



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Research Programs application guidelines at <https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/fellowships> for instructions.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: An Edition and Translation of Tarikh-i Ḥamidi, a 19th-Century Uyghur History of Eurasia

Institution: George Washington University

Project Director: Eric Schluessel

Grant Program: Fellowships

Narrative: Eric Schluessel, “*Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī*: A Uyghur History of China, Eurasia, and the World”

At the dawn of the twentieth century, as the old land empires of Eurasia began to crumble, an elderly mullah living at the intersection of China, India, and Russia sat down to write a history of his homeland and the world. Over the course of a decade, Mullah Mūsa b. Mullah ‘Īsa Sayrāmī (1836-1917) wrote and revised his remarkable work, which blends Islamic histories and legends, oral accounts, personal experience, and even Chinese sources into a complex and authoritative history of the nineteenth century and beyond. Today, scholars regard his *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* (“Hamidian History”) as a critical source for the history of Xinjiang (Chinese Central Asia) from the perspective of a Muslim intellectual. Xinjiang’s Muslim majority, the Uyghur people, consider it an important monument in their own history of native-language scholarship, while the Chinese government is taking steps to erase it from public discourse.

Nevertheless, the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* remains poorly understood. It is much more than a local chronicle of Xinjiang’s tumultuous nineteenth century: It is a history of a modernizing world told through the idiom of traditional Islamic historiography, an attempt to grapple with the implications of that change for world history, and a meditation on political philosophy during a time of Chinese domination of Muslim people. It explains the collapse of Qing imperial power in Central Asia in 1864, the rise and fall of an independent Islamic emirate, and the restoration of Chinese control in a very different form in 1877, all in ways that build on and challenge the dominant paradigm of Perso-Islamic political thought.

I propose to spend July 2019 through July 2020 completing an English translation and scholarly edition of the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī*. The translation, in book format, will serve students and a popular audience as an entertaining and informative introduction to Uyghur culture and history. The scholarly edition, which will be produced as an interactive website, will be of revolutionary value for scholars working in the history of China and Central Asia. The draft is already one-third complete, and it should be possible to finish the entire product in one year of continuous work.

Research and Contribution

This project will help scholars think about historical consciousness, mentality, and the place of Xinjiang and Uyghurs in the Chinese and Islamic worlds at the turn of the century. Sayrāmī’s work is a kind of colonial literature in that it reflects the struggle of an educated member of a dominated group, who nevertheless participated in the institutions of imperial domination, to his position and that of his people within that power dynamic. Sayrāmī by turns praises and condemns Chinese rule. He explains the rise and fall of Islamic rule and the reestablishment of Qing imperial power in terms familiar from Perso-Islamic theories of justice and kingship that seem to legitimize the empire. At the same time, he depicts the violence of the nineteenth century in terms of traumatic loss and the end of a natural order of human relations. The *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* is thus a valuable source for the cultural history of China and Central Asia.

At present, the historiography of Xinjiang is mainly divided between 1. political histories based on sources in modern languages, mainly Chinese, and 2. historical anthropology based on manuscript sources in Chaghatay, a premodern literary language of Central Asia. This has meant that the history of Xinjiang in this period has mainly been told as one of internationally-minded political actors and popular sociocultural phenomena, but it is rarely clear how these two things might have affected each other. It has been difficult to understand how the majority of Uyghurs might have understood the interactions between politics and society.

The *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* presents something in between: a Chaghatay-language work that meditates extensively on the nature of Chinese power and its relationship with the “common people” within an Islamic idiom. Moreover, it shows how Chinese ideas of justice and government influenced the Islamic discourse. Sayrāmī is the first Uyghur writer to make Xinjiang’s story central to the history of Chinese empire, and to integrate the vocabularies of Qing rule into the framework of Perso-Islamic political thought. His narrative even extends the relationship of “Xinjiang and China” as “center and periphery” into the depths of history, back to the peopling of the Earth and the early days of Islamic revelation. All of

these ideas were advanced as the memory of the conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century was fading into history, and Sayrāmī sought to recover it before it disappeared completely. We can therefore read the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* as a history concerned with traumatic loss and with the dynamics of colonial domination and oppression outside of a Western context.

Sayrāmī's worldview became unspeakable in modern history writing, which denied the basic assumptions of his traditional Islamic historiography and rejected his position between the Islamic and Chinese worlds. This project will recover Sayrāmī's voice and those of the many people whose narratives he included within the text. In the context of the Xinjiang field, this project will make it easier for scholars to think about the nineteenth century as Uyghurs experienced and remembered it, rather than as later Uyghur modernist writers depicted it.

Although many scholars mine the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* selectively as a source for empirical fact, few have read the entire book, and many fundamental questions about the text remain unresolved. The only existing critical editions are based on single manuscripts: a Modern Uyghur "translation" uses the 1908 Beijing manuscript, a 1905 Russian typeset version uses an earlier version of the text known as the *Tārīkh-i Amniyya*, and both alter the original manuscript significantly.

This new edition's critical apparatus will address the history of the text by comparing all five of its known manuscript versions. We will see how the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* relates to its sources, illustrating what a scholar in Xinjiang might have read from India, Russian-ruled Central Asia, and the broader Persianate world. Scholars will also be able to understand the changes Sayrāmī and later copyists made to the text as late as 1927. Sayrāmī's own biography remains an open question, but reading closely within and beyond the text will help us understand his life and those of people like him. A critical introduction will discuss these issues and others at length.

Methods and Work Plan

The *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* translation and scholarly edition are one-third complete: 28 out of 44 chapters have been typeset and annotated, and fifteen chapters have at least a draft translation. Early work was conducted with colleagues at Harvard, where we established standards for annotation and translation. In May 2017, a Henry Luce Foundation/ACLS-sponsored reading workshop brought six international experts together to read nine chapters collectively. That meeting advanced our understanding of how to read the text. Our discussions raised new interpretive questions that continue to guide the translation.

The guiding methodology is philology informed by codicology, historical source criticism, and literary analysis. I work chapter by chapter. Because the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* is a text with many different voices, it is necessary to mark first where Sayrāmī shifts from one genre to another – as from personal memoir to official document – and why. I then prepare a typescript version of the base manuscript, the Beijing manuscript, and then annotate its differences with the two versions that diverge the most, the Lund University *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* and the Paris manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i Amniyya*. Early work at Harvard determined that these differences could number in the thousands for each chapter, and so we formulated strict criteria of significance based on divergences in statements of fact, arrangement of the text, and word choice.

Translation follows. To maintain consistency, I keep lists of idioms, common vocabulary, idiosyncratic usages, and the Chinese words that Sayrāmī intersperses in the text. In translation, Sayrāmī's voice has priority. However, because he is an odd prose stylist who switches frequently from highly formal to colloquial registers, it can be challenging to capture his tone. The revised translation must be fluent and pleasant for the audience to read.

The last time I was able to work on the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* full-time, I spent eight to nine hours each day for two months: three or four hours of transliteration and annotation in the morning, research to confirm details or unravel puzzles around noon, and translation in the afternoon or later at night. I complete a draft of one chapter every four days, although revision takes longer. At this rate, I expect to have a complete draft finished by the middle of March 2020 at the latest. Subsequently, I will use notes taken during the work to revise the translation and write the critical introduction.

I will conduct my work mainly at the University of Pennsylvania Library and in my home office (b) (6). The Penn Library holds all of the necessary reference works and translations. In April 2020, I will make a three-week-long research trip to the Institute for Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg, Russia, which houses the only known manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* that has not been digitized. A previous site visit in 2014 determined that this manuscript is very similar to the Paris manuscript, which is digitized. Nevertheless, comparison will ensure that the work's coverage is as complete as possible and allow me to produce a better history of the text's transmission.

Competencies, Skills, and Access

I have ten years of research experience using Chaghatay-language sources from Xinjiang. Products included a dissertation, several published articles, and a critical edition of Ghulām Muḥammad's *Mā Tīṭayning wāqi'asi*, which is a "sequel" to Sayrāmī's work. My textbook *An Introduction to Chaghatay* will also be published late in 2018. Each research project used the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* as a source, and so the text is intimately familiar to me. I am also competent in both Xinjiang's history and fluent in the use of relevant sources and reference works in Chinese, English, Russian, and Swedish.

All of the known manuscripts of the *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* are available in print or digital form, except that held in St. Petersburg. The project will also use the Modern Uyghur "translation" of the text, which includes useful annotations. The base text for the project is a 1908 manuscript formerly held in Beijing, now apparently lost and known only in a print reproduction of a scan of a microfilm. I have developed the paleographic skills necessary to read this challenging and poorly-preserved text.

Final Product and Dissemination

This project will result in two books that serve different audiences, a fluent translation into modern English and a detailed critical edition of the Chaghatay text. In the longer term, other scholars have expressed interest in contributing to a collection of essays discussing specific aspects of the text.

The translation is intended for use in the classroom as an introduction to Uyghur and Islamic history and thought under Chinese rule. Students of China, who already have access to translations of long-form sources for Mongol and Tibetan history, will read it as a source for modern Chinese cultural and borderland history. The *Tārīkh-i Ḥamīdī* translation will thus enable China scholars to integrate Uyghur history more thoroughly into their teaching.

People curious about Xinjiang and Uyghurs will finally be able to read the most influential and complex modern Uyghur history without undergoing years of training first. A popular audience will find a strange and exciting story about a part of the world that most in the West only know as a "restive region" that appears in the news. Uyghurs themselves, who often feel forgotten by the world at large, will welcome the translation as a celebration and recognition of their past and present.

A critical edition of the Chaghatay text will serve a smaller audience of researchers in Central Asian history. Even very experienced scholars have remarked on the difficulty of Sayrāmī's language and the obnoxious paleography of the Beijing manuscript that make it a chore simply to read a sentence. This means that the typescript version of the text alone makes the text more accessible. The final product will be released in a digital format, as well as print, in order to make the text searchable and navigable through hyperlinks. It will include not only footnoted annotations, but indices of people and places.

I intend to publish the translation with a university press that specializes in translations of texts from this region, such as Indiana University Press or Harvard University Asia Center. Other research centers with their own publishing schemes would be appealing for publishing the edition, but they have limited distribution. Brill's open access publishing may be the best solution for low cost and flexibility in formatting. The choice of publisher will depend on a balance between wide accessibility, persistence of a digital edition, and the assurance of quality.

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جبراکه فرغانه ولایتی دین محمد لعقوبیک اتالیق معقولست لسا مملکتی دین نیاز حاکم سیک توغقان ایکنلرکم
 تدریر بصلحت و احرفیف سلوکت ابر بر لار دین کور زاده ایگاس ایدر کل حسن میل الی حبیب مضمون بولار
 شایسته موافق و مطابق کیکو سید و بر لار شی کور کانداکو یا غسل بر لاسرغ یاغ مشکینا خیر و مضمحل بولوب
 ایدر لاشیب کتیا ایدی کیس بر لاری قصد و کینه او یوق قیلماق تدریر ایدی وقت بر دینی تقاسم کتیا
 جناب عالی بدولت بویه شرفیج و تسخیر نیکه ضبط و احتیاطی او مقدار محنت و شغلت لار فرغانه تیلارکم
 قلم دوزمان تقریر و تفصیل دین عاجز و قاصر دور لار بر احوال و راحت و فراغت و خوش عشرت لار نیاز حاکم سیک
 چقد لاری بر کور دین کیم تعریف و توصیف من تا شعاری دور لار کور یا فرغانه ولایتی دین نیاز حاکم سیک اولون
 کلکان ایکنلر ارون ایکنلر ادرخت کینه پیلان قلغان عمارت عالی و کتیا باعراق و کتیا حوض لاری بر لار طیار
 ایدی و کول شنگ طرف لاری و یاغ نه سو کورادور غان اریق لار اطراف لاری تمام خشت کتیا بر لار اسلاب
 و کچاج لار بر لار سو و اب صیفیل لار بر کان ایدی و حوض کتیا کیم لار بر کور کوی بلوچیه لاری بر لار حقیقت کسیر
 تا شالار و غنمه بوز لار بهجت کسور لوق لار قلیب یا نیب یوز لاری خصوصاً بر یاغ قیلور توب چکیب لیک
 اورادینا دی ایکن طعنا روع بار اورغان زامین نیشیره بوسی معناری کور لاریتیب لار بیتوبه تعراق
 لاری لیت شلاب اطراف لاری خشت کتیا بر لار طیار تمام لار قیلور و روی و غنمه کور یاغ شنگ منی مقدار
 ایفک شتوت لار لار طیار قلیب طیار کور لار اول تور غونوب تور کورین تور بوز کور ایفک طیار لار
 تارتیب و ایستوننن ایفک طیار لار یاغ تور بوز جرنده و پرند و حشی اهل کل جاندارات لار دین مذکور یاغ شنگ
 ایچکاکر حقیقت دین سولادیلر صوره کیم سوره یاغی و چنگل هر نوع گیاه و درخت و کل عناء و نسرین حتی که
 برغ و تکیس برغ مذکور یاغنه کور حبت قلیب اول تور غونوزی چکان صحرا لار انا فیما ایدور غان شجر و کتیا لار اول یاغ ایچکاکر

موجود و دریا ایزی

ايكنچى داستان اون التنجى بابدين

{273} ... چراکه فرغانه ولايتى دين نياز حاکم بیک اوچون کلکان ايکانلار.

اون ايکى يردا خشت پخته¹ بيلان قىلغان عمارت عالی و کته باغراق و کته خوض لاری برله طيار ایدی. و کول نینک اطراف لارینی و باغغه سو کرادورغان اریق لار اطراف لارینی² اتمام خشت پخته³ برله راستلاپ، و کچاج لار برله سوواب صیقل لار⁴ برکان ایدی. و حوض ایچیدا کیه لار هر کونلوکی به چته لاری برله چقیپ، و سیر تماشاه لار و نغمه نوا برله مهجت و سرورلوق قلیپ یانپ کلور ایدی.

خصوصاً بر باغ قیلبورتوپ، چکیت لیک اوردا دیپ اتادی. ایکی طغار اروغ بارادورغان زمین نی نیزه بوی مقداری کورلاتیپ و فسلا تیپ، توفه تفریق لارینی⁵ الپ تاشلاپ، اطراف لاریغه خشت پخته برله بلند آحاطه تام لار قیلبوردی. و مذکور باغ نینک زمینی مقداریدا ایفک مشتوت لار برله طور قلیپ بلند توبروک لارنی اولتورغوزوپ توبروک دین توبروک کا ایفک طناب لارنی تارتیپ و اوستونی ایفک طور برله یافنوروپ جزنده و پزنده وحشی و اهلی کل جاندارات لار دین مذکور باغ نینک ایچیکا بر جفت دین سولادیلار. میوه لیک و میوه سیز باغی و جنکالی هر نوع کیه و درخت^[170v] و کل رعنا⁶ و کترین حتی که چیغ تیکن غچه مذکور باغغه کوچت قلیپ اولتورغوزدی جنکل صحرالاردا تافیلما یدورغان شجر و کیه لار اول باغ ایچیدا موجود و مهیا ایردی

¹ [J] پشیق خشت

² [J] چوره اطراف لارینی

³ [J] پشیق خشت

⁴ [J] سفیل لار

⁵ [J] کورلاب پستلاتیب و تفریق لارینی

⁶ [J] و کل ریجان و کل رعنا

From Book Two, Chapter Sixteen: Niyaz Hakim Beg

{273} ... It was as if Ya'qub Beg had come from Ferghana just for Niyaz Beg.

In twelve places, they prepared grand buildings with fired bricks, great gardens, and large pools. They lined the cisterns and the sluices that ran into the gardens completely with bricks and decorated them with daubed plaster. Every day, they would go out with the children in boats onto the pools, and they would revel in entertainment, music, and song.

Niyaz Beg had one special garden made, which he called the “Speckled Palace.” They dug out a plot of land⁷ to the depth of a spear’s length, removed the soil, and had high walls of brick built around the hole. He had a cloth made of silk in the same size as this garden and had tall pillars set up. From pillar to pillar, he had silk threads strung, and then covered the opening at the top with silk, and enclosed within it pairs of birds and wild and domestic animals. In that garden they raised all sorts of trees and plants never encountered in the countryside: every kind of tree^[170v] from orchard and wilderness, fruiting or not, flowers of ostentatious beauty, and incense-bearing trees known as the needlegrass thorn.⁸

⁷ The text indicates the area of this plot as two *tughar*, literally two “bags.” A *tughar* was a unit of weight equivalent to approximately 40 kilograms. (Raquette, *Eastern Turki Grammar*, 33-36) The area of the plot of land excavated was thus however much was considered necessary to produce two bags of grain.

⁸ *Commiphora wightii*, or the guggul tree, from which the incense bdellium is derived. The name *chiğ tikän* appears to be unattested in Modern Uyghur, but it combines two known plant names: *chiğ* is “needlegrass” or *Achnatherum splendens*, while *tikän* indicates a thorny bush or tree.