



TUMANSKIÏ, ALEKSANDR GRIGOR'EVICH

TUMANSKIÏ (Toumansky), **Aleksandr Grigor'evich** (b. 23 September 1861; d. Istanbul, 1 December 1920), Russian orientalist, Major-General of the Russian Imperial Army. Tumanskiï belonged to an ancient aristocratic family which had originated from the Great Duchy of Lithuania. He spoke eleven languages and, besides serving in the Russian Imperial Guards, he was several times sent to the East with diplomatic missions. Tumanskiï received his Oriental education in 1888-91 at the Officers' Courses of Oriental Languages organized by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He studied Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. In the words of the famous Russian Orientalist I.Yu.Krachkovskii (1883-1951), "Tumanskiï was one of the rare—in Russia—Orientalists by vocation and not by profession" (Krachkovskii, p. 112). In 1891-95 Tumanskiï stayed in Central Asia. In 1894 he made a trip to southern Persia with the purpose of carrying out reconnaissance of routes that lead from the Russian-Persian frontier to the Persian Gulf. In 1900-05 Tumanskiï served as Russian vice-consul in Van, Turkey. In 1908 and 1909 he was sent to Persia again. In 1911 he was appointed the head of the officers' preparatory school of Oriental languages in Tiflis (Tbilisi), which functioned under the Headquarters of the Caucasian Military Command. Tumanskiï retired from the military service in March 1917 in the rank of Major-General (Baskhanov, pp. 242-43). He left Russia after the October Revolution in 1917 and died in Istanbul on 1 December 1920 (*Ḥudūd al-ālam*, p. xliv).



Tumanskiĭ was friendly with the Bahais (see [BAHAI FAITH](#)), whom he first met in Ashgabat in 1890. He maintained close relationship with the Bahais in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, and he studied and translated Bahai works and literature. The most important publication of Tumanskiĭ in the field of Bahai studies was his translation (1899) of the *Ketāb-e aqdas* by Bahā'-Allāh (1817-92). Besides the Russian translation, the publication also contains the Arabic original and an introduction on 48 pages. An earlier publication of Tumanskiĭ (1892) deals with Bahā'-Allāh's other work, *Ketāb-e 'ahd*. In his studies in the field, Tumanskiĭ corresponded with [E. G. Browne](#) (1862-1926). He offered significant assistance to the Bahai community in Russia, especially when the first Bahai temple was being constructed in Ashgabat (*Ḥudūd al-ālam*, pp. xlii-xliii). Tumanskiĭ translated into Russian the work *Šajara-ye Tarākema* ('Genealogical Tree of the Turkmen') of Abu'l-Ġāzi Bahādor Khan of Khiva (1603-63). This translation was published in Ashgabat in 1897. Being a military man, he wrote a book entitled *Military Art of the Ancient Arabs* (1897).

Possibly under the influence of either Viktor Rozen (1849-1908) or Vasiliĭ Bartol'd (1869-1930, see [BARTHOLD](#)), Tumanskiĭ became interested in the lost work of Ulugh-beg (Oloġ-beg, 1394-1449) entitled *Olus-e arba'a*. In the process of searching for this work, during his stay in Bukhara in 1893, Tumanskiĭ was presented an ancient manuscript by a friend of his, Mirzā Moḥammad Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegāni (1844-1914, see [ABU'L-FAẒL \[OR Abu'l-Faẓā'el\] GOLPĀYEGĀNI, MIRZĀ MOḤAMMAD](#)). The manuscript turned out to contain four works, among them a unique Persian geographical composition entitled *Ḥodud al-ālam* ('Regions of the World') composed in 372/982. Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegāni presented the manuscript to Tumanskiĭ "on condition that it should be edited and not be lost for science" (*Ḥudūd al-ālam*, pp. xli-xliii).

Being busy with other things, Tumanskiĭ did not manage to prepare (or at least to publish) the translation of the entire *Ḥodud al-ālam*, even though his translations of the passages on Samarqand and on the Borṭās-Barādās came out in 1893 and 1914 (*Ḥudūd al-ālam*, pp. xliii-xliv, n. 3). After the October Revolution of 1917, the manuscript traveled together with Tumanskiĭ to Constantinople/Istanbul, and after his death on 1 December 1920 his widow arranged, via the mediation of [Vladimir Minorsky](#) (1877-1966), that the manuscript was returned to Leningrad (since that time, the manuscript has been preserved at the Institute of Oriental Studies in St.Petersburg), mainly due to the fact that quite some work for the facsimile edition of it had been done already. The facsimile appeared in 1930; it bears Tumanskiĭ's name and



is prefaced and indexed by Vasiliĭ Barthol'd (see *Khudūd al-Ālem: rukopis' Tumanskogo*). It was Vladimir Minorsky who made the English translation of the entire *Hodud al-ālam* in 1937 (the second edition was published in 1970).

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Abbreviations.

ZVOIRAO—*Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Imperatorskogo Russkogo arheologicheskogo obshestva*.

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