CONTENTS

Front cover:

Portrait of the Georgian translators of "Kalila and Dimna", king Vakhtang VI, and of the poet and scholar
Saba Sulhan Orbeliani. Manuscript P 2 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute
of Oriental Studies, fol. 3a, 22.0×19.0 cm.

Back cover:

Illustration to the story "Disservice", the same manuscript, fol. 97a, 19.0×22.5 cm.
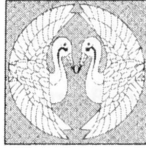
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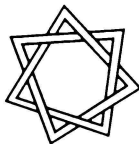
ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS
AND NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

A. S. Matveev

PERCEPTIONS OF CENTRAL ASIA IN RUSSIAN SOCIETY:
A DATABASE PROJECT

Recent years have witnessed growing interest, both in Russia and abroad, in the history and culture of the states which have taken shape on the territory of the former Soviet Union in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The serious difficulties — primarily in the area of relations between nationalities — which face this region underscore the special need for all manner of cross-cultural research on the mutual influence of Russian and Eastern cultures: "colonisers" and "colonised". The major source for research on this mutual influence consists of various texts from the period when the Russian Empire colonised its southern regions. The nineteenth century, rich in the traditional types of texts found in state and private archives in Russia and the former Eastern principalities, provides us with a vast base of source material unknown for earlier periods. These include, first and foremost, materials from Russian periodicals on Central Asia and the Caucasus. Such texts have not yet received systematic study, yet they contain a wealth of material on mutual cultural influence in these regions.

The present article discusses the first stage of the large project [1] aimed at studying cultural dialogue. It consists of two aspects: the perception of Central Asia and the Caucasus by Russian society, and the perception of Russia and Russians by Eastern society. To study the latter aspect, we plan to gather materials from archives in St. Petersburg [2] and in the republics of the CIS. These relatively late documents have not yet received the attention they merit from scholars, yet they contain valuable information on the first direct contacts between the local population and Russians, and the perceptions of this population of Russia and Russians. For example, the archives of the Zarafshan *beks*, held in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, provide an excellent indication of how attitudes toward Russians changed as they advanced ever deeper into Central Asia [3]. During the first stage of Russian penetration into the region, Russians are termed "unbelieving Russian", "damnable unbelievers", or simple "the damned"; one must fight them at all costs. Later, the tone changes as resistance becomes practically impossible. Then we learn from the newspaper *Turkestanskie Vedomosti* ("Turkestan Gazette") of the 1870s, that many of these uncompromising foes of the "unbelievers" soon began

to collaborate with the Russian authorities and came to serve the Russian Empire to the fullest extent.

As concerns the perception of Eastern regions in Russian society, the traditional texts employed for the study of this question (archival materials and literary sources) can clearly be augmented by yet another category of texts usually ignored by historical and cultural studies — the Russian periodicals noted above (for more detail, see below).

The first part of the project was dedicated to developing a method of processing and storing the necessary information. The enormous scope of the material which must be processed to achieve reliable results makes it impossible to use traditional methods and forced us to turn to a computer database which would include all relevant information. Such a database allows easy retrieval and use of the data. The database I developed was created primarily to process Russian periodicals and other Russian materials (for example, state and private archives). With minor changes, however, this database can also be used for storing and processing information from local Central Asian sources (Persian, Tajik, etc.). Of course, the questions which are posed to these other texts (and the database interface respectively) will inevitably require some corrections in accordance with the nature of the texts to be processed.

The database I developed was created in MS Access 97 for PC. It has an English interface, but the data entered in it is mostly in Russian. It was designed to work in Windows 95/98 PanEuro or NT (and, of course, in Russian localised versions of Windows 9x/NT), but it can work in the Arabic version of Windows 95/98 as well. In the latter case, the English interface of the database will be retained, but the data entered can be in Arabic script, which is important for processing local Central Asian sources. The database can also be used in Windows 2000 with MS Office 2000. It supports both Russian and Arabic alphabets (in theory, it should support other Eastern languages as well), which was virtually impossible in previous versions of Windows. This means that in a few years, when this version of Windows becomes standard for most users, we will be able to process all languages necessary for our project (Russian, Tajik, Persian, Caucasian languages, etc.) in a single database.

At present, however, I decided to stick with Access 97, as it is the most common program of this kind.

On the other hand, the technical results of this project have even broader application. The principles elaborated for this database can be applied to other fields of historical or philological study, where using a database to store and process texts is desirable but impossible in practice because of the lack of a necessary tool. The above database can be used as a basis for other text (and even picture) databases; the adaptation required is not overly complicated and can relatively easily be accomplished. The latter is especially important, as using MS Access 97, a standard program for MS Office, allows the researcher to avoid the complicated and expensive procedure of creating a specialised database in every particular case [4].

I. The Project and its methodological base [5]

The study of cross-cultural contacts in an area of active interchange between profoundly different cultures, as took place in Central Asia and the Caucasus in the nineteenth century, poses the question of analysing how foreign cultural elements were perceived by the various peoples involved. Such questions are traditional for one of the most promising tendencies in modern history — the history of mentalities (that is the aspect of this project which first attracted me, as I had examined similar problems for an earlier period). Advanced by the French "Annals School" in the process of studying medieval Europe, this approach has gradually spread to other areas of historical inquiry. Oriental studies has been less affected by the influence of the "Annals School", but works have begun to appear in the discipline on the mentalities of various peoples.

Perceptions of the surrounding world are highlighted in encounters with the unknown and unusual; that is why the study of the "image of the other" occupies such an important place in the approach noted above. In this context, it is only natural that Edward Said's "Orientalism" [6], which treats perceptions of the East in European society, should have drawn so much attention. While one can dispute the book's merits, it demonstrated the productiveness of this approach and evoked a great deal of interest in the issue at hand. In fact, however, the perception of the East even in Western Europe was more complex and went beyond the concept of "orientalism" as interpreted by Said. As concerns Russia, Said's theoretical conclusions are far less applicable to society's actual attitudes toward the Eastern territories of the Russian Empire.

For an educated Russian of the nineteenth century, the traditional concept of "Eastern exoticism" was usually limited to the remote East as represented by the tales of "1001 Nights". Pushkin's "Bakhchisaray Fountain" was not perceived by readers as directly linked to the actual Russian Crimea; it was rather a part of an imagined, fairy-tale "East". To a certain degree, elements of this perception are inherent in the romantic image of the Caucasian mountaineers who surround the "romantic hero" of Pushkin's "Prisoner of the Caucasus". But on the whole, the perception even of the Caucasus was different, more "prosaic". As concerns Central Asia, annexed by the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century, "Eastern exoticism" did not play a particularly important role. The complex interplay in nineteenth-century Russian consciousness of the "exotic" and real East inevitably brings the researcher face to face with the following question: how in fact were culturally different regions perceived by Russian society?

To answer this question, one must first determine the source base which contains the necessary information. However, I must note that at present the object of my research is "educated society" only; the peasantry and urban lower classes are not considered. Of course, the study of uneducated classes, as was shown by the research of the "Annals School" on the mentality of the "silent majority" is not *a priori* impossible. But the lack of a solid source base in the current case compels us to postpone the study of this question until the necessary material has been gathered.

Since we speak here of educated society, our major source consists of literary materials. But which sort of literature should we turn to first? It is common practice to employ well-known literary works by famed authors and poets for this aim. A typical example of such a study is Susan Layton's interesting article "Nineteenth-century Russian mythologies of Caucasian savagery" [7], which discusses the North Caucasus (Central Asia has received little study from this vantage point). The issue of how Caucasian mountaineers were perceived by Russian society is here viewed primarily through the prism of fiction, with passing reference to other works. As a result, Layton presents a relatively full picture of how *Russian literature* depicted the "Caucasian mountaineer" throughout the nineteenth century. But the question of how this image was perceived by Russian society at large remains open. Of course, Pushkin's "Prisoner of the Caucasus" was enormously influential in establishing the image of the Caucasus in Russian society. However, it remains unclear to what extent this romantic image was changed by Caucasian realia and other materials on the Caucasus.

In any case, the relation between the depiction of the East (or any other object) in fiction, especially when one speaks of outstanding literature created by exceptional people, and the image of the East in actual contemporary society is complex and requires special analysis in each concrete case. Of course, works of fiction by a major writer reflect the realities of the time and conditions in society, but to what extent? In the image created by an artist, what actually corresponds to the perception of the world by the artist's contemporaries, and what is the product of a creative individual? These questions are significantly more complex in Russian literature than in Western European literature, as most of major Russian writers (at least as long as the nineteenth century is concerned) never worked for "the market". Having other sources of income, they did not write in order to sell books. As a result, they made fewer efforts than their Western counterparts to coordinate their works with the direct needs of the reading public or to reflect its interests.

Periodicals are another story, however. They had to be sold. Consequently, they had to be more flexible and, as a minimum requirement, satisfy readers' interests. For example, if Lev Tolstoy could lambaste in his works the tenets of the Orthodox Church, the average literary journal could hardly permit itself such liberties, no matter what

views its editors or publishers might hold; it would simply lose subscribers and fall into financial ruin. Of course, meeting the expectations of readers was not the only criterion for selecting journal publications, but the connection between periodicals and readers was, nonetheless, much closer than between major writers and their readers. (Moreover, one can resolve the question of the correlation between societal consciousness and that of writers only by juxtaposing their works with more popular print production, which usually receives far less attention from literary critics than "serious literature").

Of course, such factors as the editor's personal views or the journal's ideological orientation also had a certain significance. Journals frequently held to particular political views (conservative, liberal, radical) or could express the official view of events. The latter, however, is not typical of Russian literature and even Russian periodicals; the Russian "littérateurs" for the most part considered itself duty-bound to speak out against all initiatives of the state, especially when they contradicted the intelligentsia's abstract ideas of justice (which was the case in nearly all instances). The principle of higher "state interests" was unknown to the intelligentsia, and any attempts by the authorities to gain the ideological support of the "creative intelligentsia" in creating and strengthening the Russian Empire were unsuccessful. Russian literature never produced a figure comparable to "Iron Rudyard", the bard of the British Empire. The actual needs of the state remained utterly alien to the intelligentsia up until the Russian Empire's final collapse in 1917. On the whole, any "correction for ideological pressure" from the authorities is of minimal importance when analysing Russian periodicals; the majority of the press, and certainly literary journals, reflected not official views, but the opinions of their authors and of the "reading public".

Consequently, in working on the project at hand, a decision was made to concentrate the bulk of attention not on the masterpieces of Russian literature, but on the popular periodical press, which is preferable for a number of reasons. Russian magazines are a unique source, because at a time when there was no TV or radio, they were the major source of knowledge for the general public and, to a great extent, shaped public opinion on many important issues. The image they shaped was especially important, because Central Asia was far away from typical tourist routes, unlike Western Europe or even the Caucasus. The lack of other sources of information (until the end of the nineteenth century historical and geographical books on Central Asia were rare and had a limited readership) means that the general picture presented by these journals must be very close to the image of the Central Asia in Russian society as a whole.

On the other hand, interest in this newly incorporated part of the Russian Empire was extremely great, as we see from the popularity of infrequent public lectures on Central

Asia delivered by returning travellers [8], and from an analysis of the periodicals themselves. For example, the number of publications on Central Asian themes in the journal *Niva* ("Field") is comparable to the number of publications on the Caucasus, and is exceeded only by materials on Western Europe.

For the first stage of the project, it was decided to select one journal to test the proposed approach to the problem and develop a system for data processing. For this aim, the most typical and widespread journal of the late nineteenth — early twentieth century was selected, *Niva* — an "illustrated journal of literature, politics, and contemporary life". This weekly journal "for family reading" came out from 1870 to 1918; it was the most popular journal among various groups of the educated population, from the upper classes to urban intellectuals of common birth. For a long time, it had the largest number of subscribers among publications of its type. As a weekly, it responded with alacrity to the major issues in foreign and domestic politics. Moreover, the journal was politically neutral and did not express open sympathy either for leftist or rightist political parties. Nor was it a mouthpiece of official views. It can be classified as "moderately liberal". On the whole, the views expressed there were closest to the standard perceptions of the surrounding world in Russian educated society, which makes it an ideal object for the study of the period's mentality.

Besides, there is another factor which renders the journal even more appropriate for the study of Central Asia; the journal collaborated with one of the most gifted journalists, writers, and artists of the final third of the nineteenth century, Nikolai Karazin. Karazin, who began his career as an officer in the Russian army and served for six years in Turkestan, later left the military and became a permanent correspondent for *Niva*, as well as a number of other Russian and Western journals. His articles, short stories, novels, numerous illustrations (he was called the Russian Gustave Doré for his magnificent drawings, which served as the basis for hundreds of engravings in journals and books), and detailed essays significantly contributed to the formation of the journal's image of Central Asia.

Of course, his publications were not limited to that region, but his special interest in Turkestan manifested itself quite frequently. On the other hand, his talent as a writer was on the standard "average level" best suited to the needs of our study. It is difficult to accuse Karazin of excessive originality in his judgments and views. But his novels of "Turkestani life" were enormously popular among ordinary readers. Many issues of *Niva* feature announcements of individual publications and even republications — "in response to numerous requests from readers" — of Karazin's novels. Especially popular was the "Two-legged Wolf", a melodramatic novel which shaped an entire generation's perceptions of Central Asia.

II. The technical side of the project: the database

The next question which faces the researcher is how to store and process the information contained in Russian periodicals. As was noted above, the nature of the material necessitates recourse to a computerised database, which allows one to store a large amount of information and process it with ease, making it possible to conduct searches and statistical analyses.

This stage was rather complicated technically, as historical databases of this kind belong to a new field of research. Consequently, it was necessary to develop the whole system virtually from scratch. First of all, a special system of processing information from periodical publications was developed on the basis of a template-sample proposed by Dr Nikolai Serikoff (with some changes and

additions made in the course of working with actual materials). The next stage was creating the database itself.

In theory, there could be several ways of developing the required database program. The best way is to write a special program that meets all our requirements, which are very specific and by no means "standard" for databases. Such highly specialised humanities databases exist in some libraries, as well as in a number of large research projects, usually to store and describe a whole class of sources. Unfortunately, creating such a special program involves a great deal of complicated programming, which I could not possibly do alone. Consequently, I had to reject this variant and concentrate on the programs which already existed on the market.

After trying a number of variants, I decided to use MS Access 97 for Windows, although this program does not suite our task particularly well [9]. Nevertheless, this program has an important advantage — it is included in the standard package of MS Office for Windows, so most PC users have it already installed on their computers.

1. The database structure

The database structure is based on the description of "quotations", i.e. a "quotation" is the main unit of the database. The "quotation" is a publication or a part of publication on the subject (Central Asia in our case). The size and form of the "quotation" depends on the type of the publication: a travel description is rather short, but contains up to 90% of information we need, while a long novel may have few relevant passages, which represent only a fraction of the text.

The database itself consists of several "tables", "queries" and "forms" (these are standard Access elements), but the end user needs only the last 3 "forms". Two of them (**Quotations** and **Authors**) are designed for storing texts and information about publications and their authors. The third is for processing this data, i.e. retrieving relevant information.

1. The **Quotations** form (see *fig. 1*) contains a full computerised description of a "quotation" (in English and Russian), its text (in Russian), and comments when necessary. The description includes such groups of parameters as:

– bibliographic information on the text: periodical (or archive), year, issue number, pages, title of publication (or catalogue number of document in case of archive description), genre, author, etc.;

– subjects, i.e. themes touched on by authors: settlement, fortification, roads, mountains, climate, agriculture, etc.;

– people: national identification of the people described in the texts, their beliefs, language, attitude to outsiders, hospitality, clothes, etc.;

– attitudes: point of view of the author (I, We, They, Military, Russians, etc.), evaluation of the people described, opposition Barbarism — Civilization, etc.

2. The **Quotations** form is linked to the **Authors** form (see *fig. 2*), which contains full information about the authors of the publications. It includes the full name of the author, dates, education (secondary and high), profession, place and period of service, etc.

3. The **Search** form (see *fig. 3*) allows a user to retrieve quotations concerned with the subjects he / she is interested in. One can ask such complicated questions as "how many majors who were once students in the Military Academy in St. Petersburg wrote in the period between 1870 and 1885 about Tajik Muslims in Ashkhabad with a positive attitude to them?" or similar questions. The result is a set of relevant quotations for further analysis. In addition, one can find a word he / she is interested in. For example, one can retrieve all quotations which contain the word *yurta* or "brigand".

Besides, I have added scanned "illustrations" to the publications, so one can see them when reading **Quotations** (to open it one has to double-click the "illustration" box). The pictures seem to have been as important to *Niva* readers as the texts themselves. There was even a specific "genre" in the *Niva* magazine — pictorial description (illustrations followed by extensive comments).

2. The database using

The use of the database is simple: one has to open the database in Access 97 (or convert it into Access 2000), and run the **Search** form in the "Forms" group. A form with the parameters for search described above will appear. The user has to fill in the **Search** form (marking square boxes by clicking the mouse, and filling in rectangular boxes where necessary) in order to select search parameters, and then click the button "Search". A form with quotations appears (see *fig. 4*). This form sums up the information from both the **Quotations** and **Authors** forms. The lower part of this form shows information about the number of quotations found, which one can browse through. If the quotation contains a picture, a relevant icon appears in the form.

A number of relevant quotations from the selected 400 publications from *Niva* magazine have already been entered into the database (this work will continue during the further stages of the project). If the user does not plan to add new entries to the database, he / she can use **Search** form only — in order to retrieve the necessary information. However, the user can also open the **Quotations** or the **Authors** forms and browse through them. Moreover, one can add new entries to these forms by filling in new blank pages in them. Consequently, the development of the database can be continued by the user in the future.

* * *

This database — though limited at the present stage to a single magazine — already presents enough positive information about perceptions of Central Asia and its native inhabitants by Russian society. It is not my intention to present a complete analysis of this information in the current article, but some brief notes seem to be appropriate.

The database shows that the authors of the relevant publications are varied. Some of them are officers of the

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Russian army who had their own specific point of view, with some emphasis on military or related matters. Still, they were quite interested in nature and "ethnographic" questions. Besides military men, there were civilians who wrote for journals. Most of them were professional journalists, but some were civil officials. "Pure" travellers were rare. A characteristic example is the above-mentioned Nikolai Karazin, an officer who participated in Central Asian military campaigns (and, later, in geographic expeditions) and wrote articles for St. Petersburg journals.

As was mentioned, Central Asia was one of important subjects in the *Niva* magazine. The number of relevant publications is rather high (*ca.* 400 items). The frequency of delivering information about Central Asia almost directly corresponds to Russian policies in this region. Most publications appeared in the 1870s—1880s, when Russia was busy annexing Central Asian territories. In the 1890s, the number of materials decreased (except for publications on anniversaries of the major campaigns). In the 1900s, and especially the 1910s, Central Asia disappeared from the list of important magazine topics. The area became an integral and more or less ordinary part of the Russian Empire, and readers' interest to it, obviously, decreased.

Despite the variety of topics, it is possible to distinguish a number of recurring themes and ideas in articles about Central Asia. Thus, almost all authors wrote about Central Asian deserts as totally lacking water and plants. For the authors, it was the most impressive — and fearsome — feature of the local environment. The importance of this topic can also be seen from pure statistics: the number of entries with the semantic field of "Steppe" / "Desert" exceeds 500, "Sands" — 300 (i. e. *deserts* are mentioned in virtually every publication, and often — more than once). On the other hand, native agriculture was also one of the major points of interest, which is by no means strange for observers who belonged to such a profoundly agrarian country as nineteenth-century Russia. Ethnographic descriptions of "native" inhabitants and their dwellings — especially nomadic ones — also belong to the realm of typical subjects. On the other hand, an analysis of family ties ("Relatives" item in the **Quotations** form) mentioned in these publication shows that the penetration of authors into local society was not very deep. There are few terms denoting family ties in the list, and women are especially rare. Hence, the family life of the indigenous population was not well known to most authors, who observed the locals from the "outside".

These materials also demonstrate a set of *standard ideas* about natives and about the place of Russia in Central Asia. The main issue concerns a civilising role of Russia in a "savage" country, and that the coming of the Russians resulted in prosperity and the cultural development of these lands. Another important aspect of the coming of the Russians to Central Asia, frequently mentioned in the sources, was stopping raids by the nomadic brigands-Turkomans, who used to pillage neighbouring sedentary population and enslave peasants, merchants and travellers. Freeing thousands of Russian, Persian and local slaves in Khiva, Kokand, Bukhara, and other places, was of major importance in public opinion, and several stories told by former Russian slaves were published in *Niva*. Taking into account that this journal was not political but rather a neutral magazine "for family reading", one can conclude that such themes were widespread in society and genuinely reflected the interests and the convictions of both authors and readers.

It is also possible to distinguish a number of typical images of natives. Thus, the standard image of the Turkoman was that of a savage but brave brigand who used to steal his neighbours' property and enslave people, especially women. On the other hand, the so-called "Sarts" and other sedentary peoples were highly regarded as industrious — but usually quite poor and uneducated — peasants. Such images became stereotypes and survived for many years.

The analysis of such recurrent motifs and ideas allows us to understand better Russian policies in Central Asia and a response to them in society. The further study of the database information will help us to comprehend the complicated process of cross-cultural contacts which took place in the Eastern parts of the Russian Empire in the nineteenth — early twentieth centuries and continues to influence perceptions and relations in the present.

Thus, the development of this database project gives us a new, powerful research tool. In view of the particular goals of the present section of *Manuscripta Orientalia*, I hope that some elements of the approach and the database program described here would be also of use to scholars engaged in creating new approaches in the field of information processing for Eastern manuscripts.

Notes

1. The idea for this project belongs to Dr. Nikolai Serikoff (Wellcome Institute, London), who had also proposed the database template-sample which I used as the basis for designing an actual database. This idea has been supported by Prof. Dr. Paul (University of Halle), who organised the work on this project. In 1999, thanks to the kind financial support of the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung and the help of its representative in Moscow, Dr. Bomsdorf, I was able to start the "pilot project" *Central Asia as Viewed by Russian Officers (on the Basis of the Niva Magazine)*, which was the first stage of the large-scale database project: *The Perception of Central Asia by Russian Society*. My task was to analyse different ways of achieving research goals, and select the best of them to be used in the future project. The main result of the pilot project was the creation of a database which can be used to store and analyse data from Russian periodicals and other sources. This database can be used as a basis for further research on both Russian Central Asia of the period and the perception of Central Asia by Russian society. I am grateful to the St. Petersburg programmers Alina Rodionova and Alexei Petrov for their indispensable help and advice in my work on the database.

2. For example, a large collection is held at the M. E. Saltykov-Schedrin National Library of Russia (henceforth cited as NLR); a detailed description has recently been published by Olga Yastrebova (Ol'ga Iastrebova) in her *Persidskie i tadzhikskie dokumenty v otdele rukopiseĭ Rossiĭskoĭ Natsional'noĭ Biblioteki. Sistematicheskiĭ katalog* (Catalogue of Persian and Tajik Documents in the Manuscripts Department of the NLR) (St. Petersburg, 1998).

3. Ol'ga Iastrebova, "Dokumenty 19 v. iz verkhov'ev r. Zeravshan v Otdele rukopiseĭ RNB" ("Nineteenth-century documents from the highlands of the Zarafshan river in the Manuscripts Department of the NLR"), *Vostochnyĭ sbornik*, VI (forthcoming).

4. Anyone interested can contact the journal for more technical details. Additionally, the development of the present database is by no means completed, so I would appreciate any suggestion connected with this project.

5. Though there is no special publication on the approach used in this project, some basic ideas on the subject can be found in Nikolai Serikoff, ""Saratsinskiĭ leksikon": "ФАКYNON" i "ГHZOI EΛΛIOY" (O "slovakh-prizrakakh" v vizantiĭskom farmatsevticheskom glossarii XV v. i ikh roli v izuchenii arabo-vizantiĭskikh kontaktov v spednie veka)" (""Saracen Lexicon": "ФАКYNON" and "ГHZOI EΛΛIOY" ("words-phantoms" in a fifteenth-century Byzantine pharmaceutical glossary and their significance for the study of Arab-Byzantine contacts in the Middle Ages)"), *Vizantiĭskiĭ vremennik. BYZANTINA XPONIKA*, 58 (1999), pp. 84—116; see also Alexander Matveev, "Arabic sources on Russes and Slavs: problems of interpretation of the text", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, II/3 (1996), pp. 16—26.

6. E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979).

7. S. Layton, "Nineteenth-century Russian mythologies of Caucasian savagery," in *Russia's Orient*, eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington, Ind., 1997), pp. 80—100.

8. For the lectures delivered in St. Petersburg by the traveller and artist Piasetsky, see, for example, "P. Ia. Piasetskiĭ i ego zhivopisnye otchёty o svoikh puteshestviiakh" ("P. Ya. Piasetsky and his artistic reports on his travels"), *Niva*, No. 3 (1895), pp. 66—8.

9. For our specific purposes, standard Access options are not sufficient, so it is necessary to write commands directly in Visual Basic and adjust them "by hand". Additionally, Access is an extremely cumbersome program: making changes in an already completed database (which is a standard situation when one is making a new product) is a complicated and time-consuming task (e. g., if one wants to change / add a field in the final form, one has to correct half a dozen other forms, queries and tables). Moreover, Access is not powerful enough: it failed to work with more than 70 parameters which I needed (standard databases created in Access rarely have more than a dozen or two of parameters for search "queries"), and it was necessary to find "by-passes". The above problem, however, *does not affect the final user* who receives the already adjusted database. Once created, it is simple to use it; it is also easy to adapt it to individual needs.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. A page from the **Authors** form.
Fig. 2. A page from the **Quotations** form.
Fig. 3. A page from the **Search** form (with search parameters).
Fig. 4. A page from the **Result** form (with the results for the **Search** shown in *fig. 3*).