

Chapter V

*Epigrafika Vostoka, A Critical Review**

Under the aegis of its Central Asian branch, the Academy of Sciences of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics founded, in 1947, the first journal to be devoted exclusively to Oriental epigraphy. The journal is under the editorship of Professor V. A. Krachkovskaia, and is entirely in Russian.

At the time of this writing, eight issues had reached the United States. Volume I was published in 1947, volume II in 1948, volume III in 1949, volumes IV and V in 1951, volume VI in 1952, and volumes VII and VIII in 1953. (Volumes IX and X have since appeared, and will be reviewed, together with later volumes, at a future date.)

The journal is illustrated with a great number of photographs and drawings, although the former, especially in the earlier issues, are not always of the first quality. The issues vary in length between 51 pages (Vol. I) and 143 pages (Vol. V), but all comprise a main body of articles and a few pages of general information dealing with bibliography, excavation notes, and technical problems pertaining to epigraphy.

The purpose and scope of the journal were defined by its editor in the first issue (pp. 2–3). It plans, first, to make available to the scholarly world epigraphical material found within the boundaries of the Soviet Union, without linguistic or racial limitations. Central Asia, with its treasures of Soghdian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Mongol monuments, is given primary attention. The Caucasus, a little-known area of Islamic expansion, but rich in Georgian and Armenian material, forms [548] a second center of investigations. A vast body of material comes from the museums and collections within the Soviet Union, not only the Hermitage, but also the numerous provincial collections, whose treasures are little known to scholars. The second aim of the journal will be equally welcomed by all orientalists. It is to make available again inscriptions that were published many years ago and inadequately so, or that appeared in obscure journals difficult or impossible to obtain. The third purpose is to provide the reader with a

* First published in *Ars Orientalis*, 2 (1957), pp. 547–60. *Epigrafika Vostoka (Oriental Epigraphy)*. Edited by V. A. Krachkovskaia. Akademija Nauk SSSR, Moscow–Leningrad. Volumes I to VIII.

survey of discoveries and books dealing with epigraphical problems, the emphasis being here again on Central Asia.

To review adequately all the articles published in *Epigrafika Vostoka* would require the efforts of scholars in different fields. The majority of the articles that deal with the Islamic period are treated here in greater detail than the others, which are simply noted. Three large categories have been established: General, Islamic and non-Islamic. After each title the volume and pages are given in parentheses.

General

1. V. A. Krachkovskaia, "On the question of the alphabet" (V, 5–9), examines briefly the problem of the origins and formation of the alphabet within the framework of Marxist theory as expounded by Stalin in his 1950 study of linguistics.

Islamic

The great majority of articles deal with medieval Islamic monuments and problems. Either a chronological or a geographical classification was possible, but it was felt that a combination of the two might make it more convenient for readers of varied interests to find the material that concerns them. Seven categories have been established: *A*, Early or pre-Seljuq (i.e., before the middle of the eleventh century); *B*, Seljuq (i.e., to the middle of the thirteenth century); *C*, Mongol (i.e., to about the middle of the fifteenth century); *D*, Central Asia; *E*, Caucasus; *F*, Later than the fifteenth century; *G*, Others. In the sections on the Caucasus and Central Asia, articles have been included which, whatever period is involved, deal with local problems or with problems significant only to the two areas involved.

A. EARLY OR PRE-SELJUQ (BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY)

1. M. M. Diakonov, "On an early Arabic inscription" (I, 5–8), publishes the inscription found on a ewer described as having an "egg-shaped ribbed body on a foot in the form of a truncated cone, a high neck, and a handle topped by a beautiful palmette" (illustrated), located in the State Museum of Georgia in Tiflis.¹ The inscription dates the object in 69 (or 67) AH/AD 688–9 (or 686–7), places its manufacture in Basrah, and gives the name of a certain

¹ Cf. R. Ettinghausen, "An early Islamic glass-making center," *Princeton University, Record of the Museum of Art*, vol. 1 (1942), pp. 4–7.

Ibn Yazid. It is thus one of the earliest, if not the earliest,² inscription on a manufactured object from the Islamic period.

2. —, “Arabic inscription on a bronze eagle from the collection of the Hermitage” (IV, 24–7) deals with the inscription on a remarkable vessel (inadequately photographed) in the shape of an eagle, acquired in 1939 by the Hermitage. It is dated in the year AH 105/AD 723–4 and gives the name of a certain Sulayman. The name is preceded by two words which are translated by Diakonov, who translates them as: “this [is] what Sulayman ordered to be made,” a most unusual expression. It must be pointed out that in both this object and the one published in the first article, the pious expressions are not common and sometimes are not even grammatically correct. While these errors could be attributed to foreign (Persian?) artisans working in Mesopotamia, Diakonov’s suggestion that both objects were made for the same man, Sulayman Ibn Yazid, who was governor of Basrah in 95 AH/AD 714, cannot be fully accepted without a more complete study of the activities of this personage before and after the one year during which he was governor. Both Yazid and Sulayman were quite common names in Umayyad times. The author also suggests that both objects were made at Basrah. Their inscriptions are paleographically similar and Basrah was an important center of early Islamic times (especially noted for glass-making [549]), but the attribution of the second one to a specific center could only be tested through a stylistic analysis, which is not possible with the available photographs.

3. A. L. Mihailova, “New epigraphical data for Central Asian history in the IXth century” (V, 10–20), discusses the very interesting inscriptions mentioned by al-Azraqi,³ which were set by al-Ma’mun on the crown and throne of Kabul-shah before they were sent to Mecca. The author dwells in great detail on the political reasons which led to the taking of Kabul by al-Ma’mun and on the significance of Kabul-shah’s conversion to Islam. The two inscriptions are seen as a form of political propaganda. On a few points the author corrects the reading of the *Répertoire*.

4. —, “About the formulary of state acts under the ‘Abbasids” (VII, 3–6), comments on the exact significance of a few terms in the extremely important document in which Harun al-Rashid established his succession.⁴ She gives

² The problem still remains of the exact dating of the lamps from the early Islamic period found at Jerash and elsewhere, of which several unpublished examples exist, among other places, in the museums of Jerusalem and Amman.

³ Abu Walid ibn ‘Abdallah al-Azraqi, *Kitab akhbar Makkah*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1858), pp. 158–9 and 168–9. See also *Répertoire chronologique d’épigraphie arabe*, ed. G. Wiet, E. Combe and J. Sauvaget (Cairo, 1931 to date), Nos 100 and 106.

⁴ Al-Azraqi, vol. 1, pp. 160–61.

that the terms *khatama* and *wada'a al-tin* (or *tana*) indicate two separate activities in the process of sealing a document. While the first one is taken to mean "to apply the seal," the latter would mean specifically "to put (on the document) the *tin* (a special clay used as wax by the 'Abbasids on their documents)." She adds a useful list of the legends found on 'Abbasid seals.

B. SELJUQ (UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY)

1. V. A. Krachkovskaia, "Inscription on a bronze basin of Badr al-Din Lu'lu'" (I, 9–22), publishes the inscription on a basin formerly in the Museum of the Ukraine Academy in Kiev, now No. 1036 in the Hermitage. This bowl was already known,⁵ but Mme Krachkovskaia gives a new reading of the inscription, which supplements and improves that of the *Répertoire*. The major part of the article is devoted to a detailed and thorough analysis of the titles used in the inscription. Most of them are quite common. A few, however, are either new or show variations that are significant. Instead of the normal *qahir al-khawadrij wa 'l-mutamarridin*, the bowl has only *qahir al-mutamarridin*. There is no doubt that the latter term was used essentially for political "rebels," while *khawarij* had a religious connotation. The fact that *khawarij* is missing would strengthen Mme Krachkovskaia's argument that the *mutamarridin* may refer to a specific group of people. She suggests the *amirs* against whom Lu'lu' fought between 1218 and 1220. But the use of the title *sultan* implies that the basin was made after 631/1234, if not even after 646/1248. It may be wondered whether the wording of an epithet is likely to refer to an event that took place at least 15 years before. The question of how far such expressions should be taken as referring to specific events is not yet very clear, except in a few limited cases such as the use of the title of *sultan* (at any rate before the middle of the thirteenth century). But the fact that in a funerary chapel of Mosul dated AH 646/AD 1248–9⁶ we also meet with *mutamarridin* alone seems to indicate that the two inscriptions, which are probably contemporary, may have referred to a more or less contemporary event.⁷

Another curious feature of the inscription is the lack of any Turkish or Persian title; in particular the title of *atabek* does not occur. Mme Krachkovskaia has not been able to find an explanation for this phenomenon. A third title has puzzled the author. It appears to be *qatil al-muhl*, "the killer

⁵ *Répertoire*, No. 4458; D. S. Rice, "The brasses of Badr al-Din Lu'lu'," *Bull. School Oriental and African Studies (BSOAS)*, 13 (1950), p. 628.

⁶ Max van Berchem, "Monuments et inscriptions de l'atabek Lu'lu' de Mossoul," *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke ... gewidmet*, Giessen, 1906, vol. 1, p. 200.

⁷ H. A. R. Gibb, in a private letter to I. Krachkovskij (quoted in *Epigrafika Vostoka*, vol. 2, p. 4), suggested, *à propos* of another title in the inscription, that it may refer to Lu'lu' as a defeater of the Mongols, since there is one literary reference to the effect that the ruler of Mosul had defeated a band of "Tartars."

of barrenness.” A final problem dealing with this basin is that of authorship. Mme Krachkovskaia points out (pp. 18–19) that on one of the borders appears a badly preserved inscription with, apparently, the signature of an artist, whose name ends in Yusuf. Mme Krachkovskaia asserts that no Yusuf is known with the *kunya* al-Mawsili. However, under [550] the number 4267, the *Répertoire* lists a brass bowl in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, made in 1246, and signed by Yunus Ibn Yusuf, *al-naqqash al-Mawsili*.⁸ Both the name and the date are quite close to those indicated for the Hermitage basin.

2. In the following issue of the journal, Prof. I. Iu. Krachkovskij (“On an epithet in the inscription of Lu’lu’s bronze basin,” II, 3–8) proposes a solution to the problem of the title *qatil al-muhl*. He points out that the title exists in a poem of Abu’l-‘Ala’ al-Ma’arri,⁹ where it is used for a tribal chieftain in northern Syria. This discovery led Prof. Krachkovskij to reinterpret another title of the vessel transliterated by Mme Krachkovskaia as *hami al-thughur bi l-ta’n fi l-thaghr* and translated as “defender of frontiers by blows [of the spear] in the face.” G. Wiet had translated the same expression as “le protecteur des marches en frappant à la machoire,”¹⁰ where the word *thaghr* is more correctly rendered. On the basis of a line from the same poem by al Ma’arri, Prof. Krachkovskij suggests that the word should be read as *al-thughar* (plural of *al-thughrah*), which means “the upper part of the breast below the neck.” Horses were trained to meet enemy blows with this part of the body. Hence he proposes that the expression should be understood as meaning “defender of frontiers by striking with the spear at the breasts (of enemy horses or men).” This interpretation is extremely suggestive, and it is also important from a methodological point of view, since it indicates that the explanation for eulogies and titles in Islamic inscriptions should not be sought only in political or ideological developments, but also in what we know of poetical usage and current customs.

3. L. T. Giuzalian, “Inscription with the name of Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ on a bronze chandelier of the Hermitage” (II, 76–82; partial photograph), publishes the inscription from another undated object with the name of Lu’lu’. The *naskhi* of the inscription is of rather poor quality and the text seems, on the whole, to have been carelessly written.¹¹ It is unfortunate that the author did not add a photograph of the inscription. His reading of the fifth line of the drawing as *al-mahmud fi al-shukr wa al-asal al-masalik* shows a very unusual

⁸ See also D. S. Rice, “Studies in Islamic Metalwork III,” *BSOAS*, 15 (1953), p. 231.

⁹ Yusuf al-Badi’, *Biographie d’Abou’l ‘Ala al-Ma’arri*, ed. I. Keilani (Damascus, 1944), p. 45.

¹⁰ G. Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée Arabe du Caire, objets en cuivre* (Cairo, 1932), p. 273.

¹¹ See also Rice, “The brasses,” *BSAOS*, 13.

title and his translation “famous for his gratitude and for forcing roads,” is both unclear and grammatically unacceptable. If Giuzalian’s drawing is to be trusted, no alternative could be suggested for the first part of the expression. To read the latter part as *al-atabek al-malik*, while theoretically possible since the title *atabek* usually preceded the *kunyah abu ’l-fada’il*,¹² is difficult, for this reading would make the *waw* before *al-atabek* meaningless. Furthermore the engraver tended to bend his *kaf* toward the left, while the last part of this word is perfectly straight.¹³ However unclear and unelegant, *al-asá’il* should stand, but it seems that the reading *al-malik* is more adequate for the last word of the expression. The meaning of the whole inscription is still obscure and there is here an epigraphical problem, which, if it can be solved at all, would require a photograph of the whole inscription.

4. L. T. Giuzalian’s “Frieze-like tiles of the thirteenth century with poetical fragments” (III, 72–81) can be considered an introduction to the question of the significance of poetical fragments found on tiles. The author first asks what was the purpose of such inscriptions, inasmuch as in many cases the whole poem cannot be read and was probably not meant to be read. He suggests that the answer will most likely be found, not in the polygonal tiles, often with figures in the center, but in the rectangular or square tiles which contained only inscriptions and which formed friezes. He analyzes first a group of seven such tiles from Russian and Western collections with *Shahname* fragments. He suggests that the friezelike tiles with a specific text precede the polygonal ones – figured or not – and that they created a tradition of copying literary texts on the latter. The friezelike tiles themselves originated in imitation of the stone and brick friezelike inscriptions, whose history goes much farther back.

Giuzalian also investigates the origin of the specific custom of writing poems on wall surfaces. He points out that tiles were used inside houses as [551] well as in mosques and on exteriors. Hence one possible explanation for the use of poetical texts may be found in a practice that started in private houses and was then taken to the outer walls of buildings. This hypothesis, Giuzalian believes, is only tenable insofar as excerpts from large poems are concerned. Individual *rube’iyat*, which were also common, have a more complex origin, partly to be sought in a study of the texts found on ceramics. Giuzalian does not overlook the fact that many problems, particularly chronological ones, are posed by his interpretation. Yet he has opened up an area so far overlooked by most scholars.¹⁴

¹² Ibid., pp. 628–9.

¹³ This has been pointed out to me by D. S. Rice.

¹⁴ See, however, M. Bahrami, *Recherches sur les Carreaux de revêtement lustrés* (Paris, 1937), a work which was apparently unavailable to Giuzalian. In his *Gurgan faiences* (Cairo, 1949), the same Bahrami published more readings from Persian ceramics and tiles, but never excerpts from long poems.

One of the problems posed by the study of the inscriptions on tiles concerns not the art historian, but the historian of literature. Considering that the thirteenth-century tiles are earlier than any of the manuscripts we possess of the great Persian literary masterpieces, the problem is to know whether the tiles provide us with a different reading of the texts.

5. In two consecutive articles, “A fragment of the Shah-nameh on pottery tiles of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries” (IV, 40–55, and V, 35–50), Giuzalian compares the text of the story of Sohrab in the known manuscripts¹⁵ with a text provided by 13 tiles and other objects, 6 of which are in Russian collections, and also with the Arabic version of the *Shahname* made in the thirteenth century, i.e., closer in time to the tiles than to the manuscripts. The result of his very careful examination of the evidence is that 17 verses found on tiles correspond to 24 verses common to all manuscripts and to 19 verses in the Arabic version. Of the 24 verses in the manuscripts, several are shown to be later interpolations, and in the others, marked differences appear from the text found on the tiles. Although closer to each other than to the later Persian versions, the Arabic text and the tiles are also significantly different from each other. Giuzalian suggests that there may have been two traditions of the *Shahname*, one written, the other predominantly oral, and that it is the latter which appears on tiles. The exact relationship between the two cannot be established on the basis of a study of one passage only, and Giuzalian announces that he plans to continue his painstaking work.

6. The same author, in “Two fragments of Nizami on tiles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries” (VII, 17–25), turns now from the *Shahname* to Nizami, whose earliest manuscript is dated in 1362. Taking as an example two tiles (one in the Hermitage and one in the former Preece collection), he shows that the method used for the *Shahname* can also be applied to other literary masterpieces. Giuzalian realizes quite well that it is not likely that we shall be able to find and decipher enough fragments to enable us to reconstruct a complete text of any large poem through tiles alone. But he feels that a comparison between the texts found in manuscripts and those deciphered on tiles, even if it is made only in a limited number of cases, will permit a fairly precise definition of the nature of interpolations, and therefore it will be possible to detect interpolations in other parts of a manuscript without the help of tiles.

¹⁵ Of the early fourteenth-century *Shahname* manuscripts Giuzalian mentions only the one in Leningrad. Many more are found in West European and American collections. See K. Holter, “Die islamische Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350,” *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 54 (1937), and the *Supplement* published by H. Buchtal, O. Kurz and R. Ettinghausen in *Ars Islamica*, 7 (1940).

The specific value of Giuzalian's attempt in the examples from the *Shahname* and from Nizami can be judged only by a literary historian familiar with the complex textual problems posed by these manuscripts. Whatever their value may be, it must be pointed out that Giuzalian is introducing a method of working which is of great importance. By using works of art to solve literary problems, he is breaking down the barrier of compartmentalization in Oriental studies, which, as Sauvaget, among others, often remarked,¹⁶ leads to a narrow view of Islamic civilization.

7. A. Iu. Jakubovskij, "Two inscriptions on the northern mausoleum (1152 A.D.) at Uzgend" (I, 27–32). The northern mausoleum is the best preserved of the two Qarakhanid structures remaining at Uzgend and mentioned by many travelers. It contains two inscriptions, one in Persian, the other in Arabic. The [552] first one is in *naskhi*, the other in Kufic.¹⁷ The Persian text gives the date of the beginning of the construction (547/1152) and contains a number of peculiarities such as the word *dowlat-khaneh* for mausoleum, the expression *aghaz kardeh amad*, and the spelling *pānsad* for *pānsād*. Unable to explain the first term, the author claims that the second refers to a typical *tajik* construction, while the latter is an archaism.

The second inscription, in Arabic, gives the name of the man for whom the mausoleum was built, Alp Kilij Tunga Bilga Turk Tughril Qara-khaqan Husayn ibn Hasan ibn 'Ali.¹⁸ The rest of the article is devoted to a study of the Turkish names found in the inscription and to a brief study of the style of the writing. The author points out that at that time and in that area strictly Arabic influences were dwindling and he sees a proof of that in the mixture of Persian and Arabic.

8. M. M. Diakonov, "Some inscriptions on Kirghiz tombstones (kayrak)" (II, 9–15), deals with seven inscriptions, which have now disappeared, from a place east of Ferghana. Four are dated, two in the twelfth century, two in the thirteenth. All of them were near a *mashbad* where, according to the legend, a group of Companions of the Prophet had perished. One of the tombs is that of a merchant (No. 2) and on it is found the title *khawajah*, which has been thought not to have been used for merchants until after the Mongol period. But the author does not mention the fact that the twelfth-century "Bobrinsky kettle" in the Hermitage also exhibits the same title for a merchant.

¹⁶ J. Sauvaget, "Comment étudier l'histoire du monde arabe," *Revue Africaine*, 90 (1946), p. 14.

¹⁷ The association of the two ways of writing occurs also on the newly published and earlier minaret of Dawlatabad. See J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Deux minarets d'époque seljoukide en Afghanistan," *Syria*, 30 (1950), pp. 122–9.

¹⁸ The author mistranslated the expression *mujtaba khalifa Allah nasir amir al-mu'minin*; it should be: "chosen by the Successor of God, helper of the Commander of the Faithful," not "chosen by God, helper of the Commander of the Faithful."

Others are tombs of religious leaders and *sufis*, the former bearing titles quite similar to those of the Syrian and Egyptian lords. The author draws some interesting social and economic conclusions.

9. M. E. Masson, in “New data on the inscriptions of one of the minarets from Mashhad-i Mistran (sic)” (VII, 7–16), describes one of the ruined cities of Dihistan, in Jurjan. There remain the ruins of a mosque, which is generally attributed to the thirteenth century and to Muhammad ibn Tekesh, the Khwarezmshah, as the latter’s name occurs on the portal. The ruins comprise two minarets and, near the southernmost one, what is called a portal by the author, although it is not clear whether it was the *eyvan* of a sanctuary or an actual gateway. The minaret near the arch belongs to the same period. But Masson shows that the other minaret, the northern one, is definitely earlier. It contains three partially legible inscriptions, one of which ends with the date X95. On stylistic grounds the author suggests that it should be understood as 495/1103. Both minarets are also interesting in that they give us the names of the builders. On the second minaret a father and a son are named.

10. The same author, in “Medieval tombal bricks from the oasis of Mari” (VIII, 24–35), publishes a group of bricks (average size 28 cm × 28 cm × 5 cm) found near Merv in 1951. The practice of using bricks for funerary inscriptions is otherwise evidenced in literary sources. Their importance is twofold. First, they provide us with a set of inscriptions useful for determining the development of epigraphy. Second, all these inscriptions are fairly simple and refer to common people, giving us thus a counterpart in Central Asia to the stone funerary inscriptions of Egypt.

11. E. A. Davidovich, in “A hoard of silver-covered bronze from Termedh in 617/1220” (VIII, 43–62), describes a hoard of 78 coins found in Termedh. As all the coins are of the same date, it is a type of discovery that should bring joy to all numismatists. Two types are represented, one by 3 coins, the other by 75. The author carefully lists all the titles found on the coins and gives a very complete table of measurements. He points out that there were certainly several dies and that some inscriptions were struck over older ones, which cannot, in most cases, be determined. Two problems are discussed in greater detail. First, these coins are called *dirhams* in the inscriptions. Yet they are merely copper coins with a thin plate of silver. Economic reasons probably lie behind such inflationary practices. The author analyzes them from a theoretical, Marxist point of view, without entering into an analysis of contemporary historical [553] documents, a task that is highly complex, given the difficulty of obtaining economic data from a medieval chronicler. The second problem consists of the fact that the name of the Caliph al-Nasir occurs on coins from Bukhara and Samarkand, but not on this specific group of Termedh coins. We probably have here a direct result of the

unsuccessful march on Baghdad organized in 616/1219–20 by Muhammad ibn Tekesh.

C. MONGOL (TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY)

1. A. A. Semenov, “Epitaph of pseudo-Sayyid ‘Omar in the Gur-e Amir in Samarqand” (I, 23–6). Among the tombs of the Timurids in the Gur-e Amir, there is a tomb which, according to a tradition accepted by Barthold and others, was that of a Sayyid ‘Omar, who had occupied the position of *muhtasib* in some city, perhaps Samarkand, and who died in 803/1400–01. The author publishes the inscription of the tomb, which does not contain any name or date. Then he shows that Sayyid ‘Omar, who did exist, had been *muhtasib* at Shahr-e Sabz and was buried at Bukhara. There seems to be no information about the identity of the personage who was actually buried in the Samarkand tomb.

2. The same author in “Inscriptions on the tombs of Timur and of his descendants in the Gur-e Amir” (II, 49–62), deals with the inscriptions on the tomb of Timur himself. There are two groups of inscriptions. The first is on the plinth over the actual tomb in the vault of the monuments.¹⁹ The second is found on the top and front of the jade sarcophagus which was set over the place where Timur was buried, on the ground floor of the mausoleum. Aside from the fact that the first one contains a lengthy religious text, the inscription on the tomb itself and that on the top of the jade sarcophagus comprise essentially the titles and genealogy of the great conqueror. This genealogy is of considerable interest, as it has two purposes, both of which appear to be of fundamental importance for understanding Timurid ideology. On the one hand, it attempts to connect Timur with Genghis Khan. On the other, it strives to make Timur a descendant of ‘Ali. The latter claim is introduced in most curious fashion, and it is expressed in greatest detail on the jade sarcophagus. After giving the name of the last paternal ancestor, the inscription says: “And no father was known to this glorious [man], but his mother [was] Alanquva. It is said that her character was righteous and chaste, and that she was not an adulteress. She conceived him through a light which came into her from the upper part of a door and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man.²⁰ And it [the light] said that it was one of the sons of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali son of Abu Talib.”

The author discusses the literary evidence for Shi‘ite influences in Timurid times and shows that Timur, Ulugh Beg, Baysunghur and others knew and

¹⁹ For an elevation of the building cf. J. Smolik, *Die timuridischen Baudenkmäler in Samarkand aus der Zeit Tamerlans* (Vienna, 1929), fig. 70.

²⁰ Qur’an, XIX, 17.

admired the great mystic and Shi'ite heterodox Qasim-e Anvari.²¹ Whether on the basis of this inscription one can say definitely that Timur was Shi'ite is not certain, but it seems clear that he was under strong Shi'ite influences. An interesting problem of comparative religion, which is not brought up by the author, is that of the manner in which the relation between an unnamed son of 'Ali and Timur's ancestor is established.²² The Qur'anic quotation refers to the story of Mary and it seems to me that a more direct Christian impact (or perhaps a conflation of a Christian theme with a pagan one) should be presumed. We know, for instance, that there existed in eastern Christianity, in the early Middle Ages, a very specific symbolism relating the story of the "closed door" in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 44: 1–3) with the virgin birth of Mary.²³ [554] To ascertain whether we are dealing with a direct impact of some Christian idea on the Timurids or whether the idea was already adopted in Muslim religious thought at an earlier date would require a lengthy study. At any rate the Timurid inscription poses a very interesting problem of religious syncretism.

3. The jade sarcophagus contains yet another inscription. It is at the foot of the sarcophagus and only about three-quarters of it remains *in situ*. But, by a most extraordinary coincidence, the missing chunk was discovered in a private house in Samarqand and is published in this same issue of *Epigrafika Vostoka*, by M. E. Masson ("The third piece of the jade tombstone of Timur," II, 63–75). It is unfortunate that Semenov and Masson do not appear to have known about each other's work. Their readings do not always agree and the reader is compelled to flip pages back and forth in order to understand the inscription. Here is a tentative translation of this inscription based on the versions given by Semenov and Masson:

1 Glory to God who was true to His promises, [who] helped His servant, strengthened His (servant's) army and routed the bands of robbers²⁴

2 [He is] One and there is nothing after Him. And [may there be] blessings over His Prophet who liberates booty and incites to [fight and over]

²¹ E. G. Browne, *A literary history of Persia* (Cambridge, 1920), vol. 3, pp. 473–86.

²² This theme seems already to have been in existence under the Ilkhanids. See B. Vladimirtsov, *Genghis Khan*, Fr. tr. (Paris, 1948), p. xvi.

²³ Cf. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1864), vol. 81, pp. 1233–4; see, in general, W. Neuss, *Das Buch Ezeekiels in Theologie und Kunst* (Münster, 1912). For an earlier study of this theme and a comparison with the legends dealing with Alexander, cf. E. Herzfeld, "Alongoa," *Der Islam*, 6 (1916), pp. 317 ff. Herzfeld's knowledge of the inscription derives from Blochet's reading of the "facsimiles" brought from Samarkand by I. Östrup and A. Christensen. Semenov and Masson both show that these writers did not see the whole inscription. For other examples of Christian themes in Mongol times, see R. Ettinghausen, "Some paintings in four Istanbul albums," *Ars Orientalis*, 1 (1954), pp. 97–8, figs 59–62, and idem, "An illuminated manuscript of Hafiz-i Abru," *Kunst des Orients*, 2 (1955), figs 5–9.

²⁴ Semenov translates *al-akhrab* as "a band of [his] opponents." He also suggests that there may have been a *la ilaha* at the end of this line, but it does not seem to me that there is enough space for the whole expression.

3 His (Prophet's) family, strong against unbelievers and merciful to the just. This [is] the stone²⁵ ...

4 Which was brought by the khaqan Duva Sajan khan from Udan (Aydan?) to the place of his throne called Qarshi²⁶ on the bank of the Quyash;

5 And it was brought back from there by Ulugh Bek Kuregan, when he went to [the land of] the Jita ...²⁷

6 He subdued them (the *akhrab*) [555] with his sword (?). Had Noah come near him (?) on his ark, he would not have been safe unless ...²⁸

7 Had the Friend of God (Abraham) alighted there (?), they would have both been burnt with their ancestor (?)²⁹ ... 828 (i.e. 1424–1425).

In spite of the numerous epigraphical difficulties presented by this text, it gives us several important indications on the origin and the date of the sarcophagus. These have been fully exploited by Masson (pp. 69 ff.), who has worked out all the details of Ulugh Beg's inconclusive, although victorious, war against the nomads of Mongolia in 1424, and of his finding there and bringing to Samarkand the jade piece that was set over Timur's tomb in 828/1425. In the last pages of his contribution Masson asks whether there were originally one or several pieces of jade, as there are three at present. He concludes that there was only one and that its present bad condition is the result of its having been moved out of Samarkand by Nadir Shah.

4. In a third article under the same title (III, 45–54), A. A. Semenov describes the last four tombs in the mausoleum. The first one is that of Shah Rokh, with an inscription partly in Persian and partly in Arabic. There are no Qur'anic texts on this tomb, but a description of the tomb as a garden. The inscription also tells us that it was not Ulugh Beg who moved the body of Shah Rokh to Samarkand, as is generally believed, but Paendeh, Shah Rokh's daughter. A curious detail reported by Semenov is that, when the tomb was opened, 144 small stones were found in it, carefully laid in a box.

The second tomb is that of Ulugh Beg (in the crypt). Its inscription is also in both Persian and Arabic. Ulugh Beg is called a *khalifah*. The tomb was probably erected by his second son, since the first son is accused in it of

²⁵ Both Semenov and Masson believe that the letters which follow were the beginning of a word meaning "black."

²⁶ Masson translates: "... brought by the khaqan Duva Sajan khan Merawdan to the place of his evil throne at Qarshi."

²⁷ Semenov, whose text stopped at *jidan*, translated "he is very skillful." Masson, who does not give his reading for the first part of the line, translates: "whose (the Jita's) armies he put to flight and overcame." Neither translation seems fully satisfactory. There are other possibilities but none can be advanced with certitude before we know whether or not a word is missing.

²⁸ This is Masson's reading. The first letters seem to me to be *bin* rather than a *sin*. Here there is no doubt that a piece is missing.

²⁹ This is Semenov's translation. Masson does not even attempt one and simply mentions that the text refers to Noah and Abraham.

having murdered his father. Apparently Ulugh Beg was buried as a *shahid*, i.e., in the clothes in which he died.

The third tomb is that of Timur's nephew, Muhammad Sultan, a favorite of the conqueror who designated him as heir to the throne. Muhammad Sultan died, however, before his uncle, and in the inscription he is called *wali al-'abd*. The tomb is particularly brilliantly decorated and Semenov suggests that Muhammad Sultan and Timur were probably the only two Timurids who were originally intended to be buried in Gur-e Amir. The fourth tomb is that of Miranshah, son of Timur, who died in 1407–8. It is very similar to Timur's.

This group of four articles dealing with the inscriptions of the Gur-e Amir is certainly one of the most important published in *Epigrafika Vostoka*. Although one may regret that the authors have not included more numerous photographs of the building and of the tombs themselves, one must acknowledge the extraordinary service performed by A. A. Semenov in reading the often very complicated and tiresome inscriptions found on the six tombs of the Gur-e Amir. Their historical interest is very great and both Semenov and Masson have dealt with many of the problems posed by them. But their religious significance is equally interesting and should lead to an investigation of the religious beliefs and practices of the Timurids.

5. M. E. Masson, "The date and history of the construction of the Gunbaz Manas" (III, 28–44). The Gunbaz Manas is a mausoleum some 12 kilometers east of Talas, in the present-day Kirghiz Republic. An inscription indicates that the mausoleum was made for a certain Kanizak Khatun, daughter of Abuka (or Abukan), but the inscription stops after stating that Kanizak died on the first of Ramadan of a year whose last digit is 4. On stylistic grounds the author dates the mausoleum in the twenties or thirties of the fourteenth century. He then attempts to identify the personage who was buried in it. Choosing the reading Abuka, he believes him to be one of the sons of Dava Khan, and one of the first ones to be converted to Islam. A study of the complex wars and successions in the Mongol empire leads Masson to the conclusion that Kanizak must have died on the first of Ramadan 734/May 6, 1334.

It may be argued that the author dismisses too readily the reading Abukan, which would make his identification impossible. Even if the identification is not accepted as certain, the commentaries on the epigraphical style and on the history of the period are extremely valuable (see in particular p. 41, a genealogical table of the Mongol branch that ruled the area).

6. The preceding inscription, without thorough commentary, and a few others from the valley of Talas are mentioned also in a short article by A. M. [556] Belenitzkij, "From Muslim epigraphy in the valley of Talas" (II, 16–18).

7. O. D. Chehovich, "A waqf document from the time of Timur in the collection of the Samarqand Museum" (IV, 56–67). This earliest *waqf* document from Central Asia is in Persian. Its beginning and end are lost. It was made out for 'Abd al-Malik, who was *shaykh al-Islam* under Timur. His genealogy is given in the document, together with a long description of the lands whose revenues were to be used for a group of religious structures. It is an interesting document for the historian and the economist.

D. CENTRAL ASIA

I. V. A. Krachkovskaia, "The evolution of Kufic in Central Asia" (III, 3–27), gives a survey of the epigraphical material on stone, textiles, ceramics, parchment, coins, paper and brick which come from Central Asia, more specifically from Transoxiana, and which is written in Kufic script. Together with monuments and works of art already known to scholars, the author has collected a number of examples found in the Soviet Union, previously unpublished or very little known: Afrasiyab fragments in the Hermitage (figs 3, 4, II; pl. II), a Qur'an in the Uzbek State Museum (pl. IIIa), a minaret inscription from Urganj dated in 401/1010–11 (fig. 15 and pl. Vb), another minaret inscription from Uzgend (figs 24–6), and a final one at Mashhad-e Mesreyan dated in 596–617/1200–1220 (fig. 27).³⁰ A number of late examples show that Kufic was used, if only as a decorative motif, as late as the sixteenth century. In the course of her study, Mme Krachkovskaia suggests the attribution to Central Asia of a textile in the University of Michigan and of its companion pieces,³¹ on the basis of paleographical similarities to a Merv textile dated in 278/891.³² She also suggests that the name of Ahmad ibn Isma'il, the Samanid, was written in cursive script on his coins, in order to emphasize the "power of the Samanids and their limited dependence on the caliph" (p. 8). The article is full of such small remarks and studies which tend to show that there was a definite Central Asian development of epigraphical style. The question may be asked, however, whether it is justified, at this stage of our knowledge, to assign certain trends and phenomena to one geographical area only. Too little is known about the epigraphy of Persia itself, for instance, in the first centuries of Islam, to enable us to know whether the developments evidenced in Central Asia may not have had a counterpart in neighboring areas.³³ Taking into consideration the extraordinary development of civilization at the time of the Saffarids, Samanids, Ghaznevids, Seljuqs and Khwarezmshahs, we know too little

³⁰ Cf. above, p. 77.

³¹ Florence E. Day, "Dated tiraz in the collection of the University of Michigan," *Ars Islamica*, 4 (1937), pp. 426–7.

³² H. Hawary, "Un tissu abbaside de la Perse," *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, 16 (1934), pp. 61–71.

³³ See, for instance, the minarets published by J. Sourdel-Thomine.

about their art, which must have been quite varied, to be able to determine in detail that certain types and epigraphical trends are peculiar to a limited geographical area within a wide unit, which comprises Khorasan, Afghanistan, Transoxania and Khorezm. The term "Central Asia" may not correspond exactly, in the Middle Ages, to a unit of cultural development. The various dynasties, whose capitals were in Merv, Samarkand, Nishapur, or Bukhara, ruled in fact over a much wider area than what is today understood as Central Asia. Perhaps an analysis in the nature of the one made by Mme Krachkovskaia, extremely valuable in presenting new monuments and new interpretations, should be widened to include an area extending as far west as Rayy and as far east as Herat and Ghazna.

2. —, "Monuments of Arabic writing in Central Asia and Transcaucasia before the eleventh century" (VI, 46–100). This article, of great length and touching on a great number of different problems, appears to be essentially a sort of prolegomenon to the complex and very significant problem of the ways in which and purposes for which Arabic was used in lands which were not primarily Arabic-speaking, but which had been conquered by the Arabs and, within the chronological limits of Mme Krachkovskaia's work, were ruled by them. As an introduction the author sketches in a few pages (pp. 48–68) the development of Semitic alphabets in general and of Arabic in particular, using mainly for the first part the works of Diringer and Lidzbarski, and for the second those of Moritz, [557] Grohmann, Littmann and Cantineau.³⁴ In a second part (pp. 68–86) Mme Krachkovskaia discusses the history and characteristics of the script (or scripts) used in the first-century AH papyri of Egypt and on monumental inscriptions found in Syria, Palestine and Egypt.³⁵ A detailed analysis of the most significant documents is accompanied by a series of very enlightening plates with drawings of the forms taken by the various letters. Turning then to the area under consideration, Mme Krachkovskaia deals with three monuments: a *dirham* from Merv (76/695–6), the unique letter of Divashti (99–100/718–19),³⁶ and a milestone from Tiflis (undated; appended photograph of a squeeze). While basically the coin reproduces a type that was common throughout most of the Umayyad empire, Mme Krachkovskaia points out (p. 87) a few differences in epigraphy and suggests that the missing *waw* in the word *al-mashrikun*

³⁴ Unfortunately Mme Krachkovskaia does not seem to have been aware of the important studies by Nabia Abbott, in particular her *The rise of the north Arabic script* (Chicago, 1939), which covers the same ground and deals with similar problems in very thorough fashion.

³⁵ An important omission is the inscription of Ta'if, published by G. C. Miles, "Early Islamic inscriptions near Ta'if in the Hijaz," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 7 (1948), pp. 236–42.

³⁶ First published by I. Krachkovskij and V. Krachkovskaia in the *Sogdiskij Sbornik*, 1 (1934), which was unavailable to me.

was the result of a lack of familiarity of the Central Asian mint master with Arabic. The point does not seem very convincing, since, as far as possible, representatives of the central power were controlling the minting of coins and, furthermore, errors occur also on coins minted in a purely Arab city like Basra.³⁷ The letter of Divashti to the Arab *amir* al-Jarir ibn 'Abdatlah, which was discovered in the 1930s by the Russian expedition to Soghdia, is much more significant, since it is one of the very few documents – other than monumental inscriptions, which are not numerous – we possess from the early Islamic period outside of Egypt. Mme Krachkovskaia shows that the type of script is sufficiently different from the usual first-century script of Egypt to suggest that it was probably from a different calligraphic school, a calligraphic school whose influence does not appear in Egypt until several decades later. The letter is unfortunately not illustrated, although a table is provided with an alphabet. It would be interesting to compare it in detail with the various scripts identified by Miss Abbott. The milestone from Transcaucasia is interesting in another respect. It is quite similar to the milestones found in Syria and serves to indicate the extent to which, already in the Umayyad period, Transcaucasia, actually even the Caucasus itself, was fully fitted into the new empire.

Then (pp. 91 ff.) the author goes back to Egypt and studies in great detail the documents of the second century AH. It will be apparent from this summary of Mme Krachkovskaia's learned article that its title is somewhat misleading. Only three Central Asian or Transcaucasian documents are mentioned in any detail, only one of which is new. The main point of the article is to establish the trends of early Arabic scripts, presumably as a preface to further studies more specifically devoted to Central Asian problems. It is constantly emphasized that throughout the history of Semitic writing, there was a constant influence of cursive writing on other types. Hence a thorough understanding of early scripts and the influences they underwent is necessary for the study of later monumental and manuscript writing. A complete critical analysis of Mme Krachkovskaia's thesis and interpretations would require a detailed examination of all the documents mentioned by her. It would appear, however, that her article does not replace Miss Abbott's studies, which used not only early documents, but also literary sources on calligraphic problems. On a few points it supplements it and suggests that, at a very early date, calligraphic traditions which do not appear in Egypt can be found in Central Asia.

3. The same author's "Central Asian epigraphy" (VII, 45–69) is subtitled "pioneer epigraphists: the Turkestan circle of the friends of archaeology." It is an analysis of the works done by the early Russian travelers and scholars in Central Asia (Lerh, Khanikov, etc.), with particular emphasis on the active

³⁷ S. Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of oriental coins in the British Museum* (London, 1875), vol. I, p. II.

and successful society established in Turkestan itself. The article contains a very complete bibliography of works not easily available outside of Russia, but whose importance for the knowledge of [558] Central Asia, and especially of monuments now disappeared or badly damaged, is invaluable.

E. CAUCASUS

1. V. A. Krachkovskaia, "Unknown album of Arabic and Persian epigraphy" (II, 19–40), publishes extensive parts of a 56-page album from the Archives of the Russian Geographical Society, which contains pictures of 76 inscriptions in Arabic and Persian and 14 watercolors. Almost all the inscriptions are from the Caucasus and Mme Krachkovskaia shows that they were taken by Khanikov and various collaborators in the middle of the nineteenth century. Some of them have already been published.³⁸ Many, mostly tombal, were until now unknown.

2. —, "Tomb inscriptions from Dmanis" (V, 21–32). About fifty Arabic inscriptions were found in 1936–7 in the ancient Georgian capital, about 100 kilometers southwest of Tiflis. The author publishes nine of them, all later than the middle of the thirteenth century, one of them probably monumental. One inscription is in Kufic, one in *thuluth*, the rest in *naskhi*. Although very fragmentary, the documents are interesting for a study of Islamic expansion into the Caucasus.

F. LATER THAN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

1. A. A. Semenov, "Two autographs of Khoja Ahruna" (V, 51–7). The author describes two autographs from an album of autographs of great men, and not of calligraphists (as was usual with such albums), collected by an unknown personage in the seventeenth century. The album is at present in the collection of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences.

2. —, "A seventeenth century Persian cruet for spices" (V, 58–60). Description of a curious object made up of individual "cups" fitted within each other and inscribed with religious poems.

3. I. V. Megrelidze, "A Persian alphabet in Georgian transliteration" (V, 61–4). This document comes from a Georgian manual dated around 1800.

4. E. A. Davidovich, "Inscriptions on Central Asian silver coins of the sixteenth century" (VII, 30–40), discusses inscriptions of Shaybanid coins.

³⁸ N. de Khanikoff, "Mémoire sur les inscriptions musulmanes du Caucase," *Journal Asiatique*, 5ème série, 20 (1862).

On the whole there is comparatively little variation between the titles of the various rulers of the dynasty (five at the most). Some titles appear only in certain mints. The author has added a convenient table of all known mints from the period and of the dates of known coins from those mints.

5. A. A. Semenov, "Inscription on the tombstone of the amir of Bukhara Shah Murad Ma'sm, 1200–1215/1785–1800" (VII, 41–4), shows that the tombal inscription of the first Uzbek ruler of Bukhara was different from that of his successors.

6. M. A. Dobrynin, "Poetical legends on Safavid coins" (VIII, 63–76), performs a great service to numismatists by giving a short sketch of the history of poetical inscriptions on Islamic coins, and identifying and commenting on the poems found on Safavid coins. The commentary deals with historical, religious and ideological problems.

G. OTHERS

1. V. A. Krachkovskaia, "From the archives of Khanikov and Dorn" (IV, 28–39), outlines, with numerous excerpts, the correspondence between the two orientalists, mostly dealing with Dorn's trip to Central Asia and with the purchase in Paris of books for the library of St Petersburg.

2. —, "V. V. Bartold, numismatist and epigraphist" (VIII, 10–23), contains, with a summary of the work accomplished by this great Russian scholar, a useful bibliography of some of his less known contributions.

3. A group of five articles dealing with the subject of Islamic epigraphy in Russia itself concerns essentially Tartar and Bulgarian tombstones from the thirteenth century on. Four of these articles merely publish monuments with short commentaries: (a) S. E. Malov, "Bulgarian and Tartar epigraphical monuments" (I, 38–45) and (b) "Bulgarian and Tartar epigraphy" (II, 41–8); (c) G. Iusupov and G. Hisamutdinov, "Bulgarian epigraphical monuments found in the summer of 1947" (IV, 68–75); and (d) G. V. Iusupov, "On some Bulgarian epigraphical monuments" (VII, 26–9). The fifth article, (e) G. V. Iusopov, "Tartar epigraphical monuments of the fifteenth century" (V, 78–94), is more developed and contains, besides a large group of tombs, a map showing the places where the inscriptions from different centuries were found. The map shows how [559] the Tartars moved toward the northeast and the west in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The large number of inscriptions published here permits a more complete analysis of the textual and stylistic developments in this little-studied area of Islamic expansion.

Non-Islamic

A. NON-ISLAMIC CENTRAL ASIA

1. A. N. Bernshtam, "Uighur epigraphy in Semirechia I" (I, 33–7), discusses three inscriptions from the ninth to eleventh centuries found on dishes.
2. K. K. Yudahin, "Bouz or bu uz" (I, 46–8), is a commentary on a word found on a small pitcher from Saraychik.
3. A. N. Bernshtam, "New inscriptions from Central Asia" (III, 55–8), discusses an alleged Chinese inscription on a second millennium BC spearhead, a Saki inscription of the sixth to seventh centuries BC, and a fifth to eighth centuries AD seal from Talas.
4. O. I. Smirnova, "Soghdian coins from the collection of the numismatic section of the Hermitage" (IV, 3–23), is a complete description of the coins with technical and historical commentaries.
5. A. N. Bernshtam, "Old Turkish writing in the Lena River region" (IV, 76–86), is a study of recently found runic inscriptions with a map showing the spread of these inscriptions between the sixth and ninth centuries.
6. E. R. Rygdylon, "New runic inscriptions from the region of Minusinsk" (IV, 87–93).
7. E. R. Rygdylon, "Mongol inscriptions on the Ienissei" (IV, 94–101).
8. A. N. Bernshtam, in "Old Turkish documents from Soghd, a Preliminary report" (V, 65–75), suggests that a document found by the Soghdian expedition and so far not understood is in fact in Turkish. He also draws a few conclusions of a historical nature on the significance of the close relationship between the Turks of the Semirechia and the Soghdians.
9. Iu. L. Aranchyn, "Slab with an old-Turkish inscription at Saigyn" (V, 76–7).
10. E. R. Rygdylon, "Chinese signs and inscriptions on archaeological objects from the Ienissei region" (V, 113–20).
11. O. I. Smirnova, in "Materials for a catalogue of Soghdian coins" (VI, 3–45), discusses coins of the seventh and eighth centuries AD, "a group of copper coins whose inscriptions are in Soghdian and which are written in the official government script (cursive) of Soghd in the same period" (p. 7).

Many important problems are touched upon in the course of this lengthy study: the relation to Chinese coins, the means we possess to localize Soghdian coins, and the curious fact that no silver coins are found. The last point is explained through the practice mentioned by Arab geographers that many Central Asian cities had a coinage valid only within the limits of that city. More problems are posed by the discovery at Varahsha of coins with inscriptions whose script is Aramaic, but whose language is unknown. This general introduction is a remarkably clear presentation of the very complex monetary situation of Central Asia at the time of the Muslim conquest. It is followed by a long catalog.

12. A. N. Bernshtam, "Uighur inscriptions from Erski (Ferghana)" (VI, 101–5), deals with a group of seventh- to ninth-century inscriptions with historical commentary.

13. E. R. Rygdylon, "Remnants of a Mongol inscription in the cavern of Buhtaminsk" (VII, 77–80).

14. V. C. Vorobiev-Desiatovskij, "Tibetan documents on wood from the area of Lake Lob-Nor" (VII, 70–76, and VIII, 77–85).

15. E. R. Rygdylon, "On old-Turkish runes of the Pre-Baikal region" (VIII, 86–90).

B. ANCIENT NEAR EAST

1. B. B. Piotrovskij, "The 'city Teishebaini' on an Urartian cuneiform inscription" (II, 83–5).

2. I. M. Diakonov, "Fragments of cuneiform tablets from the 1946 excavations at Karmir Blur" (II, 86–9), gives a transliteration and transcription of three tablets dealing with judicial and legal problems.

3. G. V. Tzereteli, "Armazi script and the Problem of the origin of the Georgian alphabet" (II, 90–101, and III, 59–71). In the first article the author discusses the signs used for numbers. He is led to the conclusion that the "Armazi letters and numbers are genetically tied to Aramaic, to the specific variety of Aramaic appearing in the script of the Egyptian Aramaic papyri of the fifth to second centuries B.C." (p. 95). He shows also the close relationship between Armazi and various types of [560] Persian scripts. In the second article the author turns to a more general problem. "During the archaeological excavations at Mtzhet were found Greek, Hebrew, Persian, and Aramaic inscriptions, but so far no Georgian ones. Does it mean that at that time the Georgian alphabet did not exist as yet and that the supposition is then

justified that the Georgian alphabet was formed in the fifth century A.D.? Or perhaps that it [the lack of Georgian inscriptions] can be explained through other reasons and, in spite of the lack of monuments with Georgian inscriptions in Armazi times, we are still justified in supposing the existence there of a Georgian alphabet? The solution to the problem is entirely tied to the question of the relation between Armazi and Georgian scripts. If it will appear that the Georgian script is tied to the Armazi one, and, at the same time, if it can be shown that individual Georgian letters show a more archaic character than the Armazi ones, the suggestion of the existence of a Georgian script in Armazi times becomes more convincing; on the other hand, if it appears that the Georgian script has no genetic relation to Armazi, then the question of the origin of the Georgian script will still remain open" (p. 59). The author believes that the first possibility is correct and that, with a number of exceptions, the Georgian alphabet shows many similarities to Armazi.

4. I. M. Lurié, "The teaching of Amenemhet I on ostraca in the Museum of Representational Arts" (III, 83–7).

5. B. B. Piotrovskij, "Three Urartian inscriptions on bronze objects from Teishebaini (Karmir Blur)" (III, 88–9).

6. I. M. Diakonov, "Remarks on Urartian epigraphy" (IV, 102–16, and VI, 106–12).

7. I. M. Lurié, "Old Egyptian plaque with a donation to the earth" (V, 95–109).

8. B. B. Piotrovskij, "Cuneiform inscriptions on bronze bowls from the excavations at Karmir-Blur" (V, 110–12).

9. I. N. Vinnikov, "Newly found Phoenician inscription" (V, 121–33), presents an attempt at interpretation of the well-known Kara-tepeh inscription.

10. N. V. Artiunian, "The chronicle of Argusht I from Khorkhor" (VII, 81–119), is a transcription and translation of a new arrangement of the cuneiform inscriptions formerly published by Schultz, Guyard and others.

11. V. V. Struve, "P. K. Kokovtsov as an assyriologist" (VIII, 3–9).

C. GEORGIAN

1. I. V. Megrelidze, "Arabic alphabet in old Georgian transcription" (VIII, 36–42).

2. L. M. Melikset-Bekov, "The tetralingue of Garesdji from 1352" (VIII, 56–62), presents a graffito found in 1921 and written in Georgian, Armenian, Persian and Uighur.

Summary

Ranging in time from the second millennium BC to the early nineteenth century and in space from Tibet to Egypt and to Asia Minor, the contributions to *Epigrafika Vostoka* cover a great number of fields and problems. As is to be expected, the contributions vary in importance and value. To limit myself only to the medieval period, such works as those of Semenov on the inscriptions of the Gur-e Amir, of Mme Krachkovskaia on the plate of Badr al-Din Lu'lu' and the exploration of Central Asian and Caucasian epigraphy, of Mme Smirnova on Soghdian coinage, of Giuzalian on the epigraphical problems of tiles, and many others, are certainly of great significance to all Islamic scholars. A great number of new monuments and new inscriptions have been made available. In many cases the authors have not limited themselves to purely epigraphical problems, but have sought the wider implications of the texts they published. On the whole the presentation is good. Printing mistakes are few and the Arabic and Persian texts are generally correct. A list of corrections is often attached at the end of the issue.

However, the photographs are often unsatisfactory and, although excellent drawings are generally provided, the best drawing can never be trusted in the same way as a photograph. It is to be hoped that the subsequent issues of this journal devoted to an essential area of Oriental studies will continue to publish new documents and studies which exemplify the importance of the research done in the Soviet Union and which give us an opportunity to know better the significant discoveries recently made in Central Asia and the works of art in Russian museums, whose access is difficult for scholars outside the Soviet Union.