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BARTHOLD, VASILIĬ VLADIMIROVICH

BARTHOLD, VASILIĭ VLADIMIROVICH, Russian Orientalist (1869-1930). He was born on 15 November 1869 in St. Petersburg, to a Russianized German family; his baptized name was Wilhelm, which he used in his works published in western European languages. In the years 1887-91 he studied at the Faculty of Oriental Languages of the University of St. Petersburg, mainly under the noted Russian Arabist Victor Rosen, and specialized in the history of the Middle East. Upon graduation he spent two years in western Europe, traveling, studying Oriental manuscripts, and attending the lectures of August Müller and Eduard Meyer in Halle and of T. Nöldeke in Strasbourg. In 1896 he began to teach at the University of St. Petersburg as Privatdozent, in 1901 he became extraordinary professor, in 1906 full professor. He worked there until the end of his life. In 1900 he defended his thesis "Turkestan in the Age of the Mongol Conquest," for which he obtained the degree of Doctor of History of the Orient. In 1910 he was elected corresponding member and in 1913 academician of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, later the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. He lived all his life in St. Petersburg/Leningrad, frequently traveling to Central Asia, the Caucasus, western Europe, and the Middle East (Turkey and Egypt). He lectured at the Universities of Moscow, Tashkent (1925, 1927), Baku (1924), Istanbul (1926), and London (King's College, 1923). During his career, beside his university teaching, he held numerous positions in various scholarly institutions and societies, of which the most important were those of secretary (1905-13) and head (*upravlyayushchiĭ*, 1918-22) of the

Oriental Branch of the Russian Archeological Society, secretary of the Russian Committee for the Study of Central and East Asia (1903-21), and chairman of the board (*kollegiya*)of Orientalists attached to the Asiatic Museum (1921-30). He was the editor of *Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo obshchestva* (Transactions of the Oriental branch of the Russian archeological society, 1908-12), of *Zapiski Kollegii vostokovedov pri Aziatskom muzee Rossiĭskoĭ Akademii nauk* (Transactions of the Board of Orientalists, 1925-30), and of three short-lived periodicals: *Mir islama* (The World of Islam, 1912), *Musul'manskiĭ mir* (The Muslim World, 1917), and *Iran* (1-3, 1927-29). Barthold died from uremia in Leningrad on 19 August 1930.

Barthold's scholarly output was enormous: from the publication of his first article in 1892 till his death, he published 670 works (including 247 articles in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*),and 14 of his works were published posthumously; about a dozen works prepared by him for publication still remain as manuscripts in his archives. He had an excellent philological training and a thorough knowledge of the three "classical" languages of the Islamic world, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. But his main interest was in history; in the words of Minorsky, Barthold's "fundamental characteristic was that he was not an "Oriental philologist" making inroads into history, but a "historian" equipped with Oriental languages" (preface to Barthold's *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*,tr. V. and T. Minorsky, 3 vols., Leiden, 1956, p. ix). Barthold wrote in his autobiography: "It seemed to me quite natural that a Russian Orientalist-historian should be attracted to a region which was geographically and historically closer to Russia than the other eastern countries, the region where a Russian scholar had at his disposal material which was much less available to a west-European scholar" (*Sochineniya* IX, pp. 789-90). This region was Central Asia, and Barthold was the first who put the study of the history of Central Asia on a firm scholarly basis and actually founded this branch of Oriental studies. But he never studied Central Asia in isolation. He perceived the process of world history as one of a convergence of individual societies through "the expansion of culture of one or several advanced peoples upon an ever vaster geographical region" (*Sochineniya* IX, p. 234). Therefore he paid great attention to the interaction of diverse cultural elements which, in his opinion, shaped Central Asian history, especially ancient Iranian, nomadic Turko-Mongolian, and Islamic civilizations. For Barthold, the study of these three civilizations also had an importance of its own, and he devoted a great number of works to Iranology, Turkology, and Islamology.

Some of Barthold's works deal (completely or partially) with pre-Islamic Central Asia and Iran. These works are now more outdated than his other works, because of the accumulation of archeological material and the progress in the study of Middle Iranian languages during the last five decades. But many of his general observations, as well as conclusions made on the basis of the study of Arabic sources which he was often the first to utilize, are still valid. Among his ideas which found brilliant confirmation in later research was that of the importance of Iranian Buddhism in the culture of Iran and Central Asia (see *Sochineniya* VII, pp. 469-72). His careful evaluation of the relative historical roles of the eastern and western regions of the Iranian world (*Sochineniya* VII, pp. 417-37) is also important. One of the recurrent themes of his studies bearing on the pre-Islamic Iranian world was the relation between the Iranian landed aristocracy (*dehqān*s) and urban culture; he linked the development of civilization with the flourishing of urban life brought by Islam and the decline of the *dehqān*s (cf. especially *Sochineniya* VII, pp. 359-73).

Barthold's greatest contribution to the study of Central Asia and Iran was in medieval history, from the early Islamic through the Timurid periods. His first monumental work, *Turkestan v èpokhu mongol'skogo nashestviya* (Turkestan in the age of the Mongol invasion, first published in 1898-1900; the title of the revised English edition of 1923 was changed to *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*), contains a detailed survey of the historical geography of Central Asia and a study of its political and, to some extent, social history from the Arab conquest to the Mongol invasion. It laid a firm foundation to our knowledge of this period in the history of Central Asia and eastern Iranian lands in general, on which all subsequent research has been based, and it is still indispensable. Barthold returned to the same period later in several articles devoted to specific historical problems, such as the history of the Arab conquests in Central Asia (*Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 180-87), the history of the Saffarids (*Sochineniya* VII, pp. 337-53), the history of the peasant movements in Iran (ibid., pp. 438-49), and the system of taxation in Iran under the Mongols (*Sochineniya* IV, pp. 313-38).

The Timurid period attracted Barthold's attention while he was working on his *Turkestan*. His monograph "Ulugh Bek and His Time" (written in 1915, published in 1918) was, in a sense, a continuation of *Turkestan*, and, in turn, had its continuation in the monograph "Mīr ʿAlī Shīr and Political Life" (1926; see both in *Sochineniya* II/2; translated into English by V. and T. Minorsky in

Four *Studies on the History of Central Asia* II and III). Beside these two works, which, like Turkestan for the earlier period, gave for the first time a critical scholarly analysis of the sources and provided basis for further research, Barthold devoted to the same period about a dozen more articles. They deal especially with the sources for Timurid history, and among them are also a long article "On the Burial of Timur" (*Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 423-54; English translation by J. M. Rogers in *Iran* 12, 1974, pp. 65-88), where, beside its main topic, some important questions about the cultural history of Iran and Central Asia are discussed, and "The Popular Movement in Samarqand in 1365" (*Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 362-77), in which Barthold was the first to study the *sarbeddār* movement.

Barthold recognized also the importance of the study of the later period of the history of Central Asia—that of the Uzbek khanates of the 16th-19th centuries. He noticed that this period belonged to the least developed fields of the history of the Orient, "which is to be explained not by the lack of sources, but rather by the indifference of researchers" (*Sochineniya* II/2, p. 400). He himself discovered and described a number of manuscript sources related to this period. He also contributed to this field several studies and reviews dealing with the history of the Central Asian khanates shortly before the Russian conquest (*Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 320-21, 333-58, 400-13, 419-22) and an article on the Uzbek court ceremonial of the seventeenth century (ibid., pp. 388-99). Beside this, certain aspects of the modern period of Central Asian history are discussed in great detail in his general works dealing with the historical geography and the history of irrigation of Central Asia: "Accounts of the Aral Sea and Lower Reaches of the Amu-Darya," *Sochineniya* III, pp. 75-93; "On the History of Irrigation in Turkestan," ibid., pp. 97-233; and especially "A History of the Cultural Life of Turkestan," *Sochineniya* II/1, pp. 268-433—the only work where he examined Central Asian history under Russian rule.

In the 1920s Barthold published general surveys of the history of the Tajiks (1925; Eng. tr., J. M. Rogers, *Afghan Studies* 3-4, 1982), Kirghiz (1927), and Turkmen (1929), as well as his "Twelve Lectures on the History of the Turks of Central Asia" (first published in Turkish in 1927, German translation in 1935, French translation in 1945; Russian original published in 1968, in *Sochineniya* V). The latter is still in many respects an unsurpassed general survey of the medieval history of Turkic peoples, which is of great value also for Iranologists.

Barthold's contribution to the study of history and culture of Iran and Iranian

philology is also significant. His "Historico-Geographical Survey of Iran," published in 1903 (*Sochineniya* VII, pp. 31-225; English translation in 1984, see below), is still the only study of its kind; in it Barthold systematically examines the available archeological and literary evidence on each historical province of Iran from antiquity to modern times. The term Iran is understood in this work in a broader sense, as all regions of the Middle East inhabited by peoples speaking Iranian languages, from Mesopotamia to the Indus (excluding Central Asia, which Barthold more often referred to as Turkestan). Barthold's "Iran: A Historical Survey" (1926; see *Sochineniya* VII, pp. 229-334; English translation published in 1939 in Bombay) gives an excellent general introduction to Iranian studies, discussing the place of Iran and Iranian culture in world history, geography and ethnography of Iran, historical literature in Persian (probably the best concise survey of the subject available until now), and European and Russian study of Iran and Iranian culture. Beside these two monographs, Barthold devoted more than twenty articles (not counting those in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*)to the study of various problems of the political, social, and cultural history of Iran. Among these must be noted "On the History of the Persian Epic" (1915, see *Sochineniya* VII, pp. 383-408; translated into German in *ZDMG* 98, 1944, pp. 121-57), where he proved the East Iranian origin of Persian epic poetry.

In his research Barthold utilized not only written sources, but also archeological evidence. Twice (in 1893-94 and 1904) he participated himself in archeological explorations in Central Asia, but he came to the conclusion that he was not fit for archeological fieldwork. Still, he maintained his interest in archaeology and played an important role in directing archeological work in Central Asia. More than two dozen of his articles are devoted to archeological subjects (see *Sochineniya* IV). The most fruitful, however, was his study of written, mainly narrative, sources in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages. As Barthold noted in his "Autobiography" (*Sochineniya* IX, p. 791), "in the field of history of the Orient, due to abundance of material that has not been used, in reading manuscripts one often feels the same delight as a pioneer discovering a new world in excavations of ancient cities." And, indeed, Barthold did prodigious pioneering work studying Arabic, Persian, and Turkic manuscript sources, many of which he discovered himself. Among Persian historical works which became known thanks to Barthold were *Tārīḵ-e Jaʿfarī* (i.e., *Tārīḵ-e kabīr*)by Jaʿfarī (see Storey-Bregel, p. 349), *Baḥr al-asrār* by Maḥmūd b. Walī (ibid., p. 1135), *Fatḥ-nāma* by Šādī (ibid., p. 1120), *ʿĀlāmārā-ye nāderī* by Moḥammad Kāẓem (ibid., p. 914), *Toḥfat al-tawārīḵ-e ḵānī* by ʿEważ

Moḥammad (ibid., p. 1058), *Sobḥānqolī-nāma* by Moḥammad Ṣalāḥ Balḵī (ibid., p. 1143), history of Abu'l-Fayż Khan by ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Ṭāleʿ (ibid., p. 1149), *Maḵāzen al-taqwā fī tārīḵ Bokārā* by Ḥosayn Mīrī (ibid., p. 1163), *Ẓafar-nāma-ye Ḵodāyār-ḵānī* by ʿAbd al-Ḡafūr (ibid., p. 1192). Many others were for the first time analyzed in detail by Barthold. He published the text of *Ḥodūd al-ʿālam* in a facsimile edition, and some of his works contain long extracts from Persian texts edited by him (the most important are: extracts from numerous sources included in the first part of the Russian edition of *Turkestan*; chapter on Turks from Gardīzī's *Zayn al-aḵbār*,see *Sochineniya* VIII, pp. 23-62; the last section of *Tārīḵ-e Jaʿfarī*,see *Sochineniya* VII, pp. 561-74). Probably the greatest contribution made by Barthold was to the study of Persian sources for the Mongol and especially the Timurid periods.

Finally, Barthold was also an outstanding historian of Oriental studies. His "History of the Study of the Orient in Europe and in Russia" (1st ed. 1911, 2nd ed. 1925, see *Sochineniya* IX, pp. 199-482; German translation in 1913, French translation in 1947) is an excellent general work on the exploration of Asia and the evolution of Oriental studies, which has still not been replaced by any work of comparable scope. Among his seventeen articles devoted to the detailed analysis of works of other scholars, three deal with Iranologists: K. Saleman, V. A. Zhukovskiĭ, and J. Marquart (see *Sochineniya* IX, pp. 599-618, 689-703, 779-88).

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This edition includes 511 works (among them 228 articles from *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* in Russian translation).

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Complete annotated bibliography of Barthold's published works and a

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Cf. Yu. Bregel, "Barthold and Modern Oriental Studies," *IJMES* 12, 1980, pp. 385-403.

(Yu. Bregel)