

## Werk

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## **In Memoriam Sergej Grigor'evič Kljaštornyj (1928–2014)**

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Sergej Grigor'evič Kljaštornyj, well-known Russian historian of ancient and medieval Turkic civilizations and outstanding researcher of Old Turkic written sources, passed away on September 21, 2014, at the age of 87 after a long and severe illness.

Professor Dr. Sergej Grigor'evič Kljaštornyj worked at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts until his final days. He was also vice-chairman of the Russian Committee of Turcologists at the Division of Historical and Philological Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The academy has lost an exceptional scholar who made unrivaled contributions to research on the history of Central Asian nomadic states in ancient and early medieval times, as well as to the study of Old Turkic Runiform texts scattered across the vast territories of Siberia and Mongolia.

In his work, Kljaštornyj showed very clearly that the history of Turkic peoples, alongside other nomadic tribes of the Great Steppe, is an organic part of the history of Eurasia; it is also an inalienable part of the history of Slavic states in Eastern Europe. He was of the opinion that the development of statehood in the territory of Central Asia, South Siberia and the Volga basin in the early Middle Ages (the sixth to eleventh centuries) was connected to the rise of the Turkic Khaganate in medieval Inner Asia. The Turkic Khaganate's traditions were later inherited by successor states: the Uyghur Khaganate, the Kyrgyz Khaganate in the upper reaches of the Yenisei river, the Kimak and Kipchak states in the Irtysh basin, the Bulgar state, and the Khazar Khaganate in the Volga basin and in the Northern Caucasus. The unity of the social systems and political structures of these states, as well as their close ethnic and cultural ties allowed Kljaštornyj to treat the time of their existence and dominance in the Great Steppe as a single historical and cultural period—that of the Steppe Empires.

Sergej Grigor'evič devoted his entire life to investigating Old Turkic texts and the history and culture of Turkic peoples. In this respect, he followed in the footsteps of his great teachers—S. E. Malov, A. N. Kononov, and A. N. Bernštam. Already in his candidate dissertation he gave an original and innovative historical interpretation of Runiform Old Turkic texts that he considered to be primary sources for understanding historical developments in Central Asia. In this dissertation, he looked at the contents of the oldest texts in a Turkic language in a new way. It was only logical that after his dissertation was published (1964) it was translated into Chinese (1991) and Uyghur (2000).

Also later, he continued to interpret each newly discovered or previously known runiform inscription first and foremost as a source of historical and cultural information on ancient Turks and their neighbors.

Sergej Grigor'evič has left behind a significant research legacy encompassing more than 300 publications. He constantly reached new achievements, giving him new material to interpret and new research tasks to fulfill. From the time of his studies at the university until the last years of his life, he participated in various archaeological and epigraphic expeditions, first as a member and later as the head. Thirty years (1960–1990) of his work in Kirghizia, Siberia, and Mongolia were especially fruitful. His contribution to epigraphic research in these areas was the most prominent work after that of S. E. Malov and a few other scholars.

Nevertheless, the main goal of his research work—beginning with his first major work, his dissertation “Old Turkic Runic texts as a source for the history of Central Asia”, and ending with his last monograph “Runic inscriptions of the Uyghur Khaganate and the history of the Eurasian Steppe”—was to introduce authentic data contained in Old Turkic texts into the mosaic of historic events. Before Old Turkic inscriptions were discovered, their script deciphered, and their contents read and interpreted, that mosaic had not been nearly as interesting, many-sided and colorful; it had not contained important details on the contributions of Turkic peoples to historic processes. Among the international cohort of renowned scholars studying Old Turkic inscriptions, starting with W. Thomsen and W. Radlov, Sergej Grigor'evič Kljaštornyj gained his prominent and permanent place a long time ago.

He was the founder of regular Turcological conferences held in Leningrad. The proceedings of these conferences were published in the famous series *Tjurkologičeskij sbornik* ‘A Collection of Articles on Turcology’, the series whose editor-in-chief he remained until his death.

Sergej Grigor'evič also made an important contribution to research on the national history of the peoples of the former Soviet Union as the author of separate chapters, or the editor of academic publications on these topics. His prime objective was to write an objective and adequate ethnic history of a people, to prevent non-scientific or biased interpretations of its ethno-genesis.

Sergej Grigor'evič was born on February 4, 1928, in the city of Gomel' in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. From 1945 to 1950, he studied at the Oriental Faculty of the Leningrad State University in the Departments of Turkic Philology and History of the Near and Middle East.

He started working in 1950 as an employee at the All-Soviet Institute of Geology, first as a librarian (until 1953), and later as head of the Department of Bibliography.

In 1957, Sergej Grigor'evič obtained the position of junior researcher at the Sector of Turcology and Mongolistics at the Leningrad Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union (AS USSR). After three years, he became the head of the library of this division.

Under the supervision of the well-known Turcologists A. N. Bernštam and S. E. Malov, Sergej Grigor'evič worked on his candidate dissertation “Old Turkic Runic Inscriptions as a Source for the History of Central Asia”. He defended this dissertation in 1962.

A year after his defense, at the age of thirty-five, he became head of the Sector of Turcology and Mongolistics of the Leningrad Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the AS USSR. He held this position for fifty years until 2013. During this time, as a result of a structural reorganization of the institute, the Sector was renamed the Sector of Central Asia, and together with the Sector of South Asia formed the Department of Central and South Asia. Sergej Grigor'evič became the head of the Department as well.

In 2013, Sergej Grigor'evič became the leading researcher of the Sector of Central Asia. In 2014, he retired, but continued to work on problems related to runiform writing.

Sergej Grigor'evič was an active field researcher. He started his field research career as a laboratory assistant with the Pamir-Fergana Expedition and the Pamir-Altai Expedition of the Research Institute of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1947–1953). In 1949, he worked under the supervision of the well-known archeologist M. I. Artamonov, who headed the Volga-Don Archeological Expedition of the Institute of Oriental Studies mentioned above. From 1954 to 1959, Sergej Grigor'evič headed the Archeological Detachment of the Central Asian Geological Expedition of the Ministry of Geology. During the next five years (1960–1965), he was vice-director of the Ketmen-Tjubin Expedition of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kirghiz SSR. From 1968 to 1973, he headed the Epigraphic Detachment of the Sayan-Tuva Expedition of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

Sergej Grigor'evič devoted 21 years of his life to expeditions in Mongolia. He was the head of the Epigraphic Detachment of the Soviet-Mongolian History and Culture Expedition of the Soviet and Mongolian Academies of Sciences for 19 seasons, having crossed the country many times in different directions. After his work in Mongolia, Sergej Grigor'evič was invited to Kazakhstan and Kirghizia as a participant in the archeological expeditions from 1991 to 1997. Later, he headed the Kirghiz Detachment of the Ethno-Sociological Expedition of the University of Wisconsin for five years (1998–2002).

Sergej Grigor'evič taught as Chair of Turkic Philology at the Saint-Petersburg State University from 1969 to 2009; and from 1995 to 2009 as Chair of Central Asia and the Caucasus. In 1995, he was invited to teach at Bonn University in Germany. From 1974 to 2012, he lectured at Kirghiz State University (Bishkek), Kazakh State Pedagogical University (Almaty), Eurasian State University named after L. N. Gumil'ov (Astana). He lectured at Indiana University (Bloomington, US), Jagellon University (Warsaw, Poland), Marmara University (Istanbul, Turkey), Budapest University (Hungary), Azeri University "Khazar" (Baku), and Kazan State University (Russia).

He supervised dozens of courses and diploma papers, and candidate dissertations written by Turcologists from Kirghizia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

During his life, Sergej Grigor'evič formed a whole generation of Mongolian, Kirghiz, Kazakh and Russian researchers. Many of his students became leading researchers in their states.

The contributions of Sergej Grigor'evič to the development of history and Turcology enjoyed the high esteem of the scientific community: he was an honorary member of many foreign academic societies and honorary professor of many universities, several of which bestowed their medals of honor on him.

Sergej Grigor'evič Kljaštornyj was a member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Honorary Professor of the University of Astana (Kazakh-

stan), Honorary Member of the Atatürk Higher Society of Research of Culture, Language and History (Turkey), Honorary Member of the Turkish Linguistic Society, Honorary Member of the Hungarian Kőrösi Csoma Oriental Society, Honorary Member of the Ural-Altai Society (Germany), member of the Association of Turcological Research (US), Honorary Member of the Society of Central Eurasian Research (US). In 2005, he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference (PIAC) for his great services in the research on Old Turkic Runiform writing. Sergej Grigor'evič collaborated with Mongolian colleagues from the Institute of History of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and was made Honorary Doctor of that Institute.

Sergej Grigor'evič was an industrious, decent, modest and kind person. His colleagues and friends loved him very much. His death is a great loss for modern Oriental Studies. However, his classic works remain with us; they will continue to be a source of knowledge about ancient and medieval peoples and a shining example of the historical interpretation of ancient texts.

#### **Selected works of Sergej Grigor'evič Kljaštornyj**

1964. *Drevnetjurskie runičeskie pamjatniki kak istočnik po istorii Srednej Azii*. Moskva: Nauka. 215 p.
- [with A. A. Kolesnikov] 1988. *Vostočnyj Turkestan glazami russkix putešestvennikov (vtoraja polovina XIX veka)*. Alma-Ata: Nauka. 223 p.
- [with A. A. Kolesnikov & M. S. Basxanov] 1991. *Vostočnyj Turkestan glazami evropejskix putešestvennikov*. Alma-Ata: Nauka. 133 p.
- [with T. I. Sultanov] 1992. *Kazaxstan. Letopis' trjox tysjačletij*. Alma-Ata: Nauka. 375 p.
2003. *Istorija Central'noj Azii i pamjatniki runičeskogo pis'ma*. Sankt-Peterburg: Filologičeskij fakul'tet SPbGU. 559 p.
- [with D. G. Savinov] 2005. *Stepnye imperii drevnej Evrazii*. Sankt-Peterburg: Filologičeskij fakul'tet SPbGU. 346 p.
2006. *Pamjatniki drevnetjurskoj pis'mennosti i étnokul'turnaja istorija Central'noj Azii*. Sankt-Peterburg: Nauka. 591 p. (pp. 571–586: Bibliography of his publications 1951–2005).
- [with T. I. Sultanov] 2009. *Gosudarstva i narody Exrazijskix stepej: ot drevnosti k Novomu vremeni*. Sankt-Peterburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie. 362 p.
2010. *Runičeskie pamjatniki Ujgurskogo kaganata i istorija evrazijskix stepej*. Sankt-Peterburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie. 325 p.