

# **The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies**

Edited by Michael Kemper and  
Stephan Conermann

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2011

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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Typeset in Times New Roman

by Keystroke, Station Road, Codsall, Wolverhampton

Printed and bound by MPG Books Group, UK

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

The heritage of Soviet Oriental studies / edited by Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann.

p. cm. — (Routledge contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe series; 25)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Asia, Central—Study and teaching (Higher)—Soviet Union—History.

2. Asia, Central—Study and teaching (Higher)—Russia—History.

3. Asia, Central—Historiography—Soviet Union—History. 4. Asia, Central—Historiography—Russia—History. I. Kemper, Michael.

II. Conermann, Stephan.

DK855.8.H47 2011

958.0072'047—dc22

2010029803

ISBN: 978-0-415-59977-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-83275-2 (ebk)

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## 8 The Leningrad/St. Petersburg School of Scientific Islamology

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Over the last twenty years the Russian book market has been flooded with publications on Islam that were produced by authors who are not Islamic studies professionals. Mostly financed by various Muslim organizations, these publications do not reflect the research results of specialists from Russia or the West; rather, they often have an apologetic and sometimes even confrontational character. To be sure, in Soviet times, the Russian reader was hardly spoiled for choice in terms of writing on Islam. Now, though, he finds it hard to navigate through this ocean of books, brochures, journals and newspaper articles. Students of the Muslim Orient face the same problem.

The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union had a special relation to Islam for two historical reasons: they bordered several countries of the Muslim world; and a significant portion of the autochthonous population of Russia practiced Islam. Islam is therefore part of the history and culture of Russia; it is not just an object of academic research but an important factor in social and political life. Accordingly, one of the most urgent tasks of Russian Oriental studies is to provide objective scientific information about Islam as a step towards the social consolidation in the Russian Federation.

The USSR's scientific Islamology was located above all in St. Petersburg (from 1924 to 1991: Leningrad). It was in the capital of the former Russian Empire that the Russian Academy of Sciences was founded, and it was in this city that scientific Orientalology was developed. Even during the strong dominance of Communist ideology and militant atheism, the Leningrad school of Islamic studies managed to maintain the traditions that had been worked out by previous Russian Orientalists; these concern above all the respectful relation to Muslim peoples, their history and culture, but also the strong interest in the written monuments of the Orient as the basis for any kind of research. In this context we should mention academy member Vasilii V. Bartol'd (d. 1930), Professor Aleksandr E. Shmidt (d. 1939), academy member Ignatsii Iu. Krachkovskii (d. 1951), Professor Il'ia P. Petrushevskii (d. 1977), Kulsum Kseniia S. Kashtaleva (d. 1939) and Andrei Ia. Borisov (d. 1942). The traditions of academic Islamology were continued by Petr A. Griaznevich (d. 1998), Anas B. Khalidov (d. 2001), Stanislav M. Prozorov, Mikhail B. Piotrovskii, Oleg F. Akimushkin and others. Still, the authorities' *negative stance towards religion did not stimulate the development of scientific*



religious studies, including Islamology. This resulted in both objective and subjective difficulties especially with regard to access to Islamic studies literature in Western languages. The ideological leadership also did not support the selection of religious questions as topics of research, and there was no educational program for preparing specialists of Islamology.

An important turning point in the history of Russian Islamic studies occurred in 1980. Influenced by the “Islamic factor” – the Iranian Revolution of 1978/1979 and the Islamic resistance to the deployment of Soviet troops in Afghanistan – the central ideological organs of the USSR decided that in the centers of Oriental studies (the institutes of Oriental studies as well as the Oriental faculties of universities), special sections or groups had to be organized to do research on Islam. In May 1980 the First All-Soviet Coordination Session on Problems of Contemporary Islam (*Pervoe Vsesoiuznoe Koordinatsionnoe soveshchanie po problemam sovremennogo islama*) was held in Tashkent. However, out of the enormous number of people who attended this conference, only very few had any link to scientific Islamic studies. The meeting adopted a program to activate Islamic studies and educate cadres in this field. The leadership of this program was assigned to Evgenii M. Primakov, who at that time was serving as director of the Institute of Oriental Studies in the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

While the tasks formulated at this meeting were of extraordinary importance and topicality, the lack of professional Islamologists prevented a successful implementation of the program over the following years. This became apparent at the Second and Third All-Soviet Coordination Sessions on Problems of Contemporary Islam that took place in Moscow in 1983 and 1986, respectively. It was inevitable that the studies that were conducted in the newly established sections (sectors, groups) went more in the direction of political and country studies.

There was only one institution where an encompassing program for research on Islam as a religion began: the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (renamed after the dissolution of the USSR “St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences,” and since 2008 operating as an independent institution under the name “Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences”). In May 1980 the Institute formed an inter-sectoral Group of Islamology (*Gruppa islamovedeniia*); under my leadership, it comprised twelve scholars, among them A.B. Khalidov, O.F. Akimushkin, Oleg G. Bol’shakov, Mikhail B. Piotrovskii, Aleksandr D. Knysh, Aleksei S. Bogoliubov and others. Primakov looked into the program and supported it.

The group gave itself the following tasks:

- 1 The preparation of reference works on Islam.
- 2 Source studies and historiography on early and medieval Islam, including translations and studies of original Arabic monuments on the history of Islam.
- 3 The edition and study of Arabic manuscripts on the history of Islam as a religion.

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- 4 The elaboration of programs and the production of course books on Islam for teachers, Ph.D. students and students of higher education.

In what follows I would like to review the achievements of the group with regard to these four points.

### Reference works

Several short dictionaries of Islam were produced for a wider readership, and in the late 1980s members of the group, together with Arabists from Moscow, produced and published the first Russian academic encyclopedic dictionary of Islam: *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' "Islam"*, ed. S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1991). This collective volume dealt with general and specific problems of Islam and Islamic ideology; it presented the results of the scientific work of specialists in Russia and summarized the most important achievements of foreign Islamic studies. The book was thus an encyclopedia in form and a research publication in content, and it attempted to aid the current tasks of Russian Islamic studies by providing a multifaceted and correct understanding of Islam as an ideological system. The 578 entries provide an introduction to the conceptual toolbox (*poniatiinyi apparat*) of Islam, which constitutes the core of all local ethno-cultural variants. In alphabetical order it presents the key concepts, terms, personalities, theological and juridical schools as well as Sufi communities, and it discusses the theoretical and practical aspects of the ideology of Islam. The work was written for use by specialists (of Oriental studies, religious studies, philosophy, history and cultural studies) as well as for a broad circle of educated readers, including teachers of higher education in the humanities, students, teachers in general schools, and journalists. It is also useful when writing lectures on Islam. In spite of its high print run of 50,000 copies, the encyclopedic dictionary immediately sold out. This reflected the high demand for and topicality of scientific literature on Islam.

In 1996 work started on a unique international project: production of the multi-volume encyclopedic dictionary *Islam on the Territory of the Former Russian Empire*. Located at the St. Petersburg Institute and directed by myself, between 1998 and 2003 the project produced four fascicles;<sup>1</sup> a fifth fascicle is currently being prepared. The 255 corrected and updated entries of the first three volumes were subsequently re-edited in the form of a single comprehensive volume (*svodnyi tom*).<sup>2</sup>

More than sixty authors from eleven countries took part in the production of the fascicles. Besides Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan', Makhachkala, Ufa, Krasnodar area, Tver'), contributions were made by authors from Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Bukhara, Kokand, Samarkand), Azerbaijan (Baku), Ukraine (Lugansk, Simferopol') and Latvia (Riga), as well as by scholars from Germany (Bochum, Berlin, Halle), Switzerland (Bern), France (Paris), the United States (Bloomington), Turkey (Ankara) and Japan (Tokyo). Altogether, the first four fascicles contain 340 entries in alphabetical order. They cover Islam in the territories traditionally inhabited by Muslims, above all Central Asia (which has most entries), Tatarstan,

North Caucasus and Bashkortostan. The range of topics has been kept as wide as possible. The articles deal with Islam in the great historical-cultural regions, republics and cities, as well as with individual personalities (Muslim scholars, ascetics, poets and mystics, religious-political activists, all from various schools and Sufi brotherhoods, religious organizations, parties and trends of Islam). Also covered are cultural places and structures (mosques, *mazars*, historical-religious and memorial complexes); the teachings and practices of Sufi brotherhoods; feasts and religious rituals, customs and objects of the Islamic cult; the Qur'an and its historical presence in Russia; the structure of the clergy (*dukhovenstvo*); Muslim schools (*maktabs* and *madrasas*); Muslim organizations, institutes and movements (from the Muftiyats/Spiritual Boards, to the Muslim faction of the State Duma, to the Wahhabis of the Northern Caucasus); peoples and ethnic groups (e.g., Noghays, Kists, Beluchis); terms and titles (*ishan*, *pir*, *imam*, *parandzha*); and other topics. Chronologically the project covers the time since the appearance of Islam in the regions mentioned above to the present day. The fascicles and the comprehensive volume are furnished with color and black-and-white illustrations, tables and an extensive reference section. The latter includes seven indices, including a thematic index that makes the fascicle entries easily accessible not only to specialists but also to the general public. While structure and methodology are identical in all fascicles, each one also forms an autonomous and independent edition that does not repeat the contents of previous fascicles. This autonomy and independence is reflected in the topical range of the materials presented as well as in the chronological and territorial breadth of coverage, but also in the completeness of the reference section.

One major difference between this encyclopedic dictionary and many other publications on Islamic topics is to be found in the new methodological approach to the study of Islam. This approach is based on the thesis that all dogmatic trends, ethnic groups and areas should be treated equally as they can claim equal rights and value (*ravnopravie/ravnosennost'*) within the Islamic world. In addition, our approach is to accept the regional form of Islam as the natural and objective form in which Islam exists. This new approach allows us to understand the mechanisms of how this ideological system functions as a dialectical interaction between general Islamic norms or principles, on the one hand, and the regional forms of existence, on the other. This approach does not focus on intra-Islamic differences and contradictions, and it does not posit various regional forms against each other. It also does not give preferential treatment to the ambitious claims to "orthodoxy" by this or that Islamic ideologist, or to this or that model of "Islamic government"; nor does it uphold the "primacy" of this or that dogmatic or juridical school, ethnoscene or region. Rather, emphasis is put on the equal value of the peoples who made contributions to Muslim civilizations.

The methodology and the factual contents of the entries in the fascicles constitute an effective ideological argument against the religious-political extremism of the preachers of Islamic "purity" – those who try to spread alien ideological forms of Islam that have developed under different historical conditions and in other historical and cultural regions – among the Muslims of the Russian Federation, who for generations have been brought up under specific local traditions. Under the

conditions of present-day Russia, scientific information about Islam, as collected in these fascicles, helps to overcome the negative prejudices that representatives of various confessions have about each other. It is a step forward to mutual ethno-confessional understanding in society and to social consolidation.

The work provides the reader with an opportunity to understand the manifold forms of Islam on the territory of the former Russian Empire in a broad historical context, and against a broad cultural studies background. To date, the encyclopedic dictionary is the main (indeed only) source of concentrated information on the history and contemporary situation of Islam and its institutions in the aforementioned regions. The materials presented are based on a wide range of original sources. Saturated with detailed and multifold information, these publications provide the reader with a scientific, unprejudiced representation of Islamic history and the spiritual world of the Muslims who have been living on the territory of the former Russian Empire for many centuries.

The materials on the history of Islam in Russia collected in these fascicles are practically unknown to the foreign reader, to whom the Russian-language edition is barely accessible. It would therefore be useful to translate them into English, thereby giving the English-speaking reader the possibility to become acquainted with the historical experience of how Islam existed in a non-Muslim state. This is particularly topical in our times, when tensions in ethno-confessional relations are intensifying on a global level.

### Source studies

The following books have been published as a result of the work of the Group of Islamology

- 1 S.M. Prozorov, *Arabskaia istoricheskaia literatura v Irake, Irane i Srednei Azii (VII–seredina X v.). Shiitskaia istoriografiia* [*The Arabic Historical Literature in Iraq, Iran and Central Asia (Seventh to Middle of the Tenth Century). Shi'a Historiography*] (Moscow: Nauka, 1980). This book gives a detailed overview of how the Shi'a historical literature came into being and developed. The bibliographic part of the work contains abstracts about seventy Shi'a authors of the period under consideration.
- 2 Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, *Kniga o religiakh i sektakh (Kitab al-milal wa-n-nihal)* [*The Book on Religions and Sects*], part 1: *Islam*, Russian trans. from the Arabic, introduction and commentaries by S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1984).
- 3 *Islam: Istorigraficheskie ocherki* [*Islam: Historiographical Overviews*], ed. by S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1991). The *ocherki* contain an introduction (by Prozorov) and analytical reviews of the world literature of Islamic studies (the list of referenced works contains more than 900 titles). The book covers three fields of Islamic studies that enjoy an important place in the system of religious–political ideology of Islam, and that are of particularly interest (due to the language barrier) for the Russian-speaking

reader: Qur'an and Qur'anic studies (this section was written by Efim A. Rezvan); *hadith* and *hadith* studies (Dmitrii V. Ermakov); and Sufism (Aleksandr D. Knysh).

The *ocherki* are of scientific and practical significance because they demonstrate (against a broad historical and cultural background) the development and results of research done in the three fields of Islamic studies, and define new methodologies and research perspectives for the study of Islam. No less important is that these *ocherki* produce a scientific understanding of Islam and thus serve as a high-quality basis for any complex research into its ideology. This is of special importance because Russian Islamology (*otechestvennoe islamovedenie*) and in particular journalism on Islamic topics follow political trends (*politicheskaia kon'iunktura*), and in our society they have produced a one-sided, negative response to the theory and practice of Islam. The formation of a scientific presentation of Islam helps to eliminate old stereotypes in the ideas people have about Islam.

- 4 Ibn al-'Arabi, *Mekkanskie otkroveniia (al-Futuh al-makkiyya) [The Meccan Revelations]*, trans. from the Arabic [into Russian], introduction, annotations and bibliography by Aleksandr D. Knysh (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 1995).
- 5 Aleksei A. Khismatulin, *Sufiiskaia ritual'naiia praktika [Sufi Ritual Practice]* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 1996). This work is an attempt to study the ritual mystical practice of one particular Sufi brotherhood, the Naqshbandiyya. The mystical practice of Islam is presented as having developed within the framework of the ritual practice of normative Islam before growing out of the latter.
- 6 Abu Yusuf Ya'qub b. Ibrahim al-Kufi, *Kitab al-kharaj*, trans. from the Arabic [into Russian] and commentaries by A.E. Shmidt; glosses to the translation by A.S. Bogoliubov; prepared for publication, introductory article and indices by A.A. Khismatulin (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2001). One of the earliest extant monuments of the Muslim written tradition, the *Kitab al-kharaj*, also constitutes the first work of the Hanafi school of Islamic law: it was written in the eighth century by order of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid. The *Kitab* reflects the Muslim tax system in a broad sense: the book comprises 550 traditions on the various types of tax, but also on the forms of punishment that need to be implemented for transgressions against God and against people, from the time when the Muslim community and the Caliphate came into existence.
- 7 Efim A. Rezvan, *Koran i ego mir [The Qur'an and Its World]* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2001).
- 8 Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Gazzali, *Qimiya'-yi sa'adat ("Elixir schast'ia") [The Elixir of Happiness]*, part 1: 'unvan 1 to 4, rukn 1, trans. from the Persian [into Russian], introductory article, commentary and indices by A.A. Khismatulin (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2002).
- 9 Ibn Hisham, *Sirat Rasul Allah ("Zhizneopisanie poslannika Allakha") [Life Description of the Messenger of Allah]*, trans. from the Arabic by V.I. V.

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Polosin (forthcoming) (based on an unpublished manuscript preserved in the Institut Vostochnykh Rukopisei Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk).

- 10 S.M. Prozorov, *Islam kak ideologicheskaia sistema [Islam as an Ideological System]* (Moscow: Vostochnaia Literatura, 2004) This work is a collection of the author's research in the field of Islamic studies over many years, above all in the study of written monuments of Islamic doxography in the Arabic language from the second half of the eighth to the middle of the twelfth century, with an emphasis on the genre of religious–historical literature. This made it possible to acquaint the scientific public with original material that displays the diverse forms of Islamic ideology, to restore the conceptual framework of Islam, and to establish a new methodological approach to the study of Islam that provides an understanding of how Islam functioned as an ideological (and religious) system. In view of the traditional character (*traditsionnost'*) of the spiritual values and of the ideological orientation of the followers of Islam, the results of such research on monuments of Islamic doxography provide the basis for an adequate understanding of religio-political processes in the contemporary Muslim world, including in the areas of the former Russian Empire and in Russia proper. This work won an international “Book of the Year” award, presented to the author in 2006 by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- 11 Alikber K. Alikberov, *Epokha klassicheskogo islama na Kavkaze: Abu Bakr ad-Darbandi i ego sufiiskaia entsiklopediia “Raikhan al-khaka'ik” (XI–XII vv.) [The Epoch of Classical Islam in the Caucasus: Abu Bakr al-Darbandi and His Sufi Encyclopedia Rayhan al-haqa'iq (Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries)]* (Moscow: Vostochnaia Literatura, 2003). This work on the classical period of Islam in the Caucasus (seventh–thirteenth century) is based on the unique Arabic manuscript *Rayhan al-haqa'iq* of al-Darbandi (d. 1145) as well as on other unpublished sources. It contains many new facts and interpretations about the history and culture of the mountain peoples of the Caucasus, as well as about their contacts with Iranians, Huns-Savirs, Arabs, Khazars, Russians and other peoples. The book's focus is on the problem of the emergence of the political formations that existed in the Caucasus during Arab overlordship, the pre-Muslim layer of clan systems and spirituality, the process of Islamization, the theory and practice of Islam and, in particular, of Sufism as a special form of Islam in the North Caucasus.
- 12 S.M. Prozorov is working on a translation (from Arabic into Russian) of the multi-volume Qur'an commentary *al-Mizan fi tafsir al-Qur'an* by Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i (d. 1981). Tabataba'i's introduction to his edition as well as his commentaries on the first Sura of the Qur'an have already been published (*Pis'mennye pamiatniki Vostoka* 1(4) (2006), 82–107).

## **Editions**

The group has published the following Arabic manuscripts:

- ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Fakhri, *Kitab talkhis al-bayan fi dhikr fraq ahl al-adyan* (“*Kratkoe raz’iasnenie k perechniu posledovatelei raznykh ver*”) [*A Short Explanation to the List of Followers of Various Faiths*], facsimile of the manuscript; text edition, introduction, short summary of the contents and indices by S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1988).
- *Rasa’il al-hikma I–XIV* (“*Poslaniia mudrosti I–XIV*”): *Iz druzskikh rukopisei SPbF IV RAN (A 173)* [*The Letters of Wisdom, nos. 1 to 14. From the Druze Collections*], facsimile of the manuscript, introduction, study (ch. 2 and 3), selected translations from the Arabic, glossarium by Mikhail A. Rodionov; study (ch. 1) by Valerii V. Polosin (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 1995).

Currently being prepared for publication are:

- A unique manuscript (from the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St. Petersburg) of the biographical dictionary *Mu’jam al-shuyukh* of the Khorezmian author al-Andarasbani (twelfth century). The manuscript (193 folios of Arabic text) contains around 280 biographies of Islamic ascetics. Edition of the Arabic text, introduction and indices by S.M. Prozorov.
- A unique manuscript (from the Hermitage collection, St. Petersburg) of the Arabic-language Sufi work *Kitab lawami’ anwar al-qulub fi jam’ asrar al-muhibb wa l-mahbub* [*Flashes from the Lights of the Hearts in the Collection of Secrets about the Lover and the Loved One*], by Abu-l-Ma’ali ‘Azizi b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Jili, known as Shaydhala (eleventh century). Facsimile of the manuscript (207 folios), introduction and indices by S.M. Prozorov.

### Programs and course books

In the area of course books on Islam for higher education, the following achievements can be mentioned:

- 1 “Islamovedenie. Programma dlia VUZov,” compiled by a collective of authors directed by S.M. Prozorov, published in *Narody Azii i Afriki* 3 (1989), 106–116; 4 (1989), 107–116; 5 (1989), 112–122. This complete course in Islamic studies is written for Fourth- and Fifth-year university students (above all those specializing in Islamic studies) at Oriental faculties; it comprises approximately one hundred hours. The structure of the program (separate fields of Islamic studies, particular topics and their sub-fields) makes this curriculum useful on various levels, depending on specialization and level of preparation. The program can be used as a base for the production of various special courses (*spetskursy*) on Islam. The major periods of Islamic history, the conceptual framework of Islam and the most significant elements of its ideology can also be demonstrated on a more general level, for instance for students of religious studies, history of the Orient and other fields.

In addition to the lectures, the curriculum comprises seminars with students for the reading and translation of special texts. In accordance with the structure of the curriculum program a chrestomathy was produced, the reading of which should provide a deeper and more concrete understanding of the lectures;

- 2 *Khrestomatia po islamu*, trans. from the Arabic, with introduction and annotations, chief editor S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1994). This compilation of texts addresses students of higher education who study Islam and its history, but also a wider circle of specialists (in Oriental studies, religious studies, philosophy, history). It contains Russian translations (with commentaries) of various original Islamic sources written in Arabic: "Muhammad and the Beginning of Islam" (V.V. Polosin, M.B. Piotrovskii); "Qur'an and Its Interpretations" (E.A. Rezvan); "Hadith, the Sunna of the Prophet" (D.V. Ermakov); "Dogmatics: Ideational Trends in Islam" (S.M. Prozorov); "Sufism" (A.D. Knysh); "Muslim Law" (A.E. Shmidt (archival translation), A.S. Bogoliubov).
- 3 M.B. Piotrovskii, *Koranicheskie skazaniia [Qur'anic Narratives]* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991). Written in a lively, easily accessible language, this book explains legends and traditions from the Qur'an and analyzes their origins and spread in pre-Islamic Arabia and in the countries of Arabic and Islamic civilization.
- 4 *Islam: Tarikh, Fälsäfä, Ibadätlär [Islam: History, Philosophy, Ritual]* (Baku: Elm, 1994). Including sections. "The Origins of Islam," "Qur'an" (M.B. Piotrovskii); "Islamic Dogmatics," "Ideational Trends in Islam" (S.M. Prozorov); and "Sufism" (A.D. Knysh) in the Azeri language.
- 5 *Islam i arabo-musul'manskaia kul'tura: Programma uchebnogo kursa [Islam and the Arabo-Islamic Civilization: Course Program for Study]*, compiled by S.M. Prozorov (St. Petersburg: Akademiia Kul'tury, 1996).
- 6 *Programma kandidatskogo ekzamena po spetsial'nosti "Istoriografiia i istochnikovedenie rannego i srednevekovogo islama (VII–XIV vv.)" [Program for the Examination of Ph.D. Students Specializing in the Field "Historiography and Source Study of Early and Medieval Islam (7th to 14th Centuries)"]*, compiled by S.M. Prozorov (available on the official website of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts).
- 7 A.A. Khismatulin, *Sufizm* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 1999; 2nd edn 2003).
- 8 M.B. Piotrovskii, *Istoricheskie predaniia Korana: Slovo i obraz [Historical Traditions of the Qur'an: Word and Image]* (St. Petersburg: Slaviia, 2005) Contains the thoughts of the author about the Qur'an and its historical subjects and many color illustrations, in many cases of hitherto unpublished manuscripts from the St. Petersburg collections.
- 9 S.M. Prozorov, *Klassicheskoe islamovedenie (Vvedenie v islamovedenie): Programma spetskursa lektsii dlia studentov Vostochnogo fakul'teta SPbGU [Classical Islamology (An Introduction to Islamic Studies): Program of a*



*Special Course for Students of the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University*], (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo OOO "AIK", 2009)

The members of the group have also published a large number of articles (at home and abroad) on Islamic topics. And another published volume is: *Islam: religiia, obshchestvo, gosudarstvo [Islam: Religion, Society, State]*, edited by P.A. Griaznevich and S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Nauka, 1984).

The following Ph.D. dissertations (*kandidatskaia*) were successfully defended:

- Dmitrii V. Ermakov, *Rannye istochniki po istorii slozheniia khabaliistva [Early Sources for the History of the Emergence of the Hanbaliyya]* (Leningrad, 1986); scientific supervisor: M.B. Piotrovskii.
- Aleksandr D. Knysh, *Osnovnye istochniki dlia izucheniia mirovozzreniia Ibn 'Arabi: "Fusus al-khikam" i "al-Futukhat al-makkiia"* [*Basic Sources for the Study of the Worldview of Ibn 'Arabi: Fusus al-hikam and al-Futuhah al-makkiyya*] (Leningrad, 1986); scientific supervisor: A.B. Khalidov.
- Ashirbek K. Muminov, *"Kata'ib a'lam al-akhiar" al-Kafavi kak istochnik po istorii islama v Maverannakhre (III/IX–VIII/XIV vv.)* [*The Work Kata'ib a'lam al-akhiar of al-Kafawi as a Source on the History of Islam in Transoxania (3rd/9th to 8th/14th Centuries)*] (Leningrad, 1991); scientific supervisor: S.M. Prozorov. Continuing this research topic, Muminov later defended his second (*doktorskaia*, habilitational) thesis: *Rol' i mesto khanafitskikh "ulama" v zhizni gorodov Maverannakhra (II–VII/VIII–XIII vv.)* [*The Role and Place of Hanafi Scholars in the City Life of Transoxania (2nd/7th to 8th/13th Centuries)*] (Tashkent, 2003).
- Alikber K. Alikberov, *"Raikhan al-khaka'ik va-bustan al-daka'ik" Mukhammada ad-Darbandi kak pamiatnik musul'manskoi istoriografii* [*Muhammad al-Darbandi's "Rayhan al-haqa'iq wa-bustan al-daqa'iq" as a Monument of Muslim Historiography*] (Leningrad, 1992); scientific supervisor: S.M. Prozorov.
- Aleksei A. Khismatulin, *Pragmaticheskii sufizm v bratstve nakshbandiia (na osnove pis'mennykh istochnikov)* [*Pragmatic Sufism in the Naqshbandiyya Brotherhood (on the Basis of Written Sources)*] (St. Petersburg, 1997); scientific supervisors: O.F. Akimushkin and S.M. Prozorov.
- Maksim G. Romanov, *"Talbis Iblis" ("Naushcheniia D'iavola") Ibn al-Dzhauzi (um. v 597/1200) kak istochnik po istorii islama* [*Talbis Iblis ("Satan's Instigations") of Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597/1200) as a Source for the History of Islam*]; scientific supervisor: S.M. Prozorov.
- Within the same program, Ara G. Margarian is carrying out his Ph.D. work on the history of the formation of Shi'a ideology (on the basis of the *Kitab al-mahasin* of Ahmad al-Barqi, ninth century); scientific supervisor: S.M. Prozorov.

A permanent Islamic studies seminar (*Islamovedcheskii seminar*) was established at the Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies in 1985 under my direction. The

seminar elaborated the methodology of scientific translation of, and providing commentaries on, original Arabic sources on Islam. The materials of this seminar provided the source base for the aforementioned *Khrestomatiia po islamu* of 1994 (prepared for publication by 1989). In light of the new direction in Russian Islamic studies, the seminar was reorganized in 1997 into a permanent seminar on “Islam in the Territories of the Former Russian Empire.”

In 1989 the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies hosted the Fourth All-Soviet Coordination Session on current problems of contemporary Islam, on which for the first time a joint topic was presented for discussion, and accepted: “Tradition and Innovation in Islam” (*Traditsiia i novatsiia v islame*). This was the last coordination meeting on Islam within the framework of the Soviet Union.

In conclusion, there can be no doubt that the representatives of the Leningrad/St. Petersburg school of scientific Islamic studies have achieved significant results in the study of Islam, and in offering the Russian public scientific and unbiased information about the history of this religion, and about the spiritual values and life orientations of the followers of Islam. There are, however, several factors that limit the capacity of Russian scientific Islamology to compete in the market place: above all, the small print-runs of academic publications, the books’ relatively high prices, and the limited areas where they are on sale. Consequently, scientific Islamic studies have had limited impact on the social consciousness of Russians (*rossiiane*), which has impeded the process of informing and educating (*prosveshcheniie*) Russian society in this field. On the other hand, at all levels of social life in the Russian Federation there are not enough professional Islamologists who could influence the Russian authorities’ domestic and foreign policies in matters concerning Islam and Muslims. Given the specific history of Russia and her geopolitical position in the world, one would think it was imperative to establish an academic and multi-profile Institute of Islamic Studies, whose scholars would not only do research work but also educate (through internships and Ph.D. supervision) professional Islamologists – including young Muslims who had obtained a religious education in the Russian Islamic universities as well as in international centers.

The survey I have given so far is dedicated to the Leningrad/St. Petersburg school of Islamic studies. However, it is also a farewell to this school. During the “sick and evil” 1990s (*likhie 90-e gody*), the Orientalists of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute worked under terrible conditions: salaries were low and irregular, the buildings were not heated, one had to queue for food and other staples, and so forth. As a result, the St. Petersburg Branch lost many professional Islamologists – some passed away, others moved elsewhere or gave up the profession entirely. Everything achieved in the field of scientific Islamic studies in the years that followed was the result of our scholars’ asceticism and the scientific knowledge that they accrued over time. Unfortunately, the St. Petersburg school of scientific Islamic studies will surely not be revived in the near future: there are no young people to continue the work. The Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State

University (where in the past almost all Orientalists of the Institute obtained their first degrees) has long since abandoned providing a “classical” education in Oriental studies. Instead, it teaches such disciplines as political studies, cultural studies and tourism. Even if somebody from among the young generation wished to embark upon a career in “classical” Islamic studies, there would be nobody to teach him or her, not to pass on our scientific traditions. Such is the bitter truth. It is scant consolation that several representatives of our school continue these traditions outside of St. Petersburg – in the academic Institutes of Oriental Studies of Moscow, Almaty and Tashkent, and at the University of Michigan.

*Translated from the Russian by Michael Kemper.*

### **Notes**

- 1 *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, comp., ed. S.M. Prozorov (Moscow: Izdatel'skaia firma “Vostochnaia Literatura,” fascicle 1: 1998; fascicle 2: 1999; fascicle 3: 2001; fascicle 4: 2003).
- 2 *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, comp., ed. S.M. Prozorov, vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdatel'skaia firma “Vostochnaia Literatura,” 2006).