

Photographing Central Asia

Welten Süd- und Zentralasiens / Worlds of South and Inner Asia / Mondes de l'Asie du Sud et de l'Asie Centrale



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Volume 13

Photographing Central Asia



From the Periphery of the Russian Empire
to Global Presence

Edited by
Svetlana Gorshenina, Sergei Abashin,
Bruno De Cordier and Tatiana Saburova

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The publication of this book became possible thanks to the support and active participation of many people, and we would like to thank, first, our colleagues who presented their research at the conference at the European University in St Petersburg in 2019, which inspired us to publish this book. We thank Luba Jurgenson and Sylvie Archaimbault from *Eur’Orbem* (CNRS and Sorbonne University), and Claude Rapin (CNRS, ENS) for their support, encouragement, and funding. We are grateful to the Department of Conflict and Development Studies, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences at Ghent University, the *Alerte Héritage* Observatory, the Swiss Society for Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW), the Société Académique Vaudoise (SAV), and the Society of Historians of East European, Eurasian, and Russian Art and Architecture (SHERA).

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We apologise to our readers as some links to Russian servers became inoperative after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. In particular, access to the catalogue of the state museums in the Russian Federation (<https://goskatalog.ru/>) was blocked at the time of publication of the book.

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Note on transliteration

Russian names for places and people used in this volume are transliterated according to a simplified version of the Library of Congress system, omitting diacritical marks and with exceptions for proper names or geographic sites that will already be familiar to the reader by another spelling.

The original transliteration of proper names and geographical objects in bibliographic references and citations has not been standardised.

The source language for the translation of all quotations in the articles of the volume is Russian.

The dual spelling of the ethnonym “Kyrgyz” / “Kirgiz” is used in the book: in those cases where the authors use the term to designate the modern Kyrgyz, the form “Kyrgyz” is used; in those cases where the archaic terminology of the Russian Empire is cited (“Kirgiz”, “Kirgiz-Kaisak”, and “Kara-Kirgiz”), the Tsarist-era spelling “Kirgiz” is used. This takes into account the fact that the “Kirgiz” and the “Kirgiz-Kaisak” of the Russian Empire were, according to Soviet terminology, defined as modern Kazakhs and the “Kara-Kirgiz” as modern Kyrgyz.

For all place names in the volume the versions current in the nineteenth to early twentieth century are used (e.g. Ashkhabad and not Ashgabat).

The citation of archival documents from the post-Soviet archives follows the standard abbreviated conventions for identifying their locations: F. (*fond* / archival collection); Op. (*opis'* / inventory); D. (*delo* / file); L. (*list* / folio); Ob. (*oborot* / verso).

Editorial style and bibliographical rules follow the usual rules for *Asiatische Studien – Asian Studies*.

Russian transliteration

а – a; б – b; в – v; г – g; д – d; е – e; ё – ё; ж – zh; з – z; и – i; й – i; к – k; л – l; м – m; н – n; о – o; п – p; р – r; с – s; т – t; у – u; ф – f; х – kh; ц – ts; ч – ch; ш – sh; щ – shch; ь – ' ; ы – y; ъ – ' ; э – è; ю – iu; я – ia.

Svetlana Gorshenina

1 Introduction: “On the margins of the marginal” – Why are there so few specialists in Central Asian photography of the imperial and early Soviet period?

This volume is the outcome of the “Another Turkestan: Undiscovered Photography of the Asian Periphery of the Russian Empire” conference held in May 2019 at the European University in St Petersburg.¹ Following Basel in 2014² and Munich in 2015,³ it was the third conference dedicated to Russian imperial photography of the nineteenth to early twentieth century. It was, however, the first to focus exclusively on the photography of Turkestan during the tsarist period (1867–1917) and the first decades of Soviet power (1917 to the 1930s). This is cause for celebration, especially since, for the first time, the conference has resulted in an entire book on the subject. Yet it is also somewhat concerning, and immediately raises two interrelated questions. First, why has it taken so long for the history of photography in Turkestan during this period to become the subject of discussion at an academic conference? Second, why is this geographical region – Russian Turkestan/Soviet Central Asia⁴ – still considered “on the margins of the marginal” in the history of photography?

1 The conference was co-organised by the *Alerte Héritage* international observatory (Montreal/Paris/Lausanne) and the European University at St Petersburg (Russia), with the participation of Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Dusseldorf, Germany), Ghent University (Belgium), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Germany) and the Marjani Foundation (Moscow, Russia). We extend our sincere gratitude to all these institutions. See also Vinokurov 2019.

2 “Picturing Empires: Photography and Social Change in 19th-Century Multi-Ethnic Environments”, Basel, August 2014.

3 “Photographing Asia: Images of Russia’s Orient and the Far East in the 19th and 20th centuries”, Munich, September 2015.

4 For the definition of this geographical area during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Gorshenina 2012a.

Note: Translated by Adelaide McGinity-Peebles

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The peripheral position of Central Asian studies plays a crucial role here, in that it falls between the cracks of “Western” and “Eastern” area studies,⁵ a well-established if unhelpful dichotomy. Moreover, specific reasons that account for this marginal position can be found in the postcolonial context of the post-Soviet world. In Putin’s Russia, Central Asia has become increasingly invisible, gradually disappearing from the country’s programme of sociopolitical nation-building. The belated interest in and relative marginality of Central Asia as a topic of study has also been facilitated by the reduction of Russian specialists on the region and specialised programmes at Russian universities.

As for photography itself, university courses on the history of this medium – rarely found in Russian higher education institutions – barely touch on the history of photography in Turkestan, or on the more general topic of photography in colonial contexts.⁶ This reluctance to recall one’s own colonial history – which reflects a wider, global trend⁷ – and the active denial of the existence of Russian Soviet colonies chimes with the creation of “new, neocolonial, form(s) of co-dependence with the former peripheries of the Empire”.⁸ This tendency to forget the colonial past is also evident in the Central Asian countries themselves. Despite the fact that historians of Central Asia regularly revise their attitudes to Russian and Soviet imperial “colonialism”, creating various narratives in the process,⁹ the main tendency, albeit with occasional exceptions, is a lack of desire to continue the Soviet tradition of studying the activities of the Russian imperial “enlightenment”. This reflects the decolonial tendencies in knowledge production increasingly perceptible in Central Asia.

Another factor is the distribution of research interests within Central Asian studies itself. Excluding archaeology and research on antiquity, the dominant focus in Central Asian studies is the sociopolitical conditions, as well as religious and national policies, within the republics themselves. Research on the various aspects of Central Asian culture is comparatively minimal, and for specialists within Central Asian cultural studies, the photography of Turkestan of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has largely been ignored or rejected in favour of Soviet-era photography.

⁵ Gorshenina 2009a; Bornet/Gorshenina 2014; Abashin 2015.

⁶ A rare example is Elena Iakimovich, who has written diverse and highly professional courses for the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow). See e.g. <http://yaki-art.ru/?cat=4>.

⁷ For more information on the “invisibility” of the legacy of colonial photography in museums, see Edwards/Mead 2013.

⁸ Abashin 2020. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

⁹ Gorshenina 2021a.

Despite their multi- and inter-disciplinary potential, visual anthropology and sociology have not yet fully established themselves in Central Asian studies, even thirty years after the "visual turn".¹⁰ Mention of the "iconic" or "pictorial turn"¹¹ hardly appears in Central Asian studies, although these approaches since the 1990s have allowed for the appearance of visual material in the humanities outside the disciplinary framework of art history. That events prior to the twentieth century are rarely researched by visual specialists compounds this. Moreover, all humanities-based research conducted on Central Asia that uses visual sources can be linked to visual studies. Thus, these "visual specialists" (who could be historians, anthropologists or art historians) as a rule conservatively interpret their tasks and the scope of the field. Multi- and inter-disciplinarity, though much desired, becomes almost unobtainable since the study of these multifaceted, complex visual data ultimately conforms to the researcher's personal interests and disciplinary affiliation.

Difficulties in gaining access to source material is another problem. Photographs of Turkestan during this period are scattered across numerous museums, archives and library collections in Russia,¹² the Central Asian

10 On the relationship between visual anthropology and Russian imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet history, see "Forum 'Vizual'naiia antropologiia'" 2007; Vishlenkova 2009; "Russian History after the 'Visual Turn'" 2010; Renner 2014. For a rare attempt that uses the methods of visual anthropology in an analysis of urban, architectural, memorial and commemorative structures in urban settings in tsarist Turkestan, see Crews 2003; Vasil'ev/Liubichankovskii 2018. See also publications that have used the "visual turn" in other disciplinary fields, in particular literary studies (Elkins 2003; Hutchings 2004; Jay/Ramaswamy 2014; Reischl 2018) or to show "Russia's ride to modernity" with the development of the railway (Schenk 2014, 2016).

11 Boehm 1994: 11–38, 325–343; Mitchell 1995.

12 The largest and most important collections of photographs of Turkestan are stored in St Petersburg, the former imperial capital, but are accessible to varying degrees, whether in person at a given institution or via online publications and digital archives. Work has been ongoing since 2015 to include all museum photographs in the updated state catalogue of the Museum Fund of the Russian Federation (<https://goskatalog.ru>). However, currently the catalogue covers just over 10–15 per cent of photographs stored in Russian museums; see Kizhner et al. 2018. The collections are stored, in particular, at the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences and have been extensively discussed by Galina Dluzhnevskaiia (2006, 2008). They are also available online at <http://www.archeo.ru/struktura-1/nauchnyi-arhiv/fondy-fotootdela/fondy-fotoarhiva>, and at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts at the Russian Academy of Sciences (undisclosed and unpublished); the Russian National Library (partially published by Elena Barkhatova 2009); the Russian Ethnographic Museum (the Samuel Dudin collections are the most widely published); the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (the Kunstkamera) (largely published in detail by Valeriia Prishchepova (2011a) and partially published in the online archive at <http://collection.kunstkamera.ru/>); the Russian state historical archive

republics,¹³ Europe¹⁴ and the United States.¹⁵ Moreover, private collections are virtually inaccessible to researchers.¹⁶ The breadth and quality of these collections is

(in person only); the St Petersburg branch of the archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (in person only); the Russian Geographical Society (in person, except for a few published collections); the State Russian Museum and Exhibition Centre ROSPHOTO (Maksimova 2019); the Hermitage (in person only); and the Museum of the History of Religion (in person only). In Moscow there are important collections at the Russian State Library, the State Museum of Oriental Art, the Russian State Film and Photography Archive and the All-Russian Museum Association of Musical Culture (all available in person and partially documented in the state catalogue). In parallel, private initiatives are emerging to create large photobanks, such as “The History of Russia in Photographs” (<https://russiainphoto.ru/>), “Pastvu” (<https://pastvu.com/>), “Open Central Asian Photo Archives” (<https://ca-photoarchives.net/>) or the “Great Russian Album” (<http://www.rusalbom.ru/>).

13 In Central Asia, the most important collections are stored in Uzbekistan, mainly in Tashkent, formerly the capital of the Governorate-General of Russian Turkestan. Among the largest holders of collections are the National Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Tashkent), the Uzbek Ministry of Culture’s General Directorate for the Protection of Monuments (Tashkent), the Central State Archive of Audiovisual Documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Samarkand State United Historical–Cultural and Art Museum Reserve and the State Museum of the History and Culture of the Ferghana Region. Access to these collections is only possible in person. The state catalogue of the National Museum Fund of the Republic of Uzbekistan (<http://gосkatalog.uz/>) is currently in development; see Erofeeva 2020.

14 In Western Europe, photos of tsarist Turkestan are scattered, among others, across Paris, Reims, London, Rome, Bern, Berlin, Vienna, Helsinki and Warsaw. France’s largest collection is held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF). See the repository of photographs representing the Russian Empire at the BNF (ca. 4000, the Société de Géographie and the Département des Estampes): Hours 1982. A small but significant part of this collection is available online at https://data.bnf.fr/fr/15342236/turkestan_russe__empire_de_russie__1867-1921_/ and https://data.bnf.fr/fr/15342241/turkestan_occidental/. The substantial archive of the Société de Géographie in Paris is currently being investigated; see <https://cartogallica.hypotheses.org/893> and <https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/images/photographies-de-la-societe-de-geographie?mode=desktop>. Photos by the photographer Paul Nadar are particularly well represented (<http://expositions.bnf.fr/les-nadar/>). Nadar’s collection is also available online at <https://mediatheque-patrimoine.culture.gouv.fr/collection/objet/paul-nadar-au-turkestan-1890>. The consolidating resource is the POP open heritage platform; see <https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr>. The new project Europeana (<https://www.europeana.eu/fr/>) presents photo archives from thirty-three European institutions.

15 Significant collections held at the Library of Congress include the *Turkestan Album* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2006700061/>), Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii’s photographs (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/prokudin-gorskii/about-this-collection/>) and photographs by Charles-Eugène de Ujfalvy de Mezokövesd from his *Atlas anthropologique des peuples du Ferghana* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/41039631/>).

16 The largest collections of postcards to date are owned by Aleksei Arapov (Tashkent), Jean-Claude Beaujean (Paris/Tashkent), Nizami Ibrahimov (Moscow), Iulia Pelipai (Moscow), Sergei

beyond doubt, even if to date they remain unexplored. The very fact that these large collections are dispersed demonstrates that the photographic industry was as prosperous at the Turkestani periphery as it was at the Russian imperial centre, and furthermore that it was very successful in disseminating knowledge about the region to broad audiences.

Analysing these visual documents is undoubtedly a complex process. Perhaps this also explains why the number of historians who research the imperial photography of Central Asia is so small (no more than a dozen worldwide). These historians must reconstruct the complex relationship between sources, establish the most effective methodologies to investigate them, develop a language to describe the images and engage in wider theoretical debates about photography. They are thus engaged in active discussions that are marked both by a contradictory understanding of the region’s colonial past and by tensions arising from the postcolonial discourse on the region.

Nonetheless, being “on the margins of the marginal” is hardly exclusive to the photography of Russian Turkestan. Other fringes of the Russian Empire, such as the Caucasus¹⁷ or Siberia¹⁸ or remote regions such as Tatarstan,¹⁹ remain similarly under-researched, though there has been some interest in the so-called “regional photography” of the former countries of the Soviet Union since the 1990s. The few specialists on the history of photography of the Russian Empire have inevitably focused on St Petersburg and Moscow and the activities of major photographers who worked there.²⁰ The so-called “provincial histories” of photographs of the peripheries of the Russian Empire are, like the histories of the photography of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, India and Africa in

Priakhin † (Kapchagai), and Bahodir Sidikov (Bern). Boris Golender’s collection, one of most famous of the Central Asian collections of photographs and postcards, has been partially published; see Golender 2002. Other important collections are Shakhnoza Karimbabaeva’s and Tursunali Kuziev’s collections of photographs (Tashkent). Another large private collection, belonging to Tair Tairov (Moscow), though partially exhibited (e.g. in August 2006 in the hall of the Central Post Office in Tashkent), is still awaiting publication. Oleg Karpov’s collection of photographs (in Tashkent) remains unavailable to the public (despite an attempt in 2019 supported by Gerda Henkel Stiftung to publish it as open access).

17 For an overview, see Boglachev 2013; Akoeff 2014; Solovyova/Kouteinikova 2016; Gutmeyr 2017, 2021.

18 See Saburova 2020.

19 See Idrisova 2013.

20 See Elliot 1992; Koloskova 2004; Barkhatova 2009; Gestwa/Kucher 2012; Reischl 2018. The same phenomenon, where the development of the centre of the empire is better studied than that of the peripheral areas, can be observed for the Ottoman and Iranian Qajar empires: Eldem 2018: 29.

particular,²¹ yet to take their proper place in the interconnected global history of photography.²²

Shifts in the scholarship on Turkestan's photography

While I adopt the notion of the “margins of the marginal” to describe the history of photography of Turkestan, I do not mean to describe it as a “blind spot” (*angle mort*), to borrow a term from the French geographer Alain Reynaud.²³ Despite the lack of analytical work on the region, the photography of Turkestan regularly appeared in publications from the second half of the nineteenth century – and not just in passing references. If we take a brief survey of this period (and exclude earlier critiques²⁴), we find that scholarship on photography of Turkestan involves several different stages and publication types.

Turkestan first appears in 1953, albeit very sporadically, in a historical account of Russian art photography from its inception in 1839 to 1917 by the Soviet historian Sergei Morozov. In his earlier book Morozov also tries to give an extensive account of the first Russian traveller-photographers.²⁵ This topic was rediscovered in the 1990s with the publication of various photographic archives

21 While an exhaustive review is impossible here, I suggest consulting the following studies for more detail. On Turkey: Çizgen 1987; Gavin/Tekin/Alpay Tekin 1988; Barkey 2008; Pinguet/Gigord 2011; Esra 2013; Özendeş 2013; Çelik/Eldem 2015; Roberts 2015; Hyde 2019. On Iran: Afshar 1983; Behdad 2001, 2013; Shaw 2003, 2009; Navab 2011; Pérez González 2012b; Sheikh/Pérez González 2013; Tahmasbpou 2013; Hanifi 2014; Hartmann 2019. On Afghanistan: Khalilullah/Dupree 1979; Hanifi 2014. On India: Gutman 1982; Falconer 1990, 2001, 2002; Pinney 1991, 1997, 2008; Ryan 1997; Dehejia 2000; Chaudhary 2012. On Africa: Landau/Kaspin 2002; Sohler 2012. See also transnational research on photographers who have worked on “Asia” in a colonial context: Perez 1988; Edwards 1992, 2001; Osborne 2000; Aubenas 2001; Beaulieu/Roberts 2002; Hight/Sampson 2002; Vogl 2003; Favrod 2006; Jacobson 2007; Morris 2009; Pérez González 2012a; Behdad/Gartlan 2013; Behdad 2016; Blanchard 2016; Ghesquière 2016; Sheehi 2016; Ritter/Scheiwiller 2018; and also the *Trans Asia Photography Review* (<https://asianphotos.hampshire.edu/about.html>), which aims to analyse historical and modern photographs of various regions of Asia.

22 Werner/Zimmermann 2004; Boucheron/Delalande 2013; Behdad 2017.

23 Reynaud 1981.

24 See Stasov 1885, for example, where the *Turkestan Album* and the *Types of Central Asia* album are referenced. See also a brief review of publications on the history of photography of the Russian Empire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Idrisova 2013: 4–14.

25 Morozov 1953. See also Morozov 1952.

stored in academic institutions across Russia (in Western Europe a similar interest in rethinking archival photographic materials had been apparent since the 1970s). These publications depict pre-revolutionary Central Asia and its neighbouring regions in the form of a visual series grouped by geographical categories (e.g. Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva).²⁶ Usually conceived of as albums, they only provide a rather fragmentary reconstruction of the historical context (despite being written by leading historians of the time). These authors do not analyse many important themes such as the biographies of the photographers, the conditions in which they worked, their objectives, their relationship with the local people photographed or, on a more general level, the role of photography as a modern technology in the colonial context.

This study of individual collections continued in the 2000s.²⁷ Such works are often difficult to read but bear conscientious factual descriptions, and are frequently compiled as reference publications lacking any historical and political context. They nonetheless remain relevant in the absence of detailed catalogues of existing collections found beyond the walls of archival repositories. These works tend to take a linear-chronological approach in presenting the works of photographers and mapping the changes in legislation that impacted them (e.g. on copyright, periodicals, photographic societies, exhibition activities) and defined the framework for the development of photography in the Russian Empire. However, they rarely, if ever, engage in any analytical reflection.

However, some changes are occurring in this field of study. Numerous, largely analytical works devoted to Alexander Kuhn's (1840–1888) *Turkestan Album*²⁸ also follow this pattern of studying individual collections. At the same time, these studies are part of a more global trend of studies on self-representations that have often taken the form of *albumania*.²⁹ Kuhn's album is unique in scale, containing around 1,400 photos, maps and drawings, and, since being digitised and published on the Library of Congress website,³⁰ has become prominent among specialist publications and the main source of amateur collections and discussions about

²⁶ Obolensky 1981; Naumkin 1992, 1993; Naumkin/Nadvetskiy/Arapov 1993; Mkrtychev 2007.

²⁷ Mirolubova/Petrova 1991; Magidov 2005; Dluzhnevskaja 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011; Barkhatova 2009; Prishchepova 2007, 2011a; Popov 2010; Alymova 2015.

²⁸ For the most complete bibliography on the *Turkestan Album*, see Sonntag 2011: 192–193, n. 74.

²⁹ Examples include Shaw 2009; Brumfield 2020.

³⁰ See http://www.loc.gov/tr/print/coll/287_turkestan.html. The project was implemented with the participation of Heather S. Sonntag in 2005, the site becoming available for use in 2007. Also worthy of mention is the work of Tashkent publisher Media Land, for its scans of the *Turkestan Album* in 2000–2003, which, unlike V. I. Mezhev's *Turkestan Collection*, was not widely available.

early photography of Central Asia. The discovery of new material such as new photographs or postcards also occurs in more general publications that use photography to support narratives about historical events, biographical facts, ethnographic or sociological reconstructions of society or architectural and urban histories of Turkestan cities.³¹

Alongside this trend in studying collections, though it has unfolded rather sporadically since the 1970s, many works have focused on individual photographers who worked in Turkestan. In particular, these pay attention to major figures such as Samuel Dudin (1863–1929)³² and Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii (1863–1944),³³ whose large collections are stored in several state repositories in Russia and the United States. In tandem with this, Anton S. Murenko (1837–1875), an army lieutenant and author of a single album, *From Orenburg across Khiva to Bukhara: Photographic Drawings of Artillery Lieutenant Murenko*,³⁴ also became a key figure in the scholarship. Works on Russian photographers were soon complemented by analyses of the works of Western travel photographers,³⁵ including Paul Nadar (1856–1939),³⁶ Leon Barszczewski (1849–1910)³⁷ and Henri Moser (1844–1923).³⁸ A distinct group

31 Examples include Solov'eva 2002; Gorshenina 2004; Sahadeo 2007; Emel'ianenko 2012b, 2021a; Kaganovich 2016; Kotiukova 2016.

32 For a detailed bibliography, see Laura Elias's article in this volume. Also [Karskii et al.] 1930; Apukhtin 1974; Obiya 2005; Prishchepova 2011c; Emel'ianenko 2012a, 2012b, 2021b.

33 Prokudin-Gorskii's Wikipedia entry has been translated into forty-two languages, the most detailed of which is in Russian and contains an extensive bibliography: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Прокудин-Горский,_Сергей_Михайлович. See also the open research project dedicated to him that best represents his legacy (<http://prokudin-gorskiy.ru/>), as well as a fully digitised collection held at the Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/prokudin-gorskii/about-this-collection/>). Particularly noteworthy publications include Garanina 2006, Koehler 2013 and Brumfield 2020. The most recent publication about the Turkestan period of Prokudin-Gorskii's work, containing new biographical data, is Mozokhina 2021. There is currently a major research project ongoing at the University of Basel entitled "Imperium der Bilder – Die Farbphotografien Sergej Prokudin-Gorskijs vom späten Zarenreich bis zur Emigration (ca. 1900–1948)"; see <https://dg.philhist.unibas.ch/de/personen/henning-lautenschlaeger/dissertationsprojekt/>.

34 Morozov 1953: 14; Devel' 1994; Dluzhnevskaja 2006: 282–291, 2011: 32–34.

35 Daney 1980; Janata 1984; Maillart/Bouvier 1991; White 1993; Akas 1995; Gorshenina 2000; Koehlin 2002.

36 Dopffer 1994; Çagatay 1996; Malécot/Bernard 2007. See also the latest exhibition at the BNF, *The Nadars: A Photographic Legend*, 16 October 2018 to 3 February 2019 (<https://www.bnf.fr/fr/agenda/les-nadar>), and a list of available documents related to Nadar (https://data.bnf.fr/fr/12339149/paul_nadar/).

37 Strojecki 2010, 2017.

38 Balsiger/Kläy 1992; Giese/Volait/Varela Braga 2020.

is made up of several publications on military photographers, in particular Karl Gustave Emil Mannerheim (1867–1951),³⁹ Alexander Iias (1869–1914),⁴⁰ Alexander Bobrinskii (1823–1861),⁴¹ Bronisław Grombchevskii (Bronisław Grąbczewski, 1855–1926),⁴² Pavel Rodstvennyi (1870–after 1921),⁴³ Nikolai Petrovskii (1837–1908) and Iakov Lutsch (1854–after 1924).⁴⁴ Short essays about the early local photographer Khudaibergen Divonov (1879–1940) also appeared.⁴⁵

The majority of these biographical studies adhere to the nationalised histories of photography: they do not analyse the multifaceted interactions and influences of Russian, European and Turkestan photographers, and do not show the transimperial entanglements of photographic practices. Nor do they analyse the role of the local population – either as an object or as a carrier of visual practices – in developing the photographic image of Turkestan. It might be that their authors did not wish to acknowledge the colonial aspect of the history of photography in Turkestan, or that they sought to maintain the illusion that Russia was not intrinsically colonial in character. However, their works made it possible to transfer ideas about photography to the level of microhistory and, thanks to their efforts, individual photographers began – mainly from the 2000s onwards – to be viewed as part of the amorphous mass of “photographers of Turkestan”. But these efforts have not produced broader interpretive perspectives.

Both these trends in the scholarship – studies of collections and biographies of individual photographers – are limited in specific ways. Many scholars still appeal to the postulate, formulated in Soviet times, that their work constitutes scientific research free from bias. Yet thousands of photographs by little-known or obscure authors⁴⁶ remain unexplored, which distorts any sense of historical perspective. Even Anatolii Popov’s⁴⁷ detailed dictionary, published in 2013,

³⁹ Mannerheimin 1990; Alymova 2015.

⁴⁰ Tchalenko 2006.

⁴¹ Khudonazarov 2013.

⁴² Baskhanov/Kolesnikov/Matveeva 2017.

⁴³ Baskhanov/Shevel’chinskaia 2019.

⁴⁴ Baskhanov/Rezvan 2021.

⁴⁵ *Fotovystavka Divanova* 2009; Golender 2009; Karimov 2019. See also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAb5JlFW9Q4>.

⁴⁶ There are a few exceptions, such as the description of the collections in the Military Medical Museum in St Petersburg of engineer Nikolai Petrovskii’s (1851–?) photographs from 1900 to 1965, Lieutenant Colonel Iulian Brzezickii (1869–?), and those of the zoologist and specialist in parasitology Evgenii Pavlovskii (1884–1965); see Kozyrin/Nazartsev 2014. Other examples include the collections of Eduard Zimmermann (1822–?) (photos from 1887) and the geographer S. G. Grigor’ev (1874–?) (photos from 1894 to 1895); see Leibov 2020.

⁴⁷ Popov 2013.

which is more broadly focused on the general ensemble of Russian and Soviet photographers, does not remedy this, since it has been cited by historians of photography of Central Asia only very rarely.⁴⁸ At a general level, no debate on theoretical and methodological specifics mentions Central Asian documentation.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, various collectors and researchers have touched upon the topic of postcards (and also the postal service),⁴⁹ investigated imperial exoticism in the photography of Turkestan,⁵⁰ identified the connection between painting and photography⁵¹ and tried to build a chronology of photography in Turkestan.⁵² Photography continues to be analysed as a source in ethnography,⁵³ archaeology⁵⁴ and architecture,⁵⁵ but without acknowledgement of its role in global networks of production and legitimisation of knowledge and its circulation. Some authors instrumentalise the history of photography in their revised histories of the newly independent Central Asian countries.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ The same can be said of the generalist work of Vladimir Nikitin (Nikitin 2006).

⁴⁹ Golender 2002; Rowley 2013; Sidikov 2017, 2019, 2020. About the postal service: *Pochta Uzbekistana* 2014; Mramornov/Tiukov 2018.

⁵⁰ Gorshenina 2012b.

⁵¹ Vasilii Vereshchagin's work is one of the most interesting examples of the interaction between photography and painting, both in his use of photographic images to create realistic paintings and in the subsequent wide-reaching dissemination of the artist's works. See Sonntag 2003; Chernysheva 2015.

⁵² Prishchepova 2011b; Golender 2015.

⁵³ Rzehak/Pristschepova 1994; Solovyova 2011a, 2011b; Tolmachëva 2011; Emel'ianenko 2012a, 2012b, 2021b; Dzhani-zade 2013. The same principle – photography as an illustrative basis for ethnographic reconstructions – was used in the preparation of the photography exhibition *Travel in Time and Space: Images of the Russian Empire, 1890–1910s*, held at the Ethnographic Museum in Moscow and based on the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St Petersburg (<http://www.museum.ru/N26072>). See also Bakhodir Sidikov (2017, 2019, 2020), who, based on an analysis of postcards, investigates social practices in a traditional Central Asian society.

⁵⁴ Dluzhnevskaja 2008; Baitanaev/Yolgin/Panteleeva 2017.

⁵⁵ Paskaleva/Berg 2019.

⁵⁶ In many works published in the Central Asian republics since independence in 1991, the history of the photography of Turkestan was re-nationalised: it is presented as part of the development of an exclusively national photography within an ethnic-national framework, neglecting exchange mechanisms across imperial borders and different cultures. For Kazakhstan, for example, see Tauyekel 2005; Baizhanova 2013. See also the “Kyrgyz archive” website at http://www.foto.kg/about_us.html. The same approach can also be observed in Uzbekistan, where Khudai-bergan Devanov is described in a number of publications as the “founding father” of Uzbek photography; see Qo'ziev 2005; Karimov 2019.

Moreover, new theoretical developments began to emerge in the 1990s that prompted a rethinking of the history of the Russian Empire, beginning with the "archival turn", followed by the "visual turn" and, broader in scope, the "cultural turn".⁵⁷ These ideas led to a revision of the visual legacy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in particular the place and role of photography of Russian Turkestan in the history of the Russian Empire. New approaches suggested a different attitude towards the photograph: it began to acquire the value of an independent primary source,⁵⁸ having previously been used for illustrative purposes or as an "ethnographic document" loosely related to a sociopolitical or historical context. It was now being recognised as a specific object of inquiry, on an equal footing with practices and discourses, to be studied according to its own rules and on account of the contexts of its conception, implementation, distribution, replication, consumption and preservation.⁵⁹ Photography as an object with its own history began to be treated as a specific medium, on the one hand imperial, and on the other modern. In the latter context, scholars started to theorise about issues of evidence and objectivity, agency (both human and non-human), representation and materiality.⁶⁰ Based partly on the ideas of Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes and Pierre Bourdieu,⁶¹ this approach also involves reading the subject of photography through a philosophical and sociological analysis of the image's structure, its semantic and semiotic content and the mechanism of its function.

Attempts to relate the history of photography to postcolonial criticism also opened up new interpretive arenas, helping to decentralise the analysis of the history of photography⁶² and alter thinking about empire's visual history.⁶³ Scholars such as Margaret Dikovitskaya, Svetlana Gorshenina, Kate Fitz Gibbon and Inessa Kouteinikova have analysed the history of photography in Turkestan within the framework of Russian colonial history and illustrated how it was used by the imperial government as an instrument of colonial subordination.⁶⁴ Heather S. Sonntag has reframed photography as a tool of modernisation

57 Dikovitskaya 2005; Narskii 2008; Emeliantseva 2009: 166–167; Sunderland 2011.

58 Narskii 2008; Kivelson/Neuberger 2008; Jäger 2009; Edwards 2012.

59 Schwartz/Ryan 2003: 7; Edwards/Hart 2004.

60 McQuire 1998; Osborne 2000; Daston/Galison 2007.

61 Sontag 1977; Barthes 1980; Bourdieu 1990.

62 Christopher Pinney (in Pinney/Peterson 2003) states that in research on the history of photography "non-Western material" is almost always adapted to "Western" theories, thereby affirming a Eurocentric approach. From his point of view, this means of analysis is a dead end since photography as a technology is a subject of cultural appropriation and can be aligned to other framings of non-European histories.

63 Emeliantseva 2009; Gestwa/Kucher 2012; de Kegel/Renner 2015.

64 Dikovitskaya 2007; Gorshenina 2007, 2009b, 2021b; Fitz Gibbon 2009; Kouteinikova 2015.

on the periphery of the Russian Empire. Comparing the situation in the Caucasus and Turkestan, she analyses in detail the largest photo albums created within the framework of state programmes, and links them to the development of statistics, new technologies, military reforms and colonial governance.⁶⁵ Gorshenina and Sonntag have reviewed the history of photography in the Caucasus and Turkestan through the theoretical prism of cultural transfer and the circulation of knowledge, technological innovations and people, bringing to the fore new transnational and translocal perspectives.⁶⁶ In her doctoral thesis, Jennifer Keating presents the history of photography of Turkestan in terms of its importance to the organisation of space and in constructing an image (particularly through various exhibitions) of Russian Central Asia on the national and international stages.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, Laura Elias connects the history of photography with the history of racial, anthropological and ethnographic theories, and analyses the photographic practices within nineteenth-century academia.⁶⁸

These scholars abandoned the Soviet tradition of perceiving photography as an “objective reflection of reality” or the photographer’s work as a source for “service research”. Without shying away from engaging in direct critique,⁶⁹ they asked questions about the political bias of photography that was used as a tool of colonial enterprise, and its role in spreading hybrid modernity, establishing relations of colonial dependence and subordination, and in the Europeanisation, or Russification, of Turkestani society. Choosing a global perspective, these authors compared the dynamics of Turkestan with other colonial dynamics that receive much greater scholarly attention today – an endeavour that rarely occurs in Central Asian studies.⁷⁰ Their work also complemented equally rare studies that reconstruct links between imperial and Soviet photography, which was instrumentalised in a different direction and subjected to a different kind of self-orientalisation.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Sonntag 2007, 2011, 2014.

⁶⁶ Gorshenina/Sonntag 2018.

⁶⁷ Keating 2016. See also: Kouteinikova 2019.

⁶⁸ Elias 2019. See also: Edwards 2007; Pinney 2011.

⁶⁹ See, in particular, Dikovitskaya 2007; Kouteinikova 2015.

⁷⁰ For further discussion of the relationship between photography, orientalism, colonialism and imperialism, see, in particular, the bibliographic analysis of Hight/Sampson 2002: 1–19. See also footnote 21.

⁷¹ Central Asia is very occasionally discussed in broader publications on Soviet photography, e.g. Tupitsyn 1996; Wolf 1999; Stigneeve 2005. Max Penson remains the most famous of the Soviet photographers of Central Asia: see, in particular, Khodjaeva 2005; Khodjaev/Galeyev/Borovsky 2006; Galeyev 2006; Galeyev/Penson 2011; <http://www.maxpenson.com/>. For more information on self-orientalisation, see Abashin 2012. See also Helena Holzberger’s doctoral thesis (2020) on the difficult period of transition from imperial to Soviet photography. See also

The manifold methodologies and perspectives employed in the works reviewed in this survey of the field demonstrate the relative newness of the issues that the photography of Central Asia raises. But it can also be regarded as a feature of the first stages of problematising the history of photography in the tsarist and early Soviet periods, as well as a necessary step in laying a theoretical foundation for subsequent analytical research.

Another result of the efforts of several generations of researchers is the formation of a documentary basis for the history of photography in Russian Turkestan. In parallel with the aforementioned published works, a solid and widely accessible iconographic database has been created online, representing the collections of museums, libraries and research institutes in many countries around the world (see footnotes 12–16). Thanks to several programmes funded by governments and private individuals, these collections are rich in factual material. Yet, despite the breadth of initiatives digitising works of art, many large photographic collections, even scanned ones, remain in archival repositories with limited or no access.⁷² Meanwhile, some private collections have been made visible via Facebook or LiveJournal,⁷³ albeit on a much smaller scale.

These developments reflect the "postcolonial collecting" and "photographic boom" that have swept across the globe, in former colonies and metropolises alike. In the context of the present volume, the most important development is that photography of Central Asia in the context of imperial history has finally been recognised by the scholarly community as a subject worthy of attention, one that constitutes a fruitful object of doctoral research⁷⁴ or an important subject for international academic conferences.

some other studies in which imperial and Soviet photographs were placed in parallel: Northrop 2008; Emeliantseva 2009; de Keghel/Renner 2015.

72 For example, consider the work undertaken in 2008 by Tashkent publisher Media Land in the State Museum of Culture History in Samarkand. Of the 20,000 available photos, 600 were digitised as part of a UNESCO project but are still not available in full via open access, this despite the fact that the national catalogue of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been published online (<http://goskatalog.uz>), containing a significant number of photos. Another example is the digitised photographic collection of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, which can only be viewed at the museum in St Petersburg.

73 The largest private collections are <https://humus.livejournal.com/>, <https://rus-turk.livejournal.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/tashkentretrospective>. For more detailed information about available digital non-governmental resources, see the article by Svetlana Gorshechina in this volume.

74 Doctoral theses on the photography of Turkestan that have recently been defended include Dluzhnevskaja 2008; Sonntag 2011; Tolmacheva 2011; Alymova 2015; Keating 2016; Elias 2019; Holzberger 2020; Sidikov 2020.

Placing Turkestan within the Global History of Photography

There still needs to be a detailed, analytical and problematised account written of the history of photography of Russian Turkestan combining the micro and macro levels of the production and function of photography as a specific medium. A broad synthesis of the photography of Turkestan should be written, despite the claims of some specialists working with more well-known “Western” materials (especially twentieth century photography) that the time for such investigations has already passed. In my view, such a study should focus primarily on introducing the numerous and virtually unknown state museum, library, archival and private collections – despite the work already done in this area. Concerted efforts should be made to create open virtual archives of Central Asian photographs and postcards.⁷⁵ Another important task is to collate the biographies of the photographers of Turkestan.

Even a perfunctory look at the material leaves the viewer with freedom to choose which approach they will then take to studying the photography of Turkestan from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Such eclecticism in approaches is understandable when one considers the sheer diversity of photographic sources, which are very often difficult to place under a single criterion for selection. Indeed, its analysis can be approached from different points of view, especially given the nature and untapped potential of photography as a medium. On one level, photography, which reflects the cultural knowledge of the era of its creation, has the ability to direct the viewer’s gaze in accordance with its intended message – whether ideological, political or artistic. On another level, the photograph may contradict the photographer and reveal something they did not intend to advertise: it provides a certain freedom to the viewer, who can interpret it in a manner that differs from the photographer’s intention. At the same time, it is also able to question the viewer’s habitual ways of interpreting reality, reveal a past distinct from long-established versions of history and thus destroy the “smoothness” of a linear historical narrative from within.⁷⁶ In any case, the interpretation of a photograph is dependent

⁷⁵ Since 2019 the *Alerte Héritage* international observatory (<https://www.alerteheritage.org/>) has been in the process of creating an Open Archive of Photography of Central Asia with the support of Gerda Henkel Stiftung. Work on the resource continues with the support of the University of Geneva, Ghent University, CNRS and Sorbonne University, and should draw together a number of private collections. The resource was launched in March 2021 (<https://ca-photoarchives.net/>).

⁷⁶ See Campbell 2014 as an example of an analysis of the Soviet photography of Siberia.

on the cultural perspective of its audience, and its interpretation is often related to a general, mainstream view of history in a given society or institutional setting. This is particularly the case in the theoretical debates about globalised microhistories⁷⁷ that continue in numerous research centres around the world, and that so far only tangentially engage with research on the history of photography.

Accordingly, when working with the photography of Turkestan today, it is difficult to avoid analysing it as a symbol of the contradictory hybrid modernity and the so-called "progress" that the Russian Empire "bestowed" upon Central Asia after its conquest. The decision to conduct analysis through the framework of "modernity", despite the ambiguity of this term,⁷⁸ seems more than justified given the fact that photography as a medium originated as a product of Western modernity and almost instantly achieved global prominence. At the same time, photography acts as an agent of modernity. By participating in the creation of a multiplicity of "intertwined modernities", photography contributes to their dissemination through the circulation of knowledge, technical innovations, representations, ideas and people. Photography has also actively participated in structuring knowledge in and on the region through the academic use of the camera, and in the formation of new attitudes to society and social relations, occupying one of the key places in the process of the rational reshaping of culture (e.g. during the construction of visual classifications of "ethnic groups", the elaboration of official portrait schemes of elites, the promotion of the "Europeanness" of cities and the exoticisation of so-called "indigenous" populations).

It is also difficult to discount the existence of a colonial dynamic in this peripheral region, despite all the specificities of this dynamic, particularly at the time of the transition from a tsarist to a Soviet regime.⁷⁹ Therefore, any analytical investigations should ideally use a variety of postcolonial theories that analyse the orientalisation of the photographed subjects. This would elucidate questions about the dependence of photography on imperialist or communist projects where photography is used as a tool to "subordinate" "others" (i.e. colonised subjects), its interweaving within capitalism or the Soviet system, and the often violent appropriation of the image of the "other" for the purpose of scholarly, economic, ideological or social control. In this context, theoretical considerations about the possibility of comparing photos from the postcolonial perspectives of the tsarist and Soviet periods is unavoidable. At the same time, when raising such theoretical questions, future historians of photography of

⁷⁷ Bertrand/Calafat 2018.

⁷⁸ Extensive discussions on this topic include *The American Historical Review* roundtable 2011, and "Sporia o modernosti" 2016. See also: McQuire 1998; Schenk 2016.

⁷⁹ Gorshenina 2021a: 190–192, 210–220.

Central Asia will inevitably face the problem of the colonial and/or ideological exploitation of visual representations, and, accordingly, the problem of restitution.

These future histories of the photography of Turkestan will need to be placed in the broader context of comparative studies that analyse the interdependence of photography and colonial dynamics as well as the connecting photographic practices across the empires. At the same time, the photograph should not be reduced to the role of an exotic illustration of “general history”. Special attention should be paid to the study of the conditions in which photographs are created, of where public and private initiatives intertwine and ensure the circulation of knowledge and technology. In particular, it will be important to focus on the individual trajectories of their authors who were very often rooted across imperial boundaries: professional and amateur photographers, publishers and distributors of photos, sellers of postcards. It will also be necessary to rekindle relations between representatives of these various categories and local populations, more specifically the influence of religious traditions on the development of photographic practices in the region. It will also be interesting to see the mechanism of the professionalisation of photographic practices, including the development of amateur photography, vernacular photographic traditions, the establishment of professional networks of photographers and the creation of photographic unions. Future researchers should take into account how photos functioned as material objects, whether their circulation was significant or negligible, whether any alterations were made (e.g. certain groups or individuals are cut or blurred out), what mechanisms were used to create photographic archives as “a form of collective colonial memory”⁸⁰ and how these materials are used and reused in different contexts (exhibitions, postcards, book products, social networks, etc.). An effective language for working with specific photo archives must be developed, taking into account the diverse contexts in which they are included and indeed excluded or missing.

These new approaches to the study of imperial visual documentation, which shift the emphasis between the centre and the periphery, global and regional history, micro and macro, may draw the photography of Turkestan out of its marginal position and recentre it within global histories. These “refocusings” are only possible if we abolish the centre/periphery framework in favour of a network of crossed, interconnected and transnational histories. They may clarify the chronology of the appearance of this medium at a certain moment and in a certain form (expeditions, exhibitions, studios, commercial sales), as well as the features of its (re)use in a specific situation. At the same time, photography – a subjective transfer from reality to a visual material object – should

⁸⁰ Ryan 1997: 12.

be considered as both a system and a system-forming element, as an *aide-mémoire* that helps us (albeit selectively) to "remember" and to "forget".

Other Turkestans

Naturally, undertaking these tasks requires a different format. We were not able to include articles from every specialist on photography of Central Asia in this volume, but we have nonetheless tried to address existing gaps in the scholarship. For this purpose, we have brought together historians, art historians, anthropologists and curators from France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Hungary, Russia and the United States who have long been researching visual culture. Together, we have attempted to change perspectives on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photography of Turkestan and show *Other Turkestans*. We deliberately shifted our focus from cases like Alexander Kuhn's *Turkestan Album* or Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii's collection, both of which have received considerable scholarly attention. However, we did include Samuel Dudin because he created a detailed ethnographic exploration of the peoples of Central Asia. Dudin was the exception, however: our general aim was to focus on cases that have been forgotten or have never previously been analysed.

In our research for *Other Turkestans*, we turned to little-known photographers who worked in different periods. This chronological structure allows us to (re)imagine the distinct realities of numerous *Other Turkestans* that dictated these photographers' forms and themes. We begin the volume in the early years of the Turkestan governor-generalship (1876–1878) with the photography of the French anthropologist Charles-Eugène de Ujfalvy (1842–1904), which constitutes an example of "race science" (or "scientific raciology") also marked by the exoticisation of photographed subjects at the time of colonial conquest. We then explore the early twentieth century – the most productive period in terms of photography in a by now preindustrialised Turkestan⁸¹ (Konstantin von der Pahlen, Nikolai Shchapov). At the time, Turkestan had a largely stable administrative structure that was inscribed in the general economic and political context of the Russian Empire with the governance processes typical of other colonised territories around the world. Since there was later an unstable transition from the tsarist to the Soviet regime, we reflect on the need to revise the

⁸¹ Turkestan certainly had some minor industrial enterprises (mainly cotton-cleaning factories, oil-crushing mills and some hydroelectric plants), and these were no doubt over-represented in photographs – but it remained an overwhelmingly agrarian economy.

established phases that emphasise the significance of the October Revolution of 1917 (Alexander Samoilovich, Boris Kapustianskii, Georgii Zel'ma, Max Penson). Finally, the first two decades of Soviet power were marked not only by a change in the photographic canon associated with avant-garde theories and movements but also by the much broader use of photography to study the history of the region that was intended for the creation of “national histories” (Alexander Iakubovskii, Alexander Bernshtam, Alkei Margulan, Nikolai Bachinskii).

We wanted to analyse unexamined episodes in the history of photography in Turkestan, particularly in relation to ethnographic, architectural and archaeological studies. This scholarly vision of Turkestan captured through the camera lens was supplemented by other approaches to Russian Central Asia developed among military, colonial administrators, the technical intelligentsia, representatives of commercial agencies that published postcards, and tourist guides. The desire to show “another Turkestan” also led us to focus our attention not on professional photographers (with exceptions such as Samuel Dudin, Georgii Zel'ma and Max Penson) but on anthropologists, ethnographers, military and political figures, engineers, merchants, archaeologists and architects. Accordingly, it was important for us to contextualise the photographs themselves. We were interested in how government programmes (visualisations of the empire's achievements), private initiatives (family chronicles) and the search for evidence to support academic theories interacted in this process. We also wanted to understand what kind of consumer – internal or external (in the metropolis, on the Asian periphery or in the ‘Occident’), contemporary or with an eye to future generations – these visual and intellectual structures were designed to appeal to, what image of Turkestan they intended to form and how that image formation continues to the present day. It was also important for us to understand how and with what aim these visual series were sorted into different collections to determine how large their gaps are and what their reception was at the time of their creation in comparison to today. This last aspect – the integration of photography into the formation of a historical collective Postmemory in the present, where the cultures of showing and of looking at photography are intertwined – proved to be particularly important.

The essays in this volume

The main objective of this volume is to interpret photography as a specific tool that reifies reality, subjectively frames it and fits it into various political, ideological, commercial, scientific and artistic contexts. Without reducing the entire argument to the binary of “photography and power”, the authors reveal the

different modes of seeing that involve distinct cultural norms, social practices, power relations, levels of technology and networks for circulating photography, and that determined the manner of its (re)use in constructing various images of Turkestan.

In the first part of our book, titled "Photography and Orientalisms", we bring together a number of studies that highlight the subjectivity of the authors of the photographs, whose views were shaped by political situations as well as by their own scientific, artistic or engineering objectives.

In the first two essays, Felix de Montety and Laura Elias examine the mechanisms of visualising ethnographic (racial) concepts. They reject the notion that photography is objective and instead unmask the constructed nature of the visual series. Ujfalvy's photographs became the first and perhaps sole example of a strict anthropological fixation with the "Turkestani types" that were classified according to the spirit of the scholarly culture of the Enlightenment,⁸² in which models were naked and depicted in headshots and profile shots. Along with photographs in Kuhn's *Turkestan Album* of the "ethnographic types", Ujfalvy's images ultimately consolidated at the visual level the existing racial classifications proposed by Western European anthropologists.

Without abandoning the racialising principles of photography, but changing the structure and dynamics of the framing, Samuel Dudin created his "ethnographic atlas" of the peoples of Turkestan gradually, along the same line. These photographs, made in more or less exact accordance with the results of the population census of 1897, were mostly systematised, annotated and grouped into "national" collections (in accordance with the results of the national delimitations of 1924–1936, which created the Soviet republics of Central Asia) by employees of the Russian Ethnographic Museum and the *Kunstkamera*, the largest holders of Dudin's works. At the same time, hundreds of his photographs were grouped in museum catalogues in a different order than Dudin intended but in accordance with the much less detailed Soviet nomenclature of "nations" and "nationalities", reflecting the state of Central Asia after the national-territorial division of 1924–1936.

That the transition from one system of classification of "ethnographic types" to another demonstrates the plasticity of the "objectiveness" of photographs is also observed in Anton Ikhsanov's essay. Ikhsanov analyses the photographic legacy of the linguist Alexander Samoilovich (1880–1938), taking into account the latter's "subjectivity" in his approach to photography. The socio-historical context of Samoilovich's life is also relevant here: he lived through

⁸² Edwards 1992.

the late tsarist and early Soviet periods and experienced their contradictory ideological attitudes.

The desire to classify the diversity of Central Asian populations and integrate it into a rigid rational frame is also in line with another idea that prevailed among the educated European public in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The search for the “homeland” of this or that people occupied an important place in the racialised world view of this time. As István Sántha and László Lajtai show through the example of the aristocrat György Almásy’s travels, the ideas of Turanism determined the specific attitude of Hungarian elites vis-à-vis Central Asia. The mechanism of searching for the “roots” of the Hungarian people correlated both with their own nationalist ideas and with the Russian colonial presence in the region, which had a major impact on the formation of the Hungarian orientalist narrative. At the same time, the focus of this paper is not on historical analysis but on anthropological discourse, in order to understand the trajectories of photographs and reflections on “ethnographic types” in a contemporary context.

However, the photography of “ethnographic types” was not the sole preoccupation in the photography of Turkestan. Giving preference to the so-called *vidy* (landscape photographs) and focusing more on the sociopolitical practices of photography, Tatiana Saburova gives a broad overview of the activity of the engineer Vasilii V. Sapozhnikov (1864–1924), highlighting the importance and role of the camera as a tool for visualisation and, accordingly, for the appropriation and development of the conquered territories, which was strategically important to the Russian Empire. She examines the development and construction of the Russian colonial space through photographers’ visual codes and references, as well as topographers’ cartographic systems and literary interpretations of tourist guides.

Thinking along similar lines, Tatiana Kotiukova compares two disparate visual series that allow us to reassemble the stereoscopic image of the “other Turkestan”. Contrasting the *Turkestan Album* and Prokudin-Gorskii’s photographs, which were intended for public display, she analyses the photographs of the senator Konstantin von der Pahlen (1861–1923), taken during his inspection of Turkestan in which he prepared the Commission of Inspection’s reports and an irrigation plan for the Uch-Kurgan valley. Describing them as “state-sponsored visualisations”, Kotiukova emphasises that these photos, which were probably the result of collective efforts (von Palen often received photographs with his subordinates’ reports), served as documentary evidence. They were intended primarily to show the success of the modernisation programme that the Russian Empire had brought to Turkestan, and the problems of “developing” the colony. Kotiukova contrasts this official visual series with the photographs of engineer Nikolai Shchapov (1881–1960), which he made exclusively for personal use.

Analysing the contexts, stories, comments, photographs, their consumers and the subsequent fate of these collections, Kotiukova attempts to ascertain the socio-professional status of the photographers. She examines how the desire to achieve certain aims with the photograph (to emphasise a new industrial and political modernity, or document the rapidly disappearing traditional Turkestani way of life) would determine which objects were photographed, alter their depiction and orient the gaze of a contemporary viewer in various directions.

In the second part of this volume, "Using and Reusing Photographs", we attempt to understand the mechanism of the use and reuse of photography in different historical contexts. In doing so, we have tried to address not only the (possible) political engagement of photography, but also its plasticity, which allows its content to be read in different ways, and its latent potential to govern the perception of the spectator.

Also examining the role of photography as a tool for the appropriation of the Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire, Natalia Mozokhina and Bruno De Cordier both focus on analysing the commercial use of photographs. Looking at the history of postcards, they highlight the most popular images that were designed to capture the state-sponsored vision of the new Turkestan governor-generalship and the success of the Russian colonial policy in bringing "progress" and "modernity" to the region. The Russian colonial project easily slotted into the European photographic field and numerous series of postcards showed the commercial value of depicting the "Russian East".

In contrast to these pan-European mechanisms for visualising progress in the colonial context, Helena Holzberger discusses the Soviet use of an altogether different medium – the media press of the 1920s and 1930s. Her analysis focuses not only on the discourse of modernisation but also on the rhetoric of anti-colonial liberation, which required reforming traditional colonial themes. As the goals of the propaganda machine changed, so did the stylistics of the language of photography: against the background of the formation of the avant-garde canon, a new type of "Eastern" photography was created where the revolutionary pathos of social liberation from feudalism, clericalism, colonialism and imperialism nevertheless did not negate the exoticisation of Central Asian people and life.

A different interpretation of the use of photography is given by Natalia Lazarevskaja and Maria Medvedeva. Presenting the current status of photographic collections in the field of Central Asian archaeology, they provide the necessary detailed descriptions of material that has largely been ignored, enriching the history of photography of Central Asia with a new visual range and new names (e.g. Alexander Iakubovskii, Alexander Bernshtam, Alkei Margulan and Nikolai Bachinskii). At the same time, they show how the societal context of photographs taken

during archaeological expeditions has changed, and the various ways in which the collections of photographs collected by archaeologists have been classified.

The last part of our volume is devoted to an analysis of the reception and discussions of photographs of the Turkestan governor-generalship within the framework of social media platforms, which have become the arena of endless virtual “memory wars”, especially in relation to so-called “ethnographic types”. When analysing the mechanisms of interpreting the photography of Turkestan on Facebook pages, the internal conflict between various classification systems of “ethnographic types” becomes abundantly clear. As Svetlana Gorshenina demonstrates, the basis of these online disputes about old images (themselves an indicator of contemporary attitudes to the past) derives from the following discrepancies: (1) the pre-revolutionary system of describing “races”, when basic documentation was created; (2) the Soviet nomenclature of “peoples and nationalities”, which formed stable criteria for categorisation; and (3) the post-Soviet understanding of “nations” that is marked by postcolonial nationalism. Focusing on how the visual memory of the history of Turkestan is constructed in some Facebook groups, Gorshenina shows how photography that is more than a century old is discussed by different social subgroups and accordingly fits into contemporary discourse and is instrumentalised by various political movements and groups.

The book ends with a brief conclusion by the co-editors, who summarise the chapters and share the feelings and ideas that emerged during the three years of work on the book.

Transcending borders and avoiding memory wars

In summarising the ideas presented in this volume, it is no exaggeration to state that photography was the cornerstone of imperial media governance and discourse construction in colonial Turkestan during the tsarist and early Soviet periods. Our volume also demonstrates that photography of Turkestan from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century has been at the forefront of both collective and individual “memory wars” or “memories” (including Postmemories). The various cases here illustrate the complex mechanisms by which images of Turkestan were created, remembered or forgotten from the nineteenth up until the twenty-first century. From this point of view, online platforms, which have become a kind of “platform for memory”, are extremely important and constitute spaces where the reinterpretation of this area of photography has suddenly become very widespread.

The National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in France has a very evocative motto: *Transcend the boundaries of knowledge*. In this volume, we seek to *transgress* the boundaries *between* different approaches to describing and analysing photographs, *between* specialists from different countries and *between* researchers and curators. We hope that our reflections will help attract more interest in the photography of Turkestan. By decolonising and decentring knowledge, we aim to resist the temptation to divert the analysis of old photographs to the realm of "memory wars". And by including lost or forgotten visual materials, we hope to contribute to a new understanding of photography in world history and ultimately contribute to changing the very principle of writing the history of this medium, which remains focused on the Anglophone world.⁸³

Abbreviations

MAE RAN Musei antropologii i ètnografii Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences)

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