TO THE HISTORY OF ORIENTAL TEXTOLOGY

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MEDIEVAL HISTORIOGRAPHY IN MANUSCRIPTS FROM EAST TURKESTAN

In one of his early works published in 1897 V. V. Barthold wrote: "The population of East Turkestan was obviously never renowned for its literary productivity; our evidence on the history of this land we obtain for the most part from Chinese literature and from the works of Muslim historians written in Mawarannahr or in Persia" [1]. This remark is often cited in Orientalological works. It is not mentioned, however, that this remark reflects the state of our source-basis in the 1890s. At the same time, from the end of 1897 various manuscript collections from East Turkestan have been coming to the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg (now the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences). These were manuscripts which were collected by Ya. Ya. Lutsch (acquired in 1897—1903), A. N. Samoilovich (in 1906—1908, 1914, 1920, 1930), N. F. Petrovsky (in 1909), S. F. Oldenburg (in 1910) and by other scholars and amateur collectors of antiquities. When traveling in Central Asia in 1902 V. V. Barthold discovered and bought for the Asiatic Museum manuscripts containing works by two scholars from East Turkestan [2]. In 1916 in Tashkent he became acquainted with a copy of the “Chronicle” by Churâsî in a private manuscript collection. The owner of the manuscript, Bâqâ-Jân-bûy, allowed him to take it to Petrograd — “to make a photocopy” [3]. In 1904 M. Hartmann published a description of his manuscript collection from East Turkestan [4]. During the last several decades it became evident, that among the manuscripts now preserved in Central Asian libraries there are many which had been copied and decorated in East Turkestan. The manuscript funds of Xinjiang include hundreds of volumes. Copies of some works by East Turkestan authors are present in many European and Indian libraries [5]. At present we are aware of the existence of hundreds of Muslim manuscripts from East Turkestan, some of them including several different works.

As early as 1953 D. I. Tikhonov, a specialist in Uighur studies, wrote that the St. Petersburg collection of East Turkestan manuscripts was unsurpassable both in the number of volumes and in the range of subjects they treat [6]. In this article we shall try to survey the literary life of Kashgharia of the Islamic period, giving special attention to historiographic works created by East Turkestan authors.

The development of literacy basing upon Arabic script in East Turkestan was connected with the conversion of its population to Islam in the 10th century and with the introduction of Arabic language and writing. The earliest known examples of East Turkestan Muslim literature were written in Arabic and Turkic in the 11th century: three works Qâdâghî Bîlik ("Beneficial Knowledge") by Yusuf, a native of Balasaghün, and two works by Abû al-Fath Abû al-Ghâfir (or 'Abû al-Ghaffâr) ibn Husâyn al-Alma‘î al-Kashgari, who lived in Kashgharia and wrote (in Arabic) Mu‘jam al-Shuyukh ("The Dictionary of Sheikh") and Târikh Kashgari ("The History of Kashgar").

The ethico-didactic poem Qâdâghî Bîlik was written in Kashgar in 462/1069—1070 for the local khan. This poem by Yusuf of Balasaghun is well known — it survived in three manuscripts. There are several publications of its text; it has been many times translated (completely or partially) into other languages; many articles dedicated to this early monument of Turkic literature consider its various aspects. The latest Russian translation of the poem by S. N. Ivanov appeared in 1983 (after the critical text published by R. R. Arat) [7].

None of the works by Abû al-Futûh have survived to the present time. There is some information about him and about his father in the works by Sam‘ânî (12th century), Yaqût (13th century) and Jamâl Qarshi (14th century). The sources used by Yaqût and Jamâl Qarshi are unknown. Sam‘ânî refers to what he heard from Abû Bakr Hibbatallâh ibn al-Fârâkh of Hamadân and from Abû ‘Abdallâh Muhammad ibn al-Qâsim of Merv. That is what we know about Abû al-Futûh and his father from Kitâb al-Ansâb by Sam‘ânî, from Mu‘jam al-Buldân by Yaqût and from Mülâqa‘at al-Shurûh by Jamâl Qarshi [8].

The name of Abû al-Futûh's father was al-Husayn, but he was known also as Abû Faḍl. His full name was Imâm Abû 'Abdallâh al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Hâlaf 'iba'î ibn al-Khalil ibn Sâlih ibn Muhammad al-'âtî al-Kâshgari. He was a sheikh and a preacher, also the author of many works on the hadîth (their titles not mentioned). According to Sam‘ânî, "there could be more than a hundred and twenty of them; they are rejected by everyone". As Sam‘ânî was told by his informers, al-Husayn outlived his son by ten years. Yaqût wrote that Abû ‘Abdallâh al-Hasan (sic) had died in Baghdad in 484/1091—1092; but according to Jamâl Qarshi, he died in Kashghar in 486/1093 and was buried there. His son, Abû al-Futûh ‘Abû al-Ghâfir ibn al-