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A COMMUNITY OF LINGUISTS DOES NOT CREATE A LANGUAGE, BUT A SOCIETY DOES: DICHOTOMIES IN CENTRAL ASIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

This article discusses the modern day trends in historiography of American scholars concerning Central Asian studies. One of these trends is the specific publications on regional issues. These include not only the latest research, but also some valuable studies from the 2000s. This article then focuses on one such study. A book written by Victoria Clement aims to show the inner dynamism of social phenomenon (in this case, literacy) on Turkmen society. Clement's research is viewed within the context of three tendencies in American historians' examination of historiography at the turn of the 21st century: The critique of the European theoretical legacy, the Jadid-centered historiography, and the post-colonial approach. Clement attempted to analyze the primary sources and to include the Soviet research on literacy in her long-term analysis. She sought to prove her ideas about the change in meaning of key concepts (such as modernity, the modern state, power, and literacy). This book includes significant amounts of material from field studies in Turkmenistan between 1997-2016. The book's 2018 supplement, made Clement's contribution valuable not solely for its history, but also for its analysis of the region as well. However, this review seeks to supplement her initial chapters by providing details to consider this book within the relevant discussions on a broader array of topics.

Key words: history of linguistics, language reform, Turkmenistan, Progressivists.

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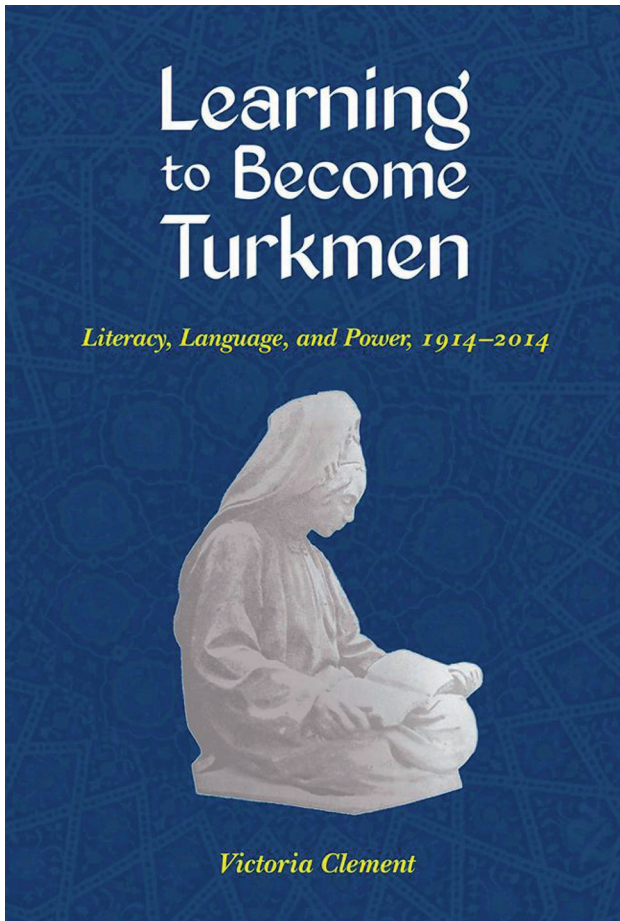
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INITIALLY, the goal of this review is to familiarize the reader with the latest trends in foreign historiography on Central Asia. This task requires serious expertise in the methodological differences and approaches used by various scholars to defend their studies. This review addresses the various contemporary publications on Central Asia from the United States by the publishing houses of the University of Pittsburgh (examples include Scott Levi's *The Bukharan Crisis* and *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709-1876*), Cornell University (Sarah Cameron's *The Hungry Steppe*, Eileen Kane's *Russian Hajj*, Ian W. Campbell's *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire*) and Indiana University (Danielle Ross' *Tatar Empire*). These publishers can be considered as leaders in the market related to Central Asian studies. While the Cornell University Press considers Russian and Eurasian Studies as separate topics, the Pittsburgh University Press introduced a specific series entitled "Eurasia in Context" edited by Douglas Northrop. Northrop is the American historian whose *Veiled*

Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia (2004) is a classic work in Central Asian studies. Since 2011, this series has frequently been given the Central Eurasian Studies Society Book Award and had a significant impact on the American analysis of the historiography of Central Asia.

This current review will analyze a book published within this series. The book, written by Victoria Clement, is entitled *Learning to Become Turkmen: Literacy, Language, and Power, 1914-2014* (Clement 2018). Clement's work is the latest work focused on Turkmenistan, and specifically on identity formation, from American publications since Adrienne Lynn Edgar's study *Tribal Nation: the Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Edgar 2004). Thus, Clement's book requires a specific analysis.

This review is divided into three sections. The first examines three tendencies that led to the emergence of this volume. The second is focused on the structure of the book itself and its meaningful narrative elements. The third part discusses the supplements to



the text which demonstrates how this study can be included in broader topics of the region. The third section also includes some critical notes which can be fruitful for considerations about the intellectual history of Turkmenistan.

The Monograph in Context

Clement's book is based on her doctoral thesis (Ohio State University, 2005) and long term field research in Turkmenistan (1997-2016). Those two points are crucial in understanding the work and its approach.

The major part of the study was written in 2005 as a PhD dissertation. According to Natalia Potapova, starting in the last decade of the 20th century, a significant change occurred in American scholars' methodology concerning historiography in general (Potapova 2010). Prior to this period, US scholars focused upon the study of representations, identities, and the heterogeneity of the social world. At the turn of the 21st century, interest turned back toward the global history of social realism. It did not necessarily represent a complete abandonment of the "spatial

turns" and cultural studies legacy (Potapova 2015). Moreover, Foucauldian discourse analysis (power-knowledge) preserved its position within the historiography. However, the discussions and debates of the early 2000s demonstrated the critical approach by American historians toward the legacy of European scholarship. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars were seeking new stable structures among the chaotic mix of social reflections with their blurred boundaries. Those structures were found within political studies. This trend can be tracked throughout Clement's book. Her main topic is literacy. In the introduction, the scholar reveals the intention to study the feedback between political decisions in the sphere of education and their reflection within Turkmen society (Clement 2018: 3-4). However, she was forced to seek a stable framework and found it in the legislative documents and a series of dichotomies (for example, Moscow as an "all-powerful" governing center and local institutions as performers of Moscow's will).

This generalizing trend in search of the new methodological foundation (which could be considered over-generalizing) certainly impacted Central Asian studies. This new field emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. At the turn of the 21st century, this branch of knowledge overcame the contradictions of the Soviet legacy. The tendency to introduce post-Soviet study principles within it was fairly summarized by Svetlana Gorshenina in 2009 (Gorshenina-Rapin 2009). It was based on case studies and local material mentioned in the critique of Alexander Morrison (Morrison 2012). The significant impact in this shift was discussed in the publication of two key monographs by American historians. The first was Adeeb Khalid's *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* which brought to the attention of academia the local discussions within the community of Central Asian intellectuals instead of the Soviet-wide tendencies (Khalid 1999). In 2015, Khalid supplemented this idea based on the principles of the linguistic shift, encouraged by Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu. According to Khalid, the heritage of the indigenous intellectuals' thought can be seen as a cornerstone for further national state formation and identity development within the region, at least, in the 1920s and 1930s (Khalid 2015). The second book was the previously mentioned work written by Adrienne Lynn Edgar. Edgar was one of the first scholars who intended to analyze the "local voices" and to comprehend the local narrative of state creation in Central Asia during the 1920s. Were the notions

of *nation*, *identity*, and *state* the same for the local citizens, the political elite of newly formed countries, and for the Soviet ideologists? To find the answers to such complicated issues, this American scholar turned to local newspaper articles (Khalid 2008) and the appeals to the administration of the Turkmen Soviet Republic. She revealed some truly important details on the inner conflicts within the political elite and the contradictions of communications between Moscow and Ashgabat (Edgar 2004). While Khalid mostly concentrates on cultural studies and intellectual history, Edgar addresses the issue of institutionalization.

Undoubtedly, these works made a significant contribution to the analysis of Central Asian history by implementing the methodological framework for the wave of works that followed in the next decade. However, that did not prevent them from being severely criticized. In 2016 an entire edition of the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (1/2) was dedicated to critiquing Khalid's narrative. Khalid's attention was primarily based on the new generation of intellectuals that had emerged in the colonial society of the Russian Empire. He pointed out that this particular generation had a specific view of modernity or vision of the future. He also considered them to be part of a progressive Islamic movement (known as *Jadidism*; from Persian *usul-i jaded*, meaning "a new method of education"). These ideas – supplemented by the position of Jadidism as a secular community and enlightenment movement – become popular in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Volga region historiography. In other words, "Jadid-centered historiography" (as Devin DeWeese called this phenomenon) provided a framework of an "umbrella concept" for the research of numerous social, cultural and political phenomena without consideration of continuity and connectivity, discontinuities and ruptures that had their place in the history of the region. The boundary between so-called Jadids (Progressivists) and their opponents was blurred and unapparent (DeWeese 2016). Moreover, the standard of a Persian education that was previously developed in the local sacred center of Bukhara, which was the main object of the Jadids' critique, was rather popular and widespread among the Muslim population of the Russian Empire (Frank 2016). Despite some appropriate critique, Khalid delicately answered this issue. He fairly points out the necessity to analyze inner dynamism and original thought within the local community and the progressivists' narrative as transitional ideas prior to the establishment of the Soviet power. This was

the reason why, for example, the local theater as a new way to express ideas to the political agenda, was important for Khalid's research (Khalid 2015: 18-21).

Clement, in her turn, was an assiduous student of both Edgar and Khalid. She based her work on the same sociological approach as Bourdieu with the constructivist reflection of a concept of "tradition." She reflects on the changing nature of tradition over time. But her main focus concentrates on modernity and what it means for the different generations of Turkmen. The scholar also uses the same group of sources, the local press, to identify the Turkmen perception of educational policy. Nevertheless, Clement avoids the direct connection with the critique against Khalid. She does so by isolating Turkmen society according to its ethnic boundaries and by considering her book not as a history, but as an opposition against the contemporary analysis of Turkmenistan based on romanticizing and the orientalizing of this country (Clement 2018: 15-16). This tactic does not save Clement from critique by Aýna Söýegowa (Söýegowa 2020) and Allen Frank (Frank 2020). Both of them refer to the Islamic factor within the transition from the late Imperial period to the early Soviet reality. This factor was only briefly mentioned by Clement. Thus, the reason for the criticism.

For a better understanding of the core of discussions concerning Jadidism, it is worth noting that all of this research is based on the local sources written in the Central Asian languages. This post-colonial trend is a very important factor within the latest historiography in the region (Sartori 2018). The approaches of studying the "local voices" include not only the primary sources, but also the legacy of Soviet historiography with all its ideological clichés and doubtful assessments. Clement consulted with one of the major local specialists on the intellectual history of Turkmenistan, Myratgeldi Söýegow. Through the analysis of his path, it is possible to see how some Soviet clichés found their way to American historiography of Central Asia.

Since the beginning of the 1960s, the topic of *magaryf* (Turkmen for "enlightenment") and national identity formation was studied by various disciplines. In the 1970s and 80s, the works of the Progressivists were introduced to Turkmen historiography by linguists (Allaguly Mollaýew), marxist philosophers (Tashli Hydyrow), literary critics, including Durdymuhammet Nuralyýew, and atheistic ideologists such as Nedir Gulyýew. The only historian who was engaged in this process was Aman Ylýasow who authored a book about the Russian conquest

of Turkmen lands. The methodological approach of these aforementioned groups was to secularize the discourse and present the Progressivist movement as a transitional episode that led to the Soviet educational reforms and way of thinking. The scholars had been seeking a way to prevent mentioning Islam and nationalism by referring to “the public activity,” “anti-clericalism,” and “progressive-democratic ideas” (Hydyrow 1979). They also made a distinction between the early Soviet academic cadres and the pre-Revolutionary generation of intellectuals. During the period of *glasnost*, in the mid-1980s and beginning of the 1990s, Turkmen academics were engaged in a number of semi-formal and informal projects such as the creation of a discussion platform through magazines and newspapers. This included titles such as *Syýasy söhbetdeş* (*Political Interlocutor*), *Türkmen ili* (*Turkmen People*), *Edediyat we sungat* (*Literature and Art*). Turkmen intellectuals were affected not only by the inner reflection concerning the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but also by the latest publications on political purges of the 1930s. The main methodological basis of the works written during this period by linguist Myratgeldi Söyegow and historian Bahar Hojagulyýewa remained the same as in the previous period. However, now Progressivists were seen as the most important contributor to the national Turkmen identity. The Turkmen vision of the national identity phenomenon was also influenced by foreign, especially Turkish historiography (Hojagulyýewa 1995).

Between 1995 and 1998, disputes over the initial steps of cultural identity formation spread beyond Turkmenistan onto the pages of foreign magazines and academic journals. The Ashgabat architect and culturologist Ruslan Muradov became a founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *Cultural Values International Annual* published in St. Petersburg. Söyegow cooperated with Turkish journals, such as *Bilgi* (*Knowledge*) and the Russian journal *Problemy vostokovedeniya* (*The Problems of Oriental Studies*) published in Ufa. These Turkmen specialists selectively continued on the trajectories of the concepts created and developed by Soviet scholarship. This methodology was preserved in their discussions. However, the discussion platforms beyond the borders of Turkmenistan made it possible for the Turkmen scholars to reveal their critique of the Soviet regime and to present their thoughts on Islam and nationalism more liberally (Soegov 2016). Söyegow inherited some ideas from Hydyrow (i.e., he avoids referring to the political agenda of Jadidism), but he mixed dif-

ferent groups of intellectuals which was in contrast to the complete separation between the Soviet academic workers and Muslim intellectuals by historian Tahir Aşırow. The main focus of his work was based on the activity of Turkmen intellectuals after the creation of the Turkmen SSR. It appears he skipped the period before the national delimitation and the Turkmen participation in numerous state projects in Central Asia (such as the unified Turkestan Republic or the Bukharan Soviet People’s Republic). However, he addressed the essential understanding of nationhood (mentioned by DeWeese 2018, and Frank 2020) and the “others” experience of Tatars, Turks, and Uzbeks. The latter was used only as a pattern for his description and briefly considered the possible networks of communication between them and Turkmen intellectuals. In other words, he avoided the heterogeneity of the Turkmen, or the “cultural self” so important for contemporary identity studies.

The approach from Hydyrow, who was forced to adapt his narrative to the Soviet methodology, and Söyegow, who introduced the term «Jadid» to Turkmen historiography,¹ is what led to some Soviet clichés in Clement’s work. Undoubtedly, her intention to address the heritage of Turkmen Soviet scholarship is valuable. Her desire to seek the local voices is notable. Nevertheless, the Islamic identity of Turkmen society mentioned by Frank is also worth notice (Frank 2020). It was a significant factor for the discussion of literacy in the entire region.

Hence, the current monograph is based on three different tendencies so unique for the beginning of the 21st century. It includes the inner struggle and self-evaluation of American historiography; the emergence of the “new wave” of works on Central Asia, including the “Jadid-centered” narrative and its critique; and the post-colonial intention of hearing the local voices and use the epistemological legacy of the local society. Since the 2000s, numerous works were published on the intellectual history of Central Asia. One of the most recent and prominent examples is *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian Rule on the Steppe, 1731-1917* by Ian Campbell (Campbell 2017). This PhD dissertation, written in 2011 and published in 2017, is noteworthy for revealing the same issue that Clement’s work does about the originality of local thought. Another example is *Despite Cultures: Ear-*

¹ During the Soviet period this term was banned from use and Söyegow’s daughter Aýna used it as a synonym for “writer of a new wave” (Söyegowa 2020).

ly Soviet Rule in Tajikistan (*Central Eurasia in Context*) by Botakoz Kassymbekova (published in 2016). This book addresses the system of alliances between the Soviet representatives and the local population in the establishment of the Soviet power in the region (Kassymbekova 2016). This point was studied by Clement as well. She also stressed the factor of self-censorship and lying to the metropole and included some interesting data on the “way to speak Soviet.” Thus, it is possible to see that Clement’s book was original for its time. The new version is also supplemented by some additional data collected during the author’s field work in Turkmenistan on the current reforms in the educational sphere. It is exactly why it was taken into consideration not only by historians, but by other experts as well. Clement was able to repackage her study in 2018 and made it valuable for various groups of specialists involved in contemporary Central Asian studies. Her work also created interest inside Turkmenistan itself.

The Structure of the Book

The book covers the lengthy period between 1914 and 2014. This chronological framework seems to be rather broad. However, the main goal of the book verifies such a scope. As mentioned above, the cornerstone of this book points out the evolution of such concepts as *modernity* (what does it mean to be a “modern nation”) and *literacy* as comprehended by the Turkmen people throughout their entire history as a nation state. Initially, Clement argues the study for “the power of language and education as social determinants... beyond the role of the state to include the agency of people” (Clement 2018: 4). However, the institutional framework also preserves its place in her book. Most current studies on the intellectual history of Turkmenistan are based on two principles: The biographical approach (Söýegow); and the analysis of selected works (Aşirov). Both of these approaches concentrate on the history of ideas instead of the linear stadial alternation of theoretical frameworks. Instead of focusing on personalities or selected works, Clement uses the main reforms as reference points for her narrative. Thus, her book is chronologically-based and is separated by an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, and notes. The structure of a chapter’s composition is based on referring to a general Soviet-wide trend, then provides a description of the Turkmen-specific context by reviewing individual cases, and gives an analysis of those cases.

The introduction is opened with a quotation about the constructivist approach to tradition and its dynamic nature (*Ibid*: 3). This quote aims to reveal the author’s intention about the main subject of this book, i.e. the inner dynamism of Turkmen culture. The following parts of the text are entitled “Turkmen Identity” and “Modernity” (*Ibid*: 4-7). This is the same basis as Edgar’s approach to the organization of Turkmen social structures as a result of genealogical connectivity. Clement argues that initially, language was not a primary marker for Turkmen identity, but its significance has changed throughout the history of the Turkmen. She also points out that modernity is a rather unstable concept, but the Turkmen case can make its contribution to the understanding of local reflection of what it does mean to be modern. These following theoretical concepts rely on Bourdieu’s conceptual base or sociological approach. They seem to be generalizations and this can be proven by an interesting misprint on page 13 which reads “Turkmic.” It seems that the fine line between “Turkic” and “Turkmen” was crossed in this case. Clement aims to reveal her reflection on modernity through an analysis of the alphabet and linguistic reforms in Turkmenistan.

The first chapter “Jadid-inspired Paths to Modernity, 1914-1917” (*Ibid*: 17-37) investigates the period of the Russian Empire’s influence on the educational system of the Turkmen. The first two sections of the text “Traditional Mekdeps” and “Russian-Native Schools for Turkmen” reveal the situation in the regional education of the Transcaspian region before the Progressivists movement was spread among the Turkmen. The next sections “Jadid-inspired Turkmen before 1917,” “Literacy, Schools, and Ulema,” and “Awakenings in Turkmen New Method Schools” aim to clarify the main reason for the Progressivist’s growth. It included a high rate of illiteracy among the Turkmen and an attempt to build a new educational system to modernize the Turkmen nation within the framework of Islamic society. The next two sections “Educating Women as part of the Turkmen Millet” and “Jadidism and Print Culture” are based on a source analysis of “The Transcaspian Newspaper for the Indigenous Population” (*Ruzname-ýi Mauri-ýi Bahr-i Hazar*) which granted an opportunity for publications written by the Turkmen themselves (in particular, by Muhammetguly Atabaýew). Clement considers this periodical as a means of observing the expression of the local narrative on the Progressivist movement and its goals. The last part “The Modified Arabic Script” reveals the intention of Turkic-speak-

ing peoples to adopt the Arabic alphabet for their purposes and phonetic specificity. In the summary of this section, Clement mentions the long term influence of the Islamic Progressivist narrative in the history of Turkmen educational reforms. According to her book, the Turkmen saw a precondition of modernity in the transition from oral information transmission to written form. Turkmen studied the pattern of this action in the activity of other Turkic groups, but they wanted to preserve their “cultural self” (*millet*) within the broader discourses of the Islamic and Turkic-speaking community.

The second chapter “Partners in Progress: Turkmen Intellectuals in Soviet Space, 1917-1930” (*Ibid*: 37-68) begins with the brief mention of the Civil War. Afterward, Clement describes the general trend of educational reforms by the Bolsheviks in the first years of Soviet power. She briefly mentions the temporary alliance with the colonial generation of intellectuals and the necessity to create a new elite devoted to the Bolsheviks. This is the first chapter to reveal the Soviet intention of “convergence” between different national groups of the Union. Only in the section “Progressives and Bolsheviks Become Partners on the Cultural Front,” is the Turkmen case revealed. The Turkmen insisted on the maintenance of former *mekdaps* to support the spread of education. Furthermore, the question of language for communication between authorities and the population, and the issue of the alphabet arose. The author does not reveal the reason for the internal controversies of the linguistic policy. In the section entitled “Alphabet,” Clement, for the first time, addresses the life of the prominent Turkmen academic, linguist Muhammed Geldiyew. He was actively involved in Turkmen language reform by introducing the modified Arabic script and fighting with other academics such as Allaguly Garahanow. This case involved the lack of standardization of the language at this particular period. By 1924, the Turkmen republic had been founded. After this political event, in 1926, the First Turkology Congress in Baku decided to make a transition to the Latin script. According to Clement, the Turkmen did not support this intention, but they were obliged to follow it because “*The Party would not forgo [the concepts of socialist progress].*” However, they were working on this transition on their own terms, by slightly implementing and rethinking the concepts proposed by the Others (i.e. other Turkic peoples). Geldiyew personally insisted on the written representation of the long vowels which is a phonetic peculiarity of the Turkmen language. Clement tried to see this position

as a representation of the “cultural self.” The chapter ends with the reference to the 1930 Turkmen academic conference that is the initial episode of the next chapter.

The third chapter “From the ABCs to the ABCs of Communism, 1930-1953” (*Ibid*: 68-91) Clement concentrates on three key events: The 1930 academic conference, the purges of the 1930s, and the First Turkmen Linguistic Congress of 1936. This chapter is based on the step-by-step movement away from indigenization (*korenizatsiya*; i.e. the intention to give control of the political decisions and cultural sphere to the local Bolsheviks). Clement delineates how Moscow took control of the construction of the nation and denounced the legacy of “Jadid-inspired” discussions in favor of its new concept of a “Soviet persona.” The chapter ends with the author referring to Cyrillization and the gradual increase of the Russian language influence within the Soviet Union. While the Progressivists who supported the “eclectic Turkmen language” were condemned and silenced by the state machine, a new generation arose. The particular attention to the Uzbek linguist Medine Bogdanova who is seen as “a human embodiment of the Soviet state” is aimed to show the contrast between the local narrative of Turkmen intellectual elite and the Bolsheviks’ intention to spread their influence and ideas. This specific section discusses Stalin’s announcement about the high literacy rate among the Turkmen. Clement imposes this statement on the framework of the “militant atmosphere” of educational movement and insists on the change of meaning for the word *literacy*. During this particular period, literacy and modernity were closely tied to both the Russian language and Soviet political agenda.

The fourth chapter “Speaking Soviet, 1954-1984” (*Ibid*: 91-112) discusses the Russification policy. According to Clement, the Soviet state after Stalin had a selective language policy which fostered the development of the titular languages (such as Turkmen and Uzbek), but limited the rights of minorities (Kurds, Balochis, and Jews). The 1954 Congress resulted in the standardization of the Turkmen language under the guidance of Pygam Azymow and Zylyha Muhammedowa. The source for the international lexicon was the Russian language. From 1960, the influence of Russian rose significantly. During the Brezhnev era, it finally obtained the status as the dominant language of the Union (1979). Clement provides an interesting section about the discussions over the status of Turkmen language that occurred between Berdi Kerbabaýew and Amanmyrat Annanurow whose

visions of vocabulary and the processes of language formation were quite in opposition with one another. It will be addressed below.

The fifth chapter “From Happy Socialism to Independence, 1985-1996” (*Ibid*: 112-137) is brilliant. The aim of this chapter is to track the shift from the concept of literacy as the knowledge of political clichés to an idea of inclusion into the international community through education following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The newspapers of the glasnost period reveal so many details and narratives that it was a genuine treasure for the researcher. Moreover, this data was supplemented by interviews with the leading Turkmen scholars of that period. This chapter clarifies how Turkmen tried to save their “cultural self” within the new setting of international relations. It also sheds light on the period of debates within the local press. The adoption of Latin-based script and the new positioning of the country were important steps in the initial years of independence. The interesting details of the different visions of the country’s future by the population, teachers, the scholastic community, and the political elite make this narration detailed and interesting.

The sixth chapter “*Altyn Asyr Nesli: Nyyazow’s Golden Generation, 1996-2006*” (*Ibid*: 137-160) points to the vision of the future that was achieved. A vision by the political elite that was gradually implemented in all spheres of education. However, some of the opportunities provided by foreign organizations persisted. Those opportunities were the options for parents who were seeking the best future for their children.

The last chapter “The Era of Might and Happiness, 2007-2014” (*Ibid*: 160-173) details the early reforms of the country’s new political elite. It references the gradual increase English in modern-day Turkmenistan. Furthermore, it examines the developing idea of further inclusion of the country in the international realm. The last two chapters are based recent events. The assessment of this period is difficult, however, Clement’s data has the potential to make an impact on future studies of this period.

In the Conclusion (*Ibid*: 173-181), the author summarizes her thoughts about power, modernity, and literacy. She mentions the reciprocal influence of identity and literacy. While literacy is considered to be a marker of identity, it also formulates future identity change. This dynamic nature of a social phenomenon is an important consideration in Central Asian studies in order to avoid the essential nature that is so unique for the regional historiography and analysis.

The Critical Notes and Supplements

The author concentrates her attention on two periods: The 1920s and 1930s which was the period when Soviet statehood was created and institutionalized, and the 1990s and 2000s which were the early years of independence. Such a focus is crucial because it considers institutionalization as the most important element of the educational reforms. It is also connected with the primary sources, due to the lack of memoirs and the scattered information concerning the different attitudes towards the reform process. However, in some cases, it is possible to enhance Clement’s narrative with additional data. In some cases, it could include her examples in broader discussions about the Central Asian Progressivist movement and the inner conflicts during the Soviet period.

The first chapter serve as a basis for numerous notes and comments. The initial part of this chapter is devoted to the Turkmen educational system during the Imperial period. It relies mostly on the official reports (in some cases, cited via the Soviet historiography) and includes brief information about the “traditional *mekdep*” (Turkmen for “school”) and “Russian native schools” as institutional settings for educational needs. This data is not exceptional. From 1908 to 1910, during the audit of the colonial affairs by Count Konstantine Pahlen, the review of the Transcaspian educational system was initiated. The data from this review is preserved in the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA, F. 1396, Op. 1, D. 355-360). Some of its materials remain unpublished. For example, specific attention should be paid to “The Note by Petr Akkerman about the Indigenous Schools and Muslim Educational Facilities” (*Ibid*, D. 358) and a textbook collection (*Ibid*, D. 371-380). It also refers to a Persian school, *Muzaffariya*, that also was functioning in the Transcaspia. This collection was a supplement to the data on the institute of *waqf* (charitable endowment). It was analyzed by the Soviet ethnographer Georgiy Karpov and A. Ahundov. Their materials are preserved in the Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology in St. Petersburg (MAE RAN, F. K-V, Op. 1, D. 538). The works on *waqf* written by Karpov and the orientalist A.V. Bashkirov also should be considered (*Demidov* 2006). However, it seems that this institute was related primarily to the territory of the Bukharan emirate inhabited by Turkmen, while the main concern of this chapter is the educational conditions in the Transcaspian region. Some peculiarities of the Bukharan *mekdeps* for the

Turkmen can be found in the books written by Sadr al-Din 'Ayni (*Ayni* 1960: 266). However, all these sources still require critical analysis.

In his article, Frank fairly presented another perspective on educational studies in his analysis of the curriculum of the local schools (*Frank* 2020). He relies on the textbook list taken from the work of the Russian colonial administrator and orientalist Ivan Belyayev (*Belyayev* 1916). This list was mentioned by the former classmate of Belyayev, the academician Alexander Samoilovich in his expeditionary diary of 1906: "I was meeting Muhammed Durdy, the younger brother of Mamed, over tea. He is sixteen years old, and he has been studying for one year, but very infrequently. Although, in the short term, he has studied: *elipbiy*,² *heftdek*,³ the Qu'ran, *Reunak*,⁴ *Sopy Allahyar*,⁵ *Hafiz*,⁶ and *Nevai*.⁷ But... He reads it without an understanding of neither Arabic books nor Persian ones. Such a method of teaching! He read Hafiz for one month" (OR RNB, F. 671, D. 79, Notebook 10a: 58-59). *Rownaq al-Islam* is at the core of Frank's analysis. It was the most widespread textbook for Turkmen schools. Different variations of *Rownaq* were used by different groups of Turkmen and were even published by the colonial administration. This focus can be related to the Uzbek discussions about the assessment of the literate population (*Dudoignon* 1996).

In the following parts on Jadidism, Clement neglected the greetings to Turkmen readers of the journal *Terjuman* published on 6 March 1888 (№ 9) by Gasprinskiy himself (*Gasprinskiy* 2019: 169-170). Furthermore, she described the local Jadid-inspired movement in an abstract manner and presented a mixed list of different personalities. This list should be clarified to avoid some clichés from Soviet historiography and to connect this section with both the succeeding chapters on the Soviet period and the broader topics.

² Alphabet (Turkmen).

³ *Haft-i yak* (Persian, one-seventh) A tradition of very conventional rote-type learning based on a seventh part of the Qu'ran (*Russia-Central Asia* 2011: 92).

⁴ *Rownaq al-Islam* (Arabic for *The Splendor of Islam*).

⁵ *Sufi Allahyar* (died in 1721 or 1724) A sufi poet and philosopher whose didactic writings were an important part of the local educational process (*Dudoignon* 1996: 136).

⁶ *Hafiz-i Shirazi* (died in 1389/1390). A famous Persian poet whose writings were an important part of moral education in the region (*Dudoignon* 1996: 166).

⁷ *Mir Ali Shir Nava'i* (1441-1501). The originator of Chaghatai poetry. His personality became a part of Turkmen folklore under the name of Myraly (*Shin* 2017).

First, the author mentions a list of the most prominent Jadids including several names of the Young Bukharans. However, neither Clement nor Khalid paid attention to one of the regional groups of this party. This group was based in the town of Kerki. Abdulhekim Gulmuhammedow mentioned in his Curriculum Vitae that he was a secretary of this group (TsGA SPb, F. R-7222, Op. 27, D. 152: 1-5). Moreover, two Turkmen (Gulmuhammedow and Orzammammed Wepayew) were sent to Istanbul based on the program of *Buhara Tamim-i Maarif Cemiyeti* (The Bukharan Society for the Spread of Public Education) which was a part of the Young Bukharan's activities. According to Söyegow, Abdulla Gelenow was also a part of this group (*Söyegow* 1990). Thus, their contribution that was criticized by their contemporaries should be studied within the framework of the Young Bukharan ideas and concepts.

Furthermore, the registration list of the photographic collection for the Russian Ethnographic Museum (REM, Photographic collection № 5493) mentions a group known as the "Young Turkmen." There is no commentary about the actual meaning behind this term. Supposedly, this group was working on changing the means of communication between the colonial administration and the local population (*Ikhsanov* 2020). One of the members of this group was Muhammetguly Atabayew who was a central personality of this chapter due to his publication activity. The issue is related to his educational background. Atabayew was a student of Nikolay Ostroumov's Pedagogical Institute in Tashkent⁸ which was the same as Alishbeg Aliyev (who arrived in Turkmen lands from Dagestan). Ostroumov himself was a complicated person. His impact on the colonial vision of Central Asia provokes numerous discussions in the academic literature. Nevertheless, he saw a great danger in the "clerical activity" in Turkestan and tried to hinder it by using educational facilities. He saw this activity as a means of integrating the local population into the Russian Empire. Clement mentions these ideas in the text. However, she did not mention another fact. Ostroumov's vision was supported by Ivan Belyayev, who arrived in Transcaspia around 1913 or 1914. Belyayev was collaborating with Aliyev and Atabayew in his fight against the clerics (*Belyayev* 1916). This was the reason for his support for increasing the number of Bukharan religious figures in the region. This movement was a

⁸ One of Atabayew's early articles was published under the signature of Ostroumov (*Atabayew* 1906).

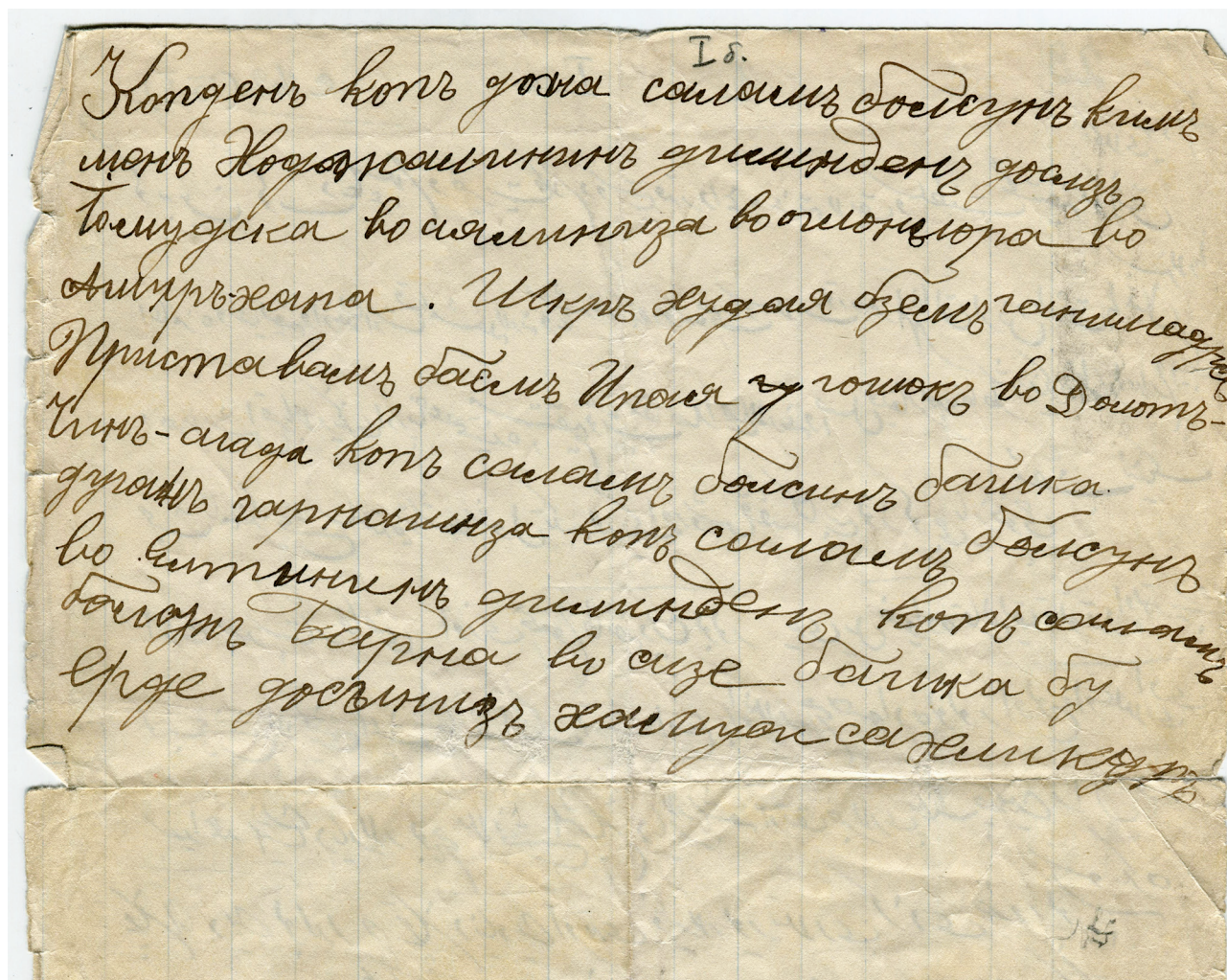


Fig. 1. Letter from Khojaly-molla to Muradberdy-ogly. IOM RAS, Arabographic fund.
Manuscript C-162, sheet Ib

prerequisite to the struggle between local *ishans* (the religious authorities among the Turkmen) and the newly incoming Bukharans (Demidov 1978). Hence, the context concerning the emergence of the newspaper *Transcaspian* is not that simple. As demonstrated by Campbell in his interesting analysis of the Kazakh teacher Ibrai Altynsarin (1841-1889), such cases are related to inferior ambivalence. The originality of thought about the comprehension of the local identity is “compatible with, and even dependent upon, an idealized vision of Russian colonial governance” (Campbell 2017). In other words, Atabayew’s activity should be seen not within the Jadid paradigm, but through the complex relations inside imperial society. Furthermore, there is no comprehension of the voices against the “Jadid-inspired” narrative. Searching for the local *ishans*’ voices is a challenging task.

The last point about the list of “Jadid-inspired” Turkmen concerns the Soviet clichés. In 1906, Samoi-

lovich made a journey to Transcaspia for the purpose of collecting contemporary Turkmen poetry. The local informant, Molla Sabyr Söyün-ogly, introduced him to a local poet whose name was Sübhan-berdi Öwez-berdi-ogly and whose literary pseudonym was Gör-molla. Samoilovich left two descriptions of this meeting along with a photograph of this poet (Samoilovich 1907). The scholar pointed out that Gör-molla was illiterate (in contrast to his father, whose pseudonym was Molla-Sakar, and his brother). Afterward, Molla Sabyr collected some of the poetry by Gör-molla and send it to Samoilovich. Currently, two or three collections of poetry by Gör-molla are preserved in St. Petersburg (Dmitriyeva 2002: 360). Samoilovich published only one of the poems which represented the poet’s disapproval of colonialism and is based on stereotypes about Russians (Samoilovich 1907). But in 1930, there was an expedition to the Merv region which aimed to collect literary manuscripts. It was

the last expedition to contact Gör-molla before his death in 1934 (Karpov, Potseluyevskiy 1934: 102). In 1933 or 1934, the poem “You are Good Fellow for your Truth, Bolshevik!” was published by G. Veselkov and Karpov (Sejidorow 1965: 133-134). In 1941, it was published in Turkmen. In Hydyrow’s book *Progressive-democratic Thought in Turkmenistan* (Hydyrow 1979), Gör-molla, alongside Atabayew, was officially proclaimed to be an “enlightener.” He was transformed into a literate person who supported Bolshevism. From Hydyrow’s work, this image was passed on to Söyegow’s books and articles and is one reason reason why Gör-molla became a part of Clement’s list.

In other words, the list of “Jadid-inspired” Turkmen is very eclectic and can be a basis for original research. Furthermore, Clement’s failure to include the criminal case of 1913 (which was closely connected to Atabayew and “Young Turkmen” group’s activities); the revolt of 1916; the Civil War; and initial state projects in the region hinders a smooth transition between thoughts and events. Thus, it seems that this section is slightly separated from other chapters and does not reveal the true motivation behind the “Others” which was how the Turkmen referred to other Central Asian ethnic groups.

In Clement’s intention to show the symbolic power behind the Turkmen script, it is important to mention one document. This is a letter now preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, (IOM, Manuscript C-162: Ib). It was written to a Russian officer of Turkmen origin Nikolaý Ýomudskiý from his informant, the secretary of the colonial administration, Hojaly-molla Myrat-berdi-ogly. The uniqueness of this letter (written between 1904 and 1909) is in its script. It was written in Turkmen using Cyrillic script. It seems that Hojaly-molla wanted to impress his friend with his knowledge and ability to write in Russian cyrillic. But it is also a marker of the colonial culture’s influence on Turkmen society (and, in particular, those personalities who were working in the colonial administration) even before the Revolution. The symbolic asset of the Russian language was already known and felt.

The second and third chapters can be criticized for a couple of reasons. The first reason is a system of dichotomies implemented by Clement to underline the originality of Turkmen thought. The main focus of this chapter is upon two personalities: Muhammed Geldiyew and Allaguly Garahanow. According to Söyegow, both of them were graduates of the Galiya madrasah in Ufa. Galiya was a specific structure.

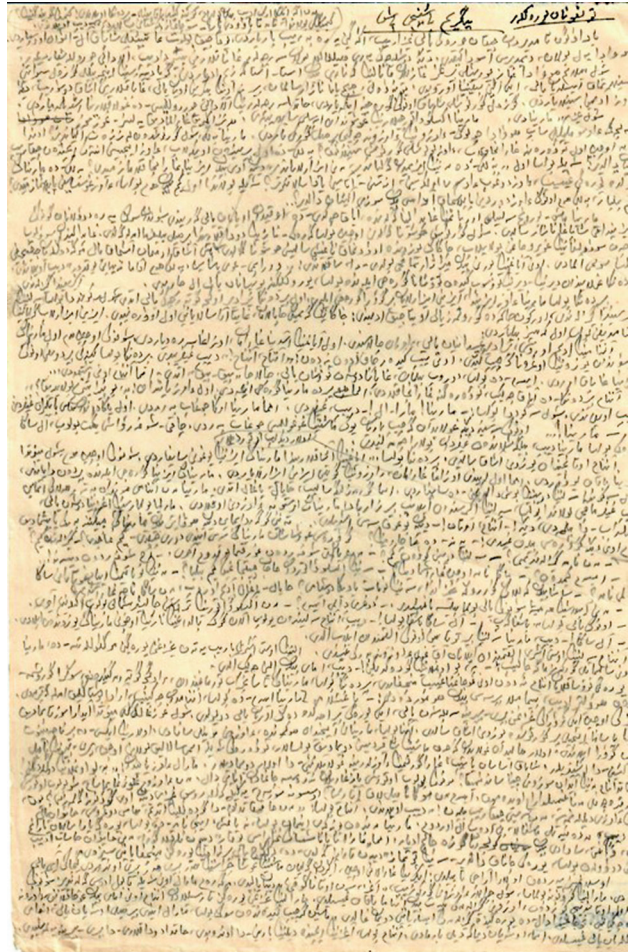


Fig. 2. The manuscript from the beginning of the 24th chapter of Berdy Kerbabaev's novel "Born by Miracle." From the collection of the State Central Museum of the Contemporary History of Russia. GIK 38805 / 686a

It was founded by Ziya Kamali the graduate of al-Azhar University (Habutdinov 2013). According to Alfrid Bustanov, at this particular period, the Muslim scholars of the Volga region were in search of narratives and methods of education. They were seeking to counter to the Persian system that dominated in Bukhara (Bustanov 2019). Near Eastern education institutions played a major role in their views. Galiya was not a facility for the training of imams. From 1910, the madrasah concentrated its attention on the instruction of teachers who were representative of the Central Asian peoples and tribes. From 1915, it was a main source of cadres for the left wing of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (*Eser*). Gibad Alparov was a well known representative of this party (Habutdinov 2013). Why is it so important to be noted in connection to the personality of Geldiyew? Mostly, because the *Eser* party had a very distinguished program of national self-determination separate from the Bol-

shevik concepts (Kan 2008). Alparov and Geldiyew were close friends. They were working together on the study of the Turkmen language (Söýegow 2019). Apparently, the *Eser* factor in the history of Turkmenistan is underestimated.

They also cooperated with Samoilovich. According to the investigation after Samoilovich's detention: "There is also a subtle proof of a relationship between the nationalists of different republics. Last year, Samoilovich participated in a scientific conference in Turkmenistan (1930). Since the very beginning, he supported the position of Geldiyew by every means necessary. Geldiyew wanted to prove his erudition. He invented a theory that Turkmen have similar words that differ from each other only in pronunciation, some of them are pronounced shorter, others, longer. For example, "at" means a horse, and "ad" means a name. He proposed to introduce double letters to represent those long vowels. This theory was promoted with great success. Over four or five years all magazines and books were published with double letters. Those who were against this writing, who found it difficult, were accused of being against the new Turkmen Latin alphabet. Last year, when the issue was considered again, the nationalists put forward almost eighteen points in defense of their theory. Samoilovich actively helped them in this defense. When we categorically suggested that they scientifically substantiate the theory of Geldiyew, they admitted that there is no scholarly basis for this theory. It was just their suggestion" (TsGA SPb, F. R-7222, Op. 38, D. 57: 59-62).

Furthermore, according to correspondence and diaries, Geldiyew, Samoilovich, Alparov were closely connected. They had serious opposition from both Russian scholars and Turkmen academics. The quotes from the correspondence prove it. For example, Potseluyevskii mentioned that he was in opposition to the so-called "Geldiyew's ABC's": "I am not responsible for the use of the orthography I strongly disagree with [in this system]. There is no significant consideration of labial harmony; there is the redundancy in the writing of long vowels (these writings also includes semi-long sounds and even the stressed vowels); there is also the artificial character of the written representation of the foreign syllables that has nothing in common with the folk language (Linin). This system ignores the living pronunciation in such forms as *dijip* (it should have been *diip*), etc)" (OR RNB, F. 671, D. 246: 18). Moreover, he stated that there was a severe critique of this alphabet from the Turkmen side: "In the autumn, there should be

a conference dedicated to the fundamentals of orthography and etymology. If you come to participate, then you should play a role as an arbitrator, because, as I know, the organizers of this conference will try to use it to change the modern orthography that was created by M. Geldiyew and K. Böriyew. The double letters (that represent long vowels) became a reason for the debate and opposition in Turkmen circles. A number of employees are going to insist on the abolition of these letters. A lot of people do not share the idea of the abolition of labial vowels from all the syllables of a word except the first one. In general terms, it seems that the battle will be raging" (Ibid).

In other words, there was a struggle not solely between Moscow and Ashgabat, but inside Ashgabat itself. It was connected to different identities and visions of the future (and not only to tribal identity). The Russian scholars were a part of these debates. It is hard to limit all the participants by their ethnic origin. Moreover, the inner social system of the Turkmen society had its particular influence on the discussions. For example, Böriyew's specific status as the leader of the reform and indigenization of culture can be associated with his origin from the so-called "saint's kin", relatives of Muhammed (*Hoja*)⁹ and his kinship connections with the leadership of the republic (i.e., he was a relative of Nedirbay Aýtakow).

Clement simplifies this picture because it is connected to the numerous contradictions and details that required more indepth study. This simplification is a reason why Clement did not study the broad topic of the interpretation of "Marxist-Leninist literature" which was the main impetus behind the debates of the late 1930s and accusations against Turkmen in purism. It also led to the absence of Hydyr Derýaýew in this book. He was the most prominent proponent of the theory by Nikolay Marr (who, by the way, was an archeologist, not a linguist). In this work, Clement substituted Derýaýew who was in a struggle with other Turkmen (Aşirov 2019) with Medine Bogdanova who was more suitable to demonstrate the Soviet transformation of Central Asia. Finally, in the near future an article should be published about the work on vocabulary in Turkmenistan during the 1930s based on the similar research by Xavier Hallez (Hallez 2004).

Clement mostly concentrates her attention to the higher level of decision making, while the situation on the ground was more controversial. Budgetary is-

⁹ See (Abashin 2004).

sues and the differences between official statements and the grassroots realities were a crucial reason for the slow pace of the reform (Vasilyev 2016: 170-181). In his diary, Samoilovich described a number of villages in the southern regions of the Turkmen SSR. According to the reports prepared by the local representatives of the People's Commissariat of Education, these did not require any maintenance while in reality the pupils were forced to study without books in rooms with dirt floors without windows. The education was based on the Arabic script and the women's clubs existed only on paper.

The budgetary shortfalls affected the educational process. One of the teachers "looks powerless because according to his statement, there is no support by the Committee. He explains that the main reason for nonattendance is the fact that the seasonal work in the fields is not over yet, it will end by November. Education is not compulsory." High level discussions focused on the authorities' ambitions to create the Academy of Sciences, while the situation on the ground was the actual emergency. The local population even planned to migrate to Afghanistan (OR RNB, F. 671, D. 81, Notebooks 18-19). The final critical comment pertains to chapter four. The focus on

russification does not correspond to the crucial increase of the number of dissertations dedicated to Turkmen linguistics during these years (from twenty two in the 1940s to forty in the 1970s); and to the emergence of two prominent Turkmen poets—Gurbannazar Ezizow and Kerim Gurbanpesow. Clement concentrates her attention solely on one global point while the inner processes are outside of her attention. In this regard, the discussion among Kerbabaýew (who was a Jadid-inspired representative of the 1920s and who wrote his books in Arabic script even in 1965 (URL: <https://goskatalog.ru/portal/#/collections?id=8220761>; last visit: 03.06.2020) and Annanurow (who was a representative of the new generation) has a particular importance for this study.

Despite those dichotomies (in some cases artificially constructed), Clement used an enormous amount of literature to show the original concepts introduced by the Turkmen themselves. The importance of this factor is significant. In light of these remarks, these monographs can be introduced to the broader discussions and make their unique impact on the comprehension of the inner dynamism of Central Asia.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- IOM - The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts at the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- MAE - The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) at the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- OR RNB - The Department of Manuscripts of the National Library of Russia.
- RGIA - The Russian State Historical Archive.
- TsGA SPb - The Central State Archive of the City of St.-Petersburg.
- Turkmen SSR - Turkmenistan Soviet Socialist Republic.