

Reviews and Abstracts

Colette Harris, *Control and Subversion: Gender Relations in Tajikistan*. London: Pluto Press, 2004, 216 pp., glossary, bibliography, index. ISBN 0745321674, \$27.50 (pbk.).

Reviewed by: **Najam Abbas**, PhD, Research Fellow, Central Asian Studies Unit, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK, nabbas@iis.ac.uk

This book offers an analysis of some of the pressures people in Tajik society face at both the macro and micro levels. Broadly, they face the burden of their own traditionalism plus that of traditions imposed by Communism. Over the years, this has led people to cultivate their own strategic responses — some passive, some aggressive — to psychological colonialism after the actual colonialism has ended. The book also reflects a tussle between yesterday's traditions and today's realities and examines how the younger Tajik generation copes with that conflict. The author illustrates how gender masks are used as a shield permitting the public display of conformity but concealing considerable deviation, albeit within the narrow limits of Tajikistan's tradition-dominated environment. These masks are not mere posturing but are a vital strategy, used by both sexes, especially women, to preserve their inner selves intact, while enacting roles crucial for preserving their social status. Harris's work, grounded in the anthropology of gender, and using Judith Butler's theory of performativity as a theoretical framework, draws on family histories of Tajiks whom she encountered while working with an NGO in southern Tajikistan's Khatlon Province.

The book documents the tensions men and women in Tajikistan face around the issue of choice or lack of choice when trying to find a life partner. Harris lists several factors that usually complicate relations within couples and with those living close to them. For many Tajik girls, the choice of a husband not only depends on his qualities but on what kind of mother-in-law the bride will face. The groom's parents attempt to maintain control of resources even after their sons have married and started to raise families. Reading of the painful conditions that Tajik rural women encounter triggers both sadness and sympathy.

Harris worked with Christian Aid and Care International, and received EU/TACIS funding for

the Tajik NGO Gamkhori with which she worked between 1995 and 2001. She had an opportunity to be a participant-observer, carrying out her fieldwork as an associate of a project for improving women's health in central Tajikistan.

A look at Harris' sources suggests that her approach is more a portrayal and explanation of the past than a discussion of the present or how the future may unfold. At times, the book refers to practices that may be current in Tajik society, but cites quarter-century-old references from Soviet times or even earlier. In Tajikistan marriages between first cousins (in the maternal line) are quite common, perhaps, notes the author, because marriage arrangements are often initiated by women; she adds that a number of women in cousin marriages complained bitterly about the frequency of birth defects in their children. The author then goes on to say that "in general, Tajiks appear unaware of the dangers of this when we brought up the subject with health project participants" (p. 105). This leaves one wondering why there are no references on what the contemporary medical literature has to say on such trends as observed by local gynecologists and family medicine practitioners.

Citations of experts' opinions and specialists' views may support the author's observations concerning the physical and psychological health of the women she studied. However, despite working for a number of international and national organizations on health issues, Harris does not quote any Tajik experts who would enrich her information on demographic, social, and psychological conditions of the women particularly since the country's independence in 1991. For example, the book claims that "ignorance of sexual matters has to be one of the greatest causes of pain and suffering ... many divorces occurred because of young couples' sexual ignorance" (p. 5). This, the author says, is because most Tajik men do not appear to consider

their wives' needs, while the girls rarely have an understanding of sexual feelings and continue to inhibit their sexual feelings even after marriage (p. 155); many women "associate sex solely with pain and discomfort" (p. 158).

Some clarification would have been helpful to justify the choice of narrators for this study. To what extent does a case study of five families (24 individuals in all) adequately represent the situation faced by Tajikistan's female and male populations? How far are we able to generalize the situation of a selected group of women and even a smaller number of men over conditions in the country in general? The author also does not mention whether she made any attempts to approach male psychologists or psychotherapists who could have helped her understand what made Tajik men behave in a particular way toward Tajik women, such as whether men's behavior was determined by economic conditions, social circumstances, traditions, cultures, or religion.

Though Harris concedes that there is a problem with using local incidents to interpret national or even regional trends, a reader should be given more convincing justification for the basis on which the author classifies and characterizes groups of people. For example, an interviewee is quoted saying "in Tajikistan a girl who has reached the age of 18 without her hand being asked in marriage is considered an old maid" (p. 86). Moreover: "It is inconceivable to most people in Tajikistan that a girl might postpone marriage in order to be able to concentrate better on her studies" (p. 86). An ideal approach would have been to check the statistics with the central and provincial marriage register bureaus. Furthermore, the growing number of female applicants seeking admission to universities in Tajikistan and abroad may not corroborate such claims. "Most girls in Tajikistan today get married on leaving high school and study afterwards," claims the book (p. 86). Citation of references to such sources as Save the Children's "State of the World's Mothers" (SOWM), which annually ranks the status of mothers and children in 110 countries based on ten indicators pertaining to health and education, would have provided readers with a fuller picture. The 2001 edition of SOWM reports that in Tajikistan the average age at first marriage for

women was 22 (SOWM 2001: 38). On some parameters such as youth literacy, education access and secondary education enrollment for women, Tajikistan figures ahead of Turkey, Egypt and India (SOWM 2005: 40).

This book attempts to give meaning to the multiple identities and strategies related to status, responsibilities and roles that Tajiks assume as individuals both within their own communities and with outsiders. This book also reflects on the contradictions observed as a result of the interaction between Tajik traditions and the Soviet ideology of the past. It looks into the interface of tradition with the explosion of new cultural stimuli that fascinate the young and horrify their elders.

The book's back cover blurb claims this study's relevance "to many other Muslim societies, particularly those of the remaining Central Asian republics ... as an essential reading for anyone interested in Central Asia, the lives of Muslim women, or gender in a Muslim context." To justify that claim, the book would need to provide more examples outside its particular geographical and historical setting; to determine if the practices and attitudes discussed were specific to a particular rural or urban area; and to determine whether differences in ethnic and geographic origins supported or deviated from this book's many assumptions. Considering the author's rare exposure to women's lives in Khatlon, this book would have made a more meaningful contribution if some pointers and suggestions were offered for future researchers interested in exploring various dimensions of gender studies in Central Asia.

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Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, xv + 239 pp., index, maps, ill. ISBN 0801442095, \$35.00 (cloth).

Reviewed by: **Marianne Kamp**, Associate Professor of History, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyo., USA, mkamp@uwyo.edu

Willard Sunderland's *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*, surveys several centuries of Russian expansion into the steppe zone that stretches from present day Moldova to Orenburg. In the process the book explores Russian ideas about empire and colonialism with detailed attention to changes in practices and attitudes. The work also draws comparisons with the larger body of historical scholarship on frontiers and borderlands. This volume provides a careful overview of Russian expansion, Russian approaches to settler colonialism, and some examples of Russian governmental treatment of conquered Central Eurasian peoples, such as Kalmyks [Kalmuks], Bashkirs [Bashkorts], and Nogays [Noghays].

The first chapter, "Frontier Colonization," addresses Russia's interactions with its steppe nomad neighbors from the founding of Rus' to the late 1700s. Until Russia's conquest of Kazan, and even in the following century, this relationship was one of exchange, and Russian colonization of borderlands was limited to building forts, settling soldiers and a few farmers, and trying to make use of Cossacks against nomadic groups. But under Peter I, as Sunderland demonstrates, the court believed that land could be transformed, and that steppe lands could and should be made "useful." Colonization was not systematic, but when Russian forces seized eastern lands and established Orenburg in the mid-18th century, tens of thousand of Russian settlers began moving into Bashkir lands. Bashkirs were forced to come to terms with the Russian Empire, either by declaring loyalty or by rebelling.

Catherine the Great presided over the next phase, the subject of the second chapter, which Sunderland terms "enlightened colonization." Russia defeated the Ottoman Empire in several wars, and thus took control of the steppe lands north of the Black Sea and Crimea. Sunderland explores the enlightenment philosophy that guided the state's efforts to colonize Russia's new steppe lands, where nomads like the Kalmyks and Nogays were made Russian subjects and pressured to settle. Like other European enthusiasts for empire and colonialism, the Russian elite saw their expansionist project as bringing civilization to empty lands and backward

peoples. At the same time, there was some romanticizing of nomads: as Sunderland puts it, "The image of the nomad as noble savage began to be embraced in the very late 1700s largely because the threat of the nomad as ignoble savage was receding; but nomadism itself was still seen as deficient, and change was still necessary" (p. 63). The Enlightenment project called for knowledge, and Russian administrators began systematic exploration of the steppe, mapping the land and enumerating and describing the people. More than half a million foreign and Russian peasant settlers went to the newly conquered lands, with the state providing strong tax and material incentives and large land grants.

From the early 1800s to the 1840s, in a process that Sunderland names "bureaucratic colonization," the Russian government tried to encourage and regulate colonization in the steppes. It did so by laying out precise conditions for immigration to those lands, and by providing material support for colonists. Best treated were the foreign colonists, who received large land allotments, tax privileges, and exemption from the draft. The bureaucrats also promoted state peasant colonization, despite their relative contempt for Russian peasants. The government wanted to people "unused" lands, but serfs were too hard to move. Instead, in "land-poor" central regions of Russia, state peasant communes could determine which of their members to release for colonization. Those peasants were directed to settle unfarmed lands in Bessarabia, Crimea, the North Caucasus, or the Orenburg region. The author examines changes in state decrees and the shifting of bureaucratic control of colonization from one government ministry to another, as well as official characterizations of colonizing groups (Mennonites, Jews, Tatars, Nogays), and the state's inability to fully control the process, so that "illegal" colonization always accompanied planned colonization.

From the 1840s until Emancipation (1861), in a period Sunderland refers to as "reformist colonization," government officials tried to regulate but encourage settlement and colonization, and began to use those two terms interchangeably.

During this period, foreign colonization decreased, but settlement by Russians and "Little Russians" [Ukrainians] from the interior to the frontier provinces expanded. The state also sent Jews to steppe lands, with the goal of turning them into farmers. The state clearly valued farmers over nomads, regarding the latter as backward potential enemies who needed to be settled, Russified, and civilized. Because Sunderland focuses on movement into colonized areas, he downplays movement out of those areas. The expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from Crimea and the North Caucasus after the Crimean War merits only two pages of commentary. The Adyge [Cherkess or Circassians], who loomed large in the Russian imperial imagination, and who were the largest group exiled, receive no mention at all; fortunately the topic has been handled in greater detail elsewhere (Fisher 1987; Jaimoukha 2001; Karpat 1985).

The final chapter discusses the expansion of colonization in the late 19th century, and government policies — now "scientifically" based — that favored distributing Russians throughout the empire so that they could civilize and assimilate the aliens. This chapter, and the conclusion, are explicitly comparative; Sunderland compares Russian colonialism with colonialisms elsewhere in the world. He notes that Russian officials in the late 19th century compared their own efforts to those of other empires, discussing whether Russia was engaged in colonialism, imperialism, internal colonization, or something unique and incomparable; they usually decided that their approach was superior and less harmful to natives than that of other empires. Sunderland also uses his wide readings in literature on frontier and borderland throughout the world to compare Russian geographical and environmental attitudes to those of other imperial regimes.

The author draws on a wealth of primary and secondary sources, and bases much of the work on research in central and provincial archives. The footnotes lead the reader to a vast spectrum of literature on empire and colony; unfortunately, the volume does not provide a bibliography. Sunderland uses the names of Russian provinces for the lands under discussion, but he provides no map of those provincial outlines, so the reader is left knowing that "New Russia" was a new name for "New Serbia," but has no concept of New Russia's or New Serbia's location. The author also uses "Tauris" to refer to Crimea (translating the Russian *Tavrida*), and again, does not help the reader to make the connection between the familiar and the unfamiliar place name. Finally, the author's lens is so broad that the whole volume is a series of generalizations. This reader wishes that the author would focus briefly on several particular places, to produce a deeper understanding of the experience of one or two groups that colonized, or one or two groups of local peoples who were affected by the waves of immigration. Regardless of these small matters, *Taming the Wild Field* is a valuable and comprehensive treatment of Russia's colonial expansion into nomadic territories.

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Hasan B. Paksoy, ed., *Central Asia Reader: The Rediscovery of History*. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1994, ix + 206 pp., index. ISBN 156324201X, \$106.95 (cloth); 1563242028, \$35.95 (pbk.)

Reviewed by: **Nathan Light**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Havinghurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, USA, nlight@utoledo.edu

In Chingiz Aitmatov's novel *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, Aitmatov invents the *mankurt*, a slave whose complete docility and obedience to his Zhuanzhuan captors results from the erasure of his memory. The *mankurt* forgets his

tribe and his name, and cannot even "remember his childhood, father and mother — in short, he could not recognize himself as a human being" (p. 126). Aitmatov's *mankurt* was a thinly veiled image of

Soviet peoples whose obedience to Russian rule resulted from forgetting their own history.

Although he does not mention Aitmatov's *mankurt*, H. B. Paksoy frames this reader as a collection of examples from the process of rediscovering and publicizing Central Asian history in the aftermath of Soviet-era denial and forgetting of history. Paksoy's collection makes translations of important sources accessible to non-specialists, and it is useful for teaching the historical and political debates from the past century of ideological conflict in Turkic Central Asia. However, he is misleading when he claims that these represent some of the few "bits of true history" (p. vii) that were published during the Soviet period. The falsification of "true history" was more complex than he allows, and some of these pieces have yet to be rediscovered in Central Asia.

In the field of Central Eurasian studies, there are few excellent collections or readers. This work merits the attention of specialists and, with adequate explanation of the material, can be used to supplement classes. Paksoy himself did not undertake to make this work very useful to non-specialists: it is a miscellany that is insufficiently integrated or comprehensive, and lacks an overall presentation to explain the significance of the pieces. These are largely of pieces that Paksoy has translated himself or that were published in the *Bulletin of the Association for the Advancement of Central Asian Research* during his editorship. The resulting collection discusses both history that had been forgotten and the political conflicts over remembering.

The best articles pertain specifically to Paksoy's areas of interest and expertise. An important influence on Paksoy's own political commitments — his anti-Russian feelings, Turkic nationalism, and rejection of the partitioning of Turkic ethnicity into the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkmen, and Azerbaijani groups — can be found in the writings of Zeki Velidi Togan. Paksoy's valuable "Excerpts from the Memoirs of Zeki Velidi Togan" (pp. 127-152) should be read first, since it introduces many of the early 20th century political issues that are implicit in most of the articles in this collection. The other selection from Togan [Toğan], "The Origins of the Kazaks and the Özbeks" (pp. 25-39), is a less enlightening presentation of historical data, but it reflects Paksoy's interest in deconstructing these ethnic identities.

David S. Thomas' brief biography of Yusuf Akchura [Akçura] and his translation of Akchura's important *Üç tarz-i siyaset* [Three types of policies], originally published in 1904 (pp. 101-16), as well as Hisao Komatsu's translation and commentary of "The Program of the Turkic Federalist Party in Turkistan (1917)" (pp. 117-126), are other highlights of this collection. They will be useful for the classroom with appropriate commentary by the instructor.

The clear significance of Akchura and Togan's early works contrasts with other political documents that appear in this collection. The latter give glimpses of political and cultural conflicts from the perspectives of both Turkic nationalists and Soviet propagandists, but still resemble the undigested translations that appear in the *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* and the *Daily Report of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service*. Without better annotation they do not stand on their own.

The two translated and annotated articles on Turkic *dastan* epics (another area of Paksoy's expertise) are also useful introductions to this field, although the annotations for the two articles differ greatly. Shawn T. Lyons simply glosses people and words, but gives no other context in his translation of Naim Karimov's "Exposing the Murderer of *Alpamysh*" (pp. 43-58), while Paksoy's introduction to Memmed Dadashzade's "Ethnographic Information Concerning Azerbaijan Contained in the *Dede Korkut Dastan*" (pp. 59-76) situates the article within the literature, and makes a good starting point for further research.

Unfortunately, in his praise for the article Paksoy seems to endorse Dadashzade's problematic claim that the *Dede Korkut* epic reflects the culture of the Oghuz Turks during the ninth through the eleventh centuries. Dadashzade says the epic shows "no compliance with the Islamic 'precepts'" since it depicts the Oghuz enjoying wine, music and dance, but this cannot be taken as proof of his assertion that "Islam had still not attained a dominant position" (p. 71). Further, Dadashzade shows that these supposed ninth-eleventh century Turks already used words borrowed from Arabic and Persian, such as *shalvar* (loose trousers), *nishanli* (engaged), *ashik* (minstrel), and *naghara* (kettle drums). As such words should make clear, the *Dede Korkut* epic likely reflects considerably later influences (perhaps as late as the fifteenth century when it was first written down). A more nuanced analysis would be

necessary to situate this epic chronologically and to draw conclusions about its reflection of religious practices.

The other discussions of cultural history in Paksoy's volume are weaker. Kahar Barat's brief article on the discovery of the supposed tomb of "Kashgarli Mahmud" (Mahmud Kashghari) in the village of Opal in Xinjiang (pp. 77-81) recounts reports from the Xinjiang press, but has none of the critical assessment that such a momentous discovery should entail. Bahtiyar Nazarov's rather empty article on the *Kutadgu Bilig* (pp. 82-88) barely begins to address its topic before closing with a vague call for further study of this work. The one brief paragraph introducing the translation of a 1982 *Sovyet Uzbekistani* [sic] editorial criticizing religious proselytizers, "Deceivers: Observations Pursuant to Judicial Proceedings," (pp. 89-97), fails to point out the connections of this polemic to a pattern of similar attempts to control popular religious expression.

The final section of Paksoy's collection consists of an interview published in Azerbaijan, and representative reports from the journal *Turkestan*,

which was published in Estonia but circulated in Almaty in the early 1990s. These pieces have no annotation at all, so that while they serve as examples of the increasingly public discussions of urban unrest, the anti-nuclear movement, and the predicament of the Crimean Tatars of that time, a non-specialist will have no sense of how these instances fit into ongoing history.

Paksoy's reader is not the accessible collection with a wide spectrum of usefully annotated readings that Central Asian history sorely needs, and now, in 2005, surely many more documents from the decade and a half of the post-Soviet period could be added. Still, in light of the absence of alternatives, researchers and teachers already equipped to assess the significance of particular pieces will find much of value in this volume.

References

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Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of "Blood" in Kazakhstan and Beyond*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2004. xxvi + 250 pp., map, tables, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0295984465, \$50.00 (cloth), 0295984473, \$22.50 (pbk.).

Reviewed by: **Virginia Martin**, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, Ala., USA, martinvi@email.uah.edu

One important goal of this clearly written and interesting study is to theorize a state political structure for Kazakhstan that does not reject subethnic (clan, kin-based) identity in modern politics, as do Weberian rationalization/modernization theories and international development norms. That clans and clan politics "persist" today is a "central puzzle" (p. x) that Schatz's study attempts to solve. In the end, he prescribes a future for Kazakhstan (and other clan-rich polities) that brings kinship identities, functions and divisions completely above ground: "... states must ... relegitimize kinship as a basis for social organization and political life" (p. 171). By thus embracing the "developmentally useful purposes" that clans can serve, states such as Kazakhstan may help themselves to avoid the potential for instability that politics based on ethnic/national divisions have engendered in other parts of the world.

Schatz comes to these conclusions after an admirable amount of empirical study of the political culture of Soviet and post-Soviet Kazakhstan. He employs a variety of research techniques: archival research, interviews, ethnographic observation, focus groups, statistical analysis, as well as a broad reading of theories and models of modernization and identity politics, in both the former USSR and other parts of the world. The book is organized into three parts (seven chapters), plus an introduction and a conclusion. The first part, "The Reproduction of Clans," attempts to explain why Kazakh clan politics survived from pre-Soviet times through the post-Soviet era. Part Two, "The Political Dynamic of Informal Ties," provides analyses of clan-based networks and how they function, both as facets of the ruling regime (at the national, regional and local levels) and as tools of the opposition. Part Three, "Managing Clans," takes issue with primordialism

and concludes that clan behavior in the modern world is shaped to a significant extent by the constructionism of the state in identity politics.

Schatz culminates his study with this last point, so everything rests on its persuasiveness. For the most part, he succeeds. He argues that clans continued to play a role in Soviet political culture and that they are influential in politics today *because* the actions and policies of the state created effective “mechanisms of identity reproduction” for them (pp. 13-20). Under Soviet rule clans were deemed antithetical to the Soviet modernization project, and were thus rejected in favor of creating other types of identity (internationalist, ethnic, class); but rather than eliminating them, this state policy only caused them to conceal their functions and thrive as tools of survival in the Soviet shortage economy. In the post-Soviet era, clan networks operate more freely, but they still function in a socioeconomic and political context of shortage and authoritarian control. The state practices clan “clientelism” and “balancing” (p. 111), and individuals respond by contemplating and utilizing their kin-based identities in, e.g., access networks and group “metaconflicts” (see Chapter 6, which is particularly impressive for its interrogation of “insider” perspectives on the meanings and functions of clans across geographic and socioeconomic divides). Thus, for Schatz, “[s]tate action may be ... the core reason for the persistence of clans” in Kazakhstan (p. 163). It is worth noting that Schatz understands both that there may be other reasons beyond state action and that there is real complexity rather than causal unidirectionality in the relationship between states and clans (“they construct each other” [p. 164]).

While one might quibble with the central role that Schatz constructs for the state in his examination of Soviet and post-Soviet identity politics, what is worth challenging more firmly is his vision for a clan-inclusive future that is “managed” by the state. That is, Schatz argues that the state must actively accommodate clan identities (and the multiple levels at which they function) by crafting policies that effect transparency in governance. Such policies include creating open “flows of information,” instituting open local and regional elections, and providing knowledge of kinship identity in public records of bureaucrats and politicians, as well as promoting a more equitable distribution of wealth (pp. 167-71). But does it make sense to so optimistically theorize the Kazakhstani state taking the lead toward “depolicizing” clans in these ways, when, as Schatz admits (p. 171), the

post-Soviet state of Kazakhstan has “moved precisely in the opposite direction” and furthered clan politics? Schatz clearly appreciates the complexity of his puzzle, but in his goal of theorizing beyond Weber, primordialists, and the “conceptual blind spot” (p. 3) that international political theory has for clan politics, he may have missed an opportunity to problematize group behavior even more by stepping back from the state to contemplate a role for non-state social and cultural activism.

Certainly, he missed a different sort of opportunity that in my view is more serious, and it involves his historical perspective (As a historian myself, I cannot help but react to his suggestion that the reader can grasp the central argument of the book without reading carefully its main historical chapter [p. 21]). The question is: at what point did “the state” begin to shape the subethnic identities that Kazakhs claim today? How far back in history should one look for evidence of the state’s role in “the reproduction of clans”? Schatz’s answer is the 1920s: “Statehood was a Soviet creation, so the impact of state structures emanated not from indigenous institutions that predated Soviet rule but rather from Soviet efforts themselves” (p. 191, n. 1). I take issue with this view, not because I support the official historiographical position in Kazakhstan today that statehood predated Russian rule in the 18th century. Rather, my point is that Schatz seriously underestimates the extent and effect of the transformative policies that the imperial Russian state crafted for the nomads. Alas, his understanding of the “pre-Soviet” era (pp. 33-37) is rooted largely in now-dated secondary literature that continues to lead even the best contemporary observers astray.

As numerous recent works have shown (e.g., Bykov 2002; Geraci 2001; Khodarkovsky 2002; Schorkowitz 2001), tsarist policy sought substantial social and political transformation of its populations within the Russian state. In the Kazakh Steppe beginning in earnest in 1822 (but practiced unsystematically for decades before that), policies were aimed at, among other things, settling the nomads and encouraging agriculture, criminalizing certain customs, rewarding politically loyal native elites, and transferring clan identity from a supposedly “primordial” kin basis to localized, territorially-defined administrative units. These are all policies and effects that Schatz attributes only to Soviet rule in the 20th century (pp. 37-45), but they all occurred earlier as well. Even if identity was not as deeply and broadly transformed under imperial

Russian rule, it cannot be dismissed as inconsequential. In fact, I would suggest that it was not simply “because of Soviet rule” (p. 147) that clans persisted. It was most likely their long struggles to accommodate Russian state structures into the steppe economy, culture and political arena in the period 1820s-1920s that prepared them to “persist” and thrive in the Soviet years.

Although this corrective leaves Schatz’s major argument intact — that clan identity is neither primordial nor necessarily destined to decline, but constantly (re-)constructed through state actions — still its implications are important. If Kazakh state and clan politics are contemplated from a deeper historical perspective — taking into consideration a 180-year (or longer) history of clans and clan networks working within a framework of a modernizing state wary of their existence — then perhaps the “potential for subversiveness” (p. 173) of clan politics so easily conjured by observers of modern states may turn out (in the case of Kazakhstan, at least) to be minimal indeed.

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Will Prentice, *Before the Revolution: A 1909 Recording Expedition in the Caucasus and Central Asia by the Gramophone Company*. London: Topic Records, 2002. TSCD 921, \$18.98.

Reviewed by: **Tanya Merchant**, PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, Calif., USA, tmerch@ucla.edu

Before the Revolution is an important and informative collection that allows the listener to have access to some of the earliest surviving recordings of Caucasian and Central Asian music; they are certainly the earliest recordings currently available on the mass market. With the diverse tracks on the album, the listener is able to follow the progress of a recording expedition made in 1909 by Franz Hampe for the Gramophone Company. The recording expedition’s purpose was primarily to collect music for local consumption, as well as for American and European markets. This practice was very successful: according to the liner notes, 95 percent of the recordings made on the trip were released to the public.

Will Prentice, a conservation specialist for the British Library National Sound Archive (BLNSA),

compiled these recordings, which are currently housed in the BLNSA International Music Collection. The recordings on this CD are similar to recordings I have listened to in the archives of the Uzbek State Radio, the Smithsonian, and the BLNSA. These samples support and go beyond descriptions of music made by travelers in Central Asia. Since the Europeans traveling in Central Asia in the pre-Soviet era were not usually trained musicians, the descriptions of music in that era leave much to be desired. Stephen Graham’s description of a “Sart Orchestra” is an excellent example of this: “I listened to an unearthly hubbub of bands — or of fire hooters, I could not tell which” (Graham 1916: 105). In light of these unenlightening and desultory comments in the literature, this recording should be mandatory listening for anyone interested in early 20th century Central Asian culture. It

provides a rare glimpse into the musical and cultural production of the era, as well as audio examples that supplement the body of ethnomusicological literature documenting the beginnings of the recording industry (Gronow 1975, 1981; Racy 1976).

The liner notes are extremely thorough and provide the contextual information necessary for educated listening. They include detailed descriptions of each track and biographical information about the performers (when available), as well as an account of the recording expedition. This very poignant sound artifact helps show the level of cultural imperialism at the time, which was supported by trade in cultural objects. Although the Tsarist government had little interest in Central Asian music, the Gramophone Company saw the value of importing European recording technology in order to profit from local audiences and their music. By bringing gramophone and phonograph technology, these companies were creating markets in Central Asia, and demand from Central Asian populations. Similar ventures in creating local markets were successful in India and Egypt in the early 20th century (Gronow 1975; Racy 1976). *Before the Revolution* provides a very interesting glimpse into the early recording industry and its attempt to open up Asian markets.

One can conjecture that this prerevolutionary era was a time of intense musical change. One possible means of ideological resistance against the Russian colonizers was the conservation of musical traditions. This disc allows the listener to compare the very different musical traditions from the Caucasus and Central Asia, and demonstrates contrasts between traditional music as it is currently played under the influences of Soviet ideology and "improved" technology. Much of the Caucasian music is similar to South Slavic or Balkan music, while the music from the Central Asian regions sounds more similar to Persian, Afghan, and Arabic musical traditions.

The recordings have been skillfully remastered; the hum of the older technology is minimal. Nonetheless, by listening to other cues, it is

possible to hear how the technology of the time shaped the types of recordings that Hampe was able to make. The most noticeable similarity between all these tracks is the length: all 23 tracks on this album are between 2:42 and 3:09 minutes in length. This explicitly illustrates the role of recording technology in shaping the musical objects that people had available to them. Of course one cannot really know how much technology shaped the live performance of any of these works, but it has certainly done much to shape many popular genres; even today, most popular songs are still around three minutes in duration. Some tracks exhibit these limits by ending in the middle of a section, or by cutting a section short in order to play a conclusive phrase before the end of the track. The liner notes mention that during this era, Gramophone switched from producing one-sided discs to two-sided discs, which effectively doubled the possible length for one recording.

This recording represents a real victory for the BLNSA in an age when archives are searching for methods to provide the public with better access to their collections. I had a chance to play this disc for my colleagues in Uzbekistan. Everyone who heard it was very excited by the content, and wished that the Uzbek State Radio would release a similar disc so that more people could hear the early recordings that are kept in its archives. Hopefully this disc will serve as a catalyst for similar remastering projects by other archives.

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Reviewed by: **Begench Karaev [Karayev]**, Fulbright Scholar, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind., USA, karbens2004@yahoo.com

Turkmenistan is the second largest independent state that emerged in Central Asia after the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991. It is a strategically important country not only because of its large oil and natural gas reserves, but also due to the fact that it occupies a natural transportation corridor between Russia and Iran, the Caucasus, and China. Yet Turkmenistan has not been the subject of comprehensive research in Western academia. Publication of the *Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan* is one of first steps in filling the existing gap in studies of this country.

This work covers modern history of the Turkmen people and Turkmen statehood in a concise form within the context of Central Asian and Middle Eastern history. It is designed as a reference source, where students and scholars can find facts about the history of the Turkmen nation and about its political, social, and economic development. The volume contains statistical data, a chronology, and an extensive bibliography.

The extended historical introduction of this book provides a useful framework for understanding the history and political and economic development of Turkmenistan in the 19th and 20th centuries. The author puts in historical perspective the establishment of the political and social institutions of modern Turkmenistan. He illustrates how traditional political institutions of the tribal society interacted with the Soviet-style one-party political institutions of the totalitarian state during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras.

The dictionary itself, which is the main body of the book, consists of information on the most important issues, personalities, geographic locations, institutions, and political parties, as well as most significant international partners in the region and critical regional issues. Current information and statistical data make this section of the book a valuable and useful resource on a wide range of topics. Readers will find particularly useful the author's concise and comprehensive description of historical, national, and political topics. Abazov not only portrays historical personalities and depicts developments in Turkmenistan, but he also shows that Turkmen intellectuals and scholars are re-

evaluating and rethinking many aspects of Turkmen history. This is especially important for understanding some developments in the ancient, medieval, and contemporary history of the Turkmen people in light of new historical findings and access to some archival materials for scholars.

The book concludes with a concise review of the historical literature on Turkmenistan and an extended bibliography. This part of the work is divided into smaller subsections, making it easy to navigate through hundreds of titles of the most important works in various fields, including economics, politics, international relations, and demography. This extensively researched section represents a valuable and up-to-date supplement for all scholars and students who study contemporary Central Asia.

In the end, I have several critical notes about this publication. First of all, in the introduction the author devotes very few lines to Turkmenistan's foreign policy, though detailed discussion of the regional security environment and relations with regional powers would contribute to a better understanding of domestic and international policies of the country. There are very few biographies in the dictionary sections. The author could have included more biographies of the many important historical personalities, writers, poets, and politicians who made significant contributions to Central Asian and Middle Eastern culture. I was also disappointed not to find the text of the Constitution of Turkmenistan, though publications in this series traditionally include the full English texts of the constitutions of the covered countries. The Constitution is the most important document shaping Turkmenistan's legal environment. In the bibliographical section of the book I found very few publications by Turkmen authors in the Turkmen language, though Turkmen scholars made numerous groundbreaking discoveries and wrote important books on various issues.

Despite some minor shortcomings, this very solid work goes beyond what is expected in a simple reference work. The *Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan* is valuable reading for anyone interested in understanding the modern history of Turkmenistan and important regional issues.