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Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia

*Texts, Traditions and Practices,
10th-21st Centuries*

*Edited by Elena Paskaleva
and Gabrielle van den Berg*



Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia

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Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia

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Gabrielle van den Berg



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Contents

List of Figures IX
Notes on Contributors XIV
Transliteration XVIII

Introduction 1
Elena Paskaleva and Gabrielle van den Berg

PART 1

Historiographic Narratives

- 1 Perceptions of History in Persian Chronicles of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries in Central Asia 15
Charles Melville
- 2 Remembering Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Bukhara 40
Florian Schwarz

PART 2

Epic Heroes and Literary Legacies

- 3 Turk amongst Tajiks
The Turkic Shāhnāma Translation Located in Tajikistan and Manuscript Production during the Abu'l-Khayrid Annexation of Khurasan (1588–1598) 53
Jaimee Comstock-Skipp
- 4 The Epic Hero Manas as the Archetype of Autonomy—Nostalgia and Futurities in Kyrgyz Spiritual and Ethno-Nationalist Discourses 90
Nienke van der Heide
- 5 Literary Souvenirs from Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Aynī and Sotim Uluǧzoda in the Leiden University Library
A Closer Look at 'Aynī's Jodgorī (1935) and Uluǧzoda's Saēhati Buxoro Bo Hamrohii Ainī (1950) 104
Gabrielle van den Berg

PART 3***Memory, Religious and Social Practices***

- 6 Editing Sufism: Contemporary Negotiations on Memory and Religious Practice in Afghanistan 133
Annika Schmeding
- 7 Ethnographic Writing on Bukharan Jews: From Lost Tribes to Community Scholarship 161
Maira Kaye
- 8 Dynamics of Perpetuity: “Traditional” Horse Games in Kyrgyzstan 177
Simone de Boer

PART 4***Shrines and Monuments as Sites of Memory***

- 9 Genealogy and Family Ties of Mawarannahr Sayyids: A Study Based on Funerary Epigraphy 201
Babur Aminov
- 10 *Ḥazīra* Memorial Complexes in Mawarannahr: Evolution and Architectural Features 222
Mavlyuda A. Abbasova-Yusupova
- 11 Commemorating the Russian Conquest of Central Asia 242
Alexander Morrison
- 12 Remembering the Alisher Navoi Jubilee and the Archaeological Excavations in Samarqand in the Summer of 1941 287
Elena Paskaleva
- 13 Soviet Legitimization of Islamic Architecture in Old Khiva as Reflected in the Diaries of ‘Abdullāh Bāлтаev (1880–1966) 330
Bakhtiyar M. Babadjanov
- 14 “Memory Traces:” Buston Buva *Mazār* in the Ferghana Region of Uzbekistan, 1980s–2010s 346
Věra Exnerová

Glossary of Terms 373
Index 376

Figures

- 0.1 The monument of Timur defining the main urban axis in the new regeneration of Shahr-i Sabz, © Elena Paskaleva 2017 5
- 0.2 Pilgrimage at the Sufi memorial complex of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband in the vicinity of Bukhara. The ancient tree that was frequently visited by women with prayers for good health and fertility was removed by the Uzbek authorities in 2016, © Elena Paskaleva 2013 6
- 3.1 Rūdāba and Zāl seated in a pavilion. Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, undated. CBL ms. Pers. 295, f. 76^v. Image credit: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. CC BY-NC 4.0 64
- 3.2 Loose folio. Jāmī, *Haft Awrang*, undated. LACMA no. M.73.5.577. Image credit: Museum Associates/ LACMA 67
- 3.3 Gathering in a pavilion. Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān*, dated 1593. BLO ms. Elliott 163, f. 55^b 69
- 3.4 The court of Kayūmarṣ. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. IOSWH ms. 1032, f. 7^r 71
- 3.5 Žahhāk's vizier announces Faraydūn's arrival. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. IOSWH ms. 1032, f. 14^r 73
- 3.6 Faraydūn enthroned. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. IOSWH ms. 1032, f. 21^v 74
- 3.7 The death of Īraj. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. IOSWH ms. 1032, f. 29^r 75
- 3.8 Pious man attacked by a drunkard. Sa'dī, *Muntakhab-i Būstān*, dated 1527. АНТ no. 66, f. 11^v. Reproduced in Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), fig. 66b 76
- 3.9 Tūr's attempt to ambush Manūchihr. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. IOSWH ms. 1032, f. 35^r 78
- 3.10 Zāl climbs Rūdāba's hair. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. IOSWH ms.1032, f. 49^r 80
- 3.11 Zāl climbs Rūdāba's hair. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated. BL ms. Or.7204, f. 55^b. Photograph taken by Michael Erdman 81
- 5.1 "140 years"—conference invitation and programme, commemorating Şadr al-Dīn 'Aynī in April 2018 105
- 5.2 Renovation of the Literary Museum of Şadr al-Dīn 'Aynī (Осорхонаи адабии Садриддин Айний), 2018: the bust of 'Aynī in the courtyard, © Gabrielle van den Berg 107
- 5.3 A copy of 'Aynī's *Namūna-yi adabiyāt-i Tājik* (Samarqand, 1925/Moscow,

- 1926) on display in the Literary Museum of Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī, © Gabrielle van den Berg 109
- 5.4 *Qjulomon* ‘Slaves’ (1935), with Russian and Tajik title page. Leiden University Library 109
- 5.5 *Jodgorī* ‘Souvenir’ (1935), Leiden University Library, title pages (pages 4–5) in Russian (5a) and Tajik (5b) 110
- 5.6 Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī’s dedication to Sotim Uluğzoda, in the Leiden University Library copy of *Jodgorī*, page 1 111
- 5.7 *Jodgorī*, front cover (7a) and flyleaf (7b) 113
- 5.8 ‘Aynī and Uluğzoda during their trip to Bukhara in 1949. Photo from Sadriddin Aīnī, *Kulliēt*, jildi 6 (Dushanbe: Naşriēti Davlatii Tojikiston, 1962), between 264–265 119
- 5.9 A drawing depicting ‘Aynī and Bukhara on the title page of Uluğzoda’s *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī*, as included in Sotim Uluğzoda, *Muntaxabot* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1975), page 93 120
- 5.10 ‘Aynī with his relatives in their *havlī* (courtyard) in his home village Soktare, during his trip to Bukhara in 1949. Photo from Sadriddin Aīnī, *Kulliēt*, jildi 6 (Dushanbe: Naşriēti Davlatii Tojikiston, 1962), between 280–281 126
- 5.11 Uluğzoda’s dedication to I.S. Braginskii, in the Leiden University Library copy of his *Muntaxabot* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1975), page 4 127
- 5.12 Uluğzoda’s *Şubh-i javānī-yi mā* (Stalinabad: Naşriyāt-i Davlatī-yi Tājikistān, 1957), Leiden University Library. Front cover (12a) and Uluğzoda’s dedication to I.S. Braginskii, flyleaf preceding the title page (12b) 128
- 7.1 “Evrei. Sheivamu (Mulla Suleiman),” *Turkestan Album*, Ethnographic Part, part 2, vol. 1, pl. 29, no. 86. Library of Congress 166
- 7.2 a) Portrait of a young man, wearing a *tiubeteika*. b) Portrait of a man, wearing a *tilpak*. Central Asian Jews, 1902 (Samuel M. Dudin). Kunstkamera (St. Petersburg), I 582-9 and I 582–511 167
- 8.1 *Kök börü* players in southern Kyrgyzstan, © Simone de Boer 177
- 8.2 Kyrchyn Gorge, one of the programme locations of the World Nomad Games, © Simone de Boer 179
- 8.3 Summer pasture (*jailoo*) in southern Kyrgyzstan, © Simone de Boer 181
- 8.4 *Kök börü* players in Bishkek hippodrome, © Simone de Boer 186
- 8.5 *Kök börü* at a tourist festival in southern Kyrgyzstan, modified to resemble a hippodrome game, © Simone de Boer 194
- 9.1 View of the exterior of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum, © Babur Aminov 207
- 9.2 View of the interior of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum, © Babur Aminov 207
- 9.3 The tombstone Yz-13 is made from marble with dimensions 170 × 52 × 12 cm. Its upper surface has rounded corners, © Babur Aminov 208

- 9.4 a and b: Detail images of the genealogy on tombstone Yz-13, © Babur Aminov 209
- 9.5 Shāh-i Zinda, Samarqand, view of the sayyid tombstones, © Babur Aminov 214
- 9.6 Detail of the tombstone of Sayyid Amīr Ḥaydar Muḥammad (d. 988/1580), ShZ No. 3 from Shāh-i Zinda, Samarqand, © Babur Aminov 215
- 9.7 Detail of the tombstone of Sayyid Amīr Ḥaydar Muḥammad (d. 988/1580), ShZ No. 3 from Shāh-i Zinda, Samarqand, © Babur Aminov 215
- 9.8 Overview of the Sultān Mīr Ḥaydar Necropolis, © Babur Aminov 217
- 10.1 The Samanid Mausoleum, Bukhara 224
- 10.2 Mausoleum of ‘Arab-Āṭā’, Tim, Samarqand region, early 1930s 225
- 10.3 Present view of the Ghijduvānī complex, Ghijduvan, © Elena Paskaleva 2019 227
- 10.4 *Dakhma* of Khwaja Aḥrār Valī, Samarqand 228
- 10.5 Present view of the Chār Bakr Necropolis, Bukhara 231
- 10.6 Miniature “Funeral Procession,” folio 35^r from *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* (Language of the Birds) dated 1487. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund 1963, no. 63.210.35 233
- 10.7 Present view of the *dakhma* at the Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband complex, Bukhara 234
- 10.8 Plan evolution of the Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband complex (sixteenth-early twentieth century) after Mavlyuda Yusupova, *Evolution of Architecture of the Sufi Complexes in Bukhara*, plan on page 129 235
- 11.1 Memorial to the men of Prince Albert’s Light Infantry who died in the First Afghan War, Canterbury Cathedral, © Alexander Morrison 243
- 11.2 Cawnpore. The Memorial Well; Marble Statue by Marochetti: *Prince of Wales Tour of India 1875–1876* (vol. 3) 1860–1876 RCIN 2701749, © Royal Collection Trust 246
- 11.3 The Mutiny Memorial, Delhi, 1863. Source: Wikimedia Commons 247
- 11.4 Monument to the men of the Jam Force, Sary-Qul, Uzbekistan, 1913, © Alexander Morrison 251
- 11.5 Monument to Nikolai Przhheval’skii, Karakol, Kyrgyzstan, 1894, © Alexander Morrison 252
- 11.6 Monument to those who fell storming Aq Masjid (Perovsk). *Turkestan Album*, 1871 255
- 11.7 Monument to those who fell at Iqan in 1864. *Niva*, 1890 256
- 11.8 Monument to those who fell in defence of the Samarkand Citadel. *Niva*, 1879 256
- 11.9 General Cherniaev’s *domik*, Tashkent. *Turkestan Album*, 1871 257
- 11.10 Mikeshin’s design for a monument to those who fell at the storming of Tashkent in 1865. *Niva*, 1883 258

- 11.11 Schleifer's successful model for the monument to von Kaufman. Source: *Turkestanskii Sbornik* Vol. 516, page 91 265
- 11.12 The von Kaufman Memorial, unveiled 4th May 1913, destroyed in 1919 266
- 11.13 The Tashkent Narodnyi Dom, renamed after Cherniaev in 1915. Source: <https://mytashkent.uz/> 267
- 11.14 Painting of the Martyrdom of Agafon Nikitin 270
- 11.15 Monument to M.D. Skobelev, Tverskaya St, Moscow, erected 1912. Source: Wikimedia Commons 271
- 11.16 View of the Gök-Tepe Museum with Monument behind 273
- 11.17 Interior of the Gök-Tepe Museum 274
- 11.18 Principal Monument at Gök-Tepe, 1901 276
- 11.19 "Shturm Krepost' Geok-Tepe" *Zakaspiiskoe Obozrenie* 1907 No. 9 in *Turkestanskii Sbornik* Vol. 417, page 141 277
- 12.1 Navoi Museum in Tashkent, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 294
- 12.2 Memorial relief at the Navoi Museum in Tashkent, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 295
- 12.3 Reconstruction model of the Gūr-i Amīr complex, Collection of the Timurid Museum in Tashkent, © Elena Paskaleva 2018 298
- 12.4 View of the central courtyard at Gūr-i Amīr, Samarqand, © Elena Paskaleva 2019 299
- 12.5 Newspaper article on the "Tomb opening of Timur's son Shahrukh," *Leninskii Put'*, 18 June 1941, no. 142 (794). Source: TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346 302
- 12.6 Gerasimov exhuming Timur's skull. From left to right: Kary-Niazov, unidentified member, Guliamov, unidentified member, Zarifov, Oshanin. Source: National Film and Photo Archive; number 0-5269, 1941 303
- 12.7 The governmental commission headed by Kary-Niazov and Usman Yusupov looking at Timur's skeleton; Semenov and Zasytkin to the very left. Source: Archive of GlavNPU, 10376/65-1, photograph by E.A. Poliakov 1941 304
- 12.8 Timur's wooden coffin, Collection of the Samarqand State Museum, © Elena Paskaleva 2018 305
- 12.9 Present state of the Gūr-i Amīr crypt with the Timurid tombstones, Samarqand, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 306
- 12.10 Bust of Timur without headgear by Gerasimov, Collection of the Samarqand State Museum, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 308
- 12.11 Bust of Shāhrukh by Gerasimov, Collection of the Navoi Museum in Tashkent, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 309
- 12.12 Bust of Ulugh Beg with a turban by Gerasimov, current location unknown 310
- 12.13 Samarqand, excavations in the area of Eskī Mazār, 24 May–10 July 1941. Source: TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346 314

- 12.14 Detail, plan of Samarqand in the fifteenth century denoting the exact location of the *chūnikhāna*. Map drawn by Masson, 1942. Source: TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 334 315
- 12.15 Present view of the neighbourhood in which the Bāgh-i Maydān may have been situated, Samarqand, © Elena Paskaleva 2019 317
- 12.16 Detail of a marble railing, Collection of the Samarqand State Museum, box A 283–281-III, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 319
- 12.17 Detail of carved earthenware with floral lotus ornaments, Collection of the Samarqand State Museum, A 283–285, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 320
- 12.18 Porcelain tile, Collection of the Samarqand State Museum, KP 1774, A-4–80, © Elena Paskaleva 2021 322
- 13.1 Skyline of Khiva with the mausoleum of Pahlavān Maḥmūd (d. 1327) in the foreground, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 331
- 13.2 Cover of Bāltaev's *Historical Notebooks*, 1965, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 336
- 13.3 Entry on 'Amal Usto 'Abdullāh in Bāltaev's *Historical Notebooks*, 1965, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 337
- 13.4 Architectural drawing from Bāltaev's *History. Khiva's Monuments*, 1965, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 337
- 13.5 Drawing of a *pīshṭāq* from Bāltaev's *History. Khiva's Monuments*, 1965, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 338
- 13.6 Drawing of a mausoleum's plan from Bāltaev's *History. Khiva's Monuments*, 1965, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 338
- 13.7 Drawing of a construction of a minaret from Bāltaev's *History. Khiva's Monuments*, 1965, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 339
- 13.8 Women performing *ziyārat* on 22 April and drinking water from the well at the Pahlavān Maḥmūd Shrine in Khiva, © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov 343

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Transliteration

The present volume involves the use of sources in Arabic, Persian, (Chaghatay) Turkic and Russian, as well as Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek in Cyrillic and Latin scripts.

For Arabic, Persian, and Turkic source material, written in Arabic script, we have used the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) transliteration system. The names of modern-day authors and publishers are represented in the way these can be customarily found in publications.

Tajik was written in Persian (Arabic) script until the late 1920s, when orthographic reforms introduced by the Soviet state led to the language being rendered in modified Latin script, which has been represented in this volume without any alterations. In the late 1930s, this script was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet. In transliterating Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik words in the Cyrillic script, we have used a simplified version of the Library of Congress (LOC) system.

Relatively well-known place names are given without diacritics and usually do not follow the local designation, e.g. Bukhara (not Bukhārā or Bukhoro). Titles (e.g. *sultan*) and certain names (Timur) are also given without diacritics. A full transcription has been retained for all monuments and architectural sites.

Central Asian personal names pose another difficulty. During the Soviet period, all Central Asian republics introduced Russianized patronymics and surnames. In the bibliography, we have transliterated these names based on the ways they appear on all cited publications and archival sources.

Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia

Elena Paskaleva and Gabrielle van den Berg

Understanding the complex history of Central Asia by taking into account its regional historiographies and nationalistic narratives is crucial for perceiving the current dynamics of this vast region. By focusing on the notions of memory and commemoration across Islamic Central Asia since the fourteenth century, this volume outlines the formation of group identities often constructed as dynastic, patriotic or very personal storylines in this highly contested and continuously reimagined realm. The majority of chapters in this collection are based on the papers given at the Seventh Annual Conference of the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS) held between 23–25 November 2016, entitled “Memory and Commemoration in Islamic Central Asia.”

The most unexpected innovations and fusions of the world’s religions and material cultures have taken place along the trade and communication networks of Central Asia. The artistic vibrancy of the empires that stretched from China to Iran was reflected in their literary and cultural production. Their artistic excellence combined with an exquisite decorum was the product of continuous exchanges, mixing and melding of traditions. The problematic definition of this multi-lingual and multi-religious region, tucked away between the Ural and the Hindu Kush and torn by the entrenched legacies of great empires, from the Ghaznavids to the Shibanids, and later on between Tsarist Russia and the USSR, has not been fully explored. Central Asia is defined in this volume both in historical and contemporary terms. On the one hand, the territory of Central Asia encompasses the realms of powerful empires that ruled across huge swaths of land and ancient cities in historical provinces such as Khwarazm, Mawarannahr (Transoxiana), Turkestan, and Khorasan. On the other hand, Central Asia evokes the intricate processes of identity formation that followed the creation and collapse of the modern nation states defined currently as the five post-Soviet Stans (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), plus Afghanistan, Mongolia and Xinjiang in China. Given the geographical, linguistic and social complexity of the region, the study of old and new commemorative practices is essential for grasping recent socio-political trends and narratives across Central Asia.

To regard the cultures and borders of Central Asia as a consistent reality would be an anachronism. Nothing is solid in Central Asia as it is an evolving multifaceted cultural ecumene. Its cultures have been produced in the midst of shifting alliances and clashes across the Turkic and the Persianate worlds.¹ The dynamic and symbolic bond between the Turkic nomadic and the Iranian sedentary lifestyles,² severed during the modern period, has resulted in denoting this frontier region as “barbaric” and “uncultured.”³ Unfortunately, this approach has been effectively used to colonize Central Asia and has totally disrupted and suppressed its spatial and cultural relationships.

1 Culture and Memory in the Post-Soviet Stans of Central Asia

The national delimitations of the 1920s and 1930s, imposed by the Soviet regime, cut across the ethnic, language and religious diversity of the peoples who inhabited this area.⁴ The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 did not result in any unity across Central Asia; since then, ethnic and religious tensions have only intensified. Subsequently, the post-Soviet governments have tried to legitimize the idea of a harmonious present, in which all ethnic and religious minorities share a common purpose of free cohabitation. This ideological attempt to subdue and simplify the diversity of Central Asia, and to transform it into a cultural diachronic unity, has resulted in the creation of a repository of state-defined cultural memory and religious practices. Currently, cultural memory is skilfully used as an ethno-nationalism tool for evoking feelings of pride and belonging.⁵

1 Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Nomads in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

2 Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Victor Shnirelman, “Aryans or Proto-Turks? Contested Ancestors in Contemporary Central Asia,” *Nationalities Papers* 37, no. 5 (2009): 557–587.

3 Adeeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 231–251; Alexander Morrison, “‘Applied Orientalism’ in British India and Tsarist Turkestan,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 3 (2009): 619–647; Vera Tolz, *Russia’s own Orient: The politics of identity and Oriental studies in the late Imperial and early Soviet periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4 Adeeb Khalid, *Central Asia: A new history from the imperial conquests to the present* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2021); Francie Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

5 Laura Adams, *The spectacular state culture and national identity in Uzbekistan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Diana T. Kudaibergenova, “The Use and Abuse of Postcolonial

While earlier studies⁶ on commemorative rituals across Central Asia focused mainly on the negative recollections associated with the suppressions during the Soviet period, the majority of recent analyses choose to discuss the prevailing dichotomy between post-Soviet nostalgia and the lamenting of lost Soviet values,⁷ on the one hand, and a distinct revisionism of cultural practices and traditions on the other hand.⁸ The current volume does not engage with sociological paradigms and does not provide any clear-cut evaluations of the colonial, totalitarian or autocratic heritage of the newly created independent states of Central Asia. The selected essays treat Central Asian culture and commemorative space as inherently nuanced and mutable over time and space. The book brings together a group of scholars from a wide range of theoretical, disciplinary and epistemological backgrounds, including history, literary studies, anthropology, heritage studies and material culture. They discuss the creation and perpetuation of epic and historical narratives, religious images and sites from within the perspective of multiple connotations that have resulted in a multi-layered palimpsest of cultural memory practices.

In an attempt to maintain peaceful dynamic interaction between multi-ethnic communities, the Soviet authorities created a set of notions and examples of idealized, original traditions deprived of any religious associations. Some of these charismatic legacies and oral practices, appropriated sometimes as ideological tools of the Soviet programme to bring literacy to the nomads or to rescue folk art, have survived the pre-Islamic Persian civilization, the glory of Islamic empires and the drastic banishment of religion during the Soviet

Discourses in Post-independent Kazakhstan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 5 (2016): 917–935; Svetlana Jacquesson, "Claiming heritage: The Manas epic between China and Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Survey* 39, no. 3 (2020): 324–339.

- 6 William D. Myer, *Islam and Colonialism. Western Perspectives on Soviet Asia* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002); Pauline Jones Luong, *The Transformation of Central Asia. States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- 7 Timur Dadabaev, *Identity and Memory in Post-Soviet Central Asia. Uzbekistan's Soviet past* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); Diana Ibañez-Tirado, "How can I be post-Soviet if I was never Soviet? Rethinking categories of time and social change—a perspective from Kulob, southern Tajikistan," *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (2015): 190–203; Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, *Post-Communist Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012).
- 8 Sergei Abashin, "Nations and Post-Colonialism in Central Asia: Twenty Years Later," in *Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Migration, Democratization and Inequality in the Post-Soviet Era*, ed. S. Hohmann, C. Mouradian, and S. Serrano (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 80–119; Botakoz Kassymbekova, "Understanding Stalinism in, from and of Central Asia: Beyond failure, peripherality and otherness," *Central Asian Survey* 36, no. 1 (2017): 1–18; Svetlana Gorshenina and Vera Tolz, "Constructing Heritage in Early Soviet Central Asia: The Politics of Memory in a Revolutionary Context," *Ab Imperio* 4 (2016): 77–115.

period. Constructed by means of governmental texts and vocabulary, this reinvented heritage has taken on new and sometimes unintended meanings in the midst of social change, asserting religious identity and political upheaval in the post-Soviet period. The narratives associated with it have resulted in the elevation of places of national fame and the creation of a pantheon of salient heroes.⁹ Unfortunately, nowadays, the legacy of modern political elites is drawn from within officially imposed discourses and destructive urban regeneration measures that are alien to the majority of the population.¹⁰ Even though the presence of heroic figures is commemorated with large statues dominating the cityscapes, their presumed permanence is based on estranged politicized story lines. As is the case, for example, with the medieval ruler Timur (r. 1370–1405) in his presumed birthplace Shahr-i Sabz. In order to elevate the importance of Timur in the urban space of the city, the old centre and many residential buildings, listed by UNESCO in 2000, were demolished by the Uzbek state. As a result, Shahr-i Sabz was added to the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2016 (Fig. 0.1). In this regard, the space in which similar historic figures are placed becomes an active medium for the transmission or annihilation of memories, while governments become the guardians of the commemorative narratives of glorious deeds.¹¹

Originally a concept coined by the nation-state, heritage in Central Asia has now become the object of intellectual reclamation by academics and activists. Institutional and non-institutional social actors are increasingly involved in debating the legitimacy as well as the need to “safeguard” different expressions of heritage. Since each ethnic group has its own distinct self-consciousness and self-identification, patriotic heroic tropes and in particular the glorification of the past have gained considerable public attention.¹² Thus the tangible

9 Katherine Hughes, “From the Achaemenids to Somoni: National identity and iconicity in the landscape of Dushanbe’s capitol complex,” *Central Asian Survey* 36, no. 4 (2017): 511–533; Elena Paskaleva, “Ideology in brick and tile: Timurid architecture of the 21st century,” *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 4 (2015): 418–439; Helge Blakkisrud and Nuraida Abdykapar Kyzy, “Female heroes in a man’s world: The construction of female heroes in Kyrgyzstan’s symbolic nation-building,” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 25, no. 2 (2017): 113–136.

10 Natalie Koch, *The geopolitics of spectacle: Space, synecdoche, and the new capitals of Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

11 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited, translated, and with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

12 Slavomír Horák, “The Battle of Gökdepe in the Turkmen post-Soviet historical discourse,” *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (2015): 149–161; Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlane’s Career and Its Uses,” *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 1–25; Sally N. Cummings, *Understanding Central Asia: Politics and contested transformations* (New York: Routledge, 2012).



FIGURE 0.1 The monument of Timur defining the main urban axis in the new regeneration of Shahr-i Sabz, Uzbekistan

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artefacts (architecture, funerary epigraphy) and the intangible written and oral practices (the *Manas*, the *Shāhnāma*) across the vast Central Asian urban landscapes and steppes function nowadays as spiritual carriers of cultural memory. The elevation of selected historical figures, commemorated by monumental buildings or celebrated in the stories of the oral epics, and their wide-spread veneration, are being used to preserve and reiterate the state's vision of culture. As a result, the process of heritage-making (heritagization) entails various forms of conflict over the definition, ownership, and use of cultural attributes, some of which have been removed by the authorities while implementing new commemorative practices (Fig. 0.2). This conscious selection, interpretation and distortion of history as a socially conditioned phenomenon in the recent past of post-Soviet Central Asia requires a new historical approach to the study of memory, which is defined in this volume in the words of Peter Burke as the “social history of remembering”.¹³

13 Peter Burke, “History as Social Memory,” in Thomas Butler, ed. *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989): 97–113.



FIGURE 0.2 Pilgrimage at the Sufi memorial complex of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband in the vicinity of Bukhara. The ancient tree that was frequently visited by women with prayers for good health and fertility was removed by the Uzbek authorities in 2016
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2 Fourteen Studies on Aspects of Memory and Commemoration in Central Asia

The studies collected in this volume offer a broad understanding of the concept of common heroic heritage and multiple identities across post-Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan. Many contributions show how cultural memory practices were defined by the Timurid dynasty, through the wide-spread production of historiographic sources in the first half of the fifteenth century,¹⁴ uniquely transformed by the Shibaniids, and later on reappropriated by the Tsarist, Soviet and contemporary post-Soviet Central Asian elites as a tool of legitimacy. Yet, this process is far from smooth and straightforward. Rather than focusing on a single genre, medium or language of literary production, this volume takes a comparative and connective perspective. The authors propose different approaches—historical, literary, anthropological, or critical heritage

14 John E. Woods, "The rise of Tīmūrid historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (1987): 81–108.

studies. They show, among other things, that memory is a fundamental constituent of identity formation. In search of a historical identity based on shared languages and culture, one of the main aims of the contributors is to map the interaction between political, ideological, literary and artistic production in a diachronic and synchronic perspective, and to contextualize the process dynamics through textual and material analysis.

The first part of the volume is devoted to studies of dynastic chronicles and narratives. The first chapter by Charles Melville analyses the perceptions of history in Central Asian chronicles of the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries and their transmission, with a focus on the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* (composed in 1701). It assesses some of the narrative histories written in Persian from the Shibanid period onwards, in order to explore what determined the choices in their recording of both internal events and the history of their Safavid neighbours on one hand, and their Chinggisid and Timurid antecedents on the other. Melville considers questions of patronage, audience, and use of sources to identify the aims of the chroniclers and the context in which they were writing based on the political and religious imperatives of the time.

Florian Schwarz's contribution discusses the commemoration of the Sufi shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband (1318–1391) in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Bukhara. By focusing on a particular story from Muṭribī Samarqandī's Persian anthology *Tazkirat al-shu'arā'* (1604), Schwarz outlines in Chapter 2 the entangled transformations of shrine landscapes, dynastic ideology and commemorative narratives about the Khwajagan shaykhs in the Bukhara oasis.

The second section of the volume deals with the legacy of epic narratives and historical figures in written and oral practices across Central Asia. In Chapter 3, Jaimee Comstock-Skipp offers a new reading of the unfinished Qipchaq *Shāhnāma* manuscript from the late sixteenth century kept in the Institute of Oriental Studies and Written Heritage in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Comstock-Skipp examines the characterisation of the Central Asian zone and its materials (often phrased as being at the margins of the Iranian empire) to nuanced notions of centre/periphery intrinsic to the term “Persianate.” Using iconographic analysis, she reinterprets the Qipchaq *Shāhnāma*'s provenance and justifies the attribution with regard to the artistic, political, and linguistic exchanges at play in the suggested time period.

Drawing from the vast literary heritage of Central Asia, Nienke van der Heide describes in Chapter 4 how the history of the Manas epic has been used by political elites in Kyrgyzstan. The imagery of the epic resonates with a lost nomadic lifestyle that was forcibly abandoned with the advent of European economic ideologies, in which communism was followed by neoliberal capitalism. Nostalgia for the nomadic past thus inherently carries political implic-

ations, and the tale of *Manas* is used by a variety of actors who want to transform present-day society and secure their position in it. This leads to internal conflicts among *Manas* narrators and other parties that are interested in safeguarding the *Manas* epic as Kyrgyz cultural heritage.

Focusing on some very personal recollections, Gabrielle van den Berg examines in Chapter 5 literary souvenirs from Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī (1878–1954) and Sotim Uluğzoda (1911–1997) kept in the Leiden University Library. By placing their work within the Soviet and post-Soviet context, Van den Berg offers a literary-historical analysis of a series of poems and travelogues that reveal a touching spiritual piety of the two authors, and long-lasting patterns of religious pilgrimage still palpable across Central Asia in the 1950s.

The third part of the volume is dedicated to studying and recollecting different religious and social practices across Central Asia. Chapter 6 by Maïra Kaye explores Jewish family life and material culture. Until the mid-1930s, when the Soviet state managed to seal its southern borders, flows and shifts of the Jewish populations within the Central Asian “Jewish triangle” occurred frequently. They were motivated and shaped by changing political constellations, economic conditions and family networks. Time and again, individuals, families and larger groups abandoned their places of residence, crossed borders and moved on to neighbouring or distant towns where they joined local Jews or founded new communities. Kaye’s study explores the ethnographic writing on Bukharan Jews and its changing nature from colonialist-imperialist collection practices and knowledge for the sake of control, to the present-day ethnographic interest in the life of these communities.

In Chapter 7, Annika Schmeding discusses contemporary negotiations on commemoration and religious Sufi practice in Afghanistan. Changing attitudes towards orality and literacy, experiences of migration, education abroad and return, generational differences in attitudes, as well as the shifting ground of religious and social dynamics have all contributed to an environment of flux. In an increasingly polarised atmosphere, the stakes are high, producing disagreements over rituals at shrines, the relationship between Persian poetry and Islam, and the relevance of the newly founded intra-*ṭarīqa* Sufi council. The paper offers an ethnographically-oriented view on contemporary negotiations of group identities through a focus on Islam and the place of Sufism from the vantage points of multiple locations in Afghan society.

Chapter 8, written by Simone de Boer, explores the connection between nomad games, history and cultural heritage in Kyrgyzstan. The perceived inevitability of the continuation of horse games is explained by locals through the fact that the games are *salt*. The concept of *salt* can roughly be translated as “custom” or “customary law,” but it also refers to a proper way of doing, to a

behaviour that is appropriate because it belongs to “the ancestors” and “has always been done this way.” The *salt* nature of the games gives them a socio-culturally constructed timeless essence, which enables transformation while simultaneously emphasising notions of authenticity.

The fourth and largest section of the book (Chapters 9–14) focuses on shrines and monuments as sites of memory across Central Asia, in particular Mawarannahr. Based on funerary epigraphy, Babur Aminov offers a study of the genealogy and family ties of Mawarannahr sayyids in Chapter 9. By analysing a series of epigraphic samples found on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, Aminov shows how dynastic marriages contributed to the legitimation of the early Islamic dynasties. Mavlyuda Abbasova-Yusupova discusses the architecture and evolution of the *ḥazīra* memorial structures in Mawarannahr in Chapter 10. By showcasing several pilgrimage sites in present-day Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, Yusupova narrates their architectural development and religious importance.

In Chapter 11, Alexander Morrison investigates the commemorative activities of General Alexei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin (1848–1925), who as Governor of Transcaspia in 1898 established the first museum at Gök-Tepe, collecting materials from many different donors and regions of the empire. This study on the Russian conquest of Central Asia concludes with an analysis of the 50th anniversary of the fall of Tashkent in 1915, when the Russian Empire was embroiled in a war that would prove fatal for the Tsarist regime. The subsequent creation of national republics within the USSR necessitated the formation of nationalities policies, which resulted in constant appropriation and renegotiation of historical sources, figures and themes. In Chapter 12, Elena Paskaleva shows how the political narrative around the 500th Jubilee of the poet ‘Alishir Navā’ī (Alisher Navoi) (1441–1501) prompted archaeological excavations in Samarqand in the summer of 1941. Based on unpublished archival materials and on the archaeological findings at the Timurid Dynastic Mausoleum of Gūr-i Amīr and at the China pavilion (*chīnikhāna*) of Ulugh Beg, Paskaleva explains how the paradigms defined during the Navoi Jubilee determined the study of the Timurid period and cultural production within the borders of present-day Uzbekistan from the perspective of Soviet cultural continuity.

The advent of Soviet heritage policies is the topic of Bakhtiyar Babadjanov’s contribution, Chapter 13 of the volume. He analyses the Soviet legitimation of Islamic architecture in Old Khiva as reflected in the diaries of ‘Abdullāh Bāltāev (1880–1966), a famous architect and restorer in Khwarazm. In his descriptions of medieval architecture, the *Itchan Qal’a* had already been transformed into a “monument” following Soviet traditions. Bāltāev was strongly influenced by the Soviet perception of “architectural heritage,” a concept according to which the

old buildings were almost completely alienated from their authentic religious and secular functions. Islamic architecture came to be defined as “historical” and architectural monuments became “tourist sites.”

In the final study of this book, Chapter 14, Věra Exnerová explores the cultural heritage in Central Asia by looking at the history and representation of Islamic architecture in the Ferghana Valley in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. When political power and social cohesion are threatened, architecture and art could be used to reassure the community of the regime’s ability to maintain stability. Exnerová’s study, based on oral history, contributes to the debates on the role of state and non-state actors in the construction of power in post-Soviet Central Asia.

One of the purposes of the present collection of studies is to raise more awareness of Central Asia as a vibrant and still widely unknown region among the wider academic and non-academic audiences. The contributions address many of the key issues related to memory and commemoration practices. The interpretations offered by the authors are based on their long-term fieldwork, archival studies and personal experiences. However, many more questions remain open. What will be the impact of recent state policies and governmental intrusions on the diverse cultural production of the region? How will the various legitimization projects in the Central Asian nation states resonate with the insecure political and economic situation in the post-Soviet realm? Will the promised prosperity and revival of the complex cultural exchanges vowed by the fabled Silk Road result in any democratic changes? How will group identities evolve in Afghanistan in relation to religious and commemorative practices, especially in the current circumstances? For now, with this volume, the editors and contributors hope to have shed new light on some of the social, political and cultural intricacies of Central Asia in relation to the theme of memory and commemoration. We hope that the contributions may lead to a better understanding of the complexity and diversity of this colourful and fascinating region that has been regarded as a periphery for far too long.

We would like to conclude this brief introduction by sincerely thanking the contributors for their willingness to share their knowledge with us, and for their patience with the editors. Due to circumstances beyond our control, it has taken us an unusually long period to prepare this volume. In addition, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers for their learned assessment and helpful comments, and the time and effort they selflessly devoted to this volume. It is beyond any doubt that all contributions in this volume greatly profited from their meticulous reading of the manuscript. And last but not least, we are very grateful to Toby Jones, Niko Kontovas and Sara Mirahmadi, fellow-members of our project “Turks, Texts and Territory:

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PART 1

Historiographic Narratives



Perceptions of History in Persian Chronicles of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries in Central Asia

Charles Melville

All history is contemporary history

BENEDETTO CROCE¹



The aim of this paper is to explore some aspects of ‘memory and commemoration’ that may be found in the chronicles written in Persian in Central Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.² Given the rather large output of historical texts and chronicles, the great proportion of which are still not edited,³ and the rather long time-frame envisaged, I shall focus only on a limited number of points, moving from some general considerations to more specific examples.

1 Historiography of Central Asia

One simple question to be addressed at the outset is whether there are distinguishing features of histories written in Persian in Balkh, Bukhara, Samar-

1 See E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 2nd ed. 1990), 21, for the full quotation. See also Jacques le Goff, *History and Memory*, tr. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 106–107.

2 I am grateful to the organisers of the conference in Leiden at which the draft of this paper was presented, which gave me the impulse to engage for the first time with the Persian historical literature produced in Transoxania.

3 See Yuri Bregel, “Historiography xii. Central Asia,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* XII, no. 4 (2004), 397–402, and the thorough survey in Thomas Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty in Early Modern Central Asia. The Tūqāy-Tīmūrid Takeover of Greater Mā Warā al-Nahr, 1598–1605* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 307–310. I have not been in a position yet to study works still in manuscript and this essay is restricted by the use of sources to which I have currently easy access.

qand or further afield at this period (apart from the particulars of the history they narrate) that distance them generically from traditional Perso-Islamic historiography, in terms of their outlook, audience, use of sources or ethical or didactic message. In short, does their authors' purpose in writing and the structural and rhetorical devices they use differ qualitatively from those of their predecessors and contemporaries writing in Iran (or, for that matter, Mughal India)?

The short answer to this is "no"—they are not so different, whether in their language and style, their use of poetry, or homilies on the value of history or the nature of kingship. Their scope (universal, dynastic or local); their structure (annalistic, episodic); and the chronological framework and calendars (*hijrī* lunar, Persian solar and Turkish animal) they employ, are essentially the same as their counterparts in Iran—with whose work they were familiar.

For example, the recently edited *Muḥīṭ al-tavārikh* (Ocean of chronicles) by Muḥammad Amīn (c. 1110/1699), is a universal history of the prophets and kings, based on a list of thirty-seven sources, of which the great majority are well-known Arabic and Persian chronicles and only two are works of Central Asian composition, namely the *ʿAbd Allāhnāma* of Ḥāfiẓ Tanīsh (which covers the period to 997/1589) and the *Tārīkh-i baḥr al-aḥrār* of Khwaja Maḥmūd Kitābdār, i.e. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Valī (which continues to 1051/1642).⁴ Three other local works are cited in the course of Book 9 on the career of Timur and his descendants: Kūhistānī's *Tārīkh-i Masʿūdī* (c. 947/1540), Niṣārī's *Muzakkir al-aḥbāb*, a *tazkira* compilation (c. 974/1566), and Muḥammad Yār's *Musakhkhir al-bilād* (c. 1016/1607), though not listed in the foreword.⁵ As the final Book (10) of the *Muḥīṭ al-tavārikh* concerns the career of his patron, Subḥān Qulī Khān (r. Bukhara, 1681–1702), it is at once apparent that for the last half century covered by his history, Muḥammad Amīn relies on his own knowledge of the period—in short, his memory or that of his informants, along with any records he may have kept himself, as he more or less implies.⁶ The author concludes his work

4 Mehrdad Fallahzadeh & Forogh Hashabeiky, *Muḥīṭ al-tavārikh (The Sea of Chronicles)* by Muḥammad Amīn b. Mūrzā Zamān Bukhārī (*Ṣufyānī*), Critical Edition and Introduction (Leiden: Brill, 2014), introduction, 11–20, Persian text, 10–13 [hereafter cit. *Muḥīṭ*]; for these two Central Asian sources, see Bregel, "Historiography," 397–398, and R.D. McChesney, "Historiography in Central Asia since the 16th Century," in *Persian Historiography. A History of Persian Literature*, x, ed. Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 508–514, 524–530.

5 *Muḥīṭ*, intro., 19; Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, 309, 312.

6 *Muḥīṭ*, intro., 21; cf. text, 347, hardly explicit: "I have assembled these scattered words from trustworthy books, and have drawn the pearl (*durr*) of what was within the competence (*maqḍūr*) of this sincere one, lacking in capital and far from learning, into the thread of explanation."

with a chapter on the “science of history” and its ten benefits, expressed in very standard terms (and based largely on Mīrkhwānd),⁷ the purpose of which is the knowledge of time or of a certain period, such as the rise of a nation, or the emergence of a new polity.⁸ He also has a section on kingship and good rule,⁹ which upholds the need for justice, wisdom and determination, to act for the welfare of the kingdom. This is used to justify the khan’s seemingly inappropriate action of executing his son, Šādiq Sultan—a *topos* recurring, for instance, in the Ottoman sultan Sulaymān’s murder of his son, prince Muṣṭafā, in 1553,¹⁰ Shah ‘Abbās’s killing of his son Šafī Mīrzā in 1615,¹¹ and somewhat differently, Nāšir al-Dīn Shah’s execution of Amir Kabīr in 1852,¹² all reprehensible actions that had to be recorded but somehow also explained by the respective chroniclers.

The purpose of writing history was also stated, more briefly, in very similar terms almost a century earlier by Muḥammad Yār,¹³ as being to record “the beginning of every rule and the appearance of every nation (*ibtidā-yi har dawlatī va zūhūr-i har millatī*) as well as the important events in history, and as a memorial (*yādgar*) of the famous kings and successful *khusraws* on the pages of time”—and in his case, particularly, the deeds of ‘Abd Allāh Bahādur Khān (r. 1583–1598), the greatest king of his age, his conquests, defeat of his enemies,

7 As previously noted, see *Muḥīt*, intro., 21; there are also strong echoes of the similar discourses in the work of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, see e.g. *Jughrāfiyā*, ed. Sadeq Sajjadi (Tehran: Bonyan, 1375/1997), 73–88, probably Mīrkhwānd’s main source. In this connection, it worth observing that Mīrkhwānd’s so-called “Testimony of Manūchīr” is also taken from Ḥāfiẓ Abrū’s expanded version of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi’ al-tavārikh*, see ed. Muhammad Rawshan (Tehran: Miras-e Maktoob, 2013), 148–154; cf. Ali M. Ansari, “Mīrkhwānd and Persian Historiography,” *JRAS* 26, no. 1–2 (2016): 252–254 (for the benefits of history) and 254–257 (for the “Testimony”). Incidentally, the “wisdom (*pand*)” of Hūshang, also found in Rashīd al-Dīn/Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jāmi’ al-tavārikh*, 85–94, is clearly taken very directly from Sharaf al-Dīn Qazvīnī, *al-Mu’jam fī āthār mulūk al-‘ajam*, ed. Ahmad Futuhi Nasab (Tehran: Anjuman-i asar va mufakhr-i farhangi, 1383/2004), 65–89. Thanks to Maria Subtelny for this remarkable finding, which reveals more of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū’s sources (pers. comm. 13 November 2017).

8 *Muḥīt*, 336–348.

9 *Ibid.*, 246–250.

10 Fatma Sinem Eryılmaz, “The *Sulaiman-nama* (*Süleyman-nama*) as an Historical Source,” in *Shahnama Studies* 111, ed. Gabrielle van den Berg and Charles Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 173–198.

11 Cf. Iskandar Beg Munshī, *Tārīkh-i ālam-ārā-yi ‘Abbāsī*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Musavi, 1956), 883–884.

12 See Charles Melville, “The Historian at Work,” in *Persian Historiography* (London: IB Tauris, 2012), 83–86.

13 Muḥammad Yār b. ‘Arab, *Musakhkhir al-bilād*, ed. Nadira Jalali (Tehran: Miras-e Maktoob, 2006), 2–4.

spreading of justice, his lawgiving, upholding of Islam and the shari‘a and so on ... We may thus assert that, in this respect, the nature of Persian historical writing in Central Asia remains more or less constant and consistent with Persian models from Iran.

Robert McChesney has observed that works now considered as “historiographical” are rarely devoted solely to the chronological narration of events. “Most devote considerable space to geography and biography and, on occasion, ethnography, mythology, and even philosophy.”¹⁴ He goes on to remark that the “reconstructed lives of individuals made up the story of a past that was worth recounting, and served best to instruct a contemporary readership.”¹⁵ This applies not only to works of Central Asian origin, although it is a pronounced feature of the three compositions he goes on to study in detail, by Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, Muṭribī Samarqandī and Maḥmūd b. Amīr Valī. This emphasis on the individual chimes with the idea advanced by some theorists that history is essentially human history, “the science of men in time.”¹⁶ The authors we are concerned with all conform, more or less explicitly, to the basic proposition that the main purpose of history is indeed *to memorialise the past and present deeds* of the dynastic rulers. The question then turns to the specifics of *which* rulers, which deeds and how they were remembered and recorded.

2 Post-Timurid Rule in Central Asia

The defeat of the last Timurid rulers and the conquest of the main urban centres of Transoxiana and Cisoxiana by Muḥammad Shībānī Khan (r. 1500–1510) and his descendants in the first decades of the sixteenth century ushered in a new era of Chinggisid rule in Central Asia, under first the Shibanids (1500–1599) and then the Tuqay-Timurids (1599–1747), with a separate and essentially rival Shibanid line (the ‘Arabshahids) in Khwarazm. As discussed by McChesney, this involved both a restoration of Chinggisid norms and the appanage state,¹⁷ and a strong element of continuity with Timurid and Perso-Islamic cultural patronage.¹⁸

14 McChesney, “Historiography,” 503.

15 Ibid., 504.

16 Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 106, quoting Marc Bloch.

17 R.D. McChesney, “The Chinggisid Restoration in Central Asia: 1500–1785,” in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia, The Chinggisid Age*, ed. Nicola di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 277–302.

18 Idem, “Islamic Culture and the Chinggisid Restoration: Central Asia in the Sixteenth and

How did the chroniclers of the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries onwards look back on the antecedents of these developments and place contemporary events in a wider view of the history of the region? How is the past remembered and commemorated? And not just events, but the symbols of sovereignty, or matters crucial to self-recognition (such as the nature of rule; urban vs. nomadic lifestyle; religious beliefs and practices, etc.). What was the present use of this past?

One particular aspect of this is the respective weight given to the legacy of Chinggis Khan against that of Timur, as cogently discussed in McChesney's neat essay in *Foundations of Change*,¹⁹ and more recently Ron Sela's pioneering book on the *Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane*.²⁰ As noted by these and other scholars, Timur's career ceased to be a formative element in the identity of the new Central Asia states (despite the fact that the centre of his empire was based in the region), certainly not compared with that of Chinggis Khan, but resurfaced in the eighteenth century and in a new political context. This makes the account of Timur and the Timurids in Muḥammad Amīn's *Muḥīt al-tavārīkh* all the more interesting, as he has a long section on Timur's triumphs,²¹ and deals positively with his descendants (especially the last effective Timurid, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, the "second *Ṣāhib-qirān*"), whose descent from both Timur and Chinggis Khan he describes in some detail.²² Muḥammad Amīn does not refer to Chinggis Khan at all in the course of his history of the Shibanids who replaced the Timurids, but refers to his ruler, Subḥān Qulī Khan, among other things, also as the *Ṣāhib-qirān* of the age, the Timurid designation par excellence.²³ He does not provide the detailed Chinggisid genealogy for the dynasty that is presented by earlier Shibanid and Tuqay-Timurid court chroniclers, the importance of this lineage perhaps already waning by the late seventeenth century.²⁴ By contrast, however, Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī, more

Seventeenth Centuries," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, 111. *The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. D.O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 239–265.

- 19 *Central Asia. Foundations of Change* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1996), ch. 4: Law, leadership, and legitimacy, 124–125; also, "The Chinggisid Restoration," 279.
- 20 *The Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane. Islam and Heroic Apocrypha in Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. 9–18.
- 21 Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, 15–25.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 68–80, concentrating on his rise to power, and 69–70 on his genealogy.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 9. So also does Muḥammad Yār, *Musakkhkir*, 4, refer to 'Abd Allāh Khān.
- 24 See Joo-Yup Lee, "The Historical Meaning of the Term *Turk* and the Nature of the Turkic Identity of the Chinggisid and Timurid Elites in Post-Mongol Central Asia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 59 (2016): 128–129. For the complexities of these lineages, linking Timur to Mongol descent, see John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam*, ed.

or less a contemporary of Muḥammad Amīn, in his *Tazkira-yi Muqīm Khānī* (1116/1705) concentrates his focus on Chinggis Khan, twice referring to his Tuqay-Timurid patron, the ruler of Balkh, Sayyid Muḥammad Muqīm Bahādur Khan, as a descendant of Chinggis Khan in his prologue outlining the aim of his work (in similar terms to those above). He starts his narrative with the rise of Chinggis Khan, and traces the line of the Ashtarkhanid Jānī Khan, first of the Tuqay-Timurids, back to the conqueror.²⁵ Amir Timur, on the other hand, is again hardly mentioned, although the author does refer to the dream interpretations linking Timur's descent to Chinggis Khan's genealogy. Muḥammad Yūsuf only briefly mentions the dominion of Timur in the context of the eclipse of his dynasty by Abu'l-Khayr Khan.²⁶

Chinggisid tradition in the guise of the *yasa* of Chinggis Khan is, nevertheless, invoked by Muḥammad Amīn a couple of times, regarding the practice of supplicants removing their quivers and helmets while interceding with the khan for victims of injustice, and again in the description of Subḥān Qulī's accession to the khanate, being lifted on a carpet of white felt by four senior amirs, according to custom (*yasa*).²⁷ The continuation of this Chinggisid tradition, though somewhat subverted by the over-enthusiasm of the great men of the time, was still in force at the coronation of the first Manghit ruler, Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan in 1756, invoking the *töre*.²⁸ This event is dated according to the *hijrī*, Persian and animal calendars. The Chinggisid *yusun* and *ayin* (customs) are also invoked in describing the organisation of the army into the characteristic centre, left and right wings,²⁹ and no doubt other instances. The latter author, Muḥammad Qāzī Vafā Karmīnagī, only mentions Timur once or twice, in connection with his unprecedented conquests (e.g. in India, and against the Caucasian Lezgis),³⁰ which Nādir Shah sought to emulate. In addi-

Michael M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1990), 85–125. It is possible that a different focus and the acknowledgment of Chinggis Khan's importance is found in the unedited Book 8 of the *Muḥīt*, still to be consulted.

25 Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī, *Tazkira-yi Muqīm Khānī*, ed. Fereshteh Sarrafan (Tehran: Mīras-e Maktūb, 2001), 54–55, 61, 66 ff., 81, 119.

26 *Ibid.*, 63–64, 79–80.

27 Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, 212, 285. Cf. McChesney, *Central Asia*, 128–129, and *idem*, “Chinggisid Restoration,” 283–284.

28 Muḥammad Qāzī Vafā Karmīnagī, *Tuḥfat al-khānī, Tārīkh-i Raḥīm Khānī*, ed. Mansur Sefatgol, with Nobuaki Kondo (Tokyo: Research Inst. for Languages and Cultures, 2015), 371; tr. Ron Sela, *Ritual and Authority in Central Asia: The Khan's Inauguration Ceremony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2003), 5–19.

29 Karmīnagī, *Tuḥfat al-khānī*, 370 (date), 431 (army); cf. McChesney, “Chinggisid Restoration,” 296.

30 Karmīnagī, *Tuḥfat al-khānī*, 73, 103.

tion, however, the Khan did once stop at Timur's tomb (*dakhma*: i.e. the Gūr-i Mīr) on his way to visit the tomb of Khwaja Aḥrār outside Samarqand, and recalled the spirit of that world-conquering king (*rūḥ-i ān pādshāh-i jahāngīr-rā ... yād-āvarī namūdand*).³¹

The point of delving any deeper into such a discussion would be to determine what *use* the chroniclers (and their patrons) made of either Chinggisid or Timurid symbols to foster loyalty or acceptance, especially in periods of conflict or change. Invoking the *yasa* as a precedent for holding a *quriltay* to agree the succession was relatively common.³² Loyalty to the Timurid heritage was, naturally, still stronger in some places (such as Samarqand, and Badakhshan) than others.³³ Thomas Welsford's extensive discussion of the events surrounding the Tuqay-Timurid (Janid, Ashtarkhanid) replacement of the Shibanid (Abu'l-Khayrid) lines between c. 1598 and 1605 does neatly raise the question of the difficulties of exploring the motives and problems faced by historians in recording contemporary events as they occurred (and for which there may be no written sources), without a sure knowledge of the outcome, and the potential for later writers with a longer-term perspective and in different circumstances to offer alternative readings of past events, perhaps constructing a new narrative from the sources available to them.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that Muḥammad Amīn chose to ignore completely the turbulent years between the death of 'Abd Allāh Khan in 1598, beyond a brief notice of the very short khanate of his son, 'Abd al-Mu'min Khān (1598), and the reign of Imām Qulī Khān (1611–1642), the account of which, however, consists solely of a brief summary of his conflict with his uncle, Valī Muḥammad Khan.³⁴ It is noteworthy that Muḥammad Amīn's account of 'Abd al-Mu'min's "martyrdom" is couched in terms that defy any analysis of the reason for the event: "an arrow hit him from the hand of the archer of Fate and the bird of his soul heard the cry from the Unseen voice, 'Return to your Lord' and he passed from the throne of [worldly] success to the eternal realm."³⁵ The

31 Ibid., 309, and 295–296 for a feast under the ruined arch of the Aq Saray at Shahr-i Sabz, following a campaign in the area to assert his control; cf. Sela, *Legendary biographies*, 17.

32 Cf. Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, 73–74, 83–87, noting the drop in efficacy of such rituals by the late sixteenth century.

33 Ibid., 187–192, 225–229.

34 Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīṭ*, 186–188. Two headings left without any text, on conflicts with the Mughals and the Safavids in this period, suggest that the work remained incomplete; it is unlikely that Muḥammad Amīn had no sources available. The omission remains mysterious, even in a selective account of the reigns leading up to that of his own ruler; cf. *Muḥīṭ*, intro., 53–54.

35 Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīṭ*, 187; for detailed accounts of his murder and its motivations, see

concluding phrase, “God knows better”, merely hints that factors were involved that the author did not wish to elaborate. Possibly, given the divisive nature of the change of regime at that time and the permanent problems surrounding the succession and the distribution of appanages, still applicable a century later, due not least to the principle of seniority, Muḥammad Amīn considered it prudent to gloss over this fundamental example of internecine conflict.

These are the common preoccupations of historiographical enquiry anywhere, concerning the historians’ task of recording the past and reporting the present, and the choice of events to report or omit; both are acts of “memory” and “commemoration”, and apply not only to internal or domestic events—revolts, succession struggles—but also foreign affairs—invasions, sieges, embassies—involving neighbouring states (in this case, Safavid Iran, Mughal India, Khwarazm) and the representation of the opposing party.³⁶ There are numerous possibilities in the history of this period for comparing the different presentation of events from the viewpoint of competing sides to a conflict, one example among many being the struggle for control of Balkh in 1696, in the reign of Subḥān Qulī Khan, variously reported by Muḥammad Amīn on one hand and Muḥammad Yūsuf on the other.³⁷ Another example is the reporting of the conflict between Subḥān Qulī Khan and Anūsha Khan of Urganj, which Muḥammad Amīn describes as the first event of the reign and which clearly left a strong impression on contemporaries.³⁸ One significant account of the culmination of these attacks (dated 1097/1686), by Khwaja Samandar, is partly transcribed in a contemporary *tazkira* by Muḥammad Badī‘ (“Malihā”) Samarqandī (dated 1100/1689).³⁹ The latter work is of particular importance for the

Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans. A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550–1702* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 96–98 and Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, 41–44. Both recount subsequent events very fully.

36 James Pickett, “Enemies Beyond the Red Sands,” *Jnl. of Persianate Societies* 9, no. 2 (2016): 158–182, esp. 167 ff., draws attention to the way historical texts/chronicles present a view of inter-state relations and political rivalries in rather different terms and with an entirely dissimilar emphasis from other literary sources, such as biographical dictionaries, hagiographies or legal documents.

37 Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, 291–305; considerably less detail in Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Muqīm Khānī*, 257–260; cf. Burton, *Bukharans*, 356–357.

38 *Muḥīt*, 215–227, under the years 1095–1096 AH; cf. Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Muqīm Khānī*, 205–208.

39 Muḥammad Badī‘ Malihā, *Tazkira-yi mudhākīr al-ashab* [sic], ed. Kamal al-Din ‘Aini (Dushanbe: Intisharat Paivand, 1385/2006), 232–249. The title of the work is more correctly given as *Muzakkir al-Aṣḥāb*, cf. R.D. McChesney, “The Anthology of Poets: *Muzakkir al-Ashab* as a Source for the History of Seventeenth-century Central Asia,” in *Intellectual Studies in Islam. Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui

text I would like to consider in the final part of this paper, the anonymous so-called *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* or *Rāqīmī*, that has been attributed to Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Rāqīm Samarqandī.

3 The *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* of Rāqīm Samarqandī

The *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* is a collection of brief biographies and chronograms (often the dates of death). It is generally ignored as a useful historical source, simply “being a catalogue of noteworthy events—births, obituaries, enthronements, battles, public construction, and extraordinary natural phenomena—with little or no attempt to explain context, motivation or consequences, and hence lack[s] the essential didactic quality of historiography.”⁴⁰ This may be the case, as a generalisation, although there are several relatively extended passages of narrative text, not least, for instance, concerning the early career of Imām Qulī Khan, which dwarfs the brief treatment by Muḥammad Amīn already referred to.⁴¹ Such a presentation of history does, however, lend itself admirably to the investigation of memory and commemoration, since, regardless of the interpretation of history, or the lack of it, there is still a deliberate choice of the “noteworthy events” selected for inclusion. The brief entries are like those in a biographical dictionary, and this makes it an excellent means to observe who or what is memorialised in this way and how (and perhaps why) they are remembered.

There are clearly problems with the identification of the date, authorship and manuscript transmission of this text, not addressed by the editor.⁴² The printed text is based on a late MS (dated 1332 or 1333/1914–1915) and lacking any critical apparatus, despite the editor’s list of other MSS of the text.⁴³ Although

and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1990), 57–84. Samarqandī’s text, for which see Burton, *Bukharans*, 331–336, is taken from his *Dastūr al-mulūk*, a manual for princes, where it appears to be quite out of place, see McChesney, “Anthology,” 64–65.

40 McChesney, “Historiography,” 504. No natural phenomena are mentioned in the printed edition.

41 Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Samarqandī (*sic*), *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*, ed. M. Sutuda (Tehran: Mawqūfat-i Duktur Mahmud Afshar Yazdi, 1380/2001), 186–197 [hereafter cit. *Rāqīm*].

42 Cf. C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature. A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, vol. 1 pt. 1 (London: Luzac, 1970), 376–378, and Storey, ed. Yuri Bregel, *Persidskaya literatura. Bio-bibliograficheskii obzor v trekh chastyakh* (Moscow: GRVL, 1972): 1139–1143.

43 *Rāqīm*, intro. *panj—hasht*. The printed edition, 204, has 1333AH in the colophon, but the editor dates it 1332 in his preface, p. *panj*.

it was not my original intention to investigate these issues, they do bear on the perspective of the author. Having consulted some of the earliest manuscripts, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the printed edition cannot be considered a reliable guide to what the author wrote; unfortunately, the more MSS one consults, the less clear this becomes.

The question of authorship is perhaps the most bizarre, but apparently caused by notices in the contemporary anthology of poets by Muḥammad Badīʿ, who was writing c. 1100/1689, as noted above. He refers to one poet under the name Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Rāqīm, who traces his ancestry back through his father to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Gilānī and to Mīrak Samarqandī through his mother, noting also a strong attachment to the family of the celebrated Naqshbandī Shaykh, Khwaja Aḥrār (d. 1490).⁴⁴ It seems feasible to identify this “Sharīf” with the author of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* (as in the printed edition), but Malihā goes on to mention another figure, Mulla Sharaf al-Dīn, son of Mawlanā Nūr al-Dīn Mullā Farhād. At the end of his encomium on Sharaf’s merits and the lectures he had attended himself, Malihā refers to the *Khātima-yi Tārīkh-i Rāqīmī* among his [Sharaf’s] writings (*nivishta-hā*) and goes on to give an addendum, apparently to correct the errors and omissions in the text. It does not seem entirely clear whether the additions to the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* are the work of Muḥammad Badīʿ Malihā (the normal interpretation) or of “Sharaf” himself, presumably in that case not regarding them as correcting his own errors.⁴⁵ The reasons for confusing “Sharaf” and “Sharīf” are not clear. In the text, under the year 1054/1644, the author refers to the death of his grandfather (*jadd*), Khwaja ʿIṣām al-Dīn b. Khwaja Nizām al-Dīn b. Ḥaẓrat Mawlanā Maḥmūd [Gilānī],⁴⁶ a pedigree that appears to sit better with Sayyid Sharīf’s lineage, and anyway bears no relation to Sharaf’s genealogy. In another place, however, the author’s grandfather (or ancestor, *jadd*) is mentioned as “amīr Fatḥī b. amīr sayyid Ibrāhīm”, who originated from Andijan but became associated with the

44 Muḥammad Badīʿ, *Tazkira*, 182–184, before continuing to quote several of his verses.

45 Ibid., 310–312. The *khātima* is not given in the printed edition, the editor believing it merely contains a summary of the events given in the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīmī*, see *ibid.*, 312, n. 1. The phrasing of the final sentence of his notice is rather ambiguous, but cf. McChesney, “The Anthology,” 65. Muhammad Badīʿ (also) composed his own addenda (*mulhaqāt*) to his *Tazkira*, 598–690, which are again described as a *khātima*, dated 1103/1692, *ibid.*, 599, 600, 610. A note by ʿAini in the margin at the end of the *mulhaqāt*, 689, is reproduced as giving the date as 1156AH, equivalent to 1693 (*sic*), presumably intending 1106/1694–1695.

46 Like many other dates in the MSS consulted, there are some variations here; National Library of Russia, MS PNS 16 [hereafter cit. PNS 16], f. 195^r, has 1054AH (the *nisba* ‘Gilani’ is omitted); Royal Asiatic Society MS, Codrington/Reade no. 162 [hereafter cit. RAS 162], f. 225^r, gives 1053; see also below, nn. 56, 92.

Tashkent sayyids.⁴⁷ The lack of a clear author, combined with the nature of the work itself, suggest that it could have been copied, altered and extended by different scholars over time.

Neither of the biographies in the *Tazkira* of Muḥammad Badīʿ is dated, and the uncertainty surrounding the date of completion of the *Tāriḫ-i Rāqim* merely compounds the ambiguity of authorship. In the printed edition the years 1100/1689, 1108/1696–1697 and 1120/1708 are variously given as the current date and Manuchihr Sutuda suggests c. 1125/1713 as the year of composition.⁴⁸ In many MSS, however, the date of writing is given more than once as 1113/1701, which seems to be authentic.⁴⁹ All these dates are well *after* the date of Muḥammad Badīʿ Malihā's *Tazkira*. Nevertheless, Sharaf al-Dīn is generally accepted to be the original author of the *Tāriḫ-i Rāqim*. A.A. Semenov considers that Mīr Sayyid Sharīf produced the later abridgement that is found in most (? all) MSS.⁵⁰ If correct, this might suggest that he benefited from Sharaf al-Dīn's (or Muḥammad Badīʿs) *khātima*. Apart from the problem of dating, however, it remains odd that the name of the "later" author (Rāqim) somehow gave his name to the "original" work by Sharaf al-Dīn, as recorded by Muḥammad Badīʿ; if anything, it seems more plausible to suggest that—if both authors were actually involved, not just one of them—Sayyid Sharīf was the original author and Sharaf al-Dīn added to it (as indeed, is what Muḥammad Badīʿ seems to suggest).⁵¹ While the few soundings made so far in the earliest MSS do suggest some texts are fuller than others—essentially, fuller than the printed edition, though not in every respect—it is not possible

47 *Rāqim*, 177; cf. Sutuda's intro., p. *chahār*, where he calculates the chronogram to yield 913 [1507], whereas I make it 1008 [1599–1600]; it refers anyway the death of Mawlanā ʿIsmat Allāh, not the ancestor (*jadd*). RAS 162, f. 199^r omits *jadd*, so that the *father* of the author (Rāqim) is amir Fathī; Edinburgh University Library, MS Or. 246 [hereafter cit. Edinburgh 246], f. 167^v, however, reads *jadd*. Apart from the association with Andijan, also accorded to Sharaf al-Dīn, there is nothing to connect this pedigree with either putative author.

48 *Rāqim*, 64, 56, 166 (*sic*), cf. Sutuda's intro., p. *do*. In PNS 16, all three references to the current year mention 1113AH, see ff. 49^v, 57^r, 167^r; cf. Edinburgh 246, ff. 57^r, 49^v [113, *sic*], 157^r [115, *sic*].

49 See also PNS 473, ff. 62^r, 72^r (1100AH), 193^r, and the same in PNS 303. In RAS 162, f. 226^r, the final chronogram gives the date for the composition (*taʿlīf*) of the "*Tāriḫ-nāma-yi Rāqim*" as 1113AH and there is a note on the flyleaf, f. 227^v, that 1113 is the date of the '*Tāriḫcha*'.

50 D. Yusupova and R.P. Dzhalilova, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei Akademii Nauk Respublikii Uzbekistan. Istoriia* (Tashkent: Fan, 1998), 164–165, quoting Semenov; thanks to Firuza Melville for help with the Russian text.

51 The date 1094/1683 for the *Tāriḫ-i Rāqim* mentioned by Muḥammad Badīʿ (see Storey, *Persian Literature*, 1/1, 377; McChesney, "The Anthology," 65), is not found in the printed edition of the *Muzakkir*.

at present to decide which if any of them represent the “original” or “abridged” versions.

In the printed text, the last date is 1029/1620.⁵² In the MSS so far examined, the final date is usually 1054 or 1055/1644–1645, and the last event often the death the author’s grandfather (mentioned above), though some texts add one or two further events.⁵³ Two of the earliest MSS, however, add almost nothing.⁵⁴ It must be supposed for now, that the *Tārīkh-i Rāqim* in its surviving form is a composition dating from the final years of the reign of Subhān Qulī Khan, but covers personalities and events only down to the end of the reign of Nazr Muḥammad Khan (1641–1651), Subhān Qulī Khan’s father. The reason for the fifty-year gap is not explained, but may be partly due to a lack of written sources (as in the case of Muḥammad Amīn),⁵⁵ and Sayyid Sharif could no longer rely on the oral testimony of his grandfather, whom he describes as “the most learned of the ‘ulama’ of Samarqand.”⁵⁶

We cannot go further into this tortuous matter here, although the date of the author naturally has an implication for understanding the scope of his “memory” and its relevance to his contemporary present. For the present survey it is sufficient to continue to refer to the printed edition, supplemented by the manuscript witnesses where necessary, pending a more reliable text on which to reach more definite conclusions. We shall also make passing comparisons with Muḥammad Amīn’s almost contemporary *Muḥīṭ al-tavārīkh*.

52 *Rāqim*, 198; in PNS 16, f. 194^v, and others later, this is given as 1031AH. The exception is a single date of 1090/1679 for the death of the musician, Ḥāfiẓ Adīna Lang, *Rāqim*, 203, not found in any of the MSS consulted so far. The addition of this information may provide a clue to as the authorship of this particular MS. Two MSS listed by Yusupova & Dzalilova, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, 169, also end in 1028 or 1029.

53 That is, before the colophon; there are often several entries added afterwards, see below. Of the forty-one MSS listed by Yusupova & Dzalilova, over half end with dates between 1052 and 1056AH.

54 PNS 16, ff. 194^r–195^r and Edinburgh 246, ff. 185^v–186^r. The latter is dated 30 Muharram 1145/23 July 1732, that is, only 30 years after the presumed completion of the work and, interestingly, copied in Shahjahanabad, see f. 186^r. See also below.

55 See above, p. 16 and n. 6. Even in other early MSS, there are rather few entries for the period from 1029 to 1054AH and effectively nothing for the 1030s; e.g. PNS 303, ff. 268^r–279^r; PNS 473, ff. 220^r–230^v; RAS 162, ff. 218^r–226^v. One might normally expect information to become fuller as the author reached his own time.

56 PNS 16, f. 195^r; this is the last date commemorated in this copy of the work, which seems also to be the earliest surviving, dated 1128/1715, the first of twelve MSS in the National Library of Russia. Edinburgh 246, the next earliest, does not mention the author’s ancestor and ends before 1054AH. Most other copies of this popular text are from the nineteenth century.

Sayyid Sharīf's brief introduction suggests that the way to record the history of the days and revolutions of the learned, the talented and the witty is to place their date in pearls of verse and jewels of prose, and so open the gates for contemplation of their virtue and accomplishments. Some didactic intention is thus implied. After explaining the different types of chronogram, he announces the scope of his work, from the appearance (*zuhūr*) of the *ṣāhib-qirān*, Amir Timur Güregen, until the time of writing (not mentioned), and starts at once with the death of Abū Sa'īd, "the last of the Chinggisid kings."⁵⁷

There follows a reasonably coherent though disjointed narrative of the events that marked the end of the Ilkhanate, briefly listing the Chinggisid, Chupanid, Jalayirid, Muzaffarid and Sarbadar rulers, interspersed with notices of saints and poets such as 'Alā al-Dawla Simnānī (p. 8), Khwājū-yi Kirmānī (p. 9), Ibn Yamīn (p. 10) and Salmān-i Sāvajī up to the rise of Timur (p. 15). This pattern continues through the fifteenth century, with a fairly extended chronological summary of the career and conquests of Timur till his death in 807/1405 (pp. 36–37), and the reigns of his descendants. Different emphases can be noted in passing: Sayyid Sharīf devotes one line to the feast (*toy*) held by Timur at Kan-i Gil outside Samarqand in the last year of his reign, whereas Muḥammad Amīn, for instance, devotes over a page to this important dynastic gathering.⁵⁸ Bāysunghur Mīrzā, the talented son of Shāhrukh, is remembered mainly for his intellectual interests—the subtleties of poetry, riddles, difficult verses and precision of meanings—and the scholars in his entourage, not for his patronage of the arts and the refined output of his atelier.⁵⁹ Intermingled with biographies of the ruling dynasty are reports of some of their constructions (Timur's palace at Aq Saray and Friday Mosque in Samarqand, Ulugh Beg's Madrasa and observatory in Samarqand, Navā'ī's mosque in Herat),⁶⁰ and the lives of various prominent poets (e.g. Ḥāfiz, p. 23, Jāmī, pp. 71–73), Sufis (e.g. Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband, p. 22) and scholars (e.g. Taftāzānī, p. 26). Sayyid Sharīf also gives a substantial account of the discovery of 'Alī's tomb in Khwaja Khayrān outside Balkh and the construction of the shrine ordered by Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā.⁶¹ With the death

57 *Rāqim*, 1–2; PNS 16, f. 2^r, and Edinburgh 246, f. 1^r, start with the birth of Timur, as expected, and the death of Abū Sa'īd follows on fols. 3^r and 2^r respectively.

58 *Rāqim*, 36; *Muḥīt*, 26–27.

59 *Rāqim*, 48; nevertheless, more informative than Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, 39; they disagree on dates of both his birth and death and neither is correct on both.

60 *Rāqim*, 18, 32, 55–56, 77.

61 *Ibid.*, 63–64; cf. R.D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480–1889* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 27–33. Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Rāqim is mentioned in connection with a geographical survey of the area (*ibid.*, 91–92), of which he must have had first-hand knowledge. The re-discovery and

of ‘Alīshīr Navā’ī and his burial in the mosque he founded, *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*’s coverage of the Timurid period comes to a close, although there is no attempt to signal this landmark and transfer of rule. As a whole, nevertheless, the Timurid dynasty and its princes are described relatively fully, if briefly, and certainly in a positive way;⁶² their infighting is recorded without comment and only the murder of Ulugh Beg is condemned and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf and his offspring shown to get their just deserts.⁶³ As previously observed, Muḥammad Amīn’s lengthier coverage of the Timurids is also positive. He doesn’t specifically discuss the change of regime, so much as lament the death of Sultan Ḥusayn at the end of 911/May 1506, when “the hand of Fate ... rolled up the carpet of joy from the surface of Khurasan” and he deals summarily with the fate of his sons before turning to the accession of Muḥammad Khan Shībānī, who “conquered the capital of Amir Timur” and, turning to the capture of Bukhara, “placed his feet on the throne of the sultanate of the Samanids”, thus suggesting long-term continuities rather than change.⁶⁴ Sayyid Sharīf routinely gives the Uzbek khans the honorific *ṣāhib-qirān* alongside their other titles.

The *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*’s focus on Central Asian history begins with the rise of Shībānī Khan, who “emerged from the desert of non-existence to the city of existence” in 855/1451 (p. 80) and whose ambitions for kingship were aroused in the service of the ruler of Samarqand and with the putative support of the Yasavī Shaykh Aḥmad, until he was able to “cast the noose of his ambition round the battlements of Samarqand” and gain control of Transoxania in 904–906/1498–1500. Telegraphic accounts of his sack of Balkh and assault on Khojand and Herat follow (pp. 83, 90, 91), culminating in his correspondence and then fatal encounter with Shah Ismā’īl Ṣafavī (pp. 92–94), whose rise and adoption of the *mazhab-i bāṭil* of Shi‘ism Sayyid Sharīf mentions immediately after the rise of Shībānī Khan (p. 82). Sayyid Sharīf gives quite a lot of space to the battle with Ismā’īl in 916/1510, at a place that, he notes, recalled the encounter at Siffin, together with a poem of his own composition, whereas Muḥammad Amīn only gives it two lines, mentioning the place of the battle, Mahmudabad

development of the shrine is recorded in *Muḥīt*, 171–173, in connection with the notice on the musician Bannā’ī.

62 E.g the notice on Mīrānshāh, *Rāqīm*, 39, overlooking his ‘fall’; *Muḥīt*, 59. Once again, they disagree on dates: *Rāqīm* is correct.

63 *Rāqīm*, 56–57; more detail in *Muḥīt*, 47–49; the explanation that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf resented Ulugh’s preference for his younger brother ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is given in both. *Muḥīt*, 45, also refers to Ulugh Beg slighting the Sufi shaykh, Bahā al-Dīn ‘Umar. *Muḥīt* follows Khwāndamīr’s *Ḥabīb al-siyar* rather than the underlying source, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Maṭla‘-i Sa‘dayn*.

64 Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, 79–81 (eclipse of Timurids), 101 (accession of Muḥammad Khān).

near Marv, and the date. Both authors date the event by the phrase *surkh kulāh* (red cap, i.e. Qizilbash), and mention the succession first of Shībānī Khan's *valī 'ahd*, Muḥammad Tīmūr Sultan, followed by Kūchkunjī Khan and his son Abū Sa'īd.⁶⁵ The literary language used by Sayyid Sharīf is ornate but not excessively so, but lends itself more to generalities than factual narrative and even less to discerning motivations. Assuming he was indeed writing some 200 years after the events mentioned, it is not surprising that he can hardly be considered a primary source of information; what is of some interest is discerning what he retains and what he omits from the history of the "Uzbek" dynasties and where the main focus falls.

Thus there is quite a long passage on 'Ubayd Allāh Khan's conquest of Transoxania, following the death of Shībānī Khan and the loss of territory to Bābur Mīrzā with the help of the Qizilbash, "which none of the Uzbek khans had contemplated" (p. 94); he also obtained the spiritual support of Aḥmad Yasavī (p. 95), defeated Najm-i ṣānī the Safavid commander at Ghijduvan (p. 97) and captured Herat in 936/1529 (p. 111). He became paramount khan in 940/1533 (pp. 112–113; *Muḥīt*, 108).⁶⁶ Among the notable constructions of this period, Sayyid Sharīf recounts at some length how Mir 'Arab built his eponymous madrasa in Bukhara in 942/1535–1536, partly on the basis of the gifts bestowed on him by the khan, grateful for his help in the defeat of Najm-i ṣānī; the calligraphy on the building was the work of Mīr 'Alī.⁶⁷ Sayyid Sharīf goes on to record Mīr 'Alī Mashhadī's death in 951/1544.⁶⁸ Interspersed within the framework of political narrative are numerous obituaries, mainly of religious figures, but also including poets: the most notable here is the long notice of 'Abd Allāh Hātifi, author of the *Haft manẓar*, *Laylī and Majnūn* and *Tīmūrnāma*, some verses of which are quoted; Sayyid Sharīf also notes the *maṣnavi* for Shah Ismā'īl, left unfinished (pp. 106–108).

65 *Rāqīm*, 93, 94, *Muḥīt*, 102, 103. The *abjad* value of *surkh kulāh* is 916.

66 Both *Rāqīm*, 97 and *Muḥīt*, 105, give the same chronogram for the defeat and death of Najm-i ṣānī, though their accounts differ. *Muḥīt* credits the victory to the powers of Mir 'Arab, a disciple of Khwaja Aḥrār, despite the Persians fielding 70,000 men to the Khan's 3,000. *Rāqīm*, 111 and *Muḥīt*, 106, both also give the same chronogram for the capture of Herat.

67 *Rāqīm*, 115–116 and see previous note for Mīr 'Arab's intervention at Ghijduvan. *Muḥīt*, 107, also mentions the madrasa, much more briefly, but cites the same chronogram for its date. *Muḥīt*, 108, records two other public works, Mīrak Sayyid Ghiyās's garden and Mihtar Qāsim's bridge; the latter is noted in *Rāqīm*, 151–152.

68 *Rāqīm*, 123–124. For an appreciation of this calligrapher and his school, see also Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Muqīm Khānī*, 94–97, where the same chronogram is quoted, as also in *Muḥīt*, 185.

One aspect of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* worth drawing attention to is the fact that it does not simply record events internal to Ma wara al-nahr, but also those regarding the neighbouring states, particularly in Hindustan, which were of course of direct interest to the Khanate as well. Thus, Sayyid Sharīf reports the death of Bābur, the first Mughal emperor (pp. 111–112); Humāyūn's flight to Iran (p. 121); the death of the Shī'ī scholar Shah Ṭāhir, who fled to the Deccan in the reign of Shah Ismā'īl Ṣafavī (p. 124);⁶⁹ the birth of Akbar (pp. 124–125); the death of three Indian rulers in one year, 961/1554 (pp. 127–128); the death of Humāyūn (p. 129); the birth of Salīm—Jahāngīr (p. 141) and his accession (p. 185).⁷⁰ To the West, he also notes the agreement concluded between Shah Ṭahmāsp and Sultan Sulaymān in 969/1562 (p. 134) and the death of Shah Ṭahmāsp.⁷¹ While celebrating the Ottoman peace in phrases such as “the Shah of 'Iraq and the Padshah of Rum both cast their Egyptian swords into the pit of their scabbards, like Joseph of Canaan, or rather, into the prison of the forgotten”, he does not give the reason for this, namely the Shah's dishonourable surrender of the fugitive Ottoman prince Bayezid to his father.⁷²

Returning to the notice of events nearer home, 'Ubayd Allāh's son 'Abd al-'Azīz Khan (r. 1540–1550) is given a very sympathetic obituary, focusing on his devotion to the dervishes and to his mentor Shaykh Jalāl, maintaining his obedience despite the cares of kingship and rule. Although there was endless discord between the sultans of the period, he nevertheless dedicated his time to constructions, among which were a *khānaqāh* (convent) and enclosure for the tomb of Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband (pp. 121–123) and another was the mosque inside the citadel in Bukhara; he was buried alongside his father in the Naqshbandī cemetery (pp. 126–127). Muḥammad Amīn similarly praises 'Abd al-'Azīz's devotion to Shaykh Jalāl, and in this connection, the congruence of subject matter and language between the two texts is striking. Furthermore, Muḥammad Amīn not only credits himself with a verse on the *khānaqāh* of Bahā al-Dīn that Sayyid Sharīf attributes to a *qaṣīda* by the poet and anthologist, Ḥasan Niṣārī, but also quotes other verses in connection with the construction

69 See Ahmad Gulchin Ma'ani, *Kāravān-i Hind* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Astan-i Quds-i Razavi, 1369/1990): 791–795, where his death is given as 953/1546.

70 Other references to events in India, 137–138, 139, 140–141, including Akbar's construction of a madrasa in 985/1577, *Rāqīm*, 145, seem rather random selections for inclusion.

71 The printed text, 147, has 986/1578, a mistake or misprint for 984, the date given by the chronogram that follows.

72 Cf. Ḥasan Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tavārīkh*, ed. 'A. Nava'i (Tehran, 1384/2005), 1424, who interestingly provides a chronogram for the surrender of Bayezid and his family that *Rāqīm*, 134–135, uses for the execution of five Indian amirs.

of a *khānaqāh* for Shaykh Jalāl that Sayyid Sharīf quotes as a chronogram, again by Ḥasan Niṣārī, on the Naqshbandī *khānaqāh*.⁷³

In contrast to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Nawrūz Aḥmad “Baraq” Khan the Soyunjukid ruler of Tashkent (1552–1556) is characterised as an oppressive despot; the foundations of Islam went to ruin in his time, the peasants were unhappy and the *faqīrs* unsatisfied—“sometimes the hot wind of his rage set fire to the straw of the harvest, sometimes he sent the dust of the harvest swirling in the storm of destruction.” He was a prodigious wine-drinker and “died drunk.”⁷⁴ He was succeeded, briefly, by his equally tyrannical cousin, Burhān Khan, whose killing was greeted with the verse:

Do not do evil, for in this fast-fading field,
you will reap the evil you have sown with the sickle of Fate.⁷⁵

Thus, there is a greater emphasis on kingly qualities than political events in many of the brief notices of the actors on the political scene. As noted by Muḥammad Amīn, Burhān Khan’s murder of Yār Muḥammad Sultan in 961/1554 brought to an end the direct line of descent from Muḥammad Shībānī Khan, for he left no successor as a memorial (*yādgār*): “nothing remains but the story (*ḥikāyat*) of that group.”⁷⁶ Ironically, Burhān Khan’s murder in Sha‘ban 964/June 1557, “for the welfare of the poor and of lovers”, brought the line of ‘Ubayd Allāh to extinction also.⁷⁷

As earlier—and as in Muḥammad Amīn’s *Muḥīt al-tavārikh*—political events are interspersed with obituaries of religious figures and invariably a reference to construction work and pious foundations—such as the *khānaqāh* of Qāsim Shaykh ‘Azīzān in Karmina, the work of ‘Abd Allāh Khan in 966/1559, noticed after a rapid account of his conquests (pp. 131–132).

Sayyid Sharīf gives several brief notices to the Kuchkunjid rulers of Samarqand: Abū Sa‘īd, who died in 939/1533 and was buried in the madrasa he had built in the city (p. 115); ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Khan b. Kūchkunjī, who died in 959/1552

73 Compare *Rāqim*, 122, with *Muḥīt*, 110–111. For Niṣārī, see e.g. McChesney, “Historiography”, esp. 519. Niṣārī is used by Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, intro., 18 and 20, cf. text 183–184.

74 *Rāqim*, 130; this and another chronogram (*kharman-sūz*, ‘harvest burner’) are also quoted in *Muḥīt*, 136–137.

75 *Rāqim*, 130. The same verse is quoted in connection with the murder of ‘Abd al-Mu‘min Khan, *ibid.*, 171. The career of Burhān Khan is detailed a little more fully in *Muḥīt*, 112–113, 134–135.

76 *Muḥīt*, 112.

77 Muḥammad Yār, *Musakhkhir*, 143, where his various sins are made explicit; Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Muqīm Khānī*, 97–99, focuses on his drunkenness and negligence of affairs.

and was buried in the same madrasa (p. 127); Sultan Saʿīd, who contested rule in Samarqand, is credited with building a garden there, though after five years of splendour his hopes were not realised (the “flower of his desire was not plucked from the colourful garden”), giving way to his brother, Javānmard ʿAlī (whose lineage went back to Chinggis Khan) and whose constant care was for the poor and the *faqīrs* and the peasantry.⁷⁸

The organisation of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*, around a series of dates attached to the lives of poets, saints, rulers and bureaucrats, the construction of mosques, madrasas, *khānaqāhs* and libraries, does not lend itself to a connected narrative of the history of the period, especially when the appanage system in force in Central Asia led to complex interactions between the rulers of Bukhara, Samarqand, Tashkent and Balkh that are hard to follow at the best of times, and become even more disjointed in Sayyid Sharīf’s presentation. The collapse of the Kuchkunjids in 986/1578, however, is treated at some length, introduced by the following nice explanatory phrase: “Out of orbit Fate and the tyrannical firmament wished to throw a stone of discord through the window of their unity, which could not be repaired by any means.” (p. 149) Dissention fell out between Javānmard ʿAlī’s two sons, Abu’l-Khayr and Muẓaffar; subsequent fighting involved their father, the Bābā Khan of Tashkent and the ruler of Bukhara, ʿAbd Allāh Khan (r. 1583–1598), who was able to assert his authority over the competing factions.⁷⁹ The summary of events does appear to contain the main elements as recorded in more detail elsewhere.⁸⁰ It remains hard to discern any pattern in what is included and left out: the fate of Abdal Sultan, son of ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Khan the Kuchkunjid in 987/1579, murdered by a certain Uzbek Khan, seems not to be an event of any significance, except perhaps as marking the last of his line.⁸¹

The work (as printed in Sutuda’s edition) ends with a summary genealogy of the descendants of Abu’l-Khayr Khan and his eleven sons and his grandson Jānī Beg Sultan, who had twelve sons, which appears to bring the chronology to the early seventeenth century and the transition to the Tuqay-Timurid line. This again seems to call into question the actual date of the composition of the work, which as noted above ends early in the reign of Imām-qulī Khan. Sayyid Sharīf

78 *Rāqīm*, 139, 143.

79 *Ibid.*, 149–151.

80 *Muḥīṭ* does not cover these events, and skips from ʿAbd Allāh Khan’s accession to his death within a sentence, p. 147. A more coherent coverage of the Kuchkunjids is given by Muḥammad Yār, *Musakhkhir*, 148–150. See also Burton, *Bukharans*, 28–31 for the overall picture. The main source for these events is clearly Ḥāfiẓ Tanīsh.

81 *Rāqīm*, 154, perhaps included only because a chronogram was available; cf. Muḥammad Yār, *Musakhkhir*, 157–158, for the end of the Kuchkunjids.

recounts the events leading to the Tuqay-Timurid takeover at some length (but with the usual interruptions for notices of the deaths of various shaykhs and scholars), starting with the death of ‘Abd Allāh Khan and the bloodthirsty activities of ‘Abd al-Mu’min Khan, which led to his assassination.⁸² The disturbances that followed included a Qizilbash attack on Herat in 1007/1598,⁸³ shortly after which, the author recognises the change of regime:

After a short while, the same year, when division had fallen among the sultans of Ma wara al-nahr, the sons of Yār Muḥammad Khan gained ascendancy over the province (*vilāyat*) of Ma wara al-nahr from the province of Khurasan and in a few days the kingdom was confirmed upon them, and the rudderless sultanate gained authority through them.⁸⁴

This is followed up with Bāqī Muḥammad Khan’s conquest of Balkh and Hisar Shadman in 1010/1601,⁸⁵ with a level of detail beyond the usual, suggesting a more contemporary interest in these events. Upon Bāqī Muḥammad’s death in 1014/1606 (“when the *muhrdār* of Fate and commander of destiny broke the signet ring of his life with a sign of the finger”), his brother Valī Muḥammad was put on the throne of the khanate to great acclaim. He is given a warm eulogy by the author (p. 183), who seems at first to have disapproved of the rebellion of Valī Muḥammad’s nephews, but later favoured their overthrow of the increasingly tyrannical khan, who returned from a brief refuge at the court of Shah ‘Abbās (1020/1611) only to be defeated and “brought to the degree of martyrdom”; his son Rustam Khan fled to Khurasan “where his descendants still live.”⁸⁶

The final political event mentioned in the printed edition is Imām Qulī Khan’s accession to the throne of Transoxania in 1025/1616 (p. 190). The text then records the construction of a number of buildings, mosques, libraries, madrasas and *khānaqāhs*, such as the madrasas of Qāzī Sāqī and Yalangtūsh Bahādur, the libraries of Qāzī Muḥammad ‘Ārif and Mullā Yūsuf Qarābāghī, and the mosques of Nazr Begī and Mullā Ṣadr Kahī.⁸⁷

82 *Rāqīm*, 169–172, 173–174; the text has 1008AH for the death of ‘Abd Allāh Khan, correctly 1006 in PNS 16, f. 190^v and Edinburgh 246, f. 164^r. For these events, see Welsford, *Four Types*, 41–44.

83 *Rāqīm*, 173, says the attack was on Balkh, whose defender he calls Tanim Jān.

84 *Rāqīm*, 174.

85 *Ibid.*, 178; also p. 180.

86 *Ibid.*, 188–189.

87 *Ibid.*, 190, 193–195, 192–193, 197–198 respectively.

This may after all represent the “original” version of the work, as it is more likely that later versions add material than that earlier copies omit it. Nevertheless, most copies as noted above add a few further memorable events, and cover the defective end of the printed text, with its various lacunae (p. 218), also placing the events mentioned in a different order. This is not the place to discuss in detail the additional entries or compare the variations quickly to be noted in the different mss. The chief political notices that follow beyond where the printed edition ends (with the death of the illustrious Shaykh ‘Azīzān),⁸⁸ include the conquest of Qandahar in 1031/1622 by the Iranians.⁸⁹ The Edinburgh MS of 1732, however, gives only a brief account of the construction by Nazr Dīvānbeḡī of a mosque at the head of tomb of Khwaja Aḥrār, which he dates 1040/1631; this is followed by a truncated account of the death of Shaykh ‘Azīzān, undated, the last entry.⁹⁰ This suggests that the Edinburgh MS might be similar to the twelfth/eighteenth-century copy in the Majlis Library, Tehran.⁹¹

The demise of Imām Qulī Khan and the succession of Nazr Muḥammad Khan are covered in the following manner by the earliest MS:

Also in that year [unspecified] Imām Qulī Khan Bahādur, who was ruler (*ḥākīm*) of Bukhara and Ma wara al-nahr abandoned the kingship (*pād-shāhī*) and went to perform the pilgrimage at the House of God ... and after that, Nadir (*sic*) Muḥammad Khan son of Dīn Muḥammad Khan took control of the sultanate of Ma wara al-nahr on the throne of sovereignty (*dawlat*).⁹²

Fuller versions in later copies expand on Imām Qulī Khan’s departure for the Hejaz with his courtiers in 1051/1641, via a warm welcome in Iran, followed by Nazr Muḥammad Khan’s succession in 1052/1642, at which “auspicious and happy enthronement (*julūs*) Ma wara al-nahr became like a new bride (*‘arūs*)”

88 *Rāqīm*, 199–200, with lacunae, and ending with a complex set of calculations to reach the date 1023AH. PNS 303, ff. 269^r–270^v and PNS 473, ff. 223^v–224^r give the date as 1043. The earlier MS, PNS 16, f. 188^{r-v}, however, has the earlier date and places this in its chronological order, before the birth of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khan, f. 189^v, cf. *Rāqīm*, 191. I have not yet found the “correct” date for the death of Shaykh ‘Azīzān.

89 PNS 16, f. 194^v; PNS 303, f. 268^r; PNS 473, f. 223^r; RAS 162, f. 218^r.

90 Edinburgh 246, ff. 185^v–186^r. Both these items are found in PNS 303, ff. 268^r, 270^r, the mosque dated 1040 and the death of Shaykh ‘Azīzān in 1043, cf. above n. 88.

91 *Rāqīm*, Sutuda’s intro., pp. *panj-shish*, quoting the *explicit* of Majlis MS 14429, identical to that in Edinburgh 246.

92 PNS 16, f. 195^r. This is last entry in this copy, followed only by the reference to the death of the grandfather of the author in 1054, and the colophon, dated 1 Muharram 1128/27 December 1715; see above, nn. 46, 56.

and the ‘ulama’ and *fuzala*—rather, all mankind—were gladdened. Imām Qulī Khan’s completion of the pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina and death there are recorded in 1054/1644. Then, in 1055/1645, three years after Nazr Muḥammad’s accession, dissention broke out among the amirs of Ma wara al-nahr and the army of Balkh and in the end, the most respected amirs placed ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khan on the throne of the sultanate.⁹³ While reporting these events in a relatively full manner, there is still nothing beyond a mere recording of facts—the author does not even mention the reason for Imām Qulī’s abdication on the grounds of the onset of blindness.⁹⁴

There is a general consensus among the MSS that the text stops here, although some scribes (and owners) are clearly reluctant to stop completely and the actual end of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* is blurred, as are the reasons for the author not continuing down to the stated time of composition.

4 Conclusions

This paper has focused on the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm* in the context of how such chronologies preserve a memory of past and present events. It has emerged, first, that the *Rāqīm* does not in fact record contemporary events, but ends around half a century before the date of composition, which can be securely dated 1113/1701 on the evidence of the earliest witnesses to the text. We have also drawn attention to some of the problems surrounding the authorship of the work. Various indications about the author and his lineage,⁹⁵ as well as details of his grandfather or ancestor preserved in the early MSS, seem to favour Mir Sayyid Sharīf’s authorship, but we have not been able to resolve the issue of whether he was the “original” author or merely composed an abbreviation of a book composed by Sharaf al-Dīn. In view of the ambiguous nature of the evidence, and the nature of the work that lent itself to additions and alterations at the whim of succeeding readers and scribes (as in the reported case of Sharaf al-Dīn), it may be more correct to say that there was no single author of the text

93 PNS 303, ff. 275^v–276^r, 277^v–278^r. This is followed by a single entry on the construction of a bridge at the gate of the citadel in Samarqand, and the colophon dated on a Sunday in 1243/1827–1828. This MS clarifies some of the lacunae in the final folios of PNS 473, ff. 229^{r-v}.

94 *Muḥīt*, 193–194, refers to Imam-qulī’s becoming incapacitated (*‘ajīz*), and follows with a telegraphic chronology that matches those in the MSS of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*, consciously omitting the details of Nazr Muḥammad’s reign. For the events of this period, see Burton, *Bukharans*, 203–211.

95 *Rāqīm*, 67, 156, 176–177; cf. editor’s intro., *sih—panj*.

that has come down to us. Regardless of the truth of the matter, it is clear that Sayyid Sharīf Rāqim was thought to be the author by some writers. The most telling evidence of this is that some of his *ghazals* are copied at the end of the *Tārīkh* in the Edinburgh MS, one of the earliest; at least two of them are also found attributed to Sayyid Sharīf in the *tazkira* of Muḥammad Badī Malīḥā.⁹⁶

The transmission of the text has not helped this discussion, the various MSS differing in more or less substantial ways from the very late MS used in the printed edition and generally containing additional material. A comprehensive study of the MSS might help to identify different strands of transmission. Nevertheless, the salient features of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqim* emerge clearly from the foregoing summary discussion of its contents. While it is obvious that a collection of chronograms and obituaries is not the ideal structure for recounting a connected view of history, it is perhaps better suited than a straight narrative for acts of “memory and commemoration”, including meritorious public works and pious foundations. In this, it shares several similarities with the thirteenth-century *Niẓām al-tavārikh* of Qāzī Bayẓāwī, not least in its popularity—as measured by the large and complex manuscript tradition—complicated by the way the work lends itself to manipulation and updating by later authors.⁹⁷ The addenda are themselves evidence of more recent events thought to be worth recording. Although its structure is less coherent than Bayẓāwī’s useful handbook, especially in its lack of organisation by dynasties or—in this case—khanates, every ruler almost without exception is presented favourably in his relations with the ‘ulama’ and Sufi shaykhs and as patrons of religious foundations; in other words, it is equally an exemplary text, though not perhaps one written at such a critical juncture in the history of the author’s time.⁹⁸

In many ways, the *Tārīkh-i Rāqim* shares this characteristic with Book 9 of the *Muḥīt al-tavārikh*, an almost exactly contemporary work, which follows the account of each ruler with a notice of the leading ‘ulama’, shaikhs and poets who flourished in his reign. The somewhat patchy coverage of events before the reign of Subḥān Qulī Khan also betrays a structural weakness in the organisation of the book, while the occasional similarity of wording and the quotation of the same chronograms suggests both authors had access to sim-

96 Edinburgh 246, ff. 186^v, 188^r; cf. Muḥammad Badī, *Tazkira*, 190, 186.

97 See Charles Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa. Qāḍī Baiḍāwī’s Rearrangement of History (Part II),” *Studia Iranica* 36, no. 1 (2007): 8–11 and *passim*.

98 Among these interactions are those with the influential Jūybārī Shaykhs, e.g. *Rāqim*, 131, 135–136, 159; PNS 16, f. 188^{r-v}, records the death of Khwaja Kalān (d. 1589) in 1004/1596, much later than *Rāqim*. See Muḥammad Amīn, *Muḥīt*, 117–121, for the influence of this family.

ilar source(s). There are, naturally, substantial differences also between the two compositions, and I have made no attempt here to identify the sources used by Sayyid Sharīf (most of which are currently inaccessible to me). This should be part of any fuller investigation of the *Tārīkh-i Rāqim*, for analysing the selection of what is included and what is omitted necessarily involves being aware of what information was available to the author in making his choices. Clearly, much is omitted (and not merely the motivations behind the deeds recorded), but the author has concentrated on providing in easily digestible form a notice of the main actors in the politics and society of the period.

The slender and rather insubstantial *Tārīkh-i Rāqim*, not surprisingly, is seldom cited in the secondary studies of sixteenth-century Central Asian history, but might merit a more thorough investigation, to reveal the author's techniques of summarising events and discerning the criteria behind his choices of inclusion and exclusion. This preliminary study does not suggest that the author is re-writing history in any discernible way, but is repackaging it for easy consumption. In so doing no doubt he provided his readers with an authoritative and affirmative reading of what was worth remembering of their past history.

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Remembering Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Bukhara

Florian Schwarz

We carry blessings for friends, misfortune for enemies.
We are like steel in the battle, like wax in peace.
Ghijduvān, source of light, is my home.
The strike of my double-edged sword hits as far as Rome.¹



In November 1512, a large Safavid army suffered a crushing defeat from Uzbek troops led by the Shibanid sultan 'Ubayd Allāh b. Maḥmūd near the small town Ghijduvan in the north of the oasis of Bukhara. The tactical decision of the leader of the Safavid army, Najm-i ṣānī, to gain control over the oasis before approaching the heavily fortified city of Bukhara failed, and Najm-i ṣānī lost his life.² A contemporary of the events and adviser to sultan 'Ubayd Allāh, the western Iranian scholar Faḏlallāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī, gives full credit for the defeat of the Qizilbash to Khwaja 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī, an eminent sheikh whose shrine (*mazār*) was located in Ghijduvan. According to Khunjī, the ill-fated tactical decision of the Qizilbash resulted from their desire to burn down the shrine of the revered saintly figure, just as they had burned down the shrines of all the friends of God and Sunnis along their path. But at Ghijduvan they encountered a superior opponent. The saint's esoteric power (*quvvat-i bāṭin*) struck them down with the sword of wrath.

1 *bar dūst mubārikīm bar dushman shūm | dar jang chū āhangīm-ū dar šulḥ chū mūm | sar chashma-yi nūr-i Ghijduvān manzil-i māst | shamsḥir-i dū-rūya mīzanam tā dar-i Rūm.* Faḏlallāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī, *Sharḥ-e vaṣāyā*, ms. Tashkent, Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies No. 3844. XVI, ff. 169^b–170^a.

2 Michel M. Mazzaoui, "Najm-e ṭānī", in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Online Edition). The Timurid Zāhir al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur participated in this campaign on the side of the Safavids.

Khunjī concludes this paragraph with the quatrain quoted in the beginning, naming the saint ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī himself as the author of the poem.³ Said to have lived in the 12th, possibly into the early 13th century, Ghijduvānī’s prominence in the post-Timurid stabilized Naqshbandī *silsila* has largely shaped his later perception. In his “proto-Naqshbandī” role he is presented as the main link from the pre-Mongol Sufi tradition represented by Yūsuf Hamadānī to the post-Mongol “Khwajagan”, the religious milieu from which the Naqshbandiyya emerged.⁴

Khunjī’s description of the saint’s triumph over the Qizilbash army serves as an introduction to a commentary on the *Vaṣīyatnāma*, a prose work ascribed to Ghijduvānī. Khunjī wrote his commentary in Bukhara soon after 1512, in the early Shibaniid (Abu’l-Khayrid) period, in a period that marked an important watershed in the history of post-Mongol Sufism. During the preceding Timurid period the *silsila* or “chain” of initiating authorities had developed into one of the fundamental organizing principles of the Sufi communities. In this process, the quite heterogenous Khwajagan tradition consolidated into the later standard Naqshbandī *silsila*. This transformation took shape first in Khurasan in the 15th century.⁵ The memory of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband was strong in lineages developing in the 15th-century metropolises of Khurasan, Herat and Balkh, as well as in Khwaja Aḥrār’s community in Samarqand, which had close links with Khurasan.⁶

In Bahā’ al-Dīn’s home region, in Transoxania, it was only in the first half of the 16th century that the Khwajagan transformed into the Naqshbandiyya. As a result of this process Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband became the main point of reference in retrospect for various Khwajagan communities, and the single source of authority for a wide range of Khwajagan (and non-Khwajagan) lineages that had been rather separate before (such as the Pārsā’iyya and the ‘Alā’iyya, named after the two foremost Bukharan disciples of Bahā’ al-Dīn). Before 1530, however, the shrine of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, located 10 km east of Bukhara near the southeastern fringes of the oasis, seems to have been hardly more than a local shrine. Still in early 16th-century Bukhara the term *naqshbandī* referred specifically to descendants of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, not to the Khwajagan in

3 Khunjī, *Sharḥ-i vaṣāyā*, loc. cit.

4 Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (Abingdon 2007), 14 ff.

5 Jürgen Paul, “The Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order in Timurid Herat,” in *Afghanistan’s Islam: From Conversion to the Taliban*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland 2017), 71–86 and 273–277 (notes).

6 Jo-Ann Gross and Asom Urunbaev, *The Letters of Khwāja ‘Ubayd Allah Aḥrār and His Associates* (Leiden 2002).

general.⁷ ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī and his shrine in the northern part of the oasis were still the focal point of the sacred landscape of Bukhara.

The strengthening of the focus on Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband in early Shibanid Bukhara can probably be attributed to a large degree to Khurasanians who were fleeing from the Shibanid-Safavid wars and arrived in Bukhara during the first decades of the 16th century. They found a particularly welcoming environment in Bukhara under the Shibanid appanage rulers ‘Ubayd Allāh (r. 918–946 h./1512–1540) and his son ‘Abd al-Azīz (born in Bukhara in 917 or 918 h./1511–1513, khan of Bukhara 946–957 h./1540–1550).⁸ A literary anthology of 16th-century Bukhara, Ḥasan Niṣārī’s *Muzakkir al-aḥbāb*, describes ‘Abd al-Azīz b. ‘Ubayd Allāh as a close associate of Shams al-Dīn Rūchī, a Herati Naqshbandī from the circle of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī.⁹ The future khan owed an important part of his education to Rūchī, who also initiated him into the Naqshbandī *silsila*. ‘Abd al-Azīz patronized Herati artists and scholars and commissioned a Herati architect with the construction of a large *khānaqāh* (completed in 1544) at the shrine of Bahā’ al-Dīn.¹⁰ A large cemetery developed next to the khanaqah. It quickly developed into a favoured burial place for exile Khurasanians who died in Bukhara.

Recent scholarship on the Khwajagan / Naqshbandiyya has shed light on the process resulting in the formation of a stabilized and unified Naqshbandī *silsila* around 1500.¹¹ As Dina Le Gall aptly put it, this process involved “forgetting or suppressing ... collateral lines ... in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Transoxania”.¹² Forgetting and suppressing, however, accounts for only part of this process. It needs to be complemented by affirmative remembering in order to root a construed perception of the past in the collective memory of the present. This paper explores how such affirmative remembering might have contributed to the formation and perpetuation of the standard Naqshbandī *silsila*. How did

7 Florian Schwarz, *Unser Weg schließt tausend Wege ein: Derwische und Gesellschaft im islamischen Mittelasien im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 2000), 124–125.

8 Schwarz, *Unser Weg*, 82–87.

9 Bahā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Niṣārī, *Muzakkir-i aḥbāb*, ed. Syed Muhammad Fazlullah (Hayderabad 1389 / 1969), 63–80. Niṣārī places ‘Abd al-Azīz in a Naqshbandī *silsila* that passes through Jāmī, and includes a substantial biography of Jāmī in the chapter on ‘Abd al-Azīz. See Schwarz, *Unser Weg*, 216–217.

10 Mustafa Tupev, “Die Madrasa Mir-i Arab; Architektur und Repräsentation in Buchara unter Ubaydallah b. Mahmud Sultan,” in *Bamberger Orientstudien 1*, ed. Lale Behzadi (Bamberg 2014), 517–573.

11 Jürgen Paul, *Doctrine and Organization: The Khwājagān/Naqshbandiyya in the First Generation after Bahā’uddīn* (Berlin 1998), 2–3.

12 Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700* (Albany 2005), 14.

the memory of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband develop over the course of the Shibanid era, and how did remembering Bahā' al-Dīn begin to overshadow the memory of 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī?

The starting point for these considerations is a story preserved in an early 17th-century Persian anthology, Sulṭān Muḥammad Muṭribī Samarqandī Aṣamm's *Tazkirat al-shu'arā'*, completed in Samarqand in 1604 (1013 h.q.). It is a rather long life-story of a man who was already 313 years old when he enters the narrative in 16th-century Bukhara. Despite his age, his beard was still black, and he still had all his teeth.¹³ Around 1580, during the reign of 'Abd Allāh Khan, Shibanid ruler of Central Asia, the long-lived man sat in the cell (*ṣawma'a*) of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband near Bukhara. Despite the scorching summer heat he was wearing a heavy cotton cloak. Interrogated by sceptical Bukharan scholars, he revealed amazing details about his life in order to prove his age. The story of his life can be summarized as follows.

The long-lived man was born around 1270, apparently in Kashmir. He had a brother who was already almost a centenarian at that time; he must have been born in the 1170s, a half century before the Mongol conquests. The long-lived man was over 100 years old when he met the Bukharan saint Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband for the first time. This encounter took place in Mecca (which would put this encounter in the 1370s). From there he returned to Hindustan. The kings of Kashmir became his followers, and he was involved in an indecisive military conflict between them and Timur. From Kashmir the long-lived man travelled to Anatolia, but on the way he stopped at Bukhara, hoping to meet again Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband. But Bahā' al-Dīn had recently passed away (which dates this episode to 1389). The long-lived man visited the shrine and talked to Bahā' al-Dīn's successor. When he arrived in Anatolia, he fought together with his older brother in the army of Timur against the Ottomans. The brother died at the age of 230 during the siege of Aleppo. After 80 years in Anatolia—that would have been around 1470—, the long-lived man returned for a second time to Bukhara and paid another visit to the shrine of Bahā' al-Dīn. He returned for a third visit another century later, around 1580. At this occasion, he met Muṭribī at the shrine.¹⁴

13 On the motive of the long-lived men, or *mu'ammārūn*, see still Ignaz Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie II* (Leiden: Brill 1889).

14 Sulṭān Muḥammad Muṭribī, *Tazkirat al-shu'arā'*, ed. Aṣghar Jānfidā, with introduction, commentary and notes by 'Alī Rafī'ī 'Alā Marvdashtī (Tehran: Miras Maktoob, 1378/1999), 684 ff. For a different version of the story see Muṭribī, *Nuskha-i zibāy-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Ismā'īl Bik Jānūf and Sayyid 'Alī Mūjānī, Qum 1377/1998, 65–67.

Modern scholars have studied the author of this story, Muṭribī, as a representative of early modern Persianate transregional intellectual networks. His reminiscences on a visit to the Mughal court at Lahore in 1627–1627 (1036) have been translated into English and studied extensively,¹⁵ and his poetic anthology, the *Tazkirat al-shu‘arā’*, has been analysed as a source for the cultural interaction between Shibanid/Tuqay-Timurid Central Asia, Safavid Iran, and Mughal South Asia.¹⁶ The actual focus of the *Tazkira*, however, is the Persian literary culture of late 16th-century Central Asia. The *Tazkira* presents itself as a sequel to a similar work written in Bukhara almost forty years earlier, in 1566–1567 (974 h.), by Khwaja Bahā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Niṣārī Bukhārī (d. 1596–1597/1005 h.), titled *Muzakkir al-aḥbāb*.¹⁷

The story of the long-lived man as told by Muṭribī revolves around two axes: Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband and Timur. It is embedded into a larger sphere, a cultural space that is defined by Timur’s legacy. Before this backdrop, the story highlights the role of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband as patron saint of Bukhara and ties the Sufi master into the Timurid legacy. We meet the long-lived man at Bahā’ al-Dīn’s Shrine; he has travelled the world and witnessed historical turning points; but he always returns to Bahā’ al-Dīn’s Shrine near Bukhara.

The long-lived Kashmiri is a multiple outsider to 16th-century Bukhara: in space (he is Indian), and in time (he is a *mu‘ammar*, “blessed with long life”). This makes his testimony to, and recognition of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, of the shrine and his lineage and of his connection with Timur particularly powerful to the audience of Muṭribī.

Muṭribī introduces a second witness, this time a Bukharan scholar of excellent reputation in Shibanid Central Asia: His own teacher Bahā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Niṣārī, the author of *Muzakkir al-aḥbāb*. Niṣārī, who was Muṭribī’s mentor, figures prominently in Muṭribī’s story about the old Kashmiri. When the Kashmiri

15 Richard Foltz, *Conversations With Emperor Jahangir*. Introd. et trad. Richard C. Foltz (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1998); Richard Foltz, “Two Seventeenth-Century Central Asian Travellers to Mughal India”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3,6/3 (1996), 367–377; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Frank submissions: the Company and the Mughals between Sir Thomas Roe and Sir William Morris,” 79–, in *The Worlds of the East India Company*, eds. H.V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln, Nigel Rigby (Woodbridge 2002), 69–96; Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Muzaffar Alam, *Indo-Persian Travel in the Age of Discoveries, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

16 Maria Szuppe, “Circulation des lettres et cercles littéraires entre Asie central, Iran et Inde du Nord (xv^e–xviii^e siècle),” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 59 (2004/5), 997–1018; Robert D. McChesney, “Barrier of heterodoxy? Rethinking the Ties Between Iran and Central Asia in the 17th century,” in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 231–267.

17 Niṣārī, *Muzakkir-i aḥbāb*, 63–80.

tells Muṭribī his incredible age, the latter asks his mentor Niṣārī what he thinks about it. Niṣārī interrogates the old man and corroborates the validity of at least some of his claims. Niṣārī, being himself a descendant of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband on his mother's side, compares the details of the old man's story on the year of Bahā' al-Dīn's pilgrimage, on his succession, and on the changing shape of the shrine from the 14th to the 16th century, with his own family tradition. Niṣārī finds everything the old man says correct.

Muṭribī creates in the tale of the Kashmiri Methuselah a witness for his version of the sacred history of the (post-)Timurid realm. The figure of Niṣārī is crucial in this regard. As much as the Kashmiri is an outsider, Niṣārī is an insider. Niṣārī's knowledge of the history of Bahā' al-Dīn and his shrine was handed down over generations from his own ancestors. He seems to confirm the story of the old man. Actually, however, it is the story of the old man, as narrated by Muṭribī, that confirms Niṣārī's family history—and hence the Naqshbandī tradition in Bukhara as it had become established in the course of the 16th century.

Muṭribī narrates the story of the old Kashmiri and the family tradition of Niṣārī to identify the shrine of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband as the sacred centre of the post-Mongol sphere. The narrative construes a continuity of the shrine since Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband's death in 1389. The Kashmiri witnessed its changing shape every 100 years. It also construes (and perhaps legitimizes) a continuity of family succession at the shrine: The Kashmiri met Naqshband's heir at the shrine.

Muṭribī quotes Niṣārī calling himself a descendant of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband.¹⁸ In the biographical entry on Niṣārī,¹⁹ Muṭribī explains that on his mother's side, Niṣārī descended from Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband through six generations.²⁰ The unspecified genealogy ("six generations") stands in stark contrast with the detailed paternal genealogy, which through seven generations leads back to Zengī Āṭā'. Niṣārī himself, in his own anthology written over three decades earlier, gives only his paternal lineage in the long and detailed chapter on his family and ancestors with which he concludes his own anthology—there is no mentioning of a Naqshbandī descent. Did he not find the Naqshbandī lineage, or maternal descent, significant? This is unlikely: Niṣārī systematically emphasizes the importance of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband and his shrine throughout his book. He also makes a personal connection: He claims that

18 Muṭribī, *Tazkirat*, 406: "Compared to the other descendants (*awlād*) of Khwaja Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband I am more lowly (*muflistaram*), because I am a poet."

19 Muṭribī, *Tazkirat* 503–518.

20 Muṭribī, *Tazkirat* 504.

when his mother was pregnant with Niṣārī, she had a dream vision that her son would be named after Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband. When Niṣārī was born, Fazlallāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī—a scholar from Western Iran who lived in Bukhara—suggested the name Bahā' al-Dīn. At this point in the narrative one would expect Niṣārī to mention his descent from the Naqshband through his mother, if that was actually the case. Apparently, the dream vision of his mother in Niṣārī's narrative of his own birth developed into a non-specific maternal Naqshbandī lineage in Muṭribī's narrative of the encounter with the long-lived Kashmiri.

Fazlallāh Khunjī, the foreign scholar who gave Niṣārī the name Bahā' al-Dīn, is the same scholar whose commentary on the quatrains of 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī has been cited in the beginning of this paper. When Khunjī came to Bukhara in the early 16th century, the shrine of 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī still dominated the sacred landscape of Bukhara; Khunjī's own works bear witness to this.²¹ In the memoir of Niṣārī, written a half-century later in 974/1566, Khunjī has transformed into a witness for Bahā' al-Dīn's sacred presence. By the time Muṭribī completed his anthology another half-century later, Bahā' al-Dīn's shrine 12 km east of Bukhara had been fully established as the pole of the sacred landscape of Bukhara with central importance for the khanate. This transformation was closely connected with the Timurid nostalgia of exile Khurasanians at the Shibanid court in Bukhara. The long-lived Kashmiri's tale reflects the commemoration of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband as a "Timurid" sheikh in that milieu. In his *Muzakkir al-aḥbāb*, Niṣārī prepared the ground for Muṭribī's narrative, while still sticking largely "to the facts". He draws a differentiated picture of the various affiliations, associations and encounters between early Shibanid rulers and a variety of Sufis or saintly figures. On the other hand, he begins to privilege a connection of the Naqshbandiyya *silsila* with a line of rulers of Bukhara from Muḥammad Shībānī Khan to 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Ubayd Allāh Khan.²² Niṣārī centred this construction on Bukhara, but two generations later, Maḥmūd ibn Valī, the author of a universal chronicle begun in 1634 at Balkh for the future Tuḡay-Timurid khan Nazr Muḥammad, systematized and expanded this connection to the entire Timurid-Neo-Chinggisid sphere. Maḥ-

21 Besides his commentary on the *Vaṣīyatnāma* of Ghijduvānī, see also Khunjī's *Mihmān-nāma-yi Bukhārā*, written in 914–915/1509 in Bukhara and Herat, specifically the chapters on the royal camp at the shrines of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband and 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī. *Mihmān-nāma-yi Bukhārā* (*Mixmān-nāme-ii Buḥārā: Zapiski buxarskogo gostia*), ed. R.P. Dzhalilova (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), ff. 24^b–37^b. For a discussion of these chapters see Schwarz, *Unser Weg*, 154.

22 Schwarz, *Unser Weg*, 218.

mūd ibn Valī draws a straight, if fictitious line of succession from Timur to his own Chinggisid employer. He associates every ruler in this line with a sheikh in the standardized Naqshbandī *silsila*, beginning with Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband as Timur's sheikh.²³

One may be tempted to use the processes of narrative suppression and commemoration outlined above to construe a rather tidy narrative of entangled transformations of political power, Sufi lineages, sacred landscape and literary commemoration that converge in the 16th century into an ever closer association of Bukharan political ascendancy and the spiritual pre-eminence of the Naqshbandiyya. Yet—in lieu of a conclusion—a word of caution may be in order. Things were much less tidy. The privileging of “mainstream” literary sources such as Niṣārī, Muṭribī, Maḥmūd ibn Valī and related historiographical works obstruct the view of the multitude of processes of commemoration and reconfiguration that must have been going on in the interplay of oral and literary transmission and their translations into ritual and architectural sacred landscapes. Suffice it to point out that the rise of Bahā' al-Dīn's memory never entirely overshadowed Ghijduvānī. For example, Ghijduvānī was central to sheikh Aḥmad Kāsānī's attempt to revitalize the Khwajagan heritage in the Zerafshan valley in the 16th century through a re-enactment of Bahā' al-Dīn's legendary encounter with the early Khwajagan at their graves.²⁴ In another instance, Ghijduvānī makes a remarkable appearance in a story regarding the alleged tomb of Yūsuf Hamadānī in 16th-century Samarqand, without any reference to Bukhara. Apparently, we are dealing here with an oral tradition that seems to have been entirely detached from its still recognizable origins in early 16th-century Naqshbandī lore.²⁵

Yet while 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī remained an important figure locally and regionally, his double-edged sword had lost some of its sharpness by the end of the 16th century due to the ascent of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband to the central position in the sacred landscape of Bukhara and Transoxania. 300 years later a similar destiny seemed to be looming over Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband in Bukhara. His shrine had become so firmly associated with the old order that it became a target for modernizing reformers. In 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Fiṭrat's “Tales of an Indian Traveller to Bukhara,” published first in Istanbul in 1911 and soon

23 Florian Schwarz, “Ohne Scheich kein Reich: Scheibaniden und Naqshbandis in der Darstellung von Mahmud ibn Wali,” in *Annäherung an das Fremde: Akten des 26. Deutschen Orientalistentages* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 259–267.

24 Schwarz, *Unser Weg*, 210.

25 Schwarz, *Unser Weg*, 223–226.

translated into Russian and printed in Samarqand, the Bukharan modernist author describes the oppressive rule of the emir through the eyes of an educated Indian visitor.²⁶ During a visit to the shrine of Bahā' al-Dīn, the visitor is shocked by the scenes of poor, ignorant village people who have come to seek relief from the hardships of their miserable lives, induced by greedy shrine servants to perform outrageous acts of idolatry under the guise of the veneration for Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband. Once again it is a fictional Indian who is the crown witness. It seems as if the long-lived Kashmiri had returned to the shrine in an early 20th-century guise as Fiṭrat's Indian traveller, this time not to confirm, but to disrupt the old order.

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26 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Fiṭrat, *Bayānāt-i sayyāh-i hindī*, Istanbul n.d. [1330/1912–1913]; "Bayonoti sayyohi hindi," *Sadoi sharq* 6 (1988), 12–57.

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PART 2

Epic Heroes and Literary Legacies



Turk amongst Tajiks

The Turkic Shāhnāma Translation Located in Tajikistan and Manuscript Production during the Abu'l-Khayrid Annexation of Khurasan (1588–1598)

Jaimee Comstock-Skipp

The *Shāhnāma*, or Book of Kings, chronicles the pre-Islamic history of Iran and Turan with the Oxus River as the dividing line. Broadly speaking, the *Shāhnāma* records historical tensions between Persian and Turkic groups, and in it these two sides are at odds with each other despite having common origins. A lengthy literary version of the *Shāhnāma* is attributed to the poet Firdawsī in the eleventh century, although its tales come from oral traditions that predate him. Firdawsī just happened to put the stories into Persian verse, and thus a legacy of illuminated manuscripts was generated in the Iranian heartland, with the highest number of productions being created during the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736). Less examined are the translations of Firdawsī's text into Turki and copies produced outside the borders of Iran, namely sixteenth-century versions of the Ottomans made in Istanbul and likely Baghdad, and those of the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks in Bukhara, Samarqand, and centres in Khurasan. Some of these manuscripts evidence heretofore unsubstantiated Uzbek—Ottoman exchanges in arts of the book and in politics. This paper examines these very relations in one such *Shāhnāma* held by the Centre of Written Heritage at the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan (CWH ms. 1032).¹ In comparing its text and illustrations to other manuscripts, the study posits the object transited from the Sublime Porte in Istanbul to Khurasan.

The few scholars who have catalogued or cursorily analysed what I am referring to as the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* have classified it as written in a Qipchaq branch of Turkic languages, and attributed its few unfinished paintings to Khurasan in the 1570s.² This article amends both this characterisation of the text

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- 1 Catalogue entry 831 in Abdulgani Mirzoev and Aleksandr Boldyrev, *Katalog Vostochnykh Rukopisei Akademii Nauk Tadzhikskoi SSR III* (Dushanbe, Academy of Sciences, 1960), 52–53.
 - 2 M.Kh. Abuseitova and L.N. Dodkhudoeva, *History of Kazakhstan in Eastern miniatures* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2010), 130, 206; Larisa Dodkhudoeva, *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia and India: XVI–XIX Centuries* (Dushanbe: Collection of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2000), 79–80.

and also the decade of its added illustrations. As a manuscript of mixed pedigree, the components of its production span centres administered by Ottomans and Abu'l-Khayrids. I propose that its Turkic verse could have been copied in circa 1540 through 1560 in Istanbul, and its visual elements were begun—but never finished—sometime during the mid-1580s through the 1590s in the environs of Herat.

With text and imagery at the interface of eastern and western Turco-Persianate zones, the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* is not easily assigned a provenance. I will first compare it to other Turkic *Shāhnāma* versions produced in the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), then connect the manuscript to other written and oral Turkic translations of Firdawsī's work that were initiated during the first few decades of the Abu'l-Khayrid dynasty (1500–1598). The discussion continues with an overview of the workshops in Khurasan in which staff, intended buyers, and manuscript productions crossed dynastic lines. The study references contemporary arts of the book produced in Khurasan with related visual programmes as the Tajikistan manuscript so as to better understand the object's assemblage and possible site of pictorial inclusions. It closes with a detailed page-by-page analysis of the illuminations and illustrations in the Tajikistan manuscript, and connects these to works presumed to be their contemporaries. This study adds to existing research on manuscript production in the second half of sixteenth-century Khurasan when it was impacted by the territorial skirmishes of the Safavids and Abu'l-Khayrids. It brings to light the contributions of artists and scribes immigrating to Khurasan from Bukhara after the longest-ruling Abu'l-Khayrid leader 'Abdullāh bin Iskandar Khan (r. 1557–1598) lost interest in manuscripts and his patronage ended. The Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* truly encapsulates the mobility of the era in miniature.

1 Turkic Translations of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* in the Ottoman Empire

In the sixteenth century, language was not a clear marker of group affiliation and identity since the heads of Ottoman, Safavid, and Abu'l-Khayrid powers would have been comfortably bilingual in Persian and Turkic varieties. However, linguistic shifts took place in the final quarter of the century, marked by a new rigidity in the Ottoman and Safavid spheres to favour Ottoman Turkish and Persian respectively.³ Ottoman interest in Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*, both

3 Under the command of Murad III (r. 1574–1595), the 'ulamā' forbade teaching Persian in

Persian and Turkic versions, exceeded the Safavids' involvement in terms of timespan due to their comparative dynastic longevity. Lâle Uluç has examined the role that the *Shāhnāma* played in Ottoman society and asserts that Persian-language copies produced in Istanbul were very rare, or even nonexistent.⁴ Persian versions produced in the broader Empire are held to be truncated copies lacking the historical section to Firdawsī's text, and have been attributed to late sixteenth-century Baghdad when it was under Ottoman rule.⁵ In contrast, various Turkic translations were copied and illustrated within the royal *nakkaşhane* (workshop) for courtiers of the Sublime Porte.

The earliest Turkic translation of Firdawsī's work was in prose by an anonymous writer commissioned by Sultan Murad II (r. 1421–1444, 1446–1451) who was based in the Ottoman capital Edirne at this time.⁶ Firdawsī's epic spawned two later renditions translated into Turkic verse, both exclusively recopied in the Ottoman domain in the sixteenth century. The first had originally been commissioned by the Mamluk sultan Qanṣūh al-Ghūrī (r. 1501–1516) who selected the poet Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan (Şerif) Âmidî (d. 1514) to compose it. The second Turkic verse translation composed by Madhî (fl. late 16th c.–early 17th c.) had shorter-lived appeal.⁷ Şerif Âmidî's edition ultimately dominated Turkic

madrasas, and the Ottoman *nakkaşhane* produced more works in Turki. Rachel Milstein, et al., *Stories of the Prophets: Illustrated Manuscripts of Qisas al-Anbiya'* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 101.

- 4 Lâle Uluç's publications examine this absence of Persian-language *Shāhnāma* copies, among them "A Persian Epic, Perhaps for the Ottoman Sultan," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 29 (1994): 66; idem, "The *Shahnama* in the Lands of Rum," in *Shahnama Studies II* eds. Charles Melville and Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 159–180. Some *Shāhnāma* fragments appear to be from Istanbul circa 1530–1550 and have passages in Persian (LACMA nos. M.73.5.428–430, M.73.5.586).
- 5 Karin Rührdanz earlier suggested Istanbul as the production site of these truncated copies in "About a Group of Truncated *Shahnamas*: A Case Study in the Commercial Production of Illustrated Manuscripts in the Second Part of the Sixteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 118–134. The dissociation of these truncated *Shāhnāma* copies from Istanbul productions and their attribution to Baghdad has since been accepted, if not fully proven.
- 6 Prose *Shāhnāma* versions (uncertain if they are of the same text) include: TSMK H.1116; TSMK H.1518; TSMK B.284; NYPL Binney 17; IUL T.6131–33.
- 7 Consult Tülün Değirmenci, "A Storyteller's *Shahnama*: Meddâh Medhî and His Şehnâme-i Türkî," in *Shahnama Studies III: The Reception of the Shahnama*, eds. Gabrielle van den Berg and Charles Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 199–215; idem, "Legitimising' a Young Sultan: Illustrated Copies of Medhî's 'Shāhnāma-ı Türkî' in European Collections," in *Thirteenth International Congress of Turkish Art*, eds. Géza Fehér and Ibolya Gerelyes (Budapest: Hungarian National Museum, 2009), 157–172.

Shāhnāma productions and was popular in Ottoman circles; the text to the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* is his translation.⁸

Şerif Âmidî originally worked on his translation between 1501–1511 and presented his two-volume manuscript to the court in Cairo shortly after its completion.⁹ Within Mamluk territories at this time, elites had Persian and Arabic works of poetry translated into Turki.¹⁰ The original composition of Âmidî's work which states the circumstances of its translation, production, and patronage in its colophon, is held in the Topkapı collection (TSMK H.1519).¹¹ It was carried off by the Ottoman victor Selim I (r. 1512–1520) after he defeated the Mamluks and captured Cairo in 1517. Later Ottoman scribes and artists employed this very manuscript as a prototype, copying its vowelled text and the iconography and compositions of its illustrations in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

In order to identify the Turkic text of the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*, I compared a sample passage from within it relaying Faraydūn's distribution of his empire to his sons with other known versions of Âmidî's *Shāhnāma* that are of Mamluk and Ottoman manufacture. These are held in the British Library (BL mss. Or. 1126, Or. 7204) and Topkapı (TSMK mss. H.1519, H.1520, H.1522). I found the text samples all to be verbatim and written out in similar *naskh* calligraphy. Only BL ms. Or. 7204 and the Tajikistan copy, both first volumes of the text, are unvowelled and slightly less refined than the other specimens. The Tajikistan manuscript is ruled in four columns with thirty-one lines per folio and rubricated in Persian-language section headings, and its opening pages have notations in rhymed Turki, Arabic, and Persian written in different hands. It closes with the accession of Luhrāsp which marks a common division of Firdawsī's

8 Known copies of Âmidî's translation, first and/or second volumes, are: BL Or. 1126; BL Or. 7204; HDA 580; HDA 422; HDA 40; CWH 1032; NYPL Spencer Turk. Ms. 1; RIOS B.3690; RIOS E.8; sK Damat Ibrahim Pasha 983; TSMK H.1519; TSMK H.1520; TSMK H.1522.

9 Biographical information on Şerif Âmidî in Barbara Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1977), 249–260; idem, "Şerif, Sultan Ğavri and the 'Persians,'" in *Essays on Turkish Literature and History* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 47–59.

10 Ira M. Lapidus, "Mamluk Patronage and the Arts in Egypt: Concluding Remarks," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 176.

11 For a transcription of the complete text consult Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, *Turecka wersja Šāh-nāme z Egiptu Mameluckiego: la version en turc du Šāh-nāme de l'Égypte Mamelouk* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965). For details on the illustrations to H.1519 consult Serpil Bağcı, "From Translated Word to Translated Image: The illustrated Şehnâme-i Türki copies." *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 162–176; Nurhan Atasoy, "Un manuscript Mamluk illustré du Şahnâme," *Revue des études islamiques* (1969): 151–158, pls. 1–xvi; Esin Atlı, "Mamluk Painting in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 159–171.

Shāhnāma into two parts. Lacking both a detailed colophon and finished illustrative programme, the full provenance of the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* is doomed to ambiguity but through a close examination of its text and imagery I can reconstruct how it might have come into being. Since all other copies of Âmidî's work are attributed to late-Mamluk and Ottoman workshops, it is probable the Tajikistan copy was transcribed in Istanbul if not another Ottoman centre. According to Serpil Bağcı, "A group of Ottoman illustrated manuscripts of Şerif's *Şehnâme-i Türki* was probably produced all at once," implying the texts to various manuscripts were written out at some point in the 1520s through 1540s with illustrations added alongside or in subsequent decades.¹² Âmidî's text appears to have been recopied only in Istanbul, which makes me believe the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* is one of these versions.

Although not impossible, it is not likely that this Turkic translation of Firdawsî's text would have been copied under the Abu'l-Khayrids, since all other poetic and prose works made during the century in which they held power over Transoxiana are written out in *nasta'liq*. What is more, although the Abu'l-Khayrid court in Samarqand between 1514–1530 was a site of Turkic literary translation, Persian-language works of literature dominated manuscript production across the century.¹³ As for the Safavids, *Shāhnāma* copies produced within Iran were always in Persian. The Abu'l-Khayrids in Transoxiana and their rivals the Yadigarids based in Khiva appreciated both Turkic and Persian literary works, but manuscript production in Khwarazm, and the local market there for books, was limited.¹⁴ For reasons and by means we do not—and may never—know, the codex left Anatolia to reach Khurasan where illustrations were added, then it continued transiting to present-day Tajikistan. Migrating from west to east, the object would have been well received in Transoxiana. Other problematic manuscripts with questionable provenances currently housed in archives today located in neighbouring Uzbekistan are thought to have been produced in the region, and there they remained. Although one cannot securely attribute an object's origins based on its present-day location, in referencing another manuscript Lisa Golombek has remarked that its ongoing and current presence in Central Asia is "a good indication that

12 Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image," 166.

13 Devin Deweese, "Chaghatay literature in the early sixteenth century: notes on Turkic translations from the Uzbek courts of Mawarannahr," in *Turkish Language, Literature, and History: Travelers' tales, sultans, and scholars since the eighth century*, eds. Bill Hickman and Gary Leiser (London: Routledge, 2017), 99–117.

14 M. Annanepesov, "The Khanate of Khiva," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Vol. 5: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, eds. Chahryar Adle & Irfan Habib (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999–2008), 67.

it was illustrated in the eastern Islamic world.”¹⁵ If we acknowledge the force of this observation, then the Tajikistan manuscript did not venture far to end up in Dushanbe where it continues to sit on a shelf.

2 Turkic Translations of Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāma* in the Abu’l-Khayrid Realm

Turkic *Shāhnāma* translations undertaken in the early Abu’l-Khayrid appanages (governing centres) prove the *Shāhnāma* had appeal in the Abu’l-Khayrid realm. At the same time that Âmidî was translating his version in Cairo in the early years of the sixteenth century, the first ruling head of the Abu’l-Khayrids—Shībānī Khan—was asking his court poets to translate the *Shāhnāma* into Turki. He could not have heard or read any parts of Âmidî’s version while he was alive, for following his death at the hands of Shah Ismā’īl his severed and stuffed head may have been personally delivered by a Safavid emissary to the very court of Sultan Qanṣūh al-Ghūrī in June 1511, just three months after Âmidî’s manuscript was presented to this same ruler in Cairo.¹⁶ Shībānī’s translation project could have been completed after his death in 1510, to be read aloud at the Tashkent court of his uncle Suyunch Khwaja Khan (d. 1525).¹⁷ Suyunch’s successor—and Shībānī’s first cousin—the more renowned Kildi Muḥammad Sultan (r. 1525–1532) had interests in Turkic translations of classic Persian works, which included Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāma*.¹⁸ We do not know if this task was fully completed beyond a few lines which incidentally, when read aloud, were “indescribably awful” to the Persian chronicler Vāṣifī who was in attendance.¹⁹

15 Lisa Golombek, “Early Illustrated Manuscripts of Kashifi’s *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī*,” *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 4 (December 2003): 631.

16 TSMK H.1519 is dated March 2, 1511 (2 Dhu al-Hijja 916). Ibn Iyas reports the head “of a person of the Tartar kings” arrived at the court of Sultan Qanṣūh al-Ghūrī “in a nice box” in June 1511. This gift exchange is analysed by Hassanein Rabie, “Political Relations between the Safavids of Persia and the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 15 (1978): 75–81. A forthcoming article by the present author will also take on this topic.

17 Maria Subtelny reports on Suyunch Khwāja’s receptivity to Turkic translations of Persian literature in “Art and Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia,” *Central Asia Journal* 27, nos. 1–2 (1983): 145.

18 Information in DeWeese, “Chaghatay literature in the early sixteenth century.”

19 Subtelny, “Art and Politics in Early 16th century Central Asia,” 145. Fuad Köprülü questions the existence of this Turkic translation in the Abu’l-Khayrid court in “Çağatay edebiyati,” *İslâm ansiklopedisi* 3, part 24 (Istanbul, 1945), 309. A forthcoming article by the present author will also take on this topic.

It is my argument that the Tajikistan manuscript, which is the only extant copy of Âmidî's version in Transoxiana so far discovered, was written out in the Ottoman realm with no intended recipient, and was later transported eastwards. Based on comparisons to similar features and forms in other manuscripts, it appears that sometime after its import a visual programme with illumination was started in Khurasan while the region was under Abu'l-Khayrid control between 1588–1598. The imagery was made in the context of military successes, territorial expansion, urban planning, and centralised administration in the Abu'l-Khayrid realm.

3 Khurasan between 1560–1600

Khurasan has long been renowned as a locale of artistic production, and despite protracted conflicts between Safavids and Abu'l-Khayrids to control the region across the sixteenth century, cultural and economic production continued. During the decade when it came under Abu'l-Khayrid control and was politically and artistically isolated from the Safavid capital Qazvin, it maintained a level of autonomy. The manuscripts produced there were technically better than contemporary specimens from Transoxiana. As Karin Rührdanz states, "Khorasan had always been synonymous with superior artistry, and if [its] painters did not come to Bukhara, the Bukharans had to go to the painters."²⁰

Prior to their takeover of Khurasan in the last decade of the 1500s, the Abu'l-Khayrids seized Herat for nine months in 1574 which caused chaos in the Safavid zone.²¹ Iran further suffered after the death of ʿTaḥmāsp in 1576 which resulted in a power struggle. This allowed the Abu'l-Khayrids to attack eastern Iran again in 1578, but they were repulsed by the governor of Mashhad. The Ottomans were quick to take advantage of general Safavid disarray and engaged Iran in battle between 1578 through 1590, enabling the powerful Abu'l-Khayrid ruler 'Abd Allāh Khan and his generals to wage an all-out war to capture Khurasan in 1587 that resulted in a great victory for the Abu'l-Khayrids. Herat fell in April 1588, Mashhad followed in November 1589, then Nishapur, Sabzivar, and Isfarain succumbed in quick succession and were held for the next decade.²²

20 Karin Rührdanz, "The Arts of The Book in Central Asia," in *Uzbekistan Heirs to the Silk Road*, eds. J. Kalter and M. Pavilio (London & New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 108.

21 Audrey Burton, "The Fall of Herat to the Uzbegs in 1588," *Iran* 26 (1988): 119–123.

22 These military campaigns are discussed in R.D. McChesney's publications: "The Conquest of Herat 1587–1588: Sources for the Study of Safavid/qizilbāsh—Shībānid/Uzbek Rela-

3.1 *Incoming Artistic Talent from Safavid Qazvin*

These political upheavals in Khurasan might explain how stoic—but still in need of work—artists and scribes from different backgrounds came together in the region to produce manuscripts to sell elsewhere. In Iran, artistic migration had begun earlier and in earnest with Shah Ṭahmāsp disbanding his courtly workshop and signing his Edict of Sincere Repentance in 1556.²³ These artisans in Qazvin sought opportunities elsewhere, some journeying to Khurasan and onwards to India. Artists and calligraphers relocating to these other sites assisted in producing affordable commercial copies and could also cater to royal patronage. Some of those in Khurasan worked in Ibrāhīm Mīrzā's (d. 1577) Mashhad-based workshop which produced fine manuscripts in the 1550s and 1560s.²⁴

3.2 *Incoming Talent from Abu'l-Khayrid Bukhara*

While these Safavid artists ventured east, artisans formerly working for the Abu'l-Khayrids in the 1550s and 1560s also migrated south and west to convene in India and Khurasan as a result of the decline of manuscript arts in Transoxiana. More a man of brick than of books, by the 1570s 'Abd Allāh Khan had a heightened interest in consolidating the state and erecting architecture at the (literal) expense of book production.²⁵ He gave away copies of his own com-

tions," in *Etudes Safavides* 39, ed. Jean Calmard (Paris and Tehran: Bibliothèque Iranienne, 1993), 69–107; "Islamic culture and the Chinggisid restoration: Central Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam. Vol. 3: The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 296–297. For an overview of events taking place in the final decade of Abu'l-Khayrid rule in Khurasan, read Barbara Schmitz, "Miniature Painting in Harat, 1570–1640" (PhD diss., New York University, 1981), 13–19.

23 A first repentance was decreed earlier in the 1530s. For the more-known edict of 1556, read Marianna Shreve Simpson and Massumeh Farhad, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's "Haft Awrang": A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 335. Painting in Qazvin halted with Khudabanda's accession in 1578, and its artists and scribes dispersed to Khurasan, Astarabad, Gilan, Herat. Information in Anthony Welch, *Artists for the Shah: Late Sixteenth Century Painting at the Imperial Court of Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), 14.

24 Consult Simpson and Farhad, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*.

25 For 'Abdullāh's building patronage see Mustafa Tupev, "All the King's Men: Architectural Patronage in Bukharan Madrasa Buildings from the 1560s," in *Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie* 5, ed. M. Ritter, et al. (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2015), 28–56; R.D. McChesney, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Public Architecture of Bukhara in the 1560's and 1570's," *Islamic Art* 11 (1987): 217–242; Yuri Bregel, "Abdallah Khan b. Eskandar," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abdallah-khan-b-eskandar-saybanid-ruler-of-transoxania-d-1598>.

missioned manuscripts that had been produced earlier, and also those of his predecessors that had come into his possession, to the heads of other dynasties. Faced with few commissions by religious and military elites in Bukhara, Abu'l-Khayrid artisans saw more opportunities in Khurasan. After the Uzbeks secured control of Herat and most of the region between 1586–1598, illustrated books made there were exported back into Bukhara as a means to fulfill the limited market. Others were dispatched to India, where some manuscripts were reassembled and assimilated into local productions to sell.

3.3 *Convergence in Khurasan*

B.W. Robinson first identified the Khurasan style of manuscript illustration practised between 1561–1606 which he described in collection catalogues and articles from 1958 through late in his career.²⁶ Barbara Schmitz further refined Robinson's analysis on the region's manuscript productions in her dissertation from 1981 and in subsequent publications.²⁷ She found evidence that it was a commercial industry radiating around Herat employing local scribes and other copyists from Mashhad and smaller towns in Sabzivar, Malan, Tun, Bakharz, and Raza.²⁸

26 Consult B.W. Robinson's many works on the subject: "Muhammadi and the Khurasan Style," *Iran* 30 (1992): 17–30; "Provincial Style" section in *Persian Miniature Painting from Collections in the British Isles* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1967); "The Khurasan Style" in *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1980); the Khurasan listing under the "Safavid Period" division in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 151–152. Rührdanz attributes the start of the Khurasan school to a copy of Astarabadi's *Athar al-muzaffar* dated 1568 (TSMK H.1233) in "The illustrated manuscripts of Athar al-Muzaffar: a history of the Prophet," in *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars: Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 206.

27 Barbara Schmitz, "The Beginning of the Khurasani School of Painting at Herat," *Artibus Asiae* 67, no. 1 (2007): 75–93. Workshop practices in Bakharz and Sabzivar have been examined by Yves Porter, "Remarques sur la peinture à Boukhara au xvie siècle," *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* [online] 5/6 (1998).

28 Tun is the historic name of the modern city Taban in southern Khurasan. Bakharz is the present-day city of Taibad between Mashhad and Herat. Robert Skelton provides a case study of a manuscript associated with that site: "An Illustrated manuscript from Bakharz," in *The Memorial Volume of the 6th International Congress of Iranian Art & Archaeology 11–18 April 1968* (Teheran: Ministry of Culture and Arts, 1972), 198–204. Norah Titley explains the continuation of the Qazvin style in Khurasan, and that Bakharz "provided patrons in the 1560s and '70s while Herat itself became yet again a noted centre at the end of the 16th century," and also quotes the Safavid chronicler Qāzī Aḥmad's scorn of Khurasan scribes, in *Persian Miniature Painting and its Influence on the Arts of Turkey and India* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 109–110. Marianna Shreve Simpson has investigated Raza and

Robinson credits the artist Muḥammadī (fl. 1527–1584) with developing and training other painters in the Khurasan style of painting in Herat between about 1565 and 1590.²⁹ From its inception, the style featured elements associated with Qazvin and Mashhad as a result of the disbanding of the Safavid courtly workshops. Talent that had been situated in the former site dispersed to the latter. Robinson characterises Muḥammadī’s style and the Khurasan school of painting as “smooth, competent, and uncomplicated ... [in which] background details of vegetation and architecture are as simple as possible, and the colour-scheme is often dominated by pale blue, mauve, or light olive green, which are the favourite colours for the ground.”³⁰ Schmitz describes the Khurasan style’s usage of a “spare technique” coalescing around 1570 with large-scale figures and elaborate details of dress. Women are infrequent in the illustrations, and typical painted subjects are battle scenes and male assemblies.³¹ This is observable in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*.

Schmitz classifies two major styles, delineated as Herat and Mashhad strains, present in Khurasan on the cusp of the Uzbek invasion in 1586. The first is “based on the traditional development of painting in Herat [which was] almost surely practiced only in this city by the 1580’s.”³² She typifies the second elusive “Late Mashhad Style” as resembling manuscripts illustrated between 1556–1565 when artists congregated in Mashhad under the patronage of the aforementioned Safavid governor Ibrāhīm Mirzā.³³ After the death of their Safavid patron in 1577, artists—including Muḥammadī—continued working in Khurasan even as the administration changed from Safavid to Abu’l-Khayrid control.

3.4 *Shāhnāma Production in Khurasan*

While collating manuscripts completed in Khurasan between 1560–1600, Robinson noted the preponderance of Jāmī titles and surprisingly few Firdawsī

found “Razeh,” a village in the *dihistān* of Tabas in the *bakhsh* of Dar Miyan, a *shahristān* of Birjand. Earlier scholarship read the locale as “Zarrah,” but there were no variations on “Zari” in the atlases, maps, or gazetteers she consulted. “Codicology in the Service of Chronology: The Case of Some Safavid Manuscripts,” in *Les Manuscrits Du Moyen-Orient: Essais De Codicologie Et De Paleographie*, ed. François Déroche (Istanbul: Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes d’Istanbul et Bibliothèque Nationale, 1989), 135, fn. 10.

29 B.W. Robinson, “An Amir Khusraw Khamasa of 1581,” *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 35 (1997): 40.

30 B.W. Robinson, “Persian Painting,” *Persia: History and Heritage*, ed. John Boyle (London: 1978), 84.

31 Schmitz, “Miniature Painting in Harat,” 113–114.

32 *Ibid.*, 125.

33 *Ibid.*, 124–126.

or Nizāmī texts. He surmised that works by these last two authors would have been “too purely Persian [sic-Iranian?] in their subject matter and appeal” since the manuscripts’ intended destinations were in India and Transoxiana.³⁴ Among all the Persian-language poetic texts illustrated in Khurasan during the late sixteenth century there exists but one completed Firdawsīan *Shāhnāma* in the Chester Beatty Library attributed to Muḥammadi circa 1575–1580 (fig. 3.1). Robinson attributes another dispersed folio in the John Rylands Library illustrating Gushtāsp slaying a rhinoceros to Khurasan in the 1570s (JRL Indian Drawings 18, f. 32^a).³⁵ This could indicate an additional *Shāhnāma* version was produced but it has not fully survived.

Francis Richard has suggested a Khurasan provenance to another complete Firdawsīan *Shāhnāma* (BNF Supp. Pers. 1122), but the manuscript requires further investigation.³⁶ A *Shāhnāma* in fine condition formerly in the Kraus collection was auctioned at Sotheby’s and has a colophon dated 1572, and the lot description states the eclectic illustrations come from the traditions of Khurasan, Qazvin, Isfahan, and Bukhara.³⁷ Schmitz mentions other copies made during the Abu’l-Khayrid occupation of Herat, such as one belonging to Shah Beg b. Mīrzā Ataliq (a patron so far unidentified) that was illustrated in Khurasan at the end of the sixteenth century.³⁸ Ataliq’s *Shāhnāma* contains illustrations that parallel those in another auctioned Firdawsīan *Shāhnāma* that has since been dispersed. This latter specimen was written out in 1580 by Quṭb al-Dīn b. Ḥasan al-Tūnī whose *nisba* (adjectival suffix) bolsters a Khurasan origin for the manuscript.³⁹ Its visual elements associated with Mashhad, Herat, and Qazvin further support this attribution. Taken together, these book arts

34 Robinson, “Muhammadi and the Khurasan Style,” 27.

35 Entry no. 804 in Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library*, 274, pl. XIII. The folio is stylistically similar to the *Athar al-muzaffar* (TSMK H.1233) that Rührdanz attributes to the start of the Khurasan School.

36 Francis Richard, “Un manuscrit malaisé à dater et à localiser, Supplément persan 1122 de la Bibliothèque nationale,” *Études orientales* 11–12 (1991): 90–103.

37 Sotheby’s, 28 April 2004, lot 25 <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2004/arts-of-the-islamic-world-104220/lot.25.html>

38 The manuscript sold at Christie’s, 16 October 2001, lot 76 https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-3052252?ldp_breadcrumb=back&intObjectID=3052252&from=salessummary&lid=1. Schmitz attributes it to Herat circa 1590 on the basis of the rendered turbans (“Miniature Painting in Harat,” 131–132). Karin Rührdanz places its manufacture closer to 1600 in “The Samarqand Shahnamas in the Context of Dynastic Change,” in *Shahnama Studies II*, eds. Charles Melville and Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 227.

39 Loose folios sold at Christie’s, 28 October 2020, lots 30 and 31 https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-6282103?ldp_breadcrumb=back&intObjectID=6282103&from=salessummary&lid=1. Provenance information is in Schmitz, “Miniature Painting in Harat,” 123.

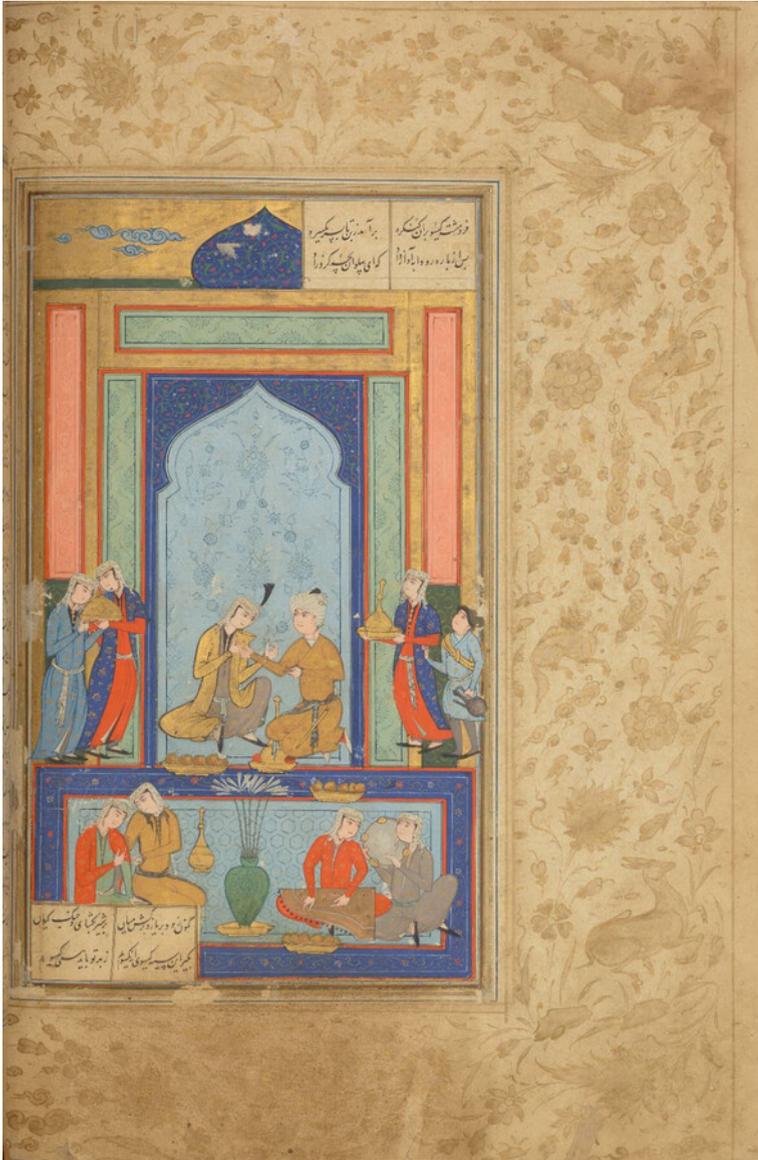


FIGURE 3.1 Rūdaba and Zāl seated in a pavilion. Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, undated CBL MS. PERS. 295, F. 76^v. IMAGE CREDIT: CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY, DUBLIN. CC BY-NC 4.0

made in the final three decades of the century suggest that Persian-language *Shāhnāma* productions in Khurasan were greater than what Robinson calculated.

Several differences distinguish these enumerated Persian-language *Shāhnāma* materials fully produced in Khurasan from our Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*. Most obvious is the language, as our case study is a Turkic translation of Şerif Âmidî's. The text-image relationship is also unique in the Tajikistan manuscript through the presence of smaller boxes intended for illustrations that are enveloped by text. In contrast, manuscripts completely designed in Khurasan often feature full-page illustrations segmenting the narrative. These inset depictions in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* support the claim that the manuscript was written and arranged outside of Khurasan. Despite its unfinished state with sketched red outlines, the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* has figural and compositional comparisons to illustrations in other manuscripts from Khurasan on the cusp of Abu'l-Khayrid conquest that inform my analysis.

3.5 *Abu'l-Khayrid Patronage in Khurasan*

With the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Khurasan in 1588 by 'Abd Allāh and his generals, many of the artisans there chose to remain and serve the new Abu'l-Khayrid governors who now oversaw the larger cities. The political situation was also favourable for Bukhara-trained artisans to join the local workshops in and around Herat to illustrate manuscripts destined for the Indian market and specifically, later in the decade, the new Uzbek overlords. The most powerful and respected Abu'l-Khayrid representative after 'Abd Allāh Khan was Qul Bābā Kūkal-tāsh, the leading administrator of 'Abd Allāh's regime and his right-hand man.⁴⁰ McChesney affirms that "Qul Baba [like his father] was a man who loved literature and compiled a large library which he donated to his madrasa in Bukhara [erected in 1568]."⁴¹ Although he is known to have endowed 650 books to his eponymous madrasa on the north side of Lab-i Hawz, these may have only been written works since Schmitz states Qul Baba may not have patronised illustrated subject matter at all.⁴² It is however unlikely that all

40 Biography in McChesney, "Ch. 10: Historiography in Central Asia since the 16th Century," in *A History of Persian Literature (Book 10): Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville (London: Tauris, 2012), 521; idem, "The Conquest of Herat," 85.

41 McChesney, "Islamic culture and the Chinggisid restoration," 255.

42 This numeric figure is quoted in Stacy Liechti, "Books, Book Endowments, and Communities of Knowledge in the Bukharan Khanate" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008), 44. Schmitz's claim about Qul Baba's lack of patronage is in "Miniature Painting in Harat," 20–21.

these materials would have been unillustrated, and Abolala Soudavar claims a copy of the *Gulistān* of Sa'dī in the Bruschetti collection from circa 1590 is of his commission.⁴³ One of its illustrations depicts a colourful gathering with figures seated on a light blue ground that is composed of hexagonal forms radiating from six-pointed stars. A circular fountain with swimming birds is on the lower left. Attendants bring platters and offer a napkin, and an individual in green offers a wine cup.

Other illustrations from different manuscripts have similar layouts and compositions as the folio from the Bruschetti *Gulistān*, and reflect the quality of book arts in Herat during the period of Qul Baba's governance. A *Dīvān* of Hāfiz (TSMK H.986) copied between 1581–1586 for the Safavid governor of Tun was produced right before the Abu'l-Khayrid siege. One of its folios depicts a musical gathering of dervishes on a geometrically-patterned ground with rows of quatrefoil tiling.⁴⁴ A loose folio that visually comports to the two mentioned so far is from a *Haft awrang* of Jāmī in the LACMA collection (fig. 3.2). It renders a slim-waisted king seated on a hexagonal throne in a garden pavilion conversing with courtiers. The lowest part of the LACMA scene renders a *chāvush* (footman) in an orange tunic leading a white horse offered a red flower by a figure in a slouched hat with a feather.⁴⁵ The folio is undated but the museum's mistaken attribution of "Qazvin–1560" belies Khurasan's indebtedness to incoming talent from the Safavid capital later in the century, and might be given a better provenance as Herat, 1580–1600.

Named Abu'l-Khayrid generals commissioned illustrated manuscripts elsewhere in Khurasan while Qul Bābā governed Herat between 1588–1598. A *Masnāvī* of Rūmī dated 1594–1597 was prepared for 'Abd Allāh Khan's son 'Abd

43 Abolala Soudavar, "The Age of Muhammadi," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 67; idem, *Reassessing Early Safavid Art and History: Thirty-Five Years after Dickson & Welch 1981* (Houston: Abolala Soudavar, 2016), 77. Soudavar titles the illustration "Qul Baba sending a gift to 'Abd al-Mu'min" and confidently attributes it to Muhammadi during the Uzbek occupation of Herat in the late sixteenth century. Schmitz is less presumptuous and titles the work: "Feasting and Divertisements [sic]" and dates it circa 1590 ("Miniature Painting in Harat," pl. 285, LVIII).

44 Reproduced in Soudavar, "The Age of Muhammadi," fig. 18; and idem, *Reassessing Early Safavid Art and History*, 77.

45 "Chavush" examples are mentioned in Robinson, "An Amir Khusraw Khamisa of 1581," 38, 39. Another term is *shatir*, whose role and attire have been discussed by Zukhra Ibragimova Rakhimova, *K istorii kostūma narodov Uzbekistana: kostūm Bukhary i Samarkanda XVI–XVII vekov; po dannym srednevekovoi miniatūrnai zhihopisi* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo zhurnala "San'at", 2005), 37. The figure is called *peyk* in Ottoman sources and is described by Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, "The Depiction of Ceremonies in Ottoman Miniatures: Historical Record of a Matter of Protocol?" *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 262.



FIGURE 3.2 Loose folio. Jāmī, *Haft awrang*, undated

LACMA NO. M.73.5.577. IMAGE CREDIT: MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/ LACMA

al-Mu'min in Balkh.⁴⁶ 'Abd Allāh's nephew Dīn Muḥammad Sultan (d. 1598), who was awarded governorship of Khargird and Bakharz for his participation in the conquest of Herat, patronised a Jāmī *Haft awrang* copy with three illustrated colophons dated between 1592–1593.⁴⁷ No patron is mentioned in a *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiẓ manuscript copied in 1593 by the same Quṭb al-Dīn b. Ḥasan al-Tūnī scribe as Ataliq's *Shāhnāma* above, but it could have been made for an Abu'l-Khayrid elite in Khurasan (fig. 3.3). The parallels in this 1593 *Dīvān* to the loose LACMA illustration can further secure the latter's date of creation.

4 Illustrative Programme to the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*

The Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* includes figures and compositions that comport with these mentioned materials that originate predominantly in Herat between 1580 through 1600. The manuscript also contains elements from courtly Ottoman book arts and those from the Abu'l-Khayrid appanages produced earlier. In lieu of harder evidence I rely on my eyes, and illustrated comparanda cause me to believe artists with different backgrounds converged in Khurasan and there contributed their skills. The stylistic uniformity of the Tajikistan manuscript's outlined figures makes it likely that designs and patterns from far-flung workshops were also brought to Khurasan for a single artist there to consult.

Farhad Mehran's analysis of break-lines (the verses closest to the image that dictate the scene to depict) in *Shāhnāma* illustrations demonstrates how a visual programme is always predetermined and situated within specific moments of the narrative.⁴⁸ In the case of the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* though, there is no indication of coordination between calligrapher and painter. The artist

46 AMA, ms. no. unknown. Francis Richard has inspected the manuscript and I am grateful that he brought it to my attention. Mentioned by Schmitz, "The Beginning of the Khurasani School," 80, fn. 27.

47 The earliest is dated September 1592 (AHT entry 83, mistakenly dated 1591), and is reproduced in Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 217–219. The next is dated winter 1592–1593 and was formerly in the Rothschild collection [reproduced in Yael Rice, "The Emperor's Eye and the Painter's Brush: the Rise of the Mughal Court Artist, c. 1546–1627," (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2011), fig. 1.48]. The third colophon is dated April 1593 (Rice, "The Emperor's Eye," fig. 1.49). Soudavar attributes them to Qul Baba's patronage and names Muhammadi as the painter of the last two colophons. However, by the 1590s the artist would have probably been deceased.

48 Farhad Mehran, "Break-line Verse: Link between Text and Image in the 'First Small Shāhnāma,'" in *Shāhnāma Studies I*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006), 151–170.



FIGURE 3.3 Gathering in a pavilion. Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān*, dated 1593

BLO MS. ELLIOTT 163, F. 55^B

who sketched the images was fulfilling a programme plotted out earlier and far away. In comparing break-lines across surviving Şerif Âmidî copies, I have detected a standard format in three that repeat the same image cycles and captions: BL Or. 7204, the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*, and TSMK H.1522. These support my claim that multiple copies of the text were transcribed and most were painted in the Ottoman domain, but the Tajikistan manuscript was taken elsewhere to be illustrated. Let us review the frontispiece and seven unfinished illustrations in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* in sequential order as they appear in the manuscript, and conclude with some musings on the intentionality and purpose of creating it.

4.1 *Illuminated Frontispiece*

A beautiful frontispiece, incongruous to the rest of the codex in its relative completeness, opens the manuscript. Badly abraded in the lower sections and with the right side containing empty spaces intended to contain images, the illumination is in dazzling lapis with gold thumb-spaces in the right and left margins. Alternating gold, black, and turquoise palmettes with coral-coloured accents and minute white filigreed lines are evocative of a tradition associated with Timurid Herat that was maintained in Abu'l-Khayrid workshops.

4.2 *The Court of Kayūmars*

Kayūmars, the first king credited with asserting order over all of creation, is represented in the first illustration to the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* (fig. 3.4). His name, inscribed above in a sloppy hand, labels his epithet: “the first king.” The scene is one of the most commonly encountered, but here the iconography departs from typical depictions that render Kayūmars and his retinue wearing animal skins, for the figures in the Tajikistan version wear tunics and sixteenth-century headwear. An indecipherable phrase below the seated ruler could read *palang p[ā]dishāh* (leopard ruler), perhaps to instruct an artist how to fill in the outlined clothing. The attendant on the right side wears an unusual brown vest over his purple robes. A slimmer version of this figure wearing sage green and a short yellow jacket carries a gold platter in the Ḥāfiẓ *Dīvān* folio (fig. 3.3).

This partly-completed illustration in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* is the only folio that permits an examination of the busy patterning of pastel-coloured surfaces in the manuscript. One can compare it to other illustrations from Khurasan, Qazvin, Shiraz, and Bukhara from the second half of the sixteenth century that also brim with colourful details and ornamented surfaces. Star, cross, square-shaped, and hexagonal geometric designs form the panels and floors in the illustrations we examined above from 1580s–1590s Khurasan (figs. 3.2–3). Cruciform and eight-pointed star panels with central dots in the lavender



FIGURE 3.4 The court of Kayūmars. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated CWH MS. 1032, F. 7^a

section on the Tajikistan folio appear in other Turkic *Shāhnāma* copies, for example the Âmidî version TSMK H.1522 circa 1544–1560.⁴⁹ Rows of teal squares in the Tajikistan illustration also recall wall ornamentation in the royal Ottoman manuscript *Siyar al-nabi* completed for sultan Murad III in 1594.⁵⁰ A close study of regional patterns and forms and colours that were in vogue in specific centres has yet to be written, but those present in the Tajikistan illustration suggest a transference of designs across workshops via sketches and materials moving through porous Ottoman, Safavid, and Abu'l-Khayrid borders.

4.3 *Žaḥḥāk's Vizier Announces Faraydūn's Arrival*

This illustration (fig. 3.5) also departs from traditional *Shāhnāma* iconography by presenting a regal Žaḥḥāk holding court who typically listens to a *maubad* (priest) interpreting his dreams. Here the *maubad* sits on a diagonal carpet below the ruler. The Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* illustration displays a macabre—and rarely depicted—element of the story: servants prepare the brains of two human victims to feed to two evil snakes that sprout from the demon king's shoulders. These reluctant chefs resemble the thin figure garbed in poppy-red with a gray slouched hat holding an unidentifiable item in the 1593 *Dīvān* illustration.

4.4 *Faraydūn Enthroned*

In the third illustration (fig. 3.6), Faraydūn sits on a platform with a *mandīl* (kerchief of sovereignty) in his right hand and left leg bent. Washes of gold are applied to the sky as well as to certain details of dress and props. Similar figure types are found in other folios produced in the workshops of Khurasan circa 1570–1581.⁵¹ To the left of Faraydūn in the Tajikistan manuscript a figure kneels performing the *kāsa-gīrī*, or ritual offering of a cup to the ruler that is derived from Mongol custom. This same attendant dressed in green offers a small cup in the Bruschetti *Gulistān* illustration. The figure standing on the far left in the Tajikistan composition clenches his hands at his waist in a mirror image of a similar figure wearing a long cornflower-blue robe in the LACMA composition (fig. 3.2).

49 Reproduced in Değirmenci, “‘Legitimising’ a Young Sultan,” 169, fig. 2.

50 Compare the illustration “Dream of the Byzantine Emperor” (TSMK H.1221, f. 86^b) reproduced in Carol Garrett Fisher, “A Reconstruction of the Pictorial Cycle of the ‘Siyar-i Nabī’ of Murad III,” *Ars Orientalis* 14 (1984): 75–94, fig. 5.

51 Consult BL ms. 10L P&A 48, f. 71^a. Reproduced in B.W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1976), fig. 217.

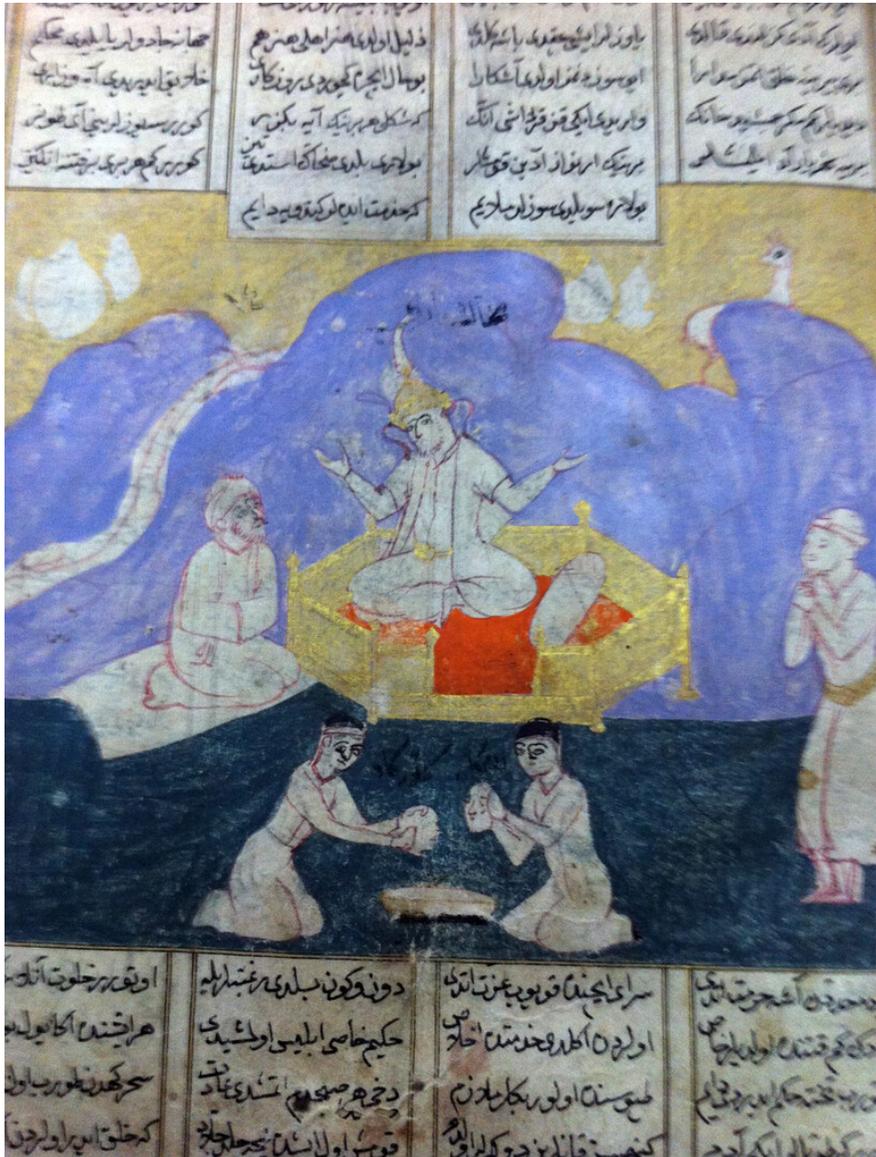


FIGURE 3.5 Žahhāk's vizier announces Faraydūn's arrival. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated
CWH MS. 1032, F. 14^R



FIGURE 3.6 Faraydūn enthroned. Şerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated
CWH MS. 1032, F. 21^v

The two studious boys seated to Faraydūn's right in the Tajikistan manuscript are stock types that circulated as single-page album compositions. One version is attributed to Shaykh Muḥammad who was active in the Mashhad atelier of Ibrāhīm Mirzā and broader Khurasan between 1540 and 1580.⁵² In the Tajikistan composition, they are garbed in collared tunics and squat turbans; perhaps they are Faraydūn's older sons who gossip and plot as they jealously look upon their younger brother sycophantically serving their father. Two similarly-posed boys wearing red and green tunics sit to the right in the LACMA painting (fig. 3.2) and were probably rendered close in time and place to the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*.

4.5 *The Death of Īraj*

The fourth illustration (fig. 3.7) portrays the violent struggle of Faraydūn's sons and bears overt connections to contemporary illustrations produced in Khur-

52 Reproduced in Arménag Sakisian, *La Miniature Persane du XI^e au XVII^e Siècle* (Paris: Les Éditions G. Van Oest, 1929), fig. 122.



FIGURE 3.7 The death of Īraj. Šerif Āmidī, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated
CWH MS. 1032, F. 29^R

asan.⁵³ Names in faded letters designate each figure, and a crown sketched at Īraj’s feet, now faded, is even labelled. The scene is common in *Shāhnāma* iconography. Usually, Īraj’s throat is slit or his head is bashed with a stool within a tent as overturned platters of fruits and spilled ewers add to the chaotic atmosphere. Instead, the victim here grips a dagger and grabs Salm’s throat; he’s not surrendering easily. The sparse use of gold emphasises the hilts and handles of the weaponry.

The sketch of the brothers killing Īraj in the Tajikistan manuscript most closely parallels a scene depicting a pious man attacked by a drunkard within a bound volume of selections from Sa’di’s *Būstān* copied earlier in Herat in 1527 (fig. 3.8). In the *Būstān* illustration as in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*’s “Death of Īraj,” a man is roughly held by two opponents while a pair of distraught onlookers on the right side of each illustration hold fingers to their lips in dismay. (Why they do not intervene is a question that must remain unanswered.) Soudavar

53 Reproduced in Abuseitova and Dodkhudoeva, *History of Kazakhstan in Eastern miniatures*, 206.

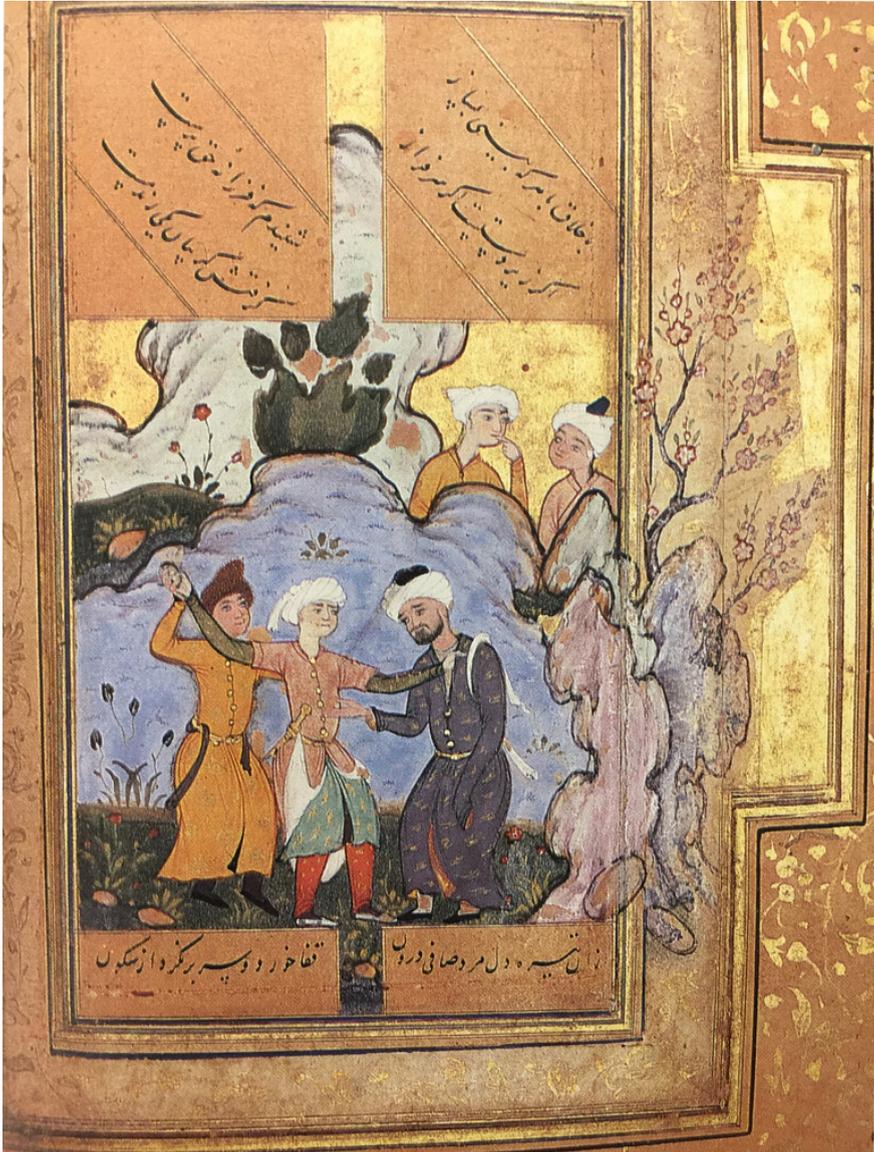


FIGURE 3.8 Pious man attacked by a drunkard. Sa'di, *Muntakhab-i Būstān*, dated 1527 AHT NO. 66, F. 11^v. REPRODUCED IN ABOLALA SOUDAVAR, *ART OF THE PERSIAN COURTS: SELECTIONS FROM THE ART AND HISTORY TRUST COLLECTION* (NEW YORK: RIZZOLI, 1992), FIG. 66B

attributes the illustrations to this *Būstān* to Mīrẓā ‘Alī working in Mashhad or Sabzivar circa 1565, and ventures they were commissioned by Ibrāhīm Mīrẓā.⁵⁴ Robinson, however, suggests the illustrations date even later, and I would attribute them closer to 1580 as well.⁵⁵ Larisa Dodkhudoeva too has observed that the Tajikistan manuscript’s illustrations display features of royal paintings associated with the *kitābkhāna* (scriptorium) of Ibrāhīm Mīrẓā, as well as compositions done by Muḥammadi.⁵⁶ We thus witness in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* the modification of figures and compositions that had been used in courtly Safavid manuscripts from Mashhad.

4.6 *Tūr’s Attempt to Ambush Manūchihr*

The fifth illustration (fig. 3.9) is a powerful depiction of combat on the right side while Tūr sits on a platform in front of his tent on the other, his evil grimace delineated as a childish scrawl. A soldier casts a mistrustful glance at his cruel commander as he sets out amidst the carnage of dismembered limbs cleaved by sword blows to wage war against Manūchihr’s army. With severed heads piled at his feet, Tūr’s pose is the same as the ruler in the LACMA *Haft awrang* illustration. The same seated ruler and frenzy of clustered fighters are similar to illustrations from a *Timūrnāma* of Hātifi dated 1581 that Schmitz attributes to Muḥammadi while he worked in Herat.⁵⁷ In both the *Timūrnāma* as in the folio from the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* here discussed, rulers with daggers in their belts sit in front of yurts with fabric draped over the smokestack openings. Elsewhere in a siege scene to the *Timūrnāma*, a jumbled unit of soldiers raise their swords and shields as in the Tajikistan illustration. Troops in both manuscripts wear spiked *zānū band* (poleyns; knee guards), flat-footed ankle boots with flaps at the heel, and pronged arm coverings that would make a simple elbowing quite a lethal jab.⁵⁸

54 Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 173.

55 Robinson, “An Amir Khusraw Khamsa of 1581,” 41, fn. 22.

56 Dodkhudoeva, *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia and India*, 80.

57 Description of the manuscript is in Schmitz, “Miniature Painting in Harat,” 127–128, 396–397. Illustrations are reproduced in her dissertation (note in particular plates 228 and 229). Sold at Christie’s in London, 31 March 2022, lot 4. Illustrations to it are reproduced in colour for the auction entry <<https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6361807>> (accessed 26 January 2023).

58 This same armour and footwear also appear in the Ottoman *Shaja’at-nama* (IUL T.6043) worn by two battling warriors in the lower right section of f. 124. Reproduced in Āsafī Dal Mehmed Çelebi and Abdülkadir Özcan, *Şecâatnâme: Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa’nın Şark Seferleri (1578–1585)* (Istanbul: Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2007).



FIGURE 3.9 Tūr’s attempt to ambush Manūchihir. Şerif Âmidî, Turcic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated
 CWH MS. 1032, F. 35^a

4.7 *Manūchīhr Slays Salm*

In the penultimate illustration to the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*, Īraj's grandson Manūchīhr avenges the murder of his grandfather by slaying Salm. The impact of the blow topples Salm's crown and splits him lengthwise like a cucumber and his shield in two. This version of the scene repeats a common pictorial trope that presents the ferocity of battles by showing a victor cleaving a rival in half from head to waist. Although this gruesome act is very common in Persianate manuscripts, the humourous pouncing horse nipping at the haunches of the opponent's mount is not. However, two illustrations with this detail appear in manuscripts attributed to Ottoman Baghdad carried out in a style associated with *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* productions. In one of these, a similarly cleft victim atop a horse bitten by the steed of another rider appears in a battle scene from Nizāmī's *Iskandarnāma* in a *Khamṣa* dated 1579–1580 (National Library of Russia ms. PNS 272, f. 234^b).⁵⁹ An equivalent composition is found in a truncated *Shāhnāma* written out in Bukhara in 1535 but perhaps illustrated half a century later in Baghdad (TSMK H.1514, f. 172^r). In it, Rustam skewers an opponent and lifts him from the saddle with the pink-speckled Rakhsh chomping at the rump of the riderless horse in front of him.

4.8 *Zāl and Rūdāba*

Although uncoloured and lacking the gold accents of the previous six unfinished illustrations, the final illustration in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* (fig. 3.10) is the only one that bears overt parallels to Turkic-language *Shāhnāma* copies produced in the court *nakkaṣhane* in Istanbul. In the painting, Zāl ascends Rūdāba's hair in a Rapunzel-like love story. A *chāvush* appears in a pointed cap and sporran-like pouch tending to his lord's horse, and he is similar to the figure in the lower section of the LACMA *Haft awrang* folio. This Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* composition is remarkably similar to an Āmidī *Shāhnāma* translation in the British Library attributed to 1560–1580 Istanbul (Or. 7204 fig. 3.11). Although both of these Āmidī versions have nearly identical layouts, the heavily-outlined eyes and sartorial elements of the figures in the BL *Shāhnāma* are obviously of Ottoman creation. Rūdāba is attired as an Ottoman noblewoman reaching down from her balcony wearing a golden crown. Zāl is garbed in the animal skins and helmet associated with Rustam, and the phallic feathers of his helmet recall other headwear produced in the courtly Istanbul workshops during the late sixteenth century.

59 Reproduced in N.V. Diakonova and L.G. Giuzal'ian, *Sredneaziatskie Miniatiury XVI–XVII vv.* Series: *Vostochnaya Miniatiura i Kalligrafiya v Lenindradskikh Sobraniakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), pl. 29.

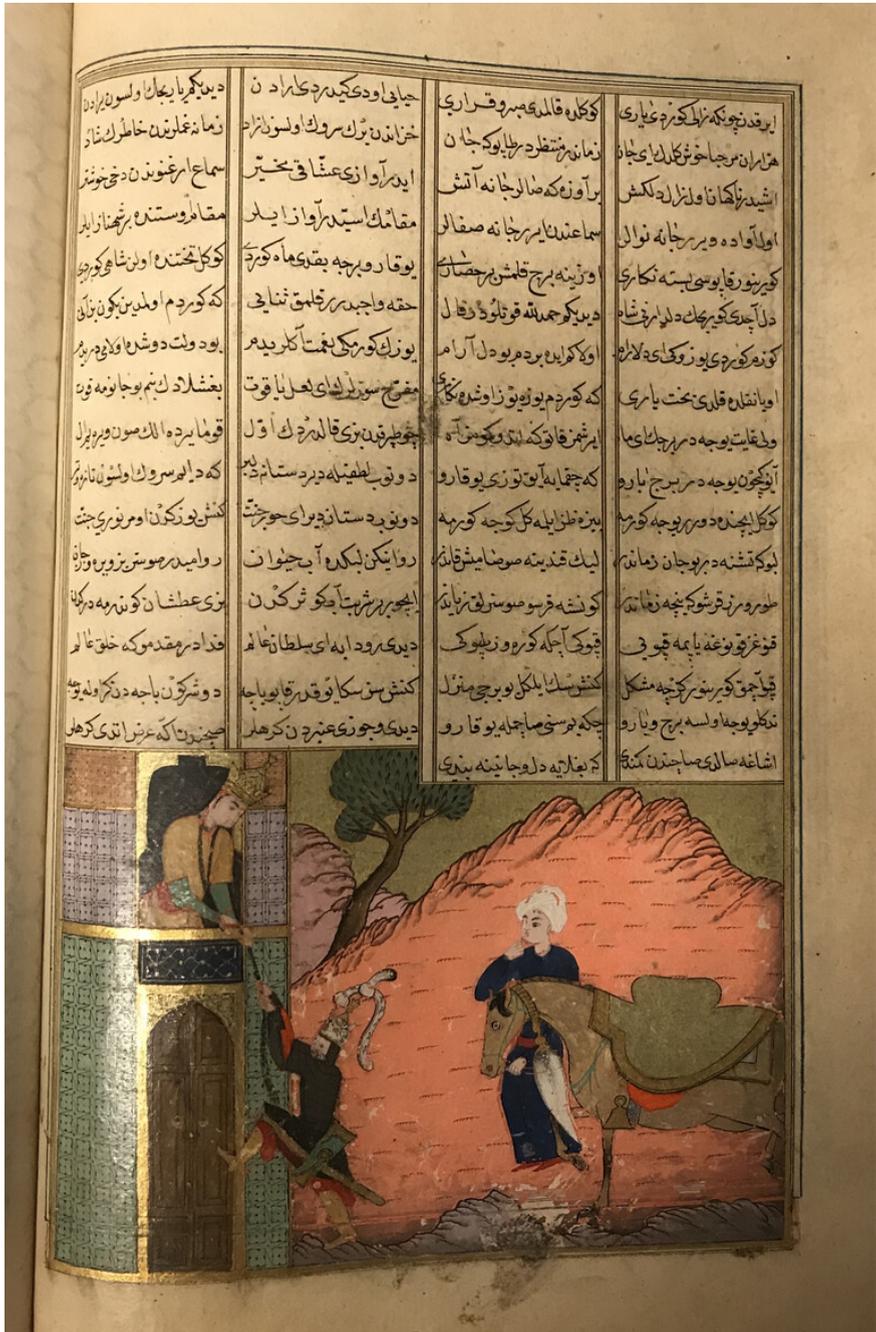


FIGURE 3.11 Zāl climbs Rūdābā's hair. Šerif Âmidî, Turkic *Shāhnāma* translation, undated BL MS. OR.7204, F. 55^b. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY MICHAEL ERDMAN

A differently-arranged portrayal of Zāl climbing Rūdāba's hair appears in another earlier Âmidî *Shāhnāma* from the Ottoman workshops circa 1545 (TSMK H.1520, f. 48^a). As noted by Zeren Tanındı, this folio has marked parallels to a scene in the fourth volume (*Osmanname*) of the Ottoman dynastic chronicle, the *Shahnama-yi al-i Osman* by Arifi (d. 1562) dated 1558.⁶⁰ The illustration renders a Byzantine princess helping an Ottoman soldier climb up the walls and open the castle door to let in the other troops who would conquer Constantinople. In Tanındı's analysis, the Âmidî *Shahnama* copy H.1520 done on inferior paper could have been an iconographic experiment. Its Turkic text was filled in by illustrators who would later prepare the *Osmanname* manuscript. This indicates that the head of the Ottoman court workshop may have stipulated that illustrators of dynastic chronicles must have previously illustrated a *Shāhnāma* either with the text of Firdawsī's original Persian or Âmidî's Turkic version. Tanındı states outright that the illustrations in the BL Âmidî *Shahnama* (BL Or. 7204) also support this claim.⁶¹

Applying her analysis, the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* executed on rough unburnished paper could have been intended as an incomplete mock-up that somehow escaped the Ottoman *nakkāshane*. Meruert Khuatovna Abuseitova and Larisa Dodkhudoeva have also suggested as much for the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*. They write: "it did not matter for the copyist and artist in which language manuscripts were copied. They quite often used ready samples for illustrations for one text, more often from Persian painting, only slightly amending graphical models. ... The plots chosen for illustrating [the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma*] belong to the most conventional Persian book painting."⁶² Although all the illustrations in the Tajikistan manuscript are the product of a *kitābkhāna* in Khurasan at the crossroads of Safavid and Abu'l-Khayrid skirmishes late in the sixteenth century, details of patterning and compositional layout indicate an Ottoman presence in the illustrative programme as well. It cannot be proven that an artist trained in Ottoman workshops travelled eastward carrying the manuscript or clutched preparatory images destined for Tajikistan, but the presence of shared compositional and decorative elements across Istanbul and Khurasan confirms a visual linkage spanning these sites.

60 Zeren Tanındı, "The Illustration of the *Shahnama* and the Art of the Book in Ottoman Turkey," in *Shahnama Studies 11: The Reception of Firdausi's Shāhnāma*, eds. Charles Melville and Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 148. Reproduced in Esin Atıl, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1987), 61, fig. 31.

61 Tanındı, "The Illustration of the *Shāhnāma* and the Art of the Book in Ottoman Turkey," 149.

62 Abuseitova and Dodkhudoeva, *History of Kazakhstan in Eastern miniatures*, 130.

5 Conclusion

Despite its coarse and unfinished state, thorough textual and visual analysis of the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* brings to light the journey of its manufacture spanning the Ottoman Empire, and Khurasan at the nexus of Abu'l-Khayrid and Safavid control. A majority of images in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* accompany the Faraydūn story, dwelling on the lead-up to the murder of Īraj. But it would be irresponsible to overemphasise the significance of these illustrations found early in the manuscript. One cannot claim that this part of the text, detailing the origin of tensions between Iran and Turan, was more important than all the other stories to whoever was the artist. In manuscripts where the text either predates the illustrations or was transcribed elsewhere, the scene selection does not necessarily reflect the artist's decision-making. Evidence and theory support my claim that the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* illustrations were sketched out and added later onto a manuscript from the Ottoman realm whose calligraphy was finished decades earlier. In the presented case study, the individual responsible for the visual material proceeded systematically through the finished text, but then inexplicably stopped and left the manuscript incomplete.

Although it might have originally been intended as a model for Ottoman scribes and artists to consult for a grander project, such as a biography of the sultan and his ancestors, the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* was deemed worthy of retention. The language of this sample text was unimportant; only the placement of images in relation to text concerned the draftsmen. Copying this first volume obviously took time, effort, and resources which endowed it with value. But who then transported it over a geographic expanse and why will never be fully ascertained. Perhaps it was an impecunious artisan affected by the turbulent politics later that century. Maybe he lacked royal commissions so was forced to itinerantly sojourn through the Persianate ecumene in search of work. He may have ultimately settled in Khurasan contested by the Safavids and Abu'l-Khayrids, creating manuscripts on demand or for export. There, he could have shared patterning and compositional ideas with local artists and others converging in Herat.

The Tajikistan manuscript was originally thought to have been illustrated in Khurasan during the 1570s. However, manuscripts associated with this region are too often attributed to this decade, and my more refined provenance of the 1580s through the 1590s is based on comparisons to contemporaneous samples. The imagery in the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* was added in a fascinating period when the Abu'l-Khayrids had annexed a large area of eastern Iranian territory, was worked on when alliances shifted, borders were contested,

and distinct regional identities were established. The intended owner of the Tajikistan manuscript—if it would have been finished—could have been a wealthy member of the Abu'l-Khayrid military elite judging from the gratuitous violence depicted in the illustrations, although one wonders who could have actually read the text. Regarding this issue of literacy, Abuseitova and Dodkhudoeva confirm that the heroes in the Persian and Turkic copies of the *Shāhnāma* epic “had enough popularity among writers and readers of ruling classes and broad masses of Turkic states in Northern Khorasm [Khwarazm], Kipchak steppes of Central Asia, [and the] Golden Horde for many centuries. Demand for manuscripts was rather high in these regions, and representatives of various clans could be their customers.”⁶³

In the fractured yet fusing domains of eastern Iran and Transoxiana in the late sixteenth century, artisans gathered in villages around Herat and in broader Khurasan where they offered their talents derived from elsewhere. Scribes were hired to execute oft-repeated works of poetry, or they brought previously-copied texts with them if they journeyed from afar. Painters contributed figures and compositions that had been learned and practised in different centres such as Qazvin, Mashhad, Istanbul, Baghdad, and Bukhara. Artists illustrated both Persian and Turkic texts in order to suit the aesthetic and linguistic whims of prospective buyers. Although fragmentary and lacking firm data elucidating its creation and transfer, the Tajikistan *Shāhnāma* exemplifies this paradigm through similarities to other illustrated manuscripts.

The manuscript was most likely a test project to appeal to Abu'l-Khayrid administrators in Khurasan. It is of particular significance that the object circulated across political and cultural boundaries. With similar fluidity, artisans in Khurasan came under, and were released from, different dynastic oversight. The artist of the Tajikistan manuscript could have previously produced manuscripts for Safavid authorities prior to 1588, then catered to Abu'l-Khayrid patronage for a decade, before again securing employment working on Safavid commissions at the start of the seventeenth century all the while remaining in Herat.

63 Abuseitova and Dodkhudoeva, *History of Kazakhstan in Eastern miniatures*, 133. Dodkhudoeva states the same concept in the Russian text to *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia and India*, 79.

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Collections

- AHT Art & History Trust, Houston.
- AMA Afghanistan National Archives, Kabul.
- BL British Library, London.
- BNF Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
- CWH Centre of Written Heritage at the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, Dushanbe.

- HDA Croatian State Archives, Zagreb.
IUL Istanbul University Library, Istanbul.
JRL John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, Manchester.
LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
NYPL New York Public Library, New York.
RIOS Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies, Saint Petersburg.
SK Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul.
TSMK Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul.

The Epic Hero Manas as the Archetype of Autonomy—Nostalgia and Futurities in Kyrgyz Spiritual and Ethno-Nationalist Discourses

Nienke van der Heide

In Central Asia, legendary heroes are often appropriated by state agents to legitimise their authority and sustain social order. In Kyrgyzstan, over the past century, a variety of different political actors have attempted to harness the epic hero Manas for just this cause. The epic hero archetype, however, often has a force of its own that goes beyond the aims of incumbent leaders. Rather than aiding in establishing order and stability, epic heroes often instil in their audiences a spirit of resistance emulating from a deep desire for autonomy. Epic heroes therefore often catalyse change rather than maintain stability. I will show how most attempts at appropriating the rallying power of the *Manas* epic that seemed successful at first eventually turned sour. What we will find is that more often than not, the archetype Manas has come back to bite the appropriator in the tail.

1 Autonomy and the Social

Before we look at the case of Manas, let us examine the field of tension between social order and individual autonomy. As social beings, humans have to balance a longing for connectedness with their desire for autonomy. On the one hand, we develop and thrive within the social contexts that are vital to our survival, on the other, we are driven by individual needs and urges that oftentimes conflict with our social responsibilities. The search for autonomy is a recurrent pattern in individual life stories and is paralleled by the pursuit of self-determination that recurs in the history of social groups.

As attempts at achieving autonomy are always realised within social settings, the individual cannot risk to behave too autonomously, for this may lead to exclusion or marginalisation. This in turn results in intense sensations of fear and loneliness that tend to drive individuals back to the group before they perish. For people who attempt to restore a personal sense of autonomy by fighting for the right of self-determination for their group, the situation is inherently

paradoxical: in order to break free from oppression by others, they need to cooperate with other others. This cooperation, however, will soon enough bring adaptation to group mores that imply once again a loss of autonomy for the individual. When the fight for self-determination is crystallised around a hero, whether in flesh or legend, the paradox deepens: here, the individual aspires to achieve autonomy through the act of submission to a leader. This may seem like a lost case, but as we will see, heroes can indeed inspire individuals to stand up to oppression, yielding an increased sense of autonomy.

It is within these complex dynamics between individuality and sociality that we need to understand the use of the *Manas* epic in political contexts, and the ways in which these attempts work out. *Manas* is the ultimate embodiment of the desire for autonomy, as we shall see, and as such has strong appeal for both individual listeners and people with political aspirations.

2 The Force of Epic Narration

The *Manas* epic is narrated in vigorous live performances in which the imagery of ancestral heroes battling for autonomy is evoked by engaging all the senses. The narrator, who is seated on the floor, conveys the story using only voice and arms, and manages to rouse in the audience emotions not only through storyline and metaphor, but also through gesture and intonation. In this way, a bodily experienced connection to the trials and tribulations of the story's characters is generated. The audience experiences what their ancestors experienced—but of course, without the actual pain and bloodshed. Storytelling thus forges deep connections with heroes from the past, and at the same time connects the audience who share this experience in the moment of storytelling.

Epic tales play in a mythical past and as such appeal to a sense of nostalgia.¹ At the same time, however, they also work as a tool for visualising new futures by making alternatives to the present imaginable. Going back to the way things were breaks open the certitudes of the present—it once was dif-

1 On the notion of nostalgia in the post-Soviet space, see for example: Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Juliette J. Cleuziou, "Le genre de la nostalgie. Nostalgie d'État et nostalgie postsoviétique au Tadjikistan contemporain," *ethnographiques.org*, Numéro 34—juin 2017 Philanthropies [en ligne] (<https://www.ethnographiques.org/2017/Cleuziou>); Timur Dadabaev, "Manipulating post-Soviet nostalgia: contrasting political narratives and public recollections in Central Asia," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 18 (2021): 61–81.

ferent, so why should it not be different again? The futurities built upon nostalgic *Manas* narration do not involve a complete return to a pristine world, however—people who glorify the mythical past do not necessarily want to do away with the achievements of the present. What they do want to recreate is the sense of autonomy that emulates from the stories. In a globalised world where individual lives are so deeply entangled in forces far beyond one's sphere of influence, stories of a time when individual deeds were influential are compelling. In the ideal future, we may once again do it *our way* and not be swept away by strong foreign currents—we may rise again like we did in the ancient tales.

What is meant by 'our way' varies, however. Over the past 150 years, for instance, the *Manas* epic has been used as tool to champion for the autonomy of groups as diverse as Muslims, the peasant masses, the Kyrgyz and shamans.² Each of these groups selects different parts of the tale to represent "our ways and our values." This is possible as more than political rhetoric, a good story is a multi-layered and oscillates continuously between black and white, good and bad, joy and sorrow, loyalty and betrayal to be engaging and remain worthy of retelling. Every political actor can therefore easily find passages that underscore their own position. However, unlike the heroic tale, political rhetoric can never encapsulate the paradoxes that are inherent in the search for autonomy. Political actors do try to harness the universal desire for autonomy for their purposes, but as this desire is perpetually dynamic, it returns like a boomerang to dethrone them.

3 *Manas as the Restorer of Autonomy*

Having outlined the conditions that make epic tales so appealing for actors in the political realm, let us now turn to the storyline of the *Manas* epic itself. Who is *Manas* and what makes his tale worthy of being retold for hundreds of generations? It must be kept in mind that the *Manas* epic is a dynamic oral tradition, where every narrator is allowed, and even expected, to have their own version of the story. Every narration is the product of improvisation on the spot, and not

2 Svetlana Jacquesson published on various aspects of the *Manas* epic as a political tool, focusing on the heritagization of the epic. See for example: Svetlana Jacquesson, "Claiming heritage: the *Manas* epic between China and Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Survey* 39, no. 3 (2020), 324–339, and Svetlana Jacquesson, "On Folklore Archives and Heritage Claims: the *Manas* Epic in Kyrgyzstan," *Journal of the economic and social history of the Orient* 64, no. 4 (2021), 425–454.

one rendering of the tale is identical to another. The storyline I will present is a reconstruction based on the version of Sagınbai Orozbekov that was recorded in the 1910s.³

In Sagınbai Orozbekov's version, the epic tale begins when the sons of the wealthy nomad Nogoi are chased out of their homeland in present-day Talas province and the Ferghana valley by the Chinese (or more precisely, the Kitai) Esen khan. Nogoi's sons flee in all directions. Jakip, who goes north, lands in the mountainous Altai region, where he and his people have many unpleasant encounters with Kalmaks. For many years, Jakip remains without a son, which causes him great sorrow. One day, after Jakip, his wife and his second wife had similar dreams, Jakip's first wife Chiyirdi finds out she is pregnant. After an extremely rough delivery, she gives birth to an unusually strong boy, who they name Manas. Manas soon receives the nickname *Chong Jindi*, or Big Troublemaker, and is sent off to the mountains to be raised by a shepherd. Trouble resumes when Manas kills a Kalmak passer-by, just for fun. The shepherd sends him back to his parents, where Manas continues to fight Kalmaks. Doing so, he achieves great admiration by his peers who follow him into battle.

A crucial moment in the tale occurs when Manas' peers ask him to sacrifice his warrior horse Akkula. If he offers Akkula's meat to them, they will accept him as their khan. As epic heroes are more closely connected to their horses than to anyone else, an enormous sacrifice is here being asked of Manas. This request, then, is a test whether Manas is prepared to give up part of his personal autonomy—his freedom to move where he wants as fast as he can—in order to establish group unity. Manas passes the test and shows that he is prepared to set aside his personal desires for the common good. His peers promptly release him of the obligation to sacrifice Akkula and find another horse to slaughter for the celebration of Manas' coronation.

Upon becoming a khan, Manas attracts many Turkic warriors who follow him in battle and win back their ancestral land. After many adventures and love stories, Manas and his forty knights decide to march to Beijing to overthrow the Chinese. Sadly, Manas is mortally wounded during the battle and he dies upon his return to Talas. The epic tale then moves on to describe the life of his son Semetei and his grandson Seitek.

The quest for autonomy within a field of social constrictions is of course not the only leitmotif in the epic, but it is a salient one. As a boy, Manas does not bow to authority and insists in doing things his own way. In consequence,

3 See Ch. Aitmatov (ed.) *Manas: Sagumbay Orozbek uulunun variantı boyunça* (Frunze, Kirgizstan basması, 1978–1982). Sagınbai is an alternative spelling for Sagumbay.

he is banned from his social surroundings and sent away to live with a shepherd. From living in the homestead of the clan's leader he declines to a harsh life in the mountains. But even there, he does not take social courtesy into account. Manas only matures once he learns to sacrifice some of his dearly held autonomy in order to create group cohesion. Only then can he assume his rightful position as a khan. Autonomy is well-consolidated under Manas' leadership: his following consists of a confederation of individuals who team up only when there is a need for defending property, finding wives or winning tournaments. This loose structure safeguards the desired autonomy of the knights. However, when they decide to deal with outsiders' attacks on their sovereignty once and for all and march to Beijing, they overplay their hand—and perish. The confederation falls apart when autocratic tendencies in Manas' successors destroy his legacy. His wife and baby son Semetei flee the area and only when Semetei is grown up, does he return to restore his father's khanate. The fight for autonomy is thus fraught with social peril—a profound lesson that politicians that invoke the *Manas* epic often do not heed.

4 The Autonomous Manaschï and the Fluid Tale

The archetype of Manas as restorer of autonomy is mirrored by the narrators of the epic, known as Manaschïs, who are generally considered to be highly autonomous characters. The Manaschïs I met often lacked the diplomacy so highly valued in Kyrgyz communication.⁴ Although some Manaschïs are unusually introverted and shy, all of them spoke their minds more openly than other people. These Manaschïs also had a tendency to withdraw from public life every now and then, often in order to roam the mountains and recite the tale to rivers, rocks and trees. Some Manaschïs are considered dangerous as they are known to use their connection to the spirit world in manipulative ways. *Manas* narrators often get away with many things that others would be reprimanded for.

The connection of Manaschïs to the spirit world is strong. At a young age, Manas narrators are called to their profession in a vocation dream or a vision, in which the spirits (*arbaktar*) of the main characters of the epic appear. They offer the future Manaschï food and something white to drink and take them to a battlefield where they show important scenes from the tale. The dream ends when the spirits command the dreamer to become a narrator. If they dis-

4 I conducted fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan between 1996–1999 and in 2014.

regard their calling, the youngsters fall ill until they finally submit to the will of the spirits of the epic characters. During their life, they will often be revisited by these spirits in dreams, thus learning new episodes and other important information regarding the passing-on of the tale. I became convinced that the narrative of dream inspiration is more than an obligatory cultural justification for Manaschīs to claim authority when I witnessed dreamtime narrations. A number of times, when I stayed at the house of narrator Talantaali Bakchiev and his family, we were woken up by his loud recitals that were even fiercer than his daytime narrations. During these night-time recitals, Talantaali remained fast asleep. In the morning he would tell us about his dream—the very same tale that he had narrated while fast asleep. In 2005, Talantaali's wife wrote a number of these nightly recitals down, which she published in a booklet.⁵

The submission to the spirit realm gives each Manaschī a certain level of autonomy in the human world. Every Manaschī has his or her own version of the tale, and these versions can vary considerably. In some versions, for instance, Manas is killed in Beijing, in other versions he makes it home before he dies in his wife's arms. According to Sagīnbai Orozbekov, mentioned above, Manas went to Mecca on hajj, but this is not a common storyline. When I asked Great Manaschī Kaba Atabekov about Manas' trip to Mecca, he replied in chant: "Manas never went there." Confused, I asked him why Sagīnbai would narrate this then, but Kaba said: "My dear, we all have our own versions. That is no problem." Never have I heard a Manaschī challenge the tale of another Manaschī. As the authority of Manaschīs comes from dreams, visions and trance-like states, there is room for change and fluidity and this is respected. Of course, there is no lack of professional jealousy and gossip, for instance on the authenticity of the claim to dream vocation, or on the integrity of a Manaschī's ways, but this does not pertain to the contents of the tale they narrate. Interestingly, although Manaschīs respect the fluidity of the tale, they also speak of the *Manas* as if it is a fixed tale: "It is said in the *Manas* that ..." is a phrase I often heard from Manaschīs' mouths.

Manas scholars at the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences, however, do have the habit of challenging the contents of specific tales. Starting from an entirely different paradigm on performance authority, *Manas* scholars come to very different evaluations of the value of versions and their narrators. The origins of this clash of paradigms can be found in the different political structures that narrators and academics are embedded in. Let us therefore turn to the polit-

5 A. Egemberdieva, *Manaschī jana Mezgil* (Bishkek: AUCA, 2005).

ical realm to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of both content and social relevance of the heroic tale.

5 Harnessing Manas for Political Purposes

As mentioned above, the tale of Manas as restorer of autonomy and sovereignty over ancestral lands is a source of inspiration for many different political actors. But whose autonomy is restored in the tale itself? What group affiliations feature in the various versions of the *Manas* epic? In the recorded version of Sagınbai Orozbekov, Manas is first and foremost a Muslim. His ethnicity is Kyrgyz, but in versions older than this, the ethnic affiliation of Manas appears to be quite different. In the famous tales that were recorded by Radloff and Valikhanov in the 1860s, the Kyrgyz are rarely mentioned and if they are, it is in a derogatory way.⁶ It is often claimed that Manas' ethnicity was Nogoi (Nogai) in these older versions,⁷ but although his grandfather's name is Nogoi, Manas is never explicitly described as an ethnic Nogoi. Rather, he is a charismatic figure who attracts warriors from all surrounding, but mostly Turkic, ethnicities. Today, very few narrators are open to the idea that Manas may not always have been portrayed as Kyrgyz, so firmly has he become identified with the Kyrgyz ethnic group over the past century. As for his religious affiliation, Manas remains a Muslim in contemporary narrations, but as we shall see later on, the influx of new forms of Islam in the region that denounce practices that were previously considered Islamic leads to shifting religious identifications.

The development of the oral *Manas* tradition was greatly influenced by academic developments within Soviet Central Asia. *Manas* scholarship as it is institutionalised in Kyrgyzstan today arose in tandem with the Soviet administration, and discussions of the *Manas* epic were firmly tied to the general aims and goals of Soviet policies. In the early Soviet years, *Manas* scholarship was conjoined with the effort of proliferating literacy among the masses. Kyrgyz

6 The term Kyrgyz has a long history, and for some time the Kyrgyz of the area constituting present-day Kyrgyzstan have been named Qara-Kyrgyz in Russian and Western sources, while the term Kyrgyz was long used to refer to the Kazakh people. In the Soviet period, this changed, and the inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan were since referred to as Kyrgyz. See W. Barthold and G. Hazai, "Kırgız," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. (http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/2048/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4387)

7 Arthur Hatto, *The Memorial Feast for Kökötöy-Khan (Kökötöydün ashı): A Kirghiz Epic Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Daniel Prior, "Heroes, Chieftains, and the Roots of Kirghiz Nationalism," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 6 (2006): 71–88.

texts were needed for this, and early *Manas* scholars dedicated themselves to recording a wide variety of tales from different Manaschīs that were published in cheap scrapbook versions. At that time, the *Manas* tales were considered particularly suitable for this purpose, as folklore was generally praised for conveying the deepest aspirations of the masses. Furthermore, epics were taken as proof of the evolutionary development of a nation, which was a clear asset within the Soviet structure during the years of national-territorial demarcation. Manas, as the great restorer of autonomy, was taken as an example for the new Soviet citizens, who were wrestled from the hands of the feudal lords (*bai-manap*) and the clergy by the heroes of communism.

In 1937, at the pinnacle of the great terror, many people involved in propagating the *Manas* epic were murdered, and a generation of *Manas* scholars vanished from the earth. The reasons they were prosecuted were not related to the *Manas* epic itself, but to their position as local intelligentsia. The realm of oral narration therefore remained unaffected, and a new star rose: Sayak-bai Karalaev became the Great Manaschī of the Soviet era. After World War II, a new generation of *Manas* scholars began to revitalise *Manas* recording and a new kind of scholarship arose, with people such as Viktor Zhirmunsky and K. Rakhmatullin trying to trace the origins of the epic and the development of plotlines.⁸ In the early 1950s, however, a new wave of cultural repression reached the Soviet Central Asian republics, including Kyrgyzstan. Epic tales all over Central Asia were considered reactionary, pan-feudalist and pan-Islamic and their publications were banned.⁹ During a conference dedicated to the question of the *Manas* epic in 1952, it was decided that the *Manas* would not be banned entirely, but it could only be republished in a version that was purged from all pan-Islamic and pan-feudalist elements. This *kurama variant* (“combined version”) was based on Sagīnbai Orozbekov’s version, complemented with episodes from other Manaschīs, and heavily censored. A year after the conference on the publication of the *Manas* epic, however, Stalin died and the Khrushchev Thaw set in. Gradually, *Manas* scholars were allowed greater freedom in publishing a variety of *Manas* recordings. On state level, the rallying power of the hero was once again harnessed, this time by bringing him into the capital’s public space. In 1974, the airport was named Manas Airport, and in 1981, the square in front of the Philharmonic building was adorned with a set of statues of Manas, his wife Khanikey, his counsellor Bakai, and four historic Manaschīs.

8 S. Aliev et.al., *Encyclopaedical Phenomenon of Epos “Manas”* (Bishkek: Muras, 1995).

9 Alexandre A. Bennigsen, “The Crisis of the Turkic National Epics 1951–1952: local nationalism or internationalism?,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 17 (1975), 463–474.

The effect that state officials had not solicited, however, was that the *Manas* epic over time became incorporated into a nationalist rather than a Soviet discourse. It had taken quite a bit of imagination to portray the epic battles as an early form of class struggle, and with the abandonment of state terror as a tactic to keep the population focussed on the socialist cause, this interpretation of the *Manas* tales quickly wore off. Members of the Kyrgyz cultural elite, most stridently the author Chingiz Aitmatov, described the *Manas* epic as “the pinnacle of the ancient Kyrgyz spirit”.¹⁰ Thus, the desire for autonomy shifted (back) from class to nation, and before long, the archetypal hero that fought for autonomy would bite the Soviet state in the tail. The call for greater national autonomy coalesced with political forces that aimed at disbanding the Soviet Union. In Kyrgyzstan, president Akayev had come to power in the atmosphere of perestroika that allowed more room for national autonomy. When the coup in Moscow collapsed, he was the first of the Central Asian presidents to announce his republic’s independence from the Soviet Union.

6 Independent Kyrgyzstan—the Land of Manas

Although many ethnic Kyrgyz did not want the Soviet Union to disintegrate, most did embrace the idea of restoring Kyrgyz autonomy and for them, the disastrous collapse of the Soviet Union did yield the opportunity to rehabilitate Kyrgyz culture. The new state, then, had to relate to the ethno-nationalist discourse, and the national hero Manas seemed to be the perfect symbol for independent Kyrgyzstan. In 1995, a large-scale celebration of the supposed 1,000th anniversary of the *Manas* epic was taken as an opportunity to strengthen Kyrgyz unity and to introduce the republic’s new identity to the world. At this event, president Akayev launched seven principles that he had distilled from the *Manas* epic and proposed these would form the ideological basis for the new Kyrgyz state. In the formulation of these seven principles, however, we see reflected how the young state engaged in a careful balancing act between ethnic and of civic nationalism. The fear of an intensification of ethnic tensions, with the violent clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in 1990 in the Osh region fresh in mind, and concern about a brain drain due to the outmigration of many Russians, Germans and Jews impelled the Kyrgyzstani government to promote not only ethnic, but also civic unity, embodied in the slogan “Kyrgyzstan—our Common Home.” This was not an easy task, as very few people identified

10 Aitmatov in Aliev et.al., *Encyclopaedical Phenomenon of Epos “Manas,”* 14.

with the neologism “Kyrgyzstani,” but were much more invested in ethnic affiliations. It is therefore no surprise that the Seven Principles of the *Manas Epic* appeal to both ethnic and civic nationalism; where the second principle speaks of “transethnic consensus,” the third promotes “national pride” and the seventh “strengthening and protecting Kyrgyz statehood.”

In reality, the imagery that was evoked by the Akayev administration principally strengthened Kyrgyz ethnic pride. My Kyrgyz informants increasingly envisioned themselves as brave, independent nomads who cherished their autonomy, instead of the proverbial flock of obedient sheep they identified with in the early 1990s. Over time, however, this reawakening of the nomadic spirit turned against Akayev himself. In the 2000s, his leadership became increasingly corrupt, nepotism had become the rule rather than the exception,¹¹ and rumours began to circle that Akayev had acquired an alcohol addiction. Civil unrest was fed when the government resolved border conflicts by handing large parts of territory to China and Kazakhstan.¹² In 2005, Kyrgyzstan surprised foreign commentators when it joined the cascade of popular revolutions that swept Serbia, Ukraine and Georgia. In the so-called Tulip Revolution, president Akayev was ousted. The success of this uproar boasted Kyrgyz self-confidence even further, and the call for a more candid ethnic nationalism, characterized by a strong focus on a romanticised nomadic past, was taken up by Akayev’s successor, Kurmanbek Bakiev.

In the first months after Akayev’s fall, the Bakiev administration worked on redefining the state ideology by drawing even more heavily on the *Manas* epic and its shamanic, or Tengriist, elements. State secretary Dastan Sarygulov set out to write the guidelines for a national ideology based on Tengriism, but in 2006, he was forced to resign, and his plan of a Tengriist state ideology faded out. The governance of president Bakiev proceeded without succeeding to create any ideological foundation, and it soon surpassed Akayev’s era in nepotism and corruption. Bakiev’s efforts to appease the population by providing cheap mortgages to all civil servants were effective for a while, but the increase in power blackouts due to mismanagement of the energy sector before long fostered dissatisfaction with the new administration. All of this coincided with a high occurrence of mafia violence towards politicians—within four years, five members of parliament were murdered. Eventually, the tolerance of the population was overstretched. Although power cuts had become a daily reality, energy tariffs were increased fourfold under the management of Bakiev’s

11 Azamat Temirkulov, “Kyrgyz ‘revolutions’ in 2005 and 2010: comparative analysis of mass mobilization,” *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 5 (2010), 591–592.

12 Ibid.

son Maksim, causing massive unrest in the country. Within this highly charged political atmosphere, a controversy around the *Manas* epic rose to explosive proportions.

7 Leadership and Autonomy

In an attempt to strengthen the identification of non-Han citizens with China as a civilisation-state, China had filed a request to place three epics of large ethnic minorities on the UNESCO list for intangible heritage. These were the Tibetan *Gesar* epic, the Kalmak *Jangar* epic and the Kyrgyz *Manas* epic. The large community of Kyrgyz that has lived in China's Xinjiang province ever since the 1916 *Ürkün* (Exodus) also kept the tradition of *Manas* narration alive, and even brought forth one of the Great Manaschīs of the 20th century, Jusup Mamai. When the news of China's request reached Kyrgyzstan, however, Kyrgyzstan's Manaschīs and many NGO representatives were outraged. The *Manas* epic did not belong to the Chinese, but to the Kyrgyz state, they argued, urging the Kyrgyz government to object. When their call was not heeded, a group of Manaschīs and NGO representatives gathered in weekly protest in the Historic Museum adjacent the White House. Here, Manaschīs narrated the epic, creating a setting in which the spirit of Manas could nurture their rebellious mood. The controversy of China and the UNESCO-list had become a focal point for indignation for a great number of people, and it provided them with the propulsion to withstand the growing threat of state terror. RFE/FL-journalist Venera Djumataeva reported how many insurgents took inspiration from the *Manas*, when she quoted an old schoolfriend:

“I've been living in the mountains for several months now, making contact with our legendary ancestors in an attempt to repair the Kyrgyz people's spirit,” he said with a straight face. “We have to revive the legendary Manas's heroic spirit in us in order to be able to overthrow this corrupt regime.”¹³

Once the protests began at the square on 7 April 2010, imagery of Manas and his knights was evoked as protesters had to muster courage to withstand snipers that killed 86 people. Afterwards, when the fallen sons of Kyrgyzstan were

13 Venera Djumataeva, *The Roots of Kyrgyzstan's Uprising* (2010). https://www.rferl.org/a/Commentary_Roots_Of_Kyrgyzstan_Uprising/2022430.html.

commemorated, they were honoured for their sacrifice, courage and bravery—characteristics that fitted the archetype of Manas like a glove. The upheaval was caused by the breach of the social contract that demands leadership to sacrifice their personal autonomy for the common good, in a way similar to Manas' willingness to sacrifice his warrior horse Akkula to feed his knights. No leader can evoke the nomadic spirit of the Kyrgyz without deferring to the intricate balance of power of a system founded on an ideal of autonomy.

After two popular revolutions, a new constitution was adopted that diminished presidential powers with the aim of preventing authoritarian corruption. Unfortunately, this also led to a general sense of the government being powerless and inefficient. President Atambayev, who was elected after the term of highly popular interim president Rosa Otunbayeva, was described as weak by many of my informants and the system of parliamentary democracy was considered too time-consuming to allow for vigorous leadership. People often told me that none of the present prosperity is attributable to the government, it was all created by the people themselves. The relationship of the government to Manaschiis corresponds with this general picture: whereas Manaschiis are allowed complete freedom in their Manas narrations, there is no material support for their art. Despite the lip service paid to Manaschiis and the instalment of Manas Day as a national holiday, the promise of appointing six state Manaschiis never materialised. The most well-known Manaschiis are now employed by a private organisation financed by a Kyrgyz businessman. Like others, Manaschiis thus experience a strong sense of autonomy, but this is paired with very little respect for the present leadership.

Currently, it is non-governmental political actors that try to harness the appeal of Manas for their cause. One of the most dominant voices comes from the Tengirchilik movement. In Kyrgyzstan, the Tengirchilik movement is set against two strands of what they conceive as foreign influence: on the one hand they battle new forms of Islam that demonise Kyrgyz spiritual practices such as holy site visits and ancestor worship, on the other hand they combat globalised capitalism that enforces cultural influences from America, Europe and South Korea, pushing Kyrgyz traditions into the fringe. With the effort to safeguard Kyrgyz traditions against the stream of fundamental Islam and modernity, however, these actors enter into conflict with people who also relate to the *Manas* as their cultural heritage. In all known recorded versions of the *Manas* epic, the hero is a Muslim and his enemies are *kapir*, heathens. Deepening the schism between various forms of Islam has, under present geopolitical conditions, the potential of becoming highly explosive. Furthermore, the promotion of the *Manas* epic as the cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz hinges on modern media, and there seems to be very little willingness to deny the fruits of capital-

ism's progress. Who then is to decide what aspects of modernity must be abandoned? Any form of enforcement on these matters will mean an infringement on the autonomy of individuals who identify with the heroes of the *Manas* epic. These may once again rise and bite the political actors who incorporate the *Manas* in their own discourses in particular ways in the tail.

8 Autonomy, Balance and Respect

Manas narrators know, or have found out the hard way, that they cannot harness Manas for their own purposes. The spirits of Manas and his companions have their own agendas and take their own position within the political field of remembering the past and imagining possible futures. Only by deferring to their power can Manaschis hope to influence their own lives and that of their nation in ways that they see as desirable. Archetypical heroes then represent our longing for freedom, but their tales simultaneously convey lessons on the perils of the journey towards greater autonomy.

The balancing act between autonomy and cooperation is not a linear tale with a happy end in which one side takes permanent control—it is rather a perpetual cycle that works on all levels of our existence as social beings. Within this cycle, we must remember that the past cannot be malleated but to fit present purposes, but its agents must be respected and honoured. Only then can one hope to be empowered by the heroes and the lessons of the past.

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Literary Souvenirs from Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī and Sotim Ulūğzoda in the Leiden University Library

A Closer Look at Aynī’s Jodgorī (1935) and Ulūğzoda’s Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Ainī (1950)

Gabrielle van den Berg

When I arrived as a student of Persian in Tajikistan in the autumn of 1988, I was struck by the omnipresence of the author Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī (1878–1954). The opera house of Dushanbe was named after him, as well as a district in the north of Tajikistan, streets in various cities and towns, and a great statue overlooking one of the central parks of the capital; his name was everywhere. As the “Father of Tajik language and literature”¹ and a Soviet national hero he was known to every citizen of the Tajik Soviet republic, which was then about to celebrate its 70th birthday.

At that time, no one foresaw that the Soviet Union would collapse in only a few years’ time, even though some cracks had appeared in what still seemed to be a strong union of Soviet republics united under communist rule. In Tajikistan, some people had begun to question the unanimous acclaim for Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī as a great national hero. In reformist circles, his perceived role in the Soviet efforts to separate Tajiks and Tajik from Iran somewhat tarnished his reputation. Against the background of *perestroika* and *glasnost*’ in the late 1980s, an idealized concept of a unified larger Iranian cultural space, separate from the Turkic identities and languages in Central Asia, played an increasingly important role in the conversations of certain intellectual groups. Another issue was ‘Aynī’s association with the politically superior “North” (i.e. Northern Tajikistan) in the strong regionalist discourse of the time.²

In the eyes of these critics Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī stood for the old establishment, whose power, they felt, was about to end. Though there is certainly truth in that, their dismissal of Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī seems to have been rash and based on a desire for a clean break with the recent past. Apparently they did not assign much value to Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī’s crucial role in safeguarding Central Asian Per-

1 Compare for example Jiri Bečka, *Sadriiddin Ayni—Father of Modern Tajik Literature* (Naples: Seminario di Studi Asiatici, 1980).

2 Observations based on personal communication, 1988–1989.

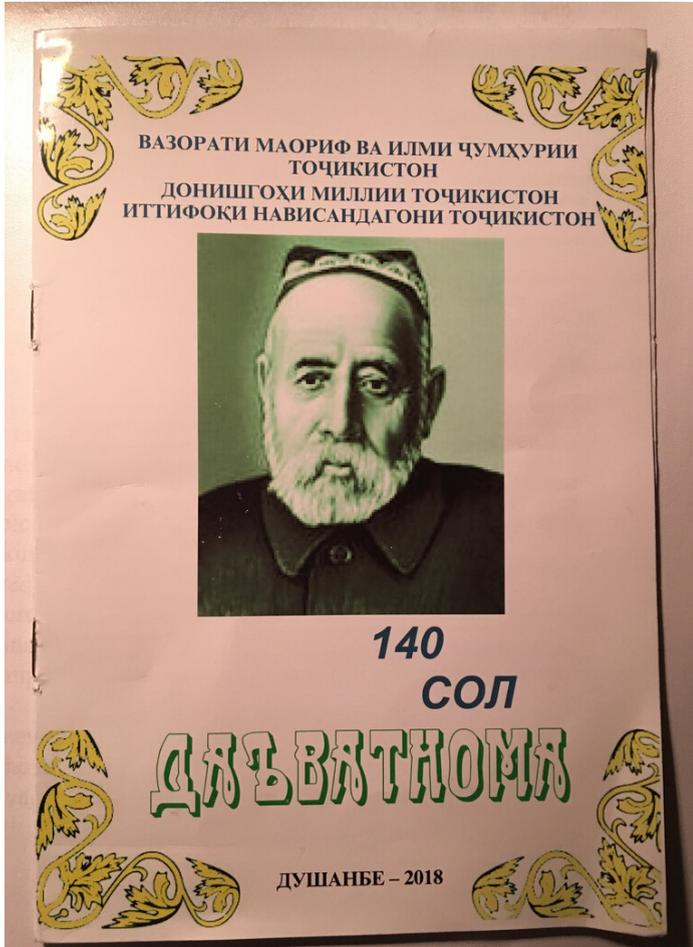


FIGURE 5.1 “140 years”—conference invitation and programme, commemorating Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī in April 2018

sian’s literary legacy as an integral part of classical Persian literature in the early decades of the 20th century. He did so first and foremost through his work *Namūna-yi adabiyāt-i Tājik* (“A sample of Tajik literature,” Samarqand 1925/ Moscow 1926), written in support for Tajik against the dominant discourse of the 1920s, in which Tajik/Persian was considered unimportant.³ As a bilingual intellectual, fluent in Tajik and Uzbek and schooled in Bukhara, ‘Aynī can be

3 Paul Bergne, *The Birth of Tajikistan. National Identity and the Origins of the Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 78.

seen as one of the last representatives of a pre-nationalist, undivided Turko-Persian realm in Central Asia.⁴

In the end, ‘Aynī weathered the storms of the late 1980s and early 1990s effortlessly and retained his symbolic position as the founding father of Tajik literature also after the sudden dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁵ In 1997, he was one of the first to receive the new title ‘Hero of Tajikistan’ (*qahramoni Tojikiston*).

In 2018, ‘Aynī’s 140th birthday was celebrated with a conference organized by the Ministry of Science and Education, the National University, and the Writers’ Union in Dushanbe, which was also attended by speakers and guests from Uzbekistan (figure 5.1). This event coincided with the end of a period of strained relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and such an academic exchange between the two republics had not taken place for a long time. It was seen as a great achievement that representatives from both Uzbekistan, the territory where ‘Aynī was born and spent most of his life, and Tajikistan, the state whose nationality he had embraced and where he is buried, were present to honor ‘Aynī’s legacy.

The Literary Museum of Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī (figure 5.2), located in ‘Aynī’s former residence in Dushanbe and dedicated to ‘Aynī’s life and work, was renovated in the spring of 2018, in honour of ‘Aynī’s birthday on 15 April.⁶ Likewise, ‘Aynī’s house in Samarqand, the Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī Museum near Registan, was closed for renovation, also in view of the celebrations of his 140th birthday.⁷ The renovations seem rather ironic, as ‘Aynī’s museum in Dushanbe is under constant threat of the many building projects that take place in the city: two

4 See Bergne, *The Birth of Tajikistan*, 24, referring to Aini’s phrase *Mo Turkestanian* (We Turkestanis). See also the discussion in Baratov on Turkestanian identity: Shuhrat Baratov, *Hero-making as ontological security practice: Tajikistan’s identity politics and relations with Uzbekistan* (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2017), 100. Available online.

5 Obviously, these events did not bring the scattered intellectual groups with diffused “pan-Iranian” ideas to power. After the civil war (1992–1997) Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī was embraced again in an official capacity because of his importance as a national symbol in the new independent republic, not because of his potential as a representative of the Persian cosmopolis. In the background, ‘Aynī’s origin and relation with Bukhara and Samarqand continue to bolster the perennial Tajik claims and sentiments regarding their heritage in Uzbekistan. For the post-Soviet state appraisal of Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī, see Baratov, *Hero-making*, 120–122.

6 Осорхонаи адабии Садриддин Айни.; For coverage of the jubileum in April 2018 see: <https://www.ozodi.org/a/sadriddin-ayni-celebration/29156283.html> and https://asiaplustj.info/news/tajikistan/societ_y/20180413/v-chest-yubileya-sadriddina-aini-v-dushanbe-otremontirovali-ego-dom-muzei.

7 See <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20180428/Sadriddin-aini-muzey-samarkand-8073340.html>.



FIGURE 5.2 Renovation of the Literary Museum of Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī (Осорхонаи адабии Садриддин Айний), 2018: the bust of ‘Aynī in the courtyard © Gabrielle van den Berg

years after the celebration of his 140th birthday, a part of the house was torn down in order to make room for a new building complex.⁸

⁸ See plans.

In this museum, or house-museum as it is called, many objects related to ‘Aynī’s life as a national writer are on display, including a large amount of his writings, such as the above-mentioned *Namūna-yi adabiyāt-i Tājik*, an anthology of Persian-Tajik literature from the 10th-century poet Rūdakī to his own poetry of the 1920s.⁹

Throughout the Soviet period and beyond, most of the literary output of Šadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī has been in print, in three different scripts: first in Arabic and Latin script and since the 1940s in Cyrillic script.¹⁰ His compilation *Namūna-yi adabiyāt-i Tājik* (figure 5.3) is a notable exception: its publication (in Perso-Arabic script) met with much resistance, so much so that it could not be published in Samarqand in 1925, but was published a year later through the intervention of Russian orientalist scholars in Moscow.¹¹ It was never reprinted or transliterated into Cyrillic (or any other) script during the Soviet period, and not included in the numerous reprints of ‘Aynī’s collected works. Only in 2010 was a copy in Cyrillic script published in Dushanbe.¹² ‘Aynī himself always stuck to what is now commonly referred to as “the script of the ancestors” (*khaṭṭ-i niyākān*).¹³

Rather surprisingly, a sample of ‘Aynī’s handwriting made its way to Leiden University Library, which holds a small collection of Tajik literature.¹⁴ This collection includes some interesting items, such as some of the early editions of Šadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī’s works published in Latin script. Examples are *ʕfulomon* (“Slaves,” 1935, figure 5.4) and *ʕallodoni Buxoro* (“The Butchers of Bukhara,” 1937).¹⁵

9 The phrase ‘Aynī used was *adabiyāt-i fārs-u tājik*. See also Evelin Grassi, *La letteratura Tagica fra riforme e rivoluzioni (1870–1954) con uno studio preliminare delle Ēddoštō “Memorie” di Sadriiddin Ajnī e appendici bibliografiche* (Napoli: L’Orientale, 2011), 109, esp. footnote 71.

10 For a comprehensive list of ‘Aynī’s publications in different editions, including also Russian translations, see Grassi, *La letteratura Tagica*, chapter v: Bibliografia su Sadriiddin Ajnī, *La sua opera e le Ēddoštō “Memorie”*, 170–210.

11 On the Pan-Turkists’ resistance against this publication, see Bečka, *Sadriiddin Aynī—Father of Modern Tajik Literature*, 26.

12 Grassi, *La Letteratura Tagica*, 108–109.

13 He was however a supporter of the adoption of the Latin alphabet for Tajik. See Evelin Grassi, “From Bukhara to Dushanbe: Outlining the Evolution of Soviet Tajik Fiction”, *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 5, 2017 (691–704), 697 and Bečka, *Sadriiddin Aynī*, 81–82.

14 At present, the collection amounts to ca. 300 catalogued items—I am grateful to Tijmen Baarda for this information.

15 *ʕfulomon* was published in Uzbek in 1934, in Tajik in 1935; *ʕallodoni Buxoro* was published in Uzbek already in 1922, in Tajik in 1937. See Grassi, *La Letteratura Tagica*, 103–106.



FIGURE 5.3 A copy of 'Aynī's *Namūna-yi adabiyāt-i Tājik* (Samarqand, 1925/Moscow, 1926) on display in the Literary Museum of Şadr al-Dīn 'Aynī © Gabrielle van den Berg



FIGURE 5.4 *Qulomon* 'Slaves' (1935), with Russian and Tajik title page. Leiden University Library

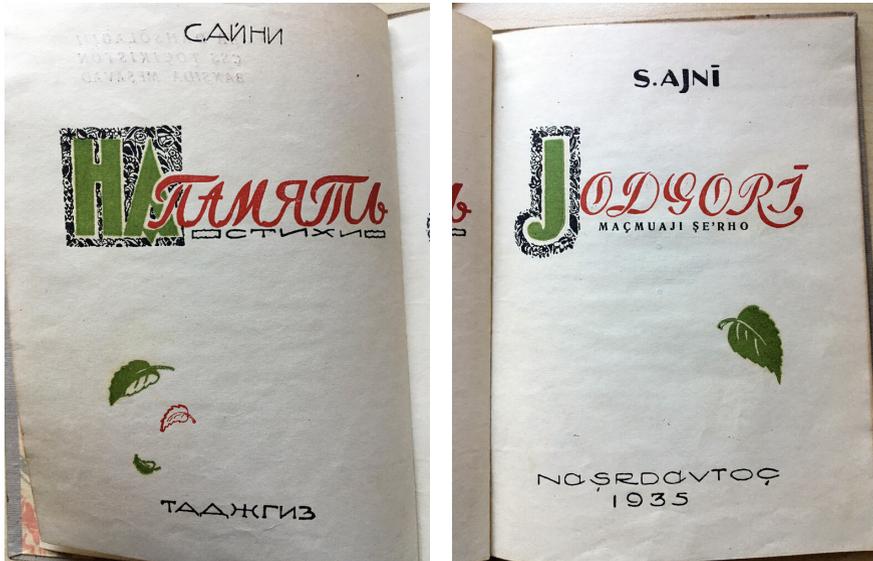


FIGURE 5.5 *Jodgori* 'Souvenir' (1935), Leiden University Library, title pages (pages 4–5) in Russian (5a) and Tajik (5b)

A specimen of 'Aynī's handwriting can be found in a collection of poems entitled *Jodgori* (Souvenir), also in Latin script.¹⁶

'Aynī dedicated this copy to the Tajik writer Sotim Uluǧzoda (1911–1997), who was one of 'Aynī's pupils and friends (figure 5.6).¹⁷ The dedication (in Persian, given in English translation below) runs as follows:

بمناسبت یوبیلی¹⁸ (؟) سی ساله فعالیت ادبی ام به رفیق الوغزاده یادگاری. از طرف نویسنده:
عینی XII/23 سال 35 سمرقند

According to the information on p. 3, the volume was published on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Tajik Socialist Republic in 1935.¹⁹ The dedication from the author (Persian above) however hints at a more personal commemorative event:

16 S. Ajnī, *Jodgori* (Samarqand: Naşrdavtoç, 1935), 1.

17 Jiří Bečka describes him as leading prose-writer of Soviet Tajik literature from the second generation. Jiří Bečka, "Tajik Literature from the 16th Century to the Present," in *History of Iranian Literature*, ed. Jan Rypka (Dordrecht, 1968), 572.

18 This word is hard to decipher: it is probably a Persian transliteration of the Russian word *юбилей*.

19 *Ba dahsolagiji ҷшш Тоҷикистон бахшида меъавад*, Ajnī, *Jodgori*, 3.

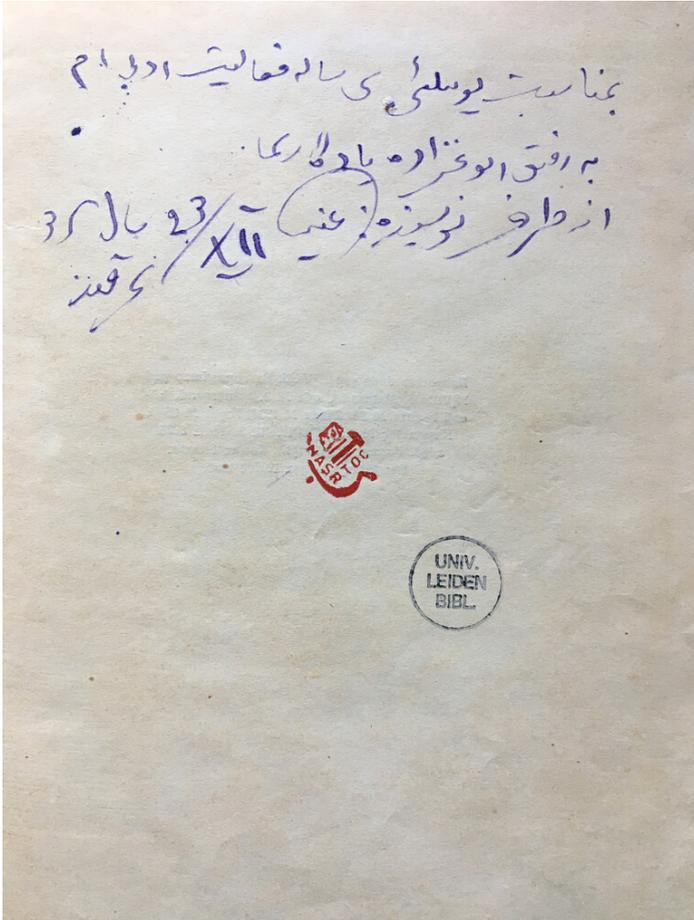


FIGURE 5.6 Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī’s dedication to Sotim Uluğzoda, in the Leiden University Library copy of *Jodgorī*, page 1

On the occasion of my 30-year jubilee of literary activity, to comrade Uluğzoda a “Souvenir”. From the author ‘Aynī: 23 XI of the year ‘35 Samarqand.

In the framework of this volume on memory and commemoration in Central Asia, I would like to go into some aspects of the Leiden University Library’s copy of ‘Aynī’s *Jodgorī* and follow up with an exploration of a travelogue written by Uluğzoda, the author to whom ‘Aynī dedicated this copy of *Jodgorī*. This travelogue is entitled *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī*, and commemorates the events of a trip to Bukhara made in 1950 by three authors: ‘Aynī, Uluğzoda and Ikromī. On different levels, both *Jodgorī* and *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī* illustrate mechanisms of commemoration: much of the contents of *Jodgorī*, in

itself representing in poetry some of ‘Aynī’s major writing themes, resonate in Ulūgzoda’s *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī*, a work which reads as a monument for the iconic figure Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī had become by the time of its appearance.

1 ‘Aynī’s *Jodgorī*

The Leiden University Library copy of the volume *Jodgorī*, as presented in 1935 to Ulūgzoda as a “souvenir” (*yādġārī*, with reference to the title of the volume, *Jodgorī*), is a little book of 64 pages, measuring 14 × 18,5 cm (figure 5.7). It was printed in an edition of 5075 copies in Samarqand, and published by the state press of Tajikistan (Naşrdavtoç) in 1935.²⁰ The flyleaves show a number of typical Soviet Central Asian scenes, printed in red within grey-blue squares while the titles on the Russian and Tajik title pages have been printed in green, red and black. The first letters of the title are in green, surrounded by a floral border in black. The name of the designer of the dust cover, title page and flyleaf is given as Strazdin.²¹

The volume *Jodgorī* contains 26 poems, written between 1904 and 1935. Most of the poems date from the 1930s, and many of the earlier poems have been reworked (*dubora kor karda şud*). In case of the third poem in the collection, entitled “Surudi Ozodī” (Song of Freedom), originally published in the journal *Şū’laji inqilob* (“Flame of revolution,” Samarqand, 1919), there is an indication that at least the fourth line of the refrain has been adapted.²² The refrain (*naqarot*) of the poem in *Jodgorī* reads:

Intiqom, intiqom! Ej raşiqon!
Ej çafodidagon, ej şafiqon
Ba’d azin dar çahon hukmron bod!
Proletar, Proletar, Proletar!

Revenge, revenge! Oh comrades!
 Oh oppressed ones, oh benevolent ones!
 May the world be ruled from now on
 By the proletariat, proletariat, proletariat!

20 Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 2. At this moment in time, the state press of the Soviet republic of Tajikistan, established in 1929, made use of the Samarqand printing press, located in the Soviet republic of Uzbekistan.

21 Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 6: *super-oblozka, oblozka, titul va forzets kori rassom* Strazdin. On the same page the name of the chief editor (*muharriri mas’ul*)—Dajlamī and technical editor (*muharriri texnikī*)—Ça’farūf is given.

22 Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 13–14.

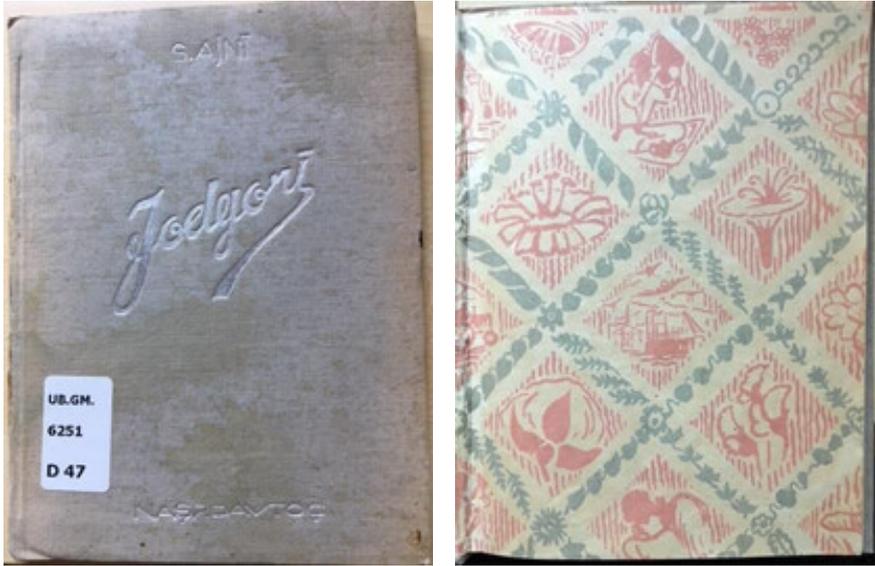


FIGURE 5.7 *Jodgori*, front cover (7a) and flyleaf (7b)

In the Leiden University Library copy of the volume, the words *Proletar*, *Proletar*, *Proletar* have been crossed out with pencil, presumably by the owner of the volume—Uluġzoda?—and have been replaced with the words *Hurriyat*, *adolat*, *rafoqat* (“Freedom, justice, friendship”) in Cyrillic script.²³ This alteration may be in line with the original text of the poem, published in 1919. It may well be that in 1935, when this poem appeared as part of the collection entitled *Jodgori*, ‘Aynī was of the opinion that the Soviet cause was served better with the more specifically communist buzzword *proletar* and adapted his original version accordingly.²⁴ In an attempt to restore the original version, the owner of the copy may have changed the words again.

The main theme of the majority of the poems in this volume is the glorification of revolution, describing the perennial struggle against oppression and exploitation in a variety of poetic forms.²⁵ A number of poems are in com-

23 Bečka notes that “Surudi Ozodi” was a translation of the *Marseillaise*, also known under the title “Marshi hurriyat,” and done under the influence of Majakovskij. Bečka, *Sadriddin Ayni*, 70.

24 ‘Ayni was under pressure from a variety of groups to “sovietize” Tajik literature; Bečka notes that the “propagators of the theory of proletcult” were against all pre-Revolutionary literature and saw Tajik literature as harmful for proletarian thought. Bečka, *Sadriddin Ayni*, 26–27.

25 ‘Ayni used both traditional and free forms of poetry, as discussed below. In his introduction (“Jak-du suxan”) to *Jodgori*, ‘Ayni explains he had difficulties in handling revolutionary

memoration of specific events, such as the tenth anniversary of the newspaper *Pravda Vostoka*²⁶ and the fifteenth anniversary of Tajikistan, in a poem entitled “15 sol”:²⁷

*Ponzdah sol peş azin ba ҷahon
Toҷikiston nabudu nomaş ham,
Bud ore ba nom kūhiston
Kūhsore xarobu purmotam,
Az fişori amiru boju vazir
Sanghojaş şikasta, xūrda baham ...*

*Dar cunin hol otaşin sele
Az labi Neva zad zabona burun,
Kand bunjodi ahli istismor
Az labi Neva to labi Ҷayhun,
Sūxt baxti amirho bo taxt,
Şust caşmi jatimho az xun ...
Bud in sel Inqilobi Kabir—
Inqilobi Kabiri Oktobir*

In the world of fifteen years ago
There was no Tajikistan, nor its name
There was however a mountainous land
A mountainous place in ruins and full of grief,
By the oppression of the emir, the landowner and the minister
Its stones were broken and all over the place ...

In such a state things were, when a fiery flood
Lashed out from the shores of the Neva

contents within the constraints of metre and rhyme, and that he therefore increasingly inclined towards prose: *Har cand pas Inqilobi Oktabr ham in peşaro [şoir] davom dodam, ammo corcūbaji vaznu qofija baroji ifodaji mazmunhoje ki inqilob ilhom mekard, tangi namud vo jo in ki qobilijati şe'rīji man az ifodaji on mazmunho dar libosi şe'r oçiz omad va daromadam ba nasrnavisī.*

Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 7.

- 26 Written as *Pravda Vastok*, in “Dah sol—ba ҷaşni dahsolagiji rūznomaji ‘Pravda Vastok’”, dated October 1932. Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 29–30.
- 27 Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 31–32; this is a translation of the first two stanzas. Three more stanzas, of varying length, follow, and the poem ends with the verse: *Zinda bod firqa—firqaji Lenin! / Dohiji ū rafiq Stalin!* “Long live the party—the party of Lenin! / Its leader comrade Stalin!” (bold type follows the original).

It broke away the fundamentals of the exploiters
 From the shores of the Neva to the shores of Jayhun,
 It consumed the good fortune of the emir and his throne,
 It washed the blood from the eyes of the orphans ...
 This flood was the Great Revolution
 The Great Revolution of October.

The poem continues in the same vein, celebrating the new world order, the USSR, Lenin's party and his successor Stalin; in the third stanza Tajikistan's cotton is referred to as an object of jealousy to England.

The volume includes furthermore a number of poems celebrating other writers, such as Maxim Gorky²⁸ and Lāhūtī,²⁹ who was a great source of inspiration to ‘Aynī. The poet Pajrav (Paīrav Sulāimōnī, 1899–1933), who died at a very young age, is celebrated with a short elegy.³⁰

A longer elegy, mourning the death of ‘Aynī's brother Ḥājī Sirāj in the prison of the emir of Bukhara is entitled “Marsijja—Dar kušta şudani Hoçī Siroç dar zindoni amir.”³¹ It is written as a *mukhammas*: it is made up of six stanzas of five double verses (*bayts*) each. Stanzas 1–5 end with the same *bayt*

*Çigaram ob şudu rext zi du çaşmi taram,
 Çigaram, voçigaram, voçigaram, voçigaram!*

My liver melted down and poured from my wet eyes
 My liver, oh my liver, my liver, my liver!³²

28 “Şojistaji Hurmat—ba çaşni chihilsol fa’olijati adabiji ustodi buzurg Maksim Gorkij,” dated September 1932, Samarqand. Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 27–28.

29 “Inqilobi surx. Dar naziraji “Inqilobi surxi” san’atkori behamto—rafiq Lohuti,” undated; “Soiqa—ba munosibati çaşni sisola fa’olijati adabiji ustodi san’atkor, şoiri çahonşumul rafiq Lohuti,” dated June 1933, written in *dehaji Zimcurud (rajoni Stalinobod) Istirohatgohi hukumatī*, and “Dili Lohuti—muxammasi ghazali Lohuti,” dated *ta’rixī taxmis maj*, 1927 Samarqand. Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 18, 36–37 and 52–53.

30 “Pajrav zi mijon raft—1899–1933,” Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 33; on this poet see Keith Hitchins, “A Bukharan Poet between Tradition and Revolution: Paīrav Sulāimōnī,” in Matteo de Chiara and Evelin Grassi, *Iranian Languages and Literatures from Central Asia from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 2015), 259–272. Hitchins notes the influence of ‘Aynī and Lāhūtī on the work of Paīrav Sulāimōnī.

31 Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 15–17.

32 This is a very literal translation. Bečka opts for: “My heart has changed into water pouring out through moist eyes, / Oh me, my dear, oh me, my dear, oh me” Bečka, *Sadriddin Aynī*, refrains to the translated stanzas, 72–73.

In this poem, as well as in many other examples in the volume, ‘Aynī remains true to the various forms and formal rules of classical lyric poetry, even though he uses these forms to express contents different from what was customary in poetry prior to his time.³³ As Bečka notes, this elegy serves to accuse, rather than to mourn and praise.³⁴ It is a vivid and utterly bitter representation of the murder of his brother Sirāj al-Dīn (Ḥājī Sirāj) in prison. See for example the fifth stanza of the poem:

*In šunidam ki du-se zolimi xunxori durušt
Dasti on xastaji mazlum bubastand ba pušt;
Rahm novarda va becorağiju begunaheš,
Mezadandaš hama dam gah ba lagad goh ba mušt.
In hama zulm ki on xuknihodon kardand,
Na ba ojini maçusastu na keši zardušt.
Heçgah mo naşunidem ki insonero
Babr, jo xirs va jo xuk badain vahşat kušt
Çigaram ob şudu rext ... [refrain]*

I heard that two or three bloodthirsty tyrants
Tied the hands of that wounded and oppressed one on his back;
Without mercy for his helplessness and his innocence,
They beat him all the time, kicking and hitting with their fists.
All the tyrannical atrocities that these pig-forms performed,
Is not according to the Magian customs or the Zoroastrian belief.
Never have we heard that man
Was killed with such ferocity by tiger, bear or pig.

This stanza contains a reference to Zoroastrianism, which sounds slightly out of place in this context. One would rather have expected a reference to justice and Islam. It may well be that ‘Aynī wished to avoid any explicit reference to Islam in this volume, and reworked the older poetry included in it accordingly. This *marsijja* or “elegy” was originally written in August 1918 in Tashkent, but has been reworked, as indicated at the end of the poem.

33 On the development of Aini’s poetry, see Samuel Hodgkin, “Revolutionary Springtimes: Reading Soviet Persian-Tajik Poetry, from Ghazal to Lyric,” in de Chiara and Grassi (2015), *Iranian Languages and Literatures*, 273–305. This chapter includes a translation and discussion of a ghazal (on 279–280) which appeared under the title “Ba Zūrnali ‘Şū’laji Inqilob’” in *Jodgorī* (21).

34 See also Bečka, *Sadriiddin Ayni*, 71–73. Bečka includes a translation of stanzas I, II, IV and VI.

The oldest poem in *Jodgorī* is a ghazal of 12 distichs, entitled “Bazm” (Feast) and dated 1904, Bukhara, Kūkaldāsh Madrasa.³⁵ It was apparently written during ‘Aynī’s studies at this 16th-century madrasa, which today reportedly hosts a small ‘Aynī museum in the northern part of the building.³⁶ In his *Ēddoštho* (Memoirs) ‘Aynī refers to his *bazmqardī* (“feasting”) during his residency at the Kūkaldāsh Madrasa, which started in 1899.³⁷ It may well be that this ghazal was written on the occasion of one of these literary gatherings.

The ghazal is a eulogy to the musicians of Bukhara and is full of playful references to their music and their names. It contains verses such as:

Ba jak siporişi Dovudu Jusufu Levī
Zi carx raqskunon bar zamin rasad nohid

With one performance of Dovud and Jusuf and Levi
 Venus comes down from the heavens, dancing towards the earth.

verse 5

The footnote to this verse reads: “Dovud, Jusuf and Levī were famous singers and musicians from the Jewish community in Bukhara. Levī also found fame in Soviet music (*musiqaji şūrajī*) and died in 1926”.³⁸ “Bazm” is thus very much an insiders’ poem: the footnotes to this poem, provided by ‘Aynī, offer crucial information to understand its context and background.

As this brief exploration of the volume demonstrates, the title *Jodgorī* or “souvenir” very much suits its contents. It offers, as it were, a brief and poetic introduction into some of ‘Aynī’s well-known themes, often focused on his life in Bukhara, in celebration of his jubilee as a writer for 30 years. Apparently, ‘Aynī presented copies to his colleagues and friends when the volume appeared in 1935. One of them was the young writer Sotim Uluğzoda. This particular gift may have marked the beginning of a long collegial relationship, a testimony of which can be found in Uluğzoda’s *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī*, written

35 1904 *Buxoro, madrasaji Kokaltoş*. Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, 47–48.

36 See <https://archnet.org/sites/2116> and the tourist travel site <https://www.centralasia-travel.com/en/countries/uzbekistan/places/bukhara/kukeldash>: “Sadriiddin Ayni, an outstanding Central Asian poet and writer of the modern times, lived and worked in the madrasah. He died in the mid-20th c, and the northern part of the building houses his memorial museum now. It shows his belongings and some of the manuscripts.”

37 Sadriiddin Aīnī, *Ēddoštho*, qismi čorūm (Stalinabad, Naşriēti Davlatii Tojikiston, 1955): 434. ‘Aynī’s describes his move and subsequent stay at Kūkaldāsh Madrasa in some detail on 427–434.

38 Ajnī, *Jodgorī*, p. 48, footnote 9.

15 years later in commemoration of a visit they made together to Bukhara, the city that continued to be the major source of inspiration for ‘Aynī.

2 ‘Aynī and Uluǧzoda: Uluǧzoda’s *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aini*

Comrade (*raftiq*) Uluǧzoda, as he is addressed by ‘Aynī, was twenty-four years old when he received ‘Aynī’s “souvenir”. Uluǧzoda was born in the village of Varzik (Chost, Ferghana region) and had by that time just become the secretary of the Union of Writers of Tajikistan, of which ‘Aynī was president.³⁹ Uluǧzoda’s career as a writer knew its ups and downs. He became an orphan at a young age and was schooled as a teacher in Tashkent; later on he also studied in Moscow. He was active from the late 1930s to the end of the 1980s, as a journalist, translator and writer of poetry, novels, plays and film scripts. His output conforms to the literary standard of his lifetime, i.e. Soviet social realism.⁴⁰

On an official trip to India in 1967 his son Aziz sought asylum at the British embassy in Delhi and this event temporarily brought an end to Uluǧzoda’s public career as a writer in Tajikistan. He regained some of his former status in the following decades and published one of his most popular works, the novel *Firdavsī* in 1988.⁴¹ A version of this novel in Persian script was published in Dushanbe in 1990.⁴²

Uluǧzoda left for Moscow when the Tajik civil war broke out in 1992 and died in Moscow in June 1997. His death coincided with the signing of the peace

39 Keith Hitchins. “Sātīm Uluǧzāda”, in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2014; <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ulugzada-satim>.

40 On this notion and its problematics see Hodgkin, “Revolutionary Springtimes”, 276, footnote 10; compare also Evelin Grassi:

There is no doubt that Soviet literature has often been in service to Soviet propaganda and that writers’ creativity has suffered under a totalitarian regime, but this does not mean that in the history of that literature there are only examples of socialist oriented fiction and poetry to be found. It must be admitted that non-experts in the field of Soviet literature usually have an idea of it as a standardized product of a socialist establishment and as a predominantly ideologized art. Whilst in the West the falsity of this idea has been demonstrated by numerous and relevant literatures studies on Soviet Russian literature, little has been written on the literature of other Soviet republics, which at some point in the twentieth century became “national”.

Grassi, “From Bukhara to Dushanbe”, 691–692.

41 The date 1988 is in accordance with the information of the Writers’ Union of Tajikistan (*Ittifoqi navisandagoni Tojikiston*). In his *Encyclopaedia Iranica* entry “Sātīm Uluǧzāda”, Hitchens gives 1986 as the year of publication.

42 Sātīm Uluǧzāda, *Firdavsī* (Dushanbe: ‘Irfān, 1990). The novel won the Book of the Year award in Iran in 1996 and was accordingly published in Iran as well.



FIGURE 5.8

‘Aynī and UluĖzoda during their trip to Bukhara in 1949

PHOTO FROM SADRIDDIN AĪNĪ, *KULLIĖT*, JILDI 6 (DUSHANBE: NAŞRIĖTI DAVLATII TOJIKISTON, 1962), BETWEEN 264–265

accords in Moscow, and the story goes that UluĖzoda’s body was taken back to Dushanbe in the same plane that brought the peace negotiators back to Tajikistan. This led the Tajik writer Sattor Tursun to compare the fate of UluĖzoda with that of Firdawsī, whose life had formed the inspiration for UluĖzoda’s successful novel, referred to above.⁴³ Peace came too late for UluĖzoda, in the same way as recognition from Sultan Maĥmūd and a suitable reward came too late for Firdawsī, whose coffin was famously carried from the city gates of Tus just as the caravan of Maĥmūd entered the city gates.⁴⁴

UluĖzoda and ‘Aynī not only had a mentor-pupil relationship but were also friends. The third volume of UluĖzoda’s *Muntaxabot* (“Selected works”) contains a short report of a trip to Bukhara he and ‘Aynī took together with the writer Ćalol Ikromī (1909–1993) in 1949 (figure 5.8); the work is dated 1950, with an epilogue dated 1969.⁴⁵

‘Aynī and Ikromī both hailed from the Bukhara area and had both studied at the Kūkaldāsh Madrasa. Like Ikromī, UluĖzoda around 1950 was a young but well-established writer.

43 “Sattor Tursun, navisandai digar, az in vazī‘at ba unvoni ‘foji‘ai Sotim UluĖzoda’ nom burd va onro ba sarnavişti Abulqosimi Firdavsī, šo‘iri buzurġi klosik, šabeh xond. Vai guft in har du az dardi farzand girifto ri musibatu ozor šuda va dar vatani xud ovarayu xor šudand.”

This remark was made during a conference in commemoration of UluĖzoda’s 100th anniversary. See https://www.bbc.com/tajik/institutional/2011/09/110930_mm_ulughza_deh.

44 Also UluĖzoda included this story in his biographical novel *Firdavsī*. In the Persian edition (1990), 428–432.

45 Sotim UluĖzoda, *Muntaxabot* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1975), 93–113; in the table of contents on page 423, this work is further described as *qaidhoi safar* (travel notes).



FIGURE 5.9 A drawing depicting ʻAynī and Bukhara on the title page of Uluǰzoda's *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī*, as included in Sotim Uluǰzoda, *Muntaxabot* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1975), page 93

In his travel report, entitled *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī* (figure 5.9), Uluǰzoda first informs his readers how he was invited to come along on a trip to Bukhara with ʻAynī and Ikromī, and how he agreed, despite the fact that he had a full agenda and was working on a new novel. The trip itself is not described and Uluǰzoda does not present a day to day report. The travelogue starts when the group has already arrived in Bukhara. What follows are short passages, sketches of no longer than a few pages on the adventures of ʻAynī's revisiting his past in Bukhara.

Uluǰzoda describes how their train wagon was stationed on a track not far from Bukhara railway station, near Qarshi gate. They used the train wagon as a place to stay and would return to it every evening. Uluǰzoda proceeds by giving an account of an official meeting between ʻAynī and the intellectuals (*ziēiēni šahr*) of the city, where ʻAynī received a warm welcome. At this meeting, ʻAynī started his speech in Uzbek (*aziz dūstlar!*) and asked permission to continue in Tajik, as he preferred to speak his mother tongue in his birthplace.⁴⁶ ʻAynī, so Uluǰzoda writes, was very glad to see the immense changes that had taken place in Bukhara:

Seeing this many representatives of Soviet science, scholarship and culture in Bukhara,—the Bukhara, that in the days of ʻAynī's youth was an Islamic place of ignorance and where he had taken so much trouble in educating people, as depicted in his *Memoirs*,—from seeing them ʻAynī is extremely happy. He speaks of the oppressive past, about the renowned

46 Uluǰzoda, *Muntaxabot*, 94.

present and the shining future of the people, about the Fatherland, about Bukhara; he reminds us of the debt and the duties of the servants of culture, who have alongside their own people, their Soviet homeland ...⁴⁷

UluĖzoda and Ikromĭ afterwards had to carry armfuls of flowers to the wagon, where an old conductor (*provodniki solxūrda*), who had a soft spot for 'Aynĭ, put them in vases.

The connection between religion, ignorance and oppression is strongly expressed by UluĖzoda's phrase *johilistoni islomĭ*, "an Islamic place of ignorance." The same sentiment is present in 'Aynĭ's poem "Marsijja—Dar kušta ŗudani HoĖĭ SiroĖ dar zindoni amir," discussed above. It is in these passages that the ideological outlook of UluĖzoda and 'Aynĭ is most visible. Bukhara is depicted as lucky to have escaped the clutches of a reprehensible regime which is identified as Islamic. Hence, it follows that Islam can be identified as a perverse and degenerate force of the past, that has no longer a place in the liberated and newly enlightened city of Bukhara. UluĖzoda represents the rich past of Bukhara in his travel report by giving extensive descriptions of the visits or "pilgrimages" (*ziĕrat*) made by 'Aynĭ to the graves of the poets and scholars of the past. However, they are in no way connected to any form of religious learning.

In UluĖzoda's report there is very much an emphasis on 'Aynĭ's personal history and UluĖzoda regularly refers to 'Aynĭ's Memoirs (*Ĕddoŗtho*), in which he described the places they visit now as they had been in his youth, touching every now and then on the improvements that had been made after 30 years of Soviet rule.⁴⁸ 'Aynĭ's descriptions of Bukhara in previous decades figure heavily in UluĖzoda's writing, who is eager to repeatedly contrast the horrors of the past with the achievements of the present, with 'Aynĭ as an emblematic ambassador.

Accordingly, UluĖzoda describes how much the small group of people accompanying 'Aynĭ on his tour is captivated by his extraordinary and often

47 *Az didani in miqdor namoyandagoni ilmu maorifu madaniyati sovetĭ dar Buxoro,—Buxoro, ki dar aiĕmi javonii Aini johilistoni islomi buda va ũ dar rohi ilmouzi dar on ŗahr on hama maŗaqqathoero, ki dar "Ĕddoŗtho"-yaŗ tasvir ĕftaand, kaŗida bud,—az didani onho Aini behad ŗod meŗavad. Az guzaŗtahoĭ zulmatniŗon, hozirai purŗon va oyandai duraxŗoni xalq, Vatan, Buxoro suxan meronad; qarzu vazifahoĭ xodimoni madaniyatro, ki dar nazdi xalqi xud, Vatani sovetii xud dorand, xotirrason mekunad ..., UluĖzoda, Muntaxabot, 95.*

48 *Ĕddoŗtho* was written between 1948–1954 in five volumes. The first volume and parts of the second volume were published in instalments in the journal *ŗarqi surkh* in 1948 and 1949. Sadridin Aini, *Kulliĕt*, jildi 6, (Dushanbe, Naŗriĕti Davlatii Tojikiston, 1962: 405. The Memoirs were published in book form after 'Aynĭ's death in 1955 (comp. Grassi, *La Letteratura Tagica*, 108).

gruesome tales of the past. ‘Aynī shows them for example the gate of the Ark, the great citadel of Bukhara, where he was beaten with a cane. Another site of unpleasant memories is the Bozori Rismon (“The Threadmakers’ Market”) where ‘Aynī and his school friend saw how two innocent prisoners were killed by the emir’s officials, or “butchers,” as ‘Aynī calls them. The emir is painted in the darkest of colours. ‘Aynī describes how the books in his library were left on the ground to fall victim to mice and moisture. ‘Aynī also point out that all things beautiful from the period of the emirate were made by talented artists, who were brought as slaves to the emir’s court, such as Ustoamak from ‘Aynī’s *Ĕddošt̄ho*. In this manner, the travel report of Uluǰzoda seems to relive the scenes of ‘Aynī’s numerous writings on Bukhara.

The group visits the madrasas Miri Arab and Kūkaldōsh (i.e. Kūkaldāsh); Uluǰzoda duly notes that at present, Miri Arab is the *omūzašgohi diniī* “*Nazorati diniyai musulmononi Osiēi Miēna v Qazoqiston*”, the religious teaching institution of the SADUM, but does not provide further information.⁴⁹ At the time of their visit, the madrasa is closed for the summer holidays and no pupils or teachers are present.⁵⁰

The next madrasa they visit is the Kūkaldāsh Madrasa. Revisiting again ‘Aynī’s memoirs, Uluǰzoda informs his readers that ‘Aynī spent ten years in a small *hujra* of this madrasa, until he was dragged out via its small window in 1917 and beaten up by government attendants and fanatic mullahs, by orders of the emir (*mulozimoni qušbegī va digar mullohoi mutaassib bo farmoni amir*).⁵¹ Uluǰzoda, still following ‘Aynī’s memoirs, tells his readers how ‘Aynī then found refuge with Rahim the oil manufacturer (*ravǰangar*), who protected him against the men of the emir. Now ‘Aynī meets with the son of this man (referred to by Uluǰzoda as *javon*, young man) and they fondly share some memories of Rahim. After this meeting, the group moves on to pay a visit to the mausoleum of Ismā‘il Sāmānī, described as the founder of the great house of the Samanids.⁵²

In Uluǰzoda’s travelogue, ‘Aynī’s recollections of the cruel past in combination with his elevated position as one of the key figures of Soviet Tajikistan neatly match the obligatory display of Soviet merits in Central Asia. However,

49 Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM), established in 1943. The madrasa Miri Arab became the only officially operating Islamic institution in Soviet Central Asia in 1948. See Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism. Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014 (first edition 2007)), 78 and 110.

50 Uluǰzoda, *Muntaxobot*, 97.

51 Uluǰzoda, *Muntaxobot*, 97–98.

52 Uluǰzoda, *Muntaxobot*, 99.

Uluğzoda's account is not just a chain of propagandistic anecdotes. He frequently interweaves sketches and observations into his story which allow the reader not only to catch a glimpse from life in a Soviet Central Asian city in the 1950s, but also to look beyond 'Aynī's role as a Soviet hero. 'Aynī is described as an old man full of stories who is very fond of Bukhara and its people and knows the family history of almost all the people he encounters. 'Aynī seems to be interested first and foremost in performing devotional visits (*ziërat*) to places of the past.

One of 'Aynī's main goals during his visit to Bukhara was to make a pilgrimage to the village where the polymath Ibn Sino (Ibn Sina) was born, so the group spends a day driving in the area around Bukhara in search for this elusive village.⁵³

As soon as they get back to Bukhara late in the afternoon, they embark upon a new quest, this time to find the grave of the poet Mushfiqī (1525–1588). We learn that the grave was believed to be once located in the street formerly known as Miron, opposite the Kosagaron pond: but now, there is no trace of his grave. The street is renamed Okyabr' and the neighbourhood has changed; the pond is no longer there. It is a hot summer day, they are tired and thirsty, but 'Aynī keeps trying—"to him, a pilgrimage to the grave of the poet Mushfiqī is a matter of urgency" (*ba va' ziëratii qabri Mushfiqii šoir zarur ast*).⁵⁴ After some time they are informed that Mushfiqī's grave is located in what now had become a smithy.⁵⁵ Qūčqorov, the party secretary in charge of propaganda, who accompanies 'Aynī, Ikromī and Uluğzoda on their trips in and around Bukhara, has been introduced quite off-handedly earlier on in the travel account. He is now described as making notes in his notebook on the location of the grave, and promises 'Aynī to find the lost tomb and the stone of the grave and to rebuild the mausoleum. Sometime later, however, they are told that Mushfiqī's grave was actually located somewhere else:

- His grave isn't there, this is the place of Mirkamoliddin's grave. Surprised, we look at him and one another.
- How do you know?
- I have lived in this neighbourhood for 32 years, I know.
- And who are you?—'Aynī asks.

53 Lağlaqa is the name of the village. The story on Ibn Sino is covered on 99–103 of *Muntaxabot*.

54 Uluğzoda, *Muntaxabot*, 105.

55 On the Kosagaron neighbourhood, see O.A. Suxareva, *Kvartal'naya Obščina Pozdnefeodal'nogo goroda Buxary*, Moscow: Nauka, 1976, 97–98.

Ikromī whispers to me: “Now Domullo will tell who his father and grandfather were.”

But this man was originally from Samarqand, his father had not lived in Bukhara, otherwise Domullo would certainly have known his father ... He took us away from the smithy, and showed us a pile of earth, which was left from the ruin of mud buildings, and said:

– Look, here was the grave of mullah Mushfiqī.⁵⁶

The search for holy places does not end there, and Ikromī and Uluğzoda have difficulties to get ‘Aynī back to the wagon to rest:

Is Ustad now about to go back to the wagon and take some rest? No, he is again looking for another holy place to visit.⁵⁷

In the hours they get to spend together in the wagon, ‘Aynī provides feedback to the writings of Uluğzoda, and offers various recommendations to improve his work. With reference to the presence of “local words” (*kalimahoi mahallī*) in Uluğzoda’s drafts, ‘Aynī starts to lecture him on how language should be used, and connects this to one of his favorite topics: education and civilization of the people.

– Books are not written for one district, one town or one region, it is written for all the people, who talk in that language. Don’t forget this ... Remember what master Gorky said: I read in an article, he says, that as a result of the revolution and the dissemination of press, education and civilization amongst the people, the language of the ordinary people has also improved; the ruin, that once was the language of the “common

56 – *Qabri vaī in jo ne, in jo joi qabri Mirkamoliddin ast.*

Mo haīron šuda ba vaī va ba yakdigar menigare.

– *Šumo az kujo medoned?*

– *Man siyu du sol boz dar hamin mahalla istiqomat mekunam, medonam.*

– *Xudaton kisted?—savol medihand Aini.*

Ikromī ohista ba man megīyad: “Hozir domullo kī budani padaru boboyašro gufta medihand”.

Ammo on mard aslaš samarqandī buda, padaraš dar Buxoro istiqomat nakarda budaast, vagarna domullo, albatta, padari ūro mešinox ... Vaī moro az ohangarxona onsūtatar burda, dar kanori roh puštai xokero nišon dod, ki az vairoinai binohoi loin boqi monda bud va guft:

“Ana, qabri mullo Mushfiqī dar hamin jo bud.” Uluğzoda, Muntaxabot, p. 106

57 *Aknun ustod ba vagon bargasta dam megiriftagist? Ne, vaī boz ba justujūi ziēratgohi digare aftod. Uluğzoda, Muntaxabot, 107.*

people”, has crumbled and is still crumbling, now, ‘Aynī says, you make up a type, if you represent a person as used to be done: to let the hero speak wrongly, in contrast with the general rules and laws of the language is not right, a “type” (i.e. character) is not made like that.⁵⁸

In the next passage, we move again to poetry. Uluğzoda describes ‘Aynī’s fabulous memory and knowledge of poetry—“tens of thousands of *bayts* of poets from different periods”, and how ‘Aynī recommended young writers to follow the advice of the 12th-century scholar Niẓāmī-yi ‘Arūzī-yi Samarqandī in learning thousands of *bayts* by heart. Thus, the narrative rests on the one hand upon the Soviet present, and on the other hand very much on the Central Asian and Bukharan past, relived via ‘Aynī, whose memoirs, through his prolific writing, have shaped the Tajik collective memory on pre-Soviet Central Asia, in particular Bukhara.

The last part of the travel report is reserved for the visit to ‘Aynī’s birthplace, the village Soktere (Sāktari), not far from Bukhara, where ‘Aynī receives a warm welcome and meets with his relatives (figure 5.10). The focus of this passage however is on the villagers’ achievements regarding the local collective farm (*kolkhoz*). Uluğzoda concludes his travel report with an idyllic scene: ‘Aynī seated on the benches near the pond of the garden, in the shade of green willows; in conversation with the secretary of the District Party Committee (*raikom*) and other officials from the district of Ghijduvon, drinking in knowledge on the day to day business of the collective farm of Soktere.

The report, written in 1950, is in Uluğzoda’s *Muntaxobot* followed by a short epilogue, dated 1969, in humble praise of ‘Aynī, who had passed away 15 years earlier. In the travel report Uluğzoda treats ‘Aynī as a much admired teacher and writer, respectfully referred to as *ustod* or *domullo* (both meaning ‘master’). There is also some room for a lighter tone, resulting in an endearing portrait of an elderly man. This aspect is not at all present in the epilogue: here, Uluğzoda seems to be apologizing for the irreverent way he treated ‘Aynī in his travel account, perhaps in response to changed policies or attitudes towards ‘Aynī almost 20 years later.⁵⁹

58 – *Kitob baroi yak raion, yak shahr ę yak viloyat navišta namešavad, baroi tamomi xalqe, ki dar hamon zabor guftugū mekunand, navišta mešavad. In chizro az ęd nabaroretan ... Yak gapi ustod Gor'kiro dar xotir nigoh doretan: man dar yak maqola xonda budam, vaį megūyad, ki dar natijai revolyuciya va pahni šudani matbuotu maorifu madaniyat dar baını xalq, zaboni xalqi oddi ham isloh šudaast; on vaırone, ki peštari dar zaboni “xalqi avom” bud, barham xūrdaast va bar ham xurda istodaast, aknun vaıro monandi peštara tasavvur karda, “tip mesozam” gufta, qahramonro ba xilofi qoidayu qonunhoi umumii zabor vaıron gap zanonan durust nest, “tip” in xel soxta namešavad. Uluğzoda, Muntaxobot, 109.*

59 Uluğzoda, *Muntaxobot*, 112–113.



FIGURE 5.10 ‘Aynī with his relatives in their *havli* (courtyard) in his home village Soktere, during his trip to Bukhara in 1949
 PHOTO FROM SADRIDDIN AĪNĪ, *KULLIĪT*, JILDI 6 (DUSHANBE: NAŠRIĪTI DAVLATII TOJKISTON, 1962), BETWEEN 280–281

3 Conclusion

In this article I have briefly discussed the ways ‘Aynī and Uluğzoda commemorate their immediate past, and how their perceptions of the past reflect the spirit of their age. The literary monuments of ‘Aynī recreated a past that befitted the Soviet ideological project very well and heavily influenced also Uluğzoda’s work; their literary output reflects in many ways the history of Soviet Central Asia, but also provides insights into Central Asian society beyond Soviet ideology. In *Jodgorī* and *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī* commemorating and revisiting the past are constantly on the forefront, and form the building blocks of creating a new literary legacy. The actual objects—in other words, the source materials for this article, the specific copies of *Jodgorī* and *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aīnī*, contribute in their own way to this literary legacy. The Leiden University Library copy of *Jodgorī* exemplifies and emphasizes the literary and social connection between ‘Aynī and Uluğzoda.

There is yet another connection which should be mentioned here. The Leiden University Library copy of Uluğzoda’s *Muntaxabot*, the collective volume

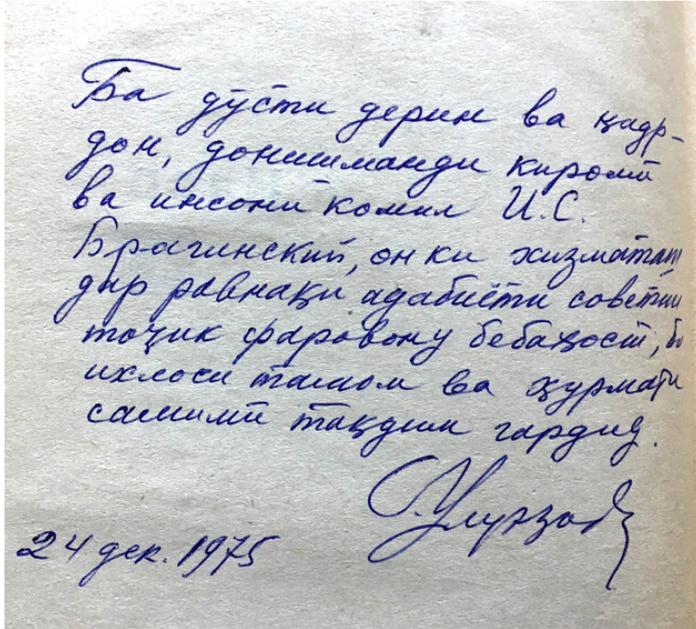


FIGURE 5.11 Uluġzoda's dedication to I.S. Braginskii, in the Leiden University Library copy of his *Muntaxabot* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1975), page 4

in which *Saĥati Buxoro bo hamrohii Aini* can be found, may give us a clue as to the provenance of a specific corpus of Tajik literature in the collection of Leiden University Library. Uluġzoda signed this particular copy and dedicated it to I.S. Braginskii on 24 December 1975 (figure 5.11). Here we read in Tajik, written in Cyrillic script:

A present to my old and valued friend, the honored scholar and perfect man I.S. Braginskii, the one whose service in the flourishing of Soviet Tajik literature is abundant and invaluable, with complete dedication and sincere respect. S. Uluġzoda, 24 December 1975.⁶⁰

I.S. (Iosif Samuilovich) Braginskii (1905–1989) was a well-known scholar in the field of Persian and Tajik literature. Uluġzoda addresses him in high terms of praise, including the qualification *insoni komil* or perfect man—probably in

60 *Ba dūsti derin va qadrdon, doniṣmandi kiromī va insoni komil I.S. Braginskii, on ki xizmataš dar rawnaqi adabiēti sovetii tojik faravonu bebahost, bo ixlосi tamom va hurmati samimī taqdim gardid.* S. Uluġzoda 24 dek. 1975. Uluġzoda, *Muntaxabot*, 4.

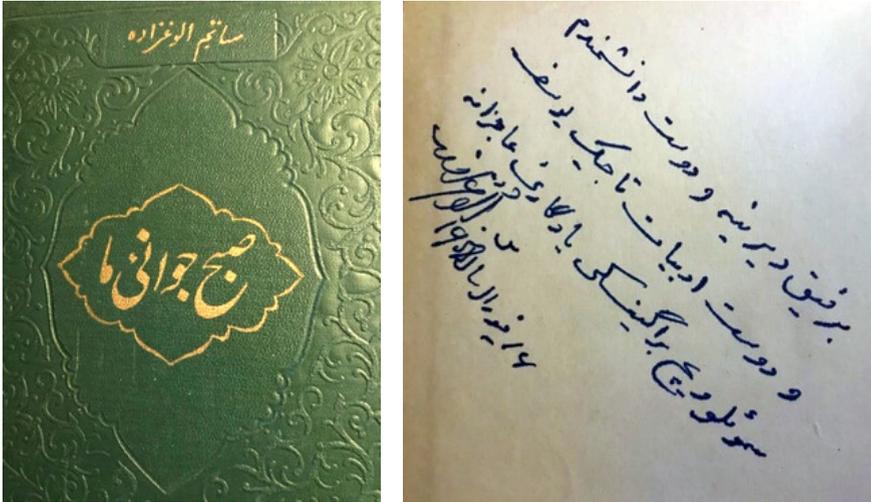


FIGURE 5.12 Uluǧzoda's *Šubḥ-i javānī-yi mā* (Stalinabad: Našriyāt-i Davlatī-yi Tājikistān, 1957), Leiden University Library. Front cover (12a) and Uluǧzoda's dedication to I.S. Braginskii, flyleaf preceding the title page (12b)

explicit reference to the Sufi concept of the Perfect Man, a recurrent topic in classical Persian literature. Braginskii's also worked extensively on 'Aynī. For example, in 1974 a monograph entitled *Problemy tvorčestva Sadriddina Aīni* was published in Dushanbe, and another work on the life and work of 'Aynī appeared in Moscow in 1978.⁶¹ It may well be that Uluǧzoda presented his copy of *Jodgorī* signed by 'Aynī to Braginskii in the context of Braginskii's scholarly work on 'Aynī, together with signed copies of his own work. Apart from the *Muntaxobot*, Leiden University Library owns a copy of the novel *Šubḥ-i javānī-yi mā*, printed in Persian script and accordingly with a dedication of the author in Persian script (see figure 5.12).⁶²

This dedication dates back from 1958 and reads:

To my old comrade and scholar-friend, and friend of Tajik literature Yūsuf Samū'ilūvīč Brāgīnskī, a humble souvenir. S. Ulūghzāda, 14 February 1958.⁶³

61 *Problemy tvorčestva Sadriddina Aini* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1974); *Sadriddin Aini: žizn' i tvorčestvo* (Moscow: Sov. pisatel', 1978).

62 Sātim Ulūghzāda, *Šubḥ-i javānī-yi mā* (Stalinabad: Našriyāt-i Davlatī-yi Tājikistān, 1957), flyleaf preceding title page.

63 Ba rafiq-i dirīna va dūst-i dānišmandam va dūst-i adabiyāt-i tājik Yūsuf Samū'ilūvīč Brāgīnskī yādgārī-yi 'ājjāna S. Ulūghzāda 14 fevral sāl-i 1958.

These two dedications demonstrate the long-standing friendship between the scholar Braginskiĭ and the author Ulugzoda. We are left with the question how Braginskiĭ's wonderful collection of Tajik literary heritage ended up in Leiden University Library, but for the time being, this question will have to remain unanswered.

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PART 3

Memory, Religious and Social Practices



Editing Sufism: Contemporary Negotiations on Memory and Religious Practice in Afghanistan

Annika Schmeding

Sufi teachers tell the truth in beautiful words, but in their eyes there are storms raging, there are debates happening, and those are not easy or tame. The problem is that there are very few real Sufis left in Kabul, or in Afghanistan in general. Most teachers and knowledgeable pirs have died in the last years. These days Sufism is like uncooked bread. People have the ingredients and the knowledge about the technical parts, but it's not baked. They eat it raw, trying to sell you as if it was the real, tasty thing. Same with people who use poetry. Of course, people know Mawlana and Bedil, and they will recite them. However, it is one thing just to say those things, and another to live by them.

SAMI HASIB NABIZADA, 2018



The comment, made by the author and filmmaker Sami Hasib Nabizada on a crisp afternoon in April 2018 over tea in Kabul, addresses subtle developments that influenced life of Afghans in the second decade of the twenty-first century (2015–2020) when I conducted my ethnographic field research: the perception of Sufi decline, doubts as to the Islamic veracity of Sufi teaching, the raging debates among Sufi groups resulting in new Sufi organizations, and the status of poetry in memory practices and religious teachings. Issues such as how safe it was to voice divergent opinions on religion publicly, to enact Sufi affiliated practices or to debate the bases of religious education emerged as decisive to freedom of speech as well as physical safety. While much has changed since my research with the withdrawal of the international troops and the government take-over by the Taliban, the findings presented here offer a window into discussions among Afghans in the last decade pertaining to the negotiation of memory and religious practice—negotiations

that are ongoing to the present day, albeit with different power-brokers in charge.

This chapter examines discursive strands in post-2001 Afghanistan (2001–2021) through a focus on key events in public debate on religion and Sufism as well as open action taken by Afghans as a response to this discursive environment. For two decades, after the ousting of the Taliban government of the 1990s and before the Taliban took power again in 2021, a relatively open democratic system enabled public debate. However, it was a time that was not without risks for rendering criticism on religious issues. My findings offer a glimpse into a moment in time, in which underlying tensions curtailed expression, made actors cautious and rendered the negotiation over what religion means, its borders and implications for people's lives, also a matter of self-preservation. This negotiation is far from decided or over, even now. Afghanistan, in spite of its reputation, was home to lively debates among and between newly-established religious civil society institutions. Their attempts at influencing opinion and public discourse through speeches, publications and individual attempts at gaining control are both far-reaching and, in academic terms, undiscovered terrain. How they will be positioned in the post-US Taliban-ruled Afghanistan remains yet to be seen. I hope to offer an alternative to a discussion that all too often sidelines the question of more subtle changes in contemporary Afghans' lived experience of religiosity and collectively negotiated memory practices.

The observations in this chapter do not form a complete picture, but instead offer a kaleidoscopic view of how from different locations, geographical as well as social, Sufism was perceived, evaluated, defined and categorized in highly diverging ways in contemporary Afghanistan. This evaluation is connected to collectively maintained and individually negotiated memory—of poetry, of Islam and the place of Sufism within the two. How to capture the by now almost colloquial term 'collective memory' in its analytical capacity and its limitations? Maurice Halbwachs' seminal conceptualization of collective memory emphasizes the social realm in the process of remembering, showing how shared attachments to the past enhance solidarity within a group.¹ However, other authors have pointed out that contemporary collective memory "becomes a permanent process of negotiation between dominant ideologies and alternative popular views of the past".² Just because we are part of a society does not mean that we all subscribe to the same collective

1 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

2 Itzhak Weismann, Mark Sedgwick, and Ulrika Martensson, *Islamic Myths and Memories* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd. 2014), 7.

memory. We can belong to sub-groups within the same society and our position within these other groups can change the vantage point from which we view a certain point in history. This means that while social memory is collectively maintained and publicly commemorated (for example through monuments or memorial days), it is also individually negotiated in differing ways, depending on the place of the individual in society and their personal connection to the collective memory.³ Individuals create links to the memory of historical events and to oral history through their own emotional attachment. This is a negotiation between personal position and available public narratives, shaped in the very interaction.

This chapter discusses three examples of confrontation and communication about how Sufism is embedded within Afghan society, how it becomes a point of contention, negotiation, or abrogation. It proposes an additional interpretation of a famous case (namely the murder of Farkhunda, a young law student), discusses the introduction of a new institution (Sufi Council), and poses questions about how the position of orality and literacy, of Sufi poetry and its place inside or outside of Islam, was discussed in urban Afghanistan at the point of my research.⁴

1 Sufism as a Contested Continuum

In pre-war Afghanistan, the poetry of the Persian masters infused with Sufi thought and imagery was a core element of education at Afghan madrasas, not only as a staple in religious education but also in everyday speech. One would be hard-pressed even today to find an Afghan who cannot reference at least a few lines, if not a full poetry recitation of Mawlānā Rūmī, Bedil or Ḥāfiz. But while Rumi has become a literary hit in the West,⁵ his poetry together

3 See for example: Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Earle H. Waugh, *Memory, Music, and Religion: Morocco's Mystical Chanters*. (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2005).

4 The observations were part of my doctoral dissertation work (Annika Schmeding. "Sufis in Afghanistan: Religious Authority and Succession in an Insecure Age," PhD diss., Boston University, 2020). The examples discussed in this chapter are mainly drawn from urban and semi-urban areas of central, north and western Afghanistan, specifically from Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat. ADD: Research was funded by the Wenner Gren Foundation and the Global Religion Research Initiative (GRRE). Some material of the chapter is also part of the book "Sufi Civilities/Religious Authority and Political Change in Afghanistan," forthcoming with Stanford University Press.

5 Albeit losing his religious connotations, see: Rozina Ali, "The Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi." *The New York Times*, 1 May 2017. <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-erasure-of-islam-from-the-poetry-of-rumi>.

with other Sufi-infused literature has been largely purged from the educational canon at madrasas, a baseline for religious education in Afghanistan, where at the time of research primarily the Qur'an was taught. This development paralleled other events, such as a generational gap in the understanding and use of poetry, as well as a broader societal push for seeing poetry as a secular pastime devoid of religious meaning or impact for teaching.

Gradual developments in (religious) education change not only the canon that is being taught, but also the understanding of what constitutes Islam and to which degree Sufism in its various forms, represents a part of it, or is seen as innovation and therefore outside of it. These developments do not form a linear correlation leading from education to knowledge to attitudes but they describe how the educational realm at one time acted as a backdrop and corresponded to an oral culture infused with Sufi thought and ethics.

The last decades have seen both how people are taught religion and how public discourses surrounding religion are gradually changing. Afghans positioned themselves in varying ways towards this development,⁶ and inhabited differing and even competing ethical realms. This, however, does not negate overall changes in the use and reference of these tropes and ways of thinking.

While there is a considerable amount of literature on Sufism and Afghanistan that deals with the earlier centuries of Sufi orders, and Sufi poets under the Kart, Timurid, Mughal or even Durrani rule,⁷ including writings on

6 On the discussion of multiple co-existing moral registers see: Samuli Schielke, "Being Good in Ramadan: Ambivalence, Fragmentation, and the Moral Self in the Lives of Young Egyptians." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009): 24–40.

7 For example: Joseph Arlinghaus, "Varieties of Islamic Expression in the Mughal Province of Kabul in the 16th Century," in *Islam and Indian Regions*, ed. Anna Libera Dallapiccola and Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 7–29; Stephen F. Dale and Alam Payind, "The Ahrārī Waqf in Kabul in the Year 1546 and the Mughūl Naqshbandiyyah," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119, no. 2 (1999): 218–233; Ertuğrul Ökten, "Jami (817–898/1414–1492): His Biography and Intellectual Influence in Herat," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2007); Nile Green, "Tribe, Diaspora, and Sainthood in Afghan History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67 no. 1 (2008): 171–211; Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Jo-Ann Gross, "Naqshbandi Appeals to the Herat Court: A Preliminary Study of Trade and Property Issues," in *Studies on Central Asian History in Honor of Yuri Bregel*, ed. Devin A. DeWeese (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asia Studies, 2001), 113–128; Robert D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Shrine* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Jürgen Paul, "The Khwajagan in Herat during Shahrukh's Reign," in *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for İsenbike Togan*, ed. İlker Evrim Binbaş and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel (Istanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2011), 217–250; Lawrence G. Potter, "The Kart Dynasty of Herat: Religion and Politics in Medieval Iran," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1992); Lawrence G. Potter, "Sufis and Sultans in Post-Mongol Iran," *Iranian Studies* 27.4 (1994), 77–102; Waleed Ziad, "Trans-Regional Authority in the Age

early twentieth century developments of interaction between religion and politics,⁸ comprehensive contemporary anthropological literature on religion in Afghanistan, and Sufism in particular, is thin.⁹ Twentieth-century pre-war writing on Afghanistan's Islam is often connected to ethnicity, focusing on religion among Pashtuns, Uzbeks or sectarian allegiances,¹⁰ or portraying pop-

of Political Fragmentation and the Great Game: Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Revivalist Networks and the Shaping of the Early Modern Persianate World, 1747–1857," (PhD diss., Yale University, 2015); Waleed Ziad, "From Yarkand to Sindh via Kabul: The Rise of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi Networks in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Persianate World: Rethinking a Shared Sphere* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 125–186.

- 8 See: Sana Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); David B. Edwards, "The Political Lives of Afghan Saints: The Case of the Kabul Hazrats," in *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam*, ed G.M. Smith and Carl W. Ernst (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), 171–192; Ashraf Ghani, "Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880–1901," *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 269–284; Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Helena Malikyar and Amin Tarzi, "The Jilani Family in Afghanistan," *Journal of the History of Sufism* 1–2 (2000): 93–102; Naweed Senzil, *Religious Response to Social Change in Afghanistan, 1919–1929: King Aman-Allah and the Afghan Ulama* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999); Magnus Marsden and Benjamin D. Hopkins, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Almut Wieland-Karimi, *Islamische Mystik in Afghanistan: die strukturelle Einbindung der Sufik in die Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998).
- 9 With the notable exception of Nile Green (ed.), *Afghanistan's Islam: From Conversion to the Taliban* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017).
- 10 For Pashtuns see: Akbar S. Ahmed, *Millenium and Charisma among the Pathans: A Critical Essay in Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); James Caron, "Afghanistan Historiography and Pashtun Islam: Modernization Theory's Afterimage," *History Compass* 5, no. 2 (2007): 314–329; James Caron, "Sufism and Liberation across the Indo-Afghan Border, 1880–1928," *South Asian History and Culture* 7, no. 2 (2016): 135–154; for a focus on Uzbeks see: Ingeborg Baldauf, "Female Sainthood between Politics and Legend: The Emergence of Bibi Nushin of Shibirghan," in *Afghanistan's Islam: From Conversion to the Taliban*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 204–224; Ingeborg Baldauf, "Zur religiösen Praxis özbekischer Frauen in Nordafghanistan," in *Religious and Lay Symbolism in the Altaic World and Other Papers: Proceedings of the 27th Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1989), 45–54; Nazif Shahrani, "Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse in Afghanistan and Turkistan in the Modern Period," in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, ed. R.L. Canfield (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 161–188; M. Homayun Sidky, "Malang, Sufis, and Mystics: An Ethnographic and Historical Study of Shamanism in Afghanistan," *Asian Folklore Studies* 49, no. 2 (1990): 275–301; for a focus on the Hazara and Shi'i religion, see: Lucas-Michael Kopecky, "Die Saiyid und die imāmitischen Hazāra Afghanistans: religiöse Vergemeinschaftung und Ethnogenese," in *Die ethnischen Gruppen Afghanistans: Fallstudien zu Gruppenidentität und Intergruppen-*

ular practices related to shrine veneration and the Sufi musical tradition.¹¹ Works on religion in Afghanistan post-2001 focus mainly on the Taliban, Islamic militancy, women's issues or the Afghan state.¹² These foci mirror a trend of humanitarian, development and consultancy-based research in the post-2001 setting in which short-term policy interest and embedded anthropology have replaced the long-term ethnographic field research of earlier decades.¹³ The only notable recent ethnographic accounts or overviews that give valuable insights center on Afghan Sufi leadership in exile in Pakistan¹⁴ or on memor-

beziehungen (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 1986), 165–203; Lucas-Michael Kopecky, “The Imami Sayyed of the Hazarajat: The Maintenance of Their Elite Position,” *Folk* 24 (1982): 89–110; and especially for a cultural ecology perspective on changing sectarian alliances and conversion, see Robert L. Canfield, *Faction and Conversion in a Plural Society: Religious Alignments in the Hindu Kush* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973).

- 11 See: Harald Einzmann, *Religiöses Volksbrauchtum in Afghanistan: islamische Heiligenverehrung und Wallfahrtswesen im Raum Kabul* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977); Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, *Reise zu Gott. Sufis und Derwische im Islam* (München: C.H. Beck, 2000); Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, “Nachbildungen von Bettelschalen: Ihre Bedeutung im Islamischen Volksglauben Afghanistans und Pakistans,” *Münchener Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 4 (1994): 49–55; Danuta Penkala-Gawecka, “Pilgrimage as Cure: Shrines in Afghanistan,” *Etnografia Polska* 17 (1992): 35–45; Lutz Rzehak, “Verheiratet mit Dschinn: Formen der Volksfrömmigkeit in Afghanistan,” *Südasiens* 2: 74–77; Bo Utas, “The Naqshbandiyya of Afghanistan on the Eve of the 1978 Coup d'état,” in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity*, ed. E. Özdalga (Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul: Istanbul, 1999), 117–127.
- 12 See: Thomas J. Barfield, “An Islamic State is a State Run by Good Muslims: Religion as a Way of Life and Not as an Ideology in Afghanistan,” in *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. Robert Hefner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 213–239; Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann, *Talibanistan: Negotiating the Borders Between Terror, Politics, and Religion* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); Julie Billaud, “Visible under the Veil: Dissimulation, Performance and Agency in an Islamic Public Space,” *Int. J. Women Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009): 120–135; Robert D. Crews and Amin Tarzi, *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Jennifer Heath and Ashraf Zahedi, eds. *Land of the Unconquerable: The Lives of Contemporary Afghan Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011); Jennifer Heath, ed. *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008); Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2001); Alex Strick van Winschoten and Anand Gopal, “Ideology in the Afghan Taliban,” AAN Thematic Report, 01/2017, accessed at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/201705-AGopal-ASvLinschoten-TB-Ideology.pdf>; critically, see: Allesandro Monsutti, “Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42 (2013): 269–285.
- 13 Monsutti, “Anthropologizing Afghanistan,” 274.
- 14 See: Kenneth P. Lizzio, *Embattled Saints: My Year with the Sufis of Afghanistan* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 2014).

ies of Sufism in Afghanistan accessed through interviews with the Afghan diaspora.¹⁵

It would seem that the inaccessibility of Afghanistan during wartimes did not leave much room for anything but consultancy agenda-driven research in the field of religion.¹⁶ However, also in the few pre-war decades during which research flourished, foreign researchers did not seem to recognize religion as a worthwhile topic for research, as Islam was more of an unacknowledged backdrop, an “all-encompassing way of life”, which was naturally embedded in people’s lives.¹⁷ This natural, unquestioned embeddedness seems to have been put to the test in recent years and during the decades of war that were, in one way or another, infused and legitimised with the veneer of Islamic and Islamicized language: “with all current factions claiming some Islamic justification for their actions, Islam itself becomes a locus of contest and not the basis of a distinct political ideology.”¹⁸ Mirroring this shift, an Afghan-American interviewee recounts a childhood memory on the decision about religious education in the late 1990s:

Sufism was never much formally talked about, but it was a normal part of life that was always there, at the same time individual and very communal. I remember when my parents talked about which mosque to bring us to, to learn to read the Qur’an. We looked at several places. One was too Arab; the other one had a strong Pakistani leaning. My mother found that ok, but my father said: no, they are against Sufis and I don’t want my children to grow up learning that. I remember sitting in the back of the car and them talking about it. It was very much a part of everything, not separate.¹⁹

While this memory fragment resonates with observations on the embedding of Sufism into everyday life, it also shows how religious education had become a conscious choice and Sufism a matter of debate.

Before embarking on a discussion about Sufism, however, it is important to parse out what is meant by Sufism in the national and temporal context

15 See: Wieland-Karimi, *Islamische Mystik in Afghanistan*.

16 Though accounts such as Baldauf’s attest to the possibility of research within Afghanistan in the 1990s: Baldauf, “Female Sainthood between Politics and Legend.”

17 Barfield, “An Islamic state,” 213.

18 Barfield, “An Islamic state,” 237.

19 Interview, female interviewee, Afghan, 25 years old, New York, March 2016. Interviewee reconstructed that the memory might be from 1999.

of Afghanistan in the reconstruction era. There are a variety of practices and groups of people on a continuum that can be described as belonging to Sufism—ranging from institutionalized associations (*tarīqas*) with formal teacher-disciple (*pīr-murīd*) relationships, to the hereditary, politically prominent Sufi families of the Mujaddidī and Gīlānī, to *zikr* meetings at Sufi lodges (*khānaqāhs*) or at regional and local shrines (*ziyārats*), to charms and amulet (*taʿwīz*) sellers at the street level of Afghan society. This is a contested continuum, not only for those outside of it but also those placed within it. What is considered as “true” Sufism, as “real Islam” or not is a matter of debate, both within these groups and between them. As Dandekar and Tschacher have pointed out: “in naming (or refusing to name) certain actions, processes or discourses as ‘Sufism’, actors contest the power to bring a certain reality (such as claims of ‘belonging’) into being”.²⁰ Dandekar and Tschacher contend that to define what “really” constitutes Sufism is an unanswerable question, and propose instead to study the politics of the “label” of Sufism itself.²¹ This study takes up this view and applies it to the negotiation and contestation of memory and everyday experience of the label of “Sufi Islam” in Afghanistan.

2 The Tense Past Present—a Re-interpretation

The contestation of this continuum of various Sufi practices and beliefs that are subsumed under the label of Sufism does not take place in a vacuum but at a point in time in which the coexistence of differing interpretations of Islam and the location of religion overall in Afghan society had come under scrutiny. While the fall of the Taliban in the 1990s signaled the advent of a technocratic government backed by the international community, the question as to which interpretation of Islam should be followed, did not cease to exist but found myriad permutations within discourses and incidents in Afghanistan’s society.

The killing of Farkhunda, an event that shook the foundations of Afghan society, offers a glimpse into these underlying tensions and the divergent ways of looking at and remembering the same incident. One way of remembering does not cancel out the other, but each gives clues as to the differing social and personal positioning of those remembering. A closer look at the incident and

20 Deepra Dandekar and Torsten Tschacher, *Islam, Sufism and Everyday Politics of Belonging in South Asia*. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 5.

21 Dandekar and Tschacher, *Islam, Sufism and Everyday Politics*, 4–5.

the ways it was remembered by several groups of Afghans in the months after can offer insight about this process of differential emotional attachments and the lingering tension.

On 19 March 2015, the young Islamic law student Farkhunda²² stopped on her way home at the Shah-e Du Shamshira mosque and shrine in the center of Kabul.²³ After saying her prayers and helping to clean the shrine area, she got into an argument with the shrine's caretaker Zainuddin. Farkhunda, who was a devout student of Islamic theology and law, accused the caretaker of un-Islamic behavior due to his side-business of selling amulets made out of paper bearing handwritten Qur'anic verses credited with magical properties (*ta'wīz*).²⁴ In a bout of insight, which he later purportedly described to have acted upon, "in order to save his job and life",²⁵ Zainuddin turned the possibly dangerous situation around and loudly accused Farkhunda of having burned the Qur'an like American soldiers had done.²⁶ An angry mob gathered and brutally killed Farkhunda. The shocking intensity of violence of the lynching of this young

22 Osman relates: "She had graduated from one of the oldest female *dar-ul-ulums* (madrasas) in the country and was two years away from graduating from the Sharia Faculty at Kabul University. She had also recently attended a Qur'an-learning *halqa* (study circle) organised by an Islamist organisation" in Borhan Osman, "The Killing of Farkhunda (2); Mullahs, Feminists and a Gap in the Debate." *Afghanistan Analyst Network*, 29 April 2015; <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-killing-of-farkhunda-2-mullahs-feminists-and-a-gap-in-the-debate/>.

23 The mosque of Shah-e Du Shamshira mosque is a mixed Ottoman "Belle Epoque" and Italian baroque influenced building dating from Amanullah Khan's time. Situated across the street is the Shah-e Du Shamshira shrine (*zīyarat*) commemorating an unnamed *ghāzī* (Muslim warrior), who is said to "have kept wielding his two swords against the infidels, even after his head had been severed by a blow as he fought against the Hindu-Shahi dynasty which ruled Kabul at the time of the Ghaznavid conquest in the 10th century." See: Fabrizio Foschini and Naheed Esar, "The killing of Farkhunda (1): The physical environment and the social types party to her murder" AAN report, 29 April 2015, accessed at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-killing-of-farkhunda-1-the-physical-environment-and-the-social-types-party-to-her-murder/>.

24 See: Zarghuna Kargar, 11 August 2015. "Farkhunda: The Making of a Martyr." *BBC World News*, November. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33810338>.

25 See: Ed Payne and Masoud Popalzai, 6 May 2015. "Afghan Court Sentences 4 to Death for Killing Woman Accused of Burning the Quran." *CNN*. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/06/asia/afghanistan-woman-killed/>; TOLO News: "Unspoken Facts about Woman beaten to death and burnt in Kabul" 16 August 2015, *TOLONews*, <http://govmeter.tolonews.com/unspoken-facts-about-woman-beaten-death-and-burnt-kabul>.

26 See: Ann Jones, 12 May 2015. "Tomgram: Ann Jones, Citizen's Revolt in Afghanistan/ 'Farkhunda Is Our Sister'/ A 'Martyr,' a Murder, and the Making of a New Afghanistan?" *TomDispatch.com*. http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175997/tomgram%3A_ann_jones,_citizen's_revolt_in_afghanistan/.

woman reverberated through Afghan society and international media alike.²⁷ The incident was framed by civil society activists and media outlets as a misogynistic example par excellence of violence against women and as a horrific example of mob violence in a society brutalized by over thirty years of war.²⁸

While the killing of Farkhunda is both of these, another dimension has been sidelined in these accounts: the confrontation of differing religious stances and varying interpretations of moral conduct in an increasingly polarized religious-political discursive environment.²⁹ Several dimensions intersect with the differing religious attitudes: While Farkhunda was a woman, she was also an Islamic law student, arguing against certain culturally inflected practices such as selling amulets. While the caretaker was a man, he also commanded the social capital as a religiously devout Muslim engaged in Sufi-affiliated practices. This social capital allowed him to re-direct a volatile situation in his favor. He not only did this by calling on the interpretational difference, but also by invoking the latent anger resonating in Afghans from reported incidents of US American troops purportedly burning or desecrating the Qur'an in earlier years.³⁰ Typical of mob violence, a local situation was connected with larger

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- 27 See: Loulla-Mae Eleftherious-Smith, 23 March 2015, "Women Break with Tradition in Afghanistan to Help Bury 'Completely Innocent' Farkhunda Who Was Beaten to Death by Kabul Mob." *The Independent*. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/women-break-with-tradition-in-afghanistan-to-help-bury-completely-innocent-farkhunda-who-was-beaten-10126976.html>; Sarah Kaplan, "Afghan Woman, Killed by a Mob for a Crime She Didn't Commit, Becomes a Rallying Point for Activists." *The Washington Post*, March. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/03/23/afghan-woman-beaten-to-death-for-a-crime-she-didnt-commit-becomes-a-rallying-point-for-activists/?utm_term=.651e827678d1; Helena Malikyar, "Farkhunda's Murder Reveals a Nation That Has Changed." *Al Jazeera English*, March, 2015. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/03/farkhunda-murder-reveals-nation-changed-150323081503908.html>; Kimberley Motley. "The Mob Killing of Farkhunda Was a Defining Moment for Women's Rights in Afghanistan." *The Telegraph*, 20 May 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11616589/Afghanistan-Farkhunda-case-Now-the-demise-of-women-needs-to-stop.html>; John Woo, Adam B. Ellick, and Barnett R. Rubin. n.d. "The Killing of Farkhunda." <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/10000004108808/the-killing-of-farkhunda.html?mcubz=0>.
- 28 See: Kargar, "Farkhunda: The making of a martyr"; Frozan Marofi, "Farkhunda Belongs to All of the Women of Kabul, of Afghanistan," *The Guardian*, 28 March 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/mar/28/farkhunda-women-kabul-afghanist-an-mob-killing>.
- 29 For an exception, see coverage: Borhan Osman, "The Killing of Farkhunda (2); Mullahs, Feminists and a Gap in the Debate." *Afghanistan Analyst Network*. 29 April 2015. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-killing-of-farkhunda-2-mullahs-feminists-and-a-gap-in-the-debate/>.
- 30 See the 2012 incident of American troops burning copies of the Qur'an, which resul-

grievances, progressively stripping the situation of contextual particulars and aggregating those grievances to larger collective issues, cascading into horrific violence.³¹ In the first 24 hours, before it became apparent that Fakhunda had not burnt a Qur'an, the killing was endorsed by the Deputy Minister of Information and Culture, the Kabul police spokesman and several prominent imams in Kabul.³² After an investigation of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs found no evidence that Fakhunda had burned the Qur'an, the imams retracted their statements and the two officials were sacked.

I was made aware of the local ripples of this event when I was working on a different research project on the outskirts of Mazar-e Sharif in northern Afghanistan just a few months after the incident. A local imam had invited me into the courtyard of his house so that our team could administer a survey with members of his family. My Afghan team members talked with his eldest son and his wife, while I drank tea with the mulla, Abdul Mohammed. I asked him about his past in Pakistan when he had fled the fighting in Afghanistan, and about his education as an imam. He brought out the copy of the Qur'an that he was using. But then he also produced papers with Arabic script stylized into a mixture of drawings, including bodies, faces, and symbols. Abdul Mohammed told me that people came to him with their problems. Women, when they couldn't bear children, or the elderly when they had pain. He would find the right passage in the Qur'an, write it out for them onto the outline of bodies or faces or hearts, make an amulet for them or prescribe certain prayers for them to ease the pain or to bring children into their lives. Then, however, he paused,

ted in riots and the deaths of two American soldiers: Emma Graham-Harrison, "Qur'an burning protests: two US soldiers shot dead by Afghan colleague", *The Guardian*, 23 February 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/23/quran-burning-afghanistan-us-soldiers-dead>

- 31 Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah introduces two concepts, focalization and transvaluation, that can work hand in hand in such cascading circumstances. Focalization describes a process in which local incidents and disputes are progressively "denuded" of their "contextual particulars" and transvaluation "distorts, abstracts, and aggregates those incidents into larger collective issues of national or ethnic interest." These two concepts describe how "microevents at the local level, through chainlike linkages, accelerate and cumulatively build up into an avalanche, whose episodes progressively lose their local contextual, circumstantial, and substantive associations." Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 81, 257.
- 32 See: Kargar, "Fakhunda: The making of a martyr": "Although President Ashraf Ghani condemned the lynching and ordered an investigation, some officials were quick to endorse it—including the deputy minister of information and culture, Semin Ghazal Hasanzada and Kabul police spokesman Hashmat Stanekzai. The following day, after Friday prayers, some prominent imams also praised the crowd's actions."

looking contemplative at the pages before him: “But not anymore. That was before Farkhunda.” Abdul Mohammed saw Farkhunda’s death as a watershed moment: “After Farkhunda I stopped. It’s too dangerous now.” He elaborated: “A mulla is not a lawmaker. If for example an American burns the Qur’an in Khost, it is the job of the government, not of the mulla, to do something about it. Now the government does not allow these things [selling amulets] anymore. The government wants to certify all mullas.”

I asked him whether he would receive certification, and he said: “I’ve never been to the governmental institutions before, I don’t want to be bullied. Maybe people would bully me, I don’t want to take this risk. I’ve never committed a crime, I’ve been doing my job. For now, we cannot sell these anymore. Even though they work.”

This view on an incident as brutal and exceptional as the killing of Farkhunda shows the different ways of framing the same event in multiple ways. While for urban women engaged in civil society projects, Farkhunda became a rallying cry against the violence perpetrated against women in Afghanistan, the same incident was for the mulla in Mazar a cautionary tale, warning him not to sell his *ta’wīz* openly as the ambiguous discursive environment is being fought out openly.

Other Muslims or Muslims engaged with the Sufi Islam might disagree with whether selling *ta’wīz* is part of the spectrum of mysticism, or Sufism even, but Farkhunda’s death points to the tense, polarized discursive environment and shows that it was seen as a watershed moment of what was possible before and what was not, afterward. Since then, amulet sellers have taken up their work again, all charged perpetrators have been released, evading justice, and showing a return to the status quo in which the Afghan state at the time did not administer any firm stance on these issues.³³ However, the underlying tension this moment revealed remained. The impact of the situation was felt differently, depending on how the situation was read and where particular actors placed themselves within the same scenario. While women sympathized with Farkhunda, the mulla saw his own position as threatened, seeing himself akin to the shrine’s caretaker Zainuddin, with the expected backlash of the Afghan government. Other interviews support the impression that different fringe groups in society are reading the Farkhunda incident as a potential

33 See: Noorjahan Akbar, “A Year Later, Still No Justice for Farkhunda.” *Foreign Policy*, January, 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/01/a-year-later-still-no-justice-for-farkhunda/>; Fatima Faizi, “Afghanistan: ‘Farkhunda Will Not Be Forgotten.’” *Al Jazeera English*, March 2016. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/03/afghanistan-farkhunda-forgot-ten-160317115433960.html>.

threat to their self or group to which they belong, as the event symbolizes the risk of violence for vulnerable groups in case of an argument.³⁴ These tensions have not evaporated since the Taliban took over the government again. The question of the interpretation of Islam, who defines what is to be understood as Islamic, and which groups in society (women, LGBTQ+, Sufis, etc.) are protected or persecuted, has become no less contested.

3 Changing Education and Learning about Islam

While Farkhunda's death, and the controversies surrounding it, is a singular event, it points to larger, contextual shifts in Afghan society that are worth mentioning. Much has been said and written about the general shift in education in the 1960s and 1970s in Afghanistan, when a large proportion of young Afghans became part of a higher education system, and the two distinct branches of left-wing socialism and a more radical Islamism became part of the mobilizing power at Kabul University.³⁵ This shift laid the foundation for the Saur Revolution/Coup (1978), the socialist PDPA government (1978–1987) and the jihadist backlash under the mujahidin that followed.³⁶ Much less attention, however, has been paid to grassroots community developments and smaller-scale, local-community shifts in religious education.

Until the beginning of the war period, Islam was taught in Afghanistan's madrasas not only through reading the Qur'an and gaining an understanding of hadith,³⁷ but equally through reading the poetry of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Sa'dī, and

34 Personal communication with Ali Abdi (Yale University) about interview insight with a young, male homosexual Afghan who felt every time he passed Farkhunda's memorial, that he might be targeted next.

35 The economy did not grow fast enough to absorb the recent graduates and Kabul University became a politicized recruitment ground for political causes. See: Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979–1982* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 79; Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 212 f.

36 See: Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 99; Micheline Centlivres-Demont, *Afghanistan / Identity, Society and Politics since 1980*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

37 While the Communist government "introduced a modern education almost free from Islam (but with plenty of Communist propaganda)", they "wisely left the traditional madrasas to the local communities." The Civil war years show a highly uneven access to education, while the Taliban, as students of Islam, focused on their own particular reading of Islam. Pia Karlsson and Amir Mansory. "Islamic and Modern Education in Afghanistan—Conflictual or Complementary?" (paper published by Stockholm University: Institute of International Education, 2007), 20.

Ḥāfiz, both in the urban and rural contexts. One of the most famous Persian poetry collections that were used was *Panj Ganj* (“Five Treasures”). Another one that seems to have been used widely, too, was *Kulliyāt-i Chahār Kitāb* (“The Complete Four Books”). Nazif Shahrani reports in the 1990s that copies of these texts, that had first existed in hand-written form and since the nineteenth and early twentieth century in lithograph and printed editions, were produced in Lahore, Peshawar, Bukhara and other Central Asian cities and made available by itinerant traders and professional book peddlars.³⁸ Shahrani reports that the use of these Persian poetry texts was as widespread in Turkic- and Pashtu-speaking communities as they were among native Persian speakers.³⁹

Panj Ganj and *Kulliyāt-i Chahār Kitāb* are “primary” texts, collections of “rhythmic Persian prose and poetry that can be easily understood”⁴⁰ and that simultaneously contain normative principles of Islamic beliefs and practices that range from the necessary and private (like the fundamental tenets of the faith, ritual purity, procedures for ritual cleansing, performance of prayers and religious duties) to the social and political (relations within families, public duty performance, conditions for prosperity or downfall of rulers, condemnation of ignorance, and discussion of the existence of the unitary God).⁴¹ All of this is presented with literary devices such as repetition, recapitulation, and analogies, that encourage the memorization of the material, which is already in narrative form. Consequently, the written texts entered the realm of oral tradition.

However, the memorization of these texts was not the only path poetry took to enter the everyday lives of people and shape their interpretative framework. Poetry reading has long held a dual position of being central in Sufi circles and religious education as well as a source of entertainment among friends and families, including reciting and reading poetry within the household during Afghanistan’s cold winter nights. Certain poets were also popularized through the development of new media technologies. With the introduction and proliferation of cassettes, CDs and radios in the twentieth century,⁴² the voices of famous musicians utilizing traditional poetry entered the homes, cars and shared spaces of many Afghans. The radio transmitter was first introduced during the reign of Amanullah Khan (1919–1929). In 1941 a government radio

38 See: Nazif Shahrani, “Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse,” 167.

39 Shahrani, “Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse,” 168.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 See: Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counter-publics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

station, Radio Kabul, was established, known from 1964 onwards as Radio Afghanistan.⁴³

The production of commercial audiocassettes of Afghan music in Afghanistan began in Kabul in the early 1970s.⁴⁴ Poetry recitation as an artform was celebrated in programs such as “Az Har Chaman Samaney” in the 60s and 70s and hosted by personalities like Anisa Latin Durrani among others.⁴⁵ Another more recent way in the past decade in which the poetry was shared were radio programs like the one of Farooq Orakzai, who had an early morning program on Sobh-e kilit radio, a call-in show where he would answer people’s questions and give advice, often through poetry. One of my interviewees argued that many people became “*ṭarīqat* people,” following a Sufi line of thought through Orakzai, because he planted the seed for people to think in this way.⁴⁶

While Radio Afghanistan overall played a mixture of classical to modern music, some musicians’ backgrounds show the intertwining of a Sufi understanding and popular dissemination of poetry in music, for example in Ustad Sarahang’s performances. Mohammad Hussain Sarahang, famously known as Ustad Sarahang (1924–1983), performed ghazals of Amir Khusraw and Bedil, famous Indian poets who wrote in Persian but who are claimed these days by many Afghans as their cultural heritage.⁴⁷ Sarahang was introduced to the Sufi-influenced poetry of Bedil by one of Afghanistan’s most prominent *pīrs* (spiritual teacher) and founder of the *Bēdilshinās* circle in Kabul,⁴⁸ Abdul Hamid Asir Qandi Agha.⁴⁹ Sakata argues in her ethnography of musicians in Afgh-

43 Hiromi Lorraine Sakata, *Music in the Mind. The Concepts of Music and Musician in Afghanistan* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), xv.

44 John Baily, *War, Exile and the Music of Afghanistan* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2015), 186.

45 Personal communication with Mejgan Massoumi, Department of History, Stanford University. See also her PhD dissertation: Mejgan Massoumi, “The sounds of Kabul: radio and the politics of popular culture in Afghanistan, 1960–1979,” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2021).

46 Interview, Kabul, male interviewee in his thirties, August 2016.

47 An example of Sarahang’s prominence and reach is that the first recording business established by Ahmad Hamidi in 1972 featured Ustad Sarahang as their first release. Furthermore, Ustad Sarahang was, together with Ustad Rahim Bakhsh, one of the only artists permitted to perform live on air in the new Radio Afghanistan, see: Baily, *War, Exile and the Music of Afghanistan*, 29, 186.

48 These circles are urban literary circles that meet weekly to read and discuss the verses and philosophical discourses of Bedil, see: Moazzam Siddiqi, “BĪDEL, ‘ABD-AL-QĀDER.” *Encyclopædia Iranica* iv (1989). <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bidel-bedil-mirza-abd-al-qader-b>.

49 See: Baily, *War, Exile and the Music of Afghanistan*, 130. Also interview with son of Qandi Agha, known as Bacha Qandi Agha, Kabul.

anistan that “music is often described as *qaza-ye ruh* in Afghanistan, meaning ‘spiritual food’ or ‘nourishment’, an idea derived from Sufism.”⁵⁰ While the reception and depth of understanding of the audience of these programs cannot be ascertained from today’s point of view, it shows that poetry existed in its dual capacity, from popular uses to religious ethical guidance, as a shared discursive realm, pervading music, private discussions, and religious education.

As seen in these examples, poetry used to be present in multiple capacities: in mixed madrasa teachings the Qur’an and *Panj Ganj* were used for teaching Islam; poetry was disseminated through music and radio, both as a popular cultural expression and as a part of the oral literature and the individual Muslim practitioner’s experience of religion. Shahrani argued that Islamic knowledge is not a “received, highly rigid, structured, and legalistic phenomenon which exists outside of individual Muslim practitioners”⁵¹ daily life, nor a passively memorised canon, but part and parcel of everyday life in Afghan communities and part of a body of resources that practitioners can draw upon in their production and reproduction of action and judgement, in meaning-making, ethical decisions and in evaluating Islamic claims.⁵²

However, since the observations of Shahrani in the 1990s, a lot had changed by the time of my research. The radio host had left the post-2001 Afghanistan and migrated abroad citing concern for his life,⁵³ the radio sphere has diversified with Islamist and Salafi-leaning programs proliferating,⁵⁴ and while this radio host is only one small example of the changes taking place in Afghanistan, a larger shift seems to have taken place within Islamic education. Poetry, which was taught side by side in Afghanistan’s madrasas, is being increasingly erased, to be replaced with a sole focus on the Qur’an:

In the past, there was oral knowledge on how to understand, recite and sing poetry. Until the Soviet time, the mosques (*masjids*) were teaching next to the Qur’an also poetry, *Panj Ganj* was a collection. The Taliban

50 See: Sakata, *Music in the mind*, 190.

51 Shahrani, “Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse,” 177.

52 Shahrani refers in his argument to Giddens and Swidler, see: Shahrani, “Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse,” 177.

53 Interview with radio audience, male Afghan, mid-twenties, Kabul.

54 Borhan Osman, “Beyond Jihad and Traditionalism, Kabul, Afghanistan,” *Afghanistan Analyst Network*, 2015 (<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AAN-Paper-012015-Borhan-Osman-.pdf>); Robert D. Crews, “Gender, Religious Authority, and Media in Afghanistan,” in *The Written and the Spoken in Central Asia/Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit in Zentralasien—Festschrift für Ingeborg Baldauf*, ed. Redkollegia (Potsdam: edition-tethys, 2021), 359–379.

completely removed the poetry; they removed the good face of Islam. Now there is only learning by heart, no analysis.⁵⁵

The extent to which this erasure is taking place is difficult to measure as no comprehensive data exists on the curricula taught in Afghan madrasas.⁵⁶ Interviewees varied on their assessment concerning the pervasiveness of change. Another aspect of this change might be a perceptible generational difference in how Afghans relate to Rumi's poetry. The Dutch researcher and organizer of Mazar-e Sharif's Rumi Festival in 2014, Lotte van Elp, argues that Afghan youth would use Rumi to match their mood, citing him selectively to express through him whether they were happy, sad or lonely, to make sense of their lives.⁵⁷ While for the younger generation it is about how they feel, in contrast, their parents and grandparents' generation read Mawlānā Rūmī in a more religious way. This development would also match up with the change in curricula in schools and madrasas. However, the academic, as well as public discourse on madrasas in Afghanistan, has mainly restricted itself to the question of radicalization. The question of the funding of madrasas and influence on perspective and curriculum have been voiced, for example by journalists such as Carlotta Gall,⁵⁸ and in public discussions after the release of an Al-Jazeera film on a madrasa in Kunduz, which imposed "an even stricter interpretation of Islam" than the Taliban.⁵⁹ That in turn, has led to a petition to the president to review religious,

55 Interview, male interviewee, Kabul, August 2016.

56 Karlsson and Mansory for example mention the differential time-allotments for religious education between government-run, NGO-supported or former Taliban schools, and give a general overview of subjects that are usually taught. However, they do not offer a comprehensive review of curriculum or of actually taught subjects nation-wide. Karlsson and Mansory, "Islamic and Modern Education," 18.

57 Interview with Lotte van Elp, August 2016.

58 See: Carlotta Gall, "Saudis Bankroll Taliban, Even as King Officially Supports Afghan Governor," The New York Times, 6 December 2016, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/06/world/asia/saudi-arabia-afghanistan.html>. Gall emphasized: "Saudi Arabia is offering the Afghan government substantial defense and development agreements, while Afghans say sheikhs from Saudi Arabia and other Arab Persian Gulf states are quietly funneling billions in private money to Sunni organizations, madrasas and universities to shape the next generation of Afghans."

59 See: Najibullah Quraishi and Jamie Doran. "The Girls of the Taliban." *Al Jazeera English*, 24 December 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2014/12/girls-taliban-2014121716718177928.html>. One particular example case is a madrasa in Kunduz Province, which is teaching about 10,000 girls. See also: صادق مليار، آزاد. "افغانستان شمال." *BBC Persian*, February 2014. http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2014/02/140228_k05_fundamentalism_girl_are_growing.

educational curricula.⁶⁰ While some have pointed out that it is social media use which changes and radicalizes students even at universities,⁶¹ other publicly contentious discussions have centered on the rewriting of the curriculum of the compulsory Islamic lessons at university (*saqafat-i islāmī*), as it would contain anti-democratic biases.⁶²

However, I would contend that one need not go as far as radicalization and violent extremism to detect a change in how even poets themselves evaluate the use of poetry in religious education and the place of Sufism within Islam. While in several *khānaqāhs* that I visited during fieldwork, alongside other ritualistic practices such as *zikr* (the meditative remembrance of God), poetry also occupied a central position through reading Rūmī's *Maṣnavī*, and the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfiz. However, several people outside of the Sufi orders expressed similar views, like a poet and regional governor in Herat province:

In religion, all is mentioned: you have God, you have the book, you have rules, and that's not the same in *'irfān* (mysticism). *'Irfān* has no rules. There is no connection between religion and *'irfān*. *'Irfān* is a humanitarian view; it is much more open than religion. See for example music: in Islam, music is forbidden. But when you look to *'irfān*, there are stories in which Shams heard music and approved of it. Sufis don't have the knowledge about their *'irfān* [they don't know what they are doing].⁶³

This quote comes from a poet and intellectual, immersed and versed in Persian poetry, who, however, sees it as a secular, humanistic streak that has sometimes been beneficial for giving Islam a good face and helping to convert people. Critique towards Sufism not only came from fundamentalists, who were trying to cleanse Islam off anything seen as un-Islamic, which often included Sufis and Sufi-inflected practices, but also from secular moderates who dismissed Sufis as pure humanists outside of any religious affiliation.⁶⁴ This conversational inter-

60 See: Open Letter: "معارف وزیر و جمهور رییس به سرگشاده نامه." n.d. <http://8am.af/1392/12/18/letter-to-president-and-ministry-introduction/>.

61 See: Robert Zaman and Abdul Ahad Mohammadi, "Trends in Student Radicalization across University Campuses in Afghanistan," Afghanistan Institute of Strategic Studies, 2014, available at https://kar.kent.ac.uk/47807/1/Trends%20in%20Student%20Radicalization%20across%20University%20Campuses%20in%20Afghanistan_Zaman.pdf.

62 Interview with Abdul Hafiz Mansoor, Kabul, June 2017; see also: فرهاد، سبجودی. 2015. اندیشه و غربت در / ثقافت جدال سعید انتشارات: کابل. افراطیت غوغای و

63 Interview with regional governor and poet, Herat, August 2016.

64 The conceptual divide between a legalistic Islam as separate from "mystic" Sufism as an individual, liberal pursuit has a longer genealogy within Orientalist literature during the

section between two very differently situated groups opens up a discursive space of rapprochement, endangering the discursive ground on which Sufi-affiliated groups claim legitimacy and safety.⁶⁵

4 Establishment of Sufi Civil Society Institutions

One reaction against this changing discursive environment was the creation of a so-called Sufi Council, the *shūra-yi tasavvuf-i Herāt* in Herat in western Afghanistan.⁶⁶ The Council was established in 2004 with the goal to counter a discursive environment that Sufi affiliates experienced as increasingly dismissive and potentially violent towards mystical interpretations of Islam. Malawi Abdul Haleem Hosseini Wais recounts its birth:

We had a big gathering in the blue mosque in Herat which was in the time of Ismael Khan where we decided to start a council, because there were some groups who were against Sufism and who started around that period in Herat. So we decided to gather a shura of all three tariqas⁶⁷ and stand against those, who are against Sufism ... these groups still existing in Herat and they are mostly Salafi, Wahhabi, and Panjpiri. They say that mysticism (*ʿirfān*) and Sufism (*taṣavvuf*) is part of Hinduism and Buddhism. So we decided that it is important that somebody should stand against them and say that this is real Sufism and it is part of Islam. It has been in the past, and it is now, and there should be no action against it ... we discussed with them, saying, we are Sufi, we are not Salafi. There was fighting,

Colonial period that carried on through the Cold War politics of Islamic studies funding in North America. It continues to inform today's perception of Islam in Muslim societies and globally in the war on terror. See: *Modern Sufis and the State: The Politics of Islam in South Asia and Beyond*, ed. Katherine Pratt Ewing and Rosemary R. Corbett (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

65 See Dandekar and Tschacher for similar developments between non-Muslim rationalists and the Muslim anti-dargah discourse. Dandekar and Tschacher, *Islam, Sufism and Everyday Politics*, 7.

66 The establishment of the Sufi Council has not been the only one. In 2007 the *shūra-yi khānaqāh* was established as a coordination body between the different Sufi meeting places (*khānaqāhs*) in Kabul and overall in Afghanistan. (Interview with the head of the *shūra-yi khānaqāh*, Haji Saikal, June 2017, Kabul).

67 The members of this council are drawn from the main *tariqas* that are active in Herat, namely the Chishtiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya. While all members seem to have one or more *tariqa* affiliations, some of the council members also preach at local mosques as the main mulla.

and even physical attacks, during the nights they even wrote leaflets and spread them around. I'm sure, if they were given the possibility to grow, there would be attacks every day.⁶⁸

Through its weekly gatherings, its collective book publishing, and the regularly organized workshops, the council attempted to create a Muslim public sphere that is safe for Sufi affiliates through public outreach, mutual support structures, as well as networking with official clerics ('ulama) and the state.⁶⁹

A few things are noteworthy about the establishment of the Council: The Sufi Council was comparatively a novelty both in its form and in its goals. While it resembled other attempts to counter violent-extremism with Sufi thought, or other Sufi councils, it was a community-led effort formed by a group of Sufi *pīrs* and Sufi-inclined 'ulama in response to incidents of hate speech and attacks against Sufis as a means of influencing their own surroundings and, ultimately, re-shaping security situation.⁷⁰

On the one hand, the Sufi Council's work resembled other ecumenical approaches.⁷¹ Its negotiations went, on the other hand, beyond an interest in the intra-associational understanding alone. The goal of the council was to counter a discursive environment increasingly dismissive and violent towards mystical interpretations of Islam. As has been argued in this chapter, opposition comes from multiple sides: on one extreme are Salafists, often educated abroad, who accused Sufi adherents of being un-Islamic; on the other were the secular moderates who dismissed them as pure humanists outside of any religious affiliation.

68 Interview with head of the Sufi shura Malawi Abdul Haleem Hosseini Wais, August 2016, Herat.

69 See: Miriam Hoexter, S. N Eisenstadt and Nehemia Levtzion, *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002).

70 Other Sufi councils (Pakistan, Egypt, or Britain) were either set up by or in close cooperation with the state, see: Theresa Ann Drage, "The National Sufi Council: Redefining the Islamic Republic of Pakistan through a Discourse on Sufism after 9/11," (PhD diss., University of Western Sydney, 2015); Tarek Ladjal and Benaouda Bensaid, "Sufism and Politics in Contemporary Egypt: A Study of Sufi Political Engagement in the Pre and Post-Revolutionary Reality of January 2011," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 50, no. 4 (2015): 468–485; Simon Stjernholm, "Sufi Politics in Britain: The Sufi Muslim Council and the 'Silent Majority' of Muslims." *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 12, no. 3 (2010): 215–226.

71 For Christianity, see: Jill K. Gill *Embattled Ecumenism: The National Council of Churches, the Vietnam War, and the Trials of the Protestant Left* (DeKalb, Illinois: NIU Press, 2011); for Islam, see: Rainer Brunner, *Islamic Ecumenism in the 20th Century the Azhar and Shiism between Rapprochement and Restraint* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

While the council called itself by a traditional name of communal deliberation (*shūra*), it seemed to have taken on the modern form of a state-recognized organization, which showed a response to the NGO- and international organizations-saturated post-2001 environment in Afghanistan. The council designated a head, deputy and scribe for their weekly meetings, however, they did not bring out reports, but instead published books like a traditional publishing house. A combination of an official NGO-organizational framework run by a community of religious leaders and their followers was a novelty for Afghanistan, which attempted to bridge traditional ways of organizing within communities (*shūras* and *jirgas*) in a more formalized post-conflict reconstruction setting. The efforts of the Sufi council drew as much on the particular historical experience of Islam along the “Balkans- to-Bengal complex,”⁷² in which Islam is interpreted through cultural immersion in Sufi thought, as on modern, global experiences informing the sensibilities of contemporary Afghans, such as the engagement with internationals, the influx and rise of media consumption and changes in education.⁷³

The council was established after the fall of the Taliban government, indicating on the one hand an opening in religious civil society,⁷⁴ and on the other hand a response to changes in religious education post-2001, exemplified in my other two examples: the changes within religious education, the strengthening of secular skepticism towards Sufism as part of Islam, as well as more fundamentalist leaning, cleansed versions that find articulation through young students such as Farkhunda.

The examples in this chapter bring together different currents in the debates about religion, community action and memory. While shifts in religious education and in the evaluation of cultural patterns such as poetry and its connection to religion and Sufism show a slower, corrosive trend, sudden events can break open the underlying tension. The incident of Farkhunda’s killing showed not only the capacity for violence in a tense discursive environment, but also

72 Ahmed points out the similarities in religious expression and their connection to Sufi infused poetry in the whole area which he calls the “Balkans-to-Bengal complex”. See: Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 73.

73 Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2015); Hussein Ali Agrama, *Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2012); Dale F. Eickelman, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

74 Karin Borchgrevink, Kristian Berg Harpviken, M Nawabi, and Arne Strand. “Disconnected and Discounted? Religious Actors and Civil Society in Post-2001 Afghanistan,” (Oslo: Peace Research Institute, 2005).

how the same incident is perceived, interpreted and remembered differently, depending on the social position and emotional attachments of the group or individual. Public remembrance and individual attachments might thereby vary widely and result in different actions. While some of my interlocutors, such as the mulla and *ta'wiz* seller in Mazar-e Sharif, decided to hide their practices, others, like the Sufi council, actively took a public stand in a tense, polarized discursive environment. Both, however, are a response to an underlying tension in which definition and memory of religious spaces were being fought out, and in which the actors will decide in the future which memory they will retain of events and what it means to be Muslim and to be a Sufi in Afghanistan.

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Ethnographic Writing on Bukharan Jews: From Lost Tribes to Community Scholarship

Maira Kaye

Bukharan Jews are people of Jewish faith originally from Central Asia (defined here as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan) many of whom now live in Israel and the United States. Their centuries-old presence in Central Asia is documented by medieval Arab travellers and scholars, who were the first to write about them as the “ethnographic other.”¹ These writers, such as the ninth-century historian Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) and the fourteenth-century explorer Ibn Battuta (d. 1369), mentioned the presence of people of Jewish faith in Central Asian cities as part of the wider historical and geographical description of the territories they visited. Often Jews were referred to when evaluating how the local *dhimmī* population of a city was treated.

Allusions to the Jews in Central Asia are sparse before the nineteenth century. The first European to mention them was Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela (1167), who visited Jewish communities from Spain to the Middle East and Central Asia (where he met the Jews of Samarqand). Until the 1700s, no other European wrote about Bukharan Jews, mainly because very few Europeans visited Central Asia, which since the disintegration of the Mongol Empire in the fourteenth century had become a dangerous travel destination. The few who did travel were more impressed by the myth of Prester John and the ten lost tribes of Israel than in describing the real Jewish people of the area, especially since in the medieval and early modern periods, the difference between “myth” and “reality” was tenuous.² The idea that the Jews in the lands beyond the Caspian were descended from the “ten lost tribes” had been propagated throughout Europe by the popular *Travels* by the fourteenth-century explorer and fantasy-writer John Mandeville.³

1 Michael Zand, “Bukhara Jews,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* IV/5, 530–545 (New York, London, 1989). <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/bukhara-vii>.

2 See Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003).

3 John Mandeville, *Mandeville's Travels* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1954), 175.

1 Nineteenth-Century Ethnographic Writings: Russian Imperialists and Jewish Anthropologists

This vague, fantasist knowledge of Jews in Central Asia would change when Tsarist Russia took an imperialist interest in the region. The Russian conquest of Siberia of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led the country to gaze evermore to the lands beyond its expanding southern border. Ambassadors were dispatched to try to negotiate formal trade relations with the rulers of Central Asia, such as the Emir of Bukhara. These early diplomats were the first to produce information about these lands for the Russian Empire; information which was viewed as useful for a potential future conquest. The production of ethnographic knowledge was entwined with a broader inquiry into geography, archaeology, linguistics, and physical anthropology, in order to know the different peoples. Knowledge of the land preceded its conquest. Jews were mentioned in this scheme of knowledge. Florio Beneveni, a Russian ambassador to Bukhara in 1718–1725, wrote a journal keeping track of the political and economic situation of the khanate. His entry from April 1723 mentions the economic activity of the Jews of Bukhara, in relation to a dye, due to its potential economic use to Russia:

And in the land of Bukhara ... there is one small tree that grows in the steppe, and they extract from its worms an expensive paint called *kermez*, in German *kushenina* ... The Bukharans do not know the secret of how to make it, but they take those worms and sell them to the Jews, and the Jews rub these worms and make that paint ... Silk is dyed with this dye, and in other countries cloths are dyed with it, and they are sewn, and called *karmazins*.⁴

Bukharan Jews are also mentioned in what is considered the first piece of modern Russian ethnographic writing, the *Description of All Peoples Inhabiting the Russian State, Including Their Worldly Ceremonies, Beliefs, Habits*, by the German-Russian geographer Johann Gottlieb Georgi in 1777. A large section of the work concerned the peoples of Siberia, which included colonists from Bukhara (called “Bukharan Tatars”). Georgi differentiates between “our Bukharans” (*nashi Bukharskie*)—the Bukharan colonists residing in Russian Siberia—, and the Bukharans residing in the city of Bukhara, outside of the Russian empire. In his description of Bukharan Tatars, he concentrates first on

⁴ Florio Beneveni, *Poslannik Petra I na Vostoke* (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), accessed at: <http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/rus5/Benevini/frameset2.htm>.

the Bukharans of Siberia, and uses them to derive knowledge about their customs in their home city. In other words, included in *Description of All Peoples Inhabiting the Russian State* are peoples who are not (yet) in the Russian state, but of potential future interest to it. Georgi thus describes Bukhara as would an ethnographer who had actually visited the city, as well as its minorities, including the Jews.

Besides the Qur'anic laws, they have other specially-written laws, which are all mild, but can be executed without a delay [...] therefore, among them many Jews (called Diuhut), Arabs, Persians, Indians and other oriental people can be encountered, also Gypsies (called Diaji) roam in tents.⁵

Georgi also describes the professions of Bukhara, and though he had not actually visited the city, he already anticipates the economic observation of many the European traveller of the nineteenth century: "the dying is mostly done by Jews, some of whom have small silk factories."⁶

Bukhara was thus viewed as a next step for conquest after Siberia for Russian imperialists. Siberian colonial officer Timofei Burnashev recorded notes from his embassy to Bukhara in the *Sibirskii Vestnik* (*Siberian Bulletin*). Burnashev explains that due to the advance of the English, Ekaterina II decided to direct her attention to the Kazakh-Kyrgyz steppe, Bukhara, Tashkent, regions of raw materials of interest to the empire. He travelled from Siberia to Bukhara in 1794 to act as Russian ambassador for one year. Just like Georgi, he lists the ethnicities living in Bukhara, then briefly discusses the Jews, their profession ("dyeing of silk"), their economic situation ("rather affluent"), and their dress ("instead of belts they must wear ropes").⁷ Other Russian envoys to the city, Filip Efremov in the 1770s, baron Egor Kazimirovich (George) Meyendorff in 1820 and Nikolai Vladimirovich Khanykov in 1841, also dedicated short sections of their journey reports to the Bukharan Jews.⁸

5 (*Außer den Geseßen im Koran haben sie besondere geschriebene Gefesse, die alle gelinde sind, aber ohne Aufschub ausgeübt werden [...] daher unter ihnen viele Juden (Buch. Diuhut), Araber, Perser, Indianer und andre Morgenländer angetroffen werden, auch ziehen Zigeuner (B. Diaji) in Zelten unher*), see Johann Gottlieb Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des Rußischen Reichs, ihrer Lebensart, Religion, Gebräuche, Wohnungen, Kleidungen und übrigen Merkwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Müller, 1776), 146. Note that Jews appear first in this list.

6 (*Die Färberei wird meistens von Juden betrieben, deren einige kleine Seidenmanufakturen haben*), see Georgi, *Beschreibung*, 149.

7 Timofei Burnashev, "Puteshestvie po Sibirskoi linii do g. Bukhary v 1794 g. i obratno v 1795 g.," *Sibirskii vestnik* (St. Petersburg: 1818).

8 Egor K. Meyendorff, *Voyage d'Orenbourg à Boukhara; fait en 1820, à travers les stéppes qui*

Two common points are striking in all the nineteenth-century Russian writing on Bukharan Jews: the authors all discuss that Jews produced and dyed silk, and that they were subject to restrictions in dress. Of specific interest to the Russian politics, many also allude to the fact that Jews were oppressed by Muslims, and thus held a “good disposition ... towards every foreigner, to Christians in particular.”⁹ The political implication of this is made clear by a letter sent by the West Siberian Governor-General Ivan Aleksandrovich Vel’iaminov to the Minister of War Prince Alexander I. Chernyshev in 1834:

Wealthy Bukharan Jews and merchants generally prefer the Russian government and trade with the Russians so far, weighed down by despotic self-interest and the cruel management of the khans, and secretly express sympathy for the transition (of course, the whole nation) to Russian citizenship ... Jews, in particular, yearn for Russian domination in Central Asia, in order to start factories, trading houses, gold mines, scatter [develop] mines, etc. (otherwise most of their capital is buried in the ground from the greed of the Khan and his relatives).¹⁰

Indeed, Jews were said to have welcomed Russian troops during their conquest of Samarqand of 1868.¹¹ After the annexation of Turkestan into the Russian empire in 1867, discussion of Bukharan Jews by Russians became more distinctly imperialist in nature. It went hand in hand with map-making and census-taking as a tool to dominate a territory. The Russian Geographical Society’s Ethnographic Division, founded in 1845, held an interest in the newly conquered territories of Turkestan, and set about studying its different peoples and collecting objects in order to organise ethnographic exhibits in Russia.¹²

s’étendant à l’est de la mer d’Aral et au-delà de l’ancien Jaxartes. Rédigé par M. le baron G. de Meyendorff et revu par M. le chevalier Amédée Jaubert (Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1826), 172–175, see also <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdclccn.05007324/?st=gallery>. Nikolai V. Khanykov, *Opisanie Bukharskogo Khanstva* (Sanktpeterburg: Tipografii Imperatorskoi Akademii, 1843), 71–73.

9 Khanykov, *Opisanie Bukharskogo Khanstva*, 73.

10 Cited in Albert Kaganovich, *Druzia Ponevole: Rossiia i Bukharskie Evrei, 1800–1917* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2016), 8.

11 See Sami, *Ta’rikh-i Salatin-i Manghitiya* trans. 85, cited in Alexander Morrison, *Russian rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

12 Francine Hirsch, *Empire of nations: Ethnographic knowledge and the making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

Jews were captured in Russian imperialist photography, particularly the *Turkestan Album* (*Turkestanskii Al'bum*, 1871), which was compiled by Russian Orientalist Aleksandr L. Kun and commissioned by the governor general of Russian Turkestan, Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman.¹³ As part of a colonial enterprise, the album sought to define the newly conquered territory through a visual survey of its monuments, peoples, and economic foundations. Jews were portrayed in the album's two-volume ethnographic section (*Chast' Etnograficheskaia*), which presented the musical instruments, crafts, celebrations, and architecture of the region. Part two of the ethnographic section displays the various "ethnographic types" (*tipy narodnosti*), including Uzbeks, gypsies (*dzugi, mazang*), Indians, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, "Sarts," Arabs, Iranians, and of course Jews (*evrei*). All the Jewish men photographed wear the typical, and—until the Russian conquest—obligatory Jewish fur hat, the *tilpak*, and are distinguishable by their sidelocks. The collection also contains photographs of Jewish wedding ceremonies, the bridal party (*shab-i dukhtarān*), the matchmaking process, a funeral, prayer recitation, lessons at the Jewish school, swaddling the cradle (*gahvāra bandān/gavarabandan*), and holiday celebrations (such as *Sukkot*).

Another important Russian colonial photographic collection was assembled by Samuel Martinovich Dudin (1863–1929), founder of the Ethnographical Department of the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg (now the Russian Ethnographical Museum).¹⁴ Dudin led expeditions to Turkestan in order to collect physical materials for the museum collection, and on the way produced his own material—photographs and sketches.¹⁵ His collection of 40,000 items mainly represents Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Turkmen—he intentionally did not collect Jewish objects, justifying that "in their everyday life and dress, they do everything as the Sarts ... and I cannot duplicate items for a material collection."¹⁶ He did photograph them though, with thirty-one photos depict-

13 See Olga Yastrebova and Azad Arezou. "Reflections on an orientalist: Alexander Kuhn (1840–1888), the man and his legacy." *Iranian Studies* 48, no. 5 (2015): 675–694; Heather S. Sonntag, "Genesis of the Turkestan Album 1871–1872: The Role of Russian Military Photography, Mapping, Albums & Exhibitions on Central Asia," PhD diss., (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011).

14 See Tat'iana G. Emel'ianenko (ed.), *Otchet S.M. Dudina o poezdskakh v Sredniuiu Aziuu v 1900–1902 gg.* (Moscow: Fond Mardzhani, 2021).

15 See Svetlana Gorshenina, *La Route de Samarcande, L'Asie Centrale dans l'objectif des voyageurs d'autrefois* (Genève: Editions Olizane, 2000).

16 Quoted in Tat'iana G. Emel'ianenko, "Pamiatniki traditsionno-bytovoï kul'tury Bukharskikh evreev v muzeinykh sobraniakh: osobennosti komplektovaniia," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 3 (2010): 67.



FIGURE 7.1 "Evrei. Sheivamu (Mulla Suleiman)"
TURKESTAN ALBUM, ETHNOGRAPHIC PART, PART 2, VOL. 1, PL. 29, NO. 86.
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

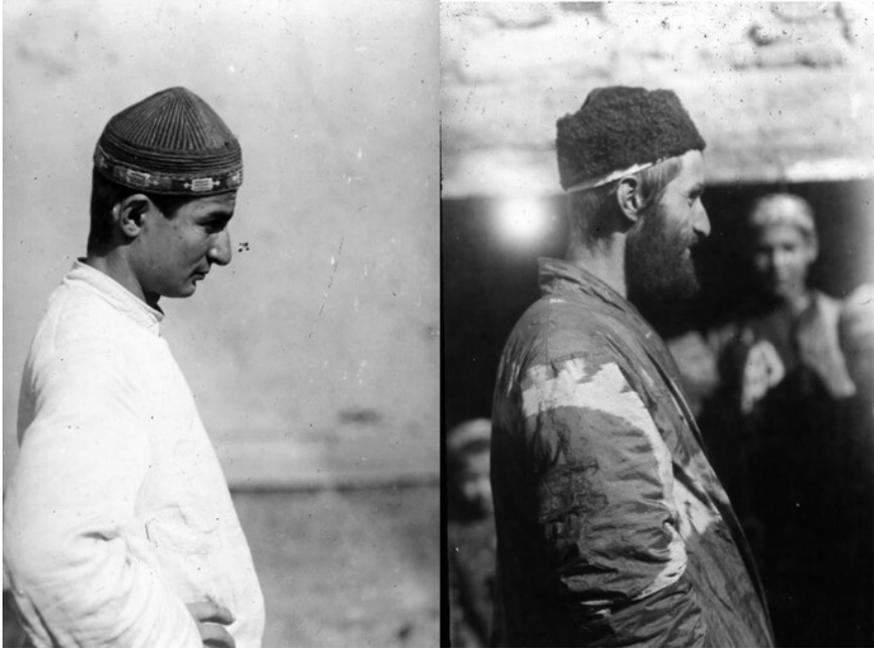


FIGURE 7.2 a) Portrait of a young man, wearing a tiubeteika. b) Portrait of a man, wearing a tilpak. Central Asian Jews, 1902 (S.M. Dudin)
KUNSTKAMERA (ST. PETERSBURG), I 582-9 AND I 582-511

ing Jews in Central Asia from his 1902 expedition. This photographic collection, taken thirty years after the *Turkestan Album*, shows notable differences in Jewish dress. Whereas in the 1871 *Turkestan Album*, all male Jews, regardless of age, wear the obligatory and low-status *tilpak* (Figure 7.2), one can observe in Dudin's 1902 photos that younger Jews do not, and instead wear a typical skullcap (*doppi*, in Russian *tiubeteika*, Figure 7.2a). This demonstrates a change in dress and status due to the influence of Russian colonisation.

While Russian discussion of Bukharan Jews placed them as one people among many others, a *narod* of the empire, to be categorised and known for the sake of knowing imperial geography, Jewish anthropologists, on the other hand, had a more scholarly, apolitical interest in Bukharan Jews. This interest was by no means predominant—the vast majority of Russian-Jewish ethnography and anthropology of this period concerned the Eastern European Jewry¹⁷—but

17 Sergei Kan, “‘To study our past, make sense of our present and develop our national consciousness’: Lev Shternberg’s Comprehensive Program for Jewish Ethnography in the USSR,” in *Going to the People: Jews and the Ethnographic Impulse*, (ed.) J. Veidlinger (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 64–84.

Bukharan Jews occasionally figured in as objects of inquiry of themselves, beyond the interests of empire. The Jewish Society for History and Ethnography (founded in 1908) published the quarterly *Evreiskaia Starina* from 1909 to 1930 in order to disseminate ethnographic studies of Jews throughout the Russian (and later Soviet) empire. Most of its articles pertained to the Jews from the Pale of Settlement, with almost none dedicated to the Jews of Central Asia. In 1912, Russian-Jewish scholar Vaisenberg complained about this lacuna; he wrote that there was little interest for the study of Jews south of Russia, due to an engrained habit to regard Jews throughout the Russian empire as a single homogenous community, with scholars tending to believe that “the Jews over there are the same as ours”, despite striking differences in reality.¹⁸ While the interest of Russian-Jewish ethnographers was limited, other European travellers (many of whom were of Jewish origin) published many ethnographic details about Bukharan Jewish life during the nineteenth century, such as Joseph Wolff, Henry Lansdell, Arminius Vámbéry, and Elkan Nathan Adler.¹⁹

There was also a tendency among Russian-Jewish anthropologists to Orientalise the non-European Jews of the empire. In his doctoral dissertation, “The Jews: a Comparative Anthropological Study,” Russian-Jewish physical anthropologist Arkadii El’kind studied photographs of Jews from across Eurasia; from the Pale of Settlement, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In his framework, which may have been modelled by his own desire to assimilate, Russian-Polish Jews were racially “European,” while those from the Caucasus and Central Asia were deemed “allotypical,” meaning that they conserved the Semitic racial type.²⁰ Citing the work of Polish anthropologist I.M. Judt, El’kind claimed that in fact “the ancestors of the Semites are to be found in Central Asia, where their nomadic masses could already mix with the Aryan and Turanian elements of Pamirs, Armenians, Mesopotamians. Proto-Hebrew tribes headed from there to the west, to Syria and Palestine.”²¹ Such speculations on the origins of the Jews of Central Asia, guised in the form of science through

18 S. Vaisenberg, “Evrei v Turkestane,” *Evreiskaia Starina* 4 (1912): 390–405.

19 Joseph Wolff, *Travels and adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff* (London: Saunders, Otley and Co., 1861). Henry Lansdell, *Russian Central Asia, including Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva and Merv* (London: Sampson Low and Co., 1885). Nathan Elkan Adler, “The Persian Jews: Their Books and Their Ritual,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 10, no. 4, July (1898): 584–625. Arminius Vámbéry, *Travels in Central Asia* (London: John Murray, 1864). Since this article has focused on Russian ethnographic writing, there was no space to discuss the work of these travellers.

20 Marina Mogilner, *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 226.

21 Arkadii D. El’kind, *Evrei (Sravnitel’no-antropologicheskoe issledovanie, preimushchestven*

allusions to nose lengths and skull types, represent a return to the same kind of myth-making of John de Mandeville. Such confabulations would characterise much of the “armchair anthropology” of the late nineteenth century, in contrast to the less fanciful information brought back by ethnographic writers. Under the Soviet era, on the other hand, there would be a push for on-the-ground scientific ethnographic research by state-sponsored scholars.

2 Soviet Ethnography

After the 1917 Revolution and the installation of the communist regime across Russia and the former territories of the Russian Empire (which then became the territories of the Soviet Union), the Bolsheviks collaborated with many of the same imperial experts of the tsarist administration.²² The predominant cultural ideology of the 1920s was that of *korenizatsiia*—encouragement of local languages and cultures of the Union.²³ Hence, Russian ethnographic interest in Bukharan Jews strengthened after the Soviet revolution, with the increased preoccupation with the “nations” (*narody*) that made up Soviet national identity. Jews were classified as one of the nations of the USSR and separated into categories (“Mountain Jews” of the Caucasus, European Jews of Russia, Central Asian Jews).²⁴ The Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum in 1924–1927 wondered if each exhibit should show the Jews of each *oblast'*, thus tying ethnic categories to the empire/union's own political borders.²⁵

In terms of ethnographic fieldwork of Bukharan Jews during the Soviet period, most of it was performed by Russian Ashkenazi Jews. Russian-Jewish ethnographer Isak Luria, interested in the customs of non-European Jews (he had previously conducted ethnomusicological fieldwork in Palestine) served the interests of the Soviet state when he was sent to Samarqand by a committee of the Jewish Historic-Ethnographic society of St. Petersburg to study Central Asian Jews. In 1922, he established the Native Jewish Museum of Samarqand in the former house of merchant Ari Fuzailov in the old Jewish quarter of Samarqand, exhibiting a total of 869 artefacts. He employed the photograph-

no po nabliudeniiam nad pol'skimi evreiami) (Moskva: Tipo-lit Vasil'eva, 1903), 336. For the full text see <https://www.prlib.ru/item/408187>.

22 Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 24.

23 George Liber, “Korenizatsiia: restructuring Soviet nationality policy in the 1920s,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991): 15–23.

24 Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.

25 *Ibid.*, 194.

ers Kuldashev and Poliakov to document Jewish life in the region. However, his efforts received vocal criticism from the local community, who resented his scholarly detachment from real Bukharans in favour of their artefacts, and the museum was shut down in the 1930s.²⁶

An important scholar to take a specific interest in Bukharan Jews was Zalman Lvovich Amitin-Shapiro (1899–1968), an Ashkenazi Jew who moved to Bukhara in 1918 to work as an instructor for Jewish children at a Soviet school. He studied the social life of Bukharan Jewish women and collected anthropological information which proves illuminating to this day.²⁷ M. Levinskii followed the path set by Vaisenberg and published an article on the history of Bukharan Jews in the periodical *Evreiskaia Starina*, which continued from imperial into Soviet times.²⁸

Soviet studies of local Jewry, which had begun to take off in the 1920s, declined in the 1930s due to anti-Semitic Stalinist policies. *Evreiskaia Starina* was discontinued in 1930. From then on, Jews were mostly ignored by Soviet scholars, who pursued subjects more aligned with State interests.²⁹ There is therefore a gap in the study of Bukharan Jews from the 1930s to the late 1980s.

3 Post-Soviet Ethnography

The fall of the USSR in 1989 provoked a large-scale migration of the Jews of Central Asia to Israel and the United States. It also allowed Western scholars to enter Central Asian countries, to directly study the Bukharan Jews who remained, as well as to access documents within the archives of the Uzbek, Tajik, and Russian states.

Since the 1990s to the present day, there has been a keen interest in studying Bukharan Jewish history by modern Israeli scholars. A general interest for Oriental Jews in Israel had surfaced in the nineteenth century due to immigration to Israel, and exposure of Ashkenazi Jews to their exotic brethren. Research

26 Zeev Levin, *Collectivization and Social Engineering: Soviet Administration and the Jews of Uzbekistan, 1917–1939* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 224.

27 Zalman Amitin-Shapiro, *Zhenshchina i svadebnye obriady u tuzemnykh ("bukharskikh") evreev Turkestana*, vol. 17 (Tashkent: Itogro, 1925), 189–196. By the same author see also *Ocherki sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva sredi sredneaziatskikh evreev* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1933), and *Ocherk pravovogo bita sredneaziatskikh evreev* (Tashkent–Samarkand: UzGosIzdat, 1931).

28 M. Levinskii, "K istorii Evreev Srednei Azii," *Evreiskaia Starina* 12, (1928): 315–340.

29 David E. Fishman, "The Rebirth of Jewish Scholarship in Russia," *The American Jewish Year Book* 97 (1997): 391–400.

on eastern communities typically began with ethnographies of their emigrant communities in Israel.³⁰ With many Bukharan Jews having migrated to Israel in the past thirty years, thus improving their socio-economic and educational status, a good number have become historians of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bukharan Jewry, publishing mainly in Hebrew and Russian, but also in English or French. By far the most prolific historians of Bukharan Jewry, who access Russian, Hebrew, and Judeo-Tajik sources from archives in Israel, Russia, and Uzbekistan, are Al'bert Kaganovich, Mikhail Zand, and Zeev Levin.³¹ Scholars with a more ethnographic bent are Alanna Cooper (who conducted an ethnographic study of Bukharan Jews in New York, Uzbekistan, and Israel), Evan Rapport (who focused on the ethnomusicology of Bukharan Jews), Tat'iana Emel'ianenko (who has specialised in the ethnographic study and collection of Bukharan Jewish dress), and Thomas Loy (who used the technique of collecting oral histories).³²

The largest group of people interested in the history of the Bukharan Jews today is the Bukharan Jewish community itself, not all of whom are scholars at universities. Based mostly in New York and Israel, they have produced memoirs and biographies in English, Russian, Hebrew, and Judeo-Persian detailing life in the community, as well as accounts of family history and reconstructions of life in the late nineteenth century.³³ They have created social media

30 This was prevalent in the 1970s. For example, Patai, who interviewed Mashhadi Jews in Israel; Moshe Shokeid, *The Dual Heritage: Immigrants from the Atlas Mountains in an Israeli Village* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971). Shlomo A. Deshen and Moshe Shokeid, *The Predicament of Homecoming: Cultural and Social Life of North African Immigrants in Israel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974).

31 Al'bert Kaganovich, "The Jewish Communities of Central Asia in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods," *Iranian Studies* 52, no. 5–6 (2019): 923–946. See also by the same author *Druzia Ponevole: Rossiia i Bukharskie Evrei, 1800–1917* (Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2016); "L'acculturation de la communauté juive boukharite et l'émancipation féminine," in *Asie centrale—Transferts culturels le long de la Route de la soie*, ed. M. Espagne, 589–602 (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2016); "The Bukharan Jewish Diaspora at the Beginning of the 21st Century," in *Bukharan Jews in the 20th Century: History, Experience and Narration*, ed. I. Baldauf, M. Gammer, and Th. Loy, 111–116 (Wiesbaden: Reichert-Verlag, 2008). See further Mikhail Zand, "Bukharan Jewish culture under Soviet rule," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 9, no. 2 (1979): 15–23. See also Zeev Levin, *Collectivization and Social Engineering*, and Zeev Levin, "From local to global: transformations of Bukharan Jewish community organization in the twentieth century," *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 2 (2014): 321–335.

32 Alanna Cooper, *Bukharan Jews and the Dynamics of Global Judaism* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2012); Evan Rapport, *Greeted with smiles: Bukharian Jewish music and musicians in New York*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). Thomas Loy, *Bukharan Jews in the Soviet Union. Autobiographical Narrations of Mobility, Continuity and Change* (Reichert Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2016).

33 Menachem Eshel, *Galerya: Dmuyot shel Rashei Yahadut Bukhara* (Tel Aviv: Bet ha-Tarbut li-

groups and continue to publish newspapers in Russian within their diasporic communities (*The Bukharian Times* in Forest Hills, New York and *Lechaim* in Israel). The World Congress on Bukharan Jews, established in 2000, in addition to its philanthropic work, meets to deliver papers on the history and culture of Bukharan Jews.³⁴ The Congress publishes its weekly newspaper *Menorah*, in Russian, Judeo-Tajik, and Hebrew.

Much of the writing on Bukharan Jews by Bukharan Jews remains in the realm of “local lore,” known in Russian as *kraevedenie*. This discipline, which gained traction in early Soviet Uzbekistan as a form of consolidating historical consciousness of the Uzbek nation,³⁵ is well defined by Emily Johnson, who studied it from the perspective of an “identity discipline.”

It is highly unusual for *kraevedy* to write about places to which they have no clear personal connection. As lexicographers struggling to define *kraevedenie* sometimes acknowledge, “for the most part” this form of research represents the work of individuals who could under some rubric be classified as “local inhabitants”.³⁶

In the case of Bukharan Jewish *kraevedenie*, however, the “local inhabitants” frequently live in the United States or Israel, miles away from the place to which they have their personal and historical connection. Johnson also notes that “a willingness to allow certain non-academic community members to participate in scholarly forums on a limited basis represents a typical feature of identity disciplines.”³⁷ In the study of Bukharan Jews, one can observe that academics frequently cite these non-academic *kraevedy*-scholars, who have access to information of local lore by virtue of the fact that they know their own local legends. Particularly prominent in this regard are historians Robert Pinkhasov,

Yehudei Bukhara be-Yisrael, 1965). Issacharoff Family, *Issacharoff: A Tale of a Family* (Haifa: Issacharoff Family, 1997). Boris Ishakov, *Moshe Kalontar* (New York, 1991). Svetlana Tolmasova published a memoir of her father, the famous singer Gavriel Mullokandov entitled *Vospominanie ob otse* (Tel Aviv, 2002). Batchaev has written a memoir as well as a novelisation of an episode of Jewish history in Samarqand, see Mordekhai Batchaev and Catherine Poujol, *La Vie de Yaqov Samandar ou Les Revers du destin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).

34 Levin, “From local to global.”

35 See Ingeborg Baldauf, “*Kraevedenie*” and *Uzbek national consciousness* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1992).

36 Emily D. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg learned to study itself: the Russian idea of kraevedenie* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 3–4.

37 Johnson, *How St. Petersburg learned*, 7.

a Bukharan Jew who resides in New York City, and Robert Al'meev, a *kraeved* historian of Bukhara who has written extensively on Bukharan Jews, along with other topics on the history of Bukhara.³⁸

4 Conclusion

The study of Bukharan Jews has been remoulded from the colonialist-imperialist collecting practices and knowledge for the sake of control, to genuine ethnographic interest in the folklife of a particular group of people. For the past thirty years, there has been a surge in publications by *kraeved* scholars from the community itself. These *kraevedenie* studies are extremely useful sources of insider information to outsider scholars. It can be said that today, the best ethnographic writers on the Bukharan Jews are the Bukharan Jews themselves.

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38 Robert A. Pinkhasov, *Istoriia Bukharskikh Evreev* (New York: Klub "Roshnoi-Light", 2005); Robert V. Al'meev, *Legendy drevnei Bukhary: o postroike pervoi sinagogi v gorode* (Moscow: Obschestvo evreiskoe nasledie, 2007); *Ustnoe narodnoe tvorchestvo Bukharskikh evreev* (Bukhara: Xokan, 1997); *Bukharskie evrei* (Bukhara, 1998).

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Dynamics of Perpetuity: “Traditional” Horse Games in Kyrgyzstan

Simone de Boer



FIGURE 8.1 *K k b r * players in southern Kyrgyzstan © Simone de Boer

And so the struggle began at a dead gallop. They were locked together like eagles fighting over prey, shouting at the tops of their voices, grunting and snarling like animals, bullying each other, their arms like steel bands, their nails bleeding. And the horses, united in their riders’ struggle, carried them onward angrily, speeding to catch up with the flaming sun.

Blessed be our ancestors who handed down these fierce games of courage to us!

CHINGIZ AITMATOV, *Farewell Gyulsary*



In September 2014 Kyrgyzstan was host to the first ever World Nomad Games; a joint initiative of the Turkish and Kyrgyz government. Two years later, I was in Kyrgyzstan to witness the second staging of this event, organised in and around Cholpon Ata, in Issyk Kul province in north-eastern Kyrgyzstan. As the name suggests, the World Nomad Games are centred on nomadic games, such as various types of wrestling, archery, falconry and, most importantly, horse games. The Games are a multi-day large-scale event in which nomadic, and in particular Kyrgyz, history and culture is celebrated. Besides sport and games, the programme includes an ethno-cultural festival featuring music, dance, art, crafts, fashion and cuisine. The main aim of the event is to celebrate, promote, and safeguard nomadic cultural heritage and attract foreign visitors to Kyrgyzstan.

In this paper, I will take a closer look into ideas about the connection between nomad games, history and cultural heritage. I will show how processes of globalisation and modernisation, and their supposed effect on tradition and cultural heritage, are differently understood by different actors. In addition to the World Nomad Games, I will pay attention to smaller scale tourism festivals and provide a more general analysis of the importance of nomadic history in Kyrgyz society. I will do so by drawing from field research I conducted in Kyrgyzstan in 2015 and 2016 as part of my anthropology degree. In my research I focused especially on horse games, since horses and horse games are central to a notion of “Kyrgyzness.”¹ As one of the organisers of the World Nomad Games stated: “For Kyrgyz culture and nomadic civilization horses and horse games are important, because we grew up with them. It’s our culture, our tradition, we have to remember and promote it.”

1 The horse games I studied include *kök börü* (a polo-like game, also known as *ulak tartysh* and *alaman*), *kız kuumai* (“chasing the girl”), *tyiyn enmei* (“grab the coin”), *er enish* (wrestling on horseback, also known as *oodarysh*) and various types of horse races. These games are practised mostly by men, of various ages. *Kız kuumai*, in which a man and woman compete together, forms an exception to this rule. In addition, *oodarysh* and *at chabysh* are occasionally practised by women. In *oodarysh* women compete amongst each other, while in *at chabysh* they either compete in special female races or against men in general races.



FIGURE 8.2 Kyrchyn Gorge, one of the programme locations of the World Nomad Games © Simone de Boer

1 “Horses Are the Wings of the Kyrgyz”

The centrality of horses in Kyrgyz life is closely connected to the nomadic history of the Kyrgyz people.² The ethnic Kyrgyz have historically been semi-nomadic herders who migrated seasonally between different mountain pastures, tending sheep, goats, cows, camels, yaks and horses. Nowadays, one-third of the country’s population lives in cities and nomadism is less widespread than it used to be. Nevertheless, animal husbandry still constitutes a significant part of the rural economy, with wool, meat and dairy products as the major agricultural produce. In rural areas transhumance continues to be practised widely, as herding families move every summer to the *jailoo* (high mountain summer pasture) where they live in round felt tents called *boz-iiy* in Kyrgyz, or *yurta* in Russian.³ This means horses continue to be important in rural life: since many mountain roads are unsuited for cars, horses are used widely for transporting both humans and goods. In addition, horses are used for herding livestock and for the production of dairy products and meat, which are highly valued.

2 Given the scope of this paper, I cannot elaborate on the rather complex question of who, historically speaking, can or should be considered “the Kyrgyz people.”

3 The English term yurt is derived from the Russian term.

The prevalence of horses and long history of horses in Kyrgyz society have made them into a symbol of “Kyrgyzness.” Even in cities, where horses are not used daily, people seem to relate to a notion of a shared nomadic past in which horses are central. Rural life, and more importantly, *jailoo* life, is romanticised as “the true Kyrgyz way of living.” As Judith Beyer, in her research on customary law in Kyrgyzstan, notes:

Many long-term inhabitants of Bishkek [the capital] have surprisingly little knowledge about the countryside and are disconnected from the flow of everyday life there. This often includes a lack of knowledge about customs and traditions, the Kyrgyz language, agricultural work, and animal husbandry. Most of them, however, assert that the rural way of life is the true Kyrgyz lifestyle, even though they do not participate in it themselves.⁴

Jeanne Féaux de la Croix moreover analyses the *jailoo* as a place “where Kyrgyz-ness is imagined to happen,” a place where yurts and horsemanship “seem to have an eternal home.”⁵

This type of imagination also plays a role in nation-building. Kyrgyz ethnologist Elmira Köchümkulova told me:

For nation-building, our cultural heritage, our nomadic past, is central. Everything that makes a Kyrgyz is related to our nomadic past. Oral tradition, music, it is all inherited from our nomadic past. Even the land and nature itself, the landscape, the environment, was best suited for a nomadic way of life and livestock raising. Cities are quite new in Kyrgyzstan. Even though contemporary Kyrgyz cannot all directly relate to a nomadic way of life, they can relate to it in their social memory, that their ancestors were nomads. That’s where they came from. Our national flag has the symbol of a yurt. That already tells that we highly value nomadic culture (...) The horse symbolises our nomadic culture, our past. A horse is the wing of a man. It was the horse culture that made the nomadic people and empires strong.

4 Judith Beyer, “Customizations of Law: Courts of Elders (Aksakal Courts) in Rural and Urban Kyrgyzstan,” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 38 (1) (2015): 60.

5 Jeanne Féaux de la Croix, *Iconic Places in Central Asia: The Moral Geography of Dams, Pastures and Holy Sites* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016), 80.



FIGURE 8.3 Summer pasture (*jailoo*) in southern Kyrgyzstan © Simone de Boer

This statement reflects Mellon's argument that pre-Soviet history is central to nation-building in Kyrgyzstan,⁶ and Laruelle's observation that "[p]easants or nomads are exaggeratedly foregrounded as the site of preservation of national authenticity."⁷

Due to the centrality of horses in nomadic life, it is said that Kyrgyz people have come to embody a connection with these animals. Involvement with horses is perceived to be in the people's blood, genes or nature. This notion of embodiment is also illustrated by popular Kyrgyz sayings such as "Horses are the wings of the Kyrgyz" and "Who has no horse has no feet." Other sayings emphasising the importance of horse riding are, for example: "Who takes good care of his horse never has to go on foot" and "If you are given only one day's life, spend half of it in the saddle."

In addition to a notion of embodiment, many of the people I spoke with referred to a notion of naturalness. One man, who worked as a car and tractor driver in a village in southern Kyrgyzstan, explained: "Horses are very important and central in my life. Horses are in my soul. There were always horses

6 James G. Mellon, "Myth, Legitimacy and Nationalism in Central Asia," *Ethnopolitics* 9 (2) (2010), 138.

7 Marlene Laruelle, "The Paradigm of Nationalism in Kyrgyzstan: Evolving Narrative, the Sovereign issue, and Political Agenda," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45 (2012), 40.

around. It is natural for me to ride.” Regarding his daughter, who also enjoys horse riding, he said: “Because I have been involved with horses all my life it is only natural that my children also ride. It is in their nature as well.”

2 Continuity and Change: The Past, Present and Future of Horse Games

Strongly connected to the emphasis on embodiment and naturalness is a notion of continuity. Importantly, the notion of continuity is not restricted to a connection between the past and the present: a strong notion about future continuation of horse games seems to exist as well. Of the people I interviewed about the future importance of the games, most were convinced that the games will continue to be meaningful and important in the future, because there is no reason why they would not. It seems to be a given, a natural fact. As one horseman in a village in southern Kyrgyzstan said: “Horse games will most likely be popular in the future (...) It is in the people’s blood to play. Young people will also want to play.” Another man said: “*Ulak* [a popular horse game] was passed on to the people by our great grandfathers. It has always been played and people will continue to play it.” And one of the younger horsemen told me: “In the future *ulak* will still be played, because it is our *uluttuk salt* [national custom] game (...) People appreciate the strength of the horses and the riders.”

The perceived inevitability of the continuation of horse games was explained by many of my interlocutors through the fact that the games are *salt*. The concept of *salt* can roughly be translated as “custom” or “customary law”, but it also refers to a proper way of doing; to behaviour that is appropriate because it is “of the ancestors” and “has always been done this way.” In most conversation I had, however, *salt* was simply translated to me as “tradition.”

I would argue that understanding *salt* as “proper way of doing because it has always been done this way” means it can be considered suitable in any past, present or future context. It follows that *salt* can be understood to incorporate these time dimensions simultaneously. Through the notion of *salt*, continuity is not a matter of simply connecting the past, present and future, but of collapsing these time dimensions to be at the core of being Kyrgyz. Put differently: *salt* is “always;” it is of all times, and hence timeless. As such, *salt* can be seen as a construction of timeless identity, which exists because of an inevitable merging between time dimensions. *Salt* gives horse games perpetual qualities. Importantly, by referring to “timeless identity,” I do not mean to essentialise identity or suggest that identity is static. Instead, I am arguing that *salt* enables a socio-cultural *construction* of a notion of timeless continuity. This connec-

tion between the past and the future is reflected upon throughout the various contexts in which horse games are played: villages, city hippodromes, tourism festivals and the World Nomad Games.

For the organisers of the World Nomad Games, *salt* is perceived as a distinguishing factor that can be used to acquire international recognition for both the games and the nation they are associated with. Moreover, *salt* serves as a means to challenge the dominance of major international sport organisations and events, and shape the future of the international sports world. The World Ethnosport Confederation (WEC) responsible for organising the World Nomad Games believes that major sport associations such as the Olympics, FIFA (soccer), NBA (basketball), NHL (hockey), and WBC (boxing) belong to the past. Instead, the future lies in ethnogames, including nomadic games. Due to their uniqueness, history and tradition, which brightly reflect the values, culture and way of life of the ethnic group, ethnogames are considered the “new world sports.”⁸ According to the WEC, these notions of history and tradition do not, or no longer, exist in other sporting events.

These distinguishing qualities thus make nomadic games capable of “competing” with modern sports by offering an alternative which is “future proof.” The notion of *salt* can in a way be understood to counterbalance the “colonising tendencies” that can be found in the globalisation and modernisation of sports, especially in the Olympics and major sport associations such as FIFA.⁹ It thereby shows the possibility of “local adaptation and resistance to the modernizing project embedded within the spread of sport.”¹⁰ What struck me during my conversations with the WEC is that it seems that, while the notion of *salt* is central to the organisers’ own understanding of the games, in the international context the emphasis shifts from the notion of *salt* to a globalised heritage jargon, in which terms like “heritage,” “uniqueness,” and “safeguarding” become central. On the World Nomad Games website it says:

The World Nomad Games are aimed at developing the ethnosport and ethnoculture movement in the world, as this is the heritage of human civilization. The mission of the World Nomad Games covers the revival, development and preservation of the ethnoculture, diversity and origin-

8 The construction of ethnicity as a social and administrative category has a long history in Kyrgyzstan. It became more or less solidified as it is today under Soviet administration. For the WEC however, ethnicity refers to a shared “culture” and “heritage” more broadly.

9 Thomas Carter, “On the Need for an Anthropological Approach to Sport,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 9 (3) (2002): 407.

10 Carter, 406.

ality of the people of the world in order to foster a more tolerant and open relationship between people.¹¹

“Ethnic culture” and “heritage” are understood here as interwoven, or even as interchangeable. According to the project manager, safeguarding of nomadic games is needed because the games are part of the people’s history and philosophy. He said it is important that people have knowledge about their history and national culture, for a nation cannot exist without it. During the opening ceremony in 2016 the Kyrgyz president emphasised the need for preservation in his speech:

For us, nomads, this event means returning to our roots, and demonstrating to our children and to the whole world the richness of the nomadic culture. For the spectators this is a way to learn something new, an opportunity to [experience] the pristine nature and the ancient traditions, to experience the hospitality and sincerity of nomads. That is why the program of the festival consists not only of sport competitions, but also [of] events and activities related to the way of life, traditions, art and philosophy of nomads (...) In times of globalization, and scientific and technological progress, there is a threat of extinction of unique cultures and traditions. In these circumstances, our efforts, aimed at preserving and expanding the heritage of ancestors, are extremely important.¹²

The notion of globalisation as a threat is also mentioned on the website, where “preserving the cultural and historical heritage and diversity of peoples from around the world in the era of globalization” is listed as one of the aims of the organisation.

We thus see that on the one hand, the *salt* nature of horse games is believed to be an asset that will guarantee their continuity in the future. It is even seen as a competitive advantage on the world stage. At the same time, however, by entering the world stage, the games have become connected to globalised UNESCO narratives of heritage that emphasise the *threat* of globalisation to the future existence of the games. Not surprisingly perhaps, it seems the use of globalised heritage discourse has become more prominent since UNESCO provided patronage for the World Nomad Games, and one of the horse games, *kök börü*, was included on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

11 <http://worldnomadgames.com/en/page/About-the-WNG/>

12 <https://akipress.com/news:581879/>

By transforming *salt* into heritage—formally or informally—the meaning of continuity and timelessness changes. Nomadic games seen as *salt* are an activity suitable in any present context, regardless of processes of “modernisation,” precisely because they have a link to the past. Therefore, they will also be right in any future present. This sense of timelessness can be understood as existing *independent* of time; or at least independent of a certain, globally dominant understanding of time. In the case of heritage, however, timelessness has the meaning of *unaffected* by time. Or, put more specifically: unaffected by processes of globalisation, modernity and progress. After all, to safeguard or preserve implies saving something from change, thereby fixing it in time.

Despite the use of heritage jargon, this idea of unchangeability was not endorsed by the organisers of the World Nomad Games. The horse games were played according to standardised and internationalised rules and regulations, in a newly built, high-tech hippodrome. The organisation saw no harm in changing and standardising the way of performing some of the games in order to make them better suited for a large international audience, and to enable competition between athletes from different countries. The chairman said: “The whole world can play these games. We can create international rules for all the games, while still finding a way to connect them to the olden days.” Moreover, it is thought that precisely by their incorporation in the globalised sports world, nomad games could gain publicity and their status of a legitimate alternative to “regular” sports. According to the organisers of the World Nomad Games, globalisation and safeguarding do not have to be mutually exclusive. Safeguarding takes place through globalisation, since the international platform brings opportunities for both the practice, promotion and development of the games.

So far, we have seen that the *salt* and supposedly timeless nature of the games does not mean they are static. In fact, the development of the games and the building of hippodromes started long before the first World Nomad Games took place. They were initiated as part of Soviet state ideology and policy, through which, among many other things, processes of sportification were promoted.¹³ Sportification can be defined as the transformation of “traditional” athletic activities into modern sports. Central to this transformation are processes of bureaucratisation, standardisation, formalisation, regulation and internationalisation, as well as an emphasis on specialisation, rationalisation and achievement.¹⁴ Processes of sportification in the Soviet Union were char-

13 Petar Petrov, “National Styles of Wrestling in the Soviet Union and the Post-Soviet States: Political and Sociocultural Aspects of Their Development and Use,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 31 (4) (2014): 405–422.

14 Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, (New York: Columbia



FIGURE 8.4 *Kök börü* players in Bishkek hippodrome © Simone de Boer

acterised by the development of “national styles,” which corresponded to the (ethnic) “nationalities in the new national-territorial units.”¹⁵

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, (the outcome of) these processes continued to exist. In cities, the games are generally organised on national holidays, such as Victory Day (9 May) and Independence Day (31 August). Moreover, newly founded sporting federations continue to change the rules and regulations of the games, including the training of referees and the formalisation of the players’ uniform. As a result, hippodromes games have become safer, more structured, and easier to watch and follow. They have changed into spectator sports, in which spectacle is foregrounded. In the case of horse racing, for example, the distance has been shortened, because, as my interlocutors explained, the start and finish are the most exciting for the audience to watch.

Despite these processes of sportification, a connection with the ancestors is still considered an essential part of the games. Many of my interlocutors

University Press, 1978). Gertrud Pfister, “Sportification, Power, and Control: Ski-Jumping as a Case Study,” *Junctures* 8 (2007): 51–67. Cécile Collinet, et al. “Physical Practices and Sportification: Between Institutionalisation and Standardisation. The Example of Three Activities in France,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30 (9) (2013): 989–1007.

15 Petrov, “National Styles,” 407.

explained that the games played in hippodromes are the games of the Kyrgyz people, or the games of the ancestors. They referred to the games as *salt* and emphasised the connection between the “new” and the “old” type of playing. They regarded the hippodrome type a continuation of the older type and as still a “proper way of doing.” The World Nomad Games can be seen as an extension of these developments. An important difference, however, is that it brings these developments into a tourism context.

3 Continuity and Change: Horse Games and the Question of Authenticity

An emphasis on the spectator and national identity is also prevalent in the case of smaller scale tourist festivals in rural areas. In the summer of 2015, the Kyrgyz Community Based Tourism Association organised three horse game festivals.¹⁶ Besides horse games, the programme of these festivals comprised national food, some non-equestrian games such as rope pulling and arm wrestling, and a performance of Kyrgyz dance, music and handicrafts. The aim of these festivals was to attract tourists from around the world and to show Kyrgyz national games and culture to foreign visitors.¹⁷ As in the case of the World Nomad Games, the notion of “ethnic identity” and “showing national culture” was very dominant within these festivals.

Both the CBT festivals and the World Nomad Games can be considered heritage tourism, as they tap into tourists’ desire to experience diverse past and present cultural practices and comprise an economic activity in which socio-cultural assets—such as local, or folkloric, traditions, ethnic history, cultural celebrations and performances, foods and handicrafts—serve as attractions for visitors.¹⁸ On one of the promotional flyers of CBT it said:

Experience the Kyrgyz people's heritage. See the finest horsemen in the land put their mastery to the test in traditional games of skill. For centuries, equestrian games have been an important part of Kyrgyz holidays and feasts. Skill on horseback was vital in this nomadic society.

16 CBT develops small scale, locally managed (eco-)tourism facilities all over Kyrgyzstan in order to generate income and improve the living conditions of the communities involved.

17 Most tourists I encountered came from Southern, Western and Northern Europe, North America, Australia and Israel.

18 Deepak Chhabra, Robert Healy and Erin Sills. “Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 30 (3) (2003): 703.

And on another: “[The aim of the festival is] to help our guests, the tourists, to experience our culture and traditions in depth, and feel the real Kyrgyz hospitality.”¹⁹

The fact that the horse game festivals are organised in a tourism context, means that the games and the notion of *salt* are part of processes of globalisation and commercialisation. As in the case of hippodrome games and the World Nomad Games, tourism festival games are organised for an audience. Consequently, some modifications are necessary to make the games more attractive to watch. Erik Cohen notes that in the case of tourism, cultural products “become increasingly oriented to an ‘external public,’” as a result of which they “may be shortened, embellished, or otherwise adopted to the tastes of the tourists.”²⁰ While discussing the plans for the CBT festivals with the organisers, they explained to me certain changes were considered in order to make the games more spectacular, and therefore more interesting for the audience. In addition, modifications were made to make the games more structured and safer to watch.²¹

Interestingly, while most tourists explained their motivation to visit the festivals in terms of “experiencing culture and traditions”, many of them disliked the fact that the games had been primarily organised for them. This initially prevented a feeling of authenticity for many tourists, because the games were not played in the supposed “original” or “traditional” context. Many tourists preferred a “real,” locals-only event. We see here how tourists have certain imaginations, expectations and desires of the places and people they visit. Noel Salazar and Nelson Graburn define these “imaginaries as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and that are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices.”²² In experiential tourism like heritage tourism, these imaginaries “are often structured by dichotomies,” which are “often based on processes of temporal and spatial Othering.”²³

19 An emphasis on rural and nomadic traditions and heritage is central to the promotion of the Kyrgyz tourism sector in general.

20 Erik Cohen, “Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 15 (1988): 381.

21 Normally, in the case of non-tourist village games, there are no clear field markers. Since the games are rather rough and chaotic, it often happens that the horses run into the audience.

22 Noel B. Salazar and Nelson H.H. Graburn, “Introduction,” in *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Noel B. Salazar and Nelson H.H. Graburn (New York: Berghahn Books 2016), 1.

23 Salazar and Graburn, 1–2; see also John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage, 2011).

In tourism in Kyrgyzstan these dichotomies are characterised by a notion of “tradition/heritage = authentic” versus “modernity = inauthentic.” The tradition/heritage = authentic narrative is connected to notions of uniqueness and continuity with the past, whereas modernity = inauthentic is linked to notions of similarity and change.²⁴ As Deepak Chhabra et al. note, (the perception of) authenticity is the basic principle of heritage tourism. Cohen argues that this desire for authenticity is fuelled by a search for “the pristine, the primitive, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity;”²⁵ thus a romantic nostalgia. This idea of authenticity is often based on popular stereotypes.²⁶ In heritage tourism it becomes apparent that no matter how “effectively scholars deconstruct authenticity and reveal it to be an intellectual red herring, the concept remains nonetheless entrenched in popular thought.”²⁷

When I asked a Belgian couple what made them use the term traditional when explaining their motivations for visiting one of the CBT festivals they said: “It’s traditional because you don’t see it in Europe. You can only see it here. It’s something that’s unique for a certain area and something from the past that might disappear.” A man from Australia explained that he considered the games cultural heritage because it is “something that has been done in these communities for a long time, it’s unique, it’s interesting for outsiders to see (...) It’s unique, because it’s specific to this area.” He also remarked that the games “are a living part of human history that has to be preserved [because] all cultures are becoming one and the same.” “Internet and TV,” he continued, “make values shift. Historically, maybe young people wanted to be a farmer like their dad, now they want to be a popstar. TV and the Internet change role models and aspirations of the community.” A German girl reflected on the issue of values as well. She said:

Such a festival is also a good way for children to see their parents ride a horse, so they want to do it as well. It’s part of the culture. A few days ago, we met a young guy who wasn’t interested in horses, only in cars, I think it’s sad. I mean, in Germany a lot of guys are interested in cars too, but

24 I put tradition/heritage here as interchangeable terms, because, although theorised as different concepts, most tourists seemed to use them interchangeably, as did organisers in promotional material and commentary during the festivals.

25 Cohen, “Authenticity,” 374.

26 Amanda Stronza, “Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Grounds for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001), 271.

27 Jocelyn Linnekin, “Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity,” *American Anthropologist* 93, no. 2 (1991): 446.

here horses are a big part of culture, more so than in Germany. The festival is not only good for tourists to see but also for locals. So they can be proud of their culture.

Regarding authenticity the Australian man stated: “When we first arrived, we tried to figure out to what extent it is authentic, also in terms of disneyfication. The question we had was if they try to preserve their culture, and we are simply bystanders, or if they do it solely for us.” After I asked why he used the term authentic he replied that the fact that there were many tourists made it feel less authentic.

From these quotes it becomes clear that for (some) foreign visitors, tradition or heritage in Kyrgyzstan is incongruent with “modern” influences such as TVs or cars, because these influences undermine or destroy the (perceived) uniqueness and anticipated authenticity of Kyrgyz culture. Since tourism can be seen as a modern phenomenon,²⁸ many tourists worried that their own touristic presence—and even more so the presence of *other* tourists—would render the festival merely a “show” and their experiences merely “touristic” and therefore, in their view, “inauthentic” and less “real.” This, of course, creates a dilemma: using tourism infrastructure in search of unique and authentic experiences seems impossible if you define authenticity in terms of its incompatibility with modernity, and, in extension, tourism.

So how can we explain the fact that, in the end, most tourists were not unhappy with their “staged tourism experience”? It seems that the tourists’ initial search for “objective authenticity,” which “refers to the authenticity of originals,”²⁹ turned into a negotiated “constructive authenticity” and emergent “existential authenticity.”³⁰ Constructive authenticity in this case means that the notion of authenticity becomes elastic and negotiable; it is a projection of authenticity.³¹ It appears many tourists accepted the ambiguity of authenticity as long as they had the feeling to have experienced at least some part of the local culture. One tourist remarked: “Despite the touristic nature of the event I got a good impression of what the games are about.” Moreover, many of my interlocutors appreciated the horsemen’s skill and perceived it as something specific to Kyrgyz culture. Cohen also notes:

28 Ning Wang, “Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experiences,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 26, no. 2 (1999): 349–370.

29 Wang, “Rethinking authenticity,” 352.

30 Wang, “Rethinking authenticity;” see also Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, “Tradition, Genuine or Spurious,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 385 (1984): 273–290.

31 See also Cohen, “Authenticity.”

The vast majority of tourists do not demand such a “total authenticity” (...) Hence, they will be prepared to accept a cultural product as authentic, insofar as traits, which they consider to be diacritical, are judged by them to be authentic. These traits are then considered sufficient for the authentication of the product as a whole. Therefore, such tourists will accept (...) as “authentic” a commercialized replication of local customs, such as a dance or a ritual, in so far as it is performed identically by members of the local group, as is its non-commercialized counterpart.³²

In addition, a notion of authenticity emerged in interaction with local people and participation in the festival activities. Wang describes this notion of “existential authenticity” as follows:

(...) existential experience involves personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities. In such a liminal experience, people feel they themselves are much more authentic and more freely self-expressed than in everyday life, not because they find the toured objects are authentic but simply because they are engaging in nonordinary activities, free from the constraints of the daily.³³

So while most tourists initially preferred a “real,” locals-only event and disliked the idea of “inauthentic” show, they in the end accepted the “tourist version” of the events due to the experiential nature and malleability and elasticity of the imaginaries of authenticity, heritage and tradition.³⁴ Interestingly, the acceptance of a tourist version of the activities influenced tourists’ expectations and desires: many tourists expected the activities to be modified somewhat to make them better suited for tourists. In case of the horse games, for example, many tourists expected informative, organised chaos, or even structure and safety, instead of the usual wild and violent nature of the games.

32 Cohen, 378.

33 Wang, “Rethinking authenticity,” 351–352.

34 And it probably also has to do with the fact that it is rather hard to attend locals-only events, as they are usually not widely promoted and mostly organised outside the tourism season. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states: “festivals have the practical advantage of offering in a concentrated form, at a designated time and place, what tourists would otherwise search out in the diffuseness of everyday life, with no guarantee of ever finding it.” Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture. Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 59.

In contrast to tourists, for many local people the integrity, or one could say authenticity, of the activities remained intact, even though some modifications had been made to make the games and other activities more attractive and suitable for a foreign audience. In addition to making the games safer, more attractive and/or less boring to watch, one of the organisers wanted his festival to stand out compared to other festivals. He explained:

We would like to introduce some new forms of traditional games, to make the games more interesting for the audience. Everywhere when people organise festivals the same games are played, the festivals are organised according to tradition. It is hard to organise a good quality festival. You want to do something special, otherwise it will be boring for the viewers. You need to organise new kinds of games to make it more attractive (...) In the festival we want to show both old and new types of games. We want to show the audience Kyrgyz tradition, while also making it attractive by adding new elements.

To him, just showing the games as they are normally played—in his words: according to tradition—would not be interesting enough for tourists. Not all modification would be possible, however, because some would be *uyat* (shameful, inappropriate).³⁵ These statements appear paradoxical: the aim of CBT is to show Kyrgyz tradition and culture to tourists, but according to this particular coordinator this can best be done by creating new cultural elements as well.

It thus seems the organisers of the festivals do not share the tourists' concern for authenticity. While tourists equate tradition and/or authenticity with uniqueness, similarity with modernity and globalisation, and (at least initially) show or stagedness with inauthenticity, the festival organisers connect uniqueness to newness, similarity to tradition, and show or stagedness to possibility or opportunity. Although some specific modifications and new elements could not be considered *salt* (custom, tradition), since they were introduced only recently, they were not considered “fake” either.³⁶ Moreover, they were presented as unique and therefore worth seeing for tourists and locals alike. For local

35 This was mostly connected to gender norms.

36 The difference between tourist and local perceptions of show could perhaps also be (partly) explained by the fact that tourist do not realise that horse games have been a central part of public performances before tourism was developed in Kyrgyzstan. For local people the celebration at a festival is very real, because they are used to celebrations with show elements.

people the integrity, or one could say authenticity, of the activities remained intact.

I believe this can partly be explained by the performative nature of the activities. Yujie Zhu calls this “performative authenticity.”³⁷ He argues that “authenticity is neither objective nor subjective, but performative.”³⁸ This approach “emphasizes the dynamism of ‘becoming’ authentic through (...) the link between memory, habitus and embodied practice.”³⁹ Thus, “[t]he performative judgment of ‘becoming’ authentic does not only lie in the ritual on the front stage (...) with tourists, but is habituated through (...) memory and experience.”⁴⁰ Because the experience of the horse games is real—in the sense of actual—and embodied, the modified games are as “real” as the “original” ones. Also, a notion of *salt* still exists in the broader context of the festival. Similar to hippodrome games, the “new” forms are perceived to be a continuation of the “old,” ancestral ones, and therefore a proper way of doing. Moreover, the organiser quoted above allowed for the possibility that with time, new forms would become the norm. This can be compared to “emergent authenticity” as described by Cohen.⁴¹ As Cohen argues, tourism does not necessarily “[destroy] the meaning of the cultural products for the locals,” as is often suggested.⁴² Instead,

tourist-oriented products frequently acquire new meanings for the locals, as they become a diacritical mark of their ethnic or cultural identity, a vehicle of selfrepresentation before an external public. However, old meanings do not thereby necessarily disappear, but may remain salient, on a different level, for an internal public, despite commoditization.⁴³

Integrity is thus dynamic.⁴⁴

37 Yujie Zhu, “Performing Heritage: Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 39, no. 3 (2012): 1495–1513.

38 Zhu, “Performing Heritage,” 1500.

39 Zhu, 1511.

40 Zhu, 1510.

41 Cohen, “Authenticity.”

42 Cohen, 373.

43 Cohen, 383; see also Stronza, “Anthropology of Tourism,” and Salazar and Graburn, “Introduction,” 18.

44 Christina Toren, “Making the Present, Revealing the Past: The Mutability and Continuity of Tradition as Process,” *Man, New Series* 23, no. 4 (1988): 696–717.



FIGURE 8.5 *Kök börü* at a tourist festival in southern Kyrgyzstan, modified to resemble a hipodrome game © Simone de Boer

4 Conclusion

In this paper I have shown how the Kyrgyz concept of *salt* gives horse games purportedly perpetual qualities, which in turn make these games “future proof” in various ways. Being *salt* means that the continued existence of these games is considered an inevitability for many Kyrgyz people. Because these games are *salt*, and “have always been played,” they will also be played in the future. A notion of embodiment and naturalness further emphasises this idea.

The *salt* nature of the games gives them a socio-culturally constructed timeless essence, which enables transformation while simultaneously emphasising notions of authenticity.⁴⁵ In addition, *salt* is seen as a distinguishing factor that makes nomadic games the games of the future. Interestingly, it has become clear that non-Kyrgyz understandings of (the authenticity of) horse games in a globalised context oftentimes differ from Kyrgyz understandings. I would argue this is a result of different understandings and expectations of time and perpetuity inherent in notions of *salt* and tradition/heritage. Using *salt* as a frame

45 See also Toren, “Making the Present.”

of reference enables an understanding of perpetuity as *independent* of time, while the framework of tradition/heritage comprises an understanding of perpetuity as *unaffected* by time.

In the context of heritage tourism, many tourists understand tradition/heritage in terms of a need to “pass on to” or “safeguard for” future generations, ideally in an unchanged form. The future here is seen as a possibly destructive force for the authenticity and uniqueness of tradition/heritage. The organisers of CBT festivals instead look at the future in terms of economic and socio-cultural development and see change as a means to create uniqueness. The concept of *salt* and its inherent notion of durability enables them to think this way. For the organisers of the World Nomad Games, both the notion of safeguarding and development are important. The notion of safeguarding, however, seems to be influenced by international (heritage) discourse as propagated by, for instance, UNESCO. By combining notions of tradition/heritage with notions of *salt*, it becomes possible for the World Nomad Games organisers to redefine tradition/heritage, and as a result they can modify the games.

This redefinition sometimes also takes place in the experience of tourists. For many tourists the fact that the games had been primarily organised for them initially gave a feeling of inauthenticity, or “not the proper way of doing it,” because the games were affected by processes of globalisation and modernisation such as tourism, and therefore not played in the supposed “original,” or “traditional” context. However, in the actual event of the festival the initial search for “objective authenticity” of “real tradition” turned into a negotiated “constructive authenticity” and emergent “existential authenticity.”⁴⁶ It seems that the shared embodied experience of the tourist festival enabled tourists to feel connected to the Kyrgyz experience of *salt* as proper way of doing, and horse games as “in the people’s blood”, even though the term *salt* was never used in communication towards tourists.⁴⁷ Through this experience, tourists became convinced their experience was “proper,” or at least proper enough. For both tourists and Kyrgyz people, the meaning of perpetuity is thus not set in stone. Instead, it is dynamic and subject to change.

46 Wang, “Rethinking authenticity;” see also Handler and Linnekin, “Tradition: genuine or spurious.”

47 All communication was in English.

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PART 4

Shrines and Monuments as Sites of Memory



Genealogy and Family Ties of Mawarannahr Sayyids: A Study Based on Funerary Epigraphy

Babur Aminov

Very often the genealogical works on historical figures of Mawarannahr during the Islamic period pay special attention to the genealogical trees of sayyids. From ancient times, the information from funerary epigraphy serves to prove the existence of this religious community across the historical region. We should note that the history of Mawarannahr sayyid dynasties and their genealogy has not been studied in sufficient detail, although there has been an increased interest in it after the Central Asian countries gained their independence from the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

In society structures Mawarannahr sayyids represented a special community based on a specific Muslim social hierarchy. The notion/name sayyid still exists. By this term, people in Central Asia generally refer to a religious elite as well as families descended from the Prophet Muhammad.¹ According to Aleksandr A. Semenov, a sayyid was the highest title of Bukharan emirs, in other words, it was considered to be “higher than any other” and therefore this word “was always used in front of names of emirs.”²

Of course, during the past few centuries sayyids, like other holy families, were representatives of a privileged social layer and had very high influence and respect among Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi *madhhab* (school of law).

Currently, there is growing interest in their history and genealogy. It is known from history that some representatives of this layer actively participated in the political affairs across Mawarannahr, especially during the Chaghatay Ulus³

1 Ashirbek K. Muminov, “*Dihqāns* and Sacred Families in Central Asia,” in *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies. The Living Links to the Prophet*, ed. Morimoto Kazuo (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 199.

2 Aleksandr A. Semenov, “Ocherk ustroistva tsentral'nogo administrativnogo upravleniia Bukharskogo khanstva pozdneishego vremeni,” in *Materialy po istorii tadzhikov i uzbekov*, vol. 2 (Stalinabad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk Tajik SSR, 1954), 20.

3 Name given to the descendants of Chinggīs Khan's second son Chaghatai (d. 1244–1245), who reigned in Transoxania until ca. 1370 and in parts of Turkestan down to the seventeenth century.

and during the reign of Amir Timur (1370–1405), and many of them gained high positions in religious institutions.

There exist several methods of naming sayyid communities, which had been established during various periods and whose name is defined by their place of residence. In addition to the title sayyid, they are also known as *‘alavī*, *ḥusaynī*, *khwāja*, *khān*, *mīr*, *mīrī*, *ishān*, *tūra*, etc. Many generations of sayyids lived from age to age in the same territory or city within Mawarannahr, but they always kept up relationships with other sayyids and sayyid families within their geographical proximity. There were several large sayyid families in Mawarannahr, who lived in relative isolation from each other, localised in separated settlements or parts of towns and who had agricultural land allotments.

Burial sites of members of each of these families gradually became sacred places. Several burial sites of influential sayyids became memorial complexes where people would go to worship. Some of these historical-architectural sites were built on the orders of the rulers, and in some cases, funerary monuments have been constructed on the graves of saintly sayyids. Among the most famous of these sacred places on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan are Sulṭān Sādāt (Termez), Sulṭān Mīr Ḥaydar (Kasbi), Gunbaz-i Sayyidān (Gumbaz-i Sayyidon, in Shahrisabz), Chār Bakr (Bukhara), Shāh-i Zinda (Samarqand), and Yāzdah Imām (Samarqand). For this study, the most significant monuments are those which help us to reconstruct the genealogies of the respective sayyid line.

A complete list of all sayyids of Mawarannahr on the basis of primary sources has yet to be compiled. Preparing genealogies of sayyids is important, for it may give answers to some questions, associated with the origin of sacred families, their individual branches and various sub-groups. Central Asian sacred families who claimed to have noble origin kept handwritten *shajara* or *nasabnāma* (family trees) as proof, which sometimes caused doubt. It should be noted, however, that in a family tree, one can trace close family relations, determine main ascending and descending lines of relations, and clarify the origin of individual branches. This article aims to shed some light on a specific branch of these family trees, and will offer a reconstruction of the genealogical tree of several Samarqandī sayyid families. It will do so on the basis of funerary epigraphy.

1 Sayyids and Their Family Ties with the Ruling Dynasties

Throughout the Islamic world the term sayyid originated from the marriage of Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fāṭima, and his son-in-law ‘Ali. On the whole, sayyids would have received a warm and respectful welcome wherever they

ended up due to the prestige of their lineage.⁴ Sayyids and their families spread across the entire Muslim world in the time of the Abbasid Caliphate. There are various reasons for their resettlement (transmigration) from the heartlands of the Caliphate to other regions, such as Mawarannahr. Throughout the ninth-tenth centuries many sayyids moved to Samarqand, which was one of the most important urban centres across Mawarannahr. Samarqand is located at the crossing point of trade routes and therefore the city had very significant strategic importance within the Abbasid Caliphate. In Mawarannahr, sayyids found shelter and lived under the patronage of the Samanid rulers (819–999). The Samanids and later dynasties patronized them in order to elevate their own prestige by showing how many well-educated sayyids were living in their realm.⁵

Since that time until the establishment of the Soviet rule in the 1920s, in the right of their origin from the family of Muhammad, they were considered as nobles, maintained their family and house traditions, and often intermarried with other sacred families and ruling circles. Sayyids married representatives of the ruling class and local nobility, and strengthened their positions. For example, via dynastic marriages they intermarried with the Samanids and the Timurids. Marriage ties between sayyids and Central Asian dynastic lines reinforced the process of “sayyidisation” (*teseyyüd*)⁶ of rulers in Central Asia. One of the first dynastic marriages between sayyids and local rulers took place

4 Local population (nobles, religious clergy) treated them with special attention and considered them as part of the local elites. Descendants of ‘Alī left Hijaz together with their families settled in Nishapur, Hamadan, Qum, Ray and in Samarqand, which was an important centre within Mawarannahr. See Teresa Bernheimer, “The Rise of sayyids and sādāt: The Āl Zubāra and Other ‘Alids in Ninth- to Eleventh-Century Nishapur,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 100/101 (2005): 43.

5 Among the texts on *qayraq* gravestones from the twelfth century, concentrated in the ancient and modern cemeteries of Samarqand, many contained names of descendants of Prophet Muhammad, who possibly had scientific degrees. For instance, Lola Dodkhudoeva identified names of the following sayyids: Sayyid b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Kamandī (d. 544/1148); Sayyid Muḥammad b. Sayyid Rashīd b. al-Rashīd b. Ṭalīb-Ḥusaynī (d. 569/1173); Sayyid Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abdulazīz (twelfth century); Sayyid ‘Ubaydullāh b. Abū Bakr al-Ḥasanī (d. 576/1180), see Lola N. Dodkhudoeva, *Epigraficheskie pamiatniki Samarkanda XI–XIV vv.*, vol. 1. (Dushanbe: Donish, 1992), 109–110, 111. Ashirbek Muminov clarified the names of some sayyids from among the ‘*ulama*’, who belonged to sacred families famous in Mawarannahr in the Mongol period. See Ashirbek K. Muminov, “Shiitskie kul’turnye vlianiia na Tsentral’nuui Aziuu (na primere deiatel’nosti ‘Alidov),” in *Ars Islamica. In Honour of Stanislav Mikhailovich Prozorov*, ed. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky and Alikber K. Alikberov (Moscow: Nauka-Vostochnaia Literatura, 2016), 647–728.

6 Hülya Canbakal, “The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet in Anatolia and the Balkans (c. 1500–1700),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52, no. 3 (2009): 542.

with the Samanid family: a sayyid from Termez named Sayyid Muḥammad Abū ‘Abd Allāh married Māh-i Simā, the daughter of the well-known Samanid ruler Ismā‘il Sāmānī.⁷

A few centuries later, the Timurids also reinforced their ties with the sayyids through marriage. For instance, one of the wives of the Timurid sultan Abū Sa‘īd Mīrzā was Khānzāda Muqaddam Begim—daughter of Khānzāda Tāj al-Dīn Tirmizī.⁸ Sultan Aḥmad Mīrzā married the daughter of a Termez sayyid called Khānzāda.⁹ The elder wife of another Timurid, Maḥmūd Mīrzā, was the daughter of the sayyid Mīr Buzurg Tirmizī. She gave him a son called Sultan Mas‘ūd Mīrzā. After her death, Maḥmūd Mīrzā married her niece, who was the granddaughter of Mīr Buzurg Tirmizī. She became the mother of the daughter and sons of Maḥmūd Mīrzā.¹⁰ Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā wed his own daughter Munavvar Sultan Begim to the Andkhoy Sayyid Mīrzā, and his ninth daughter Maryam Sultan Begim to another Andkhoy sayyid, ‘Abd Allāh.¹¹ The second daughter of Sultan Muḥammad, grandson of ‘Umar Shaykh, Maryam, was married to one of the successors of Sayyid Baraka.¹² Khwaja ‘Abd al-Kāfi was married to Shah Begim bint Khānzāda ‘Alā al-Mulk (she was the granddaughter of Sultan Abū Sa‘īd, daughter of Fakhri Jahān Begim). The latter was married to the Sayyid Khānzāda ‘Alā al-Mulk from Termez.¹³ In this manner, close ties were established between the Timurid dynasty and sayyid families who had settled in Central Asia centuries before.

After the Timurids left the historical stage, the status of Prophet Muhammad’s descendants was preserved, and they became kin to the Uzbek rulers who had come down to Mawarannahr from the Dasht-i Qipchaq. Muḥammad Yār ibn ‘Arab Qatḡhan, author of the work *Musakhkhir al-bilād*, mentions the name of a sayyid from Dasht-i Qipchaq, Sayyid Ja‘far Khwaja, who had relations with the ruling khans.¹⁴ The Uzbek ruler Muḥammad Shībānī Khan wedded

7 *Protokoly zasedanii i soobshcheniia chlenov Turkestanskogo Kruzhka liubiteli arkheologii*, vyp. 1 (Tashkent, 1914), 15.

8 Shadman Kh. Vokhidov, tr. *Mu‘izz al-ansāb. Istoriia Kazakhstana v persidskikh istochnikakh*, vol. 3, ed. Ashirbek K. Muminov (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2006), 178.

9 Zahir ad-Din Muhammad Babur, *Babur-nama (Zapiski Babura)*, ed. M. Salie, (Tashkent: Glavnaia Redaktsiia Entsiklopedii, 1993), 46.

10 *Ibid.*, 53 (28^a).

11 Turgun Fayziyev, *Temuriylar shajarasi* (Tashkent: Yozuvchi-Khazina, 1995), 124.

12 Vokhidov, *Mu‘izz al-ansāb*, 129–130.

13 Mukhlisabon T. Kadrova, *Zhitiiia Khodzha Akhrara. Opyt’ sistemnogo analiza po rekonstruktsii biografii Khodzha Akhrara i istorii roda Akhraridov*. Document de travail de l’IFEAC, no. 23 (Tashkent: Institut Français d’Études sur l’Asie Centrale, 2007), 106.

14 Muḥammad Yār ibn ‘Arab Qatḡhān, *Musakhkhir al-bilād: Tārīkh-i Shībānīyān. Fors tilidan tarjima, izohlar va ko‘rsatkichlar mualliflari*, ed. I. Bekjon and D. Sangirova (Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2009), 2.

one of his successors to a descendant of ‘Alī. He had his son Muḥammad Timur Sultan marry a daughter of a sayyid from Termez.¹⁵ Later on, marriage ties with families of sayyids enhanced the “sayyidisation” process of the subsequent dynasties—the Ashtarkhanids and the Manghits in Bukhara, the Mings in Kokand and the Qungrats in Khiva.

2 Brief Historiographical Overview

While engaging with sayyid family history, attention should be given to all sorts of possible data and a number of important works on this topic. Some information on the genealogy of influential sayyids can be found in the works of scholars who have looked into sources from Mawarannahr. The data about the origin of the Tirmizī sayyids, their history and genealogy given in Aleksandr A. Semenov’s work contains mention of Sultan Sādāt—a settlement near Termez, where sayyids used to live.¹⁶ In many articles and works, one can see a noticeable interest in the history of sayyid families: these articles give information of a historical/biographical nature and data about the genealogy of family members.¹⁷ A number of short articles fill in lacunas found in some of the larger genealogical studies. Bakhtiyar Babadjanov,¹⁸ Omonullo Buriev¹⁹ and Jaloliddin Mirzo,²⁰ among others, compiled studies on the basis of hand-written sources which were published in recent years. Translations of genealogical sources have recently been completed by Ashirbek Muminov,²¹ Shuqurillo Ziyadov,²² Shadman Vokhidov²³ and Babur Aminov.²⁴

The data we are interested in can be found in genealogical works and family trees (*shajara*, *nasabnāma*). Besides those works, funerary epigraphy is one of the most important sources on sayyid genealogies, as it enables us to delve

15 Jaloliddin Mirzo, *Termiz sayyidlari* (Tashkent: “San’at” Jurnal Nashriyoti, 2008), 16.

16 *Protokoly zasedanii*, 3–20.

17 Muminov, *Shiitskie kul’turnye vlianiia na Tsentral’nuu Aziu*.

18 Bakhtiyar M. Babadjanov and Elizaveta G. Nekrasova, “Sultan Sadat,” in *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar’* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2006).

19 Omonullo Buriev, *Temuriilar davri ezma manbalarida Markazii Osië: tarihii-geografik lavhalar* (Tashkent: Uzbekiston nashriëti, 1997).

20 Jaloliddin Mirzo, *Termiz sayyidlari*.

21 Muminov, *Dihqans and Sacred Families in Central Asia*.

22 Shuqurillo Ziyadov, “Taschkenter Handschriften über das Milieu bucharischer Theologen in 13. und 14. Jahrhunderten,” *Manuscripta Orientalia* 9 (2003): 56–58.

23 Vokhidov, *Mu’izz al-ansab*.

24 Babur Aminov et al., *Qashqadaryo: Shahrisabz* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan today, 2016).

deeper into familial relationships. Funerary monuments from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries in the above-mentioned architectural and cemetery complexes, associated with sayyids, offer valuable information, helping us to reconstruct sayyid genealogies. Throughout my research, I have been able to compile a vast genealogical database with tables and genealogical diagrams of Mawarannahr sayyids. In this research, I focused specifically on the central figures—representatives of major family lines in Mawarannahr, such as the Tirmizī sayyids. In addition, other sayyid families have been analysed. These are either known by their *nisbas* (indicating their place of origin)—for example the Kasbavī (Kasbagī), Nakhshabī, Nasafī, Samarqandī, and Bukhārī (Sumitani) sayyids—or by their eponyms, for example the Mustafavī, Ḥusaynī, Murtaẓavī, Mūsavī, Mīrakānī, and Ḥaydarī sayyid families. Furthermore, there are sayyids who also lived in Mawarannahr, but who had moved into the region from other parts of the Islamic world, as is apparent from their *nisba*—for example the Shīrāzī and Khurāsānī sayyid families.

To date, scholarly work in this field has made considerable use of written and epigraphic materials that allow identification of the history of the sacred families and their familial links. This article is an attempt to study the genealogy of the descendants of ‘Alī in Mawarannahr on the basis of epigraphic sources and information from written sources. In addition to the names of the sayyids and the dates of their death, these sources contain other important historical data. Unfortunately, this historical data has not always been preserved in its entirety on the funerary engravings. In general, gravestones contain short texts which indicate the primary genealogy of the person buried.

In what follows, I will present in detail several examples from the funerary epigraphy of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum and the Shāh-i Zinda necropolis in Samarqand, and the Sulṭān Mīr Ḥaydar complex, situated to the west of the Uzbek town of Qarshi.

3 Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum (Samarqand)

Some of the most important epigraphic sources for the reconstruction of sayyid genealogies have been preserved to the present day on the tombstones of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum. This historical-cultural heritage site is located approximately half a kilometre to the east of the Panjikent road in Samarqand. A small street connects the residential quarter with the road that leads to Registan Square.²⁵ As one goes into the Zamini residential quarter, one can find

²⁵ Registan Square was the main trading hub in Samarqand after the fifteenth century.



FIGURE 9.1 View of the exterior of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum, © Babur Aminov



FIGURE 9.2 View of the interior of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum, © Babur Aminov

a *khānaqāh* or Sufi lodge. The monument is surrounded by accommodation premises: it is separated from them by a small courtyard with a large white marble tombstone. The brick building established during the Timurid period is well-preserved. Inside the hall of the building, there are tombstones from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The most ancient one is a *qayraq* from the Qarakhanid period.²⁶ The Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum is probably a family burial

26 See also Dodkhudoeva, *Epigraficheskie pamiatniki Samarkanda*. On *qayraq*, see Pierre



FIGURE 9.3 The tombstone Yz-13 is made from marble with dimensions $170 \times 52 \times 12$ cm. Its upper surface has rounded corners, © Babur Aminov

place, since tombstones of the same family have been erected throughout the site. The interior is sparsely decorated.

Ten tombstones have been preserved in the interior of the building; Timurid tombstones are found intermingled with earlier ones. In terms of genealogy, the family tree on tombstone No. 13 (Yz-13), on which the members of a Samarqandī sayyid family are listed, is of the most interest for this study. The stone is situated in the middle of the mausoleum and has some superficial damage on its surface. The tombstone text and the genealogy of the sayyid family are presented below.

هذا المر // قد منور و مشهد // معطر صاحب سيادت و // سعادت المستريح في // جوار رحمت
 الملك // الغلام حضرت مير علي اكبر شيخ // الاسلام حضرت مير موسى و هو بن امير //
 زين العابدين بن // الملك بن ابو المعالي بن امير // شمس الدين بن ابى جعفر ابن ضيا الملك
 // ابن امير ناصر الدين بن امير عماد الملك بن امير عبيد // امير ابو الحسن بن امير ابو القاسم
 بن امير عبيد الله بن امير // سلطان بن علي الاصغر بن امير حسن ابن امير حسين بن امير
 جعفر // الحجّه زين العابدين // امام حسين ابن
 امير المؤمنين علي بن ابى طالب كرم الله

Siméon, "Central Asia," in *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Archaeology*, ed. Bethany J. Walker, Timothy Insoll and Corisande Fenwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 532 and 536.



FIGURE 9.4 a and b: Detail images of the genealogy on tombstone Yz-13, © Babur Aminov

This is the illuminated shrine, the fragrant burial place [of those who fought for religion], possessed of the status of sayyid, endowed with good fortune, in the proximity of the grace of the kingdom [of God] of

Ḥaḍrat Mīr ‘Alī Akbar shaykh al-Islām son of ḥaḍrat Mīr Mūsā , and he is the son of Amīr Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, [and he is] son of al-Malik [and he is] son of Abu al-Ma‘ālī [and he is] son of Amīr Shams al-Dīn [and he is] son of Abī Ja‘far of son of Ḍiyā al-Mulk [and he is] son of Amīr Naṣr al-Dīn [and he is] son of Amīr ‘Imād al-Mulk [and he is] son of Amīr ‘Ubayd Amīr Abu al-Ḥasan [and he is] son of Amīr Abu al-Qāsim [and he is] son of Amīr ‘Ubaydallāh [and he is] son of Amīr Sulṭān [and he is] son of ‘Alī al-Asghar [and he is] son of Amīr Ḥasan [and he is] son of Amīr Ḥusayn [and he is] son of Amīr Ja‘far al-Ḥujja [and he is] son ofZayn al-‘Ābidīn [and he is] son of Imām Ḥusayn [and he is] son of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī [and he is] son of Abī Ṭālib, God’s grace

Other tombstones identified in the Yāzdah Imām complex are exclusively for relatives of Ḥaḍrat [Ḥaḍrat] Mīr Mūsā. Two tombstones (Yz-4, Yz-5) are installed for his daughters Shāhẓāda Begim (d. 986/1578) and Bībī Shād Begim. Another tombstone was installed for his son Amīr Mīrak. According to the text, one of the epitaphs was intended for Amīr Mīrak’s mother, named Sharīfa Bānū Begim, daughter of Khwaja Zu’l-fiqār son of A‘lā Nasab ... Qāḍī Khwaja (d. 1082/1671). It is assumed that she was Ḥaḍrat Mīr Mūsā’s spouse. Ḥaḍrat Mīr Mūsā and his son can be considered the key figures of the complex.

Amir Ja‘far al-Hujja’s name is mentioned in the list of all generations of ancestors of Mīr Mūsā. He was the father of ‘Ubaydullāh al-‘Araj, whose name

TABLE 9.1 List of historical persons, encountered in the tombstones of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum

Tombstone no	Name	Year of death ^a
Yz-3	Zahrā Bibī Bānū bint Ḥusayn Khwaja ‘Ubaydallāh	835/1431
Yz-4	Bibī Shād Begīm bint Amīr Sayyid Mūsā ibn al (incomplete)	
Yz-5	Shāhzāda Begīm bint Ḥaḍrat Mīr Mūsā ibn Ḥaḍrat Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Mustafavī	986/1578
Yz-6	Sharīfa Bānū Begīm bint Khwaja Zu’l-fiqār ibn ‘Alī Nasab al- <i>Gharq</i> ... Qāḍī Khwaja ‘Iṣām al-Dīn; Ummi Ḥaḍrat Mīrak Samarqandī	1082/1671
Yz-8	Amīrzāda Dawlat ibn Amīr Zīrak Shāh	838/1434
Yz-9	Khwān Khānim Begīm bint Khwaja (not complete)	988/1580
Yz-12	Khānzāda Nuṣrat Khwaja ibn ‘Imad al-Dīn Mas‘ud	
Yz-14	Amīr Mīrak ibn Amīr Mūsā ibn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ibn Ḥusayn ibn Amīr ‘Imād al-Mulk ibn Abū-l Ma‘ālī	
Yz-15	Yādgar ‘Azīz ibn Amīr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz	855/1451

a The dates from the tombstones are provided in all tables in both formats (Hijri and Georgian calendars).

is frequently mentioned in the historical sources. Ja‘far al-Hujja is the base of the family tree of the aforesaid genealogical tree, engraved on tombstone No. 13 in the Yāzdah Imām complex. He is the common ancestor of all sayyid families in Mawarannahr. He is also known under the name Ja‘far Husayn al-Asghar Abū ‘Abdallāh in the genealogical tree of the Termez sayyids according to the epigraphy on the tombstone of Abu-Ma‘ālī in Gunbaz-i Sayyidān in Shahrisabz.

The sayyids family tree, presented in Aleksandr A. Semenov’s work gives evidence that Amir Ja‘far al-Hujja is mentioned in another source. This is clearly seen in Muḥammad Tālib’s work *Maṭlab ut-tālibīn*, written in the second half of the seventeenth century and devoted to the house of the Juybārī Khwājas. The author of *Maṭlab ut-tālibīn* is himself a descendant of this family in a direct line. The work mentions that the father of ‘Ubaydullāh Īraj—Ḥusayn al-Asghar, who is Amīr Ja‘far al-Hujja, is considered to be the forefather of both the Tirmizī sayyids and the Juybārī Khwājas. ‘Ubaydullāh al-Araj²⁷ with the *kunya* Abū ‘Alī, was a contemporary of Abu al-‘Abbās al-Saffāh (722–754). Having arrived

27 This man had a physical defect. He was slightly lame, which became his nickname as *araj* (lame).

as an ambassador to al-Saffāḥ, he received from him a settlement as a gift, which then was called Zī Amwāl.²⁸ The amount of money derived from the annual harvest obtained from the settlement was 80,000 Dinars, which was directly intended for the use of sayyids and ‘Alids.²⁹ The genealogical chain of the above mentioned sayyids has been reconstructed through comparison with the aforesaid information. This has been supplemented by information about those in the sayyid line who are not shown on tombstone Yz-13. On Yz-13 after the name of Amīr Ja‘far al-Hujja his father’s name has been lost, which I have added, having obtained the information from the epigraphy of the Gunbaz-i Sayyidān complex (No. 1): see Table 9.2.

TABLE 9.2 List of historical persons encountered on the tombstones of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum

Sultān Sādāt Khudāvandzāda Abū-l Ma‘ālī
Khudāvandzāda Abu-l Ḥasan ‘Alī Asghar Muḥammad
Khudāvandzāda Abu-l Makārim ‘Alā al-Mulk
Khudāvandzāda Niẓāmuddīn Muḥammadī
Khudāvandzāda Muḥammad Abu al-Makārim ‘Alā al-Mulk
Khudāvandzāda Shams al-Dīn Abū Ja‘far
Khudāvandzāda Ziyā al-Mulk Abū Ḥasan
Khudāvandzāda Naṣīr al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Maḥāsīn
Khudāvandzāda Niẓām al-Dīn Muḥammad Abu al-Ma‘ālī Pahlavān
Khudāvandzāda Shams al-Dīn Abū Ja‘far
Khudāvandzāda Ziyā al-Dīn Ḥasan Abu al-Ḥasan
Khudāvandzāda ‘Imād al-Mulk Abu al-Ḥasan
Bū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh
Abu al-Ḥasan Amīr Abu al-Qāsim ‘Alī
‘Ubaydullāh Abū ‘Alī
Amīr Qāsim
Amīr ‘Alī al-Ḥasan al-Amīr Bū Muḥammad
Amīr Ḥusayn
Amīr ‘Abd Allāh

28 Muḥammad Ṭālīb b. Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan Khwaja al-Ḥusaynī al-Ṣiddīqī, *Maṭlab al-ṭālibīn (matn-i ‘ilmī-yi intiḳādī)*, ed. Ghulām Karīmī and Ērkin Mir-kāmilūf [i.e., Ghulam Kārimiy and Erkin Mirkamilov] (Tashkent: O‘zbekiston Musulmonlari Idorasi, Movarounnahr Nashriyoti, 2012), 35^b.

29 Ibid., ix.

TABLE 9.2 List of historical persons encountered on the tombstones of the Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum (*cont.*)

‘Ubaydullāh al-‘Araj Bū ‘Alī
 Ja‘far Ḥusayn Asghar Abū ‘Abd Allāh
 Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn
 Ḥusayn
 ‘Alī Murtaḍā and his wife Fāṭima the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad

Thus, Ja‘far al-Hujja is the forefather of the Mīrakāni, Tirmizī and Sumitani (Khwaja Jūybārī) sayyids. Other important people from these sayyid genealogies who are buried in the Yāzdah Imām complex are Mīr Musā and his son Sayyid Mīrak Samarqandī. It is possible that the sayyid line of the Mīrakāni originates from the name Mīrak. During his visit from India to Central Asia in 1812, Mīr ‘Izzatullāh met with one of the Mīrakāni sayyids. He writes in his travel diary that while visiting the Ṭilā Kārī (Tilla Kari) Madrasa he met with the Mīrakāni sayyid representative Mīr Junaydullāh.³⁰ Another branch of the Mīrakāni family lived in Balkh, and they had arrived from Samarqand during the reign of Sayyid Muḥammad Khan, who was the brother of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khan. Evidence for this can be found in a *guvāhnāma* (certificate), present in a manuscript from the private collection of Rawnaqī in Shahrisabz, together with other documents. The certificate contains information about the history of the family of another Mīrakāni sayyid, Ḥaẓrat Mīrak Shah Khwaja, during the rule of Sayyid Muḥammad Khan, brother of Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khan (rulers of Afghanistan), whose family moved from their native Samarqand to the city of Balkh. The head of this family—Mīrak Shāh Khwaja—was appointed to the position of *ra‘īs* (ruler) of Balkh. His great-grandson Mīrzā ‘Azīz Allāh, whose nickname was Mīrzā Kalān Khwājagān, an inhabitant of Aybik (one of the districts of Balkh), became a pupil of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujadidiyya Sufi line of *ḥaẓrat* Shaykh Sharīf Khalifa ‘Abd al-Karīm. He moved to Shahrisabz, where his master Sharīf Khalifa ‘Abd al-Karīm lived. Here he married the daughter of a member of the class of the ‘ulama’. He had children from this woman: three

30 *Masīr-i Bukhārā*, Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Suppl. Persan 1346, fol. 44^a. On the journey of Mīr ‘Izzatullāh see also Maria Szuppe, “En quête de chevaux turkmènes: Le journal de voyage de Mīr ‘Izzatullāh de Delhi à Boukhara en 1812–1813,” *Cahiers D’Asie Centrale* 1–2 (1996): 91–111.

TABLE 9.3 Genealogy of Sayyid Abu-l Ma'ālī

Name	Year of death
Haḍrat Makhḍumzāda Khānzāda Abu al-Ma'ālī	950/1543
Khānzāda 'Alī Asghar	Unknown
Sultān Sādāt Khudāvandzāda Abu al-Ma'ālī	859/1454–1455
Khudāvandzāda Abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī Asghar Muḥammad	Unknown

sons and one daughter.³¹ Mīrzā Kalān became famous for his deeds. He died in 1880 at the age of seventy-six.³²

Based on reliable information obtained from other epitaphs (No. 2, No. 3), the genealogy of Sayyid Abu-l Ma'ālī, who lived in the sixteenth century, was compiled: see Table 3.

4 Shāh-i Zinda Necropolis (Samarqand)

Another branch of sayyids was identified from the funeral epigraphy at the Shāh-i Zinda (Living King) necropolis in Samarqand. This famous complex, associated with the name of Qutham ibn 'Abbās (d. 677), the nephew of Prophet Muhammad, is located in the eastern part of the city. This historical-architectural monument constitutes fascinating mausoleums from the late fourteenth-early fifteenth centuries built by members of the Timurid family. To the north-east of the necropolis, not far from the mausoleum of Qutham ibn 'Abbās, there is a concentration of tombstones with engraved texts of various forms and sizes. These are of interest for the study of the Mūsaviyya sayyids' genealogy. Chronologically, the tombstones date back to the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. To the right of the main entrance to the sacred shrine, at an area, which adjoins the Ulugh Beg Mosque from the south, there are over thirty tombstones on a higher spot, identified throughout the ongoing restoration of the necropolis.

31 The referenced manuscript of Rawnaqī has not yet been studied, therefore, the book does not have a catalogue record. Many documents of household-economic life of Shahrisabz until the middle of the twentieth century were included in this manuscript. Manuscript from the collection of Rawnaqī, sheet 49a.

32 Ibid.



FIGURE 9.5 Shāh-i Zinda, Samarqand, view of the sayyid tombstones, © Babur Aminov

In addition to the name of the buried person, many of these tombstones contain names of their ancestors: in other words, they are listed as links of one chain. These tombstones thus form unique tombstone-genealogical trees. For instance, the tombstones under numbers ShZ.III-25, ShZ-14 in my list represent 29 names. Sayyids buried in the Shāh-i Zinda necropolis can be classified as belonging to the Mūsaviyya sayyids group, which originated from Ja'far b. Ibrāhīm Mūsā, *naqīb* (head of the sayyids) in Termez during the Samanid period. Ja'far b. Ibrāhīm is listed as the eighth generation descendant of Ḥamza³³ (who died in Ray), son of Mūsā al-Kāzim, the seventh Imam of the Twelver Shi'a Islam. It is possible to complement the missing links of the genealogy, compiled by Eduard von Zambaur.³⁴ As a result of the study of tombstone engraved texts, the names of the key figures of Mūsaviyya sayyids who were also heads of individual families, have been established.

Below I present the text of tombstone No. 3 in the complex Shāh-i Zinda (see Figures 9.6 and 9.7). It belongs to Sayyid Amīr Ḥaydar Muḥammad (d. 988/1580):

33 The grave of Ḥamza ibn Mūsā is located adjacent to the grave of 'Abd al-'Azīm in Ray (Iran). Ḥamza was also known as Abu al-Qāsim. He had three sons: 'Alī, Qāsim and Ḥamza. 'Alī had no children and after his death he was buried in Shiraz. Qāsim was known as Qāsim-i 'Arabī and he left many sayyid descendants.

34 Eduard de Zambaur, "*Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam* by E. de Zambaur," review by V. Minorsky, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 6:3 (1931), 797–802.



FIGURE 9.6 Detail of the tombstone of Sayyid Amīr Ḥaydar Muḥammad (d. 988/1580), ShZ No. 3 from Shāh-i Zinda, Samarqand, © Babur Aminov



FIGURE 9.7 Detail of the tombstone of Sayyid Amīr Ḥaydar Muḥammad (d. 988/1580), ShZ No. 3 from Shāh-i Zinda, Samarqand, © Babur Aminov

هذا مرقد منور روضة معطر عاليجناب سيادت ماب؟ مرتضوى انتساب امير حيدر محمد بن سلطان غضنفر محمد بن سلطان ابراهيم بن سلطان حسين بن جمال الدين محمود شاه حسين بن طاهر بن حسين على بن محمد بن ابراهيم بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد اسماعيل بن احمد بن محمد اعرابي قاسم ابن امام حمزه ابن موسى بن امام جعفر صادق بن امام محمد باقر ابن امام زين العابدين بن امام حسين مقتول مظلوم شهيد بن علي بن ابى طالب كرم الله وجهه فاطمه بنت محمد رسول الله

This is the illuminated shrine, the fragrant garden of excellent Murtaẓavī sayyids [...] the lineage from ... Amīr Ḥaydar Muḥammad [and he is] son of Sulṭān Ghadanfar Muḥammad [and he is] son of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm [and he is] son of Sulṭān Ḥusayn [and he is] son of Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh Ḥusayn [and he is] son of Tāhīr [and he is] son of Ḥusayn ‘Alī [and he is] son of Muḥammad [and he is] son of Ibrāhīm [and he is] son of Mūsā [and he is] son of Ja‘far [and he is] son of Muḥammad Ismā‘īl [and he is] son of Aḥmad [and he is] son of Muḥammad A‘rābī Qāsim [and he is] son of Imām Ḥamza [and he is] son of Mūsā [and he is] son of Imām Ja‘far Ṣādiq [and he is] son of Imām Muḥammad Bāqir [and he is] son of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn [and he is] son of Imām Ḥusayn Maqtūl maẓlūm shahīd [and he is] son of ‘Alī [and he is] son of Abī Ṭālib God bless his face Fāṭima [and she is] daughter of Muḥammad Messenger of God

5 Sulṭān Mīr Ḥaydar Necropolis

This famous architectural-memorial complex is located near the Kasbi district centre, to the west of the Uzbek town of Qarshi. The distance between Qarshi and Kasbi is between thirty-five to forty kilometres. In the historical sources, Kasbi is mentioned as a large settlement in the Nakhshab province, located four *farsah*³⁵ from the road to Bukhara.³⁶ In the early Medieval period, the Kazbion fortress represented an advanced stronghold of the Sasanians at the border with Sughd.³⁷ According to historical evidence, the Kasbi (Kesba) settlement had a congregational mosque and was bigger than Nasaf.³⁸

35 One *farsah* (*farsang*) is about six kilometers.

36 Bartol'd uses the name Kesba. Vasilii V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 190.

37 Svetlana B. Lunina, *Goroda iuzhnogo Sogda v VIII–XII vv.* (Tashkent: Fan, 1984), 23.

38 Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 1, 190.



FIGURE 9.8 Overview of the Sultan Mir Haydar Necropolis, © Babur Aminov

The necropolis was established by a sayyid family, who had moved from Khorasan to Kasbi. The participation of local sayyids in developing the settlement of Kasbi was undoubtedly high. Here we can quote the seventeenth-century historian Maḥmūd ibn Valī,³⁹ who writes in his work *Baḥr al-asrār*: “Kasbi is a Garden of paradise, where a sayyid family resides”. Mausoleums and burial places located in the complex have been accumulated stage by stage from the fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Descendants of the sayyids, who continued to live in the area, contributed to the development of the city and filled important state-religious functions. The oldest monument in the necropolis is the three-chamber mausoleum from the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century. Ten small burial platforms (*dakhma*) with tombstones were erected from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and there are two nineteenth-century mosques. As time passed, a large cemetery was established and expanded around the family mausoleum of the Kasbi sayyids. In addition to the tombstones of the generations of sayyids, there are graves and tombstones of Uzbek rulers, who had family ties with the sayyids.

Samples of funerary epigraphy from the complex are important historical sources which contain information about representatives of the sayyid family, who lived in the Kasbi settlement. On the territory of the complex there are over forty tombstones with engraved texts. Two of these were studied in 2001.⁴⁰ I insert the data compiled during my own research into the tables below which can be used for comparison and analysis by future researchers (see Tables 9.4 and 9.5).

39 See A. Alekseev, “Maḥmūd b. Amīr Valī and his *Baḥr al-asrār*,” *Manuscripta Orientalia* 11, no. 2 (2005): 2–10.

40 Ashirbek K. Muminov and Bakhtiyar M. Babadzhanov, “Amīr Temur and Sayyid Baraka,” translated by Sean Pollock. *Central Asiatic Journal* 45, no. 1 (2001): 28–62.

TABLE 9.4 Comparative genealogical table of the Kasbi *sayyids*

Tombstone no. (measurements in cm)	Name	Date of death	Nisba	Ancestor name
SMH-1 (88 × 51 × 8,5)	Niẓām al-Dīn Mawlānā Sayyid ‘Alī b. Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Ṣamad	983/1575		
SMH-2 (189 × 49,5 × 31)	Amīr Sayyid Shams al-Dīn Ḥaydar b. Amīr a‘zam Amīr Sayyid Baraka b. Amīr Sayyid al-Ḥusayn Amīr Sayyid Amīr Shams al-Dīn Ḥaydar al-Ḥusaynī al-Nasafī	20 Shawwāl 877/ 20 March 1473	al-Nasafī	al-Ḥusaynī
SMH-3a (172 × 45 × 23)	Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Mawlānā ‘Izz al-Dīn Kasbavī	1054 /1644	Kasbavī	
SMH-3b (182 × 34 × 42–40)	Sayyid Muḥammad b. Hattāb	18 Jumādā al-ʾĀkhir 891/ 21 June 1486		
SMH-4 (174 × 51 × 33–40)	Mullā Muḥammad Qāsim b. Mawlānā ‘Aṭā’ Nakhshabī	969/1561	Nakhshabī	
SMH-18 (149 × 45 × 15)	Khānzāda Bikim (Begim) bint Ḥaḍrat Mīr Sayyid al-Ḥusaynī	1010/1602		al-Ḥusaynī
SMH-21 (stellae) (114 × 52)	Amīr Shams al-Dīn Ḥaydar b. al-Kabir al-Karīm b. Amīr Jamāl al-Dīn b. Shams al-Dīn Amīr al-Kabir b. Ḥaydar al-Ḥusayni al-Nasafī b. Aḥmad b. Amīr Sa‘īd b. Amīr Ḥusayn	Ramaḍān 766/ June 1364	al-Nasafī	Ḥusaynī

The earthenware fragment found during construction activities is of great interest. Mir Haydar’s name is engraved on this plate. Most likely the first sayyid to be buried on the territory of this complex was Mīr Haydar Kasbavī. It is possible that the genealogical line of the Kasbi sayyids began with him. The top part of the plate has been broken and therefore we cannot reconstruct its original dimensions. It is possible that the names or epithets of other sayyids were presented in the destroyed section, or that the plate was created only for Mīr

TABLE 9.5 Genealogy of Ishān
Qalandar Khwaja Sudūr
based on his tombstone

Ishān Qalandar Khwaja Sudūr (d.)
 Mīrzā Khwaja
 Amīn Khwaja
 Mīrzā Khwaja
 Muḥammad Ṣiddiq Khwaja
 Muḥammad Yār Khwaja
 Fūlād Khwaja
 Dīvāna Khwaja
 Shah Abu al-Bāqī Pādshāh
 Amīr Buzurg
 Amīr Naṣīr al-Dīn
 Amīr Quṭb al-Dīn
 Naṣīr al-Dīn Qalandar
 Amīr Sayyid ‘Abd Allāh
 Amīr Ḥaydar Kasbagī

Ḥaydar. Based on the limited information at hand, this complex may have been named after him, though it is possible that he was not the first or only sayyid to be buried here.

Another sayyid, who is assumed to be a descendant of the above-mentioned Amīr Ḥaydar is Amīr Shams al-Dīn Ḥaydar. He was also an imam and *sulṭan sādāt* (sultan of sayyids), and in any case he became a central figure in the history of the Kasbi sayyids. It may be also possible that the complex was named after his memory. According to the text of the tombstone, he had very colourful epithets. In his time, he played an important role in the Chagatay Ulus and was highly esteemed by the rulers and was widely popular among the population.

6 Conclusion

The reconstruction of the genealogy in the above complexes shows that many sayyids, who lived on the territory of Mawarannahr in its main cities and centres, originated from the Tirmizī sayyids. Having linked the information from the engraved texts on the tombstones with other data on the genealogy

of 'Alī's descendants in Mawarannahr, a number of facts have been clarified and genealogical diagrams have been drawn, which enabled us to offer clarifications of family ties with other branches of the sacred family. At the very least we can conclude that the Samarqandi sayyids (Mūsaviyya, Mīrakānī) had a direct familial link with the Tirmizī sayyids. The reconstructed genealogies show the marriage and family relations of the social layer of sayyids with local societal elites. Further studies may throw light upon many other remaining issues on the genealogy and history of the sacred family.

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Ḥazīra Memorial Complexes in Mawarannahr: Evolution and Architectural Features

Mavlyuda A. Abbasova-Yusupova

There is a substantial number of medieval funerary structures dating back to the Islamic period across Mawarannahr and in particular on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan. Two types of such commemorative buildings prevail which have co-existed for over a millennium from the tenth to the twentieth century. The first group comprises mausoleums containing the remains of esteemed secular or religious figures. Their cenotaphs are usually situated on the ground level of a centrally-domed building and the tombstones are in the crypt under the main structure. The second group consists of funerary monuments within an enclosed walled or fenced courtyards (*ḥazīra*) which either encompass the tombs in a specially erected platform (*dakhma*)¹ or in a vaulted crypt built for a single burial (*saghāna*).² Each of the architectural monuments included within these funerary complexes has become the cultural/cult nucleus around which a memorial complex (*ziyāratgāh*)³ was formed; flocks of pilgrims have been visiting these *ziyāratgāhs* since the medieval period.

1 Evolution of Mausoleum Architecture across Mawarannahr

In accordance with the rules laid down in the early days of Islam,⁴ the deceased were buried out of doors and the place of their burial was marked only with

1 *dakhma*—a large burial platform raised above the ground to a considerable height (sometimes as high as two meters), constructed with fired brick walls, arranged on a foundation, and faced with stone or brick.

2 *saghāna*—a ground crypt or gravestone with walls of fired brick, rectangular and elongated in plan, and with a top of an arched shape.

3 *ziyāratgāh*—a pilgrimage sanctum for Muslims, a holy place. Commonly, it is a memorial complex with a sacred burial site of a saint. In rare cases, it could be a location, which was truly or allegedly visited by a saint; a mock or symbolic tomb would be created on such a site. These locations were also called *qadamgāh*, which translates as—where the foot of a saint has stepped.

4 Funeral rites and constructions are not discussed in the Qur'an.

a small mound. Yet, by the ninth century, a tendency to bring back the pre-Islamic practice of worshipping ancestors had emerged.⁵ Thus, “when Caliph al-Muntaṣir died in the year 862, his Greek mother, the widow of Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–861) applied for permission to erect a mausoleum.”⁶ Permission was duly granted and this was how one of the first Islamic mausoleums appeared—that of Qubbat al-Sulay biyya, in which two other Abbasid caliphs—Caliph al-Mu‘tazz (r. 866–869) and Caliph al-Muhtadī (r. 869–870)—were buried after Caliph al-Muntaṣir (r. 861–862). Later on numerous other Islamic mausoleums were built and over time the structures became more and more monumental, both in terms of their dimensions and decoration.

Traditionally, the mausoleum has been the most frequently encountered type of surviving medieval buildings: mausoleums were protected by the fact that the population venerated them and they were not destroyed by violent conquerors out of superstitious fear. The earliest of those in existence on the territory of Central Asia is the mausoleum of the Samanid ruler Naṣr ibn Aḥmad ibn Ismā‘īl (d. 943) in Bukhara. It is entirely built of fired brick and with massive walls, thanks to which it has survived to this day in its original form. The Samanid Mausoleum, as it is commonly known, consists of a single cube-shaped chamber with a centric composition, crowned with a hemispherical dome (see Figure 10.1).

In subsequent centuries, a new type of mausoleum began to emerge incorporating many details from the Samanid Mausoleum: the prismatic main body and the dome. This new type was characterized by a monumental ornate portal (*pīshṭāq*) and its interior space was covered by a dome. Gradually, multi-chamber versions of such mausoleums came into being. One of the earliest examples of a portal domed mausoleum across Mawarannahr is the ‘Arab-Āṭā’ tomb from 977 situated on the outskirts of the Tim settlement in the Samarqand region (see Figure 10.2). The mausoleum is in a relatively well-preserved state and is noted for the earliest dated *muqarnas* (stalactite vault) in Islamic architecture. What is more, the main entrance is marked by a large *pīshṭāq* with a monumental inscription. The latter was widely adopted in later Qarakhanid mausoleums. During the subsequent reign of Ibrāhīm ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Alī Ṭamghāch Bughrā Khan (r. 1052–1068), the Qarakhanids legitimized their rule

5 Pugachenkova is quoting K.A.C. Creswell, *A short account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1958), 320. See Galina A. Pugachenkova, *Iskusstvo zodchikh Uzbekistana. Mavzolei Arab-Ata, iz istorii arkhitektury Maverrannakhra IX–X vv.* (Tashkent: Zamon-Press-Info Nashriyot uyi, 2021), 79.

6 *Ibid.*, 79.



FIGURE 10.1 The Samanid Mausoleum, Bukhara

through commissioning large-scale architectural projects in the capital Samarqand in the middle of the eleventh century.

In the following centuries, the evolution of mausoleum architecture in Mawarannahr lead to larger structures, to more intricate decoration of their portals and to wider spans of their domes. The building of mausoleums reaches its apogee in the second half of the fourteenth century during the rule of Amir Timur (r. 1370–1405) and his successors. The Timurid mausoleums account for most of the surviving late fourteenth and early fifteenth-century buildings in Samarqand and Bukhara. These mausoleums were characterized by their exquisite exterior decoration that combined a variety of monochrome and polychrome tiles with different styles of funerary epigraphy, as for example in the Shāh-i Zinda necropolis in Samarqand.⁷ Mausoleums in Bukhara had two or three domed chambers built along the longitudinal axis, see for example the complex of the Kubraviyya shaykh Sayf al-Dīn al-Bākharzī (d. 1261) from the fourteenth century. In such multi-chamber mausoleums, the room for pilgrims

7 David J. Roxburgh, “Timurid architectural revetment in Central Asia, 1370–1430: The mimeticism of mosaic faience,” in *Histories of Ornament, from global to local*, eds. Gülrü Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 116–129.

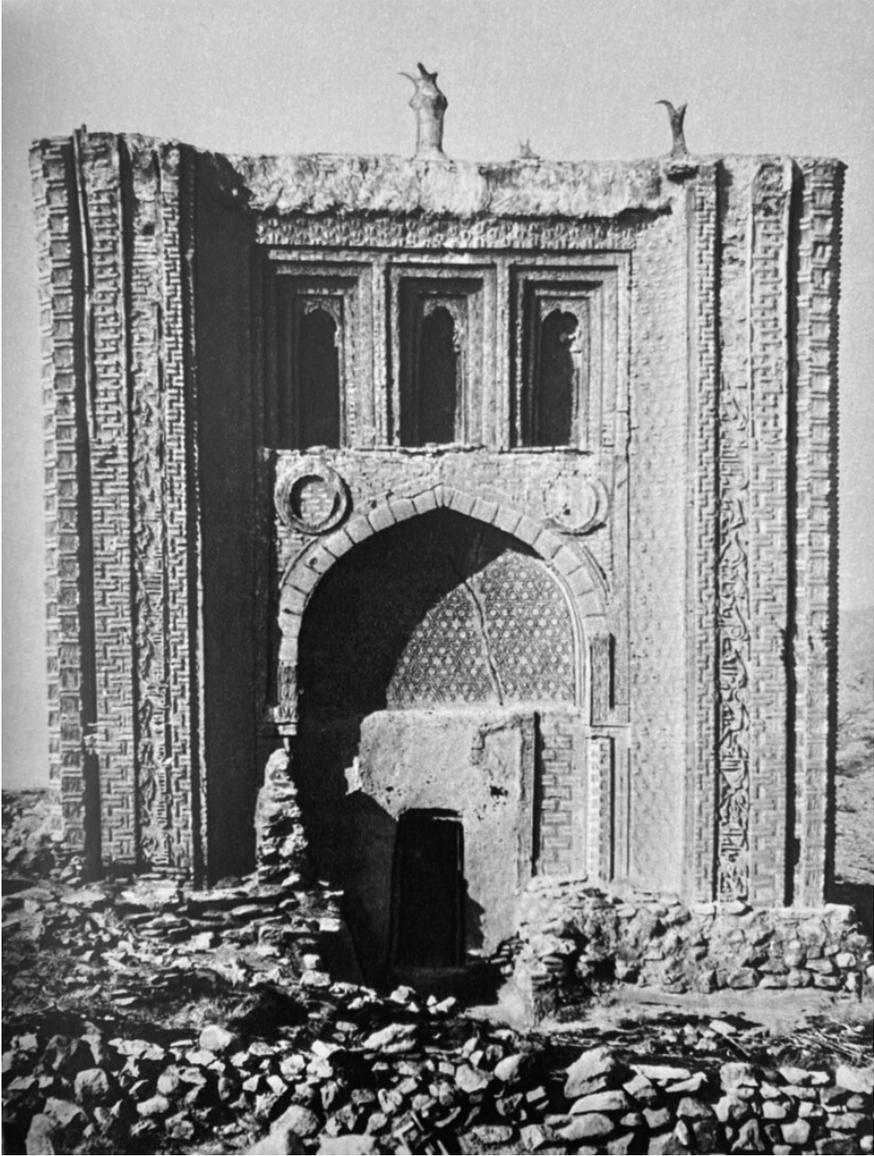


FIGURE 10.2 Mausoleum of 'Arab-Āṭā', Tim, Samarqand region, early 1930s

or the antechamber (*ziyāratkhāna*) used for prayers would be followed by the actual burial in the tomb chamber (*gūrkhāna*), which in most cases would be closed for pilgrims, as is the case in the tomb of Qutham ibn ‘Abbas (d. 677) at Shāh-i Zinda.

In contradiction to the Sufi tradition, which prohibits the burial of Sufi saints in mausoleums, Timur and his descendants did construct mausoleums for their spiritual Sufi mentors. The Rūḥābād Mausoleum in Samarqand was built in honour of the Suhrawardī shaykh, Khwaja Burhān al-Dīn Sagharjī (died in China). The Quṭb-i Chahārdahum (Fourteenth Pole)⁸ Mausoleum was erected as a tribute to another Suhrawardī shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Baṣīr (d. 1249) and his mother. One of the most monumental Timurid buildings in Mawarannahr is the Yasavī Shrine in Turkistan, present-day Kazakhstan, commissioned by Timur in 1389 to commemorate the renowned Turkic mystic poet and Sufi, Khwaja Aḥmad Yasavī (1093–1166). A disciple of Aḥmad Yasavī, shaykh Khwaja Ay (d. 1258) was buried in the Zangī-Ātā’ (Zengi Ata) Mausoleum near Tashkent built in the first half of the fifteenth century. In some cases, during the construction of these mausoleums, the Timurids reburied the remains of the Sufi shaykhs, who had died centuries earlier and had been initially laid to rest in the open air. For example, shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Baṣīr was reburied in the newly-built Timurid citadel of Samarqand in 1371–1372, shaykh Shams al-Dīn Kulāl (1278–1370) was reburied in a new mausoleum constructed in 1373 in Shahrisabz as part of the Dār al-Tilavat complex; Mīr Sayyid Baraka (d. 1404) was reinterred in the Timurid dynastic mausoleum of Gūr-i Amīr in Samarqand around 1414.

However, after the 1440s, the construction of mausoleums in Mawarannahr dwindled. Contemporary Subsequently, spiritual Sufi mentors were laid to rest under the open skies in order not to breach the early Islamic funerary canon. For example, the grandson of Timur, Mirza Ulugh Beg (r. 1409–1449) did not erect a mausoleum while refurbishing the ancient sanctuary of the founder of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, Khwaja ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī (d. 1179) in 1434. Ulugh Beg only beautified the existing *ḥaṣīra* of the shaykh and built across it a monumental two-*īwān* madrasa-*khānaqāh*. This building served as an educational institution as well as a dwelling for the Sufis residing at the Tomb of al-Ghijduvānī (see Figure 10.3).⁹

8 Here the term *quṭb* (axis or pole) refers to its Sufi connotation related to the ‘perfect man’.

9 Lia Iu. Man’kovskaia, “Kompleks Abd al-Halika Gijduvani,” *Arkhitektura i stroitel’stvo Uzbekistana* 4 (1983): 31–34.



FIGURE 10.3 Present view of the Ghijduvānī complex, Ghijduvan
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During the second half of the fifteenth century, lavish mausoleums such as the ‘Ishratkhāna (1464) and the Āq Sarāy (c. 1470) were constructed in Samarqand only for the direct members of the Timurid dynasty. However, the leader¹⁰ of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, Khwaja Aḥrār Valī (1404–1490) was buried in a *dakhma* within an enclosed *ḥazīra* courtyard despite being the wealthiest and most powerful man of his time (see Figure 10.4).

10 The Central Asian Khwajagan (“masters”) was a chain of Central Asian Sufi masters from the tenth to the sixteenth century. It is very difficult to designate a single person as the supreme leader of one part of the Khwajagani as there were other lines active at the same time and it would have been challenging to integrate all groups and lines into one’s own network. However, Khwaja Aḥrār Valī was the first to establish an organizational centre (just outside of Samarqand) and to create an interregional organization with some degree of hierarchy (centered around his figure) in the middle of the fifteenth century, which was very different from the numerous local groups, branches and collateral lines that remained active in Mawarannahr. On the role and legacy of Khwaja Aḥrār see Jürgen Paul, *Doctrine and Organization. The Khwājagān/Naqshbandīya in the first generation after Bahā’uddīn*. ANOR 1 (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1998), 68–69. In particular on the Naqshbandiyya in Samarqand in the fifteenth century see Jürgen Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung der Naqshbandīya in Mittelasien im 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).



FIGURE 10.4 Dakhma of Khwaja Ahrār Valī, Samarqand

2 Genesis and Evolution of *ḥazīra* Architecture

Simultaneously with the construction of mausoleums, from the eleventh century until the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a different type of burial tradition in Mawarannahr, namely eminent Sufi shaykhs and scholars were buried within an enclosed walled or fenced courtyards known as *ḥazīra*.

This type of memorial structures with several variations, depending on the lay-out of the complex, the composition, and the placement of tombstones within the *ḥazīra*, has not been thoroughly studied yet. The initial detailed analysis of one of the monumental *ḥazīras*, as well as the term *ḥazīra* itself, was undertaken by Lisa Golombek in 1969.¹¹ Later on, a number of Uzbek scientists completed their specialized research on the history and architecture of *ḥazīra* complexes in Mawarannahr. Lia Iu. Man'kovskaia has studied and classified the Central Asian *ḥazīras* as a separate architectural type while composing the typology of the architectural monuments of the region.¹² She also presen-

11 Lisa Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

12 Lia Iu. Man'kovskaia, *Tipologicheskie osnovy zodchestva Srednei Azii (IX-nachalo XX v.)* (Tashkent: Fan, 1980), 134–153.

ted a considerable amount of new data on *hazīras* in a collaborative article with Bakhtiyar Babadjanov.¹³ E.G. Nekrasova and A.N. Galkin have covered the construction stages and the architecture of the Chashma Ayūb *hazīra*.¹⁴ I have undertaken research on several subjects pertaining to the evolution and characteristics of the architecture of individual *hazīras* and *hazīra* complexes on the territory of Mawarannahr,¹⁵ as well as on their representation in medieval Islamic manuscripts.¹⁶ The architectural aspects of the *hazīra* were examined by a number of other scholars, for example Bernard O’Kane;¹⁷ however, this was done in the limited context of more general works on medieval Islamic architecture.

In this article, I will attempt to present the evolution and characteristics of the architecture of the older and widely spread types of *hazīra* based upon the analysis and overview of the above mentioned scholars, as well as of my own publications,¹⁸ and newly acquired data, derived from expeditions, archives and other on-site studies.

The term *hazīra* means an unsheltered tomb situated in a walled or fenced funerary enclosure. In the particular case of an enclosed *hazīra*, the burial courtyard is situated within a surrounding wall with an entrance portal; usually, members of one clan or followers of a specific (Sufi) spiritual teacher are laid there to rest.

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- 13 Lia Iu. Man'kovskaia and Bakhtiyar M. Babadjanov, "Novoe v izuchenii memorial'nykh pamyatnikov 'hazira' v arkhitekture Srednei Azii," *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane* 4 (1986): 46–49.
- 14 E.G. Nekrasova and A.N. Galkin, "Chashma-Ayub—arkhitekturny pamiatnik predmogol'skogo vremeni," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Uzbekistana* 10 (1988): 33–35.
- 15 Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, "K voprosu formirovaniia i tipologii memorial'no-kul'tovykh kompleksov Bukharskogo oazisa 15–17 vv." in *Transoksiana*, ed. Edvard Rtveladze (Moskva: Izd-vo P. Elinina, 2004b), 265–273. See also Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, *Bukharskaia shkola zodchestva XV–XVII vv.: osobennosti i dinamika razvitiia*. (Tashkent: Izd-vo SMI-ASIA, 2014).
- 16 Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, "Vossozdanie maloizuchennykh aspektov arhitektury Maverannahra po miniatyuram 15–17 vv.," in *Traditsionnoe i sovremennoe iskusstvo Kazakhstana i Central'noi Azii*. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii (Alma-Ata: Ush Kiian, 2004a), 461–472. See also Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, "Miniatiura Kamaliddina Bekhzada kak istochnik po arkhitekture dakhm i khazira Maverannahra," in *Markaziy osiyo kitobat san'ati va miniatyurasi. Respublika ilmiy-amaliy konferensiyasi materiallari to'plami*, (Tashkent, 2018), 28–39.
- 17 Bernard O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1987).
- 18 Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, *The Bukharan School of Architecture in the 15th–17th Centuries. Distinctive Features and Paths of Developments* (Samarkand: IICAS, 2022), 169–173.

Regarding the genesis and existence of the term *ḥaẓīra*, I would like to present the following information provided by Abū Ṭāhir Khwaja Samarqandī (d. 1874), derived from the twelfth-century author, Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Nasafī (1067–1142).¹⁹ He describes the “Ḥaẓīra-yi Muftiyān” as a *ḥaẓīra* located in Samarqand at the cemetery of Chokardiza, where it is said that 400 *muftīs* were buried. “Today as well, [in the nineteenth century—Yusupova] one may see the remnants of the wall of fired brick, surrounding the *ḥaẓīra*.”²⁰ Further, Abū Ṭāhir mentions several names of famous *khwajas* and shaykhs, buried in this *ḥaẓīra*. Among such figures was Abu al-Qāsim al-Samarqandī (d. 953), which proves the significantly ancient burial deposits in the Ḥaẓīra-yi Muftiyān. According to Man’kovskaia and Babadjanov, this fact presented by the twelfth-century author, is the earliest mention of a *ḥaẓīra* as a burial structure in a Central Asian necropolis.²¹

One of the earliest *ḥaẓīras* of this specific type can be found in the Bukhara Oasis in the Chār Bakr necropolis, one of the largest memorial complexes in Central Asia, situated some five kilometres from Bukhara near the village of Sumitan (see Figure 10.5). It was the family necropolis of the influential Jūybārī shaykhs. The tenth-century Bukharan scholar, Abū Bakr Sa’d (d. 971) was buried in this location in a *dakhma* constructed inside the *ḥaẓīra* courtyard measuring thirty-nine square metres.²² Between the late-thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the *ḥaẓīra* was enlarged until it finally occupied an area of fifty-four square metres; while the *dakhma* was not only enlarged but it was also enclosed with a wall constructed in fired brick. A number of family *ḥaẓīras* also appeared on the east side of the complex.

The Jūybārīs were a renowned Bukharan family dynasty who gained prominence in the middle of the sixteenth century and remained a social, economic, and political force in the city until the Soviet Revolution. They proclaimed to be descendants of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddiq (d. 634), the first caliph and the successor to the Prophet Muhammad. The dynasty was very powerful during the

19 Vassili L. Viatkin, tr. “Abu-Takhir-Khodzha. *Samariia*, opisanie drevnostei i musul'manskikh svyatyin' Samarkanda,” in *Spravochnaia knizhka Samarkandskoi oblasti* 1898, no. 6 (Samarkand: Tipografiia K.M. Fedorova, 1899), 153–259. The *Samariyya* is a nineteenth-century pilgrimage guide, see Jürgen Paul, “Histories of Samarqand,” *Studia Iranica* 22 (1993): 82–97.

20 *Ibid.*, 187.

21 Man'kovskaia and Babadjanov, *Novoe v izuchenii*, 48.

22 B. Babadjanov, A. Muminov and E. Nekrasova, “Char Bakr,” in *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi Imperii*, ed. C.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Eastern Literature, 1996), 455–457.



FIGURE 10.5 Present view of the Chār Bakr Necropolis, Bukhara

sixteenth century; members of it have assisted the Shibanids in the political contention for the throne and were elevated to the position of their spiritual mentors. From the sixteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, the deceased members of the Jūybārī family were laid to rest in the Chār Bakr necropolis.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Shibanid ruler ‘Abdullah Khan II constructed a road that led to this holy site and commissioned a mausoleum for his spiritual mentors. On the three sides of the west square of the necropolis, he erected a *khānaqāh* (Sufi lodge), a mosque and a madrasa. A *dar-wāzakhāna* (monumental gate) was built to the east. The Chār Bakr complex may be called a town of the dead as it encompasses numerous squares, streets and narrow paths, along which several façades and entrance portals of various dynastic *ḥazīras*, belonging to different branches of the Jūybārī Sufi family, are situated.

Another example of an extant *ḥazīra* that predates the Mongol invasion of 1220 in Central Asia is the Chashma Ayūb situated in the Vabkent district in the Bukhara Oasis. It is a *qadamgāh* (place of the footprints) i.e. a false grave of the holy man Ayūb (Biblical Job), who allegedly stepped with his foot on the site. The memorial appeared in the eleventh century near a revered water spring (*chashma*). As this holy place grew increasingly popular, a *ḥazīra* was erected, of which the entrance portal has survived with parts

of the adjacent wall, behind that a *saghāna* and a well were erected.²³ The splendid relief decoration of the portal contains the construction date, which corresponds to 1208, i.e. the *ḥaḏīra* was built twelve years before the invasion of Chinggis Khan (1162–1227). The tympanum of the portal bears decoration incorporating pre-Islamic symbols—swastikas glazed in turquoise shades and dentate figures. The inscription on the portal reads: “The Prophet, may Peace be unto him!”—implying: “Initially I forbade you to worship at graves, now you may proceed”²⁴—justifies the cult of holy graves widespread at that time.

It should be noted that a *ḥaḏīra* with very similar proportions and finish of the entrance portal and the adjacent walls, has been depicted on a miniature entitled: “The Son’s Lamentation at His Father’s Funeral,” illustrating the manuscript of the Persian poet’s ‘Attār, *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* (Language of the Birds) dated 1487, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund 1963, no. 63.210.35 (see Figure 10.6).²⁵ In the miniature, a small funerary courtyard or a *ḥaḏīra* has been reproduced in which there are two *dakhmas*. The *ḥaḏīra* is surrounded by a brick wall and the entrance portal is richly decorated with glazed tiles.

In the fourteenth century, the esteemed Sufi spiritual leader Muḥammad Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband (1318–1389), one of the founders of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, was also interred in a large *dakhma* in a vast *ḥaḏīra* courtyard near Bukhara (see Figure 10.7). Several more courtyards with mosques, a madrasa, a minaret, a monumental domed *khānaqāh* and other structures, have emerged around this particular site in later periods (see Figure 10.8). “At the feet” of the tomb of the saint, consequently another *ḥaḏīra* courtyard was arranged, known as *Dakhma-yi Shāhān*. It contained numerous *dakhmas* of Bukharan khans and family members who were continuously buried there between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century. In Samarqand, the leaders of the Naqshbandiyya order, Khwaja Aḥrār Valī in the fifteenth century (see Figure 10.4) and Makhdūm-i A’zam (buried in the Dagbid village near Samarqand) in the sixteenth century were also laid to rest in large *dakhmas* enclosed in *ḥaḏīras*,

23 E.G. Nekrasova and A.N. Galkin, “Chashma-Ayub—arkhitekturnyi pamiatnik predmongol’skogo vremeni,” *Arkhitektura i stroitel’stvo Uzbekistana* 10 (1988): 33.

24 E. Nekrasova and B. Babadjanov, “Hazira Chashma-yi Ayyub,” in *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi Imperii*, ed. C.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Eastern Literature, 1996), 414.

25 Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad, Master of Persian Painting* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996). For the online entry on the website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, see <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451730>.



FIGURE 10.6 Miniature “Funeral Procession,” folio 35^r from *Mantiq al-tayr* (Language of the Birds) dated 1487
 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, FLETCHER FUND 1963,
 NO. 63.210.35



FIGURE 10.7 Present view of the *dakhma* at the Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband complex, Bukhara

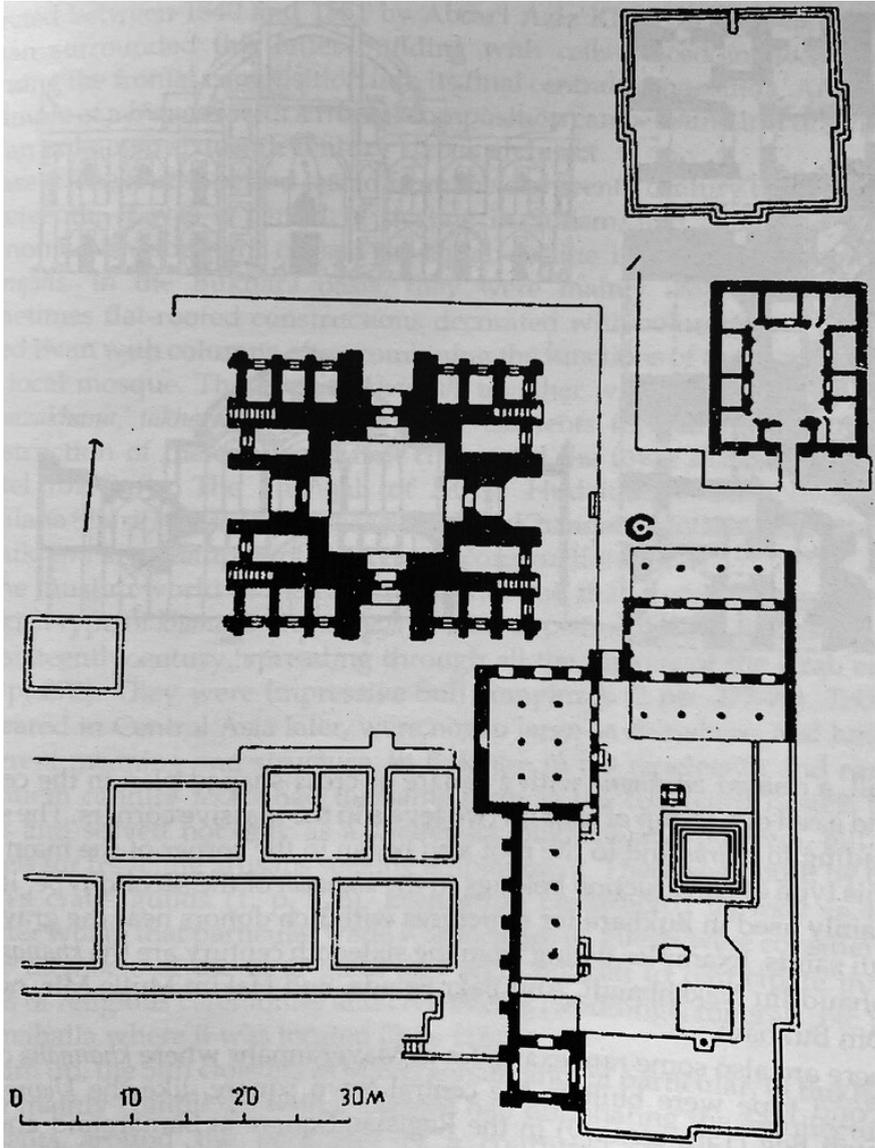


FIGURE 10.8 Plan evolution of the Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband complex (sixteenth-early twentieth century) after Mavlyuda Yusupova, *Evolution of Architecture of the Sufi Complexes in Bukhara*, plan on page 129.

located at the *khānaqāh* complexes where *ḥaẓīras* existed long before these historical figures died.

When Sufism gained more popularity in Mawarannahr in the second half of the fifteenth century and through to the sixteenth century, burials in a *ḥaẓīra*, used previously mainly for revered Sufis, became the most widespread form of interment for the secular and spiritual élite. Within *ḥaẓīras*, and alongside their walls, funerary mosques were often erected, as is the cases in the Chashma Ayūb *ḥaẓīra* in the Vabkent district from the thirteenth century, and in the *ḥaẓīra* of Khwaja ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī in 1541 (see Figure 10.3). In particularly revered funerary complexes, outside the walls of a *ḥaẓīra* but near its courtyard, *khānaqāhs* were constructed and often additional mosques and madrasas for the teaching of Sufism and for the accommodation of Sufis were built. Artificial open water cisterns with stairs (*ḥawz*), various outdoor buildings and facilities were also erected, see the complexes of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband (Figure 10.8), Chār Bakr in Bukhara and Qāsim Shaykh in Karmina.

Following this established tradition, the first rulers of the Shibanid dynasty in Samarqand were also buried in a *dakhma* in the courtyard of the Shibānī Khan Madrasa²⁶ which they had built. This *dakhma*, in the wake of the destruction of the madrasa, was removed to Registan Square in Samarqand, where it stands now between the Shīr Dār (Sher Dor) Madrasa and the Ṭilā Kārī (Tilla Kari) Madrasa.

The subsequent representatives of the Shibanid dynasty, with the capital being moved from Samarqand to Bukhara in 1534, continued this tradition. This explains why in the Bukhara Oasis burials in the open air in *dakhmas* arranged in a *ḥaẓīra* started to become widespread in the second half of the sixteenth century.

With the arrival of the Shibanids to Bukhara, mausoleums ceased to be built. Yet in the first half of the sixteenth century, a permission was granted to certain eminent individuals to be buried in buildings which already existed. ‘Ubayd Allāh Khan, for instance, and his spiritual mentor, Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh Yamānī, were buried in a domed chamber in the Mir-i ‘Arab Madrasa (1535–1536) that they had built. It should be noted that the burial of donors or builders in a madrasa they had commissioned or built, was a very long-standing tradition. Yet even this practice came to an end by the 1640s. Between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century, all burials in the Bukhara Oasis were conducted

26 R.G. Mukminova, *K istorii agrarnykh otnoshenii v Uzbekistane XVI v. Po materialam “vakf-name”* (Tashkent: Izd-vo Nauka, 1966), 15.

in the open air and only marked by a small mound, a *saghāna* or a *dakhma*, which would sometimes be set up inside a *hazīra*.

The earliest *hazīra* in the period under discussion was erected by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khan I in Ghijduvan in 1541 at the site of the venerated burial of Khwaja ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī (d. in 1179–1180) in the form of a *dakhma* (see Figure 10.3). In this instance, the *hazīra* courtyard was enclosed by walls with four small portal entrances and a funerary mosque along the western wall inside the *hazīra*. To this, most widely spread class of *hazīras*, Man’kovskaia adds such memorials from across the Central Asian region as the Merv monumental *hazīras*, the tombs of the Aṣḥāb and of Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf al-Hamadānī (d. 1140), the spiritual teacher of ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī, and a key figure of the Central Asian Khwajagan.²⁷ Yet this was a very local and peculiar to the Merv Oasis type, where *īwāns* and mosques in the form of monumental portals with deep niches were facing the burial site of the holy man as background screens, representing the rear wall of the *hazīra*.²⁸

The standard architectural features of many *hazīras* from the fifteenth until the seventeenth century remained unchanged.²⁹ This testifies to the fact that the architectural traditions for the construction of *hazīras*, that had taken shape by the beginning of the thirteenth century, were extremely enduring. They were still being followed up in later periods until the beginning of the twentieth century as is the case with the *hazīra* built at the Qāsim Shaykh complex in Karmana³⁰ that belonged to Sayyid ‘Abd al-Ahad Khan (r. 1885–1911), the seventh emir of the Uzbek Manghits, the last ruling dynasty of the Emirate of Bukhara.

The fundamental idea of this early class of *hazīras* was further developed in two memorial complexes in Afghanistan—the Khwaja Anṣārī Shrine at Gazurgah, commissioned by Timur’s son Shāhrukh (r. 1409–1447) in 1424,³¹ and in

27 Lia Iu. Man’kovskaia, *Formoobrazovanie i tipologīia zodchestva Srednei Azii, IX-nachalo XX veka* (Tashkent: Baktria Press, 2014), 479. On the Khwajagan see Jürgen Paul, *Doctrine and Organization. The Khwājagān/Nashbandīya in the first generation after Bahā’uddīn*. ANOR 1 (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1998).

28 Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, “Memorial-cult structures of Merv (evolution and architectural characteristics),” in *From Merv to Sogut. Turkish history, culture and civilization*. Materials of an International Symposium (Bilecik: Sheikh Edebaly University, 2015), 170–171.

29 Mavlyuda A. Yusupova, “Arkhitektura dakhm i khazira po dannym miniatiury Bekhzada,” in *Kamoliddin Bekhzodning zhakhon madaniyatida tutgan urni. Materialy konferentsii* (Tashkent, 2005), 18.

30 Igor E. Pletnev, “Arkhitekturnyi kompleks postroek XVI-nachala XX vv. v g. Navoi,” in *Issledovanie i restavratsiia pamiatnikov arkhitektury Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: Izd-vo Fan, 1966), 16–24.

31 Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah*, 82–84.

the Khwaja Abū Naṣr Pārsā Shrine³² at Balkh. In these instances, the *ḥaẓīra* courtyard was surrounded by monumental multi-chamber domed and lavishly decorated buildings in the entrance part of the courtyard or the second half of it (in Gazurgah). The courtyard itself was filled with numerous gravestones, located in the vicinity of the tomb of the saint and all belonging to dignitaries and members of local affluent families. However, such monumental *ḥaẓīra* courtyards were characteristic rather for Afghanistan and are not found in other parts of Mawarannahr.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the following statements may be drawn. In Mawarannahr, during the Medieval period, contrary to other regions of Central Asia and neighbouring countries such as Iran and Afghanistan, the most widely spread type of a burial structure, was that of a *ḥaẓīra* with rather modest architecture. This class of memorial courtyards represented an enclosed space with an entrance portal, with the tomb of a holy figure and his followers interred in the courtyard and with a memorial mosque in the form of a columned *īwān*³³ along one or two walls inside the *ḥaẓīra*. Here, monumental buildings were erected in connecting courtyards beyond the boundaries of the *ḥaẓīra*.

These subtypes of *ḥaẓīras* have been known in the Bukhara Oasis for over a millennium, from the tenth to the twentieth century. The earliest example from the tenth century was identified in the Chār Bakr complex. Also the well-preserved *ḥaẓīra* Chashma Ayūb in the Vabkent district of the Bukhara region from 1208 provides important information about the development of the complexes in the early thirteenth century.

Between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, when the architecture of Mawarannahr flourished, the memorial mosques were incorporated within the *ḥaẓīra*. Being erected in previous periods as light pavilions supported by carved wooden pillars, they started to acquire a rather monumental form and represented multi-domed galleries of fired brick, such as the Qāsim Shaykh *ḥaẓīra* in Karmana.

The most venerated Islamic spiritual figures in the twelfth–fourteenth centuries, among whom Sufi shaykhs, were the dominating societal layer buried

32 Robert D. McChesney, *Four Central Asian Shrines. A Socio-Political History of Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 130–211.

33 A covered canopy supported by wooden columns.

exactly in such *hazīras* of the early type. Based upon the widely spread nature and the large chronological period of existence of the early type *hazīras*, this class is identified as the most characteristic of the local memorial architecture in Mawarannahr.

With the newly acquired independence of Uzbekistan in 1991 and the easing of atheistic restrictions regarding religious practice, compared with the Soviet era, more attention is paid anew to the maintenance and beautification of the memorial-cult complexes *ziyāratgāhs*. The majority of them are founded upon the above discussed *hazīra* courtyards of the early type. The flow of local and international pilgrims is constantly increasing. Specialized pilgrimage tours are being organised and carried out; new pilgrimage routes and destinations are introduced.

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Commemorating the Russian Conquest of Central Asia

Alexander Morrison

Sacred to the perpetual memory of a great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children, who near this spot were cruelly murdered by the followers of the rebel Nana Dhundu Panth of Bithur, and cast, the dying with the dead, into the well below, on the xv day of July, MDCCCLVII

Inscription on the monument over the well at Cawnpore, 1864



Few places feel more utterly English, more serenely metropolitan, than the nave of Canterbury Cathedral. The key historical events associated with it, notably the martyrdom of St Thomas a'Becket, are often violent and highly political, but at first glance wholly domestic. A closer look reveals a different story, however, one that is intimately linked with the history of empire, and above all of imperial conquest and warfare. The chapel of the Royal East Kent regiment (The Buffs), with its rows of regimental colours and battle honours from Tel-el-Kebir, Sudan and the Boer War is the most obvious reminder, and a quick glance at the elaborate memorials that line the walls reveals many more. A memorial to eight officers, 27 NCOs and 264 private soldiers of Prince Albert's Light Infantry who fell in the First Anglo-Afghan War of 1839–1842; to Frederick Mackeson, Lt Col. of the Bengal Army and Commissioner of Peshawar, who died “of a wound inflicted by a Mahometan fanatic,”¹ and others commemorating those who died in battles of the Anglo-Sikh Wars, or the Boer War. Canterbury is just one of the grandest examples—almost every parish church in Britain has

1 The underlying significance of attacks of this kind and the British casting of them as “fanaticism” is considered in Mark Condos, “‘Fanaticism’ and the Politics of Resistance along the North-West Frontier of British India,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58, no. 3 (2016): 717–745.



FIGURE 11.1
 Memorial to the men of Prince
 Albert's Light Infantry who died
 in the First Afghan War, Canterbury
 Cathedral
 © ALEXANDER MORRISON

memorials commemorating individuals and groups who served a now vanished empire, usually as soldiers, but also in many other capacities—the tiny church of Hubberholme in the Yorkshire Dales, for instance, commemorates George Andrew Hobson, who designed the Victoria Falls bridge over the Zambezi.

Memorials of this kind are not confined to religious spaces—civic commemoration of imperial conflicts can be found in almost any British urban centre. In the 19th century these were usually statues of individuals, but from the early 20th century, beginning with the Boer War, these began to be joined by collective memorials commemorating the sacrifice of ordinary soldiers.² The most prominent examples are perhaps the statues of Major-General Sir Henry Have-lock (Relief of Lucknow), and General Sir Charles Napier (Conquest of Sindh)

2 On this transformation of war memorials from sites of relatively narrow monarchical, aristocratic or regimental significance to collective sites of national mourning see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 78–90; Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual. Commemoration in the City and East London 1916–1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 25–26, 98–135.

on two of the four plinths in Trafalgar Square. Probably barely one in a hundred of those passing them by today could say who they were or what they did.³ However, their ubiquity is a testament to the deep imprint of imperialism on British culture: these commemorative sculptures, brasses and inscriptions are so commonplace that until very recently they barely called for remark, but they create webs of connection that span the globe, and ensure that even now the history of empire—of imperial service, but also imperial conquest and violence—is woven into the very fabric of British life and its public spaces.⁴ Neither John Mackenzie nor Catherine Hall, the authors of the most influential works on the infusion of British metropolitan culture with imperial themes and ideas, pays particular attention to practices of memorialisation and commemoration, but the ubiquity of such monuments adds powerful support to their arguments.⁵

In the colonies themselves the commemoration of conflict and warfare played if anything a more important role. It was a means by which the landscape and the memories and meanings associated with it could be appropriated by the imperial power. Older, indigenous historical narratives and sacred landscapes, such as those associated with gods, kings and saints in India, were overlaid with the narratives and landscapes of empire. The “Black Hole of Calcutta” is a prime example of this, a narrative of war, victimhood and Indian “savagery” which became of enormous importance in legitimising British rule in India. While resting on a very slender textual foundation, it was first commemorated in stone in the late 18th century with a monument that was reconstructed with a very deliberate political purpose by Viceroy George Nathaniel

3 One of these plinths, as is well known, is kept open for a rotating exhibition of public sculpture, but there was a suggestion, not entirely tongue in cheek, that it be permanently occupied by a statue of General Charles Gordon on a camel, which once stood in Khartoum, and is currently languishing at Gordon's School in Woking. See Jeremy Paxman “What Empire did for Britain,” *The Daily Telegraph* 02/10/2011. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/8801370/Jeremy-Paxman-what-empire-did-for-Britain.html>.

4 See the map of statues that some activists now want removed at <https://www.toppletheracists.org>.

5 John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects. Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002). These arguments have been criticised by Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists. Empire, Society and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), and he may have a point when it comes to active engagement with and celebration of empire, which was the preserve of a largely middle-class minority. However, this is not in contradiction with the almost unconscious infusion of empire into metropolitan culture that we see in memorials.

Curzon in 1905, during the agitation over the partition of Bengal.⁶ However the most important sites of commemoration for the British in India were connected with the Indian “Mutiny” of 1857—Lucknow, Cawnpore, Delhi. The ruined Residency at Lucknow, site of a seven-month siege, was turned into a gigantic open-air shrine to British heroism, its shattered brick and stucco buildings hosting a plethora of commemorative tablets, headstones and inscriptions recording the deaths and feats of particular individuals, and the roles of particular groups, with the central place given up to the tomb and epitaph of Sir Henry Lawrence, “who tried to do his duty” and whose posthumous reputation is best described as that of an Anglican saint.⁷ His grave became a place of pilgrimage for visiting Britons, and to this day garlands of marigolds are laid on it by the students of the Lawrence Schools at Sanawar (in the Himalayan foothills) and Lovedale (in the Nilgiri Hills).⁸ A grimmer memorial was erected at Cawnpore (Kanpur), where the British garrison surrendered and was massacred. Here the narrative centred on the slaughter of women and children by the Nana Sahib as relieving forces approached the city. Marochetti’s mourning angel, erected on the site of the well where their bodies were thrown, and framed by a Gothic screen, became an imperial icon.⁹

The heavy Italianate Gothic of the Cawnpore Memorial Church was the setting for a list of the officers and their families who died, placed behind the altar. In Delhi, where the tide of the rebellion was turned, a raw red gothic Mutiny Memorial was erected on the ridge overlooking the old city, on which “native” and “European” deaths were carefully separated and enumerated. As William Dalrymple has written, contrasting it with the hybrid architecture of the nearby house of the British officer William Fraser: “one monument, with its Mughal borrowings and position determined by Timur’s camp, represents what the *Raj* might have been. The Mutiny memorial represents—crudely and distastefully—what it was.”¹⁰

6 The only contemporary source is John Zephaniah Holwell, “A Genuine Narrative of the Deplorable Deaths of the English Gentlemen, and Others, Who Were Suffocated in the Black-Hole in Fort William, at Calcutta,” [1758] *India Tracts by Mr Hobwell and Friends* (London: T. Beckett, 1764): 253–275; see Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1–6.

7 Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 107.

8 Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt 1857–1858* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), 82–107.

9 Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, 36–37.

10 William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns. A Year in Delhi* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), 150.



FIGURE 11.2 Cawnpore. The Memorial Well; Marble Statue by Marochetti
 PRINCE OF WALES TOUR OF INDIA 1875–1876 (VOL. 3) 1860–1876 RCIN
 2701749 © ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST

Although the popular memory of those who were on the receiving end of British campaigns of conquest and punishment is more difficult to recover (but by no means impossible),¹¹ reconstructing the official history of commemoration in the British Empire is thus relatively easy—the monuments themselves

11 See Badri Narayan, “Popular Culture and 1857. Memory against forgetting,” in *The 1857 Rebellion*, ed. Biswamoy Pati (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007): 271–280.



FIGURE 11.3
The Mutiny Memorial, Delhi, 1863
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

nearly all survive, both in the metropole and in the colonies, at least in the Indian case. With remarkable and laudable forbearance the Government of India has preserved most such monuments since independence, either *in situ* with an additional inscription giving the Indian perspective on the events commemorated (as in Delhi and Lucknow), or by moving them to a less public position—the graveyard of St John’s Church for the memorial to the Black Hole of Calcutta, and of the Cawnpore Memorial Church for Marochetti’s weeping angel (a bronze statue of the Indian rebel leader Tantia Topi was erected on the original site).¹² These and other memorials of the *Raj*, such as the European cemeteries in Calcutta and Surat, remain popular with British tourists to this day.¹³ Historians of the British Empire in India have produced a rich and sophisticated literature which combines aesthetic and symbolic analysis of these physical reminders with textual research on their origins, construction and reception.¹⁴ The same is true in large degree of the French empire, at least in the metropole, where memorials to those who fell in North African and

12 Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Spectre of Violence. The 1857 Kanpur Massacres* (Delhi: Viking, 1998), 2.

13 Elizabeth Buettner, “Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India,” *History and Memory* 18, no. 1 (2006): 5–42.

14 e.g. Rebecca M. Brown, “Inscribing Colonial Monumentality: A Case Study of the 1763 Patna Massacre Memorial” *Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 1 (2006): 91–113; Robert Travers, “Death and the Nabob: Imperialism and Commemoration in Eighteenth-Century India,” *Past & Present* no. 196 (2007): 83–124.

Indochinese campaigns can also be found in churches, and a memorial to that quintessential French Imperial Hero, Colonel Claude Marchand, was erected as late as 1949.¹⁵

This leaves Russia, the third great European imperial power of the 19th century, with colonies in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Far East: here we find no such visible legacy of commemoration. Monuments and memorials abound, indeed, on the territory of the former USSR, but these are almost exclusively of Soviet origin: to early Bolshevik leaders, to those who died in the Civil War, to the heroes of the “Great Patriotic War” (by far the greatest number), and, since 1991, a handful of memorials to the millions who were murdered or imprisoned under Stalin.¹⁶ For the Bolsheviks rituals of commemoration were of huge importance from the very earliest days of their political activity, something seen to good effect in the carefully staged funeral of Nikolay Bauman after his murder by a mob in 1905.¹⁷ The enshrining of Lenin after 1924 is the most famous and elaborate example, but it reached its apotheosis in the elaborate monuments commemorating the fallen of the “Great Patriotic War”, an event of such key significance in re-legitimising the Soviet regime that ever larger monuments were still being constructed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with the largest, at Park Pobedy in Moscow, completed only after the regime’s collapse in 1995.¹⁸ I could write a very different essay on the manifestations of this in Central Asia, where the spectacular Panfilov monument and cenotaphs in Almaty commemorate the (largely fictional) exploits of the 28 Panfilov guardsmen: some of those whose names are inscribed there were actually still alive when the monument was erected in 1976.¹⁹

15 Berny Sèbe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa. The promotion of British and French colonial heroes, 1870–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 257–258.

16 The best-known of the latter was placed by the *Memorial* organisation in Lubyanka square in Moscow outside the KGB headquarters in 1990, but they remain extremely rare in Russia. There is an interesting example, which lists thousands of names of the repressed, next to the main war memorial in the Northern Kazakhstani city of Petropavlovsk.

17 Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905—Russia in Disarray* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 262–265.

18 On the commemoration of the Second World War in Moscow and the evolution of Soviet commemorative monuments, see Mischa Gabowitsch, “Russia’s Arlington? The Federal Military Memorial Cemetery near Moscow,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* no. 2 (2016): 93–97.

19 Alexander Statiev “La Garde meurt mais ne se rend pas!': Once again on the 28 Panfilov Heroes,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 4 (2012): 769–798. Unlike in the rest of Central Asia, *Den' Pobedy* (Victory Day—9th May) is still enthusiastically celebrated in Kazakhstan on the 9th May. The elaborate War memorial on the *strelka* in Ust'-Kamenogorsk was actually erected in the mid-1990s, after Kazakhstan's

The need to control both the historical narrative and ritual public space meant that the Bolsheviks systematically removed and demolished earlier memorials, sought to erase previous commemorative practices, and entirely excluded any commemoration of the sacrifices of the “imperialist” First World War.²⁰ As Aaron Cohen has noted in his study of memorials to the Russo-Japanese war, traditionally in Tsarist Russia “War monuments ... were not generalized sites of memory for the amelioration of suffering, the creation of national identity, or the reinforcement of masculinity; they served to explain the history of the monarchical state, demonstrate its power, and legitimize its rule.”²¹ This had begun to change with the commemoration of the Russo-Japanese War, whose monuments began to place a greater emphasis on collective, national sacrifice, but even so most of them were anathema to the new regime.²² In the metropole the process of removal was not completely comprehensive, partly because some monuments (such as the Bronze Horseman in St Petersburg) were deemed to be of artistic merit, and others could be incorporated into a national narrative shorn of its tsarist associations: the monument to those who died at the siege of Plevna in the Russo-Turkish War, which still stands on Il’inskii square next to Kitai-Gorod metro station in Moscow, is a good example of this, while that to the torpedo boat *Steregushchii*, sunk during the Russo-Japanese War, which still stands in St Petersburg, was reinterpreted as a symbol of proletarian sacrifice.²³ In the Central Asian periphery, however, the obliteration of the past was nearly total. The monuments erected by the Tsarist regime in its colonised territories almost all commemorated their conquest, and those who died for it. They embodied the values of the Tsarist officer

independence. On Victory Day see Mikhail Gabovich, “Pamiatnik i prazdnik: etnografiia Dnia Pobedy,” *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas* (2015) no. 3: 93–111.

- 20 Catherine Merridale “War, death, and remembrance in Soviet Russia,” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 62–63; Steve Smith, “Bones of Contention: Bolsheviks and the Exposure of Saints’ Relics, 1918–1930,” *Past and Present* no. 204 (2009): 155–194, although as he notes many of the practices associated with religious pilgrimage came to be applied to Party shrines such as Lenin’s mausoleum instead.
- 21 Aaron J. Cohen, “Long Ago and Far Away: War Monuments, Public Relations, and the Memory of the Russo-Japanese War in Russia, 1907–1914,” *The Russian Review* 69, no. 3 (2010), 391.
- 22 Cohen, “Long Ago and Far Away,” 399; it is striking that the transformation of the significance of war memorials in Russia coincides with that in Britain, where it was first seen in memorials to the Boer War erected after 1901. See Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain. The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 1998), 40–44.
- 23 Cohen, “Long Ago and Far Away,” 396, 411–412.

corps and of “Great Russian chauvinism,” and this meant that they could have no place in the new world of national emancipation that was being constructed in the 1920s.²⁴ There are only three Tsarist-era monuments of any kind which I have seen during my travels in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The most obscure is that to the men of a force sent towards the Afghan frontier in 1878, who died of cholera near the village of Jam. This was erected in 1913 and was still standing in 2008—overlooked perhaps because of its remote location, at the almost uninhabited crossroads of Sary-Qul.²⁵

The only monument to the Tsarist conquest which survives is that to the battle of Uzun-Agach in 1860, in which Russian forces defeated those of the Khanate of Khoqand near what was then Fort Vernoe and is now Almaty. This was erected ca. 1910, and while its overtly Tsarist symbols were removed in a coordinated attack in 1921, by 1958 it featured in a Soviet film about the revolutionary period as a symbol of homecoming to Semirechie—it was fully restored in 2007.²⁶ Semirechie is also home to the best-known Tsarist monument in Central Asia, that to the explorer Nikolai Przheval'skii, erected in 1894 near the town of Karakol (renamed Przheval'sk in his honour until 1991, and now in the Issyq-Kul province of Kyrgyzstan) where he had died in 1888. Although a champion of Russian imperial expansion with distinctly racist views of Chinese and other Asian peoples, Przheval'skii was considered a “progressive” figure by the Soviet regime because of his geographical discoveries, and hence his rather beautiful monument was spared.²⁷ Today it is an object of local pride, a popular tourist attraction and a site for wedding photographs, while the accompanying

24 See, amongst others, Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Adrienne Edgar, *Tribal Nation. The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan. Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006); Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan. Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

25 See Alexander Morrison, “Beyond the ‘Great Game’: The Russian Origins of the Second Anglo-Afghan War,” *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 3 (2017): 686–735.

26 Niccolò Pianciola, “Décoloniser l’Asie centrale?: Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč’ie (1920–1922),” *Cahiers du monde russe* 49, no. 1 (2008), 123. The film is *My iz Semirech’ia* (1958), scripted by the well-known Kazakhstani writer Dmitrii Snegin. See further <https://almaty-history.ucoz.ru/publ/106-101-0-224>.

27 On Przheval'skii see Daniel Brower, “Imperial Russia and Its Orient: The Renown of Nikolai Przheval'sky,” *The Russian Review* 53, no. 3 (1994): 367–381; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun. Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 24–41; Peter Waldron, “Przheval'skii, Asia and Empire,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 88 no. 1/2 (2010): 309–327.



FIGURE 11.4 Monument to the men of the Jam Force, Sary-Qul, Uzbekistan (1913)
© ALEXANDER MORRISON



FIGURE 11.5 Monument to Nikolai Przheval'skii, Karakol, Kyrgyzstan (1894)
© ALEXANDER MORRISON

museum, first opened in the 1950s, continues to give an entirely Soviet-inflected account of his life and career.

These are slim pickings, however—and accordingly any study of the memorials and commemorative practices associated with the Russian conquest of Central Asia has to be based on textual sources and surviving images, rather than a study of the monuments themselves.²⁸ In this paper I will give an overview of the surviving visual evidence of memorials that I have found so far, before focusing on the two most prominent examples of public commemoration of the conquest—the long-standing plan for a grand public monument to commemorate those who fell at the taking of Tashkent in 1865, first mooted in 1883 but not erected until 1913; and the memorial complex erected at the site of the 1881 siege and storming of the Turkmen fortress of Gök-Tepe, consisting of a museum and a set of monuments and cenotaphs, created on the initiative of the War Minister and former governor of Transcaspia, A.N. Kuropatkin, between 1898 and 1902. Central Asia of course had a dense and complex sacred and commemorative geography of Islamic shrines, each with their own associated narrative, long before the Russians came.²⁹ I argue that, just as the British did in India, the Russians sought to overlay existing sacred sites with a new commemorative geography of their own.

1 Early Commemorations of Conquest

Perhaps the earliest image we have of a monument commemorating the conquest is from the “historical” section of the *Turkestan Album* of 1871. This remarkable work, one of the great colonial photography projects, has recently become the focus of much excellent scholarship which has explored how it presented to an elite metropolitan audience a newly-conquered region of whose worth many in St Petersburg were doubtful.³⁰ While the “architectural,” “ethnographic” and “trades” volumes emphasised the wealth and exoticism of

28 Svetlana Gorshenina gives an overview of important photographic collections that can be used for reconstructing vanished architectural monuments in Central Asia in *The Private Collections of Russian Turkestan. Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Century* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2004), 122–124.

29 There is an enormous literature on these sacred landscapes, but see in particular Devin DeWeese in “Sacred History for a Central Asian Town: Saints, Shrines, and Legends of Origin in Histories of Sayrām, 18th–19th Centuries,” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, Vols. 89–90 (July 2000): 245–295. <http://remmm.revues.org/index283.html>.

30 The album as a whole is available from the Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/287_turkestan.html. On its genesis and the techniques used in its photography see Heather S. Sonntag, “Genesis of the ‘Turkestan Album 1871–1872’: The Role of Russian

Turkestan, the most striking aspect of the fourth, “historical” volume, is that the history it narrates is purely that of the Russian conquest of the region, with no suggestion of any prior or alternative indigenous narratives.³¹ Most of the photographs are of the officers and men who took part in the campaigns and won the St George’s Cross for bravery, together with photographs of captured fortresses, plans of battles and sieges, and of Russian fortifications and garrisons. Among these last there is a photograph of a monument at Perovsk, erected to commemorate those who fell while storming what was then the Khoqandi fortress of Aq Masjid in 1853. Judging from the image, it was a simple whitewashed brick and plaster structure with an iron cross, and a brief (and unfortunately illegible) inscription.³²

The *Delo pod Ikanom* (Affair near Iqan) of 1864, in which a small group of 60 Ural Cossacks under Esaul Serov had beaten off an attack by a much larger Khoqandi force near the village of Iqan, south of Turkestan, was an early target for commemoration, not least because it helped to erase the memory of a reverse at the hands of the Khoqandis near Chimkent shortly before.³³ A monument was erected there on the 20th anniversary of the battle in 1884—an illustration published in *Niva* in 1890 shows a simple brick structure crowned by an iron cross, with the inscription “in memory of the soldiers who fell near Iqan in 1864.”³⁴

Military Photography, Mapping, Albums & Exhibitions on Central Asia,” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2011); on some of the representative tropes visible in the Album see Margaret Dikovitskaya, “Central Asia in early photographs. Russian Colonial Attitudes and Visual Culture,” in *Empire, Islam and Politics in Central Eurasia*, ed. Uyama Tomohiko (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre, 2007), 99–121; on the need to “sell” Turkestan to a sceptical educated public see Svetlana Gorshenina, “La construction d’une image ‘savante’ du Turkestan russe lors des premières expositions ‘coloniales’ dans l’Empire russe: analyse d’une technologie culturelle du pouvoir,” in *Le Turkestan russe, un colonie comme les autres? Cahiers d’Asie centrale* nos.17/18, ed. S. Gorshenina & S. Abashin (Tashkent-Paris: IFEAC, 2009), 133–178.

31 See further Alexander Morrison, “The Conquest of Central Asia through the Turkestan Album,” *Voices on Central Asia* 02/05/2018 <https://voicesoncentralasia.org/the-conquest-of-central-asia-through-the-turkestan-album/>

32 “Syr-dar’inskaia oblast’. Pamiatnik nad russkimi ubitymi pri osade Ak Mecheti,” in A.L. Kun (ed.), *Turkestanskii al’bom. Po raspriazheniiu turkestanskago general-gubernatora general-ad’utanta K.P. fon Kaufmana 1-go*, Chast’ IV *Istoricheskaiia*, ed. M.A. Terent’ev (Tashkent: Lit. Voenno-Topogr. Otdela Turk. Voen. Okruga, 1871–1872) pl. 16, No. 16. LC-D1G-pp-msca-09957-00016 (<https://memory.loc.gov/pnp/ppmsca/09900/09957/00016v.jpg>).

33 Mikhail Khoroshkhin, *Geroiskii podvig Ural’tsev. Delo pod Ikanom 4, 5 i 6 dekabria 1864 goda* (Ural’sk: n.p. 1895); on the campaign during which this incident took place see Alexander Morrison, “Russia, Khoqand, and the search for a ‘Natural’ Frontier,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2014): 166–192.

34 “Dvadtsat’-piataya godovshchina Ikanskogo boia,” *Niva* (1890) no. 24, 620, 624, 626–627,



FIGURE 11.6
Monument to those who
fell storming Aq Masjid
(Perovsk), Turkestan
Album, 1871

Another celebrated incident of heroism was the defence of the Samarkand citadel in the summer of 1868, in which a Russian garrison of 400 men, including the artist Vasilii Vereshchagin, had repeatedly beaten back the assault of the townspeople and forces from Shahrissabz and Kitab under the leadership of ‘Abd al-Malik Tura, the rebellious son of the Amir of Bukhara.³⁵ By 1879 there was a small neoclassical monument, topped with an orthodox cross, outside the citadel at the point where the walls had been breached.³⁶

<http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/i331.html>; Aleksei Plentsov, *Delo pod Ikanom. Sotnia protiv desiati tysiach* (St Petersburg: Istoriko-Kul’turnyi tsentr Karel’skogo peregona, 2014), 203; this comprehensive study provides an excellent technical description of the battle, but framed in very jingoistic terms.

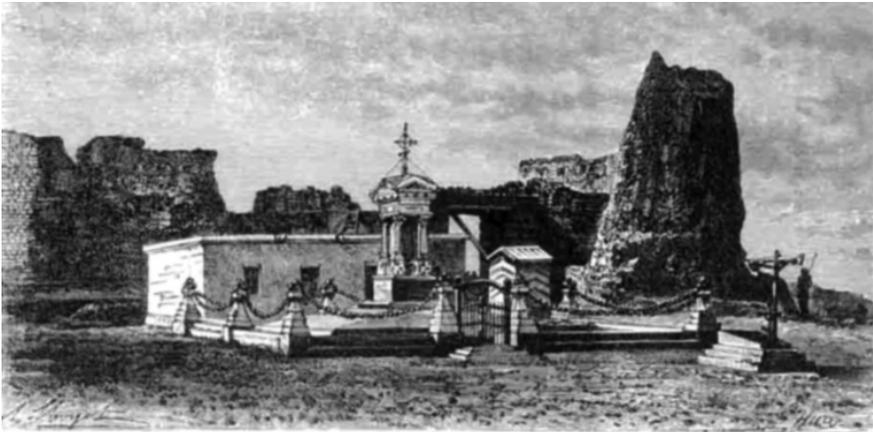
35 On this see A.S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910. A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21–24; Azim Malikov, “The Russian conquest of the Bukharan emirate: military and diplomatic aspects,” *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (2014): 190–193.

36 “Pamiatnik nad mogilam Russkikh bliz Samarkandskoi Tsitadeli,” illustration to an article by P. Stremoukhov, “V Srednei Azii. Iz zapisok russkogo puteshestvennika,” *Niva* no. 43 (1879): 441–445, <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/i333.html>.



Памятникъ воинамъ павшимъ подъ Икандомъ въ 1864 году
Грав. Рашевскій.

FIGURE 11.7
Monument to those
who fell at Iqan in 1864.
Niva, 1890



3. Памятникъ надъ могилами русскихъ близъ Самаркандской цитадели. Рис. Клерже, грав. Гильдебрандтъ.

FIGURE 11.8 Monument to those who fell in defence of the Samarkand Citadel, *Niva*, 1879



FIGURE 11.9 General Cherniaev's *domik*, Tashkent. *Turkestan Album*, 1871

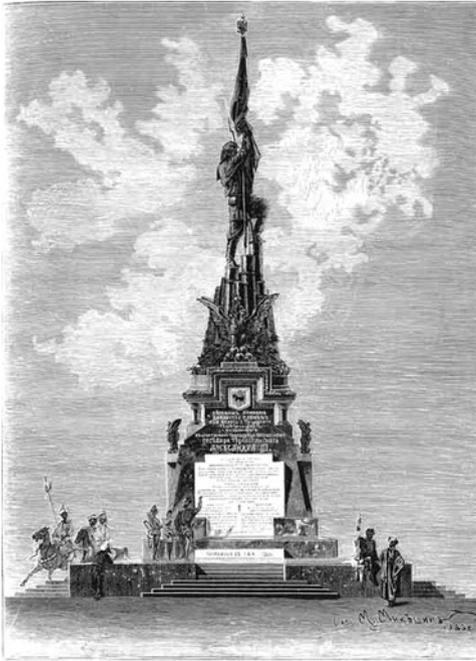
However, it was the storming of Tashkent by a small force of 3,000 men under General Mikhail Grigor'evich Cherniaev on 15th June 1865 which became the central event of the conquest narrative. While no monument to Cherniaev himself was erected in Tashkent until the early 1900s (a source of some controversy, as we will see), the *domik* (cottage) in which he had lived during his first period as governor in 1865–1866 was preserved as a relic of the earliest years of conquest, featuring both in the *Turkestan Album* of 1871,³⁷ and in later articles commemorating the anniversary of the fall of Tashkent.³⁸

As Jeff Sahadeo has shown, the first commemorative ceremonies were held in 1872, but so long as K.P. von Kaufman was Governor-General of Turkestan they remained limited in scope, and there was no permanent memorial, in large part because he and Cherniaev cordially loathed each other.³⁹ Representatives of the Russian settler community complained that the authorities

37 "Syr-dar'inskaia oblast'. Dom v kotorom zhil General Maior M.G. Cherniaev po zaniatii g. Tashkenda," in A.L. Kun (ed.), *Turkestanskii al'bom*, pl. 36, no. 77. LC-DIG-ppmsca-09957-00077, <https://memory.loc.gov/pnp/ppmsca/09900/09957/00077v.jpg>.

38 "Ko dnu dvadtsatipiatiletiiia vziatie Tashkenta," *Niva* no. 25 (1890): 651, 653, <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/i332.html>.

39 Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent 1865–1923* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 47–49.



Завоевание Ташкента. Памятникъ въ честь конной павшихъ при штурмѣ Ташкента, 15 июня 1865 г. Копія съ Высочайше утвержденного проекта М. О. Машкина, пром. М. Раппельки.

FIGURE 11.10
Mikeshin's design for a monument to those who fell at the storming of Tashkent in 1865. *Niva*, 1883

were “highly unsympathetic to all things Cherniaev,” and had discouraged public subscriptions for a monument, causing them to fizzle out when only 1,000 roubles had been collected.⁴⁰ Cherniaev’s appointment as the second Turkestan Governor-General after von Kaufman’s death in 1882 opened up new possibilities. He commissioned an elaborate design in bronze from the sculptor Mikhail Osipovich Mikeshin (1835–1896) in 1883, which was to stand on Tashkent’s central Konstantinovskii square.⁴¹ The design for the monument featured a Russian soldier in the distinctive Turkestan campaign uniform (loose blouse, baggy trousers, *kepi* with sunshade) hoisting a flag over one of the captured bastions of the city, above a double-headed eagle with outstretched wings crouched, hen-like, on a pyramid of newly-laid artillery shells.⁴²

40 Iu. D. Iuzhakov, *Shestnadsatiletniaia godovshchina vziat'ia Tashkenta (Vospominanie starogo Turkestantsa)* (St. Petersburg: V.V. Komarov, 1881), 16.

41 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.1089 “Ob Otkrytie v g. Tashkente pamiatnika na mogile pavshikh vo vremia shturma 15 iun'ia 1865 g.,” ll. 1–4; Donesenie Akademika Mikhail Osipovich Mikesheina 17/08/1883 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 ll. 48–49.

42 “Pamiatnik v chest' pavshikh pri vziatii Tashkenta,” *Niva* no. 31 (1883), <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/i173.html>.

Cherniaev also wanted to construct a cathedral with a burial vault in which there would be individual coffins for each of the fallen soldiers, but he was recalled before the funds for the grandiose design could be raised.⁴³ Some of its motifs would eventually appear on the monument that finally appeared on Konstantinovskii square in the centre of the city 1913, only to be torn down six years later. Meanwhile a smaller monument in the Russian national style was erected in 1886 by Governor-General Rosenbach on the site where most of the soldiers were actually buried, beneath the walls of the old city, where it became the focus of ever more elaborate religious processions and commemoration ceremonies on the 15th June each year.⁴⁴

2 Monumental Controversies

However, the idea for a grander monument in the centre of the city did not go away. In December 1898 Governor-General Dukhovskoi wrote to General Sakharov, the Chief of the Main Staff, proposing to revive Cherniaev's plan. The original cost was estimated at 27,550 roubles, and Cherniaev had proposed to raise this through public subscription. Unfortunately, Dukhovskoi wrote, Cherniaev was unsuccessful—they had only managed to raise about 5,000, and his successor, Rosenbach, had spent half of this on a clock and on restoring a cemetery. The balance of 2,151 roubles had remained in the bank ever since. Dukhovskoi felt the time had come to revive the idea, as he had found some spare cash elsewhere in Turkestan's budget. The stone—marble, jasper and granite—was to come from a quarry near Khujand, and he calculated that the total cost would be about 50–60,000 roubles. The design would be the same as that published in *Niva* in 1883.⁴⁵ The initial response to Dukhovskoi from Sakharov was discouraging, saying that this was not a suitable use for the money he had found, and “in general the construction of such expensive monuments is premature.”⁴⁶ However, two weeks later an article appeared in *Novoe Vremya* announcing that in view of General Cherniaev's death the previous year, a memorial was now planned for him in Tashkent, including restoring

43 Sahadeo *Russian Colonial Society*, 49.

44 Sahadeo *Russian Colonial Society*, 50–53.

45 Dukhovskoi to Sakharov 10/12/1898 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 “Po voprosam ob ustroistve: 1) pamiatnika voinam, pavshim pri shturme Tashkent 15 iunია 1865 g. 2) Pamiatnika pokoinomu Stepnomu General Gubernatoru Generalu ot Infanterii Kolpakovskomu. 3) muzeia v pamiat' pokoinogo General Leitenanta M.G. Cherniaeva,” ll. 1–4.

46 Sakharov to Dukhovskoi 11/01/1899 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 l. 8.

his *domik* and turning it into a museum. It is not clear whether Dukhovskoi was behind this article, but it led Sakharov to write to him asking for details of these plans, mentioning that the War Minister, A.N. Kuropatkin, felt that there should be memorials to Cherniaev and von Kaufman in Tashkent, and to Skobelev at Gök-Tepe.⁴⁷ Dukhovskoi responded that he agreed, noting that there was already a museum dedicated to von Kaufman in Tashkent. He renewed his request to be allowed to use a surplus he had discovered in the budget for the Cossack regiments stationed in Turkestan to build a monument to the soldiers who fell during the storming of Tashkent.⁴⁸ Sakharov again demurred, saying that the Ministry was currently building a monument to Suvorov, and that it was undesirable to have two such expensive monuments under way at the same time.⁴⁹ Dukhovskoi waited for a year, and then tried again, this time writing directly to Kuropatkin, who as an old Turkestan hand could be expected to be sympathetic. He certainly laid it on pretty thick:

Thirty years ago a band of Russian heroes, with thousands of *versts* of desert at their backs, without any hope of assistance from the fatherland, approached the fortified walls of Tashkent, with a population of 100,000, defended by the whole population and numerous enemy forces. At the price of selfless heroism and blood spilled on the walls of this city new laurels were wreathed into the crown of Russian power. From the time of that highly significant event, the fascination of the Russian name has become a pledge of victory and of our further successes in Central Asia. Fulfilling the vows of their great Tsars, Russian troops step by step conquered a vast expanse and, with one hand overthrowing the rude arbitrariness of petty despotic rulers, with the other struck off the shackles of slavery and sowed the seeds of humane Christian culture.⁵⁰

He went on to link the need for a further commemorative monument with the imminent construction of a direct rail link between Turkestan and the core regions of Russia (the Orenburg-Tashkent railway, which would eventually be completed in 1906), thanks to which “Russian life has begun to pulse more strongly and pour into a moribund region a new current of life ... This moment, as one that brings us closer to the vow of Peter the Great, crowned by the efforts of his successors ... I find the most appropriate for the immortalization of the

47 Sakharov to Dukhovskoi 30/01/1899 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 ll. 11–ob.

48 Dukhovskoi to Sakharov 03/02/1899 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 ll. 12–13.

49 Sakharov to Dukhovskoi 11/02/1899 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 l. 14.

50 Dukhovskoi to Kuropatkin 08/01/1900 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 ll. 20–21–ob.

feats of Russian arms by means of a fitting monument.” The Main Staff and the War Ministry now grudgingly agreed, provided it could be funded by a public subscription, and they took the same line with a similar proposal from the City Duma in Vernyi in Semirechie to erect a monument to their own military hero, Gerasim Alekseevich Kolpakovskii, who had defeated the khanate of Khoqand at the battle of Uzun-Agach in 1860, occupied the Ili Valley in 1871, and served as Governor of Semirechie from 1867–1889.⁵¹

Dukhovskoi’s sudden death in March 1901 seems to have led to the project lapsing once again, and it was only after the turmoil of the Russo-Japanese War and 1905 Revolution that it was revived once more, with the appointment of N.I. Grodekov (1843–1913) as Governor-General of Turkestan in September 1906.⁵² Grodekov had served in Turkestan continuously since the 1870s, apart from a brief stint as Governor of the Maritime Region in the Far East, and was almost the last of the hallowed coterie of officers that had served with von Kaufman in the “heroic” years of Turkestan’s conquest and construction. His revival of the proposal for a Tashkent monument, sparked a fierce press debate about where it should be sited and to whom it should be dedicated—one correspondent noted that the original plan under von Kaufman in 1874 had been to place such a monument at the spot where the men actually fell, near the Kamelan Gate in the Native City. Cherniaev had changed this to Konstantinovskii Square. He thought it should actually be placed on the Cathedral Square, before the Governor-General’s residence. He also thought the inscription should be amended to: “*Покорителям и устроителям Туркестанского края*” (To the Vanquishers and Builders of the Turkestan region)—that is, to all the generals who had led Russian forces in the Turkestan campaigns and helped to create its administration.⁵³ From these innocuous beginnings the debates surrounding the monument became steadily more fraught, and highly revealing of the way in which the history of the Russian conquest of Central Asia was being reinterpreted in explicitly Russian nationalist, as opposed to dynastic or imperial terms, by the early 1900s.

In July 1907 Grodekov held the first meeting of a committee to obtain donations for a monument dedicated to von Kaufman. They decided to use the

51 “Ob otkrytii po Imperii podpiski na sooruzhenie pamyatnika v Tashkente vsem pokoriteliyam Sredneaziatskikh nashikh vladenii,” 01/02/1900; MVD to Kuropatkin 14/02/1900; Petition from Alexander Ivanovich Putolov 31/01/1900; MVD to the General Staff 29/04/1900 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 ll. 24, 26, 32–33, 37.

52 “O Pamiatnike General-Ad’iutantu K.P. Von Kaufmanu,” *Turkestanskii Sbornik* 1908 nos.148–9 in *Turkestanskii Sbornik* vol. 469, 154–158.

53 Evgenii Osipovich Moshilenko to Alexander Fedorovich 01/12/1906 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2332 ll. 55–56.

16,060 Roubles that were left over from the earlier schemes for the proposed monument to the “vanquishers and builders of the Turkestan region” and “unite/merge” this with a monument to von Kaufman. There was to be a competition for a design for a monument “to the first Turkestan Governor-General, the vanquisher of Central Asia and builder of the Turkestan *krai* K.P. von Kaufman, and also to the troops who conquered Central Asia.” The committee decided to install the monument “in the centre of Tashkent, at the crossing of the Kaufman and Moskovskii Prospects.” The Academy of Arts selected a jury, which in February 1908 chose 3 designs (out of 18) which were awarded prizes. These projects were: *Otboi* (The Last Post), by Boris Mikhailovich Mikeshin (1873–1937, the son of the artist who had produced the design for Cherniaev in 1883), *Ural* by A. Kurtatov, and *Aziatskaia Rossiia* by O. Gol'dberg. However, none of the three was considered appropriate by the committee—*Otboi* was not energetic enough, *Ural's* composition was unharmonious, and *Aziatskaia Rossiia* was insufficiently monumental.⁵⁴

At this point a debate broke out in the metropolitan and Turkestani press as to who exactly the Tashkent monument should commemorate—the soldiers who fell during the storming, von Kaufman, Cherniaev, other Turkestani Generals or all of these. One correspondent wrote objecting to the published design, which had Cherniaev in an obscure position in a panel on the pedestal below Kaufman's feet, and suggested instead that Cherniaev and Kaufman should get equal billing on the same pedestal, the former as the conqueror of Turkestan, sword in hand, the latter holding a book of laws.⁵⁵ Old controversies were raked up from the 1870s, when the two men had been hated rivals, with Cherniaev baiting von Kaufman through his ownership of the newspaper *Russkii Mir*.⁵⁶ In March 1908 the journalist, dramatist and nationalist ideologue Alexei Suvorin published an article in the “patriotic” and pan-Slavist *Novoe Vremia* vehemently opposing the proposal to have busts of Generals Abramov, Kolpakovskii, Skobelev and Cherniaev at the feet of “the German” Kaufman—a position unworthy of such “Russian heroes,” as he called them in the text: “had

54 *Raport* Turkestan Governor-General to the Main Staff 11/03/1909 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.3747 “O sooruzhenii v g. Tashkente pamyatnika Generalu Kaufmanu,” ll. 11–15. My thanks to Matthias Battis for consulting this file for me in the Military Historical Archive, and providing his notes. All further references to it are also based on these.

55 Staryi i Pristrastnyi Turkestanets “Po povodu pamiatnika K.P. Von Kaufmana i ego spodv-izhnikam,” *Na Rubezhe* 1907 no. 40 in *Turkestanskii Sbornik*, vol. 434, 100–101.

56 A.L.K. ‘Kaufman i Cherniaev’ *Tashkentskii Kur'er* 1908 no. 36 in *Turkestanskii Sbornik* vol. 456, 46–47. See David Mackenzie, “Kaufman of Turkestan: an assessment of his administration 1867–1881,” *Slavic Review* 26, no. 2 (1967), 276; idem, *The Lion of Tashkent. The Career of General M.G. Cherniaev* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1974), 108–114.

these generals been born with German surnames, they would not have ended up at the feet of Kaufman. General Grodekov would not have dared to lay a general of German descent at the feet of a German general.” He concluded by saying that: “perhaps he [Kaufman] was a good Governor-General, but it is not his name but that of Cherniaev that will be linked to the acquisition of this wonderful land and with the liberation of the Slavic peoples from the Turkic yoke.” (this also referred to Cherniaev’s controversial role at the head of the Serbian army during the Balkan crisis of 1876–1877); the article caused considerable disquiet in the War Ministry.⁵⁷ By this point the debate had attracted the attention of Tsar Nicholas II himself—having read an article on the Kaufman/Cherniaev controversy in the conservative *Grazhdanin* (edited by the notorious Prince V.P. Meshcherskii, this was the only newspaper the Tsar regularly read),⁵⁸ which noted that both Skobelev and Cherniaev would be portrayed as under von Kaufman’s feet, he instructed Baron Fredericks, the Minister of the Imperial Court, to write to War Minister A.F. Rediger that he “agreed with the objections raised in the article, and considered the placing of the monument to General Kaufman in the manner projected by General Grodekov entirely unsuitable.”⁵⁹

Grodekov’s committee responded to this imperial pressure by deciding to remove the busts of other generals from the monument altogether:⁶⁰ “with this, in view of HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR’s recognition that it would be unsuitable to have on the monument busts of generals Cherniaev and Skobelev, the Committee proposed that there should be no busts or medallions of the aforementioned generals on the monument, nor of Generals Abramov or Kolpakovskii.”⁶¹ The Mayor of Tashkent, Nikolai Mallitskii, suggested reviving Mike-shin senior’s original design of 1883, with a smaller statue of Kaufman somewhere underneath the main statue of the Turkestani soldier hoisting a flag. G.K. Richter, another committee member, wanted to unite the three designs into one, and have “At von Kaufman’s feet the soldier of the *Otboi*, a Sart presenting a Dastarkhan, and the project of Mikeshin in 1883.” The committee asked the three prize-winning artists and some others, including Nikolai Georgevich Schleifer (1864–1928) and Boris Vasil’evich Edwards (1860–1924), to come up

57 G.L. Polivanov to the Main Staff 02/03/1908 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.3747 l. 3.

58 D.C.B. Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983), 72–73. See further, W.E. Mosse, “Imperial Favourite: V.P. Meshchersky and the *Grazhdanin*,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 59, no. 4 (1981): 529–547.

59 Fredericks to Rediger 12/02/1908 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.3747 l. 1.

60 “O Pamiatnike General-Ad’utantu K.P. Von Kaufmanu,” *Turkestan’skie Vedomosti* 1908 nos.148–9 in *Turkestan’skii Sbornik* vol. 469, 157.

61 *Raport* Turkestan Governor-General to the Main Staff 11/03/1909 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.3747 ll. 11–15.

with new ideas for a monument to Kaufman and to the soldiers that conquered Central Asia, giving them the following guidelines:

a) the figure ... of Kaufman must in its expression be energetic and accord with the figure of a victor b) on the monument it would be desirable to have bas-reliefs which portray scenes from the campaign and military life of the Turkestan forces c) it would be desirable to have the figure of a Russian soldier, raising the Russian flag in an enemy land d) that it could also include the figure of a Sart, presenting a *dastarkhan*, but this figure must not be bowing in the Russian style, but must accord with the type, clothing, circumstances and form of greeting which exists among the Sarts e) in general, the monument must immortalise the figure of the builder of the Turkestan region General-Adjutant von Kaufman and embody in itself the fact of the pacification and securing of Central Asia by the victorious Russian forces for the Russian autocrat, and its further peaceful development.⁶²

Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of the sculptors felt capable of embodying this daunting ideological agenda in stone and bronze, and the re-submitted designs were also rejected. At this point, in January 1909, Richter presented his own project, created using photographs of people posing as statues, portraying Kaufman, a rifleman hoisting the Russian flag, and a "Cossack trumpeter, blowing the 'Last Post' on a pedestal in the form of a clay city wall." The committee then decided to ask Mikeshin, Schleifer and Edwards to come up with new ideas based on Richter's photographs. The artists presented their new models to the committee in October 1909, and that by Edwards was rejected. The committee then cast a public vote to choose between Schleifer and Mikeshin, who received 5 votes each, but as the chairman had voted for Schleifer, the commission went to him, despite Mikeshin's objections that the design plagiarized both his design and that of his father.⁶³ In a final twist, in December 1909 the Academy of Arts rejected Schleifer's design, considering it insufficiently monumental and badly composed. While in principle all public monuments were supposed to have the academy's approval, the Ministry of War managed to secure the Tsar's approval, overriding the Academy's objections.⁶⁴

62 Ibid.

63 *Doklad* of the Main Staff 12/01/1910 RGVA F.400 Op.1 D.3747 ll. 62–63.

64 *Zeil* to Schleifer 14/01/1910 RGVA F.400 Op.1 D.3747 l. 64.



FIGURE 11.11
 Schleifer's successful model for the monument to von Kaufman
TURKESTANSKIE VEDOMOSTI
 1909, IN *TURKESTANSKII*
SBORNIK VOL. 516, PAGE 91

Apart from providing an object-lesson in the dangers of trying to design anything by committee, this complex and somewhat tedious saga does illustrate the changing forms and meanings of public commemoration in Russia in the early 1900s. A monument that had begun life as a military memorial had first been transformed into a memorial to an individual, then a series of individuals, and had then acquired a distinctly more national tinge—for all that, no doubt much to Suvorin's disgust, the commission eventually went to a sculptor with a German name. Partly owing to problems with finance, it was only in 1913 that the Kaufman monument was finally completed. Cherniaev had meanwhile received a smaller bust in a public park. Both would be swiftly destroyed after 1917.⁶⁵

Despite the outbreak of war, the fiftieth anniversary of the fall of Tashkent two years later in 1915 prompted a further frenzy of commemoration, this time

65 An excellent essay on the longer history of the "Tashkent square" and its monuments can be found in Mikhail Knizhnik, "Tashkent, Skver," *mytashkent.uz* 10/06/2007, <https://mytashkent.uz/2007/06/10/tashkent-skver/>.



FIGURE 11.12
The von Kaufman Memorial, unveiled
4th May 1913, destroyed in 1919

squarely focused on Cherniaev. The prominent local Orientalist and *Turkestanoved*, Nikolai Ostroumov, published a series of articles in *Turkestanskije Vedomosti* commemorating the capture of the city, and these were accompanied by poems, reminiscences and other forms of verbal commemoration.⁶⁶

Nikolai Mallitskii, still Mayor of Tashkent, despatched a telegram to Cherniaev's widow, Antonina Alexandrovna, informing her that the new "House of the People" (*Narodnyi Dom*) and the Labour exchange were to be named after Cherniaev, and inviting her to attend the naming ceremony.⁶⁷ In the letter that followed he wrote:

On the 15th June this year it will be fifty years since the day when the city of Tashkent was taken by the valiant force of Russian *bogatyrs*, led by your never-to-be-forgotten husband. Without admitting the thought of pompous celebrations, which would not be consistent with the heroic struggle against the cruel German powers which Russia is going through, the Tashkent Municipal Urban Social Administration proposes nevertheless to mark the 50th anniversary jubilee of the great event of the con-

66 N.P. Ostroumov "K 50-tiletiu Tashkenta. 15 iiunya 1865 g.—15 iiunia 1915 g.," *Turkestanskije Vedomosti* (1915) nos.108, 110, 111, 112, 115, 117, 119, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128.

67 Telegram N.A. Mallitskii to A.A. Cherniaeva 09/05/1915 RG VIA F.726 Op.1 D.238 l. 1.



FIGURE 11.13 The Tashkent *Narodnyi Dom*, renamed after Cherniaev in 1915
[HTTPS://MYTASHKENT.UZ/](https://mytashkent.uz/)

quest of Tashkent with modest triumphs on the 14th and 15th June, in the programme of which, amongst other things, will be the laying of the foundation stone of the new *Narodnyi Dom* and exchange in the name of Mikhail Grigor'evich Cherniaev.⁶⁸

Antonina Cherniaeva sent a gracious reply, which was reprinted in *Turkestanskii Vedomosti* alongside the full text of the many long speeches and fulsome speeches given at a special joint session of the city duma and the local learned societies.⁶⁹

These commemorative re-namings were not limited to buildings: the junction on the Samarkand-Andijan railway line where it branched off to Tashkent had already been named after Cherniaev when it opened in 1899. Now, in the jubilee year of 1915, the Russian town of New Marghelan was renamed "Skobelev" after the conqueror of Ferghana, and the ancient city of Chimkent was rebranded "Cherniaev". This appropriation of Turkestan's landscape for Russia and erasure of what were often ancient names can be appropriately

68 Mallitskii to Cherniaeva 29/05/1915 RGVA F.726 Op.1 D.238 l. 2.

69 "Telegramma A.A. Cherniaevoi," *Turkestanskii Vedomosti* no. 130 (15 June 1915).

described as “an act of geographical violence,” to use Edward Said’s phrase, and some Russians felt this even at the time.⁷⁰ In 1898 the great orientalist V.V. Barthold had risked the wrath of the Russian settler lobby by writing a letter to the editors of the main unofficial newspaper, *Russkii Turkestan*, complaining that the renaming of stations on the Samarkand-Andijan railway after Russian saints, generals and governors was obliterating thousands of years of history.⁷¹ In 1916 an anonymous correspondent wrote to *Turkestanskii Kur'er* strongly condemning the renaming of Chimkent as Cherniaev, pointing out that the new railway station was still called Chimkent to avoid confusion with Cherniaev junction, whilst there was in fact another settlement called Cherniaevka in the Tashkent district.⁷² The proposed renaming of Chimkent proved abortive, but the settlement of Cherniaevka has preserved its name and today, incongruously, marks the main Uzbek-Kazakh border crossing.

3 Gök-Tepe, Memorial and Museum

The fall of Tashkent in 1865 had taken place at a time when the Russian reading public was still relatively small, and it took time for a legend to be developed around it in the metropole, although as we have seen it was enthusiastically commemorated by settler society in Tashkent itself. The fall of the Turkmen fortress of Gök-Tepe just over fifteen years later in January 1881 took place in the full glare of Russian and international publicity. Every stage of the campaign was relayed to the Moscow and St Petersburg newspapers by correspondents embedded with the Russian forces, of which the most articulate was Captain A.N. Maslov, for *Novoe Vremya*.⁷³ There are a number of reasons why Gök-Tepe seems to have resonated so strongly with the educated Russian public; one was that it was revenge for a humiliating reverse at the same fortress for Russian forces under General Nikolai Lomakin in 1879, which had attracted much condemnation and ridicule. Another was the presence of Russia’s greatest military celebrity, Mikhail Dmitrievich Skobelev, fresh from his triumphs in the Russo-Turkish war, whose every action seems to have had an

70 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 271.

71 V. Bartol’d, “Pis’mo v redaktsiiu,” *Russkii Turkestan* no. 41 (30 Dec 1898).

72 “Proezhii” “Chimkent i ego okrestnosti,” *Turkestanskii Kur'er* no. 88 (22 April 1916).

73 Charles Marvin, *The Russian Advance towards India. Conversations with Skobelev, Ignatieff, and other distinguished Russian generals and statesmen, on the Central Asian Question* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1882), 150–151. Maslov’s articles and sketches were published in book form as A.N. Maslov, *Zavoevanie Akhal-Tekke. Ocherki iz poslednei ekspeditsii Skobeleva (1880–1881)* (St Petersburg: A.S. Suvorin, 1887).

irresistible fascination for the nationalist and Slavophile portion of Russian opinion.⁷⁴ Finally, something about the sheer scale of the violence inflicted on the Akhal-Teke Turkmen—6,000 killed during the siege, followed by an additional 8,000 in the massacre that followed—seems to have struck a chord.⁷⁵ Fedor Dostoevskii famously reacted with exhilaration, seeing this as the infliction of exemplary violence that would cement Russia's civilising mission and destiny in Asia.⁷⁶

Commemoration followed swiftly, both in the metropole and the provinces: Mikhail Nikolaevich Romanov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, hosted an anniversary breakfast for participants in the storming of Gök-Tepe in his palace in Petersburg on the 12th January 1882, where Skobelev was the guest of honour. On the same day the Orthodox Bishop of Chernigov delivered a stirring sermon at a special service in Chernigov's cathedral of the Holy Trinity, invoking eternal memory of all those who fought, and the divine assistance offered to the victors:

The victory over the Tekke has a significance, sobering for those Russian peoples, who are now in a state of indecision between believers in God and those who dare to deny his very existence. The victory over the Tekke has a significance, bringing to reason those Russian people, in whose hearts a spark of shame has still remained, and they are prepared to return to the path of the truth and justice of God, to the path of peaceful government life. They are simply looking for an example to follow. Just such a worthy example has been set by the best people of Russia, who have carried out the expedition in the Transcaspian region.⁷⁷

74 This is seen clearly in O.A. Novikova, *Skobelev and the Slavonic Cause* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1883); V.I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, *Skobelev: Lichnie vospominaniia i vpechatleniia* (St. Petersburg: Tip Imp. AN, 1882), translated as *Personal Reminiscences of General Skobelev* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1884).

75 The only general account of the campaign in English currently is Mehmet Saray, *The Turkmen in the Age of Imperialism: A Study of the Turkmen People and their incorporation into the Russian Empire* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 1989), 138–239; the standard Russian account is M.A. Terent'ev, *Istoriia Zavoevaniia Srednei Azii*. Vol. III (1–252) (St Petersburg: Tip. V.V. Komarov, 1906).

76 Fedor Dostoevskii, "Dnevnik Pisatel'ia III. Geok-Tepe—Chto takoe dlia nas Aziia?," *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* (St. Petersburg: Tip. A.F. Marksa, 1896) vol. 21: 513–523.

77 Anon, *Prazdnovanie godovshchiny shturma Geok-Tepe. Izvlecheno iz No. 590 Chernigovskikh Eparkhial'nykh Izvestiia 1882 g.* (Chernigov: Gubernskaya Tipografiya, 1882), 1, 9.

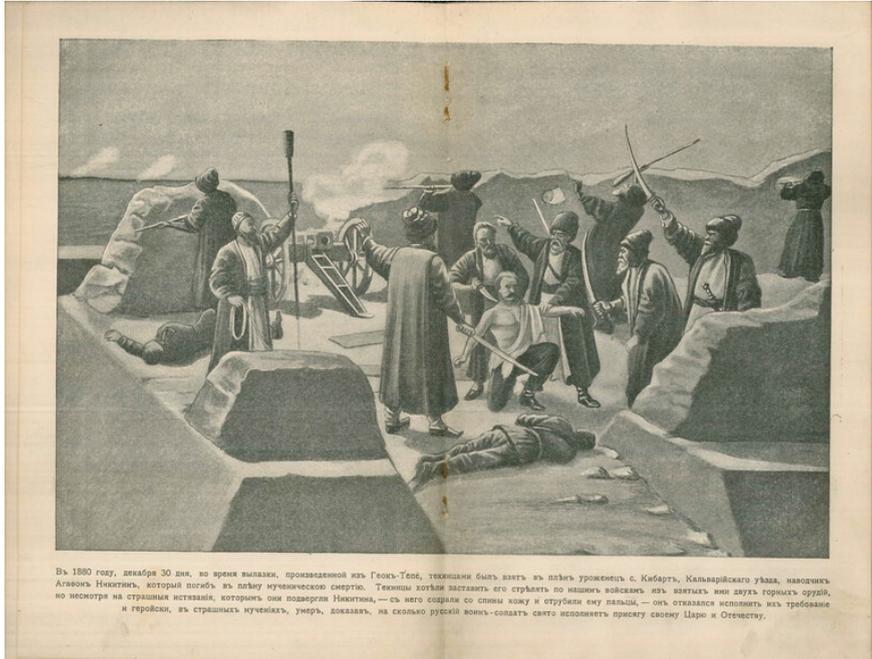


FIGURE 11.14 Painting of the Martyrdom of Agafon Nikitin

His target may not just have been atheism and free-thinking, but the many adherents of the Greek Catholic Church in this mixed region.⁷⁸ The siege also acquired its very own narrative of martyrdom—of a gunner called Agafon Nikitin, from the appropriately-named town of Calvary, who was captured by the Turkmen during a sortie from the fortress on the 30th December 1880, and suffered death by torture rather than serve his captors by directing their one cannon against his comrades. The inhabitants of Calvary raised 50,000 roubles to build a church in his memory, receiving a donation of 3,000 from Nicholas II. The building was consecrated in 1901, and contained a gruesome painting depicting Nikitin's martyrdom, in which the skin was flayed from his back and his fingers cut off.⁷⁹

Skobelev himself, of course, would die unexpectedly in 1882 of a heart attack, and thus became a potential object of commemoration. Despite his extremely

78 Paul Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths. Toleration and the fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78–82.

79 Anon, *Russkim Voinam na pamiat' ob Agafon Nikitine, pogibshem mucheniskoju smert'iu v 1880 godu za Veru, Tsaria i Otechestvo, pri vziatii nashimi voiskami kreposti Geok-Tepé* (St. Petersburg: n. p., 1902), 1, 19–21.



FIGURE 11.15
Monument to M.D. Skobelev, Tverskaya St, Moscow, erected 1912
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

high profile at the time of his death, or perhaps even because of it, given the wild rumours that Skobelev was considering using his personal popularity to overthrow the Romanovs and establish a populist dictatorship, it was not until 1912 that the *Belyi General* was commemorated in an elaborate equestrian monument on Tverskaia street in the centre of Moscow—as Cohen notes, it was a throwback to an earlier style of commemoration, and considered very ugly by the Liberal Press.⁸⁰

It was thus unsurprising that the site of the Gök-Tepe siege and subsequent massacre would become the setting for the most elaborate commemorative complex created by the Russians in Central Asia. The appointment of Alexei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin, Skobelev's chief of staff during the campaign against the Akhal-Teke, as Governor of Transcaspia in 1890, and his subsequent appointment as Minister of War in January 1898, provided the necessary impetus.⁸¹ Within a month of taking up office in St Petersburg, Kuropatkin had set up a commission to create a memorial museum at the station of Gök-Tepe

80 "Otkrytie Pamiatnik Skobelevu v Moskve," *Niva* no. 27 (1912); Cohen, "Long Ago and Far Away," 402.

81 On Kuropatkin's administration in Transcaspia see Alexander Morrison, "The Pahlen Commission and the restoration of rectitude in colonial Transcaspia, 1908–1909," *Monde(s). Histoire, Espaces, Relations* 4 no. 2 (2013): 45–64.

on the Central Asian Railway, indicating that it should collect everything connected with the conquest of Transcaspia. The initial estimate of the cost was 3,000 roubles.⁸² The commission's first report recommended that all post trains passing through the station were to wait 15 minutes at Gök-Tepe to allow passengers to visit the museum. They proposed to contact veterans of the battle asking for medals to display, and to mark out the key points of the siege on the surrounding battlefield, such as the site of Skobelev's staff headquarters, the location of the three storming columns, and a monument on the spot where General Petrusevich had died. Inside they would display a map with Skobelev's own annotations (which apparently was in the possession of one Tikhonov). The Museum was to have a library of works related to the conquest (to be selected by Baron von Osten-Saken from Kuropatkin's own collection), portraits of the most important figures in the siege, a model of the fortress showing the moment it was stormed, examples of Turkmen weapons and artillery, Turkmen clothing and Russian uniforms.⁸³ The Military council gave its assent for the necessary expenditure, and the next year was spent gathering objects for the museum.⁸⁴ In May 1899 one of the searchers sent a telegram to the War Ministry to say that he had found several Turkmen weapons and even some falconets in Tiflis, and now needed money to have them transported to the new museum, which Kuropatkin was happy to authorise.⁸⁵ Later that month the commission authorised the expenditure of 950 roubles to purchase the painting "Skobelev on horseback" from its owner, Prince Viazemskii.⁸⁶ In December 1899 the Commission reported that the museum building was complete, and that a path had been constructed connecting it to the railway station. They had also identified several graves as suitable for memorials—notably those of General Petrusevich, Major Bulygin, and Esaul Ivanov in one spot, of Lt-Col. Prince Mogalov, Lt Col. Mamatsev, 2nd Lt Sandetskii, Lt Chikarev, 2nd Lt Gotto, Doctor Trotskii and 91 other ranks in another, and Lt Yanovskii and 52 other ranks in a third.

The head of the [Transcaspian] province, Lt-General Bogoliubov gave the opinion that all the graves should be marked with iron crosses or inexpensive memorials, with one of the more suitable of them beautified with

82 Kuropatkin to Sakharov 24/02/1898 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2306 "Ob ustroistva Muzeia i Pamiatnika v Geok-Tepe," ll. 1–ob.

83 "Zhurnal Kommissii po ustroistva muzeia v Geok-Tepe," March 1898 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2306 l. 2.

84 *Voennyi Sovet* to Kuropatkin 14/04/1898 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2306 l. 13.

85 Telegram Kalitin to Kuropatkin May 1899 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2306 l. 19.

86 *Doklad* 02/05/1899 RGVIA F.400 Op.1 D.2306 l. 26.



FIGURE 11.16 View of the Gök-Tepe Museum with Monument behind

a good large memorial, giving it the appearance of a general, fraternal grave. The design for the memorial has been put together by Military Engineer Lt-Col. Chevalier de la Serre, and the cost of construction is estimated at 2,000 roubles.⁸⁷

The memorial complex as it finally emerged was even more elaborate than this description would suggest. While neither the museum nor the monuments surrounding it have been preserved (with the exception, apparently, of some of the cenotaphs erected to mark the points where the walls of the fortress had been stormed),⁸⁸ there is abundant textual and visual evidence to suggest what the museum and monuments once looked like, and the nature of the commemorative inscriptions. It was a popular subject for contemporary postcards, and also featured quite regularly in the press.

In 1906, on the 25th anniversary of the storming of Gök-Tepe, the popular magazine *Rodina* carried a full-page montage of images of the museum and the memorial surrounding it.⁸⁹ In 1907 *Zakaspiiskoe Obozrenie* celebrated the

87 *Otchet* 01/12/1899 RGVA F.400 Op.1 D.2306 ll. 48–50.

88 See “Geok-Tepinskaia Bitva i Indiiskii sindrom,” *Khronika Turkmenistana*, 11/01/2015, <http://www.chrono-tm.org/2015/01/geoktepinskaya-bitva-i-indiiskiy-sindrom/>. I hope to visit the site myself in the near future.

89 “K 25-letiiu vziatii Geok-Tepe. Istoricheskii Muzei na stantsiiu Geok-Tepe,” *Rodina* no. 4 (1906), 61. <http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/i421.html>.

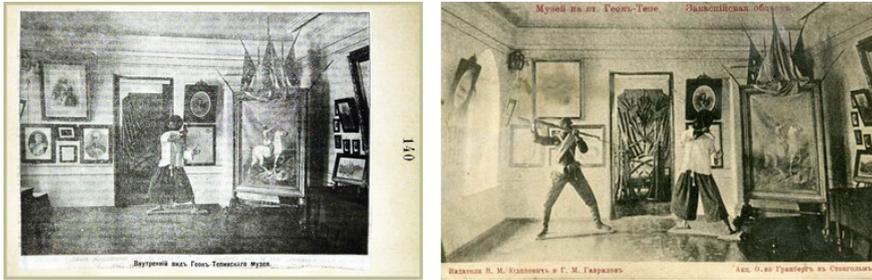


FIGURE 11.17 a and b: Interior of the Gök-Tepe Museum

26th anniversary with a pair of articles on the original campaign and the modern museum.⁹⁰ While the text of the first was largely based on Grodekov's four-volume history of the campaign, and the second was an extract from K.K. Abazov's more populist summary, both were accompanied by numerous images.⁹¹ One of these clearly shows the interior of the museum, with the large oil-painting of Skobelev occupying pride of place, numerous other portraits of officers lining the walls, a cabinet full of weapons, a mannequin of a Turkmen warrior poised to strike and, somewhat incongruously, a piano.⁹² In a contemporary postcard the piano is absent, but we see that the Turkmen is seeking to defend himself against a Russian soldier attacking him with a bayonet.

Surrounding the museum building (which was in a semi-orientalised, vaguely gothic style) by 1902 there was an elaborate complex of memorials, some to individual officers (such as General Petrusevich), some to particular units (such as the Stavropol regiment) and two large monuments to all those who fell during the siege. We are fortunate to have a detailed description of these, with their inscriptions, from articles published in the *Proceedings of the Transcaspian Circle of the Lovers of the Archaeology and History of the East* in 1915–1916, not long before they would be destroyed. The author, A. Astrelin, made a telling comparison with the ancient monuments of the region, writing that if in Turkestan in General and Transcaspia in particular the monuments of the past were often mysterious, half-ruined, silent and scattered in the desert:

90 "Dvadsat' shest' let tomu nazad," "Shturm Krepost' Geok-Tepe," *Zakaspiiskoe Obozrenie* 1907 no. 9, *Turkestanskii Sbornik*, vol. 417: 122–133, 134–145.

91 N.I. Grodekov, *Voina v Turkmenii: Pokhod Skobeleva v 1880–1881gg.* (St Petersburg: Tip. V.A. Balasheva, 1883–1884) 4 Vols.; K.K. Abaza *Zavoevanie Turkestana* (St Petersburg: Tip. M. Stasiulevicha, 1902), 252–310.

92 "Shturm Krepost' Geok-Tepe," *Zakaspiiskoe Obozrenie* 1907, No. 9, in *Turkestanskii Sbornik* vol. 417, 140.

The same cannot be said of the memorials of more recent times, which testify to the opposite movement, bringing with it the resurrection of culture and the planting of civilization: these memorials already simply because they are new, are not a closed book—they are clear. And this book should always be open ...⁹³

The lesson this book was designed to impart was equally clear, in Astrelin's telling—one of Russian heroism in a noble cause, which explicitly overlaid and relegated to the background the ancient monuments of Transcaspian sites such as Merv, or indeed the importance of Gök-Tepe to the Turkmen themselves. Astrelin's account of the monuments and their inscriptions only reinforces this impression. He described the main monument within the fortress, opened on the 23rd April 1901, as standing on a small artificial mound, with a gold cross on top of a four-cornered pyramid. He reproduced the enormously long inscriptions in full—that on the northern side listed the commanders of the storming columns, the trophies taken (one cannon and 1,500 rifles) and the total number of Russian dead—1,104 men and 264 horses—the accuracy with which the latter deaths were recorded was in stark contrast to the laconic statement that “the losses of the enemy during the bombardment, during the storming and during the pursuit were over 6,000.”⁹⁴ This ducked the main controversy surrounding the fall of Gök-Tepe: according to Skobelev's original report, while 6,000 died during the siege and storming, after the fortress fell another 8,000 Turkmen “of both sexes” (*oboego pola*) were killed as they attempted to flee.⁹⁵

The inscription on the Eastern Side of the monument listed the medals awarded—A St George Cross 2nd Class for Skobelev (even though he did not actually take part in the assault), St George Crosses 3rd Class for Kuropatkin, Kozelkov, Verzhbitskii and Gaidarov, the leaders of the storming columns, and then 20 St George Crosses 4th-class, including N.I. Grodekov. The inscription on the Western side listed the names of the officers killed. However, the longest inscription by far was on the Southern side. This gave the precise numbers of the storming force (227 officers, 6,672 men), and indicated that there were 20,000–25,000 Turkmen defenders, with 5,000 horses, 5,000 firearms, of which 500 were quick-firing Berdan rifles, one bronze six-pounder cannon, two cast-

93 A. Astrelin, “Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti v chest' russkago oruzhiya i doblestnykh geroev-zavoevatelei Oblasti,” *Protokol Zasedanii i Soobshcheniya Chlenov Zakaspiiskogo Kruzhka Liubitelei Arkheologii i Istorii Vostoka* Vyp. 2 (1915–1916) (Askhabad: Tip. A.A. Aleksandrova, 1916), 11.

94 Astrelin, “Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti,” 13.

95 M.D. Skobelev, “Osada i Shturm kreposti Dengil-Tepe (Geok-Tepe),” *Voennyi Sbornik* no. 4 (1881), 52; see also Marvin, *The Russian Advance towards India*, 98–99.



FIGURE 11.18
Principal Monument at Gök-Tepe
(1901)

iron *zamburaks* and “a mass of pistols.” All of the Turkmen were described as armed with swords and pikes. This was accompanied by a detailed narrative of the main events of the siege, extracted from Kuropatkin’s own account of the campaign, *Zavoevanie Turkmenii*; it included the following passage.⁹⁶

When credible rumours that the Yomuds were preparing for a general uprising in the rear, Adjutant-General Skobelev averred “I reject all opinions that are inclined to lifting the siege, and I will not allow any actions that might delay the storming. Forward, forward and forward. God is with us. There will be no retreat under any circumstances!”⁹⁷

This was, of course, a bowdlerized narrative—Maslov’s surprisingly frank reminiscences give a different version of the same episode, several officers thought

96 Astrelin, “Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti,” 11–14; A.N. Kuropatkin, *Zavoevaniia Turkmenii (Pokhod v Akhal-Teke v 1880–1881gg) s ocherkom voennykh deistvii v Srednei Azii s 1839 po 1876 g.* (St. Petersburg: V. Berezovskii, 1899).

97 Astrelin, “Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti,” 13.

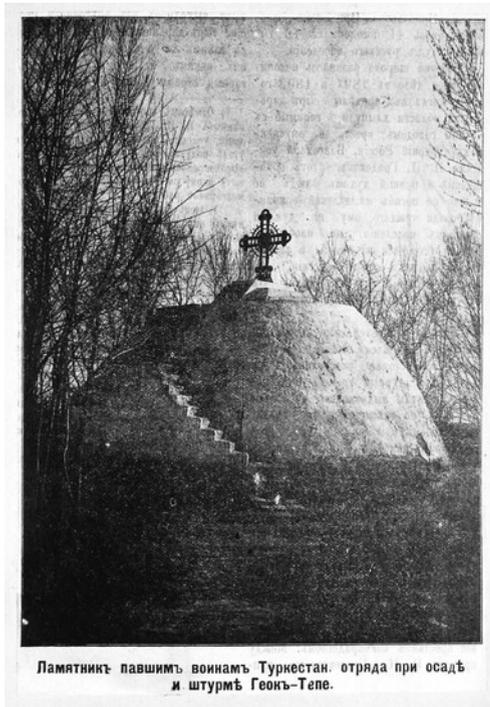


FIGURE 11.19

“Shturm Krepost’ Geok-Tepe”

Zakaspiskoe Obozrenie 1907 No. 9 in
Turkestanskii Sbornik Vol. 417, page 141

that the trenches needed to be put in better order and the soldiers given a few days’ rest before the assault, to which Skobelev’s response was “we didn’t come here to dig holes, but to press forward! We must hurry! We must finish!” When the assault began with the detonation of a mine on the 12th January 1881, Skobelev rallied his men by crying “All right lads? The enemy—are scum (*drian*)”.⁹⁸

This monument seems to have been only secondarily concerned with commemorating the dead: its main purpose was to tell, in enormously pedantic detail, the tale of a Russian military triumph, supposedly against tremendous odds, though the disparities in casualties and the fact that the Turkmen had only one functioning piece of artillery tells its own tale. At the end of an alley of trees leading from the railway-station there was another large monument to the Russian fallen in the form of a mound bearing a large cross, and the following inscription:

In 1881 on the 12th January, on the day of the storming of Geok-Tepe, after a 23-day siege, the first storming column under the leadership of Colonel

98 Maslov, *Zavoevanie Akhal-Tekke*, 64, 89.

Kuropatkin, having blown up part of the fortress wall with a mine, after a stubborn hand-to-hand fight gained possession of the rubble, in the process taking back two of our mountain guns, a Tekke cannon and the standard of the Apsheron regiment. Throwing back a mass of the enemy from the breach, Colonel Kuropatkin with a rapid advance was the first to capture Geok-Tepe and, advancing rapidly to the northern wall, pursued the fleeing enemy into the sands, thus deciding a complete victory, which gave Russia a new land. Eternal memory to those brave comrade heroes who fell here. "Ura!" to those who remained alive. 3 Officers killed, 5 contused and wounded. 124 men killed and wounded. In all 13 % of the storming party.⁹⁹

Once again, the emphasis is on narrating victory in rather long-winded detail, rather than commemorating the dead. While some of the other monuments scattered around the site were explicitly commemorative, most of them indicated key locations or moments in the siege, and like the museum were intended to be didactic, allowing visitors to reconstruct these events. Beyond Gök-Tepe itself, Astrelin gave an account of all the monuments commemorating the Russian conquest across the Transcaspian province. While some of these simply commemorated the dead, such as a small Cossack memorial at the village of Chaacha in the Tedjen district, the memorial at Chat to General Lazarev (who died of Carbunculum during the first Akhal-Teke campaign of 1879), and the memorials in Ashkhabad to the artillerymen and members of the Stavropol regiment who died during the 1880–1881 campaigns, others served a similar narrative purpose. The monument commemorating the clash with Afghan forces at Tash-Köprü in 1885 (erected by Kuropatkin during his tenure as Governor of Transcaspia) had a long inscription which not only listed the names of the dead, but noted the names of all the commanders and units that took part and the trophies captured.¹⁰⁰ Krasnovodsk had a large pyramidal column whose inscription explicitly linked the Transcaspian campaigns of 1879–1881 with earlier attempts under Peter the Great to subdue the Turkmen and Khiva, notably the Bekovich-Cherkaskii expedition of 1719, with the following doggerel:

99 Anon [A. Astrelin], "Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti v chest' russkogo oruzhiia i doblestnykh geroev—zavoevatelei Oblasti," *Protokol Zasedanii i Soobshcheniia Chlenov Zakaspiiskogo Kruzhka Liubitelei Arkheologii i Istorii Vostoka* Vyp. 1 (1914–1915) (Ashkhabad: Tip. A.A. Aleksandrova, 1915), 53.

100 Anon [A. Astrelin], "Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti," 50.

В пустыне дикой
 Вас, братья, мы нашли
 И теплою молитвою
 Ваш прах почли.
 Красноводский Отряд—сподвижников
 ПЕТРА I.

In the savage desert
 We found you, brothers
 And with warm prayers
 Honoured your dust.
 The Krasnovodsk Force—comrades in arms of
 PETER I.¹⁰¹

In all of these, of course, the Turkmen were almost completely invisible, except as an enemy whose ill-defined savagery had enabled these displays of Russian heroism, and as piles of indistinguishable corpses. It is hard to recapture or reconstruct Turkmen commemoration of what for them must have been a deeply traumatic event—far more so than the fall of Tashkent, in which casualties on both sides had been extremely low.

However, one account that hints at how different were Russian and Turkmen memories of the fall of Gök-Tepe and the commemorative practices associated with it, comes in a story recorded by the early Soviet Turkmen ethnographer S.M. Ovezbaev, at the end of his translation of an epic poem about a Turkmen elder and sage called Goni Bek:

Many years later, around 1900, General Kuropatkin, the head of the Transcaspian Province and commander of its forces, during one of his usual tours of the *auls*, talking to an old man, asked—how many Turkmen fell beneath the walls of Geok-Tepe? “3”, replied the old man. When the question was repeated, the old man replied once again, “3”. Supposing that the old man did not understand the question, Kuropatkin averred that they, the Russians, had buried more than 5,000 Turkmen, and that perhaps he knew more or less the number of all the dead, before and after the taking of the fortress. The old man repeated imperturbably once again “3”. Feeling the obvious perplexity of his interlocutor, the old man then told the translator: “you tell the general, that I understand his question—

101 Anon [A. Astrelin], “Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti,” 51–52.

he is talking about the general number of people buried in the earth. It is true that there was a multitude who were killed and buried, but they were then reborn the following day. The “three” of whom I am talking—they are no longer, and never will be.

– Who were these “3”?

– Aman Geldy Goni, N. and N”.¹⁰²

4 Conclusion

It would be unsurprising to find that Russian and Central Asian ideas of death, heroism and commemoration were so different, or that they remembered Russia’s campaigns of conquest in Central Asia very differently, but a complete study of Central Asian memories of these events is beyond my abilities, and beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I will conclude with some brief reflections on how Russian memorials and practices of commemoration in Central Asia compare with the better-known case of British India outlined in the introduction. They clearly had certain things in common—Christian symbols and imagery, class distinction in the commemoration of officers (by name) and men (by numbers), and above all the desire to use the commemoration of war and death to give new meanings to the landscape, creating a new colonial sacred geography. There were also some significant differences—in particular, Russian commemorative practices seem to have been more nakedly triumphalist than British ones. The most prominent British memorials in India—those to the Black Hole and Cawnpore—commemorated supposed atrocities committed by barbarous Indians against the innocent or powerless. These obviously served a wider imperial purpose in justifying and legitimising British rule, but they were still memorials to defeat, albeit defeats that would be avenged—though even that was not the case with the many memorials to the First Afghan War. Lucknow and the Mutiny ridge memorial had more in common with those at Tashkent and Gök-Tepe, in that they supposedly commemorated victory over the odds by heavily-outnumbered forces. Even here though, I would argue that the suffering that accompanied the siege of Lucknow, and the sense that the recapture of Delhi was retribution for earlier massacres and humiliations was what made these sites and the narratives associated with them compelling for British audiences. Both events produced mid-Victorian martyrs, in Sir Henry

102 Seid Murad Ovezbaev, “Goni Bek (Rasskaz Turkmena o bitve s russkimi pod Geok-Tepe),” *Turkmenovedenie* no. 1 (1927), 29.

Lawrence and John Nicholson, whose manly deaths were the most frequently commemorated aspects of both.¹⁰³ By contrast, Russian commemoration of the conquest of Central Asia seems more straightforwardly concerned with celebrating victory and the brutal fact of conquest, rather than remembering the dead. No doubt both types of commemoration served the same purpose—domesticating and sacralising an alien landscape, but the contrast is striking. There are a number of probable reasons for this: despite the enthusiastic reception of Gök-Tepe in educated circles in metropolitan Russia, the main audience for Russian commemorative practices in Central Asia was the military themselves—the kinds of more populist memorials which Cohen identifies for the Russo-Japanese War (and which interestingly did lay a greater emphasis on death and sacrifice) were less prominent in Central Asia, though by the time it was finally completed the Tashkent monument had acquired at least a flavour of this. The Central Asian campaigns were in no sense “people’s wars”—even less so than the Boer War. They were fought by very small forces of professional soldiers, most of whom came from the Urals region, Siberia and the Caucasus rather than metropolitan Russia. The centrality of the Indian Mutiny to the British imagining of empire and commemoration of the sacrifices it required was because so many of the victims were middle-class women and children.¹⁰⁴ This did not apply to any of Russia’s Central Asian campaigns—a possible parallel would be the 1916 revolt, where in Semirechie over 3,000 Russian settlers, many of them women and children, were killed by Qazaqs and Kyrgyz. However the revolutions of 1917, and the huge political transformations that followed, ensured that no memorials to the 1916 revolt were erected until after the end of Soviet rule, and then they would be to the tens of thousands of nomads who perished in Russian reprisals. Perhaps, had the colonial regime in Central Asia persisted, a culture of commemoration using the deaths of the innocent as a justification for the imperial civilizing mission might have emerged there as well.

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103 See Charles Allen, *Soldier Sahibs. The Men who Made the North-West Frontier* (London: John Murray, 2012) & Harold Lee, *Brothers in the Raj. The Lives of John and Henry Lawrence* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

104 Chakravarty, *Indian Mutiny*, 35–41.

- Anon [A. Astrelin], "Pamiatniki Zakaspiiskoi Oblasti v chest' russkogo oruzhiia i doblestnykh geroev—zavoevatelei Oblasti." In *Protokol Zasedanii i Soobshcheniia Chlenov Zakaspiiskogo Kruzhka Liubitelei Arkheologii i Istorii Vostoka* Vyp. 1 (1914–1915). Askhabad: Tip. A.A. Aleksandrova, 1915.
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Remembering the Alisher Navoi Jubilee and the Archaeological Excavations in Samarqand in the Summer of 1941

Elena Paskaleva

The 500th anniversary of the cultural patron and literary figure of the later Timurid period Mir Niẓām al-Dīn ‘Ali Shīr Navā’ī (844–906 AH/AD1441–1501; at present also Alisher Nava’i, Alisher Navoi, hereafter:) was scheduled for 1941. As early as 1937, a special committee for the Alisher Navoi Jubilee was created in Tashkent. At the same time, another committee was organized under the Soviet Writers’ Union in Moscow, which oversaw preparations for union-level writers’ tributes, commemorative events and publications in Russia. The Tashkent Alisher Navoi Jubilee Committee involved prominent Russian and Uzbek scholars, writers such as Şadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī (1878–1954; hereafter Sadridin Ayni), and artists, as well as cultural administrators and political leaders including the then-First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party Usman Yusupovich Yusupov (1901–1966).¹ In 1938 the Communist Party of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (UzSSR) acquired an official approval from the Soviet People’s Commissariat and the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party to celebrate the 500th birthday of the “Great Uzbek poet, Alisher Nava’i” at the end of 1941.² However, the actual jubilee was postponed due to the breakout of the Second World War and it subsequently took place in 1948.³

The purpose of the celebrations was to offer a new narrative about the progressive potential of the Central Asian peoples and to remind all Soviet citizens

1 During the Soviet period, all Central Asian republics introduced Russianized patronymics and surnames. All names are transliterated from Russian or Uzbek according to the spelling on the cited publications and archival sources.

2 TsGARUz, f. R-837, d. 33, op. 3142, l. 1. All republic-level cultural and academic institutions participated in the jubilee preparation TsGARUz f. R-837, op. 32, d. 1356, ll. 22–23; f. R-2356, op. 1, d. 49, l. 15; “Film’ o Velikom Alishere,” *Pravda Vostoka*, 21 April 1941.

3 Boram Shin, “Inventing a national writer: the Soviet celebration of the 1948 Alisher Navoi jubilee and the writing of Uzbek history,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 14, no. 2 (2017): 117–142. Also see E. Bertel’s, “Rodonachal’nik uzbekskoi literatury,” *Pravda* 15 May 1948, no. 136 (10877), 3 and Nikolai Tikhonov, “Alisher Navoi, K 500-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia,” *Pravda* May 1948.

that Central Asia had a rich cultural heritage and was not a remote region inhabited by illiterate nomads. In particular the ancient city of Samarqand had a thriving sedentary culture, sophisticated architectural traditions and an influential scientific elite.⁴

The choice of local historical figures was undoubtedly prompted by the Soviet policies of indigenization (*korenizatsiia*) according to which every titular nationality within the Soviet Union should be governed by its own people.⁵ Furthermore, the local Soviet citizens had the right to education and cultural development in their own language. In that aspect the literary legacy of Navoi was branded as formative since his poetic oeuvre was composed in Chaghatay, a language regarded as the precursor of modern Uzbek. According to the Russian orientalist Aleksandr Iur'evich Iakubovskii (1886–1953), the “ingenious Navoi” (*genial'nyi Navoi*)⁶ was the cultured predecessor of all Uzbeks. The literary importance of Navoi as the “ancestor” (*rodonachal'nik*)⁷ of Uzbek literature and “founder” (*osnovopolozhnik*)⁸ of the Uzbek language has been widely examined.⁹ My study will focus on the two archaeological expeditions that took place in Samarqand in the summer of 1941 under the aegis of the Alisher Navoi Jubilee, and on the ways in which they have shaped our knowledge and understanding of the Timurids, and their propaganda value for the Soviet regime.

4 Yahya G. Guliamov, “K izucheniiu epokhi Navoi,” in *Velikii Uzbekskii poet*, ed. M.T. Aibek (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1948), 1, 12.

5 Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 127.

6 Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii, “Cherty obshchestvennoi i kul'turnoi zhizni epokhi Alishera Navoi,” in *Alisher Navoi. Sbornik Statei*, ed. Aleksandr K. Borovkov (Moskva and Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1946), 30. Paper read at the first meeting of the Jubilee Committee on 21 March 1940 in Tashkent.

7 Introduction to the volume Borovkov, *Alisher Navoi. Sbornik Statei*, 3.

8 Aleksandr K. Borovkov, “Alisher Navai kak osnovopolozhnik uzbekskogo literaturnogo iazyka,” in *Alisher Navoi. Sbornik Statei*, ed. Aleksandr K. Borovkov (Moskva and Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1946), 92–120.

9 Vasilii V. Barthold, *Mir 'Ali-Shir. A History of the Turkman People. Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 3, translated from Russian by V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: Brill, 1962); Vasilii V. Barthold, “Mir Ali-Shir i politicheskaia zhizn',” in *Raboty po otdel'nyim problemam istorii Srednei Azii, Sochineniia*, vol. 2/2 (Moskva: Nauka, 1964), 197–260; Edward A. Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics* (London: Mouton, 1964); William Fierman, “Language Development in Soviet Uzbekistan,” in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Soviet National Languages. Their Past, Present and Future*, ed. Isabelle T. Kreindler (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: De Gruyter Mouton, 1985), 205–233, and William Fierman, “Language Planning and National Development: The Uzbek Experience,” *Contributions to the Sociology of Language* 60 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 1991).

Before I proceed with the archaeological excavations, I would like to point out that the date for the jubilee was not defined by the lunar Hijra or the solar Jalali calendars used in Navoi's lifetime. In 1941 the 500th birthday anniversary was calculated based on the Gregorian year 1441. The Gregorian calendar was introduced on the territories under Soviet-control by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union (*Sovmarkom*) in 1918. The calendar was officially adopted by the Uzbek SSR after its proclamation in November 1924. However, double dating in both Hijra and Gregorian formats was still common practice for example in endowment (*waqf*) deeds of the Bukharan SSR (1920–1924), which were officially managed by the central Soviet administration while relying on local Islamic judiciary.¹⁰ By the late 1930s the Gregorian calendar was widely embraced across the Soviet Union. In line with the atheistic propaganda, the choice of the date by the specially appointed Jubilee Committee may have been a clear sign of the ideological break with the Islamic daily routine and prayers under the Soviet regime. The Hijra calendar was used up until the 1930s not only to record time but to organize religious activities throughout the day across Central Asia.

Firstly, I will outline the historical context surrounding the commemorative 500th Jubilee of Alisher Navoi in 1941 and the political narrative that prompted excavations by two archaeological teams in Samarqand.¹¹ Based on the their findings, kept at several Uzbek museums and archives,¹² I will discuss the opening of the tombs of Timur and Ulugh Beg in the dynastic mausoleum of Gūr-i

10 On the double dating of *waqf*-related documents, please see Philipp Reichmuth, ““Lost in the Revolution”: Bukharan *waqf* and Testimony Documents from the Early Soviet Period,” *Die Welt des Islams* 50, no. 3/4 (2010): 362–396.

11 This essay reflects my ongoing research on the cultural and social history of Timurid architecture carried out within the project “Turks, texts and territory: Imperial ideology and cultural production in Central Eurasia” funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

12 As part of the NWO project, in 2017 and 2018 I worked in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan (TsGARUz). I would like to thank Ms Nina I. Iusupova and Ms Mahbuba E. Ermatova for their patience and continuous support. In 2019 I also carried out research at the Archive of the Department for the Protection and Management of Cultural Monuments of Uzbekistan affiliated with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Currently, the Archive of the Agency for Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan; hereinafter, Archive GlavNPU. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Mavlyuda Yusupova for her help, constant advice and profound kindness.

Here the following abbreviations are used in references to the archival fonds: f. (*fond*), holding; op. (*opis'*), inventory; d. (*delo*), file; l. (*list*), sheet. All translations and transliterations from Russian are mine. In transliterating Uzbek and Russian words, I have generally used a simplified version of the Library of Congress (LOC) system.

Amīr (ca. 1400–1440s) by the first team. Afterwards I will describe the architecture of the China pavilion (*chīnīkhāna*) of Ulugh Beg (ca. 1420s) by using drawings and archaeological reports from 1941 compiled by the second team. Unfortunately, the abundance of archaeological materials excavated around these two Timurid sites have been partially lost due to successive restorations after the Second World War or remain unpublished. The purpose of this article is to present the archaeological findings to the wider public and to contextualize as much as possible the role of the jubilee in promoting not so much the literary figure of Alisher Navoi but in elevating Ulugh Beg as one of the most educated men of his time, a sedentary statesman, scholar and diplomat. Given the limited scope of the text, I analyse exclusively Samarqand in 1941 and not the actual commemorative festivities of the Navoi Jubilee in 1948.

1 The 500th Jubilee of Alisher Navoi in 1941

Alisher Navoi was born in Herat in a well-educated family of Turkic chancery scribes, who had long been in the service of the Timurids, the most powerful dynasty that ruled across Central Asia in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.¹³ Although Navoi spent all his prolific life there and died in the city, Herat was not taken into consideration by the Jubilee Committee as a centre for the celebrations due to the explicit religious narrative and lack of scientific prowess associated with its Timurid patrons, both of these aspects contradicting Soviet ideology. Timur's youngest son Shāhrukh (r. 1409–1447) “became a zealous proponent of Muslim legislation in the administration of the state”¹⁴ and “due to [his] rigorous disposition and as a result of the lack of interest in mathematics and astronomy in [his son] Baysunghur, the exact sciences did not flourish in Herat and did not create any traditions in the city.”¹⁵ The fact, however, that Navoi studied for three years in a Samarqand madrasa, a period regarded by Soviet literary circles as formative for his oeuvre, gave a reason to the Jubilee Committee to analyse the historical importance of Navoi in close connection with the cultural life of the first Timurid capital Samarqand in the second half

13 On the life of Alisher Navoi see Maria Eva Subtelny, “Alī Shīr Navā’ī: Bakhshī and Beg,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4 (1979): 797–807.

14 (On [Shahrukh] stal revnostnym provodnikom musul'manskogo zakonodatel'stva v upravlenii gosudarstvom) see Guliamov, “K izucheniiu epokhi Navoi,” 11.

15 (*V silu rigoristicheskikh nastroyeni Shakhruha i otsustviia interesa k matematike i astronomii u Baisunkara, tochnye nauki ne poluchili rastsвета v Gerate i ne sozdali v nem nikakikh traditsii*), see Iakubovskii, “Cherty obshchestvennoi i kul'turnoi zhizni epokhi Alishera Navoi,” 23.

of the fifteenth century. As stated by the Soviet writer Peter Skosyrev, “it was during these years that the gift for poetry and the general philosophical and political views of Navoi finally took shape.”¹⁶

Another very important link with Samarqand was the historical figure of Ulugh Beg, the erudite governor and scholar, who ruled the city for forty years (r. 1409–1449) and created a famous observatory there. According to the art historian Yahya Guliamovich Guliamov (1908–1977), “in the field of cultural activity, Ulugh Beg was considered the predecessor of Alisher Navoi.”¹⁷ The plenitude of surviving Timurid monuments, not in Herat,¹⁸ but in Samarqand, a city on the territory of the UzSSR, may have been another reason to initiate archaeological expeditions in Samarqand, specifically organized by the Jubilee Committee as part of the commemorative events.¹⁹ As a result, all archaeological discoveries and architectural finds from 1941 were attributed to the lifetime of Navoi (*epokha Navoi*) and not to their actual patrons—Timur (ca. 1336–1405) and Ulugh Beg (1394–1449) who preceded Navoi by decades.²⁰ The archaeological evidence collected in 1941 was used to prove that Samarqand was the progress-

16 (*Chto imenno v eti gody okonchatel'no oformilis' i poeticheskoe darovanie i obshchefilosofskie i politicheskie vzgliady Navoi*) see Peter Skosyrev, *Alisher Navoi-velikii uzbekskii poet-gumanist xv veka. Stenogramma publichnoi leksii pisatel'ia Petra Skosyreva, pročitannoi 30 iulia 1945 goda v Kruglom zale Doma Soiuzov v Moskve* (Moskva: Pravda, 1945), 7.

17 (*Woblasti kul'turnoi deiatel'nosti Ulugbek byl predshestvennikom Alishera Navoi*) see Guliamov, “K izucheniiu epokhi Navoi,” 11.

18 Most of the Timurid buildings in Herat were brought down by the British in the late nineteenth century. On Herat in the nineteenth century see Christine Noelle-Karimi, *The Pearl in Its Midst. Herat and the Mapping of Khurasan (15th–19th Centuries)*. *Veröffentlichungen zur Iranistik* 74 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 143–204.

19 Newspaper article by Mikhail E. Masson, “Archeologicheskaiia ekspeditsiia v Samarkande,” *Leninskii Put'*, 27 May 1941, no. 123 (775). TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346. Later on in the 1960s and 70s several Uzbek archaeologists and architectural historians such as Galina A. Pugachenkova worked in Afghanistan. Their scholarship remains available largely in Russian. In particular on her expeditions in 1973 and 1974 see Galina A. Pugachenkova, “Arkheologicheskie razvedki v Afghanistanane. 1973,” *Mozhydan Sado* 11, no. 54 (2012): 13–22 and Galina A. Pugachenkova, “Afganskaiia arkheologicheskaiia ekspeditsiia,” *Mozhydan Sado* 3, no. 55 (2012): 12–20. On the work of the Soviet-Afghan Archaeological Expedition, see the collection of archival photographs and reports on the website of the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences: <https://www.archaeolog.ru/ru/about/history/expeditions-1943-1970/19691979-gg--rabota-sovetsko-afganskoy-ekspeditsii>.

20 Galina A. Pugachenkova wrote her dissertation in 1945 on the architecture of Central Asia in the era of Navoi, see Galina A. Pugachenkova, “Arkhitektura Srednei Azii epokhi Navoi. Kandidatskaia dissertatiia, avtoreferat,” *Bulletin SAGU* 23 (1945), 181. It was published more than a decade later as Galina A. Pugachenkova, *Pamiatniki arkhitektury Srednei Azii epokhi Navoi* (Tashkent: Izd-vo SAGU, 1957).

ive scientific cradle of the Timurid empire associated with the observatory of Ulugh Beg, while Herat was discussed as a literary centre but remained connected to Shāhrukh's legacy of a "staunch guardian of the dogmas of Islam."²¹

Bringing the Alisher Navoi patrimony to Uzbekistan was the major aim of the jubilee. The historical figure of Navoi was celebrated as "the literary patron of Uzbek literature, as a poet and humanist, enlightener, who inspiringly saw through the distance of time a better future for mankind."²² A whole pantheon of poets and prosaists was carefully crafted around him.²³ In 1939 the Navoi Museum was founded in Tashkent (see Figures 12.1 and 12.2).²⁴ Its collection presents the history of Uzbek literature as narrated by the Soviet literary critics and historiographers, and visualized by the portraits of Soviet artists who gave an imaginary face to the pantheon of state-approved cultural figures. The continuity of the poetic traditions in Chaghatay and then in Uzbek was carefully constructed and narrated throughout the museum halls.

Although the relation between the literary legacy of Navoi and the architectural opulence of Samarqand is not entirely clear, the aim of the archaeological expeditions initiated by the Jubilee Committee in 1941 was "the study of the monuments of material culture of the fifteenth century" as outlined by the renowned archaeologist Mikhail Evgen'evich Masson (1897–1986) in an article published in the newspaper *Leninskii Put'* from 27 May 1941.²⁵ All sites mentioned by Masson in that short piece were directly connected to Ulugh Beg and had no relation whatsoever to the literary production of Alisher Navoi. What is more, the places were selected to form a narrative of a forward-thinking civilization that built the most advanced observatory of the fifteenth century across the Islamic world and employed the most talented astronomers of the time such as Qadi Zāda al-Rūmī (1364–1436),²⁶ who worked together with Ulugh Beg on the celebrated astronomical tables *Zīj-i Sulṭānī* compiled in Samarqand, and

21 (*Shahrukh, kotoryi byl strogim bliustitelem dogm islama*) see Tashmukhammed N. Kary-Niazov, *Astronomicheskaia shkola Ulugbeka, Izbrannye Trudy* vol. 6 (Tashkent: Akademia Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1967), 88.

22 Nikolai Tikhonov, "Alisher Navoi. K 500-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia," a newspaper article from May 1948. I found the article cut out from the original newspaper in a book from 1945, that is why, I cannot attribute it to a specific newspaper.

23 Aleksandr N. Boldyrev, "Alisher Navoi v rasskazakh sovremennikov," in *Alisher Navoi. Sbornik Statei*, ed. Aleksandr K. Borovkov (Moskva and Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1946), 121–152.

24 At present, the museum is known as the National Museum of Literature and it is situated on the Navoi Boulevard 69 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

25 Mikhail E. Masson, "Archeologicheskaia ekspeditsiia v Samarkande," *Leninskii Put'*, 27 May 1941, no 123 (775). TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346.

26 The expeditions envisaged the study of the mausoleum of Qāḍī Zāda al-Rūmī, which was

one of the greatest mathematicians in the Islamic world Giyāth al-Dīn Jamshīd al-Kāshī (d. 1429).²⁷ In addition, the Navoi Jubilee was used as a tool to prove the sedentary way of life of the progressive branch of the Timurid family, i.e. Ulugh Beg, who created the Registan Square, built suburban luscious gardens and erected a Chinese pavilion.²⁸ The ultimate evidence for the victorious historical past of the UzSSR was the opening of the crypt of the Gūr-i Amīr Mausoleum that could disperse all doubts that Timur and several of his male descendants, including his son Shāhrukh and in particular his grandson Ulugh Beg, were related by blood and indeed buried in Samarqand. Based on advanced scientific anthropological approaches used to reconstruct the Timurid male line, these discoveries elevated the importance of the city in the eyes of the Soviet intellectuals not only in Uzbekistan but also across Central Asia.

The stakes around the jubilee were very high as all publications and planned events were meant to unify the discourse on the origins of the Uzbek language and more importantly on the cultural potential of the Central Asian proletariat. As part of the Jubilee in 1941, a decision was taken by the local government of the Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic (UzSSR) under the leadership of Tashmukhamed Niiazovich Kary-Niazov (1896–1970), deputy chair of the *Sovmarkom*, to initiate an archaeological expedition to open the graves of Timur and Ulugh Beg at Gūr-i Amīr.²⁹ Kary-Niazov was appointed as head of the expedition.³⁰ In his memoirs published in 1967 he describes the opening of the Timurid graves but does not mention Shāhrukh or Herat at all and focuses exclusively on Ulugh Beg.³¹

The archaeological excavations that took place Samarqand in 1941 were clearly meant to discover more about Ulugh Beg than about Navoi. The first team (*pervyi otriad*) that was part of the official governmental expedition was led by the Russian anthropologist Mikhail Mikhailovich Gerasimov (1907–

believed to be situated in what is at present known as the Double-Dome Mausoleum at the Timurid necropolis of Shāh-i Zinda.

27 His book *Miftāḥ al-ḥisāb* includes an extensive section on “measuring structures and buildings”, which deals with calculations of arches, vaults, cupolas and muqarnas based on geometrical rules, see Yvonne Dold-Samplonius, “Calculating Surface Areas and Volumes in Islamic Architecture,” in *The Enterprise of Science in Islam. New Perspectives*, eds. Jan P. Hogendijk and Abdelhamid I. Sabra (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 235–265.

28 Guliamov, “K izucheniiu epokhi Navoi,” 12.

29 Kary-Niazov, *Astronomicheskaya shkola Ulugbeka*, 330.

30 On the expedition see Tashmukhamed N. Kary-Niazov, *Razmyshleniia o proidennom puti*, vol. 7 (Tashkent: Academy of Science of the Uzbek SSR, 1967), 221–243.

31 On the opening in particular of the Ulugh Beg tomb see Kary-Niazov, *Razmyshleniia*, 330–339.



FIGURE 12.1 Navoi Museum in Tashkent
PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021

1970), who had become famous for reconstructing faces of historical figures based on their skulls.³² Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, Gerasimov headed the opening of Gūr-i Amīr between 16–24 June 1941 to “document the authenticity of Timur’s burial” in the Timurid dynastic tomb.³³ According to Gerasimov, the tombs were opened “on the occasion of the 500th jubilee of the great Uzbek poet Alisher Navoi” although the exact connection between Navoi and the Timurid male line was never established.³⁴ Based on the exhumed skulls, Gerasimov reconstructed the faces of Timur, Shāhrukh, Ulugh Beg and Mīrānshāh and created their portrait busts.

The second team (*vtoroi otriad*) carried out work around the Kohak Hill in Samarqand between 24 May–10 July 1941. The main aim was to discover the suburban palace of Ulugh Beg, known as the China pavilion (*chīnikhāna*).

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- 32 Mikhail M. Gerasimov, *Osnovy vosstanovleniia litsa po cherepu* (Gosizdat: Sovetskaia Nauka, 1949); Mikhail M. Gerasimov, *The Face Finder* (London: Hutchinson, 1971). See also H. Ullrich and C. Stephan, “Mikhail Mikhaylovich Gerasimov’s Authentic Approach to Plastic Facial Reconstruction,” *Anthropologie* 54, no. 2, (2016): 97–107.
- 33 Robert D. McChesney, “Timur’s Tomb: Politics and Commemoration,” *The Central Eurasian Studies Lectures* (Bloomington, Indiana: Department of Central Eurasian Studies, 2003).
- 34 Gerasimov, *The Face Finder*, 129.



FIGURE 12.2 Memorial relief at the Navoi Museum in Tashkent
 PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021

The second task was to determine the exact location of the Chil-Sutūn palace. While Timur led a nomadic lifestyle and used to live in gardens and tents, the archaeologists had to prove that his grandson Ulugh Beg constructed suburban palaces and adorned them with verdant gardens. Since the more experienced archaeologists were sent to Gūr-i Amīr, the second team consisted of mostly graduate students of the newly founded archaeological department of the Central Asian State University (SAGU).³⁵ Masson was put in charge of the excavations of both teams under the aegis of the Large Samarqand Archaeological Expedition (*Samarkandskoi bol'shoi arkheologicheskoi espeditsii*).³⁶

The celebrations around Navoi anniversary in 1941 played an important role in unravelling the mysteries surrounding Timur's burial. They also set the tone for the study of the Timurid period with a main focus on literature, science and

35 The department was founded in 1940 and Masson was the first department chair.

36 TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346, l. 28, Protocol 4.

architecture. It has to be noted here that all immediate publications after the war referred to the glory of Mawarannahr during the lifetime of Navoi (*epokhi Navoi*) with a special emphasis on his literary oeuvre and manuscript tradition.³⁷ In the essays of the late 1940s dedicated to the jubilee, the Timurids were studied by Aleksandr Belenitskii, Aleksandr Boldyrev and Mikhail Masson in relation to the topography of their capital Herat in which the literary circles around Navoi thrived.³⁸ The importance of the historical figure of Timur was never downplayed but his military achievements were always discussed in the foreground of monumental architecture, strong central government and economic stability.³⁹ Yet in particular in the 1940s, the cultural achievements of the Timurid dynasty, and not the military victories of its founder, were used to gain international recognition for Stalin's policies fostering nationhood. According to Stalin, it is only when all three characteristics of one territory, one language and shared history are "present together that we have a nation."⁴⁰ With regard to Soviet Uzbekistan, Navoi, as a well-known poet across the Turkic world, offered the narrative of one Uzbek language. The astronomical achievements of Timur's grandson Ulugh Beg, which were highly respected among the leading scientists of the European Renaissance, created the basis for shared history beyond the borders of the UzSSR. In this respect the Alisher Navoi Jubilee can be discussed as a direct enactment of Stalin's nationalistic policies in the late 1930s and 1940s. The studies published within the framework of the jubilee have become the basis for all academic and non-academic explorations by Soviet and post-Soviet scholars on the Timurids.

37 Aleksandr K. Borovkov (ed.), *Alisher Navoi. Sbornik Statei* (Moskva and Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk sssr, 1946) and M.T. Aibek (ed.) *Velikii Uzbekskii poet* (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1948).

38 Aleksandr M. Belenitskii, "Istoricheskaia topografiia Gerata xv v.," in *Alisher Navoi. Sbornik Statei*, ed. A.K. Borovkov (Moskva and Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk sssr, 1946), 175–202. Boldyrev, "Alisher Navoi v rasskazakh sovremennikov," 121–152, see also Mikhail E. Masson, "K istoricheskoi topografii Gerata xv v.," in *Velikii Uzbekskii poet*, ed. M.T. Aibek (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1948), 120–145.

39 Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii, "Timur (Opyt kratkoi kharakteristiki). Iztochniki o Timure," *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 8–9 (1946): 42–74. Only Yahya Guliamov's contribution from 1948 deals with urban architectural ensembles across Central Asia in the fifteenth century and describes the major monuments in Samarqand referring also to Timur's lifetime (*epokha Timura*), see Yahya G. Guliamov, "K voprosy o traditsii arkhitekturnykh ansamblei v gorodakh Srednei Azii xv v.," in *Velikii Uzbekskii poet*, ed. M.T. Aibek (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1948), 146–157.

40 Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936), 8.

2 The Discoveries of the First Team at the Timurid Dynastic Mausoleum of Gūr-i Amīr

One of the oldest monuments of Timurid architecture is the Gūr-i Amīr complex situated to the southwest of the Samarqand citadel (see Figures 12.3 and 12.4). The first ensemble built by Timur's favourite grandson and heir-presumptive Muḥammad Sultan (1375–1403) dates from around 1400.⁴¹ It consisted of a two-*īwān* madrasa and a domed *khānaqāh* arranged to the east and the west of a central courtyard. After the death of Muḥammad Sultan in 1403, Timur ordered the construction of an octagonal domed mausoleum in memory of his diseased grandson to the south of the original complex. Later on, in the winter of 1405 Timur was also interred there.

After Ulugh Beg became governor of Samarqand in 1409, he started expanding the ensemble. It is highly probable that a new courtyard with four minarets was created in the 1420s as an attempt to combine the three main buildings: the madrasa, the *khānaqāh* and the mausoleum in one architectural ensemble (see Figure 12.3).⁴² Multi-domed galleries were added to the east in 1424 and later to the south, which transformed the main north-south axis of the original complex and provided a much needed access to the enlarged burial shrine.⁴³ The new east-west orientation was emphasized by a monumental centrally-domed space (24 m × 24 m) erected to the west of the octagonal mausoleum in the first half of the fifteenth century, of which only one enormous portal remains.⁴⁴ In addition, all significant ongoing building projects of the early 1420s, such as

41 Lisa Golombek and Donald N. Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 261, cat. no. 29 A, B. For the most recent and comprehensive study of the complex, see Robert D. McChesney, *Four Central Asian Shrines. A Socio-Political History of Architecture*. Studies in Persian Cultural History, vol. 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 17–129. On the restorations of the ensemble, see Elena Paskaleva, "The Timurid Mausoleum of Gūr-i Amīr as an Ideological Icon," in *The Reshaping of Persian Art: Art Histories of Islamic Iran and Central Asia*, eds. Iván Szántó and Yuka Kadoi (Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2019), 175–213.

42 Paskaleva, *Gūr-i Amīr as an Ideological Icon*, 194.

43 Once the cenotaph of Sayyid Baraka was placed very close to the northern niche, access to the mausoleum through the southern courtyard portal may have been rather cumbersome. Most likely, there was not enough space to accommodate pilgrims entering from the northern mausoleum gate.

44 Pletnev calls the domed space *ziyāratkhāna* (antechamber in a mausoleum used by pilgrims for prayer), see Igor E. Pletnev, "Arkhitekturnyi kompleks u mavzoleia Gur-Emir," in *Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov TashZNIIEP*, vyp. 6 (Tashkent, 1964), 96–105, see also the plan on p. 99. Any earlier suggestions that the western extension was from the seventeenth century have been refuted by Zasyupkin in the late 1940s.



FIGURE 12.3 Reconstruction model of the Gūr-i Amīr complex, Timurid Museum in Tashkent

PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2018

the Ulugh Beg Madrasa and the Bibī Khānum Mosque, had their main compositional axis in the same east-west direction. These spatial transformations at Gūr-i Amīr coincided most likely with Ulugh Beg's massive building activities and decision to transform the burial site of his grandfather into a Timurid dynastic mausoleum in order to legitimize his rule in Samarqand. After 1409, Shāhrukh moved the Timurid capital to Herat and Samarqand was striving to preserve its primary role as a cultural and architectural centre across the vast Timurid realm.

The exact reasons for the opening of the Gūr-i Amīr tombs remain rather vague. According to the official act from October 1942, a copy of which is kept at the Samarqand State Museum (*Muzei Zapovednik*), "the opening of the burials was undertaken in connection with the fifth centenary of the birth of the great Uzbek poet Alisher Navoi [name also in Arabic script] and it aimed to give the fullest possible description of the era of Timur and the Timurids, in which Navoi lived and worked."⁴⁵ As mentioned above, the first archaeological team that conducted the excavations between 16–24 June 1941 was part of the official governmental expedition. According to Robert McChesney, the archaeological work at Gūr-i Amīr, approved already in 1938, would have required the permission from the highest echelon of power; in that case, only Joseph Stalin

45 The copy of the act is dated and signed by the members of the archaeological expedition.



FIGURE 12.4 View of the central courtyard at Gūr-i Amīr
PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2019

could have given the orders to open the Timurid tombs in Samarqand.⁴⁶ This clearly atheist expedition in the summer of 1941 was a public display of total disregard for religious traditions, it violated the Muslim sanctity of the dead and desecrated Timur's burial. It can also be regarded as an assault on Islamic practice in Uzbekistan. Although the Timurid tombs were meticulously studied and documented, there is no any direct evidence that Stalin used the results in his war propaganda. All skulls and the skeletons were reinterred in October 1942 accompanied by an exhumation report in four languages Uzbek, Russian, Persian and English.

The first team was led by the Russian forensic anthropologist Mikhail Gerasimov. The other members of the expedition were the anthropologist Lev Vasil'evich Oshanin (1884–1962),⁴⁷ the palaeographer Aleksandr A. Semenov, the architect Boris Nikolaevich Zasytkin (1891–1955), the archaeologist and architectural historian Vasiliĭ Afanas'evich Shishkin (1894–1966) and the tex-

46 McChesney, *Four Central Asian Shrines*, 109.

47 For more on Oshanin and his academic activities, please see "Lev Vasil'evich Oshanin", In *Istoriia material'noi kul'tury Uzbekistana*, vyp. 4 (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1963), 152–154.

tile restorer V.I. Komonov⁴⁸ from the Hermitage Museum. The widely celebrated Tajik poet Šadr al-Dīn ‘Aynī, who lived in Samarqand close to Gūr-i Amīr, was invited as an honorary member.⁴⁹ The ethnographer, and in 1941 a scientific collaborator of the Jubilee Committee, Khodi Tillaevich Zarifov (also spelt Zaripov, 1905–1972) also took part. Yahya Guliamov, secretary of the Uzbek Committee for Preservation of Historic Monuments (*Uzkomstaris*)⁵⁰ until 1940, and subsequently head of the archaeology department of the Uzbek branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences,⁵¹ was an important member of the team. Several graduate students from the Historical Faculty were hired as collectors, Lazar Izrail’evich Al’baum (1921–1997),⁵² Durankovskii, V.I. Sprishevskii⁵³ and Skorobogatov.

Two women participated in the expedition as well, the anthropological assistant Zakintsova, who was noting Gerasimov’s descriptions and observations, and the architect Krinitskaia, who was in charge of measuring and recording the dimensions of the graves and the tombstones. It is surprising that the names of these two women have not been officially recorded in any of the publications that discuss the opening of Gūr-i Amīr. They are noted only in the budget overview from 1941. Based on archival documents and video recordings, I managed to define their exact roles in the expedition.⁵⁴

48 Komonov preserved the fabrics discovered in 1941 and copied their patterns for the Hermitage Museum, see Gerasimov, *The Face Finder*, 146.

49 His house was situated just across the street from the Registan Square. It has been recently transformed into a museum featuring his life and work. On the role of Sadridin Ayni in the expedition, see McChesney, *Four Central Asian Shrines*, 119–121.

50 *Uzkomstaris* (*Uzbekistanskii komitet po okhrane pamiatnikov stariny*) was established in Samarqand at the end of 1928. In 1932 the *Uzkomstaris* was relocated to the new Uzbek capital of Tashkent. In 1939 the *Uzkomstaris* was reorganised into the *Glavnoe upravlenie po okhrane pamiatnikov pri Komitete po delam arkhitektury* under the *Sovnarkom* (the Council of People’s Commissars of the Uzbek SSR), the most influential Uzbek organization in charge of the restoration and preservation of the architectural heritage of Uzbekistan.

51 The Uzbek Academy of Sciences was established in 1943.

52 Al’baum was one of the most prominent archaeologists working across Uzbekistan in the second half of the twentieth century. He is best known for the study of the wall paintings at the Hall of the Ambassadors at Afrasiyab, see Lazar I. Al’baum *Zhivopis’ Afrasiaba* (Tashkent: Fan, 1975).

53 Sprishevskii defended his dissertation on the Ferghana Valley in the bronze period at the Institute of History and Archaeology at the Uzbek Academy of Science in 1963 under the supervision of Yahya G. Guliamov.

54 TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346, l. 59 and films no. 172 and no. 173 kept at the National Film and Photo Archive of Uzbekistan. Since Kaiumov was the only officially recognized film-maker, I assume the archival footage mentioned above was recorded by him.

A total amount of 13,000 roubles was spent on the opening of the tombstones in the crypt.⁵⁵ The money was used for securing electricity through a generator for the filming team, creating special boxes for the removal of bones, textiles and wooden fragments, their conservation and subsequent packaging.

With due morbid suspense, this highly controversial desecration of Islamic mausoleums in Samarqand was filmed and recorded with numerous photographs that are currently kept in different archives and museums across Uzbekistan. The crew was led by Nikolai Kim; Malik Kaiumovich Kaiumov (1911–2010) was the chief cameraman.⁵⁶ The other cameramen included Kazim Mukhamedov, Arif Tursunov, Pavel Marshalov and four light technicians.⁵⁷

The expedition worked ten to twelve hours a day and every detail of its progress was meticulously recorded by the Armenian artist Oganēs K. Tatevosian (1889–1974)⁵⁸ and the photographers G. Gerr,⁵⁹ I.P. Zavalin and E.A. Poliakov.⁶⁰ As the chief archaeologist, Masson was reporting in the local newspapers on all recent developments along with the updates by the TASS correspondent and the *Pravda Vostoka* journalist Michael I. Sheverdin (see Figure 12.5).⁶¹

Five burials were studied, that of the dynastic founder Timur (r. 1370–1405), the interments of his two sons Mirānshāh (1366–1408) and Shāhrukh (1377–1447), and of his grandsons Muḥammad Sultan (1375–1403) and Ulugh Beg (1394–1449). Timur's other two sons Jahangir (1356–1376) and Umar Shaykh (1356–1394) are buried in Shahr-i Sabz. Due to the limited scope of this essay, I will discuss below only the opening of the tombs of Ulugh Beg and Timur.

In the early morning of 18 June 1941, the expedition proceeded with the burial chamber of Ulugh Beg, who was interred at his grandfather's feet in a slightly squeezed position to the southwest of the crypt. His tomb was covered by a massive grey marble slab, similar to the one on his father's grave. The sarcophagus was made of a solid block of marble. Since Ulugh Beg was assassinated

55 The total budget overview covers not only the opening of Gūr-i Amīr but also the excavations at the mausoleum of Qaḍi Zada al-Rumi, widely known as the Double-Dome Mausoleum at Shāh-i Zinda. TsGARUz, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346, l. 59.

56 Malik K. Kaiumov, *Zhizn' moia—kinematorgraf* (Tashkent: Izd-vo literatury i iskusstva imeni Gafura Guliyama, 1982), 87–96 describes in detail his filming of the opening of the Timurid tombs in 1941. I am also extremely grateful to Robert D. McChesney who kindly showed me a copy of the original footage recorded by Kaiumov.

57 Robert D. McChesney also provides the names of the crew, *Four Central Asian Shrines*, 112; the overview I present above is based on Kaiumov's biography.

58 More on the artist and a selection of his paintings see <https://art-blog.uz/archives/10096>.

59 Kaiumov, *Zhizn' moia*, 90.

60 Although Poliakov is not mentioned by Gerasimov, all photographs kept at the Archive of GlavNPU are by him.

61 Michael I. Sheverdin, "U grobnicy Timura," *Pravda Vostoka*, 20 June 1941, no. 144.



FIGURE 12.5 Newspaper article on the “Tomb opening of Timur’s son Shāhrukh,” *Leninskii Put’*, 18 June 1941, no. 142 (794)
TSGARUZ, F. R-2773, OP. 1, D. 346

in October 1449, he was buried with the clothes at the time of his death as he was regarded as a martyr (*shahīd*). He was wearing a silk shirt and a pair of traditional trousers, held by a broad, silk checkered band with white and light blue squares; remnants of his unrolled turban could be also discerned. The skull was placed by the side of the skeleton at the height of the shoulders. The archaeologists could prove that Ulugh Beg had been decapitated, his vertebrae was scarred by a sharp instrument. Unlike his grandfather, Ulugh Beg had a delicate body. He had inherited the bone structure of his father; he was thin and of “lean frame.”⁶²

Timur’s tomb was opened on 19 June 1941 (see Figures 12.6 and 12.7). At 7:20 pm the leader of the expedition Kary-Niazov ordered the removal of the slab. The walls of the grave were covered with blocks of limestone;⁶³ the floor

62 Gerasimov, *The Face Finder*, 147.

63 Gerasimov notes that the grave was covered with slabs of limestone (*The Face Finder*, 132),



FIGURE 12.6 Gerasimov exhuming Timur's skull. From left to right: Kary-Niazov, unidentified member, Guliamov, unidentified member, Zarifov, Oshanin
NATIONAL FILM AND PHOTO ARCHIVE; NUMBER 0-5269, 1941

consisted of one larger piece. The chamber was 228 cm long and 90 cm high, its width was 83 cm at the head and 74,5 cm at the feet. The coffin was made of juniper-wood and had large-headed nails. It is kept presently at the Samarqand State Museum (see Figure 12.8). The casket was covered with dark-blue brocade decorated with Quranic texts in silver thread. A small piece of this textile still attached to the original wood plank has been preserved in the museum collection and is in dare need of restoration.

The embalmed body of Timur was laid on its back with folded hands and stretched legs, his face was turned to the west in the direction of Mecca. There were still traces of muscles and skin tissue on the bones; several reddish-brown eyelashes and body hair have been preserved in the Timurid Museum in Tashkent. Timur had a high stature of about 170 cm. Gerasimov describes in detail the peculiarities of his skeleton and skull, proving Timur's lameness and anatomical birth defects.⁶⁴ Remarkably, he also notes that the bones were very strong and that there were hardly any "marks of senility;" he defines the over-

while Sheverdin describes them as massive marble, see Michael I. Sheverdin, "U grobnicy Timura," *Pravda Vostoka*, 20 June 1941, no. 144.

64 Gerasimov, *The Face Finder*, 134-136.



FIGURE 12.7 The governmental commission headed by Kary-Niazov and Usman Yusupov looking at Timur's skeleton; Semenov and Zasyplin to the very left
 ARCHIVE OF GLAVNPU, 10376/65-1, PHOTOGRAPH BY E.A. POLIAKOV 1941

all skeleton as rather juvenile. In 1947 Gerasimov commented that neither the skull nor the skeleton showed any pronounced senile features and concluded that based on the preserved teeth, the outlines of the bones and the absence of osteophytes, all signs point to the fact that the remains belonged to a man in the prime of his life, whose biological age could not have been more than fifty.⁶⁵ Undoubtedly, these observations beg the question about the actual age of Timur in 1405, which may suggest that he was younger than his presumed sixty-nine years.⁶⁶ Gerasimov's interpretations are even more interesting if we

65 *(Nalichie bol'shei chasti zubov, chetkii rel'ef kostei, pochti otsustvie osteofitov,—vse eto govorit skoree za to, chto cherep i skelet prinadlezhali cheloveku polnomy sil i zdorov'ia, biologicheskii vozrast kotorogo ne prevyshal 50 let)*, see Mikhail M. Gerasimov, "Portret Tamirlana," in *Kratkie soobshcheniia, o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniiax Instituta Istorii Material'noi Kul'tury*, vup. 17 (Moskva, Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1947), 18.

66 It is generally accepted that Timur was born in or around 1336.



FIGURE 12.8 Timur's wooden coffin. Kept in the Collection of the Samarqand State Museum

PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2018

compare them to his comments on Ulugh Beg, who was killed at the age of fifty-six but “in appearance he was already completely decrepit, an old man exhausted by ailments.”⁶⁷

Another point subject to future exploration is the condition and completeness of the skeleton; apart from gypsum salts accumulated as a result of water damage, the body was “exceptionally well-preserved.”⁶⁸ According to Vasilii V. Bartol'd, Timur died in the night of 17–18 February 1405 in Otrar (present-day Kazakhstan, some 550 km away from Samarqand).⁶⁹ He was first buried in the *khānaqāh* of Muḥammad Sultan, Timur's grandson. Only when the construction of the octagonal mausoleum was completed, he was reburied in the main crypt of Gūr-i Amīr. On the other hand, Masson suggests that the initial burials of Muḥammad Sultan and Timur took place in the adjacent Āq Sarāy, which was abandoned sometime between 1409 and 1419, and the bodies were

67 (*Pogib on v vozroste 56 let, no na vid eto byl uzhe sovsem odriakhlevshii, istoshchennyi nedugami starik*), see Gerasimov, *Osnovy vosstanovleniia litsa po cherepu*, 166.

68 Gerasimov, *The Face Finder*, 137.

69 Vasilii V. Bartol'd, “O pogrebenii Timura,” in *Raboty po otdel'nyim problemam istorii Srednei Azii, Collected Works*, vol. 2, part 2, 423–454 (Moscow: Nauka, 1964).



FIGURE 12.9 Present state of the crypt with the Timurid tombstones
 PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021

moved to the newly completed octagonal mausoleum.⁷⁰ In 1448 also the body of Timur's son Shāhrukh was reinterred from Herat to Samarqand. However, based on the position of the tombstones, the crypt was planned primarily for Muḥammad Sultan and Timur's tomb was placed to the west of its centre, which suggests that his burial took place after its initial construction and layout (see Figure 12.9). The completeness and condition of Timur's skeleton is also striking for a body that has travelled more than 500 km in the midst of a severe winter. It would be speculative to imply that Timur died in Samarqand and not in Otrar. Regardless of the place of death, I personally regard any secondary burials as rather unlikely.

Based on the exhumed skulls in 1941, Gerasimov reconstructed the faces of Timur, Shāhrukh, Ulugh Beg (see Figures 12.10, 12.11 and 12.12), and Mirānshāh. The original busts were initially kept at the Navoi Museum in Tashkent and considered as physical proofs confirming the local Uzbek identity of the Timurid

70 Mikhail E. Masson, "Rezultaty arkhеologicheskogo nadzora za remontno-issledovatel'skimi rabotami Samkomstarisa na mavzoleiakh 'Gur-Emir' i 'Ak-sarai' v Samarkand v 1924 godu," in *Izvestiia Sredazkomstaris*, vyp. 1 (Tashkent: Izdanie Sredazkomstarisa, 1926), 82–114.

rulers.⁷¹ At present, only the bust of Shāhrukh is there (see Figure 12.11). Gerasimov created several versions of the face reconstructions with and without headgear. There are certain sensitivities connected with the type of head covering. For example, recently the Uzbek authorities refused to include the bust of Timur without his military crown (see Figure 12.10) in the exhibition in the Louvre Museum⁷² as they regarded it to be “disrespectful.” In 1941 Gerasimov inscribed the predominant Soviet narrative into the choice of head dressing by depicting Ulugh Beg as a “great scientist, astronomer and statesman, weighed down by the cares of state administration” wearing a white turban (*imāma*) characteristic of Muslim scholars (see Figure 12.12).⁷³ And on the other hand, portraying Shāhrukh as “covetous, cruel and fanatic” in an elaborate silk turban adorned with a plume (see Figure 12.11).⁷⁴

The actual results of the archaeological excavations initiated as part of the 500th Jubilee of Alisher Navoi remain largely unknown. Only Gerasimov’s findings related to the study of the skulls and the reconstruction of the physical appearances of the Timurids were published, translated into several languages and widely celebrated. On the other hand, the comprehensive analysis of the exhumed skeletons, carried out by the anthropologist Oshanin at the Department of Anthropology at the Central Asian State University (SAGU) has received very little scholarly attention.⁷⁵

71 At present, the gypsum busts of Timur and Shahrukh (without any headwear) are exhibited in the Samarqand State Museum. The labels attribute them to Gerasimov.

72 *The Splendours of Uzbekistan’s Oases*, Louvre Exhibition 23 November 2022–6 March 2023.

73 (*Portret daet predstavlenie o vneshnem oblike velikogo uchenogo astronoma, gosudarstvennogo deiatelia, otiagoshchennogo zobotami upravleniia gosudarstvom*), see Gerasimov, *Osnovy vosstanovleniia litsa po cherepu*, 166.

74 (*Korystoliubie, zhestokost’, fanaticizm—vot osnovnye dannye kharaktera mladshego syna Timura*), see Gerasimov, *Osnovy vosstanovleniia litsa po cherepu*, 162.

75 For more on Oshanin and his academic activities, please see “Lev Vasil’evich Oshanin”, In *Istoriia material’noi kul’tury Uzbekistana*, vyp. 4 (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1963), 152–154.

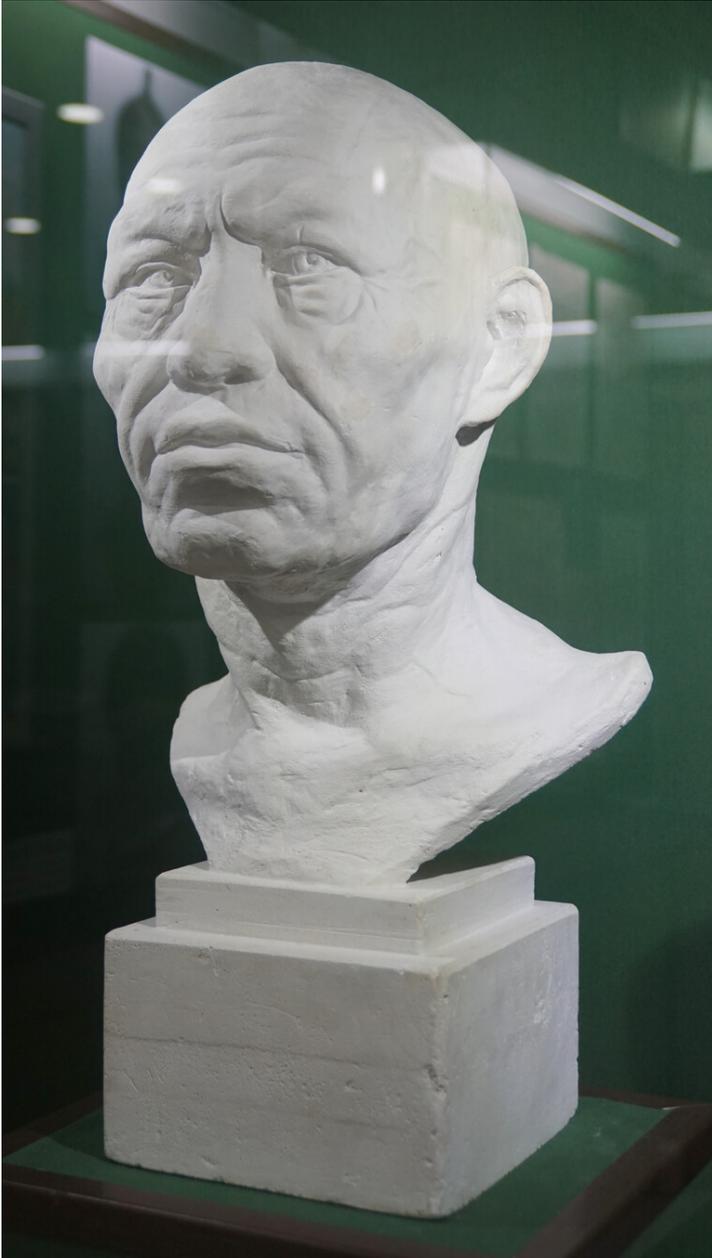


FIGURE 12.10 Bust of Timur without headgear by Gerasimov, Samarqand State Museum

PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021



FIGURE 12.11 Bust of Shāhrukh by Gerasimov, Navoi Museum in Tashkent
PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021

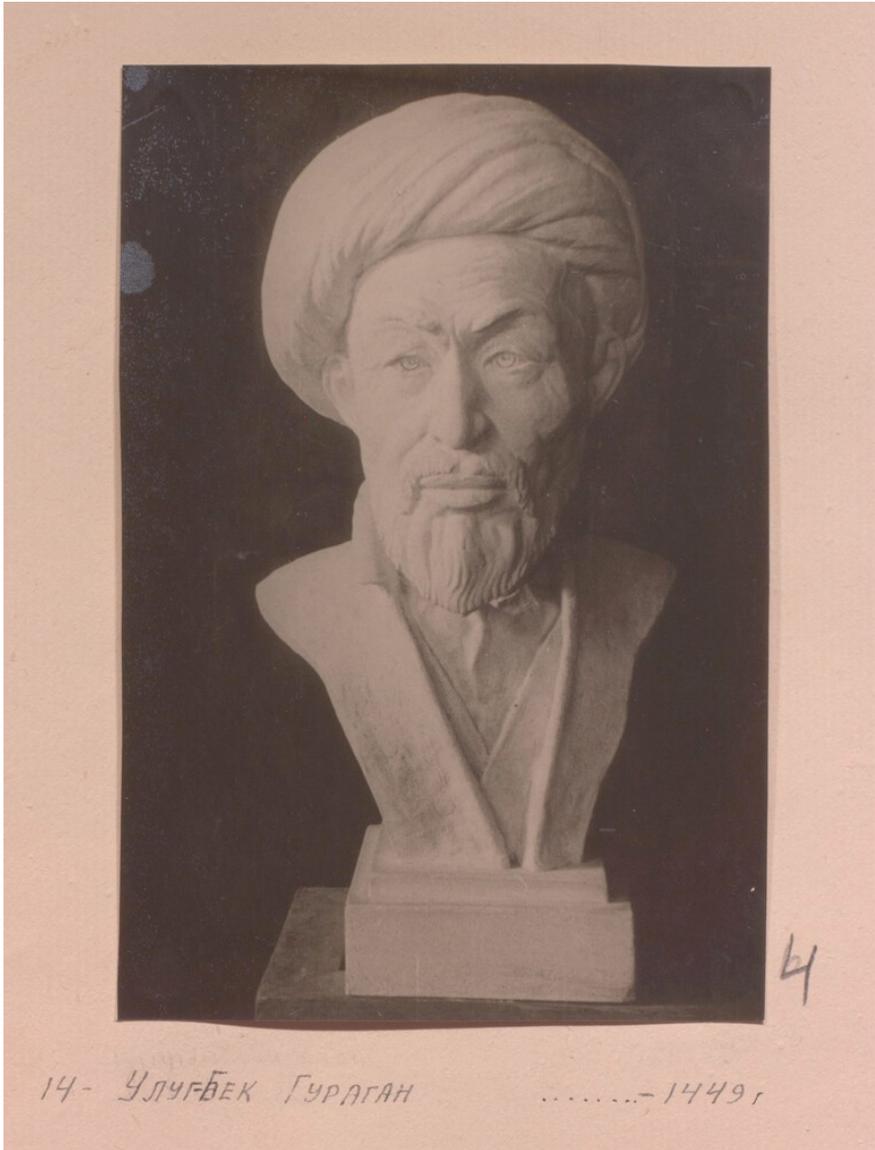


FIGURE 12.12 Bust of Ulugh Beg with a turban by Gerasimov, current location unknown

In August 1941 after the end of the expedition, all skeletons were carefully packed in separate wooden boxes and sent to the *Uzkomstaris*. In September 1941 the bones were given to the Anthropology Department of SAGU where they were kept in a simple bookcase in the room of the department's chair. All skeletons were studied in the winter of 1941–1942. V.Ia. Zezenkov analysed the skulls and Oshanin explored the bones. Most likely, the skeletons never left Tashkent and were examined locally. In the early 1960, Oshanin pleaded with the rector of the Tashkent State University for the publication of his anthropological study of the Timurid skeletons.⁷⁶ However, the university leadership kept on delaying the book under the pretext that Oshanin's findings had to be incorporated in a broader publication on Gūr-i Amīr including Shishkin's study of the mausoleum's epigraphic programme and Zasytkin's decade-long research on Timurid architecture. Such a comprehensive edition on the architecture and epigraphy of Gūr-i Amīr remains unpublished until today.⁷⁷ Parts of Oshanin's study of the Timurid skeletons were made public in 1964.⁷⁸

In more general terms, the archaeological expeditions from 1941 served a nationalistic narrative woven around the propaganda targets of the Communist Party. The conclusions were based on a carefully selected and choreographed body of archaeological material, presented as a sensational scientific achievement by the Soviet and Uzbek press. The articles, illustrated with numerous photographs, appeared in the national daily newspapers *Pravda*⁷⁹ and *Izvestiia*,⁸⁰ and in the local newspapers *Pravda Vostoka*⁸¹ and *Lenniskii*

76 TsGARUZ, f. R-2467, op. 1, d. 32. Parts of this study will be published and discussed in my upcoming monograph on Gūr-i Amīr.

77 The most comprehensive study of the mausoleum to date is the chapter on Gūr-i Amīr by Robert D. McChesney, *Four Central Asian Shrines. A Socio-Political History of Architecture*. Studies in Persian Cultural History, vol. 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 17–129. On the restorations carried out at Gūr-i Amīr since the late nineteenth century see Paskaleva, *Gūr-i Amīr as an Ideological Icon*, 2019.

78 L.V. Oshanin, "Antropologicheskoe issledovanie skeletov Timura i Timuridov," In *Arkheologiia i antropologiia, Nauchnye Trudy TashGU*, vyp. 232 (Tashkent, 1964), 74–189.

79 *Pravda* (Russian "Truth") was the official organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1918 to 1991. "Issledovanie mavzoleia Timura" (10 June 1941, no. 159 (8567), 6); "Vskryta grobnista Timura" (20 June 1941, no. 169 (8577), 6).

80 *Izvestiia* (Russian "News") was published by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and was the official national publication of the Soviet government until 1991. *Izvestiia* grew rapidly to a circulation of 354,000 in 1924 and 1,500,000 by 1932. The articles on the opening of Gūr-i Amīr were published daily between 18–22 June 1941. "Raskopki grobnitsy Tamerlana" (18 June 1941, no. 142 (7518), 4); "V sklepe Gur-Emir, raskopki grobnitsy Ulug-beka" (19 June 1941, no. 143 (7519), 4); "Raskopki grobnitsy Timura" (20 June 1941, no. 144 (7520), 2); Three photographs were published on 21 June 1941 (no. 145 (7521), 4); "Raskopki grobnitsy Timura" (22 June 1941, no. 146 (7522), 4).

81 A series of extremely detailed articles were published in the newspaper *Pravda Vostoka*,

Put'.⁸² TASS, the Russian news agency, and the *Pravda* newspaper had special correspondents in Samarqand who were reporting daily between 10–22 June 1941. Following the opening of Timur's tomb on 19 June 1941,⁸³ all Soviet newspapers announced the start of martial law (*voennoe polozenie*) on 23 June. The *Izvestiia* newspaper published a poem on “holy war” (*sviashchennaia voina*) just under Stalin's photograph on its first page and the media focus quickly shifted from the excavations onto the military achievements of the Soviet army.

3 The Discoveries of the Second Team at the China Pavilion (*chīnīkhāna*) of Ulugh Beg

The second archaeological team of the 1941 expedition carried out work around the Kohak Hill in the vicinity of Eskī Mazār to the north of the historic area of Afrasiyab between 24 May–10 July 1941; the fieldwork lasted a total of 47 days. The main aim was to discover the suburban palace of Ulugh Beg, “known in the literature under the name Chini-Khana.”⁸⁴ Another task was to determine the “exact location of the Chil-Sutūn palace” (*tochnogo mesta nakhozhdenniia dvortsa Tchil'-Sutuna*).⁸⁵ The goal was to prove that Ulugh Beg had a sedentary lifestyle; his thirst for knowledge was enhanced by a significant building activity that demonstrated his highly developed aesthetic taste.

The archaeological team consisted of different groups of mostly graduate students. At the beginning, between 24 May–14 June, the first group had five members, the PhD candidate of the National University of Uzbekistan⁸⁶ Zezenkov and four students from the Historical Faculty Al'baum,⁸⁷ Durankovskii, Skorobogatov and Sprishevskii.⁸⁸ The second group that worked between 14–21 June had only two members. After 21 June Sergei P. Bazhin joined.⁸⁹ Once

“*Bol'shaia arkhelogicheskaja ekspeditsia*” (18 June 1941, no. 142); “*Vskrytie grobnitsy Ulug-Beka*” (19 June 1941, no. 143) and “*U grobnicy Timura*” (20 June 1941, no. 144).

82 *Izvestiia* (23 June 1941, no. 147 (7523), 1).

83 “*Vskryta grobnits Timura*” (*Pravda*, 20 June 1941, no. 169 (8577), 6).

84 (*Zagorodnogo dvortsa Ulug-beka izvestnogo po literature pod nazvaniem Chini-Khana*), see TsGARUz, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346, l. 81. Capitalized and transcribed site names according to the archival document.

85 *Ibid.* The translation and transliteration are mine.

86 *Srednoaziatskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet* (SAGU).

87 Al'baum worked previously with the first team at Gūr-i Amīr.

88 These students are mentioned only with their surnames in the archeological report.

89 On 24 July 1941 Bazhin was mobilized and disappeared in military action in November 1943, see <https://100.psu.ru/sergej-pavlovich-br-bazhin-br-1919-1943>.

the work of the first team was completed at Gūr-i Amīr and at the Ulugh Beg observatory,⁹⁰ more collectors and students were involved in the excavations of the second team. Some of these students would join only for a couple of days and most of them were summoned for military duty immediately after the start of the Second World War. Given the hasty completion of the work, larger parts of the terrain could not be excavated. The official field report is signed by the Soviet archaeologist and member of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences Vsevolod Danilovich Zhukov (1902–1962), the leader of the second archaeological team.⁹¹

Despite the name of the area, Eskī Mazār, which suggests the existence of a mausoleum or a shrine, no burials could be detected under the three *kurgan* mounts. Zhukov attributes the *mazār* to the eighteenth century.⁹² The archaeologists were able to reconstruct two earlier architectural sites from the first half of the fifteenth century on the excavated area of about 800 square meters (see Figure 12.13). The small garden (*nebol'shoi intimnyi park*) was described as the *bāghcha* of Ulugh Beg and its construction was attributed to the late 1420s.⁹³ According to the most prominent Central Asian archaeologist Vasilii Lavrent'evich Viatkin (1869–1932), who also discovered the Ulugh Beg observatory in 1908, the *bāghcha* was adjoining the larger garden Bāgh-i Maydān situated in the direction of the Chūpān-Āṭā' Mausoleum (see the map on Figure 12.14). The Chil-Sutūn palace was built with turned marble columns in the middle of the Bāgh-i Maydān, fragments of these columns were found in 1941. A large stone throne (presumably belonging to Ulugh Beg) stood in its hall (*īwān*).⁹⁴ As Barthold summarises, “a pavilion tiled and faced with china was situated in the [smaller] garden.”⁹⁵

Presumably, the latter could be identified as the *chīnīkhāna* of Ulugh Beg, the first example in Islamic architecture of a purpose-built pavilion designed to

90 TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 346, l. 81–83. The report of the second team signed by V. Zhukov is the only document that mentions archaeological work at the observatory in 1941. I haven't been able to find any other sources that confirm this.

91 For more on Zhukov, his life and bibliography, please see “Vsevolod Danilovich Zhukov,” in *Istoriia material'noi kul'tury Uzbekistana*, vyp. 4 (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1963), 155–157.

92 TsGARUZ, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 364, l. 82.

93 Galina A. Pugachenkova, “Sadovo-parkovoe iskusstvo Srednei Azii v epokhu Timura i Timuridov,” in *Trudy SAGU, Istoriia* 4, vyp. 23 (Tashkent: 1951), 154.

94 Viatkin is referring to a columned *īwān* typical of Central Asian architecture and not to a monumental gate, common in Persian architecture.

95 Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, 125.



FIGURE 12.13 Samarqand, excavations in the area of Eskī Mazār, 24 May–10 July 1941
TSGARUZ, F. R-2773, OP. 1, D. 346

exhibit Chinese porcelain or to be decorated with Chinese porcelain tiles.⁹⁶ The most opulent existing *chīnīkhāna* is situated in the Safavid dynastic shrine at Ardabil.⁹⁷ The importance of the discoveries of the second archaeological team is huge as the *chīnīkhāna* of Ulugh Beg has never been previously researched. Its existence testifies that cross-cultural artistic exchanges have always played an important role across Central Asia. In the Timurid period, in particular during the reign of Shāhrukh (r. 1409–1447) and Ulugh Beg (r. 1409–1449), a series of embassies to the Ming court of Emperor Yongle (r. 1402–1424) resulted in an innovative revival and appropriation of Chinese designs.⁹⁸ The Chinese artistic influences on Timurid aesthetics have been widely described as Islamic

96 Literally the term means in Persian a house (*khāna*) for Chinese ceramic or porcelain (*chīnī*).

97 Kishwar Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine. Architecture, religion and power in early modern Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 143–155.

98 David J. Roxburgh, “The Narrative of Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash, Timurid Envoy to Khan Baligh, and Chinese Art,” in *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations*, ed. Lieselotte E. Saurma, Monica Juneja, and Anja Eisenbeiss (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010), 90–107. Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason and Gauvin A. Bailey, *Tamerlane’s*

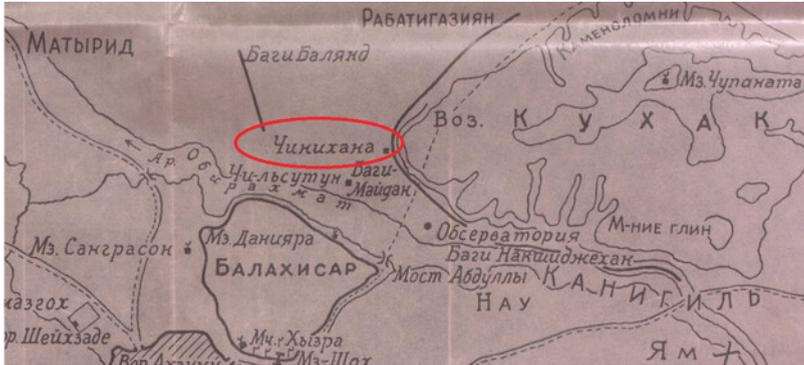


FIGURE 12.14 Detail, plan of Samarqand in the fifteenth century denoting the exact location of the chīnikhāna. Map drawn by Masson, 1942

TSGARUZ, F. R-2773, OP. I, D. 334

Chinoiserie, a process that started much earlier sometime at the end of the thirteenth century.⁹⁹ However, the evolution of locally produced tiles and pottery, used in the decoration of both the Chil-Sutūn palace and the *chīnikhāna* in Samarqand has been marginalized; only the Soviet analyses of Masson and Pugachenkova touch upon these artistic developments.¹⁰⁰ Many studies have explored the transfer of Chinese motifs from luxurious goods to Islamic ritual artefacts, their skilful transformation to different media and the adaptation to Islamic traditional craftsmanship (stone and wood carving).¹⁰¹ Although such pieces were created within the Turco-Persianate artistic realm, they were distinctly influenced by Chinese aesthetics.¹⁰² Yet, these Chinese motifs were not directly appropriated but transformed into Islamic designs, adjusted according to the availability of materials and pigments, and executed within local

Tableware. A New Approach to the Chinese Ceramics of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Iran (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1996).

99 Yuka Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie. The Art of Mongol Iran* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

100 See Pugachenkova, "Sadovo-parkovoe iskusstvo," 160 and Galina A. Pugachenkova, *Arkhitektura epokhi Ulugbeka* (Tashkent: Fund Forum, 2010), 31–32.

101 Yolande Crowe, "Some Timurid Designs and Their Far Eastern Connections," in *Timurid Art and Culture*, ed. Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 168–178. David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

102 Yuka Kadoi, "From Acquisition to Display: The Reception of Chinese Ceramics in the Pre-modern Persian World," in *Persian art: Image-making in Eurasia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 61–77. Gülru Necipoğlu, "From International Timurid to Ottoman: A Change of Taste in Sixteenth-Century Ceramic Tiles," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 136–170.

craftsmanship traditions. The westward transmission of Chinese designs was further encouraged by the thriving artistic, political and commercial exchanges between the Ming and the Timurid courts in the first half of the fifteenth century.

We know about the existence of the Ulugh Beg *chīnikhāna* from the *Bāburnāma*, the founder of the Mughal dynasty Babur visited Samarqand in 1497–1498, some seventy years after its completion and described the pavilion as follows:

On the western side of the Kohak Hill was constructed a garden called Bagh-i Maydan, in the middle of which was built a superb building called Chil Sutun, two stories high with columns of stone. [...] Going from that building toward Kohak Hill is another small garden where yet another portico was built. [...] In this small garden is a *chardara*, called the Chini-khana with porcelain all around the dado. Someone was sent to Cathay to bring the porcelain.¹⁰³

Although Babur provides the exact location and refers to the architecture of the China pavilion, our factual knowledge of the garden setting is very patchy. The artefacts discovered by the second team of the archaeological expedition in Samarqand in the summer of 1941 are the only material evidence we have about its layout and decoration. At present, the area is part of a densely populated local neighbourhood (*mahalla*) and it is virtually impossible to explore any traces of its Timurid architecture (see Figure 12.15). It is likely that any remaining structures might have been damaged during the Siege of Samarqand in 1868; fierce fighting took place in the vicinity of the Chūpān-Āṭā' Mausoleum to the northeast of the Bāgh-i Maydān.¹⁰⁴ Below I will present the main architectural discoveries as recorded in the archaeological reports from 1941 and I will try to reconstruct the decoration of the ensemble based on the artefacts kept at the Samarqand State Museum. Similar to the reports, these artefacts are discussed here for the first time.

103 Zahiruddin M. Babur, *The Baburnama, Memories of Babur, prince and emperor*, trans., ed. by Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 58–59.

104 On the history of the Chūpān-Āṭā' Mausoleum, see Yahya G. Guliamov, "Chupan-Ata," in *Trudy Instituta Istorii i Arkheologii, Materialy po Arkheologii Uzbekistana*, vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR 1948), 22–34. See also illustration 6.3 The site of the battle of Chupan Ata in Alexander Morrison, *The Russian Conquest of Central Asia: A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 289.



FIGURE 12.15 Present view of the neighbourhood in which the Bāgh-i Maydān may have been situated

PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2019

In her comprehensive essay on Timurid gardens from 1951, Galina Anatolievna Pugachenkova (1915–2007) described in detail the small garden (*bāghcha*) and published the only architectural plan known to me.¹⁰⁵ The site to the southwest consisted of a levelled terrace raised on square bricks. A system of clay pipes ran under the western ridge of the terrace and supplied water to an open basin connected to a twelve-sided polygon platform with a stone circular fountain in the middle. The water was most likely pumped up the hill from the adjacent Siyob canal and distributed by means of a sophisticated hydraulic network of water pipes. In front of the polygonal platform, that may have been decorated with a grill of carved marble (see Figure 12.16), there was a square area inlaid with multi-coloured varieties of onyx. To the south of it, the steep slope was supported by a brick wall of about one and a half meters high that marked the slanting outline of a park.

Perpendicular to the main axis of the twelve-sided polygonal basin and situated on the eastern elevation of the *bāghcha*, there was another probably

105 Pugachenkova, “Sadovo-parkovoe iskusstvo”, 154–155, see drawing 3.

earlier site. That part of the excavated area was referred to as the *chīnīkhāna*. Its main water feature along the east-west axis was an octagonal fountain with a diameter of one and a half meters decorated with glazed blue bricks;¹⁰⁶ the water was provided by an open canal of six-seven meters which was also clad with bricks. An elevated *ṣuffā* of about two and a half meters covered with hexagonal marble tiles was situated to the north of the canal. To the west of the octagonal fountain and built in the main longitudinal axis of the canal, Masson excavated the remains of a wall clad with marble slabs typical of the Timurid monumental structures in Samarqand. The floor level of that structure was raised some twenty-five to thirty-five centimetres and it was dated by coins found on site to the first half of the fifteenth century. This structure, that Zhukov defines as an *īwān*, is the only building in the garden that may have had any interior decoration.¹⁰⁷ However, it is not clear whether it was a free standing pavilion or whether it had only a protruding polygonal niche facing the western slope of the garden.

The 1941 expedition also discovered many fragments of carved marble window screens and grills (see Figure 12.16), coloured glass, pieces of intricate mosaic faience in dark and light blues, white and dark brown with floral, geometrical and epigraphic designs. In addition, they found glazed carved majolica, and unique carved terracotta fragments with stylised lotus flowers (see Figure 12.17) most likely belonging to an ornate revetment or a *muqarnas* vault.¹⁰⁸ All finds suggest the existence of a richly-decorated garden setting with different structures and water features. Based on the quality of the carved terracotta fragments it is clear that the compound was of exquisite aesthetic quality and Ulugh Beg spared no expense for its decoration. However, it is very difficult to define it as a palace as there are no rooms.

At present, the majority of the artefacts are kept at the Samarqand State Museum, inventory nr. A-283. There are only two finely carved terracotta fragments recorded in the catalogue of the museum that are attributed to the *chīnīkhāna*.¹⁰⁹ The actual collection, however, contains 111 pieces.

In 1968 nine carved terracotta fragments from the Ulugh Beg *chīnīkhāna* were published by N.S. Grazhdankina, M.K. Rakhimov and I.E. Pletnev.¹¹⁰ One

106 TsGARUz, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 364, l. 81.

107 TsGARUz, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 364, l. 82.

108 TsGARUz, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 364, l. 82.

109 Akbar Khakimov (ed.), *Masterpieces of the Samarkand Museum* (Tashkent, 2004), catalogue entries nr. 332 and nr. 334, 176–177.

110 N.S. Grazhdankina, M.K. Rakhimov, I.E. Pletnev, *Arkhitekturnaia keramika Uzbekistana. Ocherk istoricheskogo razvitiia i opyt restavratsii* (Tashkent: Fan, 1968), drawing 17.



FIGURE 12.16

Detail of a marble railing, Samarqand State Museum, box A 283–281-III

PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKAL-EVA 2021

of the pieces has Arabic epigraphy against a background of intertwined lotus leaves and stems. Another fragment has carved epigraphy interwoven within an arabesque motif. Two of the other larger details seem to be pieces of floral cartouches. At the *chīnikhāna*, the larger cartouche fragments and the arabesque details were most likely incorporated in the exterior revetment around the main portal that could have consisted of multiple bands made up of glazed tiles and carved terracotta. However, I was unable to identify the examples published by Grazhdankina, Rakhimov and Pletnev among the artefacts of the Samarqand State Museum. It might be possible that they are kept in another collection in Tashkent. It is highly probable that the technique of carved ter-



FIGURE 12.17 Detail of carved earthenware with floral lotus ornaments, Samarqand State Museum, item A 283–285

PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021

racotta was continuously applied for different forms of exterior decoration including flat and curved surfaces in the 1420s.

Either way, the only structure in the Ulugh Beg *bāghcha* that could be described as the “China pavilion” but definitely not as a palatial structure, had a polygonal form and it protruded from a larger enclosure to the west; its lower exterior was decorated with marble slabs. The upper exterior walls may have been covered with the exquisitely carved terracotta panels. There should have

been some openings (doors or niches) in all directions from which the visitors could admire the surrounding landscape and the two fountains to the east and to the west.

In addition, onyx seems to have been used throughout the garden compound but surprisingly enough there is no evidence of any original Chinese porcelain tiles found during the archaeological excavations in 1941. Zhukov lists only “facing fragments close to faience.”¹¹¹

Babur asserts that the porcelain tiles were specifically brought by someone from China.¹¹² Barthold and Sukharev state that during the reign of Ulugh Beg porcelain tiles were brought from China during consecutive trips.¹¹³ Atwell suggests that the porcelain trade was conducted by many merchants who travelled back and forth and that the Ming porcelain collection of Ulugh Beg was so extensive that he had to build a special “Porcelain House” to store it.¹¹⁴ Yet based on the archaeological reports by Zhukov and Masson, and on the artefacts and archival photographs that I have been able to trace, these tiles were not discovered on the site of the above described *chīnīkhāna* in Samarqand in 1941.

According to Masson’s earlier notes published in 1926, a large fragment of carved marble with slots for tile mosaic was accidentally unearthed by locals to the east of the Chūpān-Āṭā’ elevation. These previous discoveries also included glazed vessels, which Masson describes as “vases for flowers” and “several hexagonal porcelain tiles, decorated with stylized blue flowers and acorns on a white background with traces of gilding.”¹¹⁵ Most likely, Masson is referring to tiles with Chinese iconographic designs that could be related to Babur’s

111 TsGARUz, f. R-2773, op. 1, d. 364, l. 82.

112 Bābur, *Bābur-nāma (Vaḡāyī)*. *Critical edition*, 72, چینی خانه دیرلار خطای دین کی شی بیباریب, 72, یکتوروتور

113 (*Spetsialno dostavlenymi iz Kitaia v neskol’ko priemov*), see I.A. Sukharev, “Dva bliuda xv. iz Samarkanda,” in *Trudy Instituta Istorii i Arkheologii. Materialy po arkheologii Uzbekistana*, vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1948), 50. Also see Vasilii V. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg. Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 2, tr. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958), 112.

114 William S. Atwell, “Time, Money, and the Weather: Ming China and the “Great Depression” of the Mid-Fifteenth Century,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 1 (2002): 88. It is very likely that Ulugh Beg had an extensive porcelain collection, however, I haven’t come across a single historiographical source that confirms that. All we know about the love of Ulugh Beg for Chinese porcelain comes from the Soviet archaeological excavations and publications on Gūr-i Amīr, the Ulugh Beg Madrasa and the China pavilion.

115 (*Neskol’ko shestiugol’nykh farforovykh plitok, raspisannykh po belomu fonu sinimi stilizovannymi tsvetami i zheludiami so sledami pozoloty*), see Mikhail E. Masson, “Neskol’ko arkheologicheskikh dannyykh k istoricheskoi topografii Samarkanda v sviazi s provedeniem uzkokoleinoi gorodskoi zheleznoi dorogi,” in *Izvestiia Sredazkomstaris*, vyp.1 (Tashkent: Izdanie Sredazkomstarisa, 1926), 118, note 1. According to Masson, the marble frag-



FIGURE 12.18 Porcelain tile found during the excavations of the China pavilion. Collection of the Samarqand State Museum, KP 1774, A-4–80
 PHOTOGRAPH: ©ELENA PASKALEVA 2021

description of the *chūnikhāna*. Although Masson mentions that “several” tiles were discovered and Pugachenkova refers to “a few hexagonal porcelain tiles with cobalt blue decoration on a white background,”¹¹⁶ it is not very clear how many of these tiles were exactly found by locals in the 1920s as discussed by Masson. At present, only one tile is displayed at the Samarqand State Museum inventory number KP 1774, A-4–80, (Figure 12.18) and another broken fragment from a very similar tile is kept in the collection of the Samarqand Museum of Regional Studies.¹¹⁷

ment has been kept at the Samarqand District Museum since 1921. It was not part of the present A 283 museum collection.

116 (*Nekotoroe kolichestvo shestigrannykh farforovykh plitok*), see Pugachenkova, *Arkhitektura epokhi Ulugbeka*, 32.

117 A second hexagonal tile has been preserved at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. It was published by the Soviet art historian Tat'iana B. Arapova in 1977 and she attributed it to the sixteenth century. It has almost black decoration and the glaze on the edges seems to be damaged, see Tat'iana B. Arapova, *Kitaiskii farfor v sobranii Ermitazha: konets XIV-pervaia tret' XVIII veka* (Leningrad: Avror, 1977), 40.

In a later report from 1943, Masson comments that a fragment from a hexagonal porcelain tile found under the main floor at Gūr-i Amīr is very similar to the tile from the *chīnīkhāna* of Ulugh Beg and suggests that the Ulugh Beg gallery and the *chīnīkhāna* could have been erected simultaneously.¹¹⁸ It might be possible that the broken fragment kept at the Samarqand Museum of Regional Studies is that particular piece. In the same report, he also mentions that Chinese bases for porcelain vases were discovered at the Timurid dynastic mausoleum and suggests the existence of a large porcelain collection there. One wonders how and why similar tiles could be found at Gūr-i Amīr. Were they initially kept at the mausoleum (given its earlier construction date) or were they also used in its decoration? According to Al'baum the onyx hexagonal tiles of the dado at Gūr-i Amīr were gilded with designs copying the exact geometry of the ornamentation found on the porcelain tile at the Samarqand State Museum.¹¹⁹

My hypothesis is that the original Chinese tile samples were never used on the Samarqand dados but studied at the Timurid artistic workshops; their exquisite linear patterns in white and blue were transformed into tile designs applied across Samarqand.¹²⁰ These artistic transformations were not only executed with different techniques but they were also locally manufactured based on the availability of building materials, silicate sands and glazes. Their hexagonal shapes were indeed implemented in the dados of the major Timurid mausoleums from the start of the fifteenth century, however, the linear geometric decoration was executed in gilding applied onto the glazed monochrome surfaces of the locally produced tiles as was the case with the dado at Gūr-i Amīr.

Almost all Samarqand monuments from the Timurid period have been heavily restored, partially rebuilt and are still undergoing major transformations, usually linked to subsequent anniversaries and commemorations celebrating Timur and Ulugh Beg.¹²¹ The example set by the Alisher Navoi Jubilee in 1941, and skilfully used as an ideological pretext to conduct extensive archaeological work, has been reused as a propaganda tool in the current ethno-nationalistic discourses of the Uzbek independent state. That is why it is almost impossible

118 TsGARUZ, f. R-2406, op. 1, d. 1579, l. 2. Report by Mikhail E. Masson on the archaeological excavations at Gūr-i Amīr from 25 July 1943.

119 L.I. Al'baum, "Panel' Gurimira," in *Trudy SAGU. Arkheologia Srednei Azii*, vyp. 49 (Tashkent: Izd-vo SAGU, 1953), 137, Figure 3.

120 All six sides of the tile on Figure 12.18 are gilded and in almost immaculate condition, there are not traces of mortar on its back, which suggests that the tile was never attached together with other tiles on a walled surface.

121 Elena Paskaleva, "Samarqand Refashioned. A Traveller's Impressions, August 2013," *The Silk Road Journal* 11 (2013): 139–153.

to reconstruct the original exteriors and interiors of the existing Timurid monuments. The exact attribution of all Chinese porcelain fragments discovered in Samarqand could be answered in future explorations. For that reason studying the scattered museum collections and the fieldwork reports compiled by the leading archaeologists and architectural historians of the Soviet period can shed new light on our knowledge and understanding of the complex cultural exchanges in the Timurid realm.

4 Conclusion

By using unpublished archival sources, drawings and historiographical descriptions, I tried to contextualize the findings of the two archaeological expeditions that took place in Samarqand in the summer of 1941. Both of them were organized around the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the great cultural patron of the later Timurid period Alisher Navoi, although none of them was directly related to his literary legacy.

Given the importance of the discovery of the skeletons at Gūr-i Amīr, the attention of the political elite swiftly shifted to the cultural legacy of the Timurids. The outcome of the expeditions proved that the Timurid rulers of Samarqand, the dynastic founder Timur and his grandson Ulugh Beg, did not only leave their artistic heritage in the city in the form of monumental buildings and garden pavilions, but they were also buried on the territory of Uzbekistan. What is more, the anthropologists Gerasimov and Oshanin could confirm that they were blood relatives. Once the genealogical relationships were established, the archaeologists proceeded with crafting architectural evidence that Ulugh Beg lived in sedentary palaces and built magnificent gardens, one of which even had a pavilion decorated with Chinese porcelain tiles (*chīnikhāna*). His historical figure was elevated to the status of a scientific prodigy who lived for knowledge and as a result lost his life fighting the dogmas of Islam. Unlike the military successes of Timur, Ulugh Beg achieved scientific fame and his work resonated for centuries with distinguished international scholars. The paradigms defined during the Navoi Jubilee determined the study of the Timurid period within the borders of present-day Uzbekistan from the perspective of Soviet cultural continuity.

Pertinent questions related to the controversial legitimacy of the excavations and the desecration of local burial rituals were shrouded in a media frenzy that followed all discoveries with a scary meticulousness. Although the archaeological excavations in the summer of 1941 were well-documented, they still remain largely unknown to the wider audience. Hopefully, the above presen-

ted data has helped to shed more light and clarity on the political storylines on the eve of the Second World War.

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Soviet Legitimization of Islamic Architecture in Old Khiva as Reflected in the Diaries of ‘Abdullāh Bāлтаev (1880–1966)

Bakhtiyar M. Babadjanov

Back in the early 1980s, I began to study the epigraphy of Khwarazm and I first found myself in Khiva. As a young fellow at the Institute for the Restoration of Monuments, I was struck by the magnificence of its pristine architectural landscape and the unique preservation of its monumental and funerary inscriptions. I tried to pay attention not only to the architecture and its epigraphy, but also to learn from the elders about the masters and the history of the local mosques and madrasas; about the ways they perceived and interpreted the past of their native city, which has preserved its former appearance and original landscape (see Figure 13.1).¹ Khiva has always been an important part of their lives, even during the difficult periods when the victims of the Soviet repression included not only people, but also architectural monuments, which in the eyes of the new Bolshevik authorities were a symbol of the ideology and culture of the “dark past.”

Later, when Khiva became the most sought-after city in the tourist industry, this circumstance intensified Soviet reflections, for example, gradually changing the local residents’ perception of their own unique heritage as “tourist sites.” However, many stories about the city and its architecture have been preserved. Despite their legendary outlines, I perceived and still perceive the monuments as important markers of the real world and the real history, as part of the celebratory memory in the eyes of the inhabitants of this ancient landscape. As a graduate of a Soviet school and a Soviet university, since childhood I, like Alice in Lewis Carroll’s wonderful fairy tale, was used to moving easily from the “looking glass” that the Soviet ideological machine had created into a non-virtual world, with many invisible threads connected to the realities of pre-Soviet life. My religious grandmother, who instilled in me a very different view of the past, of personal and social ethics, continued to live in this world.²

¹ All photographs used in this essay are by the author.

² Of course, the boundaries between these “worlds” were conditional, just as people could feel



FIGURE 13.1 Skyline of Khiva with the Mausoleum of Pahlavān Maḥmūd (d. 1327) in the foreground © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

In short, as a bearer of a complex mixture of ideological and educational codes, and having found myself in Khiva, I copied architectural epigraphy directly from the monuments and at the same time recorded their histories. I was trying to understand what parts of them have become the product of Soviet reality, and what can be considered an archaic component. Finally, I was intrigued to learn what they meant to the storytellers themselves—the old inhabitants of Khiva.

As an intellectual product of that same complex historical period, I was not surprised that most of my Khiva storytellers were quite free to operate with notions and terms that the Soviet reality had produced. For example, most of them called (and still call) all ancient buildings of Khiva by the Soviet-Uzbek neologism *fomitnik/pamiatnik* (monument). Or, named a building according to its former function (madrassa, mosque, palace), whereas it still remained a *pamiatnik* for them.³ Nevertheless, the former religious perception of their

quite comfortable listening to a Komsomol (youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) or party agitator and then participate in, say, a burial ceremony (*Janāzah*), which took place according to traditional (religious) scenarios.

3 *Obida* [‘ābida] (ancient monument) is the Uzbek equivalent of the Russian word *pamiatnik* (monument).

past did not disappear despite the efforts of the Soviet atheist propaganda. For example, stories about builders and patrons of mosques or madrasas almost always contained the traditional motivation—“seeking Allah’s pleasure,”⁴ that is, as an act of religious piety (*thawāb*).⁵ Specifically, in the context of an Islamic worldview, *thawāb* refers to spiritual merit or reward that accrues from the performance of good deeds and piety.

Now I am well aware that the ideological stamps of the atheistic state proved to be only an imposed background, in one way or another changing Soviet people’s view of the world, of their past, and generating bizarre forms of adaptations. At the same time, the somewhat forgotten commemorative practices turned out not to be a window to the past; they lived or revived precisely in the architectural landscape of old cities, where the small urban space had preserved the close societal relations and modes of communications.

Even more contradictory impressions were formed when I became acquainted with the works of local amateur historians, written in the Soviet period (1950–1960s). In addition to architectural descriptions (sometimes including epigraphy), they recorded oral accounts of famous events, personalities, the history of the city, its holy shrines (*mazārs*), and the craftsmen who built them. The enthusiasm of Khiva’s amateur historians of the Soviet period was not only connected with the tradition of intellectuals recording on paper stories about the past of their home town. It turned out to be almost a direct continuation of the tradition of historians of the Khwarazm Khanate. As a symbol of the link with the past, the “new stories of the old” were written in Arabic script, which, however, was not understood by at least two generations of Soviet citizens who had adopted and used the Cyrillic alphabet. However, each of these historians, judging by the remarks in their footnotes, retained the hope that their works would be transcribed into Cyrillic, published, and available to their countrymen.

Meanwhile, Soviet approaches of describing history as a permanent class struggle, with inevitable clichés about the “religious obscurantism” that reigned in the “feudal past,” have become part of the historiographic discourses produced in scientific and educational institutions across Uzbekistan. These approaches were adopted even in the works of the archaeologists and architectural historians of Khwarazm.⁶ Adapting to the Soviet interpretations of history

4 اِتِّغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ

5 Later, I had to work with various kinds of manuscripts and *waqf* documents, in which the information about Islamic architecture was more diverse; however, they all had retained stable matrixes in assessing the “charitable deeds” of those who financed the constructions.

6 Ia.G. Guliamov, *Pamiatniki goroda Khivy. Trudy Uzbekistanskogo filiala Akademii Nauk sssr*,

and especially of religion was a difficult task, which each amateur historian solved in their own way. Some, such as the theologian Babajan Safarov (1891–1983),⁷ when describing the holy places of Khwarazm and the rituals practiced around them, preferred to criticize most pilgrimage practices (*zā'irīn*) as a form of violation of the fundamental religious law (*shari'a*), or as a manifestation of “backward thinking.” In this way he tried to bring his assessments closer to the Soviet critique of living religious rituals associated with shrines (*maz-ārs*).

Other authors tried to fill the vocabulary of their works with neologisms from the colonial period and the Soviet era, while using ideological remarks in the presentation of architecture. For example, by describing buildings as the product of the labour of the “working proletariat.” This was the only and effective way in which Soviet legitimization of ancient architecture could be achieved. The most revealing example in this sense is the work of the Khiva historian ‘Abdullāh Bāлтаev. He was a famous architect and restorer. His skills were highly appreciated by the Soviet government; he became a laureate of the Joseph Stalin State Award (1946),⁸ had governmental awards (orders and medals) and worked in various institutions related to the restoration and preservation of ancient monuments. Bāлтаev sincerely cared about architectural conservation, invariably calling historic buildings “the memory of the past” and urging authorities to treat them with care. In numerous passages of Bāлтаev’s writings, his concern for the original landscape of Khiva appears as a desire to connect the past with the present, or to restore this connection, which the Soviet ideology was trying so hard to destroy. However, his self-representation as a mediator between the “dark past” and the “bright future” (according to Soviet interpretations of the time vector denoting the progression towards Communism) was not understood in academic circles. His writings, submitted several times for publication, did not pass the censorship, again leaving their author stuck between the pre-Soviet and Soviet eras.

In this essay, I offer a brief review and analysis of some works by ‘Abdullāh Bāлтаev in which he describes the Islamic architecture of his native city of

series 1, vol. 3. *Istoriia arkheologii* (Tashkent: Izd-vo UzFAN, 1941), 2–4, 7; L.Iu. Man'kovskaia and B.A. Bulatova, *Pamiatniki zodchestva Khorezma* (Tashkent: Gafur Guliam, 1978).

7 About him and his work, please see Ulfat Abdurasulov and Nuryoghdi Toshov, “Soviet “Local” Knowledge: Babajan Safarov’s Notes on Slavery in Khwarazm,” in *Aus den Tiefenschichten der Texte. Beiträge zur turko-iranischen Welt von der Islamisierung bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. Nader Purnaqqheband and Florian Saalfeld (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2019), 265–292.

8 Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) was the Soviet political leader who led the Soviet Union from 1922 until his death in 1953.

Khiva.⁹ Here we can find occasional, but quite detailed descriptions of practices related to holidays (e.g. Nowruz, the Persian New Year), which according to a long tradition were held at the mausoleums of famous people. These works provide a good opportunity to look at the past through the eyes of the author, to find his place among the keepers and written records of the commemorative history of the inhabitants of Khiva.

1 New Power and Old Monuments. Báltaev as a Curator, Restorer and Historian of Medieval Architecture

Báltaev had to go through several stages of changing official attitudes towards the old architecture. At the very beginning of the Bolsheviks' power, the mindset towards old monuments was twofold. The ideology, based on a passionate desire to “destroy the old world,” first of all, affected the approach towards the “monuments of antiquity” which were perceived as models of the “culture of the exploiters.” However, the passion for destruction gradually subsided, aided in large by the old generation of orientalists, artists and art historians, as well as local enthusiasts and lovers of antiquities. They convinced the Bolsheviks that the monuments were examples of the outstanding creations of ordinary craftsmen, who by class origin were close to the “working proletariat.” All the more so, since the nation-building that began in the late 1920s demanded a search for “cultural roots.” That is why, the Soviet *patrimonialization*¹⁰ of the ancient architecture divided the cultural heritage according to the geographical locality of the new state formations situated mainly on the territory of Turkestan, Semirechye, the Bukhara and Khiva Khanates. Already then this her-

9 According to Dr. Nuregdi Toshev, 88 notebooks of ‘Abdullāh Báltaev are known, with a total volume of about one thousand pages, written in Arabic script. They contain descriptions of some events in the history of the Khiva Khanate, poems by the author and famous Muslim poets, descriptions and historical details about the construction of architectural monuments in Khiva and Khwarazm, etc. They are kept in the Abu Rayhan Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan (inv. no. 9321, 631, 11645, 11978 and others), and in a private collection of the author's grandson Odilbek Abdullaev, 77 notebooks (*daftar*). The bulk of these manuscripts are uncatalogued. For more information, please see Nuregdi Toshev, “Materialy Abdully Báltaeva po istorii Khivinskogo khanstva: predvaritel'nye zamecheniia,” in *Tsentral'naia Aziia v epokhu srednevekov'ia i novogo vremeni: obshchestvo, kul'tura, istochniki*, eds. Dilorom Alimova and Florian Schwarz (Tashkent, Vienna: Akademnashr, 2019), 76–91.

10 The various means by which cultural features—either material or immaterial—are turned into people's heritage.

itage obtained “nationality”—Uzbek, Tajik, Kazak, etc. These processes have been already described in detail by Svetlana Gorshenina.¹¹

Bältaev left a number of memoirs dedicated to the history and architecture of Khwarazm and Khiva. His largest work in the series of his so-called *Historical Notebooks* is the *Rules and procedures for the construction of architectural buildings* written at the beginning of 1965 (see Figures 13.3, Chapter 13).¹²

In the same year he completed another work entitled *History. Khiva's Monuments* which he designated as Daftar no. 47.¹³ Here we find even more information about the historical monuments of Khiva. The author evidently used not only oral data, but also materials known to him from the khan's period. He was familiar with the architectural epigraphy, sometimes citing texts in their entirety, or using information he had obtained from interviews with the old masters of Khiva. He gives a lot of evidence about disappeared monuments, personalities (patrons or burials in different mausoleums), circumstances of construction, architectural plans and drawings, height calculations and other extremely interesting and useful data (see Figures 13.4, 13.5, 13.6, and 13.7).

The author's remarks concerning the architectural epigraphy are particularly exciting. For example, describing the complex of the mystic poet Pahlavān Maḥmūd (d. 1327), Bältaev notes:

The tile mosaic masters who worked in this building [the mausoleum] inscribed over the entrance to the Falvān-bābā's burial chamber ... only one quatrain (*rubā'ī*). [...] These masters intended that the people who saw it would draw the *right conclusions for themselves*.¹⁴

11 Svetlana Gorshenina, “Turkomstaris-Sredazkomstaris-Uzkomstaris: formirovanie institutsii i etnotsentricheskii razdel kul'turnogo nasledia Srednei Azii,” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1 (2012): 52–68.

12 ‘Abdullāh Bältaev, *Arkhitektura binolarīnī sālīshdāghī qā'ida va tartīblārī*, Daftar no. 88, MS Khiva, Private collection of Odilbek Abdullaev, 1965.

13 ‘Abdullāh Bältaev, *Tā'rikh. Khīva isdalīklārī*, Daftar no. 47, MS Khiva, Private collection of Odilbek Abdullaev, 1965.

14 The text refers to the quatrain below by Pahlavān Maḥmūd, indentation mine:

سه صد کوه قافرا بهاون سو دن // نه طاق فلک بخون دل اندودن // صد سال اسیر بند زندان بودن
// به زانکه دمی همدم نادان بود

It is better to overcome three hundred mountains of Kaf / To color the vault of heaven with the blood of the heart / Or to be tethered in captivity for a hundred years / Than for one moment to be the companion of a fool. All translations from Persian and Arabic are by Bakhtiyar Babadjanov.



FIGURE 13.2 Cover of Bāltāev's *Historical Notebooks*, 1965 © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

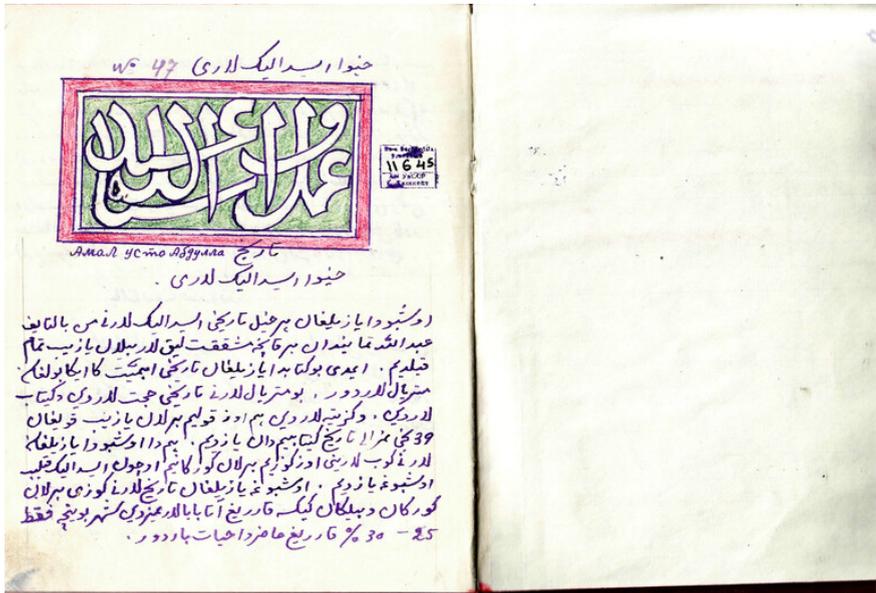


FIGURE 13.3 Entry on 'Amal Usto 'Abdullah in Bältaev's *Historical Notebooks*, 1965

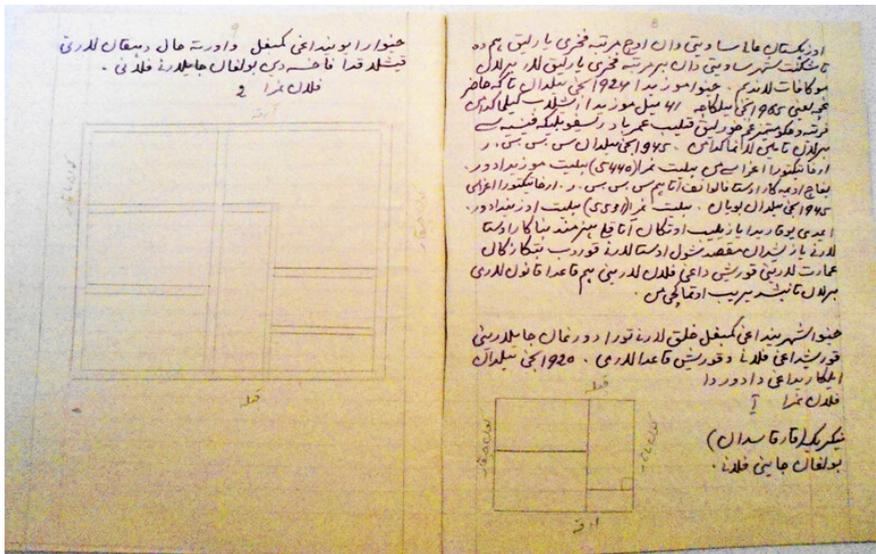


FIGURE 13.4 Architectural drawing from Bältaev's *History*. Khiva's Monuments, 1965 © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

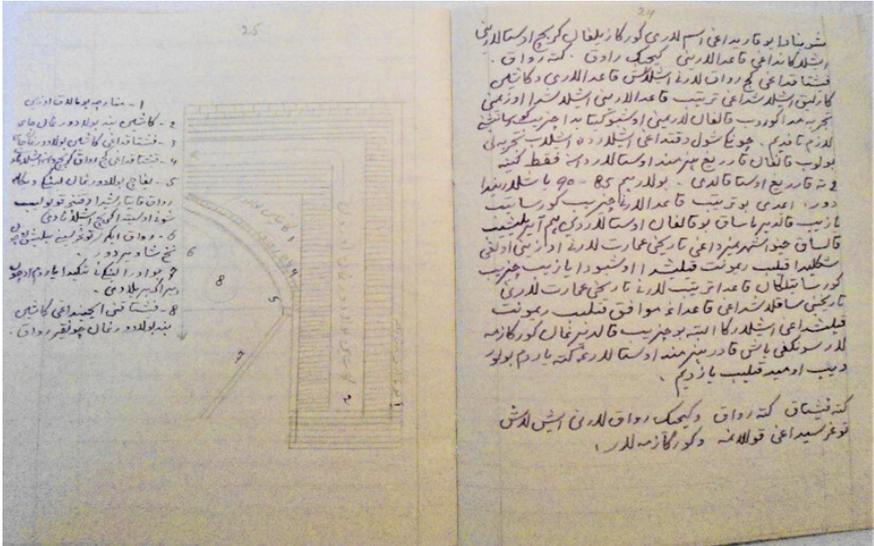


FIGURE 13.5 Drawing of a pishtaq from Baltaev's History. Khiva's Monuments, 1965 © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

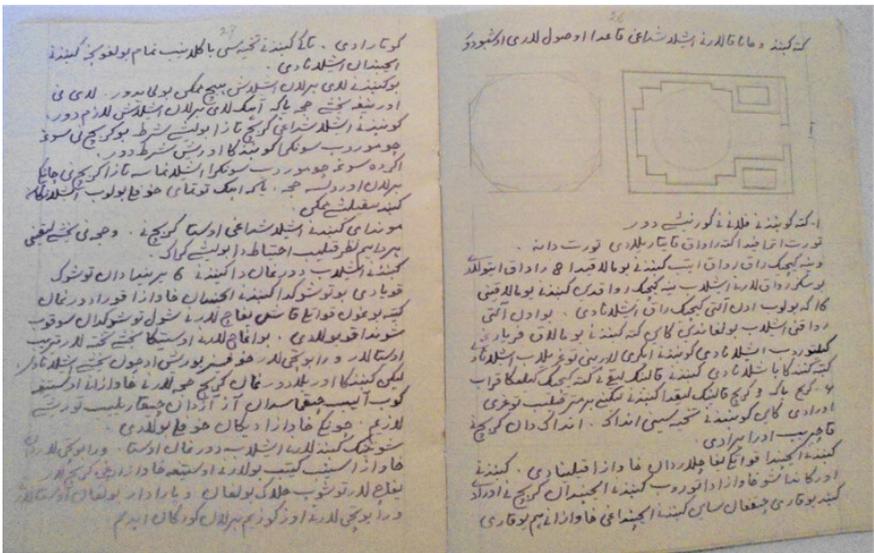


FIGURE 13.6 Drawing of a mausoleum's plan from Baltaev's History. Khiva's Monuments, 1965 © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

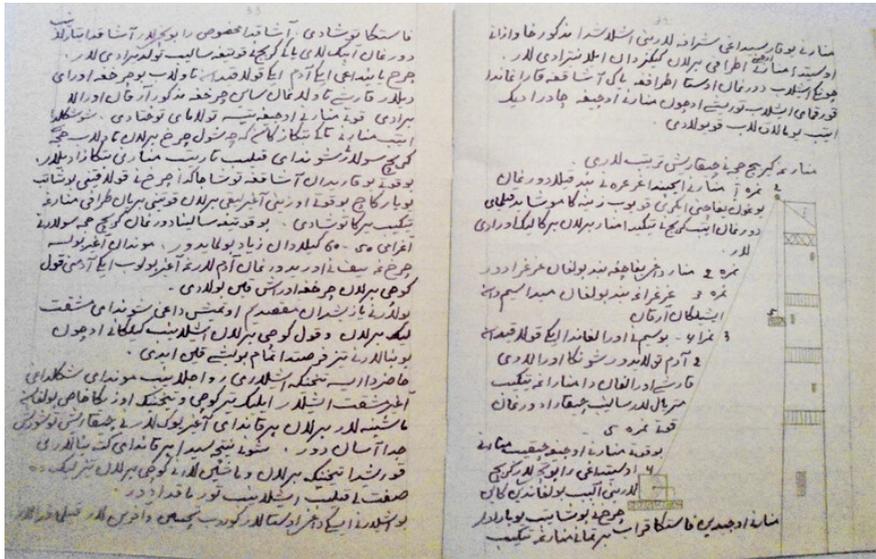


FIGURE 13.7 Drawing of a construction of a minaret from Bāltaev’s *History*. Khiva’s Monuments, 1965 © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

Here the author also cites the verse with a translation into Uzbek. Moreover, in this and other essays, Bāltaev refers to the architectural epigraphy and accompanies his brief remarks with statements on the “usefulness” or “necessary conclusions” that are derived when reading the inscriptions.¹⁵ For him, epigraphy must fulfil its direct function—to inform, to become a way of instilling ethical norms, to feed the collective memory of the community with specific names, dates, and events.

Bāltaev gives no less interesting information about the architecture of old Khiva and partly of Khwarazm in his other extensive historical essay *Materials on the History of Khwarazm, Khiva*.¹⁶ Following his style of a meticulous researcher of antiquity, Bāltaev provides information about monuments that were destroyed before his birth, and scattered information about them he collected all his life based on interviews with old masters and sources he read, including epigraphy. Such circumstances put Bāltaev’s works in the category of important, but, unfortunately, poorly demanded by the architectural historians of urban planning of Khwarazm and especially Khiva.

15 Ibid.

16 ‘Abdullāh Bāltaev, *Khwārazm tā’rīkhīga matir’iallār, Khīva*. Ms Tashkent. Abu Rayhan Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, inv. no. 9320, 1950.

It is also essential to note that for Bāltaev the reference to the architectural history of Khwarazm, especially his native Khiva, is not accidental. The ancient city, which for his fellow historians such as Safarov, was more of an ordinary historical background to events they described, and a familiar architectural landscape, became for Bāltaev part of his professional interest as an architect and designer. Typically, he always remained not only a spectator or an ordinary inhabitant of this landscape, but one of its creators, as a builder and later as a restorer.

In his works, among other reviews, we find interesting descriptions of the architecture of Khiva, in which the neologisms of the Uzbek language of the Soviet time are mixed with the original (old) names of architectural constructions, technologies, methods of artistic design, names of tools, (tracing) paper for drawings, etc.

In Bāltaev's descriptions, the medieval architecture of Khiva had already been transformed into "monuments." It is characteristic that sometimes he uses the terms in the form of neologisms—*Pāmītnīklār* (پامیتنیكلار), meaning "*Arkhātiktura*" (architecture), *Mauzalīy* (mausoleum), *Fataluk* (for потолок, ceiling), *Tāpāgraftīya* (topography), and others. Moreover, behind some Uzbek terms like *Tā'rikhīy imāratlār* (historic buildings), *Īsdalīklār*, *Yādgārliklār* (monuments), *Bīnākārlik maktablārī* (architectural schools) and similar words,¹⁷ their well-established Russian translations are easy to guess.¹⁸ While describing a particular site, he occasionally refers to the traditional designation of the monument according to the local historiographic tradition such as *Āthār-i 'atīqa* (آثار عتیقه), meaning "ancient monuments," followed immediately by the more contemporary phrase *Tā'rikhīy āhamīyatgā īgā' bo'lghān* (تاریخی اهمیت گایگه بولغان), having historical value.¹⁹

However, these are not just ordinary neologisms or characteristics of architectural structures, landscapes and their new functions relevant at that time. The author, judging by his descriptions, adopted new (Soviet) symbolic values, according to which "old architecture" is alienated from its former functions and becomes a "historical building," a "museum," transformed into a panorama and a model of scenery that delights the audience, and therefore should be preserved as "monuments of antiquity."

As an example, I would like to provide a translation of a few lines of his text:

17 Compare, for example, that the first few pages of *Khwārazm tā'rikhīya matir'i'allār* are devoted to the architectural rules used in medieval Khiva.

18 Bāltaev, *Khwārazm tā'rikhīya matir'i'allār*, 1–4.

19 *Ibid.*, 68–72.

Khiva—the most ancient city of Khwarazm.... Historic buildings (*tā'rikhīy bīnālār*), mausoleums (*mauzalāy*) have been built in this city for many centuries ... Since then, many historic buildings (*tā'rikhīy bīnālār*) have remained as monuments (*yādgārliklār*). Our government takes care of these monuments and allocates large funds for their preservation, repairs them well (*rīmuntlār qīlib*), reviving their original appearance. Seeing the samples of architectural work on these monuments of the 18th–19th centuries, people are delighted.²⁰

Obviously, by the time of writing of this and other similar works, Bāltaev was a witness to the reading of the Soviet cultural tradition, which became a direct heir to the imperial one. One can also say that by the 1960s there was a post-colonial (Soviet) *patrimonialization* of Islamic architecture according to European (Russian or Soviet) models, turning it into “monuments” worthy of showing to “spectators,” that is, offering their representation as objects of tourism.

Nevertheless, ‘Abdullāh Bāltaev combines neologisms and a new understanding of this architecture according to the religious and cultural notions with which he was brought up. For example, referring to the mausoleums of saints (Sufis, theologians), he writes about them with a reverence, trying to prove that they too are worthy to receive the usual classification of “a monument” and could be suitable for the Soviet appreciation of ancient architecture.²¹ In addition, the people buried there are worthy of being “written down in the history notebooks for the modern Soviet people.”²²

At the same time, he cites various parables and stories related to the history of the construction or use of the monuments and complexes he describes. The new historical interpretations of their loci created a space for the legitimization of the old architecture within the complex system of Soviet cultural revolutions. To illustrate this, I would like to cite Bāltaev’s descriptions of the Bābā Ḥārīs mosque and memorial complex. They are situated in the south-western sector of the Inner Fortress of Khiva, at the foot of the city wall. Bāltaev does not provide any information about the eponym of the al-Ḥārīsa *mazār*. However, he writes that this cemetery is very large, and the established memorial complex had a significant endowment.

20 Ibid., 2. The special value of this work is that, in addition to the technologies for decorating monuments, it presents the plans of some famous monuments in Khiva, the names of their master builders, the legends and stories associated with them, etc.

21 Bāltaev, *Khwarazm tā'rikhīga matir'iallār*, 50, 54.

22 Ibid.

Bältaev describes in detail the rituals, games and festivities during Nowruz, which was celebrated widely and was so popular that it was called “Bābā Ḥārīs celebrations” (بابا حاریس سیلی).²³ According to the author, it was held from time immemorial on the day of the vernal equinox, i.e. 21 March. Bältaev asserts that during the Soviet period, the authorities tried to ban the holiday. However, residents adapted in their own way and moved the dates of the holiday to 8 March and 22 April. As a reminder, the first date is a Soviet holiday—Women’s Day. The second date is Vladimir Lenin’s birthday (22 April 1870–20 January 1922).²⁴ According to Bältaev’s description, the complex around the *mazār* became the focus not only of funerary and memorial rituals, but also a place for the feasts of the living, again symbolizing the extraordinary symbiosis between cults and cult practices.

Bältaev does not simply describe these Soviet-era collisions with the Soviet legitimization of ancient festivals and architectural heritage. He makes it clear that the Soviet authorities gave a new life to these monuments, took care of them, and allocated large amounts of money for their restoration. He concludes in his writings: “What harm is there if the old festivals are mixed with the new ones? For in doing so, the old monuments will be preserved, the old festivals will take on new forms, and the new life will be more perfect.”²⁵

By the way, the dates of 8 March and 22 April were preserved as a time for pilgrimage (*ziyārat*) to the monuments. Although people have already forgotten about the date of Lenin’s birthday, 22 April has become a traditional day for *ziyārat* (see Figure 13.8).

2 Conclusion

‘Abdullāh Bältaev has always been not just a resident of the ancient landscape of his native city of Khiva, but one of its creators, as a builder and later as a restorer. However, the Soviet reality instilled in him a new perception of the monuments according to the notions, defined by Soviet orientalism and ideology.

23 According to unverified data, the toponym is associated with the name of al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj, who took part in the movement against the Umayyad Caliphate in Khorasan and Transoxiana in 734–747. However, al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj was killed in the battle near Merv and was buried there. In Khwarazm, as elsewhere in Central Asia, such imaginary graves associated with the names of commanders of the period of early Islam are quite common.

24 Vladimir Il’ich Lenin was the founder of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

25 *Askī bayramlār yāngülārī bilan chatışsa, ne zarar? Munda askī fāmiyatniklār saqlanar,*



FIGURE 13.8 Women performing ziyarat on 22 April and drinking water from the well at the Pahlavān Maḥmūd Shrine in Khiva © Bakhtiyar Babadjanov

His works combine a new view of Islamic architecture based on the religious and cultural traditions with which he was brought up. The style of his narration retained, to a greater or lesser extent, echoes of the manuscript tradition, which can only indicate a partial cultural alienation of the author from the past in which he was born and whose paradigms have not yet been definitively forgotten. However, he tried to fill it up with new or his own interpretative meanings.

For Bāltaev, it does not matter at all how an architectural structure in his native city will be called—a monument, a museum, a palace or architectural heritage. The important thing is that this familiar landscape will be safeguarded. In other words, the preserved architectural landscape and the almost untouched topographic environment consisting of old buildings became a very convenient space where different practices, traditional and Soviet prototypes of social communication, could mix. Most importantly in their free combination, Bāltaev and the majority of his fellow countrymen saw no disagreements. Similarly, for them there was no contradiction in mixing rituals and practices.

aski mayramlār yangi tus olar, yangi hayātini komilgha etkurur, Bāltaev, *Khivada Tāsh havli bināsining tāpagrafiyasi*, fol. 105^b.

One gets the impression that commemorative practices among traditional believers or ordinary people are quite capable of adapting to any political regimes and imposed ideological constructs, new rituals, holidays and paradigms. This does not mean that collective memory in this environment does not change or is not subject to external influences, including official ideology. However, a certain autonomy allowed it to survive in the most unfavourable moments of its existence.

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“Memory Traces:” Buston Buva *Mazār* in the Ferghana Region of Uzbekistan, 1980s–2010s

Věra Exnerová

This chapter studies memory and the diverse aspects of commemoration in Islamic Central Asia. Memory studies aim for “insight into practices of public remembrance and the sociocultural dynamics through which mediations of the past shape collective identities and inform social action”.¹ In this chapter, I am interested in the dynamism inherent in remembering, or what is called memory’s multi-directionality. I particularly study performances of memory as an ongoing process involving processes of both inscription and re-inscription on the example of the Buston Buva *mazār* (shrine, an Islamic sacred site) in the Ferghana district of Uzbekistan in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Memory studies have recently started to focus on “sites” of memory and the ways in which the past finds articulation in such places.² This research has been linked from the beginning primarily to analysing the different national memory cultures and institutions. Authors observe not only monuments or museums, but also novels, cities, personages, symbols and more. In that sense, memory studies are similar to studies of symbolism in politics. This discipline, originating in the modern sociology, studies the role of symbols and the signification in political life where symbol is “naturally typifying or presenting or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought.”³ The analysis focuses on how these symbols produce meaning, which is conveyed and interpreted with the aim to explore the legitimating of the political order. In the case of Central Asia, this scholarship has so far used different theories of representation or non-representation to analyse the

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- 1 *Transnational Memories: Sites, Knots, Methods*, ed. Brett Kaplan: Forum 3 August 2015. Available at <http://hgmsblog.weebly.com/blog/transnational-memories-sites-knots-methods>.
 - 2 *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, ed. Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–1998).
 - 3 Turner 1966, 19, cited in Sally N. Cummings, “Inscapes, Landscapes and Greyscapes: The Politics of Signification in Central Asia,” in *Symbolism and Power in Central Asia. Politics of the Spectacular*, ed. Sally N. Cummings (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 1.

process of signification on example of mass spectacles,⁴ art,⁵ Soviet narratives about conquering mountains,⁶ etc.

These approaches are close to the historical scholarship that analyses tradition crafting with the aim to explore the means for securing and maintaining social and political order, or what the above authors called “representations of political power.” This strand of scholarship importantly shows that the maintenance of some traditions needs a carrier, and these are always somehow linked with the existing ruling regime or ideology.⁷ Scholars studying Central Asia, however, have so far made little use of this literature, which finds relevance specifically in studies of the ancient Near East (archaeology), medieval Europe or Japan (emperor’s processions, signs, symbols, language). In the Central Asian context, rather heritage studies, and especially critical heritage analysis, are important. Discussions of epigraphy, memory and commemoration are framed by the contention that “heritage” is not something that simply exists, but reflects power relationships in the society and specific national ideologies. Authors illustrate these processes largely through the restorations of monuments, in particular from the Timurid period, in places such as Bukhara or Samarqand;⁸ within these discussions scholars note the need to address the questions of authenticity, involvement of different actors in the representation of Islamic architecture, its appropriation, etc. Other such studies however lack the reflective approach.

Recently scholars in Uzbekistan prepared an impressive series dedicated to the 25 years of Uzbekistan’s independence called *O‘zbekiston Obidalaridagi Bitiklar* (The Architectural Epigraphy of Uzbekistan).⁹ It covers in detail some of “the preserved monuments of architectural and partly memorial epigraphy, ornaments, and the history of the monuments,” including the provinces of the

4 Laura L. Adams and Assel Rustemova, “Mass spectacle and styles of governmentality in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan,” in Cummings, *Symbolism and Power in Central Asia*, 164–191.

5 Michael Denison, “The art of impossible: political symbolism, and the creation of national identity and collective memory in Post-Soviet Turkmenistan,” in Cummings, *Symbolism and Power in Central Asia*, 83–103.

6 Stuart Horsman, “Michael Romm’s *Ascent of Mountain Stalin*: a Soviet landscape?” in Cummings, *Symbolism and Power in Central Asia*, 67–82.

7 *Representations of Political Power. Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

8 Svetlana Gorshenina, “Samarkand and its cultural heritage: perceptions and persistence of the Russian colonial construction of monuments,” *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (2014): 246–269; see also Elena Paskaleva, “Samarqand Refashioned. A Traveller’s Impressions, August 2013,” *The Silk Road Journal* 11 (2013): 139–153.

9 *O‘zbekiston Obidalaridagi Bitiklar*, ed. Edward Rtveladze (Tashkent: Uzbekistan Today, 2016).

Ferghana valley.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it serves primarily as an official publication aimed to present Uzbekistan as one of the countries with the richest spiritual heritage in the world.¹¹

In either case, these strands of literature are very interesting and have an important potential to provide a needed insight into the ongoing dynamics in Islamic Central Asia and the role of memory production in its society and politics. However, all this scholarship relates its analysis in a way to a nation state or its ideology, be it the former Soviet Union, independent Uzbekistan, or previous historical periods. In this way authors suggest that at times there was a “real” or “true” memory and that now we study the artificial reconstructions of memory and its “sites.” By suggesting that the things previously were “real,” “true,” it divorces the current memory from the community of people, and links it to the nation state. In that way, while trying to “uncover” the dynamism of nation building or strategies of social and political order in the particular context, it only reinforces its narrative and contributes to its legitimation, while omitting serious processes out of the description. The aim of such studies is then to explore usually the processes of “re-inscription,” “restoration” instead of analysing a multi-directional dynamics of inscription *and* re-inscription, or coding *and* recoding in regards of memory making. These are important conceptual fallacies.

This chapter takes a different approach. It uses a new model of remembrance developed for example by Rothberg, Sanyal and Silverman.¹² It makes no assumptions about the contents of the communities or their memories (such as the homogenized Soviet Union or independent Uzbekistan stripped of its “true” past). It does not claim that before there was a “real” memory about the *mazārs*, veneration of saints, the mosques, and their architecture, while later during the Soviet regime and independent Uzbekistan we should analyse mostly artificial reconstructions of memory connected to national ideology and its legitimation. In that sense, this chapter is a critical response to the official writing of history in Central Asia where “monuments and documents testify to the victors’ point of view.”¹³ But it is also a reaction to the nation

10 *O'zbekiston Obidalaridagi Bitiklar. Farg'ona*, ed. Edward Rtveldadze (Tashkent: Uzbekistan Today, 2016).

11 The aim is to cover some 4000 “monuments of material and spiritual culture, which have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.”

12 *Noeuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*. Yale French Studies Series no. 118/119, ed. Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal and Max Silverman (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

13 Max Silverman, “Memory Traces: Patrick Chamoiseau and Rodolphe Hammadi’s *Guyane: Traces-mémoires du baigne*,” in *Noeuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar*

state story of national memory recounted in current memory studies in general, and disciplines of symbolism of political life and (critical) heritage studies in regards to Central Asia.

For describing a memory production, the approach used in this chapter relies on and draws inspiration from concepts such as "memory traces" ("traces-mémoires") or "knots of memory." In referring to a memory trace, scholars are interested in finding ways how "one write(s) things differently, so that the histories and memories (with their small letters) that official narratives have erased can be heard?" Silverman asks: "What poetics of text (and image) we can employ to convert the linear and monovalent narrative of the monument into the hybrid and multivalent vision of the memory-trace?"¹⁴ If talking about ruins (of a *mazār* for example), through such texts authors want to "transform the narrowly-circumscribed surface of the ruin into a complex network of echoes and reverberations across time and space."¹⁵

In the case of "knots of memory," authors such as Rothberg observe that "knotted" in all places and acts of memory are "rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference that exceed attempts at territorialisation (whether at the local or national level) and identitarian reduction."¹⁶ This strand of scholarship builds among others on the work of Maurice Halbwachs who introduced the concept of "social frameworks of memory."¹⁷ However, unlike the notion of network, the idea of "knots of memory" emphasizes the dynamism and what the authors call multi-directionality of memory. The concept of "knots of memory" is important exactly because it does not stipulate that memories, as well as groups, possess a coherent language of remembrance. Contrary to such methodological bias, the scholars argue for studies of "knots of memory" that do not make assumptions about the content of communities or their memories. "Performances of memory may well have territorializing or identity-forming effects, but those effects will always be contingent and open to resignification," as Rothberg explains.¹⁸

Both of these approaches offer a new prospective for the study of memory production in Central Asia. As this chapter illustrates, it significantly opens up the debate and brings new questions that would remain overshadowed if

French and Francophone Culture, ed. Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal and Max Silverman (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 225–238.

14 Silverman, "Memory Traces," 226.

15 *Ibid.*, 226.

16 Rothberg et al., *Noeuds de mémoire*, 7.

17 Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: PUF, 1952).

18 Rothberg et al., *Noeuds de mémoire*, 7.

authors link the process of memory production only to the nation state, politics or national ideology. It reaches beyond the imagined territories and identities that we usually use for study of memory and history of Central Asia. This approach also offers perspectives for the studies of *mazārs* in Central Asia. In the scholarly literature, the word *mazār* is usually used to refer to a broader cultural phenomenon, employing it as a generic term for a wide variety of Islamic sacred sites. The recent studies significantly focus on cultural, social, economic and historical values of the *mazārs*. Scholars especially work to “re-establish” the spiritual history of the *mazārs*, or to reconstruct the ways they are remembered.¹⁹ Other authors have shown that hagiography was part of the lives of Islamic scholars during the Soviet Union, too.²⁰ However, these studies do not take into account other processes and carriers that influence memory production with regards to the *mazārs*. This scholarship stipulates that there are coherent languages of remembrance, as well as groups that produce the memory. Mostly these scholars do not touch upon the question how else one might describe the process of memory production with regards to a particular *mazār*.

A number of scholars have emphasized that *mazārs* often had the status of political centres. By focusing on *mazārs* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, Bakhtiar Babadjanov shows that although ideally holy places should be the focus of sacred and spiritual practice, they never stay away from worldly issues, including politics and political events.²¹ Ashirbek Muminov describes the role of descendants of saints in the political affairs of the Khoqand Khanate (1709–1876).²² Studies about later periods suggest that diverse actors dynamically interacted when employing their social and political power with regards to *mazārs*.²³ This literature is significant because it argues

19 *Mazar Documents from Xinjiang and Fergana*, ed. Jun Sugawara and Yayoi Kawahara (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Press, 2006), see also Rian Thum, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

20 Stéphane Dudoignon, “From revival to mutation: the religious personnel of Islam in Tajikistan, from de-Stalinization to independence (1955–1991),” *Central Asian Survey* 30, no. 1 (2011): 53–80.

21 Bakhtiar M. Babadjanov, *Kokandskoe Khanstvo: vlast', politika, religii* (Tokyo, Tashkent: Yangi Nashr, 2010), 305–376.

22 Ashirbek Muminov, “Veneration of holy sites of the Mid-Sirdar'ya valley: continuity and Transformation,” in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the early 20th centuries*, ed. Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen and Dmitriy Yermakov (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996), 355–367.

23 Vera Exnerova, “The Veneration and Visitation of Graves of Saints in Soviet Central Asia. Insights from Southern Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan,” *Archiv Orientální* 83, no. 3 (2015): 501–536.

that we need to approach conceptually *mazārs* as “spaces” where sacred, spiritual and worldly often unexpectedly and dynamically intersect across different contexts. Memory studies argue that in order to “visualize the trajectories of the diverse peoples who found themselves there” we must “deconstruct” the idea that there is a coherent language of remembrance related to “spaces” such as *mazārs*.²⁴ In the case of Central Asia, this chapter aims to contribute to the study of *mazārs* by presenting a new way to explore memory production. It takes into consideration the accounts of actors and the dynamics that were overshadowed in the existing analysis because they have not come to conflict with the religious meaning of the *mazār*.

In line with the new trajectories in memory studies briefly outlined above, this chapter analyses the organic construct, the coding and recoding of the memory and the spiritual history of the Buston Buva *mazār*. It is not interested in a memory that was lost, and later had to be “maintained” or “rediscovered.” Rather, it shows that “memory emerges from unexpected, multidirectional encounters—encounters between diverse pasts and a conflictual present, to be sure, but also between different agents or catalysts of the memory.”²⁵ It particularly underlines the aspect of multi-directionality of memory and the dynamics inherent to public remembering. It is an initial attempt at bringing such conceptual innovations into the study of memory and *mazārs* in Central Asia from the twentieth to the twenty-first century and calls for further conceptual, theoretical and practical development of these approaches.

1 The Buston Buva *Mazār*

The *mazār* Buston (also Boston, Bustan) Buva is located in the village having the same name in the Buvaydo district (*tūmān*). This district lies to the north of the city of Khoqand in the Ferghana region of the Republic of Uzbekistan.²⁶ In the oral tradition people often narrate two versions of the origin of the *mazār*. The first legend connects the place to the brother of Shah Jalīl,

24 Silverman, “Memory Traces,” 226. This scholarship argues that we must reinvent the notion of monuments instead. In the case of Central Asia, however, the term “monument” was used by the Russian Tsarist and later Soviet administration. Consequently, it is problematic to come up with a power-neutral term in order to address these “spaces.”

25 Rothberg et al., *Noeuds de mémoire*, 9.

26 This district is named after a legendary woman—Bibi Ubayda. The population is more than 150,000 people.

who was the grandson of Muḥammad Jalīl (son of caliph ʿUthmān and Prophet Muḥammad's daughter Zaynab).

We find records of this story in the writings of Jamāl Qarshī from the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of fourteenth century. In more detail it is described in the story *Qiṣṣa-i Shāh Jarīr* (or *Qiṣṣa-i Safīd Bulān*).²⁷ The text was written in verse in Chaghatay Turkic by Shah Ḥakīm Khālīs (ca. 1778–1843). In this story, it is narrated that Muhammad married his daughter Zaynab to the future caliph ʿUthmān and they had a son Muḥammad Jarīr (Shah Jarīr, Jarīr Shah, Shah Jalīl). He led a campaign to Ferghana around 655AD, conquering the cities of Kuva, Akhsi, Kasan, etc. Also the governor of Ungor Karvan-bas was forced to submit to Shah Jarīr and gave his daughter Buvayda to one of the Arab commanders. Once Buvayda heard that her father discussed a plan to attack the Arabs during prayer, she told this to her new husband but he did not believe it. During the Friday prayer, however, in the area of Safid Bulan the Mugh attacked the Arabs and beheaded 2,800 people; many other Arabs fled. After the defeat Shah Jarīr left with his wife to Medina and died there. His son Shāh Fāzīl was born in Medina and forty years later he returned with his mother to Ferghana to fight in Kasan, defeated the Iḥshit and became the ruler of Ferghana. There he married a relative of his mother and they had a son Jarīr-Muḥammad (Shah Jarīr, Shah Jalīl). Shāh Fāzīl nominated his son as the ruler of Kasan but was poisoned at the ceremony and died. Bibi Buvayda and Jarīr-Muḥammad decided to leave to Medina then but died in the barren lands in the region of Khoqand. Their tombs became later *mazārs*. In the Buston Buva *mazār* people specifically venerate the tomb of the brother of Jarīr-Muḥammad.²⁸ By narrating this legend the orators consider themselves as custodians of the heroic deeds of Shah Jarīr, i.e. a person associated with the names of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the time when Islam was introduced to the region.

Other legends associate Buston Buva with the name of Khwaja Bāyazīd, or Sultan Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī, nephew of Khwaja Aḥmad Yasavī (d. 1166). He was

27 Note from the editors: The Al-Biruni Institute in Tashkent holds a number of manuscripts of *Qiṣṣa-i Shāh Jarīr* (inventory numbers 11619, 13055/4, 8844/3, 5660 /7, 5660/6). The work—a *masnavī* of ca. 5500 verses—is also known under the title *Qiṣṣa-i Shāh Jarīr va Qussam ibn Abbās*. It has been published in Cyrillic script under the title *Сафед Булон қиссаси*. See Lola Azimova, “Холис Тошкандий Ва Абдуқамом Ваҳмий Ижодида Ислому Тарихи Воқеаларининг Бадиий Талқини (XIХ Аср),” under *Алломалар*, 28 June 2022 <https://www.bukhari.uz/?p=22690>.

28 Sergey Abashin, “Safid-Bulan,” in *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiyskoi imperii. Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, ed. S.M. Prozorov (Moskva: Vostochnaya literatura RAN, 2001), 88.

supposedly one of the *pīrs* (spiritual leaders) of Amir Timur.²⁹ The historian Hamidjon Islomiy describes the meeting of Amir Timur with Khwaja Bāyazīd and comments on the fact that Timur came to visit him. He sees it as a confirmation that Khwaja Bāyazīd was a famous and well-known personality of that time. Alisher Navoi notes on Amir Timur’s allegiance to Khwaja Bāyazīd, and his admiration of the Prophet, too.³⁰ These legends and sources make the *mazār* an important place to visit or perform *ziyārat* (pilgrimage, ritual at a shrine).³¹ Besides these legends, there are the natural phenomena in a form of renowned sand dunes around the Buston Buva *mazār* that are connected in oral tradition with curing miracles. Myths and beliefs about the healing powers of the sands are kept in different parts of the Ferghana valley and Central Asia in general.³²

Today, we do not have many sources to gain relevant insights into the practices of public remembrance or the social and cultural dynamics through which the mediations of the past shaped the identity and informed the social action at the Buston Buva *mazār* in the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth century. The memories of older generations are already overshadowed and narrated through the current circumstances. The official reports are also a “matter of obfuscation rather than an actual reflection of reality”³³ since they are written through the perspective of victors and their struggle between communism and veneration of saints, or religion in general.

We can observe from different external aspects and secondary sources that the “space” and the *mazār* had some kind of relevance to the practices of public remembrance. Above we already noted that Alisher Navoi wrote that if Amir Timur was in contact with this *pīr* (Khwaja Bāyazīd), it was used to legitimize its own rule. According to Babadjanov historical account about the Khoqand

29 People associate the construction of the mausoleum at the *mazār* with the name and time of Timur, too. It is necessary to note that different people in the Ferghana valley have kept legends about Amir Timur as a legendary figure until today.

30 Nodirbek Abdulahatov, Abdujabbor Rahmonov and Muhammadjon Ahmedov, *Buvayda ziyoratgohlari. “Bibi Ubayda Yohud Safed Bulon Qissasi” Asosida* (Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi, 2013), 133.

31 People visit often Buston Buva along with two other *mazārs*—Bibi Buvayda and Podsho Pirim. Bibi Buvayda is considered as the first woman who converted to Islam in Ferghana, and a saint patron for women. People at times believe those women who have not visited this *mazār* will fail to cook tasty food (*Bibi Ubaydaga bormagan ayolni ovqati shirin bo’lmaydi*). In neighbouring Podsho Pirim people venerate the tomb of Shāh Jalil who is thought to be the patron of the Ferghana valley.

32 Abdulahatov, Rahmonov, Ahmedov, *Buvayda ziyoratgohlari*, 130.

33 Devin DeWeese, “Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: A Review Essay on Yaacov Ro’i’s *Islam in the Soviet Union*,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2002): 298–330.

Khanate, khans were at times spending religious or spring festivals at the *mazārs*, complementing these events by *ziyārat* rituals, listening to people's problems, distributing gifts, etc. Conquering new territories was complemented by visiting and pilgrimage to local *mazārs*, endowing property to them (*waqf*), preparing charitable food, etc. The association with the saint served the rulers as a tool for legitimation. Any of these actions carried out in (famous) *mazārs*, received specific spiritual legitimacy, which was also the goal of the rulers.³⁴ We can infer that the Buston Buva *mazār* had some relevance during the rule of Narbuta Beg (r. 1774–1799), or Khudāyār Khan (r. 1845–1875). The original mosque at the *mazār* was constructed according to the locals by the Khoqand khan Narbuta Beg at the end of the eighteenth century. In the area of the *mazār* there is also a *hawz* (water reservoir) that was given as a *waqf* to the *mazār* by Khudāyār Khan. We find other references to the political importance of the *mazār* in the written sources, too. One for example indicates the importance of this space in the military efforts of Shīr 'Alī Khan: according to the historian Muhammad Hakimhon tura "the Khoqand khan Shir 'Ali during military expeditions visited the area with the name of Sulton Boyazid Bastomiy."³⁵

In his account, Babadjanov also notes that attacks on *mazārs* could have been perceived as delegitimizing for the existing rulership.³⁶ It was not always the case that during the conflicts these "spaces" had immunity. In this we can observe important continuity with the Soviets in the regions of Central Asia and policies towards the "spaces" such as *mazārs* including Buston Buva *mazār*. Usually, the period between the 1920s and the 1970s is studied as traumatic for the *mazārs* and other religious or architectural buildings in Central Asia, when they were demolished, used for other purposes, veneration was forbidden and persecuted, etc. The main emphasis in the scholarly literature is on the concept of a traumatic experience that was not known before. Yet, the memory practices might have differed from the common "tortured" history of the Soviet legacy.

By all accounts, the Buston Buva *mazār* was officially "closed." The mosque built with the funds of Narbuta Beg was used as a storage for cotton by the *kolkhoz* (Soviet collective farm) administration. The relevance was presumably linked to the fact that there was a clear conflict going on between the existing authorities and the new regime; the *mazārs* and the mosques were "attacked" or adjusted as a sign of taking control, power over the region. Furthermore, the new authorities sought legitimation by securing a "public consent" for

34 Babadzhano, *Kokandskoe Khanstvo*, 626–640.

35 Abdulhatov, Rahmonov, Ahmedov, *Buwayda ziyoratgohlari*.

36 Babadzhano, *Kokandskoe Khanstvo*, 631–632.

such actions (it was the “return” of these places to their rightful owners—the people).³⁷ In oral history, the *kolkhoz* administrations in general took over the control of the buildings associated with former mosques and *mazārs*. They turned them into storage centres for drying cotton, or their bricks were used for construction projects. For example, in other place people remember that the *mazār* of the famous poet and saint Huvaydo, close to the Chimion *qishlāq* (rural settlement, village), was destroyed and its bricks were used in 1937 for the construction of a place to store cotton.³⁸ The local authorities at the *raion* (district) level were required to take over control of buildings associated with former mosques and the graves of saints, and to transform them into places promoting cultural or enlightenment objectives. If not, they had to at least “close” them.³⁹

Of course, this was taking place on the backdrop of very complex general dynamics and processes on the all-Union level with regards to the “monuments,” “architecture,” and “art” in general.⁴⁰ The diverse authorities dealt with the question of “authenticity” versus “non-authenticity.” We can observe how the Soviet organs also used the idea of “original,” real historical place as being opposed to “unoriginal,” fake space that does not demand special respect and veneration in the cases of some *mazārs*. Yet, it was not the case in the Buston Buva *mazār* as far as it is evident from the oral history.

Shortly after the Second World War, a monument was constructed in front of the cemetery to commemorate those killed in the war.⁴¹ It could be interpreted as attempts to appropriate the place actively for the justification of the Soviet polices and the communist state project. In the words of local inform-

37 In 1937, for example, one such order urged the local organs to include protocols regarding the public gatherings of the working class of the relevant *kolkhoz*, *sel'sovet* (rural council) or town into the dossiers linked to the closing of prayer houses and cemeteries, see Exnerova, “The Veneration and Visitation,” 509.

38 Interview with a *shaykh* in Huvaydo *mazār*, Chimion, May 2008.

39 The actions of local governmental and party organs were supported by the 1929 *Law on Religious Associations* that allowed Muslim communities to formally run a religious association or mosque and to observe religious needs but only if accredited by the state, see N.M. Orleanskii, *Zakon o religioznykh ob'edineniakh RSFSR i deistvuiushchie zakony, instruksii, tsirkuliary s otdel'nymi kommentariiami po voprosam svyazannym s otdeleniem tserkvi ot gosudarstva i shkoly ot tserkvi v Soiuzе SSR* (Moskva: Centralny Sovet Soyuza Voinstvuyushchikh Bezbozhnikov SSSR, 1930), 5–26.

40 See E.D. Kul'chinskaia, K.V. Rytsarev and A.S. Shchenkov, *Pamiatniki arkhitektury v Sovetskom Soiuzе. Ocherki istorii arkhitekturnoi restavratsii* (Moskva: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2004).

41 In other cases, such as in neighbouring Bibi Buvayda *mazār*, the monument was erected within the feast area, just before the entrance to the cemetery.

ants, however, the position of the monument does not really come into conflict with the meaning of the space in terms of *ziyārat* and veneration of Buston Buva. One informant told me: “All those commemorated in the Great Patriotic War monument were from the Buvaydo *raion*. It was appropriate to raise a monument for them on this place, next to the cemetery and the grave of a saint! They were martyrs.” Based on this example we can only observe that the space had a relevance in the 1950s as a place of remembrance (every year on the anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War official events were organized there) and that we are not able to infer how the dynamics took place. Today we can see that the new gate was constructed or reconstructed in the 2000s next to the Second World War memorial, so that currently authorities and people consider the gates to be both part of public memory.

Babadjanov rightfully argues that it was common for *mazārs* to be attacked during conflicts and power conquests; people believed that the disrespect of rulers towards a *mazār* would bring disaster or illness to them.⁴² This was happening during the Soviet period in different cases in neighbouring districts and villages. Different people believed that demolition of holy places would bring misfortune and refused to participate in the destruction of *mazārs*, or narrated stories how it was impossible to destroy a certain *mazār*.⁴³ In case of the Buston Buva *mazār*, however, we cannot detect any record of such cases.

2 Buston Buva *Mazār* in the 1980s–2010s

In the period 1980s–2010s we have more information regarding the practices of public remembrance and socio-cultural dynamics. Here we can rely on semi-structured interviews with *shaykhs*, *mutawallīs* (endowment trustees), workers of public foundations responsible for tourist sites such as *Oltin Meros* (Golden Heritage) who have been involved in the reconstruction and management of *mazārs*. We can also include discussions with the employees of the State Directorate for the Protection of Architecture who are responsible for the architectural monuments, with local historians, and carry out textual analysis of epigraphy of the site, photographic documentation and recent publications about the *mazār*.

It is important to note that the narratives are framed mostly within the official goal of “rebirth” of saint veneration, “reconstruction” of *mazārs*, holy

⁴² Babadzhanov, *Kokandskoe Khanstvo*, 632.

⁴³ Exnerova, “The Veneration and Visitation.”

places and Islamic sites in general (mosques, madrasas, etc.), and “return” to authenticity after more than a century and a half after the Russian conquest. Nonetheless, in reality the research reveals that in the case of the Buston Buva *mazār* there are no coherent languages or groups producing memory. The public remembrance is dynamic and multidirectional, and it emerges from unexpected encounters between different actors and their own past and present.

In the early 1980s, the *mazār* was described as an example of an architectural monument built in the Ferghana style. It was discussed in the book entitled *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Ferganskoï doliny* published by Iskandarbek Azimov in 1982.⁴⁴ Azimov prepared the text on the basis of general research on the monuments of the Ferghana valley for the “List of historical and cultural monuments of Uzbekistan”, that was conducted by a task research group at the Institute of Art History in Tashkent, with active and regular cooperation with the Uzbek Society for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Monuments. The book was written like a guide to all important historical and cultural monuments of the Ferghana valley within 400 km.⁴⁵ In this case, it would be interesting to explore the idea of symbolism in politics because it is evident that the Soviet state have used the “space” and its symbolism for the sake of its own legitimation.

The book itself does not provide any fascinating insights beyond the quasi neutral description of the place. It explains that the mausoleum of Buston Buva, along with other shrines called Bibi Buvayda, and Podsho Pirim, were established in the period when the Shibanids embellished their capital Bukhara and added Ferghana to their orb. For Azimov, the site could be understood as a manifestation of the architectural art of Ferghana that remains since the sixteenth century to the present and did not disappear even in the period when the region represented the remote borderlands of the Shibanid state.⁴⁶ As for the “shrine” Bustan Buva, Azimov writes:

Local elders narrate that the brother of Shoh Jalil was buried here, and they link the building of the mausoleum to the name of Timur, and although historical facts about the time of construction do not exist, or are not known, according to the architectural forms, constructions,

44 Iskandarbek Azimov, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Ferganskoï doliny* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1982).

45 Azimov, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki*, 18.

46 Azimov, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki*, 14.

and building materials the mausoleum can be dated to the XV–XVI century.⁴⁷

He also describes the architectural design of the building:

A monumental portal with two cylindric towers (*gul'dasta*) with an entrance orientated to the East. A rectangular building (15 × 7,2 m), built from burnt brick, consists of two rooms, covered by domes, a shrine with refracted headstone (*sagana*) and a memorial mosque. The *ziyorkhona* is crosswise in the plan, *gurkhona* is square. The mausoleum is without decoration, only at the portal there are remains of solar signs (concentric circles with stars). The architectural expression of the building reached monumental forms.⁴⁸

It is also not the first book that describes the monument of Buston Buva through this perspective. In 1939, a group of archaeologists from Tashkent shortly visited the place during the archaeological research carried out in the context of the construction of the Ferghana channel. The head of the expedition Iakh'ia G. Guliamov writes:

Basta-baba. The nineteenth-century two-domed mausoleum is located in the territory of the Urgandzhi railway station, between Namangan and Khoqand, southward of the railway line. The legend associates that mausoleum with shaykh Bayazid Bastami, one of the founders of the mystic Islamic tradition. The Fergana citizens call it just the mausoleum of Bastom-baba. Every year from mid-August, the residents from different parts of the Ferghana region come here to take sand baths.⁴⁹

However, there were also other factors that influenced the practices associated with memory production and public remembrance around the Buston Buva

47 Azimov, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki*, 37.

48 Azimov, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki*, 37.

49 Guliamov also writes that “this site is a barren steppe, on which the dunes of drifting sand are moving. The building of the mausoleum of Bastom-baba is surrounded by one of them. The mausoleum is situated at the edge of the oasis, which represent the end of the cultural earth of the Molotov district. Then the steppe area extends further north and eastward.” See Iakh'ia G. Guliamov, “*Otchet o rabote tret'ego otriada*,” in *Materialy Arkheologicheskoi ekspeditsii na stroitel'stve Bol'shogo Ferganskogo Kanala imeni I.V. Stalina*, *Trudy Instituta istorii i arkheologii Akademii Nauk Uzb. SSR*, vol. 4. (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1951), 85–122.

mazār in the early 1980s. According to the local memories, Azimov included this *mazār* and other neighbouring monuments (such as Bibi Buvayda and Podsho Pirim *mazārs*) in the book because he was from the Ferghana province. In other words, he was familiar with the region and its *mazārs*. He also chose the study of local sites as a theme for his dissertation that later became the basis for his book. We do not know, however, whether Azimov was in any way linked particularly to the Buston buva *mazār* or other “monuments” described in the book.

The particular socio-cultural dynamics of the site can explain why the *mazār* appeared on the list of architectural monuments of the Uzbek Society for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Monuments (called mostly *Okhrana pamiatnikov*, Protection of Monuments) in the early 1980s. In the oral history, people explain that this was on the initiative of a certain Bakhtiyor. “His relatives lived here. And he was working in Tashkent for *Okhrana pamiatnikov*. It was Bakhtiyor who secured that the shrine was put on the list,” explains the *mutawalli* of the *mazār* today. Allegedly his ancestors were buried in this cemetery and he linked his ancestry with Buston Buva.

A broader field study of mosques or *mazārs* that were put on the list of protected sites in the 1970s–1980s in the Ferghana region suggests a certain pattern in this regard. In the case of smaller *mazārs*, it was very random whether they got on the list of protected monuments or not. The links of a particular staff member with a site, based on a family lineage, or spatial belonging, played an important role. This is confirmed also when looking at the system of architectural protection in the Uzbek SSR. The employees associated with the Uzbek Society for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Monuments and the Institute of Art History had a symbolic power derived from the place of the institutions for which they worked in the ideology and legitimacy of the Soviet regime. According to some accounts, often wives of important officials were employed at the Institute. There were also specialists with expert knowledge working for the Society. Nonetheless, there were limited funds for travelling to the provinces, and it demanded efforts and personal interests to carry out research on the sites and to secure their proper protection. The result was that scholars described and influenced spaces that were somehow related to their social or personal interests.

Within these dynamics, also a minor reconstruction was carried out at the Buston Buva *mazār* during the early 1980s. According to local memories, people from the *Okhrana pamiatnikov* came from Khoqand in 1984 to inspect the place before reconstruction. The reconstruction of the outer parts of the *mazār* was carried out by a local master, who came from a restorer’s family in which the art of restoration was passed down from generation to generation; he had also

gained official certification from the master school in Tashkent.⁵⁰ In public memory, this was considered as positive in the narrative of informants; the *mutawallī* started the history of the shrine with this story. At that time, Karim Kurbanov was a gravedigger in Buston Buva. He took an active part both in the official visits and in the reconstruction. Buvi Sobira Saloxidinova and Nisobuvi Egasheva were shaykhs. The role of the *imām* (the person who leads prayers) was occasionally performed by Israil qori Eshkuziev from the Buston Buva *qish-lāq* (in the 1970s–1980s), who worked as a seller of meat in the village.⁵¹

It is interesting that during the same period, the ritual visitation of sands around the Buston Buva *mazār* was forbidden, and the sand instead was used for construction. If previously no one used the sand for building—presumably fearing the revenge of the saint, as was already mentioned in other cases—from the 1980s onwards, different individuals started to use the sands for making bricks or for other constructions. There was the tendency to use the building materials from former mosques, *mazārs*, etc. also in the past. Some argued that these were often high-quality materials, wood, bricks that were otherwise unavailable in the region especially after the First World War, the Civil War, as well as later after the Second World War. This practice depended mostly on people's individual decisions, often based on their own interest.⁵² For example, although the mosque at the Buston Buva *mazār* remained untouched until 1965, in that year it was destroyed and its wooden beams were used to construct the summer tent for the local *Oktiabr kolkhoz* in the Buvaydo *raion*.⁵³

Prior to the 1980s, different people remember the time spent at the sand dunes during the August weeks as a joyful time where *ziyarat* and other healing rituals were performed. The *mutawallī* narrates: “In the 1960s–1970s every sum-

50 Unfortunately, the master did not keep any plans, or photos, etc. from this period. The first master school was opened in Tashkent and then after the 1970s also in Andijan, Khoqand, etc.

51 In some other place, the *kolkhoz* leadership nominated as the guardian an illiterate tractor driver in order to prevent the authorities from intrusion.

52 Today some of the old mosques are being damaged, if they do not fit, or are used as restaurants, it depends on individual people and encounters between different agents and catalysts of memory who do not need to be necessarily linked to the religious theme, political issues, etc. Nowadays it is forbidden to use the sands from Buston Buva for construction purposes.

53 Summers in the Ferghana valley turn out very hot and *kolkhoz* workers need a tent (*shipon*) to hide from the sun or when having food. In these *shipons* at times, also prayers were performed illegally in the past. In the 1960s a campaign against the visitation of holy places started within the official system. In 1966 an article was published about Buston Buva in the local press describing “fake” legends about the curing capabilities of sands and the “inappropriate” practices there.

mer during July and August more than 20,000 people from all corners of Uzbekistan, including Jambul and Chimkent in Kazakhstan came here. There were performances of ropewalkers and wrestlers. During those days about 20–30 truck cars were selling melons for those who came.” Furthermore, the *kolkhozes* sent people here prior to the cotton collection season for recreation. Toshmatov and Ho’jayev bring up the memory of one man who recollects from his childhood how he had observed people travelling to Buston Buva every August. “One week or ten days before the collection of cotton, farmers and women went there. They made *ziyorat* to Buston Buva and dreamed of curing head and leg pain with the warm sand. If they would buy sweets and toys for kids like us, we would be happy.”⁵⁴ We can observe the relevance of these practices in the Buston Buva also from the previous note of Guliamov, and in official reports.⁵⁵

It was the same practice in other *mazārs*, too. People remember how every year before harvesting their *kolkhoz* sent them to places such as Shahimardon, even donated a sheep, etc. Not far in the Huvaydo *mazār*, for example, the shaykh recalls: “In Soviet times, people came here from as far as Khorezm and Bukhara. They built a sanatorium five kilometres from here. People came here on Fridays to pray at the shrine,” combining their vacation with the veneration of the grave of the saint.⁵⁶ Many of the guests made sacrifices there, brought gifts and recited prayers, performed the rituals (both the spiritual and the accompanying ones) specific for the place. These are positive memories of the people. These issues are not being taken into account in the scholarly literature about *mazārs* and the production of memory, because they do not come into conflict with religion, or the spiritual meaning of the place. However, here we observe that the practices were multi-directional, and the dynamics through which the collective identity was formed and the past mediated were not coherent. It emphasizes that one cannot afford to pre-imagine the communities while studying the practices of public remembrance in general and in particular with regards to *mazārs*.

The same could be said about the next decades. As already noted, for the past thirty years the history and public remembrance associated with the *mazārs* has been linked to investigation and reconstruction of the “spiritual history”

54 T. Toshmatov and E. Ho’jayev, *Bibi Ubayda va buvaydaliklar* (Farghona: Farghona Nashriyoti, 1996), 213.

55 Here we can refer also to other sources that describe *mazār* visitations and veneration of holy graves in the 1920s–1940s. See Ashirbek Muminov, “Veneration of holy sites of the Mid-Sirdar’ya valley: continuity and transformation” and Exnerova, “The Veneration and Visitation.”

56 Interview with a *shaykh* in the Huvaydo *mazār*, Chimion, May 2008.

of the particular *mazārs*, the role of saints and the social history of the *mazārs* in the past, primarily before the establishment of the Soviet rule, and study of “rebirth” of veneration of saints and their graves since the 1990s. In the 2000s when I started with the research, I was interested in and studied the narratives of the *mutawallīs* and the shaykhs in order to analyse the oral history of the *mazār*, especially in the 1950s–1980s. But as the case of Buston Buva and other *mazārs* revealed to me that the informants have had often a history of working for the *militiia* (police forces in both Soviet or post-Soviet contexts), or have been heads of the *mahalla* (local neighbourhood) or *raion* committees, etc. It has been quite normal that after retirement in the *organs* (a term usually associated with the (secret) police), men have dedicated their lives to *savob* (praiseworthy) activities in the Central Asian region in general.⁵⁷ People have sought to contact these personalities and to secure their support in different matters, either institutional, or financial, since they are perceived as a source of power and have a social status irrespective of their past. If we cover the ideological garb that we expect to form the memory, there is the interesting and unexpected continuity that provides another context for studying public remembrance related to *mazārs* in the 1990s–2010s.

In 1994–1995 efforts were made in Buston Buva to re-establish the previous mosque that was destroyed in 1965 and to build a new one. When asked where the funds for construction of the new mosque came from, the informants explained: “The chairman of the *kolkhoz* had a minimum of ten million roubles in his bank account at that time.” These funds came from the trade with cotton and other products that the *kolkhozes* were allowed to operate with around the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the first years of independence. My field research shows that in other cases in the second half of the 1980s, early 1990s the *kolkhoz* chairmen initiated, or used the funds of the *kolkhoz* bank account to spend it on mosque construction and/or reconstruction. When the externally exposed regime was visibly liberating or falling apart, they were able to justify their social status in the new changing conditions and to maintain their power positions.

The site of the *mazār* was initially partially reconstructed through *hashar* (a self-help community tradition in Central Asia used for cleaning small channels in the spring in the villages and other activities, such as building a house for a new couple, etc.). Those that participated in the reconstruction were mainly activists of the *mahalla* (usually they worked in the *kolkhoz*, operated a tractor,

57 Few examples from recent field work include 55–70-year-old men who after career in the organs of security dedicate their time to managing cultural associations and different public funds, issuing and repairing old and religious books, etc.

etc.). In this case, the funding came mostly from ordinary people, those performing *ziyārat*. "People coming here were giving small banknotes, meters of textiles, etc. and this was used for the repair," explains M., who took over the coordination of the reconstruction at that time. M. was a devoted *komsomolets* (a member of the all-Union Leninist Young Communist League) and in 1995 he started to work in the public foundation *Oltin Meros*.⁵⁸ For M., however, his participation in the reconstruction of the *mazār* was connected to his personal interest and social status. M. told me that he was related to Podsho Pirim (Shah Jalil, brother of the saint whose grave is according to the legend in Buston Buva) through his father's line. Before explaining the history of the *mazār* of the past thirty years, he had an opening speech where he claimed that the *mazār* actually "chose" him for leading the repair. He emphasized that he looked like his great-great-grandfather, a relative of Podsho Pirim. He also mentioned that "we Uzbeks very much value the knowledge and education." Regarding the idea of a *mazār* reconstruction, he noted: "They told me I was a fool! But then they all followed me."⁵⁹

M. explained that when he started the reconstruction, there was no money. There was a certain moment when he even fed masters with noodles only, promising them that "when I have money, I will pay you." According to M. at that time a person from the Kazakhstan's town of Chimkent came, his ancestors had come from Podsho Pirim and he was somehow related to the saint. First M. refused him: "He said it is my debt, it is my obligation, but I said that the responsible person was not there," pretending that he was not in charge. M. continues: "then he came again, returned and said 'you misunderstood me, I want to help you'. In the end this person offered to invest into the reconstruction of the *mazār*. Indeed, he funded most of the *mazār*'s repair!" M. concludes.

I was interested in the way the authorities reacted to the fact that a person from Chimkent wanted to fund the repair of the *mazār*. M. and the others told me that they were not concerned at all. M. explains: "You need to send a letter to the Protection of Monuments, they need to confirm it formally, but they do not mind who it is doing the job."⁶⁰ There is even a pressure at times

58 When we met, he and the others were joking about the fact that he wore the *Komsomol* badge until he went on hajj.

59 The interviews were carried out in April and October 2016. For the sake of privacy, I am not using the full name of the informants. M. also added that down his mother's line there is another *mazār* (So'fi *azizlar*) which needs to be reconstructed and he wants to do the work.

60 In case of *muhājirs* (immigrants) who fled and settled down in Afghanistan, Turkey or Saudi Arabia, and wanted to support mosque or madrasa reconstruction since the 1990s, the authorities have been more careful.

from the upper echelons to reconstruct the *mazārs* and formally open them again. M. and others sitting around explain: “Sometimes the government does the reconstruction. But at times they force businessmen or successful people to contribute funds. There are also own master workrooms that participate in the reconstruction. They want to have it reconstructed, what do you think! It is income for them ...” It turns out that both organizations such as the Protection of Monuments or *Oltin Meros* should contribute funds for reconstruction, but they do not do this very often.⁶¹ This analysis provides us with a very different level of understanding if we are interested in the phenomena of “rebirth” of spirituality and veneration of saints in independent Uzbekistan.

In Buston Buva, they also told me that there was an interesting follow-up after the reconstruction was finalised. According to M., the person from Chimkent wanted to slaughter a camel, but the authorities and local organs got really afraid that this would attract many people. Instead, they collectively decided to slaughter a sheep. The Chimkent person then did not come to the opening. He came afterwards and put in new locks on the *mazār*. He had the key (i.e., he employed his symbolic power, and influenced the social order beyond the borders of the country).⁶² According to M., at that time a struggle began about who would “rule the key”.

It is important to note here that the whole story is complicated and the interpretations of speakers are changing according to their previous, current or multiple affiliations. They might have worked for the Protection of Monuments, *Oltin Meros*, museums, or state authorities, etc. Simultaneously, the same *mutawallī* can be appointed by an *Oltin Meros* representative, as well as by a Protection of Monuments representative, depending on who controls the place currently. For example, according to M. in 2011 all monuments were inscribed on the List of the Inspection (Protection of Monuments). They formally appointed A.B. (65 years old) as the *mutawallī* who used to work there. But M. had to go, since the place did not fall under the authority of the Khoqand regional office of *Oltin Meros* anymore. There was a similar competition or institutional rivalry and changes during the Soviet Union in the case of large *mazārs*

61 The Uzbek constitutions stipulates that cultural monuments are protected by the state; and citizens are obligated to preserve and protect historical, spiritual and cultural heritage (cf. Article 49 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan; for a full English version, please see <https://constitution.uz/en>).

62 The concept of symbolic power was introduced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and accounts for the unconscious modes of cultural and social domination within the everyday social habits maintained over conscious subjects, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, edited and introduced by John B. Thomson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

such as Shahimardon, Takht-i Sulayman in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, and in Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarqand,⁶³ so we might assume that it had effect on memory production in the communist period, too.⁶⁴

The *mutawallī* of the Buston Buva *mazār* introduced himself as a dentist, who in the 1980s was the first to produce dental prosthesis in the whole of the Soviet Union (he boasted probably in reaction to the presence of a Western listener). A.B. then explains that in 1995 he opened up a sanatorium in Buston Buva and claims that there is no sanatorium with such great salty water in the whole region. He continues: “And then M. came and told me to work here as a shaykh. We work already thirteen years here, with our own power we did a lot,” referring to the new gates, etc. During this time, mostly people performing pilgrimage and villagers contributed funds for repair and for the road leading here. At times, they did not have money to continue their work. I asked him why he acts as the *mutawallī* of the Buston Buva *mazār*. A.B. explains: “I did not aim to become a guardian, but I was persuaded by people from *Oltin Meros*,” he smiles and also adds that it is necessary to have good management skills for such a place.⁶⁵

In that context, A.B. also mentions that there is a competition with other actors. He says: “There are also enemies. Many of them.” There are struggles among different local actors for control over the *mazār* and its income. In this case, he means representatives from the official Muslim Board of Uzbekistan who at some point attempted to take over the control of the *mazār*. Nonetheless, as the informants explain: “Yes, they know Arabic and can read the Qur’an, but they do not know how to manage things. That is why, it is better if it is someone who knows how to manage things.” There are also other actors who seek to control the *mazārs*. For example, in some other cases local *mahalla* committees set up *ma’naviyat xonasi* (room of enlightenment) in the famous *mazārs* such as Do’sti Khudo in Oltioriq. In this way, they gain control over the place and the income. It is not the state—as it appears if studying only nation state memory—who forces them to do so in order to fill in the ideological goals of the nation-building and spiritual rebirth. The research that investigates these spaces shows that it is the local people themselves who seek to challenge the control of other institutions (both state and public such as *Oltin Meros*) in an attempt to secure their own interests.

63 See Exnerova, “The Veneration and Visitation”.

64 There are also conceptual tensions between the definition of scope of work of diverse institutions (not talking about private funds used for reconstruction).

65 Later he also says that his father used to work as a gravedigger in the cemetery.

Other actors that step in are the historians or personalities who seek to promote their patronage of the Buston Buva *mazār* through funding or authoring a book, a booklet or a short text about the place. The above-mentioned book *Buvayda ziyoratgohlari* is for example written by a famous local historian, funded by a person from Tashkent related to Buston Buva and also by the rector of the Ferghana University. They all relate themselves to this *mazār* and the others in the Buvaydo *tūmān* in some way. It is their personal effort, each of them having their own particular interest in it.⁶⁶

Finally, one can observe and assess a “marketing strategy” that is associated with this place. An inscription on the gate to the *mazār* reads “Khoja Boyazid Bastomiy Maqbarasi” “Sohibqiron Amir Temurning Vodiyaq Piri” (*pīr* of *Ṣāhib Qirān*⁶⁷ Amir Timur in the valley). It was put here by M. and the *mutawallī*. It might be interpreted from the perspective of fitting with the current promotion of Timur as the main ancestor of all Uzbeks and “reinventing” the rich historical tradition of Uzbek people. Putting up the sign is not, however, a one-time process. Timur belongs to the public remembrance in the Ferghana Valley for centuries, it is also mentioned in the account of Guliamov from the late 1930s. If Amir Timur was opposed in the official ideology of current Uzbekistan, the sign would probably not be there. But it was put there from the private initiative.

There is a wall around the *mazār* where different histories and quotes are mentioned on plastic billboards. The texts include excerpts from the hadith, texts of Imām al-Bukhārī, and also popular legends. These excerpts enforce the sacred and religious meaning of the space and define the behaviour (*odobi*) of the pilgrims during their visit. The *mazār* is linked with the Islamic faith, its references and sources. Yet the mixture of sources is clearly the production of memory of a specific type, beyond the oral tradition and other sources about the *mazār* in the past. It is produced by people who “operate” the *mazār*. During the interview,⁶⁸ the *mutawallī* of the *mazār* also showed me the booklet *Buvaydo Ziyoratgohi*. It includes photos of pilgrims to the *mazār* from the 1950s, of its different reconstruction stages and of people participating in the constructions. He showed me the bricks that were used for the reconstruction; they were produced in a factory in Khorezm following old Qarakhanid proto-

66 Here we can contextualize the scholar/historian, who as one among many actors participating in the multidirectional memory of Buston Buva wants to find “who” Buston Buva was.

67 *Ṣāhib Qirān* means Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction. It is one of the titles of Timur, used primarily after his death by his descendants to underline his importance as the founder of the Timurid dynasty.

68 All interviews were translated by the author.

types. It feels like they want to make the *mazār* permanent, not haunted by the past.⁶⁹ However, they are not only postmodern bureaucrats. The informants show that they are concerned about God and afterlife.⁷⁰ “Before I was young, ... before it was easier ... Now I am afraid of my responsibility,” M. says when I ask how his work changed over the past twenty years. In other words, he sees his reconstruction efforts also as a way towards potential salvation.

Interestingly, similar to the Soviet regime, the current authorities use the space to celebrate the end of the Great Patriotic War. Recently people have started celebrating *Xotira kuni* (Memory Day) in places like this. There is no conflict of interest, only the government under Islam Karimov changed the narrative. Karimov reiterated that it was the Uzbek nation who won the war and shifted the Soviet focus away from Stalin. That brings us to the role of the state in memory practices regarding the Buston Buva *mazār*. What is important to note here is the continuity with the Soviet regime in terms of different aspects of public remembrance and memory practices.

In general, over the past two decades, the Uzbek authorities have claimed that the state helped to “restore” the spiritual heritage and to return to the “authentic,” “real” history of the Uzbek people. The major work was until recently Islam Karimov’s book *Yuksak ma’naviyat—yengilmas kuch* (High spirituality—an invincible force).⁷¹ In one of the chapters entitled “Basic criteria for the formation of spirituality,” Karimov wrote that the spirituality of any nation cannot be represented outside its rites, traditions, values and life stories. Based on this, the most important factors in the formation of spirituality were, according to Karimov, spiritual heritage, cultural wealth and ancient historical monuments. The main terms and emphasis were on restoration and return of the authentic, i.e., real, history of the Uzbek people and their monuments.⁷² As a result, different *mazārs* have become objects of spiritual heritage with a focus on renovation or enlightenment, and their religious aspects have been sidelined.

In this way, however, the Uzbek state has actually built on the Soviet legacy. Buston buva was, for example, registered in 2006 as an architectural monu-

69 Silverman writes that since “ruins are always haunted by a past, similar to but different from the buildings they once were, they are present but also bear witness to an absence.” Silverman, “Memory Traces,” 226.

70 Some also note that religion is important in Uzbekistan, because there is no law enforcement and people fear God.

71 Islam Karimov, *Yuksak ma’naviyat—yengilmas kuch* (Tashkent: Ma’naviyat, 2008).

72 For example, the book argues for restoring “a huge, priceless spiritual and educational heritage, cultural, national and religious values and traditions,” for the return of the “authentic history of the Uzbek people,” see Karimov, *Yuksak ma’naviyat*, 2008.

ment. It has been only one of four listed in the Buvayda *raion* in the category “architectural monuments.”

The authorities put the sign of the Ministry of Education and Sport at the gate of the *mazār* (in other cases, the sign replaced the original Arabic inscription). Nonetheless, similar to the dynamics in the Soviet times, those who secured that the site was listed as an architectural monument were individual people. In the case of the Buston Buva *mazār* in 2006 it was M. working for *Oltin Meros* but also linking him with his ancestors and for his personal interests.

Finally, we need to interpret the literature written about the *mazār*. In the book *Buvayda ziyoratgohlari* we can read, for example, that holy places played an important role in the formation of elevated emotions among Uzbek people. Pilgrimage to holy places is said to attract people to good deeds as only good deeds, performed by just and moral beings can keep them away from ignorance. The book calls upon human values such as education, morality, friendly relations, rights for children, parents, relatives, love, conscience, ethics. In this way, we might say that the authors underline the state narrative of veneration of saints as part of the spiritual history of Uzbeks, sidelining the clear Islamic aspects of *ziyarat*.

As a conclusion to the study of pilgrimage in Buvayda, the booklet ends with the following summary:

We can state that: firstly, the spirituality (as elevated moral qualities) of the people is expressed in the sacred places of pilgrimage; handed down from century to century by legends, and various tales associated with them being the examples of folklore that form an integral part of our spiritual heritage. In particular, the edificatory tales associated with the lives of the saints, the legends and stories about the courageous struggle against the enemies and the valour of national heroes have survived to this day; they assist people in understanding their nature and the essence of our national values. Secondly, views and attitudes related to animals and plants, as well as to the water-springs on pilgrimage sites become important in the preservation of the environment, strengthening the concept of ecological knowledge and people.⁷³

In practice, however, this is what people in Uzbekistan do associate with being a “good” man or a “good Uzbek,” but stripped of the religious content. There is no linear narrative, or coherent language where we could clearly divide spiritu-

73 Abdulahatov, Rahmonov, Ahmedov, *Buvayda ziyoratgohlari*.

ality and religion/Islam. Memory is multidirectional, open to signification and resignification. There are three authors written on the cover of the book, as was indicated earlier, each of them had their own specific relation to the *mazārs* in the Buvaydo district and the veneration of their saints.

3 Conclusion

In the context of this *mazār* we see that the “History” (with a capital H) of conflict between communism and the veneration of saints, and of “rebirth” after independence, written by the winners, play a little role for the ways public remembrance is produced. Different meanings of the past form the identity and inform the deeds of the social actors. We observe the multidirectionality of memory, and the dynamism inherent in public remembering. We see that public memory emerges from “encounters between diverse pasts and a conflictual present,” to be sure, but also “between different agents or catalysts of the memory.”⁷⁴

In a sense, the agents of catalysts of the memory use the system. Also, the actors usually hold some positions or status within the system of authorities (although not exclusively as the example of a descendant of Podsho Pirim from Kazakhstan funding the reconstruction of Buston Buva *mazār* shows). Through different channels the agents seek to contribute or take part in the memory production around the *mazār*. The analysis shows that it is often the personal interest—be it social status, power, personal links that influence the memory in regards to the particular site, in which the legitimacy of the state itself, and its institutions, are not decisive. Finally, the practices and dynamics are not restricted to certain epistemological categories (Uzbekistan, state and nation, religion, local, non-state) that we tend to link with the study of public memory.

The chapter shows that the new interdisciplinary field of cultural inquiry, as the concepts of “memory traces” or “knots of memory” demonstrate, have a unique potential to show a more complex picture of memory in Central Asia and to make the power dynamics more understandable. We should be careful not to create a sense of the *mazār* as (paradigm of) a totalized modernity, while it opens up avenues for analysis of the multi-directionality of memory and dynamism inherent in remembrance. In this way, the chapter also contributes to the study of *mazārs* in Central Asia in the past and in the present.

74 Rothberg et al., *Noeuds de mémoire*, 9.

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Glossary of Terms

bīrūn outer, external

bāgh a garden, park; cf. *chahar bāgh*—a fourfold garden

bannā' a builder

baraka a blessing, divine favour

chilla-khāna a small structure or room used for a forty-day fast and seclusion

columned iwān a covered semi-open space supported by wooden columns

dakhma a burial platform with a rectangular form containing tombstones in an open enclosed area with burials inside the platform, tomb

dars-khāna an auditorium, lecture hall (usually in a corner room of a madrasa)

darūn inner, interior

darwāza-khāna a gate, entrance. A small or sometimes monumental structure that forms the main entrance to a complex.

dhimmī non-Muslims living in an Islamic society, whereby the Muslim community granted protection and hospitality to non-Muslims in exchange for their acknowledgment of Muslim sovereignty and dominance

dihlīz a vestibule, anteroom

ganch a type of plaster carving

gaz a length measuring unit of approx. 75 cm. The exact dimensions fluctuated in different historical periods.

gīrih decorative Islamic geometric patterns used in architecture

gunbad a domed building, often a mausoleum

gūr a grave or a tomb

gūristān a cemetery

gūrkhāna the tomb chamber in a mausoleum

guzār a communal center of a residential area

ḥadīth sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad

ḥawz an artificial open pool or cistern with a rectangular or octagonal form

ḥazīra a walled or fenced funerary enclosure

ḥazrat the honourable, a title of high distinction

ḥujra a small room in a madrasa or a *khānaqāh*

iwān a deep arched portal niche, an arched portal

jamā'at-khāna congregational place, meeting room

kāshī-kārī glazed ceramic tilework used on a revetment

kāshīn sand-based, porous material used in porcelain-type pottery

khānaqāh (*khānqāh*) a hospice, lodge, residence for Sufis with a large hall for *zikr*, often with cells for the temporary shelter of wandering dervishes and pilgrims

kitābdār a librarian

- madrasa* a school for the study of the Islamic sciences and related subjects
- maktab* an Islamic traditional school
- masjid* a mosque
- masjid-i-jāmi‘* a Congregational, Friday mosque
- mazār* a shrine, holy burial place
- miḥrāb* arched niche in the *qibla* wall of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca
- mi‘mār* an architect
- mudarris* a teacher, professor in a madrasa
- muhandis* an engineer
- muqarnas* a stalactite composition marking the transition of a rectangular structure to a dome 2) “cellular” or “crystalline” systems of volumetric stalactites
- murīd* in Sufism, a novice committed to spiritual enlightenment under a spiritual guide
- murshid, pīr, shaykh* a spiritual Sufi teacher, head of the Sufi lodge or the Sufi order
- mutawallī* a trustee of an endowment
- namāz* the Persian word for *ṣalāt*, the five daily prayers required of every Muslim
- necropolis* a large, memorial cemetery with elaborate tomb monuments
- panjara* a screen, grating, (grille) window with a decorative lattice with a geometric pattern, usually made of *ganch* or wood, occasionally—of terracotta
- pīshṭāq* an entrance portal with an arched niche in the architecture of Central Asia
- qāzī* a judge (qadi)
- qishlāq* a village
- qubba* a dome, by extension, a masuoleum
- quṭb* a pole, axis, a title used for significant Sufi figures
- riwāq* an arched opening, portico or porch; also an arcade around the open courtyard of a mosque
- ṣaghāna* a vaulted crypt for a single burial
- sardāba* water reservoir covered by a dome
- shahāda* the profession of faith (“There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God”)
- shahristān* the medieval city proper
- shajara*, cf. *nasabnāma* a family tree of the Prophet Muhammad
- silsila* a genealogy, usually used for the spiritual genealogy of Sufi shaykhs
- sqinḥ* a structure marking the zone of transition from a rectangular base to a dome
- ṣuffa* a raised platform; originally a shelter at the rear of the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina
- tahārāt-khāna* a room for ritual ablutions
- tāq* an arch, vault; market with a vaulted passageway typical of Bukhara

- tazkira* remembrance; recollections; biographical compendiums
- tīm* a covered market specialized in a specific trade
- töre* grand principle of Mongol law, correct order of good governance
- ṭūgh* a high pole with a yak or horse tail in the pommel used to mark a holy place
- tympanum* frontal wall surface over the arched niche of an entrance portal
- waqf* a charitable endowment, property bequeathed or transferred by a person for the upkeep of an Islamic institution (for example, a mosque or a madrasa), and yielding an income, also used as a provision for the family of the endower
- yāsā* a term used for individual edicts issued by Chinggis Khan and his successors (yasa)
- zīkr* (lit. remembrance) communal Sufi recitation of sacred names, phrases or prayers. A spiritual exercise with the aim of experiencing the divine presence from within oneself. Rhythmic, repeated recitation of the names of God (*theomnemia*) in order to achieve a state of spiritual focus.
- zīkr-khāna* room for Sufi recitation of prayers, ritual chanting
- ziyārat* a pilgrimage, ritual at a shrine
- ziyāratgāh* a memorial complex
- ziyārat-khāna* a room for pilgrims (antechamber) in a mausoleum or shrine, a place of worship

Index

- ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Naẓr Muḥammad 35
‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Ubayd Allāh 30, 31, 42
‘Abd al-Laṭīf, son of Ulugh Beg 28
‘Abd al-Laṭīf Khan b. Kūchkunjī 31, 32
‘Abd Allāh Bahādur Khan 17
‘Abd Allāh Khan b. Iskandar (‘Abd Allāh Khan II) 21, 31–33, 43, 54, 59, 60, 65, 66, 231
‘Abd Allāhnāma see Ḥāfīz(-i) Tanīsh
‘Abd al-Khālīq Ghijduvānī 40, 41–43, 46, 47, 226, 237
‘Abd al-Mu’min Khan 21, 33, 66, 67
‘Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī 24
‘Abd al-Razzāq, author of *Maṭla’-i Sa’dayn* 28n
Abdal Sultan 32
Abu’l Khayr Khan 32
Abu’l-Khayrid(s) 21, 52–54, 57–63, 65, 66, 68, 70, 72, 82–84
Abū Sa’īd (Ilkhan) 27
Abū Sa’īd, son of Kūchkunjī Khan 29, 31
Afghanistan 133–154
Aḥmad Yasavī 28, 29, 226, 352
Aitmatov, Čīngīz 98, 177
Akayev, Askar 98, 99
Akbar 30
‘Alā’iyya 41
‘Alī Abī Ṭālib 209, 212
Alisher Navoi see Navā’ī, ‘Alīshīr
Amanullah Khan (Amān Allāh Khan) 146
Amir Timur see Timur
Amulet 140–144
Anūsha Khan 22
‘Arabshahid(s) 18
Arbak 94
Ashkabad 278
Ashtarkhanids 20, 21, 205
Authenticity 177–195
‘Aynī, Ṣadr al-Dīn 104–128, 300
‘Aynī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, *Jodgorī* 104, 110–116
‘Aynī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Commemoration 140th birthday 105–107
‘Aynī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Museum 106–108
‘Aynī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, *Memoirs (Ēddoštho)* 117, 121, 122
Bābur, Ṣaḥīr al-Dīn, author of *Bāburnāma* 29
Baghdad 53, 55, 79, 84
Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband 27, 30, 40–48, 232
Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband Shrine complex, Bukhara 41, 42, 44, 45, 234–236
Balkh 28, 32, 33, 35, 41
Bāltaev, ‘Abdullāh 331–334
Bāqī Muḥammad Khan 33
Bartol’d, Vasilii Vladimirovich (Barthold) 268, 305
Bayezid 30
Bāysunghur Mirzā 27
Bedil (Bidil) 133, 135, 147
Bībī Khānum Mosque, Samarqand 298
Bihzād, Kamāl al-Dīn 232
Boer War 242, 243
Braginskii, I.S. (Iosif Samuilovich) 127, 128
British Empire 246, 247
Bukhara 32, 43, 47, 53, 60, 61, 63, 65, 70, 79, 84, 104–129, 223–224
Bukhara Oasis 230, 231, 236, 238
Bukharan Jews 117, 161–173
Burhān Khan 31
Buston Buva 346–369
Calcutta 244, 247
Cawnpore 242, 245–247, 280
Chār Bakr Necropolis, Bukhara 202, 230
Chashma Ayūb, Bukhara 229, 231
Cherniaev, Mikhail Grigor’evich 257–268
China 1, 99, 100, 321
Chinggisid(s) 7, 18–21, 27, 46, 47
Chinggis Khan 19, 20, 32, 201, 232
Chīnikhāna (China Pavilion) of Ulugh Beg, Samarqand 27, 28, 226, 287–325
Cis-Oxiana 18
Collective memory 42, 125, 134, 135, 339, 344
Colonialism 165
Dasht-i Qipchaq 204
Delhi 245, 247, 280
Dīn Muḥammad Sultan (Khan) 34, 68
Dudin, Samuel Martinovich 165, 167
Dukhovskoi, Sergei Mikhailovich 259, 260
Dushanbe 104, 106, 108, 118, 119

- Edirne 55
 Embodiment 181, 182, 194
 Ethnicity, ethnic 137, 183, 184, 186, 187, 193
 Ethnography 168–171
- Faḡlallāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī, author of
Sharḥ-i vaṣāyā 40, 41, 46, 48
 Faraydūn 56, 72, 73, 74, 83
 Farkhunda 135, 140–144, 153
 Ferghana 93, 118, 267, 346–369
 Firdawsī 53–55, 57, 58, 82, 119
 First World War 249, 360
 Fiṭrat, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, author of *Bayānāt-i sayyāh-i hindī* 47, 48
- Ghijduvan 29, 40, 227, 237
 Ghijduvāni, 'Abd al-Khāliq see 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvāni
 Ghijduvāni
 Glasnost' 104
 Globalisation 177, 183–185, 188, 192, 195
 Gök-Tepe 253, 260, 268, 269, 271–276, 278–281
 Golden Horde 84
 Grodekov, Nikolai Ivanovich 261, 263, 265
 Gūr-i Amīr (Gur-i Mir), Samarqand 21, 226, 298–301, 305, 311, 313, 323–325
 Güreng, see Timur
- Ḥaḍrat Mir Mūsa 209
 Ḥāfiẓ 27, 66, 68, 69, 70, 146
 Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū 17n
 Ḥāfiẓ(-i) Tanish, author of *'Abd Allāhnāma* 16, 18
 Hamadāni, Yūsuf 41, 47, 237
 Ḥasan Khwaja *naqīb* (Ḥasan Niṣārī) 211, 220
 Hātifī, 'Abd Allāh 29, 77
 ḥaẓīra 222–239
 Ḥaẓīra of Khwaja Aḥrār, Samarqand 21, 228
 Herat 28, 29, 41, 42, 59, 61–63, 65, 66, 68, 70, 75, 77, 83, 84
 Heritage 183–185, 187–191, 194, 195
 Heritage tourism 187, 189, 195
 Humāyūn 30
 Ḥusayn Bāyqarā see Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā
- Ibn Battuta 161
 Ibrāhīm Mirzā 60, 62, 74, 77
 Ikromī, Ḥalol 119, 123
- Imām Qulī Khan 21, 23, 32, 34, 35
 India 16, 20, 22, 60, 61, 63, 118, 212, 244–247, 253, 280
 Indian 'Mutiny' 281
 Indigenization see *korenizatsiia*
 Iqan 254–256
 Īraj 74, 75, 79, 83
 Iran 53, 57, 59, 60, 83, 84, 238
 Isfahan 63
 Isfarain 59
 Ismā'il Sāmānī 122, 204
 Issyk Kul 177
 Istanbul 53, 54, 57, 79, 82, 84
- Jahāngīr 30
 Jam 250, 251
 Jāmī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān 27, 42, 62, 67
 Jānī Khan (Jānī Beg Sultan) 20, 32
 Janid(s) 21
 Javānmard 'Alī 32
 Jewish communities Central Asia 117, 161–173
 Judeo-Persian 171
 Judeo-Tajik 171, 172
 Jūybārī shaykhs 36n, 210, 212, 230, 231
- Kabul 133, 141, 143, 145, 147
 Karakol 250, 252
 Karmina (Karmana) 31, 236
 Kāsānī, Aḥmad, see Shaykh Aḥmad Kāsānī
 Kashmir 43
 Kaufmann, Konstantin Petrovich von 257, 260–266
 Kayūmarš 70, 71
 Kazakhstan 1, 99, 226, 248n, 250, 305, 361, 363, 369
Khānaqāh 30, 31, 33, 42, 140, 150, 207, 226, 231, 232, 236, 297, 305
 Khiva 57, 330–342
 Khojand (Khujand) 28
 Khoqand (Kokand) 205, 254, 261, 350–354, 358, 359, 360n, 364
 Khorasan (Khurasan) 28, 33, 41, 42, 53, 54, 57, 59–62, 65, 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, 82–84, 217
 Khunjī, Faḡlallāh ibn Rūzbihān, see Faḡlallāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī
 Khwaja 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvāni, see 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvāni

- Khwaĵa 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduvāni complex, Ghijduvan 226, 227, 236
- Khwaĵa Abū Naşr Pārsā Shrine, Balkh 238
- Khwaĵa Aĥmad Yasavī, *see* Aĥmad Yasavī
- Khwaĵa Aĥrār (Khwaĵa Aĥrār Valī) 21, 24, 34, 41, 227, 232
- Khwaĵa Anşārī Shrine at Gazurgah 237, 238
- Khwaĵa Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband *see* Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband
- Khwaĵa Bahā' al-Dīn Shrine complex, near Bukhara 232, 234, 235
- Khwaĵa Bahā' al-Dīn Ḥasan Nişārī Bukhārī, *see* Nişārī
- Khwaĵa Bāyazīd (Sultan Bāyazīd Bisţāmī) 352, 353, 358
- Khwaĵa Burhān al-Dīn Sagharjī 226
- Khwaĵa 'Işām al-Dīn b. Khwaĵa Nizām al-Dīn b. Ḥaġrat Mawlanā Maĥmūd [Gilānī] 24
- Khwaĵa Maĥmūd Kitābdār, *see* Maĥmūd b. Amīr Valī
- Khwaĵa Samandar 22
- Khwaĵagan 7, 41, 42, 47, 227n, 237, 237n
- Khwarazm 18, 22, 57, 84, 330–342
- Kildi Muĥammad Sultan 58
- kitābkhāna* 77, 82
- kök börü* 178, 184, 186, 194
- Kolpakovskii, Gerasim Alexeevich 261–263
- Korenizatsiia* 169, 288
- Küchkuñjī Khan 29
- Küchkuñjid(s) 31, 32
- Kühistānī, Mas'ūd b. 'Uşmān, author of *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdi* 16
- Kükaldāsh (Kükaltosh) Madrasa 117, 119, 122
- Kulliyāt-i Chahār Kitāb* 146
- Kuropatkin, Alexei Nikolaevich 253, 260, 261, 271, 272, 275, 276, 278, 279
- Kyrgyz, Kyrgyzstan 90–102, 177–195
- Kyrgyznes 178, 180
- Lawrence, Sir Henry 245, 281
- Leiden University Library 108, 109, 112, 113, 126–128
- Local lore (*kraevedenie*) 172
- Lucknow 243, 245, 247, 280
- Madĥī 55
- Maĥmūd b. Amīr Valī, author of *Tārīkh-i baĥr al-aĥrār* 16, 18, 46, 47
- Maliĥa, *see* Muĥammad Badī' Maliĥa Samarqandī
- Mallitskii, Nikolai Gur'evich 263, 266
- Mamluk 55–57
- Manas, Manaschī 90–102
- Manghit(s) 20, 205
- Manūchīhr 77–79
- Mashhad 59–63, 74, 77, 84
- Mawarannahr (Ma wara al-nahr) *see also* Transoxiana, Transoxania 30, 33, 35, 41, 47, 57, 59, 60, 63, 84, 220, 222–224, 226, 228, 229, 236, 238, 239, 296
- Mazār 40, 313, 341, 342, 346–369
- Mazar-e Sharif (Mazar-i Sharif) 143, 144, 149, 154
- Merv (Marv) 29, 237, 275
- Mikeshin, Boris Mikhailovich 262–264
- Mikeshin, Mikhail Osipovich 258
- Mīr 'Alī Mashhadī 29
- Mīrak Samarqandī 24, 209
- Mīrānshāh 28n, 301, 306
- Mīrkhwānd 17
- Mīr 'Arab 29, 29n
- Mīr-i 'Arab (Miri Arab) Madrasa 122, 236
- Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Rāqim Samarqandī, author of *Tārīkh-i Rāqim*, *see* Rāqim Samarqandī
- Modernity 185, 189, 190, 192
- Modernisation 177, 183, 185
- Mongol(s) 41, 43, 45, 73, 161, 203n, 231
- Mughal(s) 16, 21n, 22, 30, 44, 136, 245, 316
- Muĥammad Amīn *see also* *Muĥit al-tavārikh* 16, 19–23, 26–28, 29n, 30, 31, 36
- Muĥammad Badī' Maliĥa Samarqandī, author of *Tazkira-yi Muṣakkir al-Aşḥāb* 22, 24, 25, 36
- Muĥammad Imām al-Bukhārī 366
- Muĥammad Qāzī Vafā Karmīnagī, author of *Tuĥfat al-Khanī, Tārīkh-i Raĥīm Khanī* 20
- Muĥammad Raĥīm Khan, Manghit ruler 20
- Muĥammad Shībānī Khan 18, 28, 31, 46, 58, 204
- Muĥammad Sultan 305
- Muĥammad Ṭālib, author of *Maṭlab ut-ṭālibīn* 210
- Muĥammad Timūr Sultan 29
- Muĥammad Yār ibn 'Arab Qatġhān, author of *Musakhkhir al-bilād* 17, 31n, 32n, 204

- Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī, author of
Tazkira-yi Muqīm Khānī 19, 20, 22, 29n,
31n
- Muḥammadi, artist 62, 63
- Muḥiṭ al-tavārikh* see Muḥammad Amīn
- Murad II 55
- Murad III 72
- Musakhkhīr al-bilād* see Muḥammad Yār ibn
‘Arab Qatḡhan
- Mushfiqī 123, 124
- Music 117, 147–150
- Muṭribi Samarqandī 18, 43–47
- Muzakkir al-aḥbāb* see also Bahā’ al-Dīn
Ḥasan Nişārī, 16
- Muzakkir al-Aṣḥāb* see Muḥammad Badī’
Malīḡa Samarqandī
- Najm-i ṣānī 29, 30, 40
- Naqshbandī 24, 30–31, 41–42, 45–47, 232
- Naqshbandiyya 46, 47, 226–227, 232
- National-territorial demarcation 97
- Nasabnāma* 202, 205
- Navā’ī, Mir ‘Alī Shīr (Alisher Navoi) 28, 287–
325, 352, 353
- Navoi, Jubilee 500th Anniversary 287–325
- Nawrūz Aḡmad “Baraq” Khan 31
- Nazr Divānbeḡī 34
- Nazr Muḥammad Khan 34, 35, 46
- Nişārī, Bahā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan, see also *Muzakkir
al-aḥbāb* 16, 30, 42, 44–47
- Nishapur 59
- Niva* 256, 258, 259
- Nizāmī Ganjavī 63, 79
- Nogoi 93, 96
- Nomad(s), see also World Nomad Games
180, 181, 184
- Nomadic 177–181, 183–185, 187, 194
- Novoe Vremya* 259, 262, 268
- Nowruz 334, 342
- Oltin Meros 365–368
- Orality 135
- Orozbekov, Saḡīnbai 93, 95, 96
- Osh riots 98
- Ottoman(s) 17, 30, 43, 53–57, 59, 68, 70, 72,
79, 82, 83
- Pahlavān Maḡmud 331, 335, 335n, 343
- Pajrav (Paīrav Sulāimōnī) 115
- Panj Ganj 146, 148
- Pārsā’iyya 41
- Pashtu 146
- Patrimonialization 334, 341
- Perestroika 98, 104
- Perovsk 254, 255
- Persianate 7, 44, 54, 79, 83, 315
- Peter the Great 260, 278
- Photography 165–167
- Przheval’skii, Nikolai Mikhailovich 250
- Qanṣūh al-Ghūrī 55, 58
- Qarakhanid(s) 207, 223
- Qāsim Shaykh ‘Azīzān, see Shaykh ‘Azīzān
- Qazvin 59, 84
- Qayraq 203, 207
- Qipchaq 53
- Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* 79
- Qizilbash 29, 33, 40, 41
- Qul Bābā Kūkaltāsh 65, 66, 68
- Quṭb al-Dīn b. Ḥasan al-Tūnī 63, 68
- Quṭb-i Chahārdahum Mausoleum, Samar-
qand 226
- Radio Afghanistan 147
- Rāqīm Samarqandī, author of *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*
23–37
- Religious education 121, 122, 148–150, 153
- Rūdāba 64, 79–82
- Rūḡhabād Mausoleum, Samarqand 226
- Rūmī, Jalāl al-Dīn (Rumi) 66, 135, 145, 149,
150
- Rumi Festival Mazar-e Sharif 149
- Russian Turkestan see Turkestan
- Russo-Japanese War 249, 261, 281
- Russo-Turkish War 249, 268
- Sabzivar 59, 61, 77
- Sa’dī 66, 75
- Şādiq Sultan 17
- Safavid(s) 21n, 22, 29, 40, 42, 44, 54, 58–60,
62, 66, 72, 77, 82, 83, 314
- Salafī 148, 151, 152
- Salt* 182–185, 187, 188, 192–195
- Samanid(s) 122, 203, 204, 214, 223, 224
- Samarqand (Samarkand) 21, 23, 27, 32, 41,
43, 47, 48, 53, 57, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111,
112, 115, 124, 207–216, 224, 227, 230, 255,
256, 267, 268, 297–325

- Sattor Tursun 119
- Sayf al-Dīn al-Bākhazī Mausoleum complex, Bukhara 224
- Sayyid(s) 23, 24, 201–222
- Sayyidisation 203
- Sayyid Muḥammad Muqīm Bahādūr Khan 20
- Sayyid Sharīf, possible author of *Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*, see also Rāqīm Samarqandī 24–33, 35–37
- Schleifer, Nikolai Georgevich 263, 264
- Selim I 56
- Semirechie 250, 261, 281
- Şerif Âmidî 55, 56, 72, 73, 75, 78–82
- Shajara* 202, 205
- Shah 'Abbās 33
- Shah Ḥakīm Khālis 352
- Shah Ismā'īl Şafavī 28, 29
- Shah Jarīr (Shoh Jalil) 351, 352, 357
- Shāhnāma* 5, 7, 53–88
- Shāhrukh 290–309
- Shah Tahmāsp 30, 59
- Shahrisabz (Shahr-i Sabz) 210–213
- Shāh-i Zinda necropolis, Samarqand 202, 206, 213–215, 224, 226
- Shamanist 92, 99
- Shams al-Dīn Rūchī 42
- Shaykh 'Abdullāh Yamānī 236
- Shaykh Aḥmad Kāsānī 47
- Shaykh 'Azizān 31, 34
- Shaykh Jalāl 30
- Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Başīr 226
- Shibānī Khan see Muḥammad Shībānī Khan
- Shibanid(s) 18, 19, 21, 231
- Shīr Dār (Sher Dor) Madrasa, Bukhara 236
- Silk 163
- Skobelev, Mikhail Dmitrievich 260, 262, 263, 267–272, 274–277
- Soktare 125, 126
- Sovietisation of Tajik literature 108, 113
- Soyunjukid(s) 31
- Storytelling 99
- Subḥān Qulī Khan 16, 19, 22, 26, 36
- Sufi Council 135, 151, 153, 154
- Sufism 41, 133–154, 226, 228, 236
- Şū'lajī inqilob* 112
- Sultan Abū Sa'īd Mirzā 204
- Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā 19, 27, 28, 204
- Sultan Qānsūh al-Ghawrī, see Qānsūh al-Ghūrī
- Sultan Sādāt 202, 205, 211
- Sultan Sulaymān 30
- Suvorin, Alexei Sergeevich 262, 265
- Suyunch Khwaja Khan 58
- al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr 161
- Tajik 104–106, 108–110, 112, 113, 119, 120, 127, 128, 170–172, 300, 335
- Tajik Civil War 118
- Taliban 133, 134, 138, 140, 145, 149, 153
- Ṭamghāch Bughrā Khan 223
- Tārīkh-i Rāqīm*, see Rāqīm Samarqandī
- Tashkent 116, 118, 163, 253, 257, 258–263, 265–268, 279–281
- Tazkira-yi Muqīm Khanī* see Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī
- Tazkira-yi Muḥakkir al-Aşḥāb* see Muḥammad Badī Malīḥa Samarqandī
- Tengriism, Tengriist 99
- Termez 202, 204, 205, 210
- Ṭilā Kārī (Tilla Kari) Madrasa, Samarqand 212, 236
- Timeless(ness) 182, 185, 194
- Timur 19, 21, 27, 28, 43, 44, 202, 224, 302–308, 353, 357, 366
- Timurid(s) 6–9, 18–21, 28, 32, 41, 44–46, 70, 136, 203, 204, 207, 208, 213, 224, 226, 227, 287–329, 347, 366n
- Töre* 20
- Tourism 183, 187–190, 193–195
- Transcaspia 253, 269, 271, 272, 274, 275, 278, 279
- Transoxiana, Transoxania see also Mawarān-nahr 30, 33, 35, 41, 47, 57, 59, 60, 63, 84, 220, 222–224, 226, 228, 229, 236, 238, 239, 296
- Tsar Nicholas II 263
- Tsarist Russia 249, 250
- Tulip Revolution 99
- Tuqay-Timurid(s) 18–21, 32, 33, 46
- Tūr 77, 78
- Turan 53, 83
- Turco-Persianate 54, 315
- Turkestan 164, 165, 254, 255, 257, 258, 260–262, 264, 268, 274
- Turkestan Album 165–167, 253, 257

- Turkic 53–58, 65, 71–75, 78–82, 84, 93, 96,
104, 146, 226, 263, 290, 296, 352
- Turkmen 253, 268–270, 272, 274–279
- Turkmenistan 1
- ‘Ubayd Allāh Ahrār, *see* Khwaja Ahrār
- ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Maḥmūd 30, 31, 40, 42
- ‘Ubayd Allāh Khan 236
- ‘Ubaydullāh 209–212
- Ulugh Beg *see* Chīnīkhāna of Ulugh Beg
- Ulugh Beg Observatory, Samarqand 291,
292, 313
- Uluḡzoda, Sotim, *Saēhati Buxoro bo hamrohii*
Aīnī 104, 111, 112, 117, 118, 120
- UNESCO 100, 184, 195
- Ustad Sarahang 147
- Uzun-Agach 250, 261
- Vali Muḥammad Khan 21, 33
- Vāşifi 58
- World Nomad Games 177–179, 183–185, 187,
188, 195
- Xinjiang 1, 100, 350
- Yār Muḥammad Sultan (Khan) 31, 33
- Yasa* 20
- Yasavī Shrine, Turkistan 226
- Yāzdah Imām Mausoleum 202, 206, 207,
209–212
- Yūsuf Hamadānī 41, 47, 237
- Yusun* 20
- Ẓaḥḥāk 72, 73
- Zāl 79–82
- Zangī-Āṭā’ (Zengi Ata) 226
- zīkr* 150

Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia: Texts, Traditions and Practices, 10th-21st Centuries is a collection of fourteen studies by a group of scholars active in the field of Central Asian Studies, presenting new research into various aspects of the rich cultural heritage of Central Asia (including Afghanistan). By mapping and exploring the interaction between political, ideological, literary and artistic production in Central Asia, the contributors offer a wide range of perspectives on the practice and usage of historical and religious commemoration in different contexts and timeframes. Making use of different approaches – historical, literary, anthropological, or critical heritage studies, the contributors show how memory functions as a fundamental constituent of identity formation in both past and present, and how this has informed perceptions in and outside Central Asia today.

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