

the purpose of purloining their ideas, which they then use to produce publications and advance their careers. In part this attitude is related to the fact that researchers in the post-Soviet context are less respected than they are in the West. However, there are several other dimensions that are specific to Western involvement in Kyrgyzstan. One is what I would call interview fatigue caused by the feeling of being exploited by foreign researchers. The stream of Western researchers passing through Bishkek over the last ten years has been large relative to the size of the local NGO community, so that NGO leaders — especially because they are more likely to speak English than, say, academics or politicians — are approached again and again with similar inquiries but rarely see the outcome. As a result, they feel that Westerners come to pick their brains and then leave, never getting back in touch to share the product of their research. There was an undercurrent of the same attitude toward Western researchers in Moscow, but it became far more obvious and explicit in Bishkek because researchers' presence looms larger in this much smaller city.

This attitude about exploitative Western researchers is reinforced by the way international organizations conduct their research on Kyrgyzstan. In the words of a respondent with firsthand experience of the procedures of the European Union and the UN for gathering data, international organizations use local social scientists as "plantation slaves" for the most basic tasks of data collection and entry and almost never involve them in analysis and writing which usually take place outside of Kyrgyzstan. According to this person, this arrangement compromises the quality of information

in the resulting studies. Local researchers, having no stake in the final product, do not have a strong incentive to be responsible and meticulous about their work and do on occasion falsify data, for example, by filling out questionnaires themselves.

A related concern, which I heard several times in Bishkek, is that knowledge about Kyrgyzstan is predominantly produced in the West, that what is produced is rarely brought back, and that so far there has been very little, if any, development of the capacity for local knowledge production. This concern was also recently voiced here in the United States: in her presentation at the SSRC-sponsored thematic conversation on the Caucasus and Central Asia at the November 2002 annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, Cynthia Buckley discussed the pervasive lack of access by Central Asian researchers to "public access" data produced by international organizations, which "can both diminish the participation of regional scholars in policy debates and encourage researchers to repeat, often at significant costs, data collection efforts."

My motivation in writing this report for CESR has been two-fold. First, my research experience suggests that Western scholars (including Central Asians, like myself, who are now working in the West) should be aware of the broader context in which their individual research projects take place and that each of us contributes to shaping that broader local context during our field work. Secondly, the Central Eurasian Studies Society is an ideal forum for discussing how to forge stronger links between scholarship here and in Central Asia and to foster the development of knowledge production capacity inside the region.

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### **Bayani's *Shajara-ye khorezmshahi* and the Russian Conquest of Khiva: An Essay on Historical Production<sup>1</sup>**

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The Russian conquest of Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century drew considerable

attention from numerous eyewitnesses (Russians, French, Germans, English) and a great deal of scrutiny from scholars in Russia and elsewhere. Unfortunately, descriptions of the conquest in Central Asian sources were for the most part left out of scholarly inquiry, perhaps because too many of

<sup>1</sup> The following is a concise version of a paper read at the *Third Annual Conference of the Central Eurasian Studies Society*, October 17-20, 2002, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

them are still in manuscript form, sometimes difficult to trace and hard to access.

One such source is the *Shajara-yē khorezmshahi* (Genealogy of the Khorezmian Kings), completed in 1914 by Muhammad Yusuf Bek, known by his poetic pseudonym [*takhallus*] "Bayani." The work, a history of Khiva written in Chaghatay (the language of Khivan historiography), survived in a single manuscript (preserved in Tashkent at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan) and was never edited nor published in its entirety. In fact, the number of scholars who have actually used it can be counted on one hand.<sup>2</sup> In this report I will draw readers' attention to a part of this source that indicates the author's reliance on multiple sources with very different perspectives on the Russian conquest of Khiva. This research is part of an ongoing project concerning Central Asian historiography, relying in part on the extensive and rare materials kept at the RIFIAS (Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies), Indiana University, Bloomington.

Our information on Bayani is limited. We know that he was a poet (he was a member of a poetic circle in Khiva where the khan made him read twice a week from his own works), a writer, and an administrative official. He was the son of Babajan Bek, also a writer and an official at the Khivan court, and the great-grandson of Eltuzer, Khan of Khiva at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Russian ethnographer Samoilovich, who visited Khiva in 1908, listed Bayani as a poet, musician and *divanbegi* (an official in charge of the treasury). He also mentioned that Bayani was a captain in the service of the Russians (the Russians often gave Central Asians honorary ranks with no real authority), and what is more important for our purpose, knew Russian well and regularly received Russian newspapers and journals.

On the circumstances of the writing of the work, Bayani relates that on 22 *Jumadi al-Awwal*, 1329 (May 21, 1911) he received instructions from Isfandiyar, Khan of Khiva, to write down the history of the latter's "noble and sublime dynasty" in simple language that common people would find intelligible, "avoiding metaphors and similes" (in contrast with previous historical works, all written in a very ornate style). Therefore, we can entertain the

<sup>2</sup> See Bayani, *Shajara-i khorezmshahi* (M.S.). For an overview of the work and its history see Bregel (1961).

notion that this work was an attempt at producing a Khivan national history.

Bayani based his account on earlier works by Munis and Agahi, the most noted historians of Khiva in the nineteenth century. However, unable to find all of Agahi's chronicles, he had to write the history from 1846-1856 and from 1864 onward himself. These parts are Bayani's original contribution, based on information that he had collected himself. He also explains that this was the reason why it took him three years (1911-1914) to finish the work.

The part of the work I would like to highlight here deals with events surrounding the Russian conquest of Khiva and the bloody expedition against the Yomut tribe of the Turkmens which followed.<sup>3</sup> On May 29, 1873, General von Kaufman, Governor of Turkestan and commander of the campaign against Khorezm, triumphantly entered Muhammad Rahim Khan's palace in Khiva. The conquest of Khiva, "Russia's most troublesome Central Asian neighbor," was the peak of the Russian advance into Central Asia at the time, following the subjugation of the other two khanates of the region, Bukhara and Qoqand. Approximately six weeks after Kaufman entered Khiva, he sent General Golovachev to annihilate the Turkmen tribe of the Yomuts in the most brutal expedition of the Khivan campaign. Here is a peek into Bayani's description of the massacre:

The mounted Cossacks dispersed to all sides and set fire to the Yomuts' crops, to their huts and tents. The flames reached the sky from every direction and the smoke could be seen everywhere so that the meaning of [the Qur'anic verse] "Wait for the day when the heavens bring forth visible smoke, enveloping mankind," [Qur'an, 44:10: a reference to the Sura of the Smoke, the Day of Judgment] became clear. The Cossacks fired at everyone they saw. They stabbed the old and the women and children with their sabers and impaled infants who were still suckling their mother's milk on their lances and tossed them

<sup>3</sup> Recently this part of Bayani's account was transcribed from the Arabic script into Cyrillic (see Baëni 1994). The editor accommodated the text for her Uzbek readers by occasionally providing synonyms in modern Uzbek to the original Chaghatay words. The transcription is generally good although this is not a scholarly edition of the text (there is a short introduction but no commentary or analysis).

into the burning fire. And they carried on plundering the Yomuts' possessions (Bayani, ff. 468a-469a).

As I was reading Bayani's account, I had the distinct feeling that I had read a similar description before, in a report in English on the Russian conquest of Khiva, written approximately 40 years before Bayani started his work. J. A. MacGahan, a correspondent for the American newspaper *The New York Herald*, was sent by his paper to cover the Russian advance into Central Asia (MacGahan 1970). MacGahan joined General Kaufman's column, attacking Khiva from the East, and later he got Kaufman's permission to accompany him on the operation against the Turkmens, riding alongside Prince Eugene, a commander of one of the Cossack divisions.

Reading both testimonies, it became clear that Bayani may have based parts of his narrative on MacGahan's account, using the same language as MacGahan's report, zooming in on similar scenes, and offering information that otherwise would not have been available to Bayani. My guess is that Bayani had access to MacGahan's account, not in its original English of course, but in a Russian translation of MacGahan's work completed in Moscow a year after the original publication (Mak-Gakhan 1875).

This is not to say that Bayani's description of the conquest isn't useful. On the contrary, his work provides insights into the Khivans' perception of the approaching Russians, into the organization of the Khivan administration and the movements of the Khivan troops, and into the relationship between Uzbeks and Turkmens in Khiva. (We should also bear in mind that the description of the Russian conquest is only a small part of the *Shajara-ye khorezmshahi*).

More significantly, if indeed Bayani consulted MacGahan's account, this may mark a turning point in historical production in Khiva. It means that the Khivans began to utilize external sources of

information that had nothing to do with the organic body of materials that they would normally use to write down their history (such as older court chronicles, "classical" reference works from Central Asia and Iran, documents, stories, popular knowledge, and local eyewitnesses). Naturally, in order to accommodate a new body of materials to Khivan reality, Bayani needed to modify not only some of the contents, but also the style of presentation. Accordingly Bayani would occasionally quote from the Qur'an, provide a domestic perspective on people and locales, and give more credit to the Khivan military than they deserved. Nevertheless, the move to rely on more diverse sources of information in Central Asian historiography would have caused the Khivans to unknowingly rely on a New York journalist as the storyteller of their most depressing hour.

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