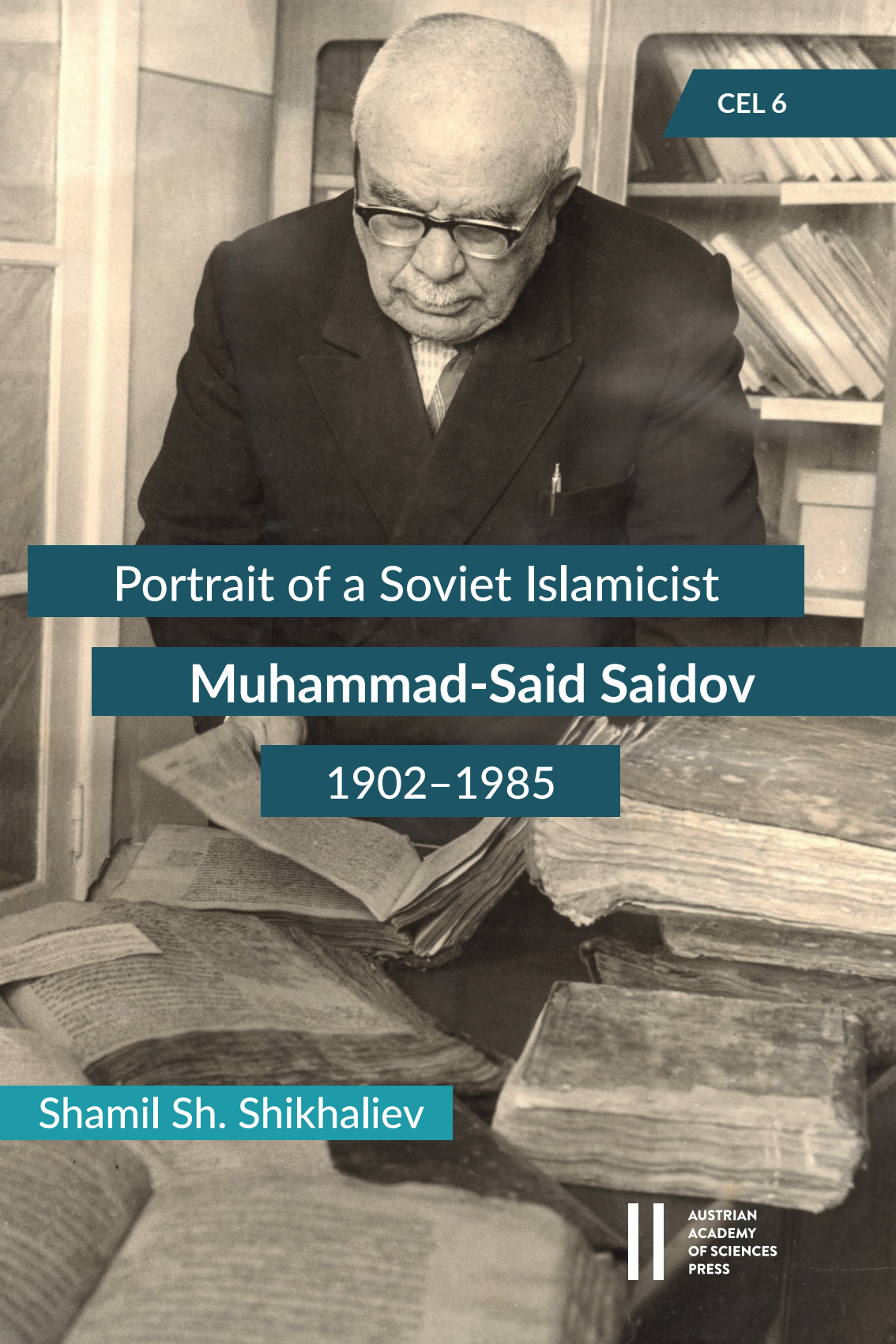


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Portrait of a Soviet Islamicist

Muhammad-Said Saidov

1902–1985

Shamil Sh. Shikhaliev

AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES PRESS

Shamil Sh. Shikhaliev

PORTRAIT OF A SOVIET ISLAMICIST: MUHAMMAD-SAID SAIDOV (1902–1985)

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
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Shamil Sh. Shikhaliev

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Muḥammad-Said Saidov among Arabic manuscripts, 1981.
Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova.

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Note on Transliteration and Nomenclature

For Islamic names and terms, I adopt the transliteration system for Arabic used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. I have generally avoided translating the titles of Arabic works into English, except in cases where contextual necessity warrants it. When a manuscript or document lacks an original title, I provide a descriptive title of my own in square brackets, based on the content. To avoid imposing a standardised form, I retain personal names as they appear in the specific sources under consideration. In some cases, when translating primary sources, I include the transliteration of the original Arabic term or concept – such as *bid'a, tawassul, or istighātha* – to preserve its specific connotations. At the same time, I often leave certain terms untranslated when they are well established in academic literature, such as *waqf, ijtihād, zakāt,* and others. A significant portion of the unpublished material used in this book is drawn from the archives of the Institute of History in Makhachkala. References to these archival sources follow the conventional citation format used in Russian archival studies, indicating the collection *(fond),* inventory *(opis'),* file *(no),* and folio, in accordance with established Russian abbreviations.

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Introduction

The Life of a Muslim Reformist in Soviet Daghestan

"A [Daghestani scholar] replied in the most eloquent and fluent Arabic…
I have never seen anyone in my entire life who would express himself as beautifully,
using plain language, avoiding vulgarity and grammatical errors in speech,
and making great use of intonation.
When listening to his speech, I was seized with such delight and joy,
that a trembling went through my body…"
— Muḥammad b. ʻAlī al-Shawkānī.

Muḥammad b. ʻAlī al-Shawkānī (1759–1834), a famous Yemeni scholar, unexpectedly crossed paths with a Daghestani scholar with a brilliant knowledge of Arabic at a mosque in Sanaa in the late 18th century. The Daghestani scholar's mastery of the Arabic language left such a lasting impression on al-Shawkānī that he subsequently wrote about this encounter in his biographical dictionary.[1] His enthusiastic assessment of the extraordinary Arabic proficiency displayed by an unidentified Daghestani scholar could be equally applicable to the hero of my book, Muḥammad-Said Saidov, otherwise known as Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī (1902–85), had he lived two centuries earlier.

Saidov was born in the village of Genichutl, into the family of a Muslim scholar. Between 1910 and 1921 he received a classical Islamic education in various Avar, Kumyk, and Lak villages in Daghestan. The establishment of Soviet rule had little direct impact upon his studies. Throughout his entire life he was engaged in the Islamic sciences, with a particular focus on Arabic literature, historical works, and poetry, this latter being his lifelong passion. Saidov's excellent command of Arabic doubtless reflected his training in Arabic poetry: he copied many texts himself, recited classical examples by heart and even tried to compose original works of his own. Saidov's Arabic-language prose style is characterised by a remarkable eloquence, and a rich variety of idioms and tropes. He was an embodiment of Arabic literacy in the North Caucasus: something that is particularly remarkable given that his adult life

1 Muḥammad b. ʻAlī al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-ṭāliʻ bī maḥāsin man baʻd al-qarn al-sābiʻ* (Cairo: Dār al-kitāb al-islāmiyya, 1348/1930), 290.

fell within the Soviet era – a period that one does not generally associate with Arabic literary culture.

In what follows I should like to briefly outline the main stages of Saidov's lifepath; this will be key for our understanding of the main themes of the book. From 1922 to 1924, Saidov attended pedagogical courses organised by the Soviet authorities in the city of Buinaksk, formerly known as Temir-khān Shūrā, the capital of Daghestan.[2] Upon his graduation, he spent two years teaching Turkic philology at a school in Gimry, combining this with teaching classes on Islamic law at the local mosque. From 1925 to 1931, he was employed as a calligrapher and editor at the state printing house, where he assisted in the production of newspapers and books in various Daghestani languages to be published as lithographs. In the next five years he worked as an editor and then as a head of the Avar section of the educational and pedagogical sector of the Daghestan publishing house, while studying at the Pedagogical Institute. During these years, he compiled and published dozens of textbooks on Avar grammar, and participated in the creation of a new modified Cyrillic alphabet for Daghestani vernaculars.

In 1936, Saidov was arrested by the Soviet secret agency (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh del*, futher - *NKVD*) on suspicion of involvement in 'national-bourgeois counter-revolutionary activities,' and spent a month in prison. Unlike many of his contemporaries who were similarly arrested around this time, he was lucky enough to be released quickly, and continued his education in languages and history. That same year, the Soviet government sent him, together with a number of other Daghestani former madrasa graduates, to study at the North Caucasus Mountain Historical and Linguistic Institute named after S.M. Kirov in Piatigorsk. Following the closure of this Institute in 1937, Saidov entered the doctoral track (*aspirantura*) at the Moscow Institute of Language and Literature of the Peoples of the USSR named after Nikolai Marr. Within three years, he successfully defended his dissertation on Avar philology. Upon his return back to Daghestan, Saidov began his long career at the

[2] G.Sh. Kaimarazov, *Obrazovanie i nauka v Dagestane v 20 veke* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2007), 145.

Institute of History, Language, and Literature (hereinafter – Institute of History) of the Daghestan branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences. For two years, in 1945–46, Saidov headed the Department of Arabic Studies at Baku State University, where he went upon the advice of Ignatii Krachkovskii (1883–1951), an Arabist of great renown.

From this brief overview of his early years, we see that Muḥammad-Said Saidov's biography has much in common with those of other Muslim scholars who similarly managed to escape the purges of the 1930s and became successfully integrated within Soviet educational or academic institutions. There were numerous individuals in the Central Asian republics and the Volga-Urals, too, whose professional careers similarly illustrate the cohabitation of Soviet and Muslim systems of knowledge production.[3] Many of these individuals are nowadays forgotten, and their scholarly achievements do not form part of the celebrated post-Soviet national list of revered figures. By examining the life and career of Muḥammad-Said Saidov, I hope to redress this state of neglect.

An Orientalist

My acquaintance with Saidov's legacy was caused by a chain of accidental events that repeatedly caused me to engage with his remarkable personality. His ideas, works and worldview were extremely close to my own interests and outlook, despite the fact that I never met him. In fact, I did once have a chance of meeting Saidov in my early childhood, but nothing came of it. My grandmother Insabat (d. 2008) was a relative of Saidov's beloved wife Ḥabiyat and, knowing my interest in Arabic, she

[3] Bakhtiyar M. Babajanov, "'Ulama'-Orientalists: Madrasa Graduates at the Soviet Institute of Oriental Studies," *Reassessing Orientalism: Interlocking Orientologies during the Cold War (Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe)*, ed. by Michael Kemper & Artemy M. Kalinovsky (London: Routledge, 2015), 84–119; Alfrid Bustanov, *Biblioteka Zainap Maksudovoi. Zäinäp Maksudova kitapkhanäse* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Mardzhani, 2019), 11–26; idem, "Muslim Literature in the Atheist State: Zainap Maksudova between Soviet Modernity and Tradition," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9 (2018), 1–31.

promised to introduce me to the reputed scholar Saidov, our distant relative. Alas, as an eleven-year-old boy I did not take advantage of this opportunity to meet Saidov, and soon thereafter he passed away.

Upon my graduation from the Islamic and Pedagogical Universities in Makhachkala, I entered the academic Institute of History. In 2000, I was entrusted with the task of inventorying and describing the old printed Arabic books from Saidov's collection.[4] Only some time later did I realize that this was the same scholar of Arabic whom my grandmother had told me about. My colleagues at the Institute spoke highly of Saidov as a founder of the local tradition of Oriental Studies (*vostokovedenie*), and as a gifted Arabist, historian, and philologist.[5] They told me stories about Saidov, who would appear in my imagination as a towering orientalist, similar to the famous figures of the Leningrad school.[6] At work I met Rabiyat (1934–2024), Saidov's daughter and the keeper of her father's archive at the Institute. She also shared with me a lot of stories about Saidov, mainly about his time at work, his Soviet-style education, and his ties with Soviet orientalists.

At first, I assumed that Saidov was a purely secular scholar. However, through my numerous visits to Rabiyat I gradually started to learn about the other sides of Saidov's personality. She related to me stories about a strict, but fair and loving father, and an affectionate, loving husband to Rabiyat's mother Ḥabiyat. I learned more about his private life, his family, and his interactions with relatives, friends, and colleagues. For Rabi-

4 For more details on how Saidov's personal library and archive came to be housed at the Institute of History, see further.

5 G.G. Gamzatov, A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Magomedsaiid Saidov – vydaiushchiisia vostokoved," A.R. Shikhsaidov, Kh.A. Omarov, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei (Kollektsiia M.-S. Saidova)* (Makhachkala: Izdatel'stvo tipografii DNTs RAN, 2005), 11–22; A.A. Isaev, "M.-S. Saidov – osnovopolozhnik issledovaniia istorii zarozhdeniia pis'mennosti na iazykakh narodov Dagestana," *Vestnik Instituta istorii, arkheologii i etnografii* 2 (2006), 72–74, 2 (2007), 70–72; A-G. S. Gadzhiev, *Magomed-Said Dzhamaludinovich Saidov – krupnyi uchenyi, arabist, iazykoved, literaturoved* (Makhachkala, 2008).

6 Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

yat there was two images of Saidov: that of a father to love, and that of a great Soviet orientalist scholar *(sovetskii vostokoved*) to be proud of.

As part of the Institute's assignment, I completely immersed myself in describing the previously unfamiliar old printed Arabic books that had belonged to Saidov. I got acquainted with a broad repertoire of materials that only reinforced my sense that Saidov had been a scholar of tremendous range and expertise. The array of his collection fit squarely into the image of a Soviet scholar that I had in my mind at the time.

Muslim Scholar

Ten years later, in 2010, I turned to Saidov's documents once again. As part of a three-year research project at the Institute of History, I was involved in the cataloguing of his personal archive which included notes, poems, draft works, diaries, letters, autobiographies, and memoirs in Russian, Arabic, Turkic, and Avar. While going through this set of texts, I altered my vision of Saidov's personality. The study of his archive enabled me to gain a sense of his stature as a leading Muslim scholar, who possessed a masterful command of the language of Islamic discourse. I came to realize that Saidov was not just an orientalist who analyzed and taxonomized what one might think of as 'exotic' Islamic manuscripts. At the same time as producing conventional academic studies on Islam, I realized, he also penned Islamic treatises in the same fashion as his pre-Soviet predecessors within the Islamic learned classes had done, and as contemporary Muslim scholars continued to do.

I heard stories about Saidov, the Muslim scholar (*'ālim*). Murtazali Yakubov (b. 1956), a former *imām* during the Soviet era, residing in Chirkey, told me repeatedly about Saidov's close relations with his own father Ḥajiyaw Yakubov, with whom Saidov had studied. Saidov would regularly visit Ḥajiyaw and his family, and stay for several days. The old friends spent hours discussing Islamic law and aspects of grammar moving from Arabic to Avar and back. Saidov used Ḥajiyaw's library as his own, often sitting with books until midnight, making notes. "My father, who was a Sufi, told me that Saidov adhered to Wahhabi views. Howev-

er, his knowledge was so impressive and profound that it was rather difficult to argue with him," recalled Murtazali Yakubov.[7] Other informants recounted similar stories. My teacher Amri Shikhsaidov (1928–2019) recalled that Saidov had access to many private libraries in the region because the owners, some of whom had been his classmates, respected him as a Muslim scholar.[8] Another of my teachers at the Islamic University, the Muslim scholar Muḥammad-Amīn Absaidov (1923–2006), held Saidov in high regard, particularly for his religious learning, although he also made the criticism that "he was a Wahhabi".[9] His only student in the field of Islamic sciences, the Muslim scholar Muḥammad-Rasūl Gamzatov (al-Sahādī, 1941–2023), likewise noted that Saidov was among the foremost Muslim scholars of his time. When I asked him about the rumours circulating that Saidov had been a Wahhabi, Gamzatov smiled and replied: "I did not study *'aqīda* with him; I studied poetry. And in that field, there was no one in Daghestan at the time who was his equal."[10]

In the eyes of Soviet historians, Saidov was a scholar who studied 'the written heritage of the Oriental peoples of the past'.[11] For Muslim scholars of the same era, by contrast, he was a respected religious authority who had a dazzling mastery of the Islamic disciplines. I pondered where Saidov the Muslim scholar ended and Saidov the orientalist began, and I attempted to disentangle his 'Islamic' from his 'Soviet' self. My initial assumption was that two seemingly opposing worldviews could not coexist within a single individual – one was either a Muslim scholar or a secular orientalist. Yet, as this book demonstrates, Saidov's self-representation indicates that such forms of hybrid personality were, in fact, widespread among Soviet Muslims in Daghestan.

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7 Author's interview with Murtazali Yakubov (Makhachkala, August 9, 2011).

8 Author's interview with Amri Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala, November 16, 2011).

9 Author's interview with Muḥammad-Amīn Absaidov (Makhachkala, April 2, 2003).

10 Author's interview with Muḥammad-Rasūl al-Sahādī (Mutsalaul, 4 August 2015).

11 A.R. Shikhsaidov, G.G. Gamzatov, "Magomed-Said prodolzhaetsia (k 15-letiiu so dnia konchiny vydaiushchegosia uchenogo-dagestanoveda, arabista, vostokoveda)," *Vestnik Dagestanskogo Nauchnogo Tsentra RAN* 6 (2000), 163–169.

Hybrid Subjectivity: being of Muslim or Soviet? Historiography

The hybrid character of Saidov's personality became an intellectual challenge for me: how could I describe and do justice the various dimensions of his scholarly selfhood? Can it be argued that Soviet modernisation, alongside the policy of indigenisation (*korenizatsiia*), resulted in the complete secularisation of Muslim regions of the USSR, where the practice of Islam was confined to officially sanctioned institutions such as the muftiates established in the 1940s? Was the 'Sovietisation' of Muslims a tactical form of mimicry that translated Islam into the register of national culture,[12] or was it rather a natural process of cultural synthesis?[13]

While remaining a devoted Muslim, Saidov developed his own approach to Islam which allowed him to study Arabic manuscripts as both a Muslim scholar and a Soviet historian. Phenomena that might initially appear mutually exclusive – being a Muslim scholar, composing poetry in Arabic, engaging in Islamic reformist discourse, while at the same time studying the "classical heritage of the East" from a secular academic perspective – are, in fact, not inherently contradictory. On the contrary, as James Pickett has shown in his recent work, Muslim scholars were often marked by the complexity and multiplicity of their identities. Muslim scholars possessed deep expertise across a wide range of disciplines, including jurisprudence, Sufism, medicine, astronomy, and literature. This intellectual breadth enabled them to occupy key positions in society, simultaneously serving as judges, poets, mystics, and administrators. Frequently, Muslim scholars embodied roles that might appear antithetical: it was not uncommon for them, say, to act as strict *sharī'a*

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12 See: Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

13 Eren Tasar, *Soviet and Muslim: The Institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Christian Noack (eds.), *Allah's Kolkhozes: Migration, De-Stalinisation, Privatisation, and the New Muslim Congregations in the Soviet Realm (1950s-2000s)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014).

judges while also producing poetry that celebrated wine.[14] The same can be observed in the case of Saidov: a Muslim scholar with pronounced reformist views, he was simultaneously a distinguished Soviet historian and philologist. In his works, he seamlessly cited the Qur'ān as an epigraph and offered blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad in his Arabic-language writings,[15] even as he composed articles within the framework of the classical Orientalist approach.[16] His subjectivity played out at the juncture of these two intellectual personhoods. In what follows I will situate this personal complexity in current historiographic debates.

One historiographical approach to the phenomenon of Muslim in Soviet Union focuses on reformists as the key actors of modernity. Adeeb Khalid situates the history of Muslim reformism as a consequence and reflection of Russian colonialism and the technological progress that eased transfers of goods and ideas.[17] He further highlights the close links that developed between the reformists and Bolsheviks in the 1920s, when they joined forces in the projects of nation-building and educational reform.[18] Khalid thus focuses on the sociological and political dimensions of Muslim reformism, and plays down its religious dimension. He criticises researchers who focus on "those who seek to perfect themselves as Islamic moral agents and thus presume that people identifying as Muslim must channel their moral agency through an Islam-inflected discourse".[19]

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14 James Pickett, *Polymaths of Islam: Power and Networks of Knowledge in Central Asia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2020).

15 Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī, *Mulāḥaẓa*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 540, 1–17.

16 Saidov, M.S. "O nekotorykh pamiatnikakh material'noi kul'tury v lakskikh raionakh DASSR," *Uchenye zapiski Instituta istorii, jazyka i literatury Dagestanskogo filiala AN SSSR. Tom 3* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1957), 122–134; idem, "O rasprostranenii Abumuslimom islama v Dagestane," *Uchenye zapiski Instituta istorii, iazyka i literatury Dagestanskogo filiala AN SSSR. Tom 2* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1957), 42–51.

17 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1999).

18 Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press, 2015).

19 Idem, "Islam in Central Asia 30 years after independence: debates, controversies and the critique of a critique," *Central Asian Survey* 40:4 (2021), 542.

For Khalid, the study of modern Central Asia is overburdened with undue emphasis on Muslim religiosity.[20]

Khalid's opponents, by contrast, emphasise the continued importance of Islam throughout the emergence of Soviet modernity. Paolo Sartori, for instance, suggests that Khalid's narrative of modernizing, secularizing Islamic reformism is the story of just "a comparatively small, homogeneous group of progressive intellectuals".[21] He argues that "Islam, although challenged by the discourse of an unabashedly antireligious state, remained a source of knowledge, ethics, morality, and spirituality for many (but by no means all) Muslims in the USSR".[22] Devin DeWeese, meanwhile, suggests, *contra* Khalid, that the study of modern Central Asia is marred by *insufficient attention* to Muslim religiosity, and argues that Islamic discourses continued to develop in the Soviet era,[23] beyond the state purview.[24]

In this debate the 'Soviet' and the 'Muslim' seem to be rather decoupled from each other. Such decoupling, however, is nowhere to be seen in Saidov's sense of the self, which by contrast is characterised by a profound hybridity. As Eren Tasar has rightly noted in his recent study, Muslim leaders exercised agency within the Soviet constraints, forging a 'Soviet Muslim subjectivity' that blended Islamic values with socialist loyalty, while Islam itself was reinterpreted as being compatible

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20 Khalid's writing has been extremely influential in the field as his views are supported by many scholars: G.Sh. Kaimarazov, *Obrazovanie i nauka v Dagestane v 20 veke*; Ingeborg Baldauf, "Jadidism in Central Asia within Reformism and Modernism in the Muslim World," *Die Welt des Islams* 41 (2001), 72–88; Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *Laboratory of Socialist Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan* (Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press, 2018).

21 Paolo Sartori, "Towards a History of the Muslims' Soviet Union: A View from Central Asia," *Die Welt des Islams* 50 (2010), 327.

22 Ibid., 322. Cf.: Paolo Sartori, Bakhtiyar Babajanov, "Being Soviet, Muslim, Modernist, and Fundamentalist in 1950s Central Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62 (2019), 108–165.

23 Devin DeWeese, "Review of *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia* by Maria Elisabeth Louw," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21 (2010), 157–162.

24 Idem, "It was a Dark and Stagnant Night ('til the Jadids Brought the Light): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of Central Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59 (2016), 37–92.

with Soviet modernisation. Crucially, Tasar rejects binary oppositions (e.g., Islam vs. atheism, repression vs. resistance), revealing a more nuanced reality of bureaucratic regulation, international instrumentalisation during the Cold War, and adaptive coexistence, where Islam persisted not in spite of but through negotiated, 'managed autonomy'.[25] Similarly, Sergey Abashin also argues that the intellectual and ideological landscape in the region was more mosaic, and that Islam was in fact a key integral part of Soviet history.[26]

In his recent book *A Soviet Sultanate*, Paolo Sartori also re-evaluates the prevailing narrative of total secularisation in Central Asia by demonstrating how Islam adapted to the new Soviet political and legal realities, in a context where Islamic practices were neither entirely suppressed nor wholly preserved, but rather transformed through a continuous process of negotiation between state policies and local traditions. Drawing on a broad range of archival sources, he constructs a nuanced account of coexistence and mutual entanglement between ideological and legal frameworks in Soviet Uzbekistan, thereby offering a compelling narrative of religious resilience and transformation. He characterises this phenomenon as a kind of "Soviet sultanate" – a hybrid regime in which Islam and socialism became intricately interwoven. Sartori thus underscores the irony of a state that, while officially atheist, inadvertently enabled both the persistence and the evolution of Islamic traditions.[27]

In my research, I take into account Sartori's observation regarding the hybrid character of Islamic and Soviet frameworks, and demonstrate, through the intellectual biography of Saidov, how he navigated and engaged with these two epistemic systems. In this book, I aim to critically examine the interweaving of ideas and practices that were characteristic of Soviet Daghestan, focusing in particular on the history of manuscript collections, Saidov's engagement with them, and his personal interaction with ideas, individuals, and texts.

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25 Eren Tasar, *Soviet and Muslim: The Institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia.*

26 Sergey N. Abashin, "Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR by Adeeb Khalid (review)," *Ab Imperio* 4 (2016), 256–267.

27 Paolo Sartori, *A Soviet Sultanate: Islam in Socialist Uzbekistan, 1943–1991* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2024).

Saidov was both an *ʻālim* and Soviet scholar, and he engaged with Islamic literature for both religious and secular purposes. He simultaneously authored a catalogue of manuscripts according to the Orientalist canon[28] and wrote an article celebrating the *ṭabaqāt* genre.[29] He criticised Sufis for distorting religion and colonial orientalists for their objectification of Islam. Importantly, there was no transition from one model to another: rather, there was a life-long engagement with both.

Thus, this book proposes a re-evaluation of the figure of Muḥammad-Said Saidov as a representative of a complex yet coherent form of Soviet-Muslim subjectivity, situated at the intersection of two ostensibly incompatible traditions: Islamic scholarship and Soviet academic epistemology. Contrary to earlier interpretations, such as those advanced by Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck – whose works emphasise the formation of the "new Soviet person" and identity construction under ideological constraint[30] – I argue that Soviet Muslim intellectuals such as Saidov were not primarily torn between conflicting identities. Rather, they cultivated a durable hybrid subjectivity, wherein Islamic and Soviet discursive frameworks did not necessarily clash but often interacted productively and underwent mutual transformation.

The contribution of this research lies in its reconstruction of Saidov's biography not only as an orientalist scholar embedded within Soviet academic institutions, but also as a traditional Muslim *ʻālim* – a connoisseur of Arabic literature, poetry, Islamic jurisprudence and theology. Drawing on previously unexamined archival materials, oral histories, and personal documents, the present study reveals that Saidov did not merely

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28 *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei Instituta Istorii, iazyka i literatury im. Gamzata Tsadasa Dagestanskogo Filiala AN SSSR,* ed. by M.-S. Saidov (Moscow: Nauka, 1977).

29 M.S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," *Trudy dvadtsat'piatogo Mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov. Tom 2* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1963), 118–123; Muḥammad Sayyid b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī al-Sayyidī, "Ta'rīkh al-adāb al-ʻarabiyya fī Dāghistān," *Majallat kulliyyat al-adāb* 2 (Baghdād, 1963), 1–14;

30 See: Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 2006).

adapt to Soviet realities or conceal his religious commitments. On the contrary, he actively participated in the emergence of a new mode of Islamic scholarship integrated within the Soviet cultural framework.

Thus, Saidov emerges not as a figure emblematic of a rupture between the secular and the religious, but as an example of the continuity of Islamic intellectual tradition under conditions of Soviet modernity. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of Soviet Islam – one that moves beyond binary paradigms of "repression and resistance" or narratives of religious decline under atheistic state pressure. In developing this approach, the present study aligns with and extends the recent scholarship of Eren Tasar and Paolo Sartori, while offering a new empirically grounded, biographically centred analysis of a Daghestani Muslim intellectual active in the Soviet period.

Models

The intellectual landscape of Daghestan was marked by considerable diversity, encompassing both instrumental and normative disciplines – such as grammar and Islamic law – as well as domains of poetic and esoteric knowledge, including literature and practices rooted in spiritual or occult traditions. Local bio-bibliographical dictionaries, in documenting the lives of scholars, record their engagement with a wide range of genres and disciplines, both in the realm of personal piety and in the sphere of public religious activity. This broad spectrum of intellectual interests was closely tied to prevailing conceptions of the ideal Muslim – an aspirational figure whom every believer was encouraged to emulate in order to live a righteous life and attain salvation in the hereafter. Yet understandings of how one might cultivate such an ideal Muslim self, whether in oneself or in others, varied significantly among Daghestani scholars and reflected a wide array of possible interpretations of religious and intellectual virtue.

The figure of the ideal Muslim has been a subject of enduring concern and elaboration across various Islamic intellectual traditions. While the Qur'ān and Sunnah provide the foundational contours of this arche-

type, various different schools of thought have developed distinct yet overlapping visions of what constitutes the exemplary Muslim. In light of the ideal Muslim figure as both a normative model and an aspirational goal, this study turns to the question of Muslim subjectivity – that is, how individuals conceptualise and strive to realise such an ideal in their own lives.[31] The inherent diversity of subjectivity determines the plethora of ways in which an ideal personality might be imagined and cultivated in Islamic societies. The subjectivity of a Muslim scholar is manifested here through his archival practices, his interaction with sources, and his engagement with ideas and concepts.

In the context of twentieth-century Daghestan, particularly during the period in which Saidov was active, it is possible to distinguish three characteristic trajectories. Each offers a particular articulation of what it means to cultivate the ideal Muslim self, reflecting diverse approaches to ethical, intellectual, and spiritual formation under the conditions of Soviet modernity.

One such trajectory draws upon the Sufi tradition, which reorients the ideal from outward conformity with religious norms to inner transformation and divine proximity. Rather than focusing solely on external observance, this model privileges the cultivation of sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), love for God (*maḥabba*), and continuous remembrance (*dhikr*). Here, the ideal Muslim is conceived as one engaged in the refinement of the soul (*taṣfiya*), striving for nearness to the Divine (*qurb*). Sufi shaykhs articulated this vision through exemplary narratives that portrayed spiritual elevation not as an abstract state, but as a moral and communal ideal embodied in daily life.

A second approach, rooted in classical Sunni jurisprudence, places legal discipline and ritual observance at the core of Muslim ethical formation. In this juristic model, the ideal believer is defined by precise adherence to the *sharī'a*, fulfilling the prescribed obligations of prayer,

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[31] For more on the different theoretical concepts for studying Muslim subjectivity, see: Dietrich Jung, "Modern Muslim Subjectivities: Theories, Concepts and First Findings," *Muslim Subjectivities in Global Modernity Islamic Traditions and the Construction of Modern Muslim Identities*, ed. by Dietrich Jung, Kirstine Sinclair, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020), 11–32.

fasting, *zakāt*, and pilgrimage. Legal manuals depict piety as closely tied to lawfulness, where moral and religious rectitude are measured through lawful conduct and visible compliance with codified norms. For proponents of this view, correct action – orthopraxy – is not only the basis for individual salvation but also a mechanism for ensuring collective order and social cohesion.

A third model, shaped by the intellectual movements of Islamic reformism, reimagines the ideal Muslim in light of modernity, rational reform, and civic responsibility. Emerging in response to both colonial encroachment and internal crises, this vision foregrounds reason, moral autonomy, and engagement with the public sphere. Reformists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries emphasised that Islamic values are not only compatible with scientific progress and political participation but provide the ethical foundation for just and modern societies. In this view, the ideal Muslim is not merely a legal or spiritual adherent but also an active citizen, reformer, and bearer of moral universals, capable of interpreting Islamic teachings in response to historical change.

These three orientations of models – spiritual, legal, and reformist – should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Rather, they represent different emphases within a broader, historically layered tradition. While each model foregrounds distinct virtues – interiority in the Sufi mode, discipline in the juristic, and rational engagement in the modernist – Muslim scholars and communities often drew upon multiple strands simultaneously, combining them into hybrid identities that defy rigid categorisation. The ideal Muslim, therefore, emerges not as a fixed template, but as a polyvalent figure shaped by overlapping theological commitments, spiritual sensibilities, and the contingencies of historical experience.

Thus, the Islamic perceptions on the ideal Muslim subject were represented by various behavioural models, which reflect a broad intellectual landscape. Saidov consciously preferred some parts of the cultural repertoire, while disregarding others. His sense of the self was certainly not limited to the intellectual sphere, and extended to encompass also his roles within the family. I explore Saidov's personality through the prism of several models in cultivating an ideal subject.

In this book I explore both the range of models that were potentially available to Saidov during his lifetime, mainly through textual means, and those more specific models that he preferred to articulate at various stages of his life and career. His shifting engagement with these models reflected the complexity of his public and private self-fashioning and helped to form a particular type of scholarly persona that suited Saidov.

Scholarly Persona

These three afore-mentioned models together shape the concept of a *scholarly persona* – that is, the image of a scholar, possessing particular knowledge, skills, and a way of life. Saidov's scholarly persona was shaped by his creative engagement with texts, ideas and individuals. Mineke Bosch defines the concept of persona as "a cultural identity that simultaneously shapes the individual in body and mind and creates a collective with shared and recognisable physiognomy," and one which lies between the individual biography and social institution. The term 'persona' refers neither to individuals nor to stereotypes or social roles. For Bosch, a 'persona' constitutes a collective way of thinking, feeling, judging, perceiving, and working.[32] The term finds wide circulation[33] in

[32] Mineke Bosch, "Persona and the Performance of Identity: Parallel Developments in the Biographical Historiography of Science and Gender, and the Related Uses of Self Narrative," *L'Homme* 24:2 (2013), 15.

[33] *The Gnostic Jung, including "Seven Sermons to the Dead"*, selected and introduced by Robert A. Segal (London & New York: Routledge, 1992); Carl G. Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 7: Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, edited by Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). The concepts of Persona and Self have since been widely developed within the framework of historical sciences. See recent work in this area: K.M. Korchagin, "Musul'manskaia sub'ektivnost' i modernost': mezhdu sociologiei i istoriei idei," *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 3–4:41 (2023), 586–602; O.Yu. Bessmertnaia, "Chto nam delat' s «musul'manskoi sub'ektivnost'iu»? Perspektivy i «lovushki» issledovatel'skogo podkhoda v istoriograficheskom kontekste," *Vestnik Rossiiskogo universiteta druzhby narodov. Seriia: Istoriia Rossii* 2:22 (2023), 174–187; idem, "Musul'manskaia sub'ektivnost'? Personae, self i "zaprosy zhizni" v svidetel'stvakh o sebe musul'manina-samozvantsa (Magom-

literary studies, especially in regard to autobiographical writing, and is further developed in the philosophy of science by Herman Paul. In his work on the concept of 'scholarly persona', Paul suggests that this can be classified into three basic levels. On the micro level, one deals with articulation of the self in individual texts. On the macro level, there is a commonly shared definition of scholarly subjectivity. Interaction between the two takes place at the meso level with the time- and place-specific models characterised by particular habits, skills, or competencies.[34] Throughout this book, Saidov's production of scholarly persona will be conceptualized through the meso level as formulated by Herman Paul.[35]

In contrast to Herman Paul's concept of persona, however, the models in my approach refer to more abstract forms of scholarly preference, such as the focus on Sufi ethics or legal texts. My idea of 'persona' is based on these models and refers to the various skills, competencies, and ideas a scholar should have within an accepted model. This means that there can be multiple personae cultivated in one and the same behavioural model.

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et-bek Khadzhetlashe, 1870 (?) - 1929)," *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 2:41 (2023), 129–161.

34 Herman Paul (ed.), *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 3; idem, "Introduction: Scholarly Personae: What They are and Why They Matter," *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000*, 3–6. More about the scholarly persona see: Herman Paul, "Sources of the Self: Scholarly Personae as Repertoires of Scholarly Selfhood," *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review* 131:4 (2016), 135–154; idem, "What is a Scholarly Persona? Ten Theses on Virtues, Skills, and Desires," *History and Theory* 53:3 (2014), 348–371; Mineke Bosch, "Scholarly Personae and Twentieth-Century Historians. Explorations of a Concept," *Low Countries Historical Review* 131:4 (2016), 33–54.

35 Following Herman Paul's approach, in this book I engage exclusively with the concept of scholarly persona, since Muḥammad-Said Saidov was a scholar. The concept can also be applied to individuals beyond scholarly circles: *Muslim Subjectivity in Soviet Russia: The Memoirs of 'Abd al-Majid al-Qadiri,* ed. by Alfrid Bustanov & Vener Usmanov (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 36–50.

Archival Persona

The investigation of Saidov's persona will be based on an exploration of his personal archive and the library he amassed throughout his life. The repertoire of private libraries reflects the personal choice of their owners. In my study of personal and institutional libraries I make use of statistical analysis of the genres and individual works held, and their authors. This helps to understand the mechanics in archiving a concrete type of persona. Statistical analysis of the contents of the state, private and mosque libraries in Daghestan reflects the dynamics of intellectual developments over the last two centuries. A preference for certain genres reveals personal tastes and the inner logic of the depositary in question.[36] Therefore, a word of clarification is needed for the terms *library*, *collection*, and *archive*.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'library' as "a place set apart to contain books for reading, study, or reference" and "a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, and the duty of rendering the books accessible to those who require to use them."[37] For David Lankes, the library is a facilitated space, stewarded by librarians, and dedicated to creation of knowledge and learning.[38] In contrast, the term 'collection' refers to a number of objects gathered together and viewed as a whole, such as works of art. This meaning is closely connected with the idea of the museum, where historical objects are arranged in collections.[39] Objectification without circulation is key

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36 Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, Ilona Chmilevskaya, "Building an Archival Persona: The Transformation of *Ijāza* Culture in Russia, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 12 (2023), 216–252; Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Archives of Discrimination: The Evolution of Muslim Book Collections in Daghestan," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 15 (2024) 82–109.

37 "Library," Oxford English Dictionary https://www-oed-com.proxy.uba.uva.nl/view/Entry/107923?rskey=sqGaso&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid Consulted online on 12 June 2023.

38 David R. Lankes, *The New Librarianship Field Guide* (The MIT Press, 2016), 95.

39 John E. Simmons, *Museums: a History* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 2–8; James Currall, Michael Moss, and Susan Stu-

to collections. A library contains sources of knowledge, while a collection hosts curious objects of the past.

Throughout the book I distinguish between the terms 'library' and 'collection'. In a library, the books are meant for meaningful engagement leading to the production and transmission of knowledge. This is the reason why the form of books (manuscript or printed ones) often does not matter to the practitioners. I use the term 'collection' to speak of those bodies of artefacts that escape circulation and use. In practice, of course, the types could overlap, depending on practices associated with the books. A library inherited by Sovietized children ignorant of Islamic learning turns into a silent collection. Often state repositories obscure their holdings, thereby similarly transforming the libraries into collections.

Next to *library* and *collection*, in the book I also speak of Saidov's *archive*. James Pickett and Paolo Sartori have pointed out that researchers often tacitly reconcile themselves to the conventional notion of the modern archive, which is almost always associated with European bureaucratic practice.[40] Brinkley Messick proposed to speak of library and archive as interdependent textual domains that encompass books and documents. He defines the library as a set of literature for reading, copying, and teaching, whereas he conceives of the archive as a set of documents as a result of interaction with the library.[41] As will be shown in Chapter 4, scholars created libraries to support a type of persona. In interaction with the library the new forms of knowledge emerged – this is the realm of selfhood, manifested, for examples, in the numerous notes inserted in books.

Of course, these are ideal types. In practice, Saidov had his own take on the library and archive that did not spatially intersect – he kept them separately for different purposes. The library was for research and teach-

art, "What is a Collection?" *Archivaria. The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists* 58:1 (2004), 132.

40 James Pickett, Paolo Sartori, "From the Archetypical Archive to Cultures of Documentation," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62 (2019), 773–798.

41 Brinkley Messick, *Shari'a Scripts: A Historical Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 20–23.

ing, while the archive kept the results of this interaction with literature. This distinction practised by Saidov was a product of Soviet influence, and one that eases my project: to look for his persona I study his library, which is now held at the Institute of History in Makhachkala, but for manifestation of his personhood I have to turn to his archive, which is partly still kept at his former home. Naturally, once Saidov's papers made their way to the state repository, they were discursively converted in a collection named after him.[42]

Textual Self-Representation

Another form of scholarly persona is reflected in the autobiographical essays of Daghestani literati. With the transformation of intellectual landscape and shifts in models, authors adopted their narrative versions of the self, identifying their preferences in scholarship, position in hierarchies, their opinion on the historical events, and other value judgments.[43] Writing about others in the biographical texts served the function of describing certain desirable (and undesirable) personal qualities.

Authors could choose to omit some details of their lives that would show them in a bad light.[44] For instance, when parents describe their relationship with children, they rarely mention taking recourse to physical punishment. As Rudolf Dekker points out, however, people's widespread

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42 For more details about Saidov's library, collection and archive, see Chapter 3.

43 Jeroen Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life Reading and Writing in Early Modern Dutch Diaries* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2009); *Controlling Time and Shaping the Self. Developments in Autobiographical Writing since the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf M. Dekker and Michael James Mascuch (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2011); Giovanni Ciappelli, *Memory, Family, and Self Tuscan Family Books and Other European Egodocuments (14th-18th Century)* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2014); *Theoretical Discussions of Biography. Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, ed. by Hans Renders and Binne de Haan (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2014).

44 Elizabeth Hafkin Pleck. *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of Social Policy Against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 205.

tendency not to mention corporal punishment scarcely means that parents never beat their children.[45] Omission of facts does not make sources less valuable. Such omissions reveal views held by the author who would try to conceal aspects of private life. Still, I am not aiming at revealing the true biographies of individuals. My goal rather is to examine how an individual's subjectivity might dictate the appearance and omission of facts. Such narrative devices, including self-censorship, play a major role in building a scholarly persona. Authors would thus write about themselves vis-à-vis other individuals and define their persona through the articulation of those ideas that were expected of them.

Autobiographies serve the goal of defining a type of scholarly persona. This literary genre allows for self-fashioning in multiple versions, be that the scholarly persona of a jurist (*faqīh*), teacher (*mudarris*), Sufi shaykh or Soviet poet as one can see in the Chapter 5. These combinations in autobiographies embody "the habits, virtues, skills, or competencies necessary to be a good scholar," as suggested by Herman Paul.[46]

In the respective chapters of this book, I examine the formation of various types of scholarly personae in private libraries and collections and autobiographical writing and demonstrate a range of variants that one could employ for writing the self.

Self

Muslim subjectivity takes shape at the intersection of institutions and social relations. Individuals inscribe themselves into a version of the scholarly persona of their liking. However, on the level of the self an individual deals with the messiness of everyday life and inner uncertainties. Part of this life experience finds expression in ego-documents, defying easy classifications on the level of personal engagement with the world.

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45 Rudolf Dekker, "Jacques Presser's Heritage: Egodocuments in the Study of History," *Memoria y Civilización* 5 (2002), 23.

46 Herman Paul, "Introduction: Scholarly Personae: What They Are and Why They Matter," 6.

What we see on the level of the self can intersect or contradict with the persona(s) built by the individual. The self is situational and works *ad hoc* without any particular coherent choice of a public image.

Let us look at Saidov's diary with his Arabic notes recounting events dated between 26 March 1969 and 25 April 1970.[47] His language here is often highly refined and builds on Daghestani written tradition: when describing a friendly visit to his home he uses the more religiously-colored word *zāra* and not the conditional *jā'a* or *waṣala*[48] to denote personal encounter,[49] thereby conveying the sense that the interaction involved blessing from God. When someone died, Saidov used the verb *intaqala*[50] for Muslims and *māta*[51] for non-Muslims, so as to make a religious distinction between the two groups.[52]

In Daghestan, it is a custom to visit the grave on the fortieth day after death to perform Qur'ānic recitation at the grave – a behaviour that is associated with Sufi practices. Saidov held reformist views and criticised Sufi practices, and thus might be expected to have disapproved of such rituals. In the diary, however, we read that forty days after his wife's brother passed away, she went to recite the Qur'ān at his grave, and Saidov did not prohibit her from doing so.[53] There is no mention of any objection or critique. In the same diary, however, when discussing academic affairs, Saidov writes in plain Russian.[54]

There is no way we can discern a consistent single type of persona out of these sporadic and somewhat contradictory aspects of the diary. Saidov did not make an effort to construct a version of his self in this literary format, unlike in his works on religious topics or academic writ-

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47 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Ba'ḍ yawmiyyāt*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 121.

48 Both words mean "to come"

49 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Ba'ḍ yawmiyyāt*, fols. 2a–4b.

50 That is, "he departed from the transient world to the realm of eternity; he passed on to the mercy of God".

51 That is, "passed away, died"

52 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Ba'ḍ yawmiyyāt*, fol. 6a.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., fols. 9a–10a.

ing. The diary was a genre with loose borders where Saidov felt free to express himself without a fear of compromising his scholarly persona.

The Structure of This Book

The organisation of the book reflects the approach briefly outlined above, i.e., starting with a broad overview of the history of behavioural models in Daghestan, then proceeding to the scholarly personae that Saidov adopted and engaged with, and then finally examining the complexities of personal life on the level of the self. In the first chapter, I draw on an analysis of Islamic literature in the region from between the 18th and the 20th centuries to identify five models of persona. I describe in sequence the features of the 'moral', 'esoteric', 'legal', 'reflective', and 'reformist' models of subjectivity. Each model mirrors a take on the cultivation of the ideal personality. For instance, the moral subject model took inspiration primarily from the works of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) with particular attention to ethics and ritual. Other models reveal a combination of ethics and occult practices; an emphasis solely on legal principles at the expense of Sufism and esoteric practices; a connection to Naqshbandi practices and associated emotional experience; a focus on modern education, or a preference for rational approach to the main sources of Islam.

In the second chapter, I examine the intellectual legacy of Muḥammad-Said Saidov to explore how various diverse Islamic subject models were inhabited, contested, and reconfigured within the life and writings of a single scholar. Saidov's position within the reformist model – defined by rationalist scripturalism and critique of Sufi practices – was shaped not only by theological concerns but also by broader ideological tensions, including the legacy of Soviet secularism and the epistemic authority of Orientalist scholarship. Through an analysis of his marginalia, editorial notes, and commentaries, I demonstrate that while Saidov rejected Sufism as a valid mode of Islamic practice, he seriously engaged with Sufi texts, often reframing them through reformist lenses. Ultimately, the chapter traces how Saidov embodied a layered intellectual sub-

jectivity, marked by both a principled rejection and a selective appropriation of the models that had shaped the Islamic tradition in Daghestan.

In the third chapter I study how private and institutional libraries of Islamic literature were formed and functioned during the Soviet period. The preservation, transformation, and even destruction of such collections were crucial for maintaining a scholar's archival profile. These distinctive features become especially evident when we consider the state collection in Makhachkala that provides a holistic view on the ranges of books in the region. Here I trace the important role played by Saidov in establishing the manuscript collection at the Institute of History, thereby operating at the intersection of Muslim and Soviet archival principles. Although Saidov was employed at a secular Soviet academic institution, the collection of the Institute – largely established through his efforts – ironically operated, due to his initiative, much like a traditional Islamic *waqf*[55] library, similar to those that had been prevalent in pre-Soviet Daghestan.

In the fourth chapter I analyse three private libraries that were created in the 20th century, including the one that belonged to Saidov. Each of these collections contains a distinct variety of genres sharply different from what we find in the state collection in Makhachkala. The genres and repertoires of works in these collections signaled the scholarly personae of the people who amassed and preserved them. The array of Arabic poetry, history, lexicography and biographical literature in Saidov's collection together served as a tool of self-description against the background of regional and cosmopolitan intellectual trends. In particular, we will see how the holdings in his collection attest variously to the traditionalist, reformist and Soviet modes of self-fashioning that Saidov mastered in his lifetime.

In the fifth chapter, I move from the archives as a space of subjectivity to an investigation of the role played by (auto)biographical and ha-

[55] *Waqf* (pl. *awqāf*): "charitable endowment", means the transfer or assignment of certain property for charitable or spiritual purposes. Property allocated for charitable purposes can be not only real estate, such as houses or lands, but also books and collections.

giographical works and other narrative modes in constructing the scholarly persona. Through description of the self and others, these works served to express an ideal form of personality. Such accounts either celebrate a single model or incorporate elements from various of the models described in the first chapter. With the help of several examples – all stemming from Saidov's collection – I demonstrate possible combinations in the narrative construction of subjectivity. Saidov was inspired by these works and interacted with this literature both as a scholar[56] and a private individual. Some of the authors whose life accounts I study in the chapter were personally known to Saidov.

In the sixth chapter, I turn to the most intimate dimensions of Saidov's personality – his sense of self and subjectivity as a father, husband, and both an Islamic and Soviet scholar. Saidov's autobiographies produced between 1948 and 1973, his diaries and brief memoirs prove invaluable for this task. Saidov's autobiographies largely conform to the conventions of the genre as observed in the Soviet period, which reflects the fact that they were written at least in part for official purposes.[57] As we shall see, Saidov's official autobiography in Russian tellingly differs significantly from what he wrote in his Arabic-language memoirs, poetry, notes, and letters. It is in this realm that we find the unbound manifestation of the self that is difficult to categorize.

According to his colleagues, Saidov was not talkative and hardly expressed any emotion in public. His daughter and grandson, by contrast, describe him somewhat differently: they reveal a personality full of emotions, just as we see in his memoirs. It seems, however, that the terrible years of the state terror taught him to hide his feelings from public. Self-control meant safety. It was only at home that he could be himself,

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56 M.S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," 118–123. M.-S. Saidov, *Materialy k tvorchestvu Ali Kaiaeva*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 29, *opis'* 1, no. 31, 60 fols.

57 For autobiographical accounts written in the Soviet bureaucratic workflow, see: Igal Halfin, *Terror in my soul: Communist autobiographies on trial* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Yurii Zaretskii, "Moia zhizn' dlia Gosudarstva: Massovaia praktika sostavleniia deloproizvodstvennykh avtobiografii sovetskimi liud'mi," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 3:157 (2019), 107–127.

surrounded by children and his beloved wife. Family was crucial to him, as we see in his letters, which are full of love and joy.

In the seventh chapter, I examine Muḥammad-Said Saidov's engagement with Islamic biography and historiography as a means of constructing and projecting a distinctive scholarly persona situated at the intersection of Islamic intellectual tradition and Soviet academic discourse. Central to this analysis are four of his key works: an Arabic-language conference paper, a Russian bio-bibliographical list, an Arabic-language compilation entitled *Fawā'id al-munajjima*, and a study on anti-colonialism and the critique of Orientalism. Together, these texts constitute a coherent intellectual project, wherein biography, history, and polemic are mobilised to affirm Saidov's dual identity as both a Muslim scholar and a Soviet intellectual. His works also reflects a growing discomfort with the dominance of colonial knowledge structures; he condemned Orientalism as a form of cultural subjugation, particularly where it intersected with missionary influence and post-imperial educational norms.

In these four writings, Saidov gave articulation to his hybrid subjectivity, wherein it is often difficult to differentiate between the secular and the Muslim facets. These works demonstrate the creative engagement of their author with various different intellectual traditions depending on time and place. Saidov integrated his academic background into the Islamic written tradition, while also incorporating his understanding of the Islamic literary tradition into his scholarly works.

These writings demonstrate Saidov's selective appropriation of classical Islamic genres such as *ṭabaqāt* and *manāqib*, as well as his adaptation of Soviet scholarly conventions. Rather than uncritically reproducing Islamic biographical models, Saidov reworked them to fit a modern epistemic framework – embedding them with themes of moral authority and institutional legitimacy. His historiographical strategies not only preserved the memory of Daghestani scholars, but also positioned Saidov himself as an heir to their legacy and as a critic of both Western Orientalism and internal cultural amnesia.

His works reflect a sustained attempt to reconcile inherited ethical models with the discursive demands of Soviet scholarship, allowing for the continuity of Islamic thought under conditions of ideological con-

straint. In this chapter, Saidov emerges not merely as a compiler of names but as an architect of Islamic intellectual history in twentieth-century Daghestan. This was, truly, a performance of scholarship. Saidov was a true heir of the epistemic tradition to which he apprenticed himself in both the academic and religious domains.

CHAPTER 1

Sufism and the Models of Ideal Personality

In 1963, Muḥammad-Said Saidov wrote a letter to Babajan Gafurov, Director of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, expressing a desire to meet him and discuss the proposed publication of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa bustān al-daqā'iq*, a work by the Sufi shaykh Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Darbandī (d. 1145).[58]

Saidov's proposal might at first glance appear unsurprising, given that many classical works by Muslim authors were being translated and published by Soviet orientalists at that time. But his eagerness to publish the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* sits curiously alongside what we know of Saidov's earlier life. In the 1920s and 1930s, Saidov had been an active participant in various theological disputes, in which he voiced a very negative opinion on Sufism, as can be seen in his abundant notes and letters in Arabic. So what prompted Saidov, who had previously accused Sufis of a lack of belief and proclaimed Sufism to be a teaching that runs contrary to *sharī'a*, to want to devote years to compiling a glossary of Sufi terms and seek to publish this work? As we consider Saidov's personality through his self-reflective approach to Sufism that was manifested in two opposing views, one critical of Sufism and the other eager to study it, we are bound to ask the following series of questions: What place did Sufism and Sufi literature have in Saidov's worldview and creative output? Why did Saidov turn his attention to a Sufi book by al-Darbandī, which was at that point little-known in the Daghestani Muslim tradition? And how does Sufi literature sit within a wider domain of moral and intellectual edification?

Sufism and the discussions surrounding it have been significant topics for Muslim scholars in Daghestan since at least the mid-17th century. Attitudes towards Sufism – whether to adhere to its teachings or to criticise them – have profoundly influenced the behavioural patterns of Muslims in the region. For some, Sufism is perceived as the only path to cultivating an ideal Muslim, while others regard it as a doctrine that contradicts *sharī'a* and is, therefore, incapable of fostering an ideal Muslim. Con-

[58] *Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Babajan Gafurov.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 516.

sequently, Sufism and the varying attitudes towards it have played a pivotal role in shaping diverse conceptions of the ideal Muslim personality.

Saidov's conception of Sufism as a behavioural model, along with its interaction with Sufi literature at the academic level, demonstrates the complex interweaving of behavioural models within both Islamic and academic contexts. In this present chapter, I will examine the various behavioural models associated with Sufism that were prevalent among Daghestani Muslims between the 17th and the 20th centuries.

Academic scholarship identifies three stages in the emergence and evolution of Sufism. The first stage, which covers the 8th–9th centuries, saw the emergence of the mystical way and the development of its main concepts. In this period the early Sufis, who had accepted the notion of God existing outside space and time and being transcendental, began to cultivate a range of non-rational experiences in order to understand the essence of God. The second stage, which covers the 10th–12th centuries, was the period of codification of Sufi terms, the establishment of the canons and the emergence of internal hierarchy. It was in this period that Sufis formulated the main concepts, terms, and principles of Sufism. This stage in the evolution of Sufism is marked by the emergence of Sufi retreats – the *ribāṭ*, the *zāwiya*, *khalwa*, the *tekke* – which are the first steps of Sufi institutionalisation. The early Sufi associations were fluid in terms of composition and very mobile. Meanwhile, they already had Sufi teachers, and whoever came to such a retreat was under Sufi masters's supervision.

Finally, the third period, which covers the 12th–16th centuries, saw the emergence and evolution of various Sufi brotherhoods. This stage is characterised by the further development of Sufism within the confines of specific fraternities with already formulated principles and methods of ritual practices, which took their names from the founders of such fraternities. From around the 12th century, Sufi brotherhoods began to emerge centered around Sufi retreats or *ribāṭ*s, forming the *ṭarīqa*s or active Sufi schools led by shaykh.[59] As Alexander Knysh suggests, during

[59] A.K. Alikberov, *Epokha klassicheskogo islama na Kavkaze (Abu Bakr ad-Darbandi i ego sufiiskaia entsiklopediia "Raikhan al-khaka'ik» 11 – 12 vv.)* (Moscow: Vo-

the stage of institutionalization, Sufism incorporated and formalized several unique spiritual practices and meditation methods that have since come to define it. These practices included activities such as spiritual seclusion (*khalwa*), the practice of remembering God (*dhikr*), and mystical gatherings (*samā'*). This process generally occurred when a group or circle formed around a teacher and turned into a school seeking to promote his name, ways and methods of learning, as well as the ritual practices and lifestyles introduced by him. This was the way in which such brotherhoods as the Qādiriyya, named after its founder 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gilānī (d. 1166); the Rifā'iyya, started by Aḥmad b. Rifā'ī (d. 1182); the Shādhiliyya, attributed to Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258); and the Naqshbandiyya, associated with Bahā' al-Dīn al-Naqshbandī (d. 1389) and others, were established.[60]

Sufism played an important role in the spread of Islam in medieval Daghestan. Since the 11th century Sufi literature has occupied an important place in the local intellectual tradition. A number of Sufi shaykhs were prominent missionaries, as evidenced by numerous epigraphic monuments in the Eastern Caucasus dating back to the period between the 13th and the 17th centuries.[61] In the 15th and 16th centuries there were centres in Daghestan that specialized in the copying of Sufi literature.[62] This tra-

stochnaia literatura, 2003), 236–241.

60 Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: a Short History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000), 169–244.

61 M.S. Neimat, *Korpus epigraficheskikh pamiatnikov Azerbaidzhana. Tom 1. Arabo-perso-tiurkskie nadpisi Baku i Apsherona 11 – nachala 20 veka* (Baku: Elm, 1991), 12, 18–22, 25–28; L.I. Lavrov, *Epigraficheskie pamiatniki Severnogo Kavkaza na arabskom, persidskom i turetskom iazykakh. Chast'1* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 63–64, 87, 140; T.M. Aitberov, "Epitafii shaikhov Safaviia, Khalwatiia i Sukhravardiia v Dagestane: k istorii Irano-Dagestanskikh sviazei 15 v.," *Dagestan i Musul'manskii Vostok*, ed. by A.K. Alikberov, V.O. Bobrovnikov (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Mardzhani, 2010), 179–188; A.R. Shikhsaidov, *Epigraficheskie pamiatniki Dagestana 10–17 vv. kak istoricheskii istochnik* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 33–34, 172, 242–243; M.A. Musaev, Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, "Nadmogil'nye stely kontsa 13 – nachala 14 vekov kladbishcha s. Shiri," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriia 13: Vostokovedenie* 2 (2020), 107–126.

62 A.R. Shikhsaidov, N.A. Tagirova, D.Kh. Gadzhieva, *Arabskaia rukopisnaia kniga v Dagestane* (Makhachkala: IIAE DNTs RAN, 2001), 48–49.

dition continued until the end of the 17th century. In the 18th century one can observe a degree of waning interest in Sufism in the local written tradition. In the 19th century, however, as a result of the wide spread of the Naqshbandi brotherhood in the region, interest in Sufi literature increased sharply. At the beginning of the 20th century, the ideas of Muslim reformism began to spread in Daghestan. The reformists criticised Sufism and certain Sufi practices, eliciting a resistance from the Sufis themselves, who began to write works legitimizing Sufi rituals.

The vast corpus of Sufi literature is of immense value in enabling us to examine how authors perceived their Muslim identity and attempted to integrate their understanding of what it means to be an ideal Muslim into their personal lives. I have discovered hundreds of Sufi texts in a wide range of private and state collections in Daghestan. My database of Sufi manuscripts shows what texts Muslims read in different periods and what inspired and guided their religious life. These texts show a multiple understanding of how an ideal Muslim should be brought up. The views of Muslim scholars – proponents and opponents of Sufism alike – can be seen to have evolved over time. In tracing this evolution, I have been able to classify these shifting views in accordance with their particular understandings of the ideal Muslim personality. Focusing on the period between the 17th and early 20th centuries, I conceptualize these views on Sufism as behavioural models of cultivating an ideal Muslim. In accordance with the Sufi literature disseminated during this period in Daghestan, I propose a clasification of five behavioural models.

Each of these models presents a vision of the ideal Muslim, and each model offers an account of how, through immersion in ethical norms or following a certain set of practices, individuals can approach this ideal. The notion of an ideal Muslim was a practical rather than a theoretical concept. Given the high authority of the Muslim elite in Daghestani society, it was the teacher (*mudarris*), the scholar (*ʻālim*) and the judge (*qāḍī*) who served as examples of the righteous way of life and performed key practical steps in the upbringing of an ideal Muslim through sermons and instructive storytelling. Representatives of each model had their own vision of what it meant to be an ideal Muslim and promoted this vision within the community. In the case of Saidov, we can see that

since he was aware of this multitude of models and had himself taken part in discussions of Sufism and Sufi practices, he effectively cultivated his own repertoire of behavioural models, availing himself of certain models while rejecting others.

The Moral Subject

The inclusion of Derbend within the cultural oecumene of the Arab Caliphate and later the Seljukid State resulted in the development of close scholarly and educational ties between Derbend's Muslim elite[63] and the countries of the Near East. From the 11th century onwards, some inhabitants of Derbend were educated at the famous al-Niẓāmiyya madrasa in Baghdad.[64] The close intellectual ties between Daghestani scholars and Baghdad led to the proliferation of educational literature associated with the al-Niẓāmiyya in Daghestan. The works of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, the prominent Muslim scholar and Sufi, were to remain important in the Arabic literature of Daghestan for many centuries.

My years of the fieldwork experience in Daghestan have shown that nearly every private or mosque collection contains some works by al-Ghazālī. The following texts by him or attributed to him were particularly widespread in Daghestan: *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, *Minhāj al-'ābidīn*, *Jawāhir al-Qu'rān*, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, *Salwat al-'ārifīn*, *Bidāyat al-hidāya*, *Ayyuha l-walad*, *Dhikr al-mawt*, *al-Wajīz*, *Qawā'id al-'aqā'id*, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, *al-Mawā'idh fī l-aḥādīth al-qudsiyya*, *Kitab al-arba'īn fī uṣūl al-dīn*, *al-Durra al-fākhira fī kashf 'ulūm al-ākhira*. Despite the rich legacy left by al-Ghazālī in various fields of knowledge, including Sufism, Muslim law and dogma, his considerable popularity in Daghestan was nevertheless mostly as a Sufi shaykh; his works were regarded as the principal source on matters of Muslim ethics for a number of centuries.

63 Here Derbend means not only the city of the same name, but also the nearby Muslim regions.

64 A.K. Alikberov, *Epokha klassicheskogo islama na Kavkaze*, 267–268.

One of al-Ghazālī's most popular works in Daghestan was the *Bidāyat al-hidāya*. This work itself largely echoes al-Ghazālī's main study, the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, and serves as an abbreviated compendium of this latter.[65] While the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* was intended for a certain milieu of advanced intellectuals, the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* was meant for students who did not possess a sufficiently in-depth knowledge of law, Sufism, and religious doctrine to master the complexities of the longer work.[66]

Structurally, the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* consists of an introduction and two main parts. Al-Ghazālī begins the work by addressing a reader, by implication a student embarking on a course of Islamic sciences. He instructs the reader that it is necessary to strive for mastery of sciences, not because it brings a high authority or riches, but simply in order 'to set Muslims on a path of truth'.[67] Al-Ghazālī points out that there should be only one single motivation for the study of sciences, namely to transmit knowledge to others regarding the true path in order to please God. Otherwise, the knowledge obtained will be disastrous for the scholar himself on the Day of Judgment. After this, al-Ghazālī proceeds to provide a definition of three types of scholars according to their respective motivations for gaining knowledge. The first type of scholar studies the sciences in order to use of this knowledge in his everyday life and thus to gain the pleasure of God and to ensure bliss in the next life. According to al-Ghazālī, this is the only path for which it is necessary to gain knowledge. The second type of scholars are those who study the sciences in order to obtain wealth, honour and respect in this earthly life, even

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65 A.A. Khismatulin, "Posobiia imama Mukhammada al-Gazali dlia studentov," *Minbar. Islamskie issledovaniia* 1:11 (2018), 119–125.

66 For the importance of ethics in al-Ghazālī's legacy see: Justin Parrott, "Al-Ghazali and the Golden Rule: Ethics of Reciprocity in the Works of a Muslim Sage," *Journal of Religious and Theological Information* 16:2 (2017), 68–78; Yasen Mohamed, "The Ethics of Education: al-Isfahani's al-Dhari'a as a Source of Inspiration for al-Ghazali's Mizan al-'Amal," *The Muslim World* 101 (2011), 633–357; Muhamed Ahmed Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue.* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975); Stefan Reichmuth, *The World of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1732–91): Life, Networks and Writings* (Oxford: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2009), 279–298.

67 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Bidāyat al-hidāya* (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2004), 59–60.

despite being aware that this is a base aim. The third type of scholars are those who seek knowledge solely for worldly purposes, deliberately wishing to obtain wealth or an influential position among other people and not seeking to gain God's pleasure. Al-Ghazālī warns his readers not to be a scholar of the second or third kind.[68] Al-Ghazālī's main idea is that knowledge should be sought for the sake of knowledge itself, for the sake of gaining God's pleasure, and for the sake of teaching 'the true path' to others.

The main text of the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* consists of three parts. In the first part, al-Ghazālī provides an accessible discussion of three main issues falling into the sphere of Muslim ritual practice (*'ibāda*): ritual purity (*ṭahāra*), obligatory prayer (*ṣalāt*), and fasting (*ṣawm*). The second and third parts of his work are dedicated to the ethical norms that a Muslim needs to follow, as well as the ethics of his inner communion with God. Al-Ghazālī does not simply explain the necessary actions to be performed during ritual ablutions or prayer: he also considers additional prayers which he says are very desirable to read from the point of view of Muslim ethics. The idea of morality as a key category that defines an ideal Muslim imbues all his treatises. Moreover, al-Ghazālī also pays close attention to the upbringing of an ideal Muslim from the point of view of education.[69]

In contrast to most legal works written by Muslin jurists, including al-Ghazālī himself, the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* places particular emphasis on ethical matters. In this work, al-Ghazālī presents the legal norms of ritual practices as being closely intertwined with ethics. In his study, the ethics behind each performance (awakening, ritual washing, meals, going to bed) are placed centre-stage, and are tightly interwoven with normative practices. This means that al-Ghazālī's understanding of an ideal Muslim does not simply imply someone who complies with all five mandatories of Islam, but rather envisages someone whose ethical norms are closely tied to rituals.

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68 Ibid., 63–65.

69 Hamid Reza Alavi, "Al-Ghazali in Moral Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 36:3 (2010), 309–319.

This focus on spirituality, on a Muslim's place in society from a moral standpoint, is the main characteristic of al-Ghazālī's works. Particularly in the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* he classifies three categories of Muslim. The first, highest, category of Muslims are those who do good to people by fulfilling their wishes. In al-Ghazālī's opinion, such Muslims reach the level of angels, who are without sin, in terms of their moral qualities. The second category includes those who do not do good to Muslims but nor do they cause any harm. He compares such people to animals or inanimate objects. The third category, meanwhile, are those who cause harm to the community by acting in defiance of ethical norms. Al-Ghazālī compares this third kind of people to predators, scorpions and snakes that harm people.[70] Thus, in al-Ghazālī's view, an individual's merely complying with the mandatory precepts of Islam is insufficient for becoming an ideal Muslim. The ideal Muslim is instead that individual who not only complies with the precepts of Islam but also does good to people and the community. Ethical norms interwoven with rituals are thus essential preconditions for nurturing an ideal Muslim.

One notable characteristic of the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* is that it does not include chapters on such subjects as the alms-tax (*zakāt*) and pilgrimage (*ḥājj*), which traditionally feature prominently in legal texts. This is explained by the fact that the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* was intended specifically for students, who were concerned primarily with three main precepts: ritual purification before prayer, the ritual prayer itself, and fasting. Students were exempt, meanwhile, from the annual *zakāt*, and their limited financial resources meant that they were unlikely to be required to perform pilgrimage, which is an imperative only for those with the financial means of doing so. This perhaps explains why al-Ghazālī omitted these mandatory norms.

The popularity of al-Ghazālī's works in Daghestan can be explained by the fact that his strong emphasis on personal spiritual self-improvement found fruitful soil against the background of the emergence and development of Sufism in 14th- to 17th-century Daghestan. Students were the target audience of the *Bidāyat al-hidāya*, and the goal of this work

70 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Bidāyat al-hidāya*, 114–115.

was primarily to facilitate the nurturing of an ideal Muslim rather than the training of a Muslim law master. In this work al-Ghazālī focuses primarily on the matters falling within the scope of cult practices (*'ibāda*) closely intertwined with matters of Sufi ethics, rather than on the theory of Muslim law or an in-depth interpretation of the of the Muslim legal system. The *Bidāyat al-hidāya* was thus very different from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, whose target audience were Muslim theologians with a certain degree of experience under their belt.

Al-Ghazālī's works on Muslim ethics were widely read in Daghestan for a number of centuries. My analysis of Daghestani manuscript collections reveals the repertoire, chronology, and geography of the provenance of al-Ghazālī's works in Daghestan. For instance, out of over 5,000 items in all genres kept at the collection of Islamic manuscripts of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography, there are 105 works by al-Ghazālī, i.e., a little over 2% of the total number of texts. Given that works on ethics and Sufism as a whole account for a little over 4% of the total, nearly a half of all these Sufi works are by al-Ghazālī.[71] One can see the same picture in private collections as well.

Correlating the geography and chronology of the spread of al-Ghazālī's works in Daghestan reveals a fascinating picture. Thus, the earliest manuscript of a work by al-Ghazālī to have been found in Daghestan is his famous *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, copied in Baghdad on 7 Dhū l-ḥijja, AH 586/11 September 1191 AD.[72] The collection of the Institute of History in Makhachkala also contains some works by al-Ghazālī copied in the 15th–16th centuries in Iran or other Near Eastern countries. The earliest manuscript by al-Ghazālī to have been copied in Daghestan is his *Minhāj al-'ābidīn*. This manuscript was copied in AH 772, i.e., between 2 August

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71 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev (ed), *Kratkii katalog arabografichnykh rukopisei IIAE DFITs RAN,* 2016–2020. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3*, opis'* 1, no. 953, 1980 pages.

72 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 909. See: A.B. Khalidov, A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Rukopisi sochinenii al-Gazali v Dagestane," *Vestnik Instituta Istorii, arkheologii i etnografii* 2 (2006), 36–65.

1370 and 22 July 1371.[73] A small number of other works by al-Ghazālī were also brought to Daghestan; these had been copied in the 15th–16th centuries in Iran or other Near Eastern countries. From the 16th century onwards, manuscripts of works by al-Ghazālī that were copied in Daghestan begin to oust manuscripts that had been copied in the Near East. Overall, the analysis of nine private and state collections of Islamic literature reveals the following quantitative metric for the chronological spread of al-Ghazālī's manuscript works in Daghestan [tab. 1]:[74]

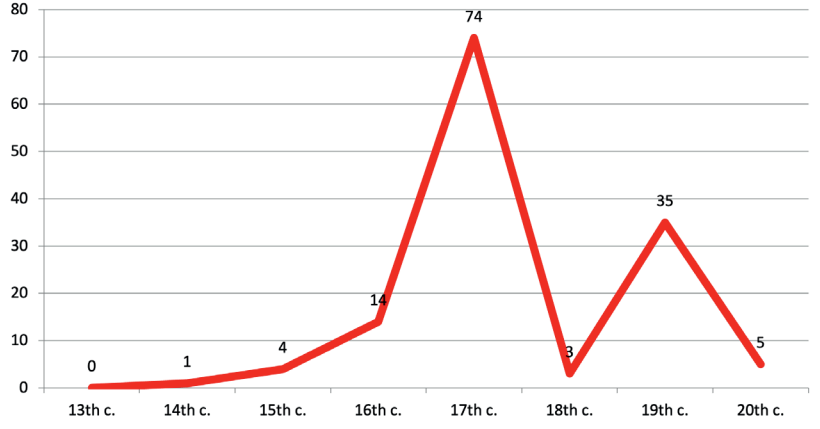


Table 1. The copying of al-Ghazālī works in Daghestan.

As one can see in table 1, the vast majority of works by al-Ghazālī held in Daghestan were copied in the 17th century, more in the first than in the second half. The period from the late 17th century to the first half of the 18th century sees the disappearance of interest in al-Ghazālī's treatises in Daghestan. In this period, his works were very rarely copied. Only three texts copied in the 18th century can be found in private and mosque collections today. One of these is *Ayyuha l-walad*, copied on 1–30 Muḥar-

[73] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Minhāj al-ʿābidīn.* Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2465.

[74] The tables presented below are based on the analysis of nine collections in Daghestan, including those from state, private, and mosques, totaling approximately ten thousand items, including manuscripts and old printed books.

ram 1131 / 24.11 – 23.12.1718.[75] Another copy of the same text was copied in 1140 / 19.08.1727 – 06.08.1728.[76] The third text is *Dhikr al-mawt*, copied in 1171 / 14.09.1767 – 2.09.1768.[77] All the remaining dated manuscript copies of al-Ghazālī's works were produced in Daghestan either before the 18th century, or in the 19th and 20th centuries. As for undated copies of al-Ghazālī's works, these were either written on locally produced paper, as is typical for 16th–17th-century Daghestani manuscripts, or on Russian manufactory-produced paper, which was mass-exported into Daghestan in the early 19th century. The vast majority of al-Ghazālī manuscripts were copied either in the 17th century, or, to a lesser extent, between the middle and end of the 19th century. In the 20th century, al-Ghazālī's works were once again very rarely copied in Daghestan. The Daghestani orientalist Amri Shikhsaidov also pointed out that the 18th century saw a disappearance of interest towards al-Ghazālī's works in Daghestan.[78] This is also corroborated by my own experience of archeographical fieldwork between 1998 and 2021 and research the database of dozens collections.

This uneven amplitude in the chronology of copying al-Ghazālī's works is fairly clear, and can be explained by certain models of Sufism being replaced by others. In the 15th–17th centuries, al-Ghazālī was effectively the only author whose treatises on Sufi ethics as a whole Muslim ethics and in particular enjoyed widespread circulation in the region. The au-

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75 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Ayyuha l-walad*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 1882 (f).

76 Ibid., Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 368 (c).

77 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Dhikr al-mawt*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 613.

78 Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala, 13 August, 2006). Professor Amri Shikhsaidov was my superviser during my work on PhD dissertation. Moreover, I participated in annual expeditions led by Amri Shikhsaidov where he had told me huge amounts about himself, the history of Soviet Oriental studies, Islamic book cultures, about his colleagues and friends who passed away. Our relationship was a close one, less that of superviser and student than of grandfather and grandson. Some of his stories I wrote in my notebook, others were recorded by myself. I conducted my last extensive interview with Amri Shikhsaidov at his home in Makhachkala on 19 February, 2019, shortly before his death. In this book I use all his tales and memoirs told me by him during our field trips as well as interviews with him.

thority of al-Ghazālī was probably so high in Daghestan at the time that Daghestani scholars began to copy him widely, even despite the fact that al-Ghazālī was not included in the chain of spiritual authority (*silsila*) of the *ṭarīqa*s which were widespread in Daghestan. The cooling of interest by people in Daghestan towards Sufism as a whole and towards al-Ghazālī's works in particular during the late 17th and early 18th centuries was due to the fact that Sufism was replaced by another model, which placed attention on rationalism rather than the esoteric experiences of Sufism. In this period, one can see a drift away from emphasis on Sufi ethics towards a more emphatically legal tradition. My study of manuscript collections in Daghestan indicates that between the late 17th and early 19th centuries Sufi literature was only rarely copied. Interest in al-Ghazālī in Daghestan revived again from the first third of the 19th century, in part due to the beginning of the spread of Naqshbandi networks in Daghestan, when the Sufi ethics widely represented in al-Ghazālī's works fitted organically into Naqshbandi theory and practice. In the first third of the 20th century, interest in al-Ghazālī once again waned. In this case, this diminished interest in his works can probably be explained by the proliferation of reformist Muslim ideas, and the resultant pivot towards the Qur'ān and Sunna as the key sources for a re-evaluation of Islamic theory and practices.

In outlining the 'moral subject' model, I have thus conceptualized this model with reference to the period when al-Ghazālī enjoyed popularity in Daghestan. Al-Ghazālī has a strict approach to Sufi practices, which he deems licit only if they comply with the Sunna. In contrast to other Sufi shaykhs, al-Ghazālī accords attention to non-rational experiences only when he discusses the knowledge of God, who is above all definitions. In his works, ritual practices are closely intertwined with a deep dive into moral aspects; he thus avoids extreme exaltation of Sufism. Al-Ghazālī promotes a rigorist version of Sufism and as he evaluates Sufi practices according to their compliance with *sharī'a*, he seeks to bring Sufism as close as possible to *sharī'a*. According to al-Ghazālī, asceticism (*zuhd*), trust in God (*al-tawakkul*), divine love (*'ishq*), acceptance of one's earthly lot (*riḍā'*), and endurance of the privations of secular life (*ṣabr*) are necessary prerequisites for the formation of an ideal Muslim.

Al-Ghazālī's Sufism was not an elite movement. In al-Ghazālī's works, there are no complicated Sufi rituals intended solely for a particular elite milieu. Al-Ghazālī addresses all Muslims and formulates his ethical precepts for the Muslim community (*umma*) as a whole. The accessibility of al-Ghazālī's works for readers had a profound influence on the standards of behaviour in society and on moral aspects of a Muslim's life. In al-Ghazālī's works, the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*) serve simultaneously as an illustration of ideal Muslim behaviour and as an irreproachable authority in matters of law, dogmatics and ethics. At the same time, the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad in al-Ghazālī's writings is somewhat de-emphasised in comparison to other models that I will discuss below, where the Prophet Muḥammad's life, emotions, and behaviour are the subjects of greater focus as the identifying hallmarks of an ideal person.

The Esoteric Subject

During the 16th and 17th centuries, around the same time that al-Ghazālī's works enjoyed their widest circulation in Daghestan, another body of literature was circulating also in the region. These were treatises of the Khalwatiyya Sufi brotherhood. Originating in Shirvan, starting from the 16th century this brotherhood began to spread in southern Daghestan.[79] Gradually moving northwest, it spread to Central Daghestan and finally reached Western Daghestan.[80] The available Sufi genealogies of this

[79] Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, "Srednevekovyi Daghestanskii sufii Sheikh Amir al-Mishlishi i ego ziiarat v selenii Mishlesh," *Islamovedenie* 3:9 (2011), 105–111; Idem, "Novye dannye araboiazychnykh epigraficheskikh pamiatnikov po istorii sufizma v Dagestane," *Islamovedenie* 4:14 (2012), 97–102; T.M. Aitberov, "Epitafii shaikhov Safaviia, Khalwatiia i Sukhravardiia v Dagestane: k istorii Irano-Dagestanskikh sviazei 15 v.," 179–188.

[80] Sh.M. Khapizov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, "Sufiiskii orden Khalvatiia v gornoi Avarii: novye stranitsy istorii sufizma v srednevekovom Dagestane (16–17 vv)," *Islamovedenie* 8:1 (2017), 70–81.

brotherhood show the existence of the Khalwatiyya shaykhs in different regions of Daghestan during the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries.[81]

The history of the spread of this brotherhood and its theory and practice has already attracted the attention of researchers.[82] Nevertheless, the Daghestan branch of this brotherhood still remains unexplored, in stark opposition to the large body of existing work on the Khalwatiyya in Egypt or in the Ottoman Empire. Since this brotherhood is distinguished by a variety of branches, it is important to take into account the ritual differences that existed among its branches across different regions.[83] The beliefs and practices associated with the Daghestan branch of the Khalwatiyya characterise what I refer to as the 'esoteric subject' model.

A distinctive feature of this model is its emphasis on esotericism, i.e., occult knowledge. Occult conceptualizations in this model are experiences of self-improvement. Given the complex rituals, as well as the elitism characterizing this model, the Khalwati shaykhs are an example of the ideal type of a Muslim that Sufi disciples (*murīd*s) should strive for.[84] According to the Khalwati shaykhs, Sufis follow the orders of God better than other people, and they avoid all the things that God prohibits. In their opinion, Sufis cleanse their hearts of defilement and are therefore 'purer' than others.[85] Thus, the activity of the Khalwatiyya in Daghestan was conditioned by a concern to confine the brotherhood to a narrow, limited circle of people. The Khalwatiyya was therefore an 'elite' brotherhood, but one that at the same time remained marginal within Daghes-

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81 The text of the Khalwatiyya spiritual genealogy is kept in the private possession of the author.

82 See: John J. Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire. The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350–1650*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Saude, Hamka, Kasmiati, "Tracing the Khalwatiyah Order in the Tolitoli Regency Central Sulawesi," *Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 19:1 (2021), 101–119.

83 J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 69, 74–78.

84 Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī, *Silsilat al-maṣnū'āt*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 1919 (b), f. 6b.

85 Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-ma'ārif* (Cairo: Maktabat al-thaqāfa al-dīniyya, 2006), 57.

tan. This combination of elitism and marginality is typical of the Khalwatiyya in other regions as well.[86]

Having originated from a predominantly Persianate region, the Khalwatiyya bore the clear influence of Twelver Shi'ism. The Khalwati shaykhs attributed their spiritual genealogy (*silsila*) to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who was an admired figure amongst this brotherhood's proponents.[87] For example, the Daghestani Khalwati shaykh Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī (d. 1560s) alluded in his writings to the sacred meaning of the number 12, as the basic formula of monotheism practised in this brotherhood, noting for instance that the phrase 'there is no deity but God' (*lā ilāha illa 'llāh*) contains exactly 12 Arabic letters. In this litany practice (*dhikr*), the angel Jibrīl revealed it to the Prophet Muḥammad and instructed him to teach it to his cousin and son-in-law, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.[88] Moreover, as al-Zirihgerānī wrote, when the Prophet Musa struck a rock with his staff, 12 founts were hammered into this place.[89] Clearly, this number 12 has a direct reference to Twelver Shi'ism.

Interest in the occult meaning of Arabic numbers and letters (*'ilm al-arqām wa-l-ḥurūf*) is widely characteristic of the followers of this brotherhood. Khalwatiyya shaykhs often attribute sacred meanings to certain terms, uncovering these meanings through the magic of letters and numbers. So, in the term '*faqr*' (i.e., poverty), they distinguish three root letters - *f-q-r*. According to the Khalwati shaykhs, '*f*' stands for the dissolution in the essence of God (*al-fanā'*), '*q*' for the approach to the knowledge of God (*al-qurba*) and 'r' for the ability to contemplate God

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86 Saude, Hamka, Kasmiati, "Tracing the Khalwatiyah Order in the Tolitoli Regency Central Sulawesi," 101–119.

87 J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 75.

88 In the context of the connection between Jibrīl and 'Alī through the Prophet Muḥammad, the Shī'ī scholar Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, better known as Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa al-Ṭūsī, transmits a narrative in which Jibrīl instructs Imām 'Alī in supplication. The account reveals that 'Alī did not initially recognise Jibrīl, prompting the Prophet Muḥammad to inform him that the man in question was indeed Jibrīl. See: Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* (Beirut: Mu'assasat fiqh al-shī'a, 1991), 420.

89 Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī, *Silsilat al-maṣnū'āt*, ff. 7b–8a.

(*al-ru'ya*).[90] The Khalwatiyya brotherhood also paid close attention to the interpretation of the saying by the Prophet Muḥammad: 'Whoever sees me in a dream will see me when he is awake; Satan (*Iblīs*) cannot take my shape'.[91] A disciple (*murīd*) was required to tell his dreams to his shaykh, who then determined which degree of righteousness his *murīd* had attained.[92] This emphasis on the occult sciences is a primary characteristic of the 'esoteric subject' model. Such emphasis is perhaps linked with the spread in Daghestan of works on the magic of numbers and letters, as well as on the distribution of genre interpretation of dreams (*ta'bīr al-ru'yā*).[93]

In the 'esoteric subject' model, the persona of the Prophet Muḥammad plays the same role as in the 'moral subject' model that we considered above, where it serves as shorthand for the figure of the ideal Muslim, and an exemplar for ethical norms of behaviour. At the same time, the 'esoteric subject' model actualises the importance of Sufi shaykhs, who were believed to be spiritual heirs of the Prophet Muḥammad.[94] Thus, Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī wrote that there were two types of emissaries from God. The former, who he referred to as 'the main ones' (*al-aṣlī*), are the prophets. The latter, who he called 'the derivative ones' (*al-far'ī*) are the Sufi shaykhs who "were sent by God to the Muslims through the Prophet Muḥammad," and who "are the spiritual heirs of the Prophet Muḥam-

90 Ibid., f. 3a.

91 Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ; ḥadīth,* no: 6994.

92 Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī, *Silsilat al-maṣnū'āt,* fol. 4a. See also: J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 158.

93 Practically all of the hundreds of private and state collections of Islamic manuscripts contain several copies of excerpts and writings on occult sciences; see: Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic) Occult Science Science?" *Theology and Sciences* 18:2 (2020), 303–324. The development of occult sciences among Russian Muslims has only recently become the object of scholarly interest; see Alfrid Bustanov, "The Occult Turn in Russian Islamic Studies", *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 40:2 (2022), 218–258.

94 The Prophet Muhammad is regarded in Islam as the ideal Muslim, whose example believers are enjoined to emulate through adherence to the Sunna. While affirming the Prophet's moral perfection as an unattainable ideal, the Khalwati Sufis portrayed their shaykhs as those who had come as close as humanly possible to embodying it.

mad" and whom Muslims "must unconditionally believe in everything."[95] Ignoring the genealogy of the jurists, the shaykhs of this branch advance Sufi authority further – something which is unacceptable according to the 'moral subject' model that we discussed above.

Another characteristic of the 'esoteric subject' model is its limited integration of ethical principles with legal norms, in contrast to what we observed with reference to the 'moral subject' model. At the same time, the 'esoteric subject' model is characterised by a deep immersion in cosmography and an esoteric interpretation of the origin of the universe in Muslim dogma. A striking example of this is the *Ṭifl al-ma'ān*, a treatise by Yūsuf al-Muskurī (d. 1475), a prominent Khalwati shaykh from Shirvan, where he gives an esoteric account of the origin of the world, angels, and Divine light.[96] Such a bias towards an esoteric explanation of dogma is closely intertwined with numerology. Moreover, the magic of letters was generally considered to be a main characteristic of this model. The magic of numbers and letters, interpretation of dreams and esoteric interpretation of the origin of the world in the context of dogma was clearly not available to lay uneducated Muslims. This monopoly of knowledge and a turn to elitism was characteristic of the Daghestani branch of the Khalwatiyya. This brotherhood left little room for ordinary Muslims, and remained largely elitist and exoticised.

It is noteworthy that there was hardly any interest in Daghestan in the work of another major shaykh: Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī. Among around several hundred private collections discovered in Daghestan, only three manuscripts of his works have been found so far: *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*,[97] copied in Daghestan in the 1680–90s, *Jadwal*,[98] copied in AH 1287 / 2.04.1870–21.03.1871, and *Mawāqi' al-nujūm wa maṭāli' ahillat*

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95 Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī, *Silsilat al-masnū'āt*, f. 10b.

96 Yūsuf al-Muskurī, *Ṭifl al-ma'ān.* Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2597 (c).

97 Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 1735.

98 Idem, *Jadwal*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2962.

al-asrār wa-l-ʻulūm, copied in the late 19th century.[99] There are no references to works by Ibn ʻArabī on the margins of manuscripts on Sufism copied in Daghestan. Clearly, Ibn ʻArabī's ideas of pantheism, which imply a unity between God and the surrounding world (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), were not popular among Daghestani Sufis.[100] Al-Ghazālī's moderate Sufism was evidently regarded in Daghestan as preferable to the more 'extreme' version of Sufism represented by Ibn ʻArabī.[101]

The Khalwati shaykhs maintained close intellectual links between themselves. They imposed extremely strict criteria on anyone who sought to become part of their circle. For instance, before being admitted to the brotherhood, novices had to go through a gruelling initiation ritual (*ḥilla*), which placed special emphasis on asceticism (*zuhd*). It was not until they had completed the *ḥilla* that novices were allowed to become full members of the brotherhood. Initiation into the brotherhood was accompanied by a complex ceremony, which included forty days of solitude (*khalwa*) and additional prayers focusing on asceticism.

In comparison with al-Ghazālī's works, Khalwatiyya treatises outline a model of behaviour that is substantially narrower and highly limited in its application. This limited applicability is evidenced by the significantly smaller number of Khalwatiyya works that were distributed in Daghestan than of those by al-Ghazālī [tab. 2]. The Sufi texts connected to the Khalwatiyya that were distributed in Daghestan are *Aʻlām al-hudā* and *ʾAwārif al-maʻārif* by Abū Ḥafs ʻUmar b. Muḥammad al-Suhravardī (1145–1234/35), *Silsilat al-maṣnūʻāt* by Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī and *Ṭifl al-maʻān* by Yūsuf al-Muskurī.

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99 Idem, *Mawāqiʻ al-nujūm wa maṭāliʻ ahillat al-asrār wa-l-ʻulūm*. Daghestan State University's Library, no. P-244.

100 See more about Ibn ʻArabī in: A.V. Smirnov, *Velikii shaykh sufizma (opyt paradigmal'nogo analiza filosofii Ibn Arabi)* (Moscow: Nauka, Vostochnaia Literatura, 1993); *Ibn al-ʻArabi. Mekkanskie otkroveniia (al-Futukhat al-makkiia)*, perevod s arabskogo, vvedenie, primechaniia i bibliografiia A.D. Knysha (Saint Petersburg: Tsentr PV, 1995).

101 See more on the contradictions in the views of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʻArabī in: I.R. Nasyrov, "K voprosu o roli Ibn ʻArabi v istorii islamskogo mistitsisma," *Filosofskaia antropologiia* 2:2 (2016), 90–109.

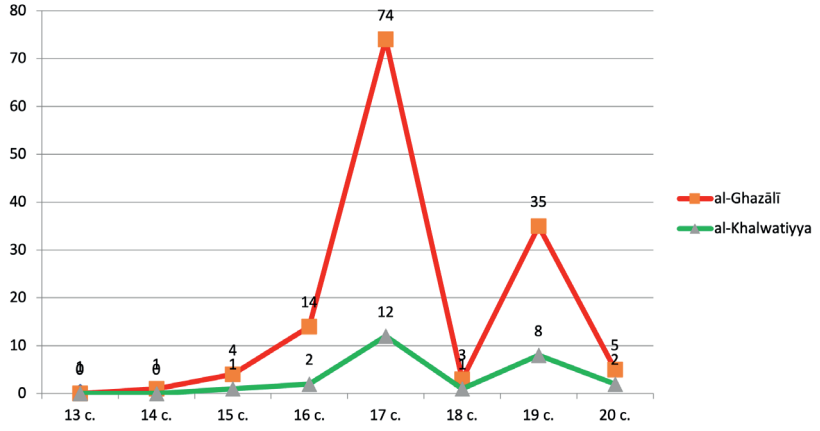


Table 2. The copying of works of al-Khalwatiyya and al-Ghazālī in Daghestan.

As we can see in the table 2, the largest number of manuscript copies of such works were produced during the period spanning from the second half of the 16th to the first half of the 17th century. This corresponds to the era in which the Khalwatiyya was at the height of its influence. In the 19th century, interest in the works of the Khalwati shaykhs grew again. This was due to the beginning of the spread of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood in Daghestan which engaged with both the ethics immersion characterised by al-Ghazālī and the esotericism of the Khalwatiyya.

In view of the Shī'a motifs in the Khalwatiyya, the works of al-Ghazālī, who adhered to strict Sunni positions, seem to have acted as a kind of counterbalance for the Khalwatiyya shaykhs. Al-Ghazālī's form of moderate Sufism, which maintains a close association with legal norms, clashed with the Khalwatiyya. This latter brotherhood was often criticised by adherents of al-Ghazālī's 'moral subject' model due to their deep engagement in occult practices, which were viewed as potentially questionable from a legal standpoint. Therefore, these two models were not combined, but rather coexisted in the 16th and 17th centuries. Moreover, these models directly competed with each other, doubtless because they advocated completely divergent ideas. We can observe similar confron-

tations with and criticisms of the Khalwatiyya shaykhs in other regions of the Islamicate world.[102]

The Legal Subject

The interest in Sufism in Daghestan declined markedly at the end of the 17th century. The activity of Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Quduqī (1652–1717), from the Avar village of Kudutl in northwestern Daghestan, is partially responsible for this decline. As we shall see, the works of al-Quduqī form the basis of what I term the 'legal subject' model.

After receiving his education in Daghestan, al-Quduqī went to Egypt and Ḥijāz to continue his studies. In Mecca, he met the Arab scholar Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī (1637–1697), under whom he studied for many years and then returned to Daghestan.[103] After he returned to his homeland, al-Quduqī founded networks of Islamic education which extended beyond the borders of Daghestan and had a certain impact on the Muslims in the Volga-Ural region.[104] Shortly before his death, he went on a second

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102 James Muhammad Dawud Currie, "Kadizadeli Ottoman Scholarship, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, and the Rise of the Saudi State," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26:3 (2015), 265–288; Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789–1889. Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), 147–170.

103 A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Al-Kuduki," *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, ed. by S.M. Prozorov, Issue 2 (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1999), 51–52; Rebecca Gould, "*Ijtihād* against *Madhhab*: Legal Hybridity and the Meanings of Modernity in Early Modern Daghestan," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57 (2015), 35–66; Michael Kemper, "*Ijtihad* into philosophy: Islam as cultural heritage in post-Stalinist Daghestan," *Central Asian Survey* 33:3 (2014), 391–392.

104 Shihāb al-Dīn al-Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār fī aḥwāl Qazān wa Bulghār.* (Kazan: Tipo-litographiia Imperatorskogo universiteta, 1900), Vol. 2, 219–220; Muḥammad Murād al-Ramzī, *Talfīq al-akhbār wa talqīḥ al-āthār fī waqā'i' Qazān wa Bulghār wa mulūk al-tatār* (Orenburg: Parovaia tipo-litographiia tovarishchestva "Karimov Khusainov i Ko", 1908), Vol. 2, 413–414.

pilgrimage to Mecca, but he fell ill during the journey to the holy city and died in Aleppo in 1717.[105]

Returning to Daghestan after his first trip to Mecca, Muḥammad al-Quduqī began an extensive teaching career in the region. He and his disciples systematized the learning process. They did so by introducing a fixed curriculum – one which left out the works of many authors who were popular in Daghestan prior to the second half of the 17th century. Under his influence, the fields of logic and Islamic law began to occupy a central position in education. Although some alterations to al-Quduqī's curriculum were made in the following centuries, the basic syllabus retained the structure that al-Quduqī imposed upon it.[106] From the end of the 17th century to the start of 19th in Daghestan Sufi manuscripts were largely replaced by works on grammar, logic and Muslim law.

The analysis of manuscripts colophons copied in Daghestan indicates that unlike the 13th–16th centuries, when education was either emulating the Near Eastern *majlis*, or was individually structured, under al-Quduqī the madrasa type acquired a more formal institutional structure. Moreover, al-Quduqī in one of his legal decisions (sing. *fatwā*) classified madrasa students as one of the categories eligible for the payment of *zakāt*, that the economic foundation of the madrasa system was laid down. Al-Quduqī's *fatwā* led to a widespread establishment of madrasas which were maintained by the mandatory *zakāt* paid by the community members. Al-Quduqī's follower Ibrāhīm al-'Uradī (d. 1771), a prominent jurist, issued a similar *fatwā* where he equated students with the poor, meaning that the *zakāt* must be paid to students as well.[107] These *fatwā*s played an important role in the material support of madrasas and as a result, the

105 M.A. Musaev, "Materialy k biografii Mukhammada, syna Musy al-Kuduki," *Vestnik Instituta istorii, arkheologii i etnografii* 3 (2013), 61–70.

106 See: Michael Kemper, Shamil Shikhaliev, Qadimism and Jadidism in Twentieth-Century Daghestan, *Asiatische Studien - Études Asiatiques* 69:3 (2015), 593–624; Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, Amir R. Navruzov, Shamil Sh. Shikhaliev, "Islamic Education in Soviet and post-Soviet Daghestan," *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States*, eds. by Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika and Stefan Reichmuth (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), 107–167.

107 Al-hājj Ibrāhīm al-'Uradī, *Mas'alat al-zakāt*. Mosque collection of Karabudakhkent village. no. 6, fols. 10b–11a.

widespread distribution of madrasas networks in Daghestan since 17th century [tab. 3].

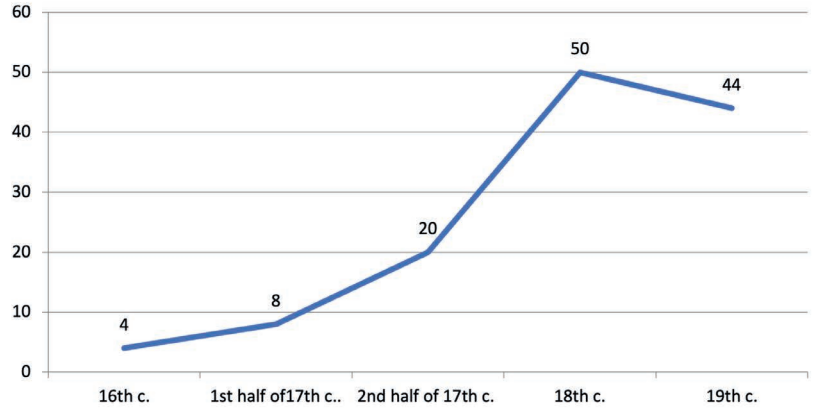


Table 3. The spread of madrasas in Daghestan.[108]

It is important to explain here why I have conceptualized the writing of al-Quduqī and his followers as constituting a distinct model, and what was the main difference between this model and the two previous ones. The significant point is that the views of al-Quduqī and his followers were focused primarily on legal theory and rational sciences instead of Sufism. Moreover, Arabic sources tell us that al-Quduqī, like his teacher Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī "criticised Sufism and Sufis, considering their path and brotherhoods contrary to Islam and the *sharī'a*."[109]

The rationalism of al-Quduqī and his disciples is reflected in his views on Islamic dogma and Sufism. Like his teacher, Muḥammad al-Quduqī adhered to the rationalistic positions of the *Mu'tazilī* school and

108 The graph is based on the author's study of colophons of Daghestani manuscripts in several dozen state and private collections of manuscripts, which mention their copying in local madrasas.

109 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥarb al-ahliyya fī Dāghistān*. Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev (b. 1962). Ms 209, fol. 2a. See also: Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-ṭālī' bī maḥāsin man ba'd al-qarn al-sābi'*, 289.

was therefore highly critical of the Sufi emphasis on metaphysical experience as a source of divine knowledge.[110] In contrast to the 'moral subject' and 'esoteric subject' models, the 'legal subject' model is centrally concerned with Islamic law. This focus means that the 'legal subject' model was of importance to a range of different social strata in Daghestani society.[111] To al-Quduqī and his followers, an ideal Muslim is one who strictly observes the norms of the Shāfi'ī legal system. In other words, the Sufi interpretation of a 'pious Muslim' as immersed in asceticism and the practice of moral self-improvement is largely replaced by an emphasis on legal norms, especially the area of law that deals with interpersonal relations (*mu'āmala*).

In the 'legal subject' model exemplified by al-Quduqī and his followers, there is ample room for individual subjectivity. Unlike the Sufi tradition, where the ultimate goal is to abandon one's selfhood (*nafs*) and completely dissolve oneself in the essence of God, the 'legal subject' model focused on the Muslim's individuality as a specific subject in his relationship with God (*'ibāda*) and with other people (*mu'āmala*). In contrast to al-Ghazālī, who takes the view that, without proper immersion in ethical norms, the implementation of cult practices (prayer, fasting) is insufficient for producing the ideal Muslim, scholars of the 18th century took the view that legal norms outweighed ethics. Unlike al-Ghazālī's emphasis upon the sole imperative to 'benefit others', al-Quduqī and his followers formulated complex systems of legal norms

110 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qaḥī, *Wasā'il al-murīd wa rasā'il al-ustādh al-farīd* (Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2011), 335. Ḥasan-efendī al-Alqadārī, *Jirāb al-Mamnūn* (Temir-khān Shūrā: al-Maṭba'a al-islāmiyya li Muḥammad Mirzā Mawrāyūf, 1912), 279–281; Shamil Shikhaliev, "*Taqlīd* and *Ijtihād* over the Centuries: The Debates on Islamic Legal Theory in Daghestan, 1700s – 1920s," *Sharī'a in the Russian Empire. The Reach and Limits of Islamic Law in Central Eurasia, 1550–1917*, ed. by Paolo Sartori, Danielle Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 245–254; M.A. Musaev, "Materialy k biografii Mukhammada, syna Musy al-Kuduki," 62.

111 V.O. Bobrovnikov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Fikkh i musul'manskii obychai v rossiiskom Dagestane: istochniki i issledovaniia* (Saint Petersburg: Prezidentskaia biblioteka, 2017), 14–23.

to govern behaviour in hereditary, criminal, administrative and a range of other matters.

This is the view that starts to be dominant in Daghestani society starting from the time of al-Quduqī and throughout the 18th century. Legal writings, legal discourse, and the focus on the norms of Muslim law came to predominate people's concerns at the expense of Sufism and Sufi ethics. Rationalism, plus the sceptical attitude of al-Quduqī and his school towards the non-rational experience of Sufis, coincided chronologically with a decline in the relative importance of Sufi literature within the written tradition as a whole. In these conditions, a deep exploration of ethics seen in the works by al-Ghazālī becomes a matter of secondary concern.

Starting from the end of the 17th century and continuing until the first third of the 19th century, the 'legal subject' model occupies a dominant position in Daghestani society. The table below [tab. 4] illustrates the spread of copying manuscripts on Sufism and Muslim Law in Daghestan.

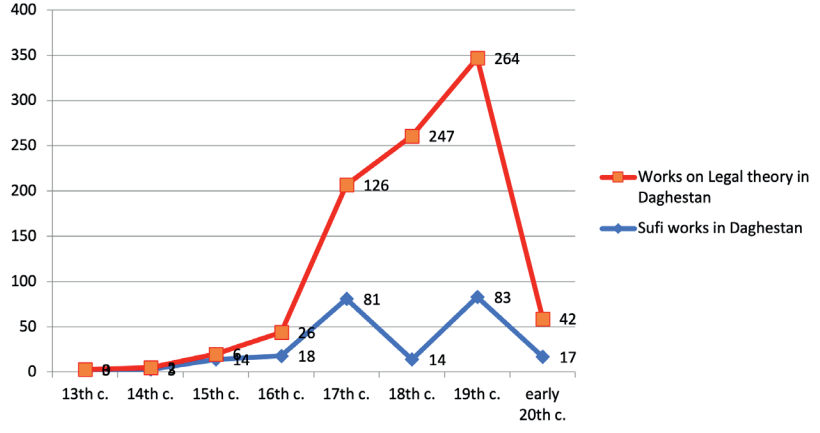


Table 4. The copying of works on Muslim Law and Sufism in Daghestan.

We see in table 4 that during the 18th century Sufi literature occupied an insignificant place in the region. Daghestani scholars in the 18th century stopped copying the works of al-Ghazālī as well as other Sufi texts. A legal focus became dominant in Daghestan throughout the 18th and the first third of the 19th century. Until the ideas of the Naqshbandiyya broth-

erhood started to spread in Daghestan, the influence of al-Quduqī's 'legal subject' model remained dominant in the region.

A key feature of the 'legal subject' model was an increased interest in the figure of the Prophet Muḥammad. This interest was directed to his invocation of particular legal norms. The model was deeply invested in the question of what the Prophet Muḥammad said during his life, and how his statements should be applied to the legal field. At the same time, however, the model was profoundly suspicious of any Sufi interpretation that associated the personality of the Prophet with that of particular shaykhs, or that sought to present particular shaykhs as the heirs of the path of the Prophet. Prominent in the 'legal subject' model is an interest in *ḥadīth*, both as a source for Islamic law and as the sole behavioural model for the community to emulate. While in the 'moral' and 'esoteric' subject models the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad serves as an exemplar for ethical norms of behaviour, in the 'legal subject' model his personality plays a role of authority in legal norms.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, the heyday of the 'legal subject' model was marked simultaneously by an upswing of interest in Muslim law and a development of natural sciences, on the one hand, and a decrease in interest in Sufi literature in general, on the other. The orientation towards a rational interpretation of the Qur'ān and Sunna when taking legal decisions was crucial for this model.[112] Legal norms were foregrounded, and the workings of the rational human mind were regarded as constituting the prime means of becoming the ideal Muslim. Rationalism and reason thus defined what is permitted and forbidden in legal norms, emphasising the individual's personal responsibility. Within this model Sufi principles of morality were downgraded to the status of conventionalized behaviour, while esotericism and occult sciences were mostly rejected.

112 V.O. Bobrovnikov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Fikkh i musul'manskii obychai v rossiiskom Dagestane: istochniki i issledovaniia*, 12–51.

The Reflective Subject

At the start of the 19th century, Sufi ideas became again popularized across the region. This renewed interest was the result of the concomitant emergence of the Naqshbandiyya and, later, in the 20th century, the Shādhiliyya brotherhoods.[113] The resultant 'reflective subject' model pays most attention to forms of ritual practice that are closely intertwined with Sufi ethics, widely represented in the 'moral subject' model. In contrast to the first model, here specific emotions (like joy), personal experiences, and even external sensations (such as warmth in the heart, a pleasant aroma, and an increased intake of air into the lungs) are attributed to the proper execution of specific Sufi practices (*dhikr*, *rābiṭa*, *murāqaba*). These elements are seen as crucial indicators of the 'correct' cultivation of an ideal Muslim. I conceptualize the outlook of this reinvigorated Sufism as the 'reflective subject' model.

Despite the differences between branches of the Naqshbandiyya and Shādhiliyya in terms of certain ritual practices such as *dhikr, rābiṭa* and initiation of novices to the brotherhood, I have nevertheless associated both branches with this single shared model. This is due to the fact that most internal discrepancies and disagreements over ritual practice and the like were confined to discourses amongst the spiritual elite: they thus had little bearing on the life of the wider population, and on the behavioural model in general.

Over the course of the 19th century, the Naqshbandiyya spread throughout Daghestan and the Volga-Ural region. Then, in the early 20th century, the Naqshbandiyya unified with the Shādhiliyya brotherhood represented by the Daghestani shaykh Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov (1853–1919). The latter possessed several Sufi 'licences to teach' (*ijāza*s), including Naqshbandi, Shādhili, and Qādiri *ijāza*s that he received from Tatar

113 Michael Kemper, "Khālidiyya Networks in Daghestan and the Question of *Jihād*", *Die Welt des Islams* 42:1 (2002), 41–71; Shamil Shikhaliev, "Sufi Practices and Muslim Identities in Naqshbandi and Shadhili Lodges in Northern Daghestan", *Islam and Sufism in Daghestan,* edited by Moshe Gammer (Sastamala: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2009), 43–56.

shaykhs in the cities of Troitsk and Astrakhan.[114] After his return to Daghestan, Bashlarov made some changes to the organisational structure of the Naqshbandiyya, unifying it with Shādhili practices.[115] Shortly before his death, he transferred all the Sufi *ijāza*s he had received in the Ural region to the Daghestani shaykh Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qaḥī (1852–1937) from the Avar village Kakhib, who already had possessed Naqshbandi *ijāza*s from two Daghestani shaykhs, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAsawī (d. 1907) from the Avar village of Assab and Shuʿayb al-Bāginī (1856–1912) from the Avar village of Baginub. These latter two shaykhs belonged to a branch of the Maḥmūdiyya, which had subsequently absorbed the Daghestani and Volga-Ural branches of the Maḥmūdiyya as well as a Shādhili branch, and has continued to develop in Daghestan throughout the Soviet period, until the present time.

The analysis of written sources points to a geometric progression in the expansion of Naqshbandi Sufi networks during the tsarist period. Each Naqshbandi shaykh left behind several followers, each of whom in turn left several heirs behind. All of this led to a situation where there were dozens of Naqshbandi shaykhs belonging to different branches in Daghestan by the start of the Soviet period. The expansion of these Sufi networks was evidently a crucial way for Muslims to define and articulate their selfhood during the periods of tsarist and Soviet rule. Unlike the consciously elite Khalwatiyya brotherhood, the Naqshbandiyya and particularly the Shādhiliyya made a point of creating accessible educational resources in order to broaden their appeal to the masses – in which undertaking they were highly successful.[116]

The dissemination of Sufi networks also led to the renewed interest of Daghestani scholars in Sufi writings. Together with the spread of the

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114 Shamil Shikhaliev, Michael Kemper, "Sayfallāh-Qāḍī Bashlarov: Sufi Networks between the North Caucasus and the Volga-Urals," *The Piety of Learning. Islamic Studies in Honor of Stefan Reichmuth*, ed. by Michael Kemper, Ralf Elger (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2017), 166–198.

115 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, "Sufiiskie virdy Nakshbandiia i Shaziliia v Dagestane," *Vestnik Evrazii* 3:37 (2007), 137–152.

116 Michael Kemper, "Khālidiyya Networks in Daghestan and the Question of *Jihād*," 60–68.

Naqshbandiyya in Daghestan during the 19th century, one can also see a revival of interest in the work of al-Ghazālī and older Sufi texts. One can see the features of this model across numerous treatises of Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykhs.[117] The majority of these works share a similar structure, and discuss similar themes and issues. Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumuqī's (d. 1866) *Adāb al-marḍiyya fī ṭarīqat al-Naqshbandiyya* is one of the earliest works in the region dedicated to the ethics and ritual practice of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood.[118]

Structurally, the work consists of an introduction and eleven chapters. In the introduction, al-Ghāzīghumuqī writes that the first step of a novice starting out in a *ṭarīqa* should be to learn the mandatory attributes of God. Thus, novices had to learn and grasp with their hearts the foundational attributes of Islamic doctrine, in this case interpreted by the *Ash'arī* theological tradition. Moreover, the novice should to have a sound knowledge of the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad.[119] The emphasis here on the personhood of the Prophet Muḥammad is a distinct feature of the 'reflective subject' model of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the works of Naqshbandi shaykhs, the Prophet Muḥammad is personified as the example of an ideal Muslim. This partly reflects the origins of the Naqshbandiyya, where all known strands in the spiritual genealogy of the Naqshbandi brotherhood (*silsila*) are traced back to the Prophet Muḥammad himself. The Prophet Muḥammad is thus an immediate presence in the Naqshbandiyya, whose lifestyle and biography (*sīra*) must be studied as an example that Sufis should follow. Within the 'reflective subject' model, the *ḥadīth* serve not so much as instructions, but rather as a personified example of an ideal Muslim.

Further, al-Ghāzīghumuqī writes that a beginner disciple should also be aware of various Muslim practical regulations, including guidelines for ablutions, ritual bathing, the removing of filth, the conditions and order of prayer, and the fasting. Just like in the case of the *Bidāyat al-*

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117 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, "Dagestanskaia sufiiskaia literatura 19 – nachala 20 vekov", *Islamovedenie* 2 (2009), 75–91.

118 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumuqī, *Adāb al-marḍiyya fī ṭarīqat al-Naqshbandiyya* (Petrovsk: Tipo-litografiia A.M. Mikhailova, 1905).

119 Ibid., 5.

hidāya by al-Ghazālī, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumuqī focuses on such ritual matters while again making no mention of alms-tax (*zakāt*) and pilgrimage (*ḥājj*).

The main part of the *Adāb al-marḍiyya* begins with the first step in the *ṭarīqa*, namely repentance (*tawba*). For al-Ghāzīghumuqī, this is the first and one of the most important rituals without which a person may not purify himself of sin or continue on the path of spiritual self-improvement.[120] The author speaks further of the need to purify one's soul of deplorable character traits and to fill it with commendable qualities. He observes that people are prone to low animal passions and moral failings, and states that the only way a human being may escape these is by following the *ṭarīqa* path. "He who guards himself against deplorable qualities and cultivates commendable qualities within himself, follows in the footsteps of the Prophet Muḥammad and the virtuous saints," the author writes at the end of this chapter.[121] As we can see, the author once again focuses attention on the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad as he stresses that Sufism is the way of the Prophet Muḥammad, who showed Muslims 'the true path'.

Al-Ghāzīghumuqī describes the successive stages of Naqshbandi ritual practice, namely initiation into the brotherhood, practices of individual and collective (*khatm*) *dhikr*, *rābiṭa*, and solitude (*khalwa*). Describing the practice of *dhikr*, al-Ghāzīghumuqī writes:

> Before performing *dhikr*, the disciple (*murīd*) must imagine that he is sinful and weak, that he has no will of his own and that he fully relies on the mercy of God Almighty. He must imagine that he has died and been wrapped in a shroud in buried in a grave, and that people have left and he has remained alone in a dark grave, and has appeared before God in a humiliated, submissive state… The *murīd* must constantly keep in his heart the image of his shaykh, in his presence, behave self-deprecating-

120 Ibid., 6.
121 Ibid., 26.

> ly, be ready for self-sacrifice for the sake of one's shaykh, and not contradict him in anything.[122]

In his description of the relationship between shaykh and *murīd*, another Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykh, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, wrote that the disciple should behave towards the shaykh "like a dead person, whose body lies in front of the one who washes him. He should not contradict his shaykh in anything; he should forget that he has his own soul."[123]

In other words, according to the shaykhs an ideal Muslim must necessarily be a Sufi, and must unquestioningly follow along the path the shaykh leads him, fully placing himself in his teacher's hands. The *murīd* must suppress in himself any inclination to express his subjectivity. The only form of self-expression permitted to a Sufi should be reflected in his subjective experience when performing certain practices, and should be directed inward to his own senses rather than outward. The Naqshbandiyya-Shādhiliyya emphasises the importance of sensual emotionality as evidence that rituals have been correctly performed. For example, Sufis should experience a rapid heartbeat, while energy is transmitted through divine-energy reception (*laṭā'if*), rapid breathing, or a specific fragrance. Similar explanations of sensory perceptions that Sufis should feel are found in almost all Naqshbandi works. For example, Naqshbandi authors describe what physical sensations the *murīd* should experience when performing particular practices: when performing *rābiṭa*, for instance, the *murīd* should sense a pleasant smell; when performing *murāqaba*, a pleasant trembling in the heart; and when performing *dhikr*, a pleasant warmth.[124] This attention to the sensual results of ritual practices characterised the works of various Naqshbandi shaykhs in the region. Since these sensory perceptions cannot be rationally explained, Sufi shaykhs emphasised that it is impossible to understand God by means of rational

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122 Ibid., 43, 71.

123 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qahī, *Tanbīh al-sālikīn ilā ghurūr al-mutashayyikhīn* (Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2010), 444. Idem, *Burūj al-mushayyada bi-l-nuṣūṣ al-mu'ayyada* (Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2011), 153, 362.

124 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qahī, *Talkhīṣ al-ma'ārif fī targhīb Muḥammad 'Ārif* (Damascus: Dār al-nu'mān li-l-'ulūm, 1998), 231, 314.

intellection. They thus stressed the importance of the close connection between *murīd* and his shaykh, a connection that takes place through an esoteric experience. A *murīd*'s placing himself in the hands of shaykhs is therefore not a denial of subjectivity: rather, his denial of his will and his strict obedience to his shaykh is in fact a manifestation of his subjective personhood. All these sensory perceptions, and their regularity when performing the practices, serve as evidence for the correct performance of these practices and progress towards membership in the brotherhood.

The widespread dissemination of Naqshbandi texts attests to how the Naqshbandiyya extended its influence throughout a wide mass of the population, and to how the shaykhs played a key role in determining a distinct 'reflective subject' behavioural model. While the 'moral subject' model defines general moral imperatives by whch one should be guided throughout one's life, the 'reflective subject' model provides a detailed commentary on ritual practices, thereby generating closer ties between Muslims and the specific networks to which they belonged. Hence, the Sufi shaykhs aimed to reach the broader audience beyond the immediate circles of intellectual elite fluent in Arabic. With this goal in mind, the Sufi authors composed works in local languages meant for the consumption of those lacking a thorough training in Islamic sciences.

Thus, for example, the Naqshbandi shaykh Ilyās al-Tsudaqārī (1835–1903) opted to write his Sufi treatise *Kifāyat al-murīd* in the Kumyk language, explaining his decision thus:

> I have seen many men and women who have embarked on *ṭarīqa*, but who know nothing of the Islamic norms, religious rites, or Sufi ethics that they ought to know. At the same time, they are unable to find this much-needed information and answers to important religious questions from reliable sources because they do not know any Arabic. This is why I have decided to write this work in the Turkic (in this case, Kumyk) language, in order to convey to the people everything, they need to know of Sufism.'[125]

[125] Ilyās al-Tsudaqārī, *Kifāyat al-murīd fī ṭarīqat al-tawḥīd* (Kazan: Tipografiia naslednikov M. Chirkovoi, 1904), 2.

Al-Tsudaqārī, an ethnic Dargin, deliberately chose to write in the Kumyk language, which in tsarist and early Soviet Daghestan played an important role as a language used for multi-ethnic communication in the highlands and plains.[126] He decided to do so in order to reach a lager local audience than would have been possible if he had written in Arabic. A similar text in Kumyk was also composed by the Daghestani scholar Abū Sufyān Akaev (al-Ghazānishī, 1872–1931).[127] A number of Sufi works in several vernaculars were also published in Daghestan in the period 1905–12.[128]

One feature of the 'reflective subject' model is that much more attention is paid to the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad than was is the case in the other models discussed above. For the Naqshbandis, the Prophet Muḥammad and his statements are not only a weighty argument for certain attitudes, just as *ḥadīth*s in the legal tradition are the second most important source of Islamic law. In contrast to the first two models, this model highlights the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad, who becomes more "tangible". In Naqshbandi practices such as *rābiṭa*, appeals to the Prophet, deceased saints or shaykhs with a request for a prayer to God (*istighātha*), praying to God through the mediation of prophet, saints or shaykhs (*tawassul*), as well as in a spiritual genealogy (*silsila*), there is an inextricable connection between the shaykhs and the Prophet Muḥammad. The personality of the Prophet is not only an abstract embodiment of the norms and provisions of legal norms, and ethics: rather, every Sufi can join the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad through the performance of particular practices.

Another feature of this model is the literary genre of hagiographies, in which the personalities of certain saints and Sufi shaykhs appear as mod-

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126 G-R. Guseinov, M.-R. Ibragimov, G. Orazaev, "Kumykskii iazyk v istorii Dagestana: 20 vek (kollizii, palliativy i perspektivy)," *Balkansko ezikoznanie. Linguistique Balkanique* 3 (2010), 173–193.

127 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, *Wasīlat al-najāt* (Temir-khān Shūrā: al-Maṭba'a al-islāmiyya li Muḥammad Mirzā Mawrāyūf, 1908).

128 A.A. Isaev, *Katalog pechatnykh knig i publikatsii na iazykakh narodov Dagestana (dorevoliutsionnyi period)* (Makhachkala: Tipografiia Dagestanskogo filiala Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1989).

els of the ideal Muslim. In this model, emphasis is placed on the genealogy of the Sufi shaykhs, in their capacity as descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. In the 19th century a new literature describing the Prophet's moral traits, his life experiences, (*sīra*) and praise of him (*munājāt*), began to develop in Daghestan. Moreover, this was not a purely theoretical literature. In fact, it had a clearly practical significance when during Friday sermons (*khuṭba*) and other meetings (*majlis*, *mawlid*), scholars and *qāḍī*s described the ideal personality of the Prophet Muḥammad. This orientation towards the personality of the Prophet, as well as emphasis upon the example of his life as an ideal model to follow, is characteristic of the 'reflective subject' model. We see a similar pattern of interest in the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad in the spread of the Naqshbandiyya across other regions of the Islamic world, most notably in the Volga-Ural region and the Ottoman Empire.[129] It is unsurprising, therefore, that manuscripts of works about the personality of the Prophet kept in Daghestani private and public collections were mostly copied in the 19th century. The table presented below [tab. 5] is a good illustration of the development and co-existence repertoires of manuscripts, correlated to the 'moral' 'esoteric', 'reflective' subject models, represented in Sufi literature and the 'legal' subject model, represented in legal literature. Additionally, it sheds light on the genre of *sīra*, which emerged within the 'reflective' subject model.

As one can see in table 5, quantitative analysis of the generic repertoire of manuscripts kept in Daghestani collections indicates that Sufi literature began to develop in Daghestan between the 15th and the first half of the 17th century (the period coinciding with the 'moral subject' and 'esoteric subject' models). Between the second half of the 17th and the late 18th century, interest in Sufism declined, but it revived over the course of the 19th century (the period of the 'reflective subject' model).

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129 A.T. Sibgatullina, *Chelovek na minbare. Obraz musul'manskogo lidera v tatarskoi i turetskoi literaturakh (konets 19 – pervaya tret' 20 vv.*) (Moscow: Sadra, 2018), 87, 100. See also: *The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam. Volume 1. The Prophet Between Doctrine, Literature and Arts: Historical Legacies and Their Unfolding*, ed. by Denis Gril, Stefan Reichmuth, Dilek Sarmis (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

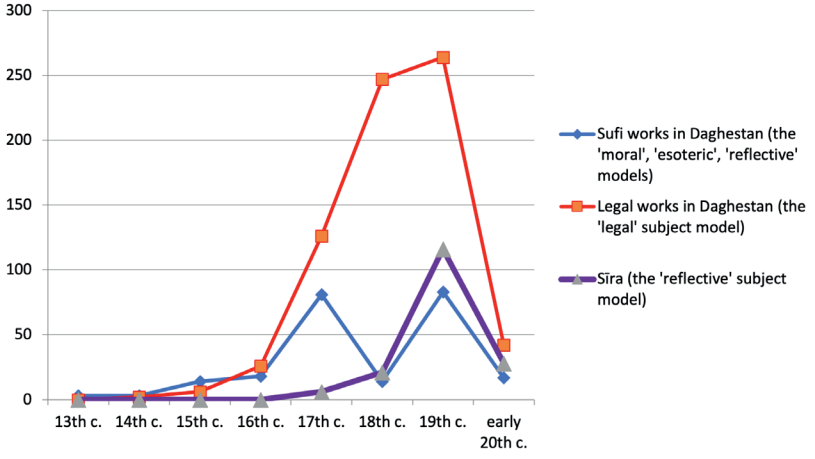


Table 5. Manuscripts on Sufism, Muslim Law, and the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad *(sīra)* in Daghestan.

At the same time, one can see a consistent rise in the popularity of works dealing with Muslim law, which reaches its peak in the late 18th – early 19th century (the period of the 'legal subject' model). As for the literature dedicated to the Prophet Muḥammad, the table indicates that such treatises were completely absent until the 17th century. Starting from the 18th century (the period of the 'legal subject' model) and until the end of the 19th century (the period of the 'legal subject' and 'reflective subject' models), the interest in the persona of the Prophet Muḥammad grew abruptly. In the 'legal subject' model, interest in the persona of the Prophet was mostly related to legal norms. The 'reflective subject' model, meanwhile, renders the Prophet Muḥammad's persona more 'tangible' – a shift that corresponds with increased emphasis upon the Prophet as the ideal Muslim. In the 19th century, one can see a peak in the dissemination of works on Muslim law, Sufism, and the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, which suggests the coexistence at least three models, namely those of the 'moral subject', the 'legal subject', and the 'reflective subject'. By tracing the dissemination of manuscripts produced within these various genres, we can see that starting from the 19th century, Daghestani Muslims followed a range of models, or some combination of them. These

alternatives highlight the scope for Muslims to exercise agency in following their own preferred behavioural models.

The Reformist Subject

The 'reformist subject' model is characterised by a dual attitude towards Sufism and Daghestani Sufis. While acknowledging the legitimacy of Sufism and the important role of Sufi ethics in Islam, the representatives of this model nevertheless doubted the legitimacy of contemporary Daghestani shaykhs. None of the representatives of this model voiced criticism of the views held by al-Ghazālī, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (986–1072), ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī (1492/3–1565), or other prominent shaykhs, whose significant contributions to the development of Islamic ethics they readily acknowledged. At the same time, however, they criticised modern shaykhs in general, highlighting their low level of education, their money-grabbing and acquisitiveness, their violations of *sharīʿa*, and their use of Sufi authority for their own personal ends. Some of them went further still, not only criticising the shaykhs but also accusing them of unbelief (*kufr*), on account of their adherence to certain practices – such as *ziyāra*, *istighātha* and *rābiṭa* – which they deemed entirely illegitimate from the standpoint of the *sharīʿa*.

One of the figures who personified this model was the Daghestani scholar Abū Sufyān Akaev (al-Ghazānishī). He accepts that Sufism has a legitimate role to play within Islam, and acknowledges the stature of such major Sufis of the past. Despite not being a shaykh or a Sufi himself, in 1908 he nevertheless produced a treatise on Sufism, which was dedicated to Naqshbandi ritual practice and reproduced the Naqshbandi spiritual genealogy (*silsila*). At the same time, in this work he expressed his scepticism as to the legitimacy of his contemporary Sufi shaykhs:

> After I had written a book on *ṭarīqa,* I considered it appropriate to quote the *silsila* at the end of this book. Up until the present time, I have not been a follower of any of the shaykhs. Otherwise, I would have only listed the shaykhs of my branch and omitted the others. In view of this, I

> considered it necessary to quote the names of all the Naqshbandi shaykhs that I have heard of or read. As to those of them who are worthy or unworthy of being included in this *silsila*, the God Almighty will judge better Himself… However, at this present time, those who could be followed on the *ṭarīqa* are rarer than red gold.[130]

Abū Sufyān Akaev expressed his views on Sufism most fully in the Arabic journal *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, which he edited in Buinaksk in the years 1925–28.[131] This journal became a platform for a discussion of Islamic reformism ideas. Within the pages of *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* there were discussions of such issues as Sufism, the development and reform of the Islamic educational system, and certain legal questions. Articles on Sufis and Sufism appeared in every volume of the journal. In one of his articles, Akaev wrote:

> Being a shaykh is not an obligation in *sharī'a*. Despite the fact that the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*s do not mention Sufism, there is no doubt as to its legitimacy, provided that it not contradict the Qur'ān and Sunna. Even the opinions of *imāms*[132], although they cannot be found either in the Qur'ān or the Sunna', are to be accepted provided they are founded on *sharī'a* rules. Likewise, shaykhdom is permissible under *sharī'a*, provided that its aim is worship, is unstained by hypocrisy, and seeks spiritual growth and the rejection of such vicious qualities as arrogance, greed, and covetousness. It is commendable if shaykhs bring up their disciples and imbue them with laudable qualities, such as humility, rejection of greed and contentment with the things Muslims have.[133]

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130 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, *Wasīlat al-najāt*, 28–29.

131 See: A.R. Navruzov, "'Baian al-Khakaik' (1925 - 1928) – dukhovnyi zhurnal uchenykh arabistov Dagestana," *Dagestanskie sviatyni. Kniga 3* (Makhachkala: Epokha, 2013), 147–174; Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, "Islamskaia pressa v rannesovetskom Dagestane i zhurnal 'Musul'mane Sovetskogo Vostoka'", *Islamology* 7:2 (2017), 74–100.

132 These are the founders of the four Sunni legal schools.

133 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, "al-Tashayyukh fī l-sharī'a," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 1 (Buinaksk, 1925), 11.

In the next issue of the same journal, Abū Sufyān Akaev writes:

> There is not a single argument which would indicate that Sufism is a necessary prescription and an obligation. At the same time, *sharī'a* does not prohibit Sufism, provided that its practices do not contradict the *sharī'a*. In that case, it is commendable to follow it. In the past, there have been very righteous shaykhs, who instructed people in the *ṭarīqa*. With the passing of time, there has been an increasing number of liars among those who claim to have the status of shaykhs. We do not aim to criticise Sufism, but rather are trying to explain to Muslims its essence and true nature, and the harmful innovations introduced into Sufism by some false shaykhs.[134]

Similar opinions were held by a considerable number of Daghestani and wider North Caucasian theologians. For instance, in the article *Fī ḥaqq al-mulāḥida al-ṣūfiyyīn* (*On the Godlessness of Sufis*), 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Albūrī al-Ḥurāqī criticises his contemporary Sufis. He writes:

> Some godless people (*al-mulḥidūn*) in our time, who call themselves Sufis, are not in truth Sufis. They are all from the host of Satan, who are lost souls themselves and lead others into sin. The mosques that were built for worship and prayers they turn to places for their dances and games. With their mouths, they preach devotion and asceticism, but in truth, there is no faith in their hearts. They are ignorant, despite claiming to be knowledgeable, and they do not follow the opinions of true scholars. A dishonourable scholar and an ignorant ascetic: both of them sow iniquity on earth. I have been a witness of their acts and I believe them to be devils and *jinn*s. They claim that they are able to see God Almighty, they allege that they possess secret knowledge (*bāṭin*) and consider a visit, a pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to their shaykh preferable to visiting the tomb of the Prophet Muḥammad. They believe that performing a loud *dhikr* is more honourable worship than reading the Qur'ān. One needs

134 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, "Risālat al-shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 2 (Buinaksk, 1925), 8.

> to be wary of them and flee from them as sheep flee from wolves. They claim that they can fly through the air or walk on water. Verily, this is not a manifestation of their miracles (*karāmāt*) but rather evidence of their wizardry and deception, which is one of the deeds of Satan. Such false shaykhs devour the food of orphans. They are arrogant, proud, envious and sinful. They perform the *mawlid*s not out of love for the Prophet Muḥammad, but in order to sate themselves with food. They steal livestock from people, kill it and demand that *mawlid* be performed before them, after which they feed this stolen meat to people.[135]

There are a number of articles in this journal where some particular Naqshbandi or Qādiri ritual is criticised by scholars.[136] At the same time, the journal also contains articles that offer responses to criticism of Sufism on the part of certain authors. Thus, ʻAbdullāh b. Qurbān ʻAlī al-ʻAshilṭī expresses his bewilderment at the criticism of Sufis that is articulated in certain articles in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*:

> I am astonished that some major scholars are berating the holy men who seek solitude in their homes, performing *dhikr* and blessings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣalawāt*), read the Qur'ān and call on the people to do good. How do these authors of the articles know that these holy men harbour unclean thoughts or 'devour earthly goods by abusing religion,' as they put it? Why do these scholars refer to such holy men as 'false shaykhs'? Why cannot these holy men be true shaykhs? And why are they not allowed to accept presents from others,[137] if the Prophet accepted such presents?[138]

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135 ʻAbd al-Razzāq b. Albūrī Kadiev al-Ḥurāqī, "Fī haqq al-mulāḥida al-ṣūfiyyīn," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 3 (Buinaksk, 1926), 6–7.

136 Ibrāhīm Hajiyaw al-Ṭamīrī al-Rikānī, "Hādhihi nubdha ʻalayhi ṣūfiyya," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 6 (Buinaksk, 1927), 11.

137 This is a reference to the scholarly criticism of some Sufi shaykhs for not earning their own keep and instead living by getting donations and presents from their disciples.

138 ʻAbdullāh b. Qurbān ʻAlī al-ʻAshilṭī, "Fī ḥaqq al-ijtihād wa-l-taṣawwuf," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 7 (Buinaksk, 1927), 7.

In response to this letter, Akaev wrote as follows in his editorial:

> We do not berate those holy ones who seek solitude in their homes, performing *dhikr* and eating the fruits of their labours. On the contrary, we beseech God to assist and help such holy men. As for our criticism, it is directed at those who walk around villages and cities, demanding gifts and using religion as a cover. Likewise, we are not saying that all shaykhs have unclean thoughts, though the majority of them are like that. Scholars say that you can tell a true shaykh by the fact that he used to be rich but has become poor. And a sign of a false shaykh is his desire to become rich where before he was poor. If we take a look at the shaykhs of our own time, we see that the majority of them conform to the latter description. We will not see them becoming poor after they have embarked on the path of Sufism and given away their possessions for God's sake, as true Sufis used to do in the past.[139]

In the next issue of the journal, Akaev wrote a short editorial article about the afore-mentioned shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, who renounced his shaykhdom and refused to pass it on to others:

> Since the time when we first started publishing our journal, we have written incessantly of false shaykhs who deceive people. But none of them have acknowledged that they had no authority and are unfit to the great task of Sufism. Not a single one of them stopped calling for it, except for the famous shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, who has always been a sincere follower of Islam. We received a letter from him to our editorial board, where he says that he is unfit and has no authority to educate people in Sufism, and that he has stopped receiving pilgrims for that reason in his house. We fervently wish that others will follow his example and confess this to themselves. But no! They devour earthy goods whilst using religion as a cover. Such false shaykhs must be the first to abandon all claims to shaykhdom, rather than Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, who lives a righteous

139 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, "Min al-idāra," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 7 (Buinaksk, 1927), 8.

> life and is more deserving of being a shaykh than his contemporaries. But since even he believes that he has no authority to instruct people in Sufism, what shall we say of the others?[140]

Seeking to justify the position taken by the editors of the *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* in not criticising Sufism, but focusing on the criticism of 'false shaykhs,' Akaev printed a chapter from the Sufi treatise *Burūj al-mushayyada bi-l-nuṣūṣ al-mu'ayyada* by shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī. After providing a positive review of this book in his article, Abū Sufyān Akaev draws readers' attention to this extract and demonstrates that Ḥasan al-Qaḥī was objective in his work and described what true Sufism should be like and what criteria a true shaykh ought to conform to. In his conclusion, Abū Sufyān Akaev writes:

> There is no deed more honourable than to educate Muslims in Sufism, provided that the shaykh is true. And there is no thing more despicable than the education of Muslims by a false shaykh. May God help us with following the *ṭarīqa* ethics![141]

As the above examples demonstrate, some representatives of this model engage in a delicate balancing act: they simultaneously affirm the legitimacy of Sufism within Islam and acknowledge the virtues of past Sufi shaykhs, while directing pointed criticism at contemporary ones. Strikingly, their condemnation of the so-called 'false shaykhs' often echoes the rhetorical strategies employed by the Naqshbandi shaykhs themselves.

Other representatives of this model directed their criticism specifically at contemporary Naqshbandi practices, denouncing them as a 'harmful innovation' and a doctrine at odds with the *sharī'a*. They particularly accused practitioners of engaging in acts tantamount to polytheism (*shirk*) and unbelief (*kufr*).

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140 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, "Maktūb al-shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 8 (Buinaksk, 1927), 10.

141 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, "Min al-Burūj al-mushayyada," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 5 (Buinaksk, 1926), 3.

The vast majority of representatives of this model were disciples of ʿAlī Kaiaev (al-Ghumuqī, 1878–1943),[142] one of the major leaders of the reformism movement in Daghestan.

A reading of Kaiaev's body of work indicates that he himself did not criticise Sufi beliefs and practices as a whole. Moreover, he commented positively on the performance of *mawlid*, which became popular among the Sufis in the late 19th and first third of the 20th century.[143] Nevertheless, although ʿAlī Kaiaev limited himself to criticising just contemporary shaykhs, his disciples Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī (1900–1927),[144] Muḥammad ʿUmarī al-Uḥlī (1897–1942)[145], Masʿūd al-

142 ʿAlī Kaiaev (al-Ghumuqī, 1878–1943) was a Daghestani Muslim scholar. He received an Islamic education in Daghestan before continuing his studies at al-Azhar in Cairo, where he collaborated with the prominent Egyptian reformer Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā. Upon returning to Daghestan, he became editor of *Jarīdat Dāghistān* (1913–18), the first Arabic-language newspaper in the Caucasus. In the subsequent years, he was actively involved in reforming Islamic education and in developing new curricula. Kaiaev also played a notable role in the political events of 1917–19. Following the establishment of Soviet power in Daghestan and in opposition to the policies of the new regime, he returned to his native village of Kumukh, where he served as a *qāḍī* and taught at the local madrasa. In 1926, he was invited to join the newly founded Institute of National Cultures, established during the Soviet period, where he worked on collecting and studying Islamic sources on the history and literature of Daghestan. In 1939, he was arrested on charges of participation in a "bourgeois-nationalist" organisation and was exiled to Kazakhstan, where he died. In terms of religious views, Kaiaev was critical of rigid adherence to the established legal schools and advocated for a hermeneutical rethinking of the Qur'ān and Sunna. He is considered one of the founding figures of Islamic reformism in Daghestan. He had many students, including Muḥammad Said Saidov himself. Although Kaiaev was personally cautious in his discussions of Sufism – recognising it as a legitimate current within Islam – his disciples, including Saidov, later adopted a markedly radical stance, both in their critique of Sufism and in their broader call for *ijtihād*. All of them, including Kaiaev, formed part of Saidov's close intellectual circle, with whom he maintained an active correspondence, and who exerted a significant influence on his religious worldview.

143 ʿAlī al-Ghumuqī, "Mawālidunā," *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 1 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1915), 4; 52 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1915), 4; idem, "Mawlid fī Jungūtāi," *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 1 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 4.

144 For discussion of this figure see below.

145 Muḥammad ʿUmarī (al-ʿUmarī) al-Uḥlī (1897–1942) was Saidov's close friend. After studying in Soviet pedagogical courses in the mid-1920s, Muḥammad ʿUma-

Muhūkhī (1893–1941),[146] ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿAymakī (d. 1980s)[147] and Muḥammad-Said Saidov went further. They placed the authority of the Qur'ān and the Sunna above all other sources, criticising both Muslims' adherence to particular legal schools and their observance of Sufi practices. Rationalism and an exclusive reliance on the Qur'ān and the Sunna – while disregarding all other legal schools, and rejection of all practices that is not mentioned in the Qur'ān and the Sunna – formed the core and defining feature of their worldview.

In a letter addressed to the *sharīʿa* court of the Avar District (*Avarskii Okrug*), Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī, one of the more active representatives of this model, produced a denunciation of Sufism, referring to *ḥadīth*:

> You are those of whom *ḥadīth* says: "Surely, you will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, in everything as one arrow resembles another, so much so that even if they entered a hole of a sand-lizard, you would enter it. We said: 'O Messenger of God, do you mean the Jews and the Christians?' He replied: 'Who else?'" The phrase 'who were before you' refers to those who follow the way (*ṭarīqa*) of harm-

rī worked as a teacher in Soviet school until the mid-1930s, when he was exiled by the Soviet secret services and passed away in exile.

146 Masʿūd al-Muhūkhī (1893–1941), originally from the Avar village of Mogokh, pursued his Arabic studies in various villages in Daghestan. He also delved into poetry and literature under the guidance of Najm ad-Din al-Ḥutsī al-Awārī, a prominent scholar who played a significant role in the political establishment between 1917–20, and later, under ʿAlī Kaiaev. Despite his early affiliation with Sufism and being a disciple of the Naqshbandi shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, Masʿūd al-Muhūkhī eventually renounced Sufism and began to critique it. Before 1925, he served as *qāḍī* in several villages. Like other reformist friends such as Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī and Muḥammad ʿUmarī al-Uḥlī, he completed Soviet pedagogical courses and, in 1925, he was appointed as a teacher at the Soviet school in his native village of Mogokh. However, in 1933, Masʿūd was arrested and exiled to the Magadan Region, where he died in 1941.

147 ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿAymakī (d. 1980s) was one of the disciples of ʿAlī Kaiaev. He was a staunch opponent of Sufism and a committed advocate of *ijtihād*. He authored a number of works in Arabic, in which he criticised Sufism and contemporary Naqshbandi shaykhs, while also defending his teacher, ʿAlī Kaiaev, as well as his fellow students, against the polemics of Daghestani scholars.

> ful innovations (*bid'a*). They introduce harmful innovations which have arisen after the Prophet and perverted their religion! O scholars, you follow fanaticism. And fanaticism is the beginning of error, and the fanaticism is a way for Satan (*Iblīs*) to lead you astray.[148]

In this letter, al-Harakānī moves from the specific to the universal, first of all criticising a particular legal judgment and then shifting focus to denounce the fact that most legal scholars in Daghestan do not follow the main sources of Muslim law – the Qur'ān and the Sunna – but instead, in their capacity as Sufis, rely on Sufi-inflected innovations which were introduced into Islam in later centuries.

A feature of this model is renewed interest in *ḥadīth* as a source of Muslim law. In the first third of the 20th century, *ḥadīth*s were a subject of extensive study and the topic of numerous treatises, which had not previously been the case since the late 17th century when the 'legal subject' model had begun to predominate. Nothing had been written on *ḥadīth* by a Daghestani scholar since the time of Sha'bān al-'Ubūdī (1608–1667), who was a practitioner of the 'legal subject' model, and who produced a commentary on the treatise *Masābīh al-Sunna* by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Baghawī (d. 1122).[149] Between the second half of the 17th and the first third of the 20th century, we do not find a single work on the subject by Daghestani scholars. Things began to change only in the 1920s, when Nadhīr al-Durgilī (1891–1935), a representative of the 'reformist subject' model, composed a work dedicated to the analysis of the *ḥadīth* transmission lineage (*isnād*). In his comments appended to the margins of the manuscript, the author quoted a number of treatises on *ḥadīth* which had not circulated in Daghestan prior to the 20th century.[150] A second work by al-Durgilī, meanwhile, deals with the abro-

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148 [*Letter from Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī to the sharī'a court of Avar District*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 42, fols. 3a–3b.

149 Sha'bān b. Ismā'īl al-'Ubūdī, *Al-Tanāqīḥ fī sharḥ al-Masābīḥ al-Sunna*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 51.

150 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, "Irtiyāḥ al-akbād bi-inkishāf al-asnād," *Āthār al-'ilmiyya al-Tūniyya*, ed. by Abū Bakr b. Saḥawāt al-Durgilī (Makhachkala: Dar

gated (*mansūkh*) *ḥadīth*.[151] With the growth of interest in *ḥadīth* in the first third of the 20th century, one can trace an influx of texts on *ḥadīth* printed in Egypt, which had not been widespread in Daghestan before, entering Daghestani private and state archives. It is clear that Daghestanis' growing interest in *ḥadīth* caused them to purchase publications in this genre, including even books which were not typical for the local Islamic tradition.

Drawing on *ḥadīth* studies, representatives of this model emphasise two distinct aspects of the Prophet Muḥammad's persona: his personal qualities, and his status as one of the main arguments for the justification of legal norms. The reformists emphasised the importance of *ḥadīth*s as one of the main sources for the exercise of *ijtihād*, and often preferred to refer to *ḥadīth*s rather than to legal books. On the other hand, one can see a denial of any Sufi interpretations of the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad as linked to the shaykhs and consequently, as an embodiment of the shaykhs' spirituality as heirs of the way of the Prophet. In this model, the Prophet Muḥammad becomes even more lifelike, endowed with the human emotions that behove him. Indeed, some representatives of this model went so far as to believe that "the Prophet was a man without special merit, except for the message and the revelation that was sent to him."[152]

The 'reformist subject' model is further characterised by its focus on rationalism and reason, not only for the justification of certain legal norms, but in matters of ethics as a whole. In one of his letters Saidov, an exemplar of this model, discusses the role of reason in a Muslim's ethics:

> Reason (*al-'aql*) – a concept that has both philosophical and religious meanings – plays an important role in enabling Muslims to live a righteous life. Reason is the fundamental quality that separates humans from animals, and it is present only in those creatures of God who have been

al-asar al-'ilmiyya, no year), 65–272.

151 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, "Risālat al-nāfi'a fī l-aḥādīth al-mansūkha," *Āthār al-'ilmiyya al-Tūniyya*, 283–287.

152 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī, *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-l-akh al-muṣliḥ*, fol. 7a. The manuscript is in private possession of the author.

> granted a soul. Consequently, reason and the soul are closely linked together. And reason alone is capable of consulting the Holy Texts in order to make a rational distinction between what is good for people and what is evil. It is human reason that governs people's actions and forms their moral image.[153]

As we can see, unlike those Sufi-inflected behavioural models which deferred to certain moral imperatives or authorities, the 'reformist subject' model places reason centre stage as a tool that can analyse and interpret Muslim texts in order to make a rational decision on what is moral or immoral. This model cares nothing for the judgments of previous generations or the authority of saints; rather, its central authority is the human personality endowed by reason, which uses rational intellection to establish its moral reference points. The rational view of morality offered by this model is thus very different from Sufi models that emphasise the importance of emotional and non-rational experience. According to the 'reformist subject' model, in order to become an ideal Muslim one must engage in a study of the Qur'ān and Sunna, rather than by following saints or emulating the non-rational experience of Sufis. One should follow along the righteous path and be a moral Muslim, not out of fear of inevitable punishment of sins in the next world, but rather through rational comprehension of the moral imperatives that are laid out in the Qur'ān and Sunna. Human rationality is thus central to the 'reformist subject' model of behaviour.

Representatives of this model accepted the importance of Sufi ethics in the upbringing of a Muslim, but nevertheless did not consider this a priority. Their primary concerns were reforming the educational system and addressing various pressing legal issues. Among these latter was the question of the Daghestani Shāfi'ī tradition regarding the triple *ṭalāq* procedure for initiating divorce. Representatives of the 'reformist subject' model argued that the threefold pronouncement of the divorce formula in a single sitting should count as only one divorce and does not an-

153 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Sāniḥa*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 43, fols. 1a–3a.

nul the marriage. Additionally, they broadened the scope of *ijtihād* – the hermeneutical re-evaluation of the Qur'ān and the Sunna with the aim of deriving new legal rulings – and made more extensive use of *talfīq*, the practice of combining rulings from different legal schools.

According to this model, education plays a key role in cultivation of the ideal Muslim. Since only a small circle of scholars in Daghestan knew Arabic, representatives of this model advocated the idea of education in Daghestani vernaculars. In their opinion, this would enable a wide development of literacy among local Muslims who could read literature in their national languages. The representatives of this model opened national schools and published literature in national languages. They shared the ideas of Jadidism, as developed among the Muslims of Crimea, Azerbaijan, the Volga-Urals and Central Asia. Rationalism also occupied a considerable place in their ideas. According to this model, only an educated Muslim with rational methods could understand the true nature of good and evil and of piety and sin. Accordingly, advocates of this model argued, only an educated Muslim can warn against sin and follow the good. Therefore, the upbringing of an ideal Muslim is possible only through education.[154]

This chapter has provided a conceptual and historical overview of the key behavioural models that shaped Islamic intellectual and ethical life in Daghestan from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Rather than reducing these models to theological or jurisprudential classifications, the analysis foregrounds their performative dimension: how ideal types of Muslim subjectivity are cultivated, contested, and inscribed through textual and ritual practice.

The moral, esoteric, legal, reflective, and reformist models do not merely represent doctrinal orientations; they constitute distinct epistemic and ethical grammars, each proposing its own criteria for religious authority, moral formation, and truth claims.

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[154] For Muslim reformism in Daghestan, see in more detail: Shamil Shikhaliev, "Muslim Reformism in Dagestan (1900–1930)," *State, Religion and Church* 1:3 (2018), 35–63.

What emerges from this typology is a set of plural and, at times, competing imaginaries of the ideal Muslim, defined through contrasting relationships to knowledge, authority, and embodiment. These models function not in isolation but in dialogue, tension, and mutual reshaping. In some cases, models are consciously fused or superimposed; in others, the polemical rejection of one becomes the performative ground for another. Such dynamics suggest that the historical evolution of Islamic subjectivity in Daghestan cannot be adequately captured through linear or binary frameworks (e.g., Sufi vs. reformist, traditional vs. modern). Rather, the chapter points to a landscape of fluid boundaries, epistemic hybridity, and strategic adaptation.

Our analysis has also demonstrated the centrality of intertextuality as both a medium of transmission and a mode of transformation. The frequent practice of copying, editing, and re-signifying earlier works – particularly across *ṭarīqa* lines – reveals a culture of active textual intervention, where authors and copyists assert doctrinal authority through the shaping of inherited materials. This creative editorial practice is far from passive reproduction; it reflects deliberate acts of repositioning and appropriation. For instance, a Naqshbandi shaykh might 'correct' Khalwati texts or embed reformist critiques within traditional commentaries. In this context, textuality becomes a site of epistemological contestation, where debates over ritual, legitimacy, and authority are materially encoded.

Moreover, this chapter challenges static notions of Sufi traditions as internally coherent or hermetically sealed. As demonstrated, figures associated with one behavioural model frequently engaged with others: Naqshbandi authors drew on the ethical legacy of al-Ghazālī; reformists selectively retained elements of moral Sufism while denouncing its institutional expressions; and legalist critiques were answered not only with doctrinal refutations but also with appeals to spiritual affect and prophetic emulation. These patterns suggest a shared discursive space in which rival models were not always discrete alternatives but often functioned as overlapping, even co-constitutive, formations.

Another key contribution of this chapter is its attention to the historicity of behavioural models – not simply as transhistorical archetypes but as embedded responses to changing political and social conditions.

The emergence of the reformist subject, for instance, cannot be disentangled from the influx of Egyptian and Volga-Ural print culture and the epistemic pressure of Soviet secularism.

By juxtaposing figures who inhabit these models, we have attempted in this chapter to illustrate how Islamic ethical life in Daghestan was governed not by doctrinal consensus but by persistent conflict over the meaning of piety, authority, and authenticity. These conflicts were rarely settled; instead, they generated new textual interventions, novel forms of pedagogy, and shifting allegiances. In many cases, personal friendships and intellectual networks traversed doctrinal divides, giving rise to subjectivities shaped as much by individual ethical struggle as by allegiance to collective authority.

Crucially, the models delineated here are not presented as typological endpoints, but as heuristic tools for understanding the lived complexity of Islamic ethics in Daghestan. Each model gestures toward an orientation, a set of priorities, and a horizon of ideals – but never entirely excludes the possibility of contradiction, transformation, or rearticulation. Indeed, the chapter's examples reveal that individual scholars often moved between models over time, responding to new intellectual stimuli, shifting political contexts, or personal spiritual crises. This fluidity calls for a historiographical approach attentive to transition, tension, and hybridisation rather than systematisation or closure.

In summary, this chapter offers not merely a taxonomy of Islamic subjectivities, but a theoretical grammar for reading their interplay. It advances an account of Islamic ethical formation as a historically contingent, textually mediated, and affectively charged process – one marked by contestation, borrowing, and strategic realignment. As the following chapters will show, the enduring significance of these behavioural models lies not in their doctrinal fixity, but in their capacity to be mobilised, reformulated, and contested across time.

This diversity of existing behavioural models that Saidov observed in the world around him informed the choices that he made in formulating and articulating his own persona – a set of choices that can be clearly seen from the range of literary and scholarly works that Saidov produced and collected over the course of his academic career.

CHAPTER 2

Saidov and the Negotiation of Competing Models

The models outlined above represent not merely theological or jurisprudential differences, but rather competing visions of what it means to be a righteous and ideal Muslim within a shifting socio-political and epistemic landscape. This present chapter examines Saidov's complex engagement with these behavioural models as they manifest themselves across various Islamic intellectual and spiritual traditions in 20th-century Daghestan.

These models should not be viewed as autonomous or mutually exclusive, each with clearly demarcated intellectual boundaries and behavioural norms. Rather, they must be understood as components of a more dynamic and intricate framework of interaction, characterised by intertextual overlap, partial convergence, and, at times, polemical tension.

'Intertextuality' here refers not only to the citation or adaptation of earlier authoritative sources but also to acts of rewriting, polemic, and critical engagement that signify an ongoing negotiation of meaning and religious authority. For example, Naqshbandi authors frequently appropriated and modified Khalwati texts, subtly embedding their own ritual practices and doctrinal positions within inherited frameworks. This textual engagement was not merely exegetical or preservational in nature; it played a constitutive role in redefining spiritual authority and ethical legitimacy. Such intertextual interventions often accompany points of convergence between otherwise distinct models.

A notable case is the integration of al-Ghazālī's ethical ideal – centered on the 'moral subject' model formed through the internalisation of divine attributes and the purification of the soul – into the reflective piety characteristic of the Naqshbandi tradition. This example demonstrates that ethical and epistemic models do not exist in isolation but rather reveal permeability and hybridisation. Thus, the incorporation of 'moral subject' elements into Naqshbandi discourse marks not a departure from core Naqshbandi principles but rather a reformulation that maintains central ethical themes while situating them within a renewed epistemic context.

Simultaneously, considerable tension can be observed in the contestation of certain models. Reformist critics launched incisive attacks on contemporary Naqshbandi practices, denouncing them as harmful in-

novations (*bid'a*) and deviations from the normative framework of the *sharī'a*. These critiques frequently stemmed from a legalist perspective, either within the parameters of the Shāfi'ī school or from positions outside established legal schools, and promoted a rationalist epistemology wherein the Qur'ān and Sunna were upheld as the exclusive sources of ethical morality. Everything beyond rationalism and these two sources, including Sufi-inspired approaches to the upbringing of an ideal Muslim, was rejected by them.

However, this tension was not unidirectional. In response to these reformist critiques, Naqshbandi shaykhs composed treatises defending their practices, reasserting the legitimacy of their spiritual lineage and their preferred approaches to the upbringing of an ideal Muslim. These polemical writings are essential for understanding how spiritual authority and normative conduct were not merely defended but actively rearticulated through textual means. They reveal that these tensions were deeply rooted in questions of social legitimacy, institutional continuity, and the configuration of ethical norms.

Hence, the Islamic intellectual landscape of 20th-century Daghestan is best understood not through rigid dichotomies such as Sufi versus reformist, or law versus mysticism, but rather through a more fluid analytical lens that recognises intertextual dialogues, ethical convergences, and normative contestations. The behavioural models under consideration did not operate in isolation; instead, they intersected and overlapped in ways that underscore both the creative dynamism and discursive volatility of the period.

This approach also seeks to challenge simplistic historiographical binaries that posit either a linear decline of Sufism or a homogeneous rise of reform. The evidence drawn from manuscript transmission, textual redaction, and polemical literature presents a far more nuanced picture – one in which different actors strategically positioned themselves in relation to, or in opposition against, existing behavioural models. For example, the noted decline in the reproduction of Sufi manuscripts during the 18th century has often been interpreted as indicative of diminishing interest in Sufism. However, when examined alongside the emergence of polemical exchanges and the continued adaptation of Sufi ethical concepts,

this trend may more accurately reflect a transformation in the modalities of ethical formation rather than an outright rejection of Sufi thought.

This chapter also addresses the role of textual agency in shaping ethical models. Authors were not passive transmitters of tradition but rather active agents in the construction and transformation of religious subjectivities. Their editorial interventions – including the insertion of new ritual practices, selective citation of earlier authorities, and the framing of particular moral exemplars – operated as strategies of legitimisation and contestation. In this regard, texts function not only as repositories of doctrine but as arenas of ideological struggle in which competing visions of the ideal Muslim self are constructed and debated.

In sum, this chapter offers a heuristic for analysing the plural and contested nature of Muslim ethical life during this period. It permits an interpretive move beyond static classifications and facilitates a more refined appreciation of the dynamic interactions between competing models.

Saidov's engagement with these models exemplifies their dynamic character, marked by normative contestation and intertextual engagement. While he openly criticised Sufism and certain Sufi practices, Saidov nevertheless devoted decades of meticulous effort to studying and publishing the works of the Sufi shaykh Abū Bakr al-Darbandī. Close examination of this work, grounded in a wealth of empirical documentation – including personal correspondence, handwritten notes, published articles, and memoirs preserved in his private archive – vividly demonstrates the fluid and evolving nature of these behavioural models, a theme that this chapter explores in greater depth.

Through close textual analysis and contextual interpretation, the chapter aims to illuminate the multifaceted ways in which Saidov navigated these behavioural paradigms. In doing so, this chapter not only delineates the contours of doctrinal difference but also reconstructs the lived complexities of Saidov's intellectual positioning amidst shifting political landscapes and evolving epistemic commitments.

Intertextuality and Tensions between Models

Whereas most Sufi works from before the 19th century were composed outside of Daghestan, the period from the first half of the 19th and early 20th century saw the development of local original Sufi literature. The wide spread of Sufism in Daghestan around this time meant that there was a need for practical guides to the ritual practices of particular *ṭarīqa*s. This requirement determined the genre structure of Daghestani Sufi works of the period, which focused primarily on practical matters relating to the procedure and conditions for performing Naqshbandi rituals. Works produced within the 'reflective subject' model additionally pay close attention to the sensations or experiences of those performing these practices.

Although the 19th century saw Naqshbandi literature become widespread throughout Daghestan, this literature did not wholly supplant the older Sufi tradition: as we saw above, the 19th century saw upswings also in the circulation of works by al-Ghazālī and Khalwati shaykhs as well. Frequently, also, the Naqshbandi shaykhs either integrated the old texts into their understanding of Sufism or supplemented their own traditions with reference to the ethical or esoteric practices of the early Sufi models. Let us consider, for instance, two instances where Naqshbandis are known to have copied Khalwati works. On one occasion I was reading a text entitled *Silsilat al-maṣnū'āt* by the Khalwati shaykh Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī, which was copied by the Naqshbandi shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī. As I was going through the text, I saw that in terms of its structure and matters discussed it was not very different from many Naqshbandi works. The practices, Sufi terms and concepts outlined in this work are largely similar to those described in the works of Ḥasan al-Qaḥī himself. After I had read this manuscript to the end, I noticed the following inscription in the colophon: "Here ended the copying of this work by the hand of the feeble Ḥasan-efendī al-Qaḥī… This work was copied from a manuscript which contained errors (*maghlūṭa*) in many places…"[155]

[155] Aḥmad al-Zirihgerānī, *Silsilat al-maṣnū'āt*. The digital copy of the manuscript was kindly provided to me by Magomed Shekhmagomedov (b. 1983), to whom I ex-

It is unlikely that the 'errors' to which Ḥasan al-Qaḥī refers here were objective errors of grammar and spelling: Daghestani scholars were well trained in Arabic grammar and style, and grammatical mistakes are extremely rare in the many manuscripts that I have examined. Rather, I suggest, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī is indicating here that while copying the text he encountered various Khalwati terms and concepts that he, as a Naqshbandi shaykh, regarded as erroneous or misleading, and so he edited the entire text as he copied it, adapting it so as to make it conform with the Naqshbandi tradition. Similarly, in the dozen-plus Naqshbandi treatises that he himself composed, al-Qaḥī often referred to the works of al-Ghazālī. This intertextual engagement with the earlier Sufi tradition was characteristic of the 'reflective subject' model.

The second telling instance of Naqsbandi engagement with Khalwati works is a manuscript copy of *Ṭifl al-ma'ān*, a work by the Khalwati shaykh Yūsuf al-Muskurī. This latter was one of five main successors of Yaḥyā al-Bakūwī (d. 1463), a famous Khalwati shaykh from Shirvan. The manuscript in question was copied by the Naqshbandi shaykh Ḥusam al-Dīn al-Kurīkhī (Yusufov, 1915–2002).[156] As I was reading the manuscript, I noted that the text is in fact describing Naqshbandi practice, including reference to distinctive Naqshbandi terms and concepts. Although the text is ostensibly describing Khalwati ritual practices, the practices described in the manuscript are radically different from those described by scholars elsewhere. In particular, the section dedicated to the practice of *dhikr* describes how the *dhikr* should be performed in strict sequence, starting with the loud (*jahrī*) *dhikr* and gradually moving to the 'silent' (*qalbī*, *khāfī*) *dhikr*. The description of silent *dhikr* practice is a highly faithful descriptive and terminological reproduction of what we see with the Naqshbandis (*al-sirr, al-khāfī, al-akhfā*). The practice of silent *dhikr* was not typical of the Khalwatiyya, and the order of description of the transition from a loud *dhikr* to the silent *dhikr* in this

press my gratitude.

156 The manuscript is preserved in the private collection of Ḥusam al-Dīn Yusufov, the village of Gurik, Daghestan. The copy of the manuscript is in the private possession of the author.

Khalwati work is in fact a very close echo of the Naqshbandi practice to which the copyist Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov himself belonged. It is clear that Ḥusām al-Dīn himself, as a Naqshbandi sufi, had edited the Khalwati text as he copied it and included a description of a Naqshbandi ritual practice. Readers of this Khalwati text would then interpret Naqshbandi practices as Khalwati ones. These two cases of creative copying indicate that not only did Naqshbandi shaykhs produce their own writings, but they also edited the writings of the shaykhs representing other brotherhoods, correcting what they regarded as erroneous from their own subjective Naqshbandi point of view.

This leads us to further questions, including the blurring of the strict boundaries of this or that *ṭarīqa*, a phenomenon that has been pointed out by other researchers. In particular, Devin DeWeese questions the existence of clear boundaries between Sufi brotherhoods in matters of genealogical succession (*silsila*) and ritual practice and notes the more diffuse nature of the structure of *ṭarīqa*s in the 18th and 19th centuries, than they had been in previous centuries.[157] In the Daghestani case, it can also be observed that some models were somewhat blurred. There frequently occurred, for instance, a partial merging and superimposition of elements of the 'moral subject' or 'esoteric subject' models with the 'reflective subject' model. The idea that there was an intertwining between the latter two models is also corroborated by the fact that 'occult sciences', including works on the magic of numbers and letters, began to spread in Daghestan simultaneously with the advent of the Khalwatiyya, and acquired currency once again during the heyday of the Naqshbandiyya in the 19th-20th centuries. Moreover, my field research reveals that Muslims who practicesed occult healing were given permission (*ijāza*) to do so by Naqshbandi shaykhs. Besides, a number of Naqshbandi and Shādhili *ijāza*s received by Daghestani and Tatar shaykhs in the late 19th-early 20th centuries often include *ijāza*s authorising the bearer to use

[157] Devin DeWeese, "'Dis-ordering' Sufism in Early Modern Central Asia: Suggestions for Rethinking the Sources and Social Structures of Sufi History in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *History and Culture of Central Asia/Istoriia i kul'tura Tsentral'noi Azii*, ed. by Bakhtiyar Babadjanov and Kawahara Yayoi (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo, 2012), 259–279.

occult practices for healing purposes.[158] Furthermore, a number of Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykhs actively employed healing practices. One such shaykh, the afore-mentioned Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov, worked for a long time as a medic in various regions of the Russian Empire[159] and wrote a book on medicine.[160]

The cases discussed above provide compelling evidence of the complex intertextual dynamics among Sufi brotherhoods in Daghestan during the 20th century. Rather than a strict separation between Naqshbandi, Khalwati, and other Sufi traditions, there emerges instead a fluid field of textual engagement, reinterpretation, and adaptation. The Naqshbandi shaykhs not only composed their own treatises but also actively engaged with the literary heritage of other *ṭarīqa*s, particularly the Khalwatiyya. This engagement was not merely passive or reverential; it often featured deliberate editorial intervention. Shaykhs such as Ḥasan al-Qaḥī and Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov did not simply copy Khalwati texts – they reshaped them, integrating Naqshbandi terminology and ritual structure into works that ostensibly belonged to a different tradition. Such acts of creative copying blurred the boundaries between *ṭarīqas* and effectively re-inscribed Naqshbandi conceptions of spiritual practice into broader Sufi discourse.

This practice of textual appropriation and transformation reveals a significant dimension of intertextuality that goes beyond mere citation or doctrinal influence. It reflects a model of Sufi knowledge transmission in which texts serve as malleable repositories, open to reinterpretation in accordance with a particular community's evolving spiritual norms. In this context, the role of the shaykh as both transmitter and editor becomes crucial. The authority to reshape earlier works reflects not only a confidence in one's interpretive stance but also the fluidity of Sufi affiliations and discourses during this period.

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158 Shamil Shikhaliev, Michael Kemper, "Sayfallāh-Qāḍī Bashlarov: Sufi Networks between the North Caucasus and the Volga-Urals," 166–198.

159 Sh.Sh. Shihaliev, A.R. Navruzov, *Iz istorii zhizni i tvorchestva 'Alī Kaiaeva i Saifulla-kadi Bashlarova: dokumenty i materialy* (Mahachkala: Rizo-Press, 2018).

160 Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov, *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-ṭibbiyya*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 94.

Furthermore, these examples support broader observations made by scholars such as Devin DeWeese regarding the permeability of *ṭarīqa* boundaries, particularly in the realms of ritual practice and spiritual genealogy. In Daghestan, this permeability extended beyond textual borrowing to include shared or overlapping models of subjectivity – particularly the intertwining of the 'reflective subject' with moral and esoteric subjectivities. The integration of occult sciences and healing practices into Naqshbandi circles further underscores the eclectic and adaptive nature of Sufi praxis. In sum, intertextuality among Daghestani Sufi brotherhoods was not a marginal phenomenon but a core mechanism through which traditions were sustained, reshaped, and transmitted across generations. The majority of the material collected by Saidov, plus his own memoirs and correspondence with theologians, together reveal two co-existing dynamics. The first dynamic that we can discern from Saidov's archive is a sequential tendency for new models to replace previous ones, and the second dynamic is a tendency for multiple models to exist in parallel with one another, sometimes furthermore with an element of bricolage with elements from multiple models being combined together.

Let us first consider the first of these dynamics, namely the sequential replacement of one model with another. Describing at one point in his memoirs the life of his friend, the afore-mentioned Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī, Saidov writes that "at first he was a Sufi but subsequently, upon reflection, he came to the conclusion that Sufism was a false teaching and spoke out against the Sufis".[161] This tells us that whereas al-Harakānī had previously adhered to the 'reflective subject' model, later he fully changed his views and became one of the key opponents of this model. It is likely that al-Harakānī had access to the reformist literature and ideas which arrived in Daghestan through Muslim press and printed publications from Egypt and the Volga-Ural region. This new literature, which became popular in 20th-century Daghestan, probably led to this change of outlook, and he started to advocate reformist ideas. It is not accidental that he and his friends, who can be described as represen-

[161] *Muḥammad-Said Saidov's memory notes in Arabic*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 52, fol. 1a–1b.

tatives of the 'reformist subject' model, copied and quoted the works of Egyptian and Tatar reformists, such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Marjānī, and Riḍā Fakhr al-Dīn. Moreover, Saidov's archival documents indicate that representatives of this model had great respect for Egyptian reformists, to the extent that one such figure, Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī, signed his correspondence with the pseudonym 'Muḥammad 'Abduh'. Saidov himself observed in one of his notes that Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī named one of his sons after Muḥammad 'Abduh.[162]

Similarly, the replacement of one model with another can be seen in the example of the Daghestani scholar Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, many of whose works Saidov eventually purchased for his own archive. Nadhīr al-Durgilī's father, Nika Muḥammad al-Durghilī, was the oldest and best-known disciple of the Naqshbandi shaykh Ilyās al-Tsudaqārī. Therefore, Nadhīr al-Durgilī was brought up within the 'reflective subject' behavioural model. In 1924, he wrote a treatise entitled *al-Fajr al-ṣādiq fī radd 'alā munkarī al-wasā'it wa-l-khawāriq*. In this work, he offers a sustained critique of Wahhabi legal thought, beginning with the views of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzī and Ibn al-Hādī, and extending to the writings of later Egyptian and Daghestani reformists. Part of Nadhīr al-Durgilī's aim here is to justify the legitimacy of Sufi practices like *rābiṭa*, *tawassul* and *istighātha*, as well as the practice of visiting the graves of the Prophet Muḥammad, saints, and holy men (*ziyārat al-qubūr*).[163]

Over the next few years, Nadhīr al-Durgilī read and copied a number of works by Egyptian reformists such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Muḥammad Rashid Riḍā and Muḥammad Farīd al-Wajdī, as well as the works of the Tatar reformist scholar Shihāb al-Dīn al-Marjānī, all of which appear to have had a profound influence on

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162 *Notes by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 21.

163 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Al-Fajr al-ṣādiq fī radd 'alā munkarī al-wasā'it wa-l-khawāriq*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'*1, no. 31b.

his thought.[164] Subsequently, in 1927, Nadhīr al-Durgilī wrote several works which contained views diametrically opposed to those which he himself had advocated in the *al-Fajr al-ṣādiq*. In particular, in his polemic with two Daghestani critics of Wahhabism, the scholars Yūsuf al-Jungūtī (1869–1928) and Muḥammad al-Targhūlī (d. 1940s), Nadhīr al-Durgilī acts as a defender of Ibn Taymiyya and the Egyptian reformists whom he had criticised three years previously. Thus, the example of al-Durgilī demonstrates how some scholars might change their views from one model to another, or indeed to multiple others. The case of al-Durgilī exemplifies how a scholar may alter his priorities and world-view as he moves from the 'reflective subject' model to the 'refirmist subject' model.

Another case demonstrates how elements of different models could be superimposed on one another. This follows clearly from the characteristics accorded by different scholars to another friend of Saidov, with whom he also maintained an active correspondence. The individual in question was Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī, the afore-mentioned disciple of 'Alī Kaiaev. Being a reformist, 'Umarī produced sharp criticism of Naqshbandi practices. Nevertheless, he advocated the legitimacy of al-Ghazālī's works, combining both 'moral subject' and 'reformist subject' models. This diffusion of elements of different models can also be seen in 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī's Arabic work, where he gives detailed information about Umarī's views.

Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī, described by the author as a cherished nephew and a young man of remarkable intellectual ability and prodigious memory, was initially raised in a pious Sufi family and received his early education under respected scholars. However, his trajectory changed dramatically after he came under the influence of 'Alī al-Ghumuqī. According to the author, this encounter marked the beginning of his deviation from the accepted Sufi path. Upon his study under al-Ghumuqī, 'Umarī began to promote a reformist message that rejected the established authority of the four legal schools and the Sufi masters. He emphasised the importance of relying solely on the authority of the

[164] *Majmū' al-rasā'il*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'*1, no. 90.

Qur'ān and Sunna, thereby dismissing the value of classical Sufi texts and broader Islamic scholarly tradition. His antagonism toward Sufism was particularly pronounced: the author recounts an episode from their youth when 'Umarī burned a respected Sufi compilation, the *Nuzhat al-majālis* of al-Ṣufūrī – an act that deeply disturbed the narrator. In a telling personal story, the author recalls asking 'Umarī to teach from a classical text of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, namely al-Maḥallī's commentary on the *Jam' al-Jawāmi'* by al-Subkī. 'Umarī declined with scorn, recommending instead al-Ghazālī's *al-Mustaṣfā*, arguing that al-Ghazālī's works more useful for Muslims than the works of lattest generation scholars. Muḥammad 'Umarī composed numerous poetic and prose writings in which he fiercely criticised prominent Sufi shaykhs for their performing of practices that were tantamount to unbelief (*kufr*). In one of his letter adressing to Naqshbandi shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, 'Umarī elaborates on what he sees as serious theological deviations within contemporary Sufi practice. Drawing upon arguments rooted in a strict reading of *tawḥīd*, 'Umarī accuses Naqshbandi practices of the crime of associating partners with God (*shirk*) by treating their spiritual guides, both living and deceased, as intermediaries between themselves and God. He condemns the practice of seeking intercession through shaykhs, whether in matters of personal distress, spiritual elevation, or eschatological concerns such as the Day of Judgment. According to 'Umarī, these forms of mediation lack any basis in the Qur'ān and Sunna and are fundamentally opposed to the principles of monotheism. Moreover, he characterises contemporary Sufi leadership as a deceptive mechanism, allegedly inspired by Satan, designed to mislead those of weak understanding and superficial religious insight. Ultimately, 'Umarī concludes that in the current environment, the institution of Sufism itself represents a deviation from Islamic orthodoxy, and he argues that closing the doors to Sufi practice has become a legal necessity (*wājib shar'an*).[165]

What 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī wrote in his work concerning Muḥammad 'Umarī's critique of Naqshbandi practices is in fact corroborated

[165] 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī, *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-l-akh al-muṣliḥ*, fols. 5a–9a.

by 'Umarī's own words. Thus, in one of his writings, while criticising the Naqshbandi practice of *istighātha*, he states:

> …The praying to God through the medium of Prophets, saints and righteous men, asking them to help in one's need, at a time of trials and tribulations, is nothing other than sin of polytheism (*al-shirk*) and a clear error (*al-ḍalāl al-mubīn*) which displeases God and His Messenger Muḥammad. We can see the Sufis of our time extolling their shaykhs as only God should be extolled, and loving them as only God should be loved. These Sufis ask their shaykhs for help, convinced that the knowledge of the sacred nature of God is closed and only accessible through these shaykhs. They call on these shaykhs, requesting them to help with their worldly affairs – for instance, in the growing of crops, in asking for rain, and in destroying their enemies.[166]

This examples present a rather complex and ambivalent picture, illustrating a gradual shift in 'Umarī's perception of religious models – from a reflective Sufi orientation to a reformist stance. Initially engaged in Sufism, 'Umarī ultimately came to reject it, considering it a deviant path. At the same time, we observe a diffuse influence of two distinct models on his thought: on the one hand, the ideas of Islamic reformism, and on the other, the ethical principles articulated in the works of al-Ghazālī. While 'Umarī aligned himself with the views of Islamic reformism, he nevertheless acknowledged the authority of al-Ghazālī, refusing to dismiss this earlier model of Sufism. He elevated al-Ghazālī above all subsequent scholars and emphasised the continuing importance of his writings for the moral and religious formation of a Muslim. At the same time, however, 'Umarī expressed strong opposition to Naqshbandi practices, which he regarded as incompatible with the fundamental principles of monotheism. This radical critique illustrates the depth of his opposition to Naqshbandi traditions and reflects a broader reformist impulse aimed

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166 Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī, *Tajrīd al-tawḥīd*. This manuscript was compiled on 5 February 1923. Autograph. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 97, fol. 3a.

at purifying Islamic belief and practice from what he perceived as accretions and distortions.

There are other examples indicating that a number of reformers, while accepting the legitimacy of old Sufi tradition, nevertheless entirely rejected contemporary Sufism in Daghestan. Conversely, Sufis who were contemporaries of Saidov also adopted a sharply critical stance towards the reformers, including Saidov himself, who maintained an uncompromising position in relation to Sufism. Such tension between competing models was, more broadly, a characteristic feature of the 20th century as a whole.

In his article *Mas'alat al-taṣawwuf wa ḥurmatuhu fī hādha al-zamān* (*The Issue of Sufism and Its Prohibition in Our Time*), the Ingush scholar Muḥammad Kurkiev[167] quotes nine conditions that a Sufi has to conform to. These are repentance, frugality, making good use of time, asceticism, learning, following the Prophet Muḥammad's way, trust in the will of God (*tawakkul*), sincerity of actions (*ikhlāṣ*), and solitude (*khalwa*). At the same time, the author writes that none of the contemporary shaykhs, let alone their followers, measure up to these conditions. He writes further:

> Here in Daghestan, various shaykhs compete with one another and accuse their opponents of lying, thus sowing dissent among the disciples. It is also surprising that they give some of their followers authorisations to teach. In fact, if they are asked about the order and conditions for performing ablutions or prayer, they are unable to say anything because they are ignorant for the most part… Following Sufism is forbidden at present, because Sufism contradicts the development of the state that obliges people to engage in politics or other studies. It is also necessary to destroy the traces of Sufism in Daghestan, such as the mausoleums, for the construction of which the poor people contributed their

[167] He was one of the harsh critics of Sufism and adhered to Salafi ideas, rejecting the legitimacy of Sufism. In the 2000s, some Salafis from Ingushetia translated his treatise from Arabic into Russian and published it, where he criticised Sufism and 'harmful innovations.' For more details about this individual and his treatise, see: M.K. Kurkiev, *Odolenie palits novovvedenii, vykhodiashchikh za predely sunny Zakonodatelia* (Moscow: Flinta, 2011), 6–15.

> money in vain. Poor people, inspired by the shaykhs, also waste their money on other events, such as *dhikr* and *mawlid,* which are against *sharī'a*. Sufism appeared at a time of bliss when people followed the precepts of God and renounced things that were condemned. This was the time when *sharī'a* imposed strict boundaries, and the Sufis who transgressed these boundaries were severely punished. But subsequently, these boundaries disappeared, so the Sufis became fearless in transgressing the norms of *sharī'a*.[168]

Saidov's archives contain a fragment of a letter from the afore-mentioned Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī to a Daghestani Sufi shaykh, possibly to be identified as the afore-mentioned shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī. Although the exact circumstances of the letter's composition are not clear, we can glean from internal textual evidence that the letter was written in response to a work in which said shaykh had attempted to justify the legitimacy of performing *dhikr* in Sufism. In response to this work, al-Harakānī writes that he does not accept anything which is not supported by clear arguments in the Qur'ān and Sunna; thus, he states, he regards Sufism to be a harmful innovation (*bid'a*), which perverts Islam and contradicts *sharī'a*. He furthermore rebukes his anonymous correspondent for complaining to his teacher and asking the latter to visit al-Harakānī in order to prevail upon him to renounce his criticism of Sufism.[169]

It was not only the reformers who criticised Naqshbandi practices and, more broadly, the representatives of the 'reflective subject' model. Naqshbandi shaykhs, for their part, composed letters and even entire treatises in which they not only defended the legitimacy of Naqshbandi practices – criticised by al-Harakānī and other reformers – but also directed their own critique at the reformist ideas themselves, often equating them with Wahhabi doctrines.

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168 Muḥammad al-Dashlaqī, "Mas'alat al-taṣawwuf wa ḥurmatuhu fī hādha al-zamān," *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* 7 (Buinaksk, 1927), 19–22; 9, (Buinaksk, 1927), 5.

169 [*Letter from Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī to an unknown addressee*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 574.

In one letter addressed to ʻAlī Kaiaev, the afore-mentioned Naqshbandi shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī notes that some of Kaiaev's disciples, apparently referring to the aforementioned al-Harakānī, were spreading dissent by criticising shaykhs for their ritual practices:

> Some of your disciples are leading our brothers astray from the path of Islam by stirring up discord and saying that the spiritual connection with the Prophet through the shaykhs (*rābiṭa*) is a sin of polytheism (*shirk*). They do not understand the true meaning of the spiritual connection of disciples with their shaykh. I also hope that it is clear to you what is allowed and what is permitted in *rābiṭa*. Major scholars of all four *madhhab*s recognised that it is allowed to embrace with one's spiritual gaze the hearts of the disciples (*taṣarruf*)... Sufi books are full of descriptions of the order of performing *dhikr* and *rābiṭa.* Even Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā believed that performing *rābiṭa* was permitted, although on matters of addressing God with prayer through the mediation of shaykhs and righteous men (*tawassul*), he followed the opinion of the Wahhabis. The essence of *rābiṭa* is for a disciple to visualise the image of those shaykhs who have attained the state of complete detachment from the earthly world and contemplation of God Alone (*fanā'*). Then this disciple uses the connection with the shaykhs to turn his spiritual gaze towards God, asking Him to bring the light of *dhikr* through the hearts of these shaykhs into his heart. When performing the *rābiṭa,* this disciple turns his spiritual gaze towards God, just like how a Muslim, when he is praying, turns his spiritual gaze to God. A Muslim imagines that the light of the Divine Inspiration (*fayḍ*) reaches the place where he performs prayer, turning his face to the Kaaba. Our scholars marvel at the fact that some of your disciples prohibit *tawassul*, following the Wahhabi opinion in this issue. Many major scholars have refuted the opinions of the Wahhabis. I hope you will write in short about the truth, indicating whether you believe *rābiṭa* and *tawassul* should be allowed or prohibited.[170]

[170] [*Letter from Ḥasan al-Qaḥī to 'Alī Kaiaev*] (in Arabic). Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 22.

In lamenting how Kaiaev's disciples were criticising Sufi shaykhs, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī was probably referring in particular to the behaviour of Kaiaev's associate Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī, who criticised *rābiṭa*, *istighātha*, *tawassul* and some other practices as a 'harmful innovation' (*bidʻa*) running directly contrary to *sharīʻa*.

It was probably in response to al-Harakānī's criticism of Naqshbandi practices that shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī wrote his work *Ṣifr al-asnā fī l-rābiṭa al-ḥusnā*. In this work, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī seeks to demonstrate the legitimacy of such practices as *rābiṭa* and *tawassul*, as well as shrine visitation (*ziyāra*).[171] As he writes in the preface, he wrote the work after receiving a letter from a certain Daghestani scholar. In this letter, the scholar had criticised visits to the graves of saints and holy men as a custom that contradicts the Qur'ān and Sunna, and had stated that the *rābiṭa* practised by the Sufis, as well as the practice of pleading to God through the mediation of shaykhs (*istighātha*), is a polytheism (*shirk*). The scholar had also written that he could find no arguments for such practices either in the Qur'ān or the Sunna, and that, since he could only be guided by something for which there is a clear argument in the Qur'ān or Sunna, he thus beleived these practices to be illegitimate in Islam.[172]

In response to such criticisms, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī begins his treatise with a refutation of scholars who call for *ijtihād*.[173] He writes that the period

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171 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qaḥī, *Ṣifr al-asnā fī l-rābiṭa al-ḥusnā* (Damascus: Dār al-nuʻmān li-l-ʻulūm, 1998).

172 Ibid., 43–44.

173 In Islamic jurisprudence, '*ijtihād*' (derived from the Arabic term 'effort') refers to the practice of independent reasoning. It entails the issuance of legal decrees and the resolution of various religious matters based on the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*s, analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), and scholarly consensus (*ijmāʻ*). A scholar who engages in *ijtihād* is known as a '*mujtahid*'; they are required to possess extensive knowledge and fulfill specific criteria. The emergence of distinct legal schools (*madhhab*s) took place during the reign of the ʻAbbāsids (750–1258). Jurists within the predominant Sunni branch of Islam became affiliated with one of these legal schools, shaping their legal reasoning within the framework of their respective school's interpretative principles. By the 16th century, Sunni jurists had largely concluded that *ijtihād* was applicable only in genuinely novel legal cases. However, since the 19th century, reformers have championed the call for a renewed practice of *ijtihād* as a rallying point for advocating legal reforms and critiquing the established legal schools

of legitimate *ijtihād* had come to an end with the deaths of the founders of the four legal schools. He thus advises the unnamed addressee of the treatise, who he addresses as 'my son,' to read certain books and cautions him against following the ideas of those he calls 'the opponents of the followers of the Sunna and the congregations' (*ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a*). Among such opponents he notes Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn al-Qayyim, as well as Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Jamāl al-Din al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, whom he calls 'the Wahhabis'.[174] To support his argument that this group of scholars were leading Muslims astray, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī writes that shortly before the death of al-Afghānī in Istanbul and Muḥammad 'Abduh in Alexandria, both men lost the ability to speak and died in great pain. In the opinion of Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, these two men's terrible deaths allotted to them by God were incontrovertible evidence that their ideas were false and that they had led people astray.[175]

What we see here is a clash of two models. As a representative of the 'reformist subject' model, al-Harakānī relies primarily on the direct arguments of the Qur'ān or Sunna, which alone, in his opinion, had the authority to confirm or deny the legitimacy of Sufi practices. Al-Harakānī approaches the issue of Sufism from a rational standpoint, tracing a logical link between the source (Qur'ān and Sunna) and its consequence (the ascription or denial of legitimacy). His method and approach here are very close to the 'legal subject' model, which similarly criticises the non-rational experience of the Sufis and is also founded in rational meth-

(*madhhab*s). For more details about the *ijtihad,* see: J. Schacht, D.B. MacDonald, "Iǧtihād", *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 04 October 2023 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573–3912_islam_COM_0351

174 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qaḥī, *Ṣifr al-asnā fī l-rābiṭa al-ḥusnā*, 49–61.

175 Ibid., 62.

od, which presumes a logical link between the sources and methodologies of Muslim law (Qur'ān, Sunna *ijmā'*, *qiyās*), and the end result (*fatwā*). Like the 'legal subject' model, the 'reformist subject' model exemplified by al-Harakānī emphasises the need for a clear, logical justification of one's views, steeped in reliance on primary sources and the logical link between premise and consequence along the lines of "if Sufism is not mentioned in the Qur'ān and Sunna, consequently it is not legitimate."

Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, by contrast represents a very different position. Like al-Harakānī he accepts the importance of the Qur'ān and Sunna as sources for establishing the legitimacy of Sufism. But unlike al-Harakānī he seeks to engage also with his readers' non-rational, emotional feelings. In recounting the 'painful deaths' of al-Afghānī and 'Abduh, for instance, he seeks to make an emotional impact on his readers, and thereby persuade them that the reformists' views are false, while simultaneously demonstrating to them what awaited them should they also criticise and disregard Sufi practices. This contrast between the rational method advocated by the 'legal subject', and 'reformist subject' models, and the emotional reflections of the Sufi-inflected 'moral subject', 'esoteric subject', and 'reflective subject' models highlights a fundamental difference between these respective sets of dispositions.

Another Naqshbandi shaykh, Muḥammad b. Nūr Muḥammad al-'Asalī al-Ya'sūbī (1872–1942), also composed treatises in which he justified Sufi practices. Muḥammad al-Ya'sūbī was an associate of shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, together with whom he was arrested by Soviet secret service officers (*NKVD*) in 1937 and charged with counterrevolutionary activity – an accusation that was common at the time; he died in prison in Derbend in 1942. He is the author of several major works, in which he, like his teacher Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, criticises those Daghestani scholars who believed Sufism to be 'a harmful innovation,' and justifies the legitimacy of Sufi practices (*rābiṭa, tawassul, ziyāra*) from the point of view of the Qur'ān, Sunna, and the opinions of Muslim scholars.[176]

[176] Muḥammad b. Nūr Muḥammad al-Naqshbandī al-Shādhilī al-Dāghistānī, *Al-Ajwiba al-bahiyya fī ithbāt shafā'a khair al-barriyya* (Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2014); idem, *Al-Farā'id al-wahbiyya fī radd shubuhāt al-wahhābiyya* (Makhach-

One of these earliest works is *Ajwibat al-ʻAsalī al-Yaʻsūbī li-l-turrahāt al-wahhābī al-Harakānī* (*Responses by al-ʻAsalī al-Yaʻsūbī to the Wahhabi Nonsense Spouted by al-Harakānī*).[177] Like Ḥasan al-Qaḥī's afore-mentioned *Ṣifr al-asnā*, the work was written as a refutation of the criticism of Sufism and Sufi practices by Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī. In the text, the author quotes from al-Harakānī's arguments and then proceeds to refute them. The original work by al-Harakānī here being subjected to criticism has not as of yet been discovered. Nevertheless, it is clear from Muḥammad al-Yaʻsūbī's refutation that the work in question by al-Harakānī had been a treatise dedicated to the criticism of Sufism.

In his rejoinder to al-Harakānī's criticism, Muḥammad al-Yaʻsūbī writes that Sufis in fact adhere much more strongly to the precepts of the Qur'ān and Sunna than do the critics of Sufism. He argues for the legitimacy of such Sufi practices as *rābiṭa*, *tawassul*, *istighātha* and *dhikr*, pointing out that al-Harakānī's critique of these practices merely repeats those arguments by Wahhabis which had already been overturned by major scholars. At the end of the work, al-Yaʻsūbī notes:

> When a Muslim is lax at performing his religious obligations, he does not receive any reward in the afterlife. For instance, if he is inconsiderate when performing prayer and does not focus his attention as if he were standing before God, he shall not receive any reward in the afterlife. Nor does he receive any benefit from the *dhikr* or from greeting the Prophet Muḥammad if he has performed or pronounced these rituals without due respect. As for Sufism, it aims to make the person more God-fearing, so that he may cleanse his heart of all envy, pride, arrogance, and recklessness. It is the Sufis' orientation toward God that helps to avoid such sloppiness and carelessness in religious rituals. And there

kala: Dār al-risāla, 2014); idem, *Kunūz al-āman min fitan al-zamān* (Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2014).

177 Muḥammad b. Nūr Muḥammad al-ʻAsalī al-Yaʻsūbī, *Ajwibat al-ʻAsalī al-Yaʻsūbī li-l-turrahāt al-wahhābī al-Harakānī*. The manuscript is kept in the mosque of Akhalchi, Daghestan. The copy of this manuscript is in the private possession of the author.

> is no contradiction here with what the Qur'ān says and what the Prophet Muḥammad said.[178]

The materials examined above compel us to reconsider the nature of doctrinal authority, textual continuity, and epistemic rupture in 20th-century Daghestani Islam. Rather than viewing the transformation of religious models as linear progressions or clear-cut ruptures, the evidence points to a far more intricate landscape where models of subjectivity interacted in ways that were simultaneously dialogic, antagonistic, and structurally productive.

Intertextuality functions not merely as a mechanism of literary continuity but as a form of epistemic contestation. The Naqshbandi appropriation and rewriting of Khalwati texts reveal intertextuality as a tool of strategic displacement, whereby dominant paradigms subtly overwrite subaltern ones. Textual practices can serve as techniques of "tactical re-appropriation," in which seemingly subordinate actors reshape hegemonic discourses to suit their own aims.[179] Shaykhs such as Ḥasan al-Qaḥī and Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, by embedding Naqshbandi content into Khalwati frameworks, effectively reinscribed their authority within the discursive field of Sufi legitimacy.

This process highlights a broader dynamic in which textual production becomes a site of identity formation and boundary negotiation. The act of copying, annotating, and re-editing manuscripts was not a passive exercise but a performative claim to doctrinal authority.

Equally crucial is the role of polemics as a means not only of theological refutation but also of epistemological repositioning. Reformist thinkers such as al-Harakānī and 'Umarī reject Sufi practices not only as heterodox but also as epistemically illegible within their framework of Islamic knowledge – one which privileges a rationalist reading of the Qur'ān and Sunna.

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178 Muḥammad b. Nūr Muḥammad al-'Asalī al-Ya'sūbī, *Ajwibat al-'Asalī al-Ya'sūbī lil- turrahāt al-wahhābī al-Harakānī*, fols. 3a–16a.

179 See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 174–177.

However, the boundary between reformist and traditional models is frequently porous. Figures such as ʻUmarī, despite their polemical tone, continue to draw upon the ethical universe of al-Ghazālī. This demonstrates that model shifts were rarely total; they were often fragmented, ambivalent, and recursive. Daghestani scholars frequently assembled their subjectivities from heterogeneous discursive fragments.[180]

The divergence between the rationalist epistemology of reformers and the affective epistemology of traditionalists further highlights a structural contrast. While reformists grounded their arguments in a linear hermeneutics of deduction, Naqshbandi authors such as Ḥasan al-Qaḥī and al-Yaʻsūbī appeal to the moral imagination, spiritual exemplarity, and the affective charge of divine retribution. These acts of speech not only describe emotional states but also aim to shape the emotional orientation of the audience.

In summary, subject models – whether reflective, moral, legal, or reformist – should be understood not as static types but as performative positions adopted within specific discursive and social contexts. The persistence of polemics, the selective appropriation of earlier authorities, and the rewriting of inherited texts all demonstrate that the production of Islamic knowledge was, and remains, a contested and dynamic process.

Saidov's Performance of Models

An analysis of Saidov's archive shows reveals the diversity of the intellectual landscape that he inhabited, and the range of behavioural models represented in the works that he collected and produced. Saidov's ego-documents, which encompass memoirs, brief biographical notes about his friends, and his correspondence with them, reveal his perception of a particular model and the type of persona with whom he either associated himself or aspired to be associate. Hence, in one of his memoirs, Saidov summarises the brief life story of Muḥammad ʻAbd al-

180 Cf. Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth-Century Notable* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 68–73.

Rashīd al-Harakānī, where he outlines the range of behavioural models and his own adherence to one of them. He writes thus:

> My faithful friend Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī was born in the year 1318 / 1900 in the village of Arakani in Avaristan. He was born in an ancient Avar family and received his primary education as a child under his father ʿAbd al-Rashīd. He then went wandering in search of knowledge and reached considerable heights in the study of useful sciences (*al-ʿilm al-nāfiʿ*). He had limitless memory and penetrated deeply into the intricacies of Arabic literature of the past. He absorbed a vast amount of knowledge about the Arabic language, morphology, and Arabic literature. He was diligent in his pursuit of poetry and displayed an exceptional talent in versification, being a most eloquent poet. After this, he was an *imām* of a mosque, and due to his extraordinary gifts and talents he had a great many pupils. Early on in his studies, he studied logic, philosophy, Sufism, and other subjects that were taught in Daghestan. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd was initiated (*talqīn*) in Sufism by one of the well-known shaykhs. Since his bright and sharp mind was not content with explanations of the form and nature [of Sufism], he plunged deep into the search for truth. It was then that he perceived the nature of Sufism and its main foundations. And presenting clear and hefty arguments, he started to speak about the false nature (*buṭlān*) of Sufism and its utter deviation from Islamic norms. It was then that he declared unrelenting war (*jihād*) on the iniquity of Sufis. He crumbled into dust the Sufis' intentions and lies, so that everyone clearly saw that these dissenting Sufis (*māriq*) were unable to respond to him. For their part, the Sufis began to accuse him of religious dissent. They beseeched him to abandon his war on the Sufis, lest, as they said, the cane of the miracles (*karāmāt*) should come down upon him. However, he – may God have mercy on him – continued to stand firm on his path of criticising Sufism and engaged in open conflict with them until the time of his death in 1928.[181]

[181] Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Tadhkira*. [*A short biography of Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥam-

In this text, one can clearly see Saidov describing himself through another's biography. While ostensibly recounting the life of his friend al-Harakānī, Saidov appears also to be alluding to himself with his reference to al-Harakānī's coming from 'Avaristan' and belonging to an ancient Avar family. Saidov himself often signed his correspondence with the *nisba* '*al-Awārī*', which refers to someone who is 'Avar' in the geographical sense, which is to say from that region of Avaristan that is Saidov's own homeland region in the north of Daghestan. Moreover, Saidov himself came from an ancient and well-known family. Furthermore, the descriptions in this biography also refer to qualities which Saidov himself possessed: rationalism, a sharp mind seeking the truth, a principled negative position on Sufism, an exceptional poetic talent, and powers of eloquent versification. In describing al-Harakānī, Saidov is thus describing also how he saw – or wanted to see – himself.

Saidov clearly regards al-Harakānī as a positive character, and describes him in superlative terms as a talented poet and a major scholar with a 'bright mind' and a 'deep immersion in the search for truth', who attracted many pupils. As for al-Harakānī's opponents, whom Saidov identifies as Sufis, he describes them in highly negative terms, attributing them with a range of appropriately derogatory characteristics. Saidov presents them as people who pervert religion, deceive the faithful, and are unable to muster any arguments to refute the views expressed by al-Harakānī, instead merely throwing at him unsubstantiated accusations of dissent and empty threats.

In this account, one can see how Saidov defines, reflects and selects what he regards as a correct 'reformist subject' model and a persona of the ideal Muslim, embodied by al-Harakānī. For Saidov, being an ideal Muslim means being a scholar (as exemplified by al-Harakānī's brilliant education, his commitment to penetrating the intricacies of the truth, his broad outlook, and his outstanding knowledge of Arabic literature), being moral and brave (as exemplified by al-Harakānī's exposing the falsehood of Sufism in front of witnesses rather than berating

mad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 52. It was compiled by Saidov between 1960 and 1970.

the Sufis secretly, behind their backs), and being principled (as exemplified by al-Harakānī's standing his ground despite remonstrations and threats). As the direct opposite of al-Harakānī's embodiment of the 'reformist subject' model, Saidov presents the 'reflective subject' model, which he suggests embodies an 'incorrect' kind of Islam as exemplified by Sufis. Saidov gives a negative depiction of Sufis, presenting them as being poorly educated (as exemplified by their inability to respond to the arguments presented by al-Harakānī), lacking moral dignity (as exemplified by their directing threats at him), and being 'backward' in their belief in the shaykhs' miracles (*karāmāt*). Thus through his brief account of al-Harakānī's life story Saidov demonstrated that he himself was closely connected to the 'reformist subject' model.

Saidov copied for himself a fragment of a letter by al-Harakānī to an unnamed Daghestani Sufi shaykh. This letter demonstrates al-Harakānī's negative attitude toward Sufism that Saidov highlighted in the biographical sketch. It transpires from the content of the letter that the shaykh in question had attempted to justify the performance of *dhikr* in Sufism. In response to this attempt, al-Harakānī writes as follows:

> If you introduce harmful innovations into the religion, you are one of those who deviate from the path of God. As for me, I guide myself solely by the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad. I do not of course reject the performance of *dhikr* after the prayer or in several other cases that were relevant during the first three centuries of Islam. However, I do not accept anything that was not transferred through our Prophet and his disciples. I reject any harmful innovations (*bid'a*), and I follow the principle of 'following the bidding [of God] and rejecting what is condemned (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*).[182]

Although the discussions of Sufism that Saidov had taken part in as a young man were now a thing of the past, in the 1960s and 1970s Saidov revisited his past and once again articulated his attitude towards Sufi-inflected behavioural models by means of writing al-Harakānī's biography

[182] [*Letter from Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī to an unknown addressee*.]

and copying the above-cited letter. One can see that Saidov remained a critic of Sufism for at least 40 or 50 years, starting from the 1920s when he participated in debates on the subject and continuing until the 1960s and 70s, when he wrote the afore-mentioned biography and letter. This reflects his permanently negative attitude to Sufism and his personal adherence to the 'reformist subject' model as an Islamic scholar.

In adhering to this latter behavioural model, Saidov was exercising his personal subjectivity. The 'reformist subject' model may have been widespread in 20th-century Daghestan, but it was not universal: other models or their combinations remained available, even though Saidov opted not to avail himself of them. For an example of someone who made a very different choice, let us consider the Daghestani scholar ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī (Umarov, 1912–2000), who like Saidov wrote an account of al-Harakānī's life, but one entirely unlike the narrative discussed above. ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī was a Sufi, and from the text quoted below we see that he can be classified as a practitioner of the 'reflective subject' model:

> Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī was the worst reprobate. He had no knowledge, good manners, or any remarkable good deeds. As for the bad qualities of his nature, he had so many that it is impossible to list all of his vices in this short text. During the days of his studies, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd had met Muḥammad ʿUmarī. He breathed the thoughts of his Satan into him, leading him astray and sending him to spread this iniquity among the sons of our homeland… He would sometimes visit Muḥammad ʿUmarī when I was studying under him. I saw his pride, arrogance, and haughtiness. He spoke as if he were one of the *mujtahid*... He has written many poems in which he criticises the Sufis. The evidence that al-Harakānī was a resolute opponent of Sufism is in these words of his:
>
> May God curse Sufism,
> For verily it is a disease,
> And anyone who follows it shall be lost.
>
> He had composed many letters and poetry in which he mocked two great Sufi shaykhs: Sharaf al-Dīn al-Kikunī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, who once told him: Remove your cart from the battlefield lest you be struck down by

> the arrows of our flesh and you perish soon. The flesh of saints is poison for you![183]

The two starkly differing assessments of al-Harakānī's life, one by his friend Saidov and the other by his opponent Umarov, reflect the two authors' contrasting takes on the same person. The two authors' differing views can furthermore be explained by the fact that Saidov and Umarov each adhered to differing behavioural models. Saidov speaks positively of al-Harakānī's resolutely negative position on Sufism because Saidov himself shares these views. In Saidov's narrative, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd figures as a fighter for the preservation of true Islam and as a true scholar (*ʿālim*). Saidov notes how well-educated and talented al-Harakānī was, and praises him for his lofty principles. Umarov, by contrast, alleges the direct opposite, saying that al-Harakānī was not knowledgeable at all. As for al-Harakānī's moral qualities, ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī notes his excessive pride, arrogance, and haughtiness. In his description, the principled determination so commended by Saidov is recast instead as stupid obstinacy. The two biographers also have very different views of threats levelled at al-Harakānī that the shaykhs whom he criticised would use their miraculous powers to cause him harm. Saidov treats these threats with ironic contempt, thereby displaying that rationalist outlook which is one of the most distinctive features of the 'reformist subject' model. ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī, by contrast, takes the threats considerably more seriously. He quotes the words of the Sufi shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, conjuring up a figurative image of 'the arrows of miracles striking him down', and thereby suggesting that al-Harakānī's criticism of Sufism would result in this latter's undoing. For ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī, the shaykhs' miraculous powers are self-evident, as is the inevitability of retribution for the criticism of the shaykhs. As it happened, al-Harakānī died unfortunately young at the age of 28 during a household quarrel. While Saidov regards al-Harakānī's death as a tragic accident, Umarov sees it as something that was fated to occur. In ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī's understanding, al-Harakānī died as a consequence of his

183 ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī, *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-l-akh al-muṣliḥ*, fols. 9a–10b.

ignoring the shaykhs' warning to stop criticising Sufism, and was therefore punished by God for his obstinacy.

Saidov's biographical account of Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī thus illustrates the ways in which Saidov juxtaposed a range of different behavioural models. Moreover, a comparison of Saidov's biographical narrative with that by ʻAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī demonstrates the differing ways in which two scholars with diametrically opposed views presented the image of an ideal Muslim. For Saidov, the ideal Muslim is the scholar and exemplar of moral fortitude as embodied by al-Harakānī. ʻAbd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī's biographical account, meanwhile, similarly uses the figure of al-Harakānī as a moral exemplar – but, unlike Saidov, he uses him not as a *positive* exemplar but as a *negative* one. That is, Umarov uses the biography of Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd to show his readers precisely what a Muslim should not be.

Saidov's principled stance regarding Sufism becomes evident in his correspondence with afore-mentioned al-Harakānī and Fakhr al-Dīn.[184] In one of his letters, he expresses his dissatisfaction with the fact that his teacher and close friend, Masʻūd al-Muhūkhī, does not share Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī's stance against Sufism and does not recognise this teaching as unequivocally false [fig. 1]. Saidov addresses a series of rhetorical questions to his recipients:

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184 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Harakānī (1880–1978): a pupil of ʻAlī Kaiaev, a friend of Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī. In the Daghestani Islamic tradition, he is considered by the local Muslim scholars to be "*one of the key Wahhabis in Daghestan during the Soviet period*". Author's interview with Murtazali Yakubov, former *imām* of mosgue in the city Buinaksk in 1980–89 (Chirkei, Daghestan, February 3, 2012). Muḥammad-Said Saidov himself wrote the brief biography of Fakhr al-Dīn where he wrote follow: "*Initially, Fakhr al-Dīn was a Sufi and a follower of shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī. However, subsequently he rejected the Sufi movement and accepted the Salafi values*". Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Al-ʻĀlim Fakhr al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Harakānī.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 903. There is an extant letter from him to Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd, in which Fakhr al-Dīn writes the following in verse form: "*May God leave the Sufism without His support! For Sufism is poison and whoever takes it shall die!*" This letter is in private possession of the author.

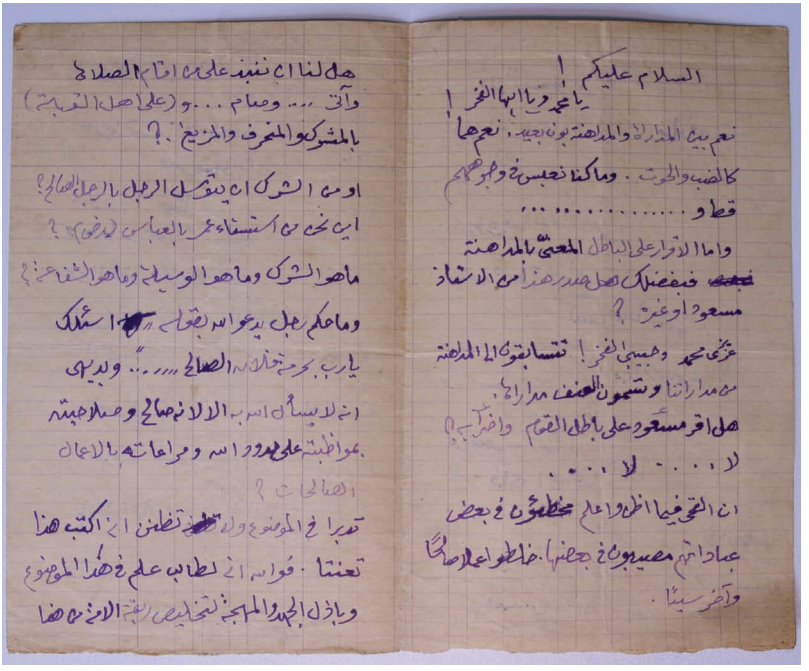


Figure 1. Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Harakānī. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5. no. 47.

Has our teacher Masʻūd written anywhere about the false nature of Sufism? Does Masʻūd claim that its followers are false? Indeed, shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, as I believe and as I know to be true, errs in some of his questions and falls into sin in some rituals (*ʻibāda*). He mixes good deeds with the bad! Should we reject those who perform prayer, pays the *zakāt*, fasts, while being a polytheist (*mushrik*)? Or those who commit the sin of polytheism (*shirk*) by praying through righteous people (*tawassul*)? Is addressing God through shaykhs (*wasīla*) and asking these shaykhs for intercession (*shafāʻa*) not a sin of polytheism? How should we judge the person who calls on God with the words: "I beseech you, O Lord, for the sake of Your respect for such and such a holy man?" Reflect on this, and you shall never think that I am saying this in order to find fault with the Sufis or to show excessive obstinacy! I swear by God

> that I seek knowledge in this area and apply all my efforts in order to save our Muslims from this incurable disease![185] Village of Irganay, end of the month of Rajab, 1342 [1–5 March 1924].[186]

In this letter Saidov offers a harsh criticism of Sufi practices and calls the Sufis who perform them polytheists. He points out that the afore-mentioned Naqshbandi shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī errs in many matters of ritual (*ʻibāda*). At the same time, Saidov regards his friends al-Harakānī and Fakhr al-Dīn as like-minded allies and laments the fact that their third friend Masʻūd does not consider Sufism or Sufi practices to be sinful at all.

Saidov's egodocuments are especially fascinating, since they inform us about the attitudes toward Sufism both of Masʻūd and of Saidov himself. The letter in his archive provide ample evidence of the 'reformist subject' model of which Saidov can be seen as a representative. In a letter addressed to Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī, Saidov notes that al-Muhūkhī had previously sought his opinion regarding the status of Sufism and the behaviour of Sufi practitioners in Daghestan. Initially, it is noted, Mas'ūd had been a critic of Sufism but later adopted a more sympathetic stance, expressing a form of deference toward Sufi figures. In response, Saidov felt compelled to articulate his own view of Sufism in a poetic form that combined theological critique with pointed satire.

In these verses, the author denounces Sufism as a source of religious disorder in the region, accusing its adherents of ignorance, hypocrisy, and harmful innovation (*bidʻa*). He suggests that the Sufis falsely present their practices as legitimate religious instruction, despite lacking any authoritative knowledge beyond their self-serving claims. He portrays them as self-appointed spiritual elites, whose actions are marked by deception, doctrinal error, and moral corruption.

The poem further accuses Sufi shaykhs of straying from the prophetic model, engaging in sinful and misleading behaviour, and spreading

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185 I.e., Sufism, the Sufi practices which Muḥammad-Said Saidov believes to be the sin of polytheism.

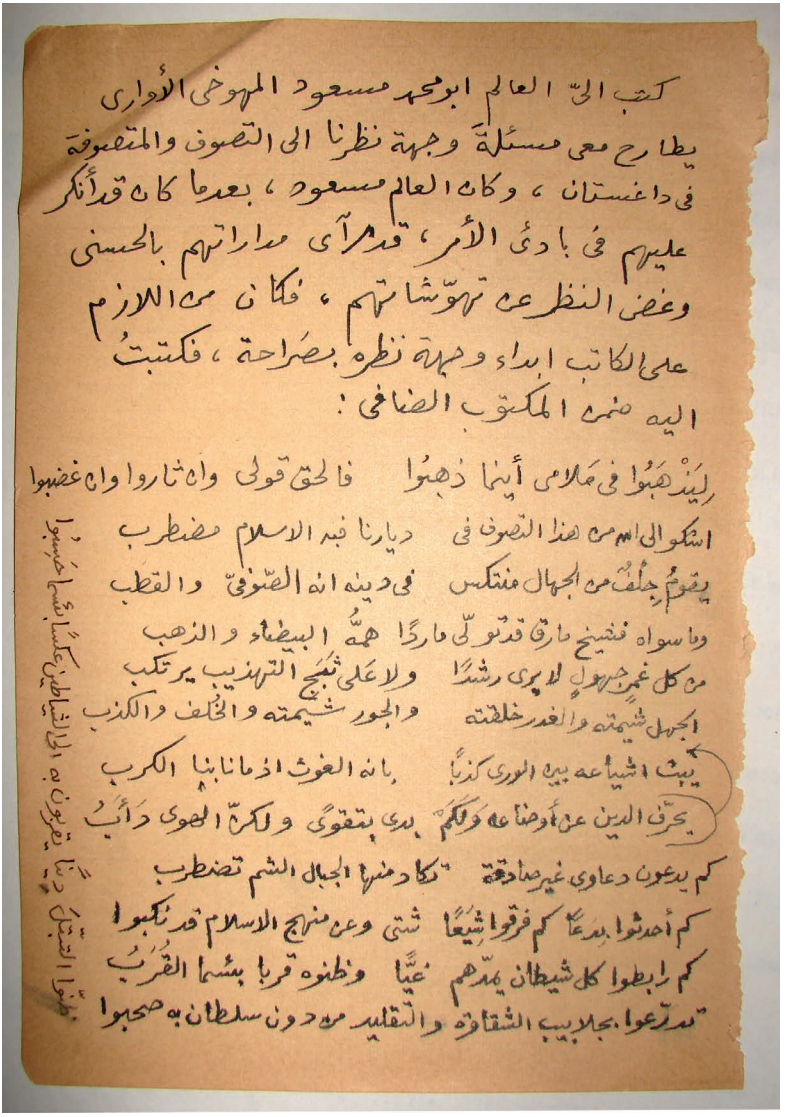
186 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Harakānī*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 47, fols. 1ɞ–2a.

superstitious beliefs among the populace. Particular criticism is directed at the Sufi invocation of saints (*awliyā'*) and intermediaries as sole deliverers from suffering – an act Saidov equates with associating partners with God (*shirk*). He condemns their supposed displays of piety, such as wearing garments of poverty and professing disdain for worldly power, while simultaneously cultivating close relations with rulers and pursuing material wealth.

The verses culminate in a declaration that, in the author's view, the behaviour and beliefs of these Sufis are so egregious that he can only regard them as unbelievers (*kuffār*). This judgment, he asserts, is based on unequivocal texts of the Qur'ān and Sunna.[187] [fig. 2]

This account is interesting for several reasons, one of which is that, in recounting Mas'ūd's attitude towards Sufism, it simultaneously tells us much about Saidov's own views on the subject. Saidov notes that Mas'ūd subjected Sufism and Sufis to criticsm. At the same time, however, he notes that Mas'ūd, having initially adopted this critical attitude, subsequently came to "bow his head before the Sufis", recognising them as legitimate. As for Saidov himself, he uses his biographical account of Muḥammad al-Harakānī's life and his letter to al-Harakānī and to Fakhr al-Dīn to reveal his own principled position toward Sufism. Here, in the letter to Mas'ūd, Saidov articulates this principle position even more clearly. He is indignant at Mas'ūd for his irresolute attitude towards Sufism. In Saidov's eyes, Sufism is fundamentally illegitimate, and he refers to Sufis as unbelievers (*kāfir*) and polytheists (*mushrik*). Saidov believes that while Mas'ūd had initially been on the right track in his criticism of Sufis, he subsequently strayed away from this path. In order to talk sense into his friend, Saidov wrote this letter addressed to him. Moreover, he also wrote along similar lines to his friends al-Harakānī and Fakhr al-Dīn, who seemingly share Saidov's principle po-

187 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār* [*Some Poems and Verses*], fols. 2a–2b. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 73. For the English translation of this manuscript from Arabic, see the Appendix.



كتب الي العالم ابو محمد مسعود المهوخي الأداري
يطارحني مسئلة وجهة نظرنا الى التصوف والمتصوفة
في داغستان ، وكان العالم مسعود ، بعدما كان قد أنكر
عليهم في بادئ الأمر ، قد رأى مداراتهم بالحسنى
وغض النظر عن تهوشاتهم ، فكان من اللازم
على الكاتب ابداء وجهة نظره بصراحة ، فكتبت
اليه ضمن المكتوب الضافي :

لِيَذْهَبُوا فِي مَلَامِي أَيْنَمَا ذَهَبُوا فالحق قولي وان ثاروا وان غضبوا
اشكو الى الله من هذا التصوف في ديارنا فيه الاسلام مضطرب
يقوم حِلْفٌ من الجهال منتكس في دينه انه الصّوفيّ والقطب
وما سواه فشيخ مارق قد تولّى فارغًا همُّه البيضاء والذهب
من كل غمرٍ جهولٍ لا يرى رشدًا ولا على نهج التهذيب يرتكب
الجهل شيمته والغدر خلقته والجور شيمته والخُلف والكذب
يبث اشياعه بين الورى كذبًا بانه الغوث اذ ما نابنا الكرب
يحرّف الدين عن أوضاعه وكم يدري بتقوى ولكرّة الهوى دأب
كم يدعون دعاوي غير صادقة تكاد منها الجبال الشم تضطرب
كم أحدثوا بدعًا كم فرقوا شيعًا شتى وعن منهج الاسلام قد نكبوا
كم رابطوا كل شيطان يمدّهم غيًّا وظنوه قربا بئسما القُرَبُ
تدرّعوا بجلابيب الشقاوة والتقليد مردون سلطان به صحبوا

ظنّوا التقبّل دينًا يتقربون به الى الشياطين كما بئسما خسروا

Figure 2. Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Mas‘ūd al-Muhūkhī. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov’s collection, *opis’* 5, no. 73.

sition, in the hope that they could make Mas‘ūd listen to reason and increase his resolve.

It is also noteworthy that Saidov addresses Mas‘ūd in verse rather than prose. Saidov may have believed that this would make an emotional impact on Mas‘ūd, leading him to renounce his agreement with the legitimacy of Sufi practices.

Thus, it can be stated that Saidov, while critiquing Mas‘ūd’s conformist position towards Sufism, evidently admired how al-Harakānī remained an opponent of Sufism till the end of his life. We see this admiration in his reference to al-Harakānī’s ‘principled position’, and this latter’s refusal to modify his opinion on Sufism, despite admonishments from shaykhs Ḥasan al-Qaḥī and Muḥammad al-Ya‘sūbī or the threats of their followers.

Saidov’s admiration of al-Harakānī’s resolutely unchanging views raises the question of how far Saidov’s own position on Sufism remained consistent over the course of time. To address this question, let us first consider the afore-mentioned letter that Saidov addressed to Mas‘ūd. The poem can be found in Saidov’s archive in two copies. The earlier copy was written by Saidov on 23 Sha‘bān 1342 / 28 March 1924, when he was 22 years old. This was clearly a time when issues related to Sufism were widely discussed in Daghestani intellectual circles. Just a few weeks earlier Saidov had written his first letter addressed to al-Harakānī and Fakhr al-Din. It is likely that having written this first letter, Saidov now decided to address Mas‘ūd himself directly.

The second copy, quoted above, was written in 1965, as Saidov himself notes at the end of the document. The text of both copies is nearly identical, with the exception of some light editing done by Saidov on the original copy. The dating of the second copy draws our attention to a number of circumstances. In 1965, when Saidov made his second copy, questions about the legitimacy of Sufism were very popular, relevant, and widely discussed in Daghestan. This was reflected in the *fatwā*s of the Muslim Spiritual Administration for North Caucasus,[188] with whose

188 Michael Kemper, Shamil Shikhaliev, “Administrative Islam: Two Soviet fatwas from the North Caucasus,” *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language: Studies*

employees Saidov maintained close contact.[189] At the same time, Daghestani historians and social scientists also were writing about Sufis and Sufi practices, criticising these as 'superstitions practised by the ignorant masses' and 'relics of the past'.[190] The idea that Sufi rituals were a relic of pagan beliefs was also widely articulated in the works of Soviet ethnographers who worked with Saidov at the same Institute of History.[191] The works of Sufi shaykhs additionally became an object of interest for Soviet orientalists,[192] who also maintained an intense correspondence with Saidov. Between the 1950s and 1970s, Saidov was an active participant in field trips to areas of Daghestan where he observed Sufi practices that he believed to be 'a fanatical incarnation of Islam.'[193]

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on Texts from European Russia, the North Caucasus and the West Siberia, ed. by Alfrid K. Bustanov and M. Kemper (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus, 2012), 55–102.

189 See, for instance, a number of letters from employees of the Muslim Spiritual Authority for North Caucasus to Muḥammad-Said Saidov. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, nos. 229, 239, 241, 390, 460, 473.

190 V.P. Dzagurova, *Pravda o religioznykh sektakh* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962); I.A. Makatov, *Kul't sviatykh – perezhitok proshlogo* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962); idem, *Religioznye gruppy Amaia i Kunta-Khadzhi* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1965); M.A. Abdullaev, M.V. Vagabov, *Aktual'nye problemy kritiki i preodoleniia islama* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1975).

191 S.Sh. Gadzhieva, *Kumyki. Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1961), 321–329; B.M. Alimova, *Tabasarantsy 19 – nachala 20 vv. Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1992), 215–233; idem, *Kaitagi 19 – nachala 20 vv. Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie* (Makhachkala: Iupiter, 1999), 207–219; B.B. Bulatov, S.A. Luguev, *Dukhovnaia kul'tura narodov Dagestana v 18 - 19 vekakh. (Avartsy, dargintsy, laktsy)* (Makhachkala: Most, 1999), 53–64.

192 E.E. Bertel's, *Sufizm i sufiiskaia literatura. Izbrannye trudy.* Tom. 3 (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1965); V.A. Gordlevskii, *Izbrannye sochineniia. Istoricheskie raboty.* Tom 1 (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura,1960); V.V. Naumkin, *Abu Khamid al-Gazali, Ikhia' 'ulum ad-din (perevod s arabskogo, issledovanie i kommentarii) (Moscow: Nauka, 1980)*; *Ibn al-'Arabi. Mekkanskie otkroveniia (al-Futukhat al-makkiia)*.

193 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Polevye zapisi ekspeditsii v Gumbetovckii raion. (Field notes from the expedition to the Gumbet district)*. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 463, fol. 2a.

It is clear that Sufism as a behavioural model and as a subject of intellectual discussion was omnipresent all around Saidov. It is likely that during this period he recalled his past in the early Soviet period when he had been an active participant in Islamic debates on Sufism and Sufi practices. His friends who had been his correspondents at the time were no longer alive, and even the targets of his criticism had all died, as victims of the Soviet repression policy of the 1930s. It was probably as he was recalling past debates about Sufism, which surrounded him on all sides, and remembering his old friends that Saidov copied this poem in 1965, stating in the introduction the circumstances which had prompted him to write this poem addressed to Mas'ūd – something that we do not see in the 1924 original. When Saidov was writing this poem for Mas'ūd in 1924, the latter was still alive and they were both aware of the context of these letters and the circumstances of their writing. In 1965, when Mas'ūd was no longer alive, Saidov added his preface. At the same time, it is unclear what exactly Saidov had in mind when he wrote his preface: whether this was caused by his emotions of recollecting the past or he was expecting someone to read the poem at some point and realise why it was written.

Interestingly, in 1965 Saidov did not copy the poem with absolute fidelity, but instead added a few lines and, most importantly, corrected one highly significant phrase, thereby highlighting the difference between the Saidov of 1924 when he was 22 years old, and the more mature man aged 63. While in the earlier copy Saidov writes that "I have no other opinion other than to consider them unbelievers", in the 1965 copy Saidov, having originally copied the word 'unbelievers', then crossed it out and replaced it with are mistaken, thereby softening his position on Sufism.

It is clear that despite his initial stance on Sufism, wherein he admired the principled anti-Sufi stance taken by al-Harakānī, Saidov's perspective evolved over time. When addressing Mas'ūd directly in his letter, in 1965 Saidov not only copied it but also made edits. These edits included the addition of a preface and a change from the harsh term 'unbelievers' to the milder 'are mistaken.' According to the *Ash'arī* concept, unbelief is considered a more severe sin, punishable by eternal torment in hell, compared to delusion, where those who are misled do not cease

to be Muslims and will not be in hell forever.[194] This shift in Saidov's views towards Sufism can likely be attributed to his deep engagement with the study of the treatise *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq* by the Sufi shaykh Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Faraj al-Darbandī. He contrasted his views held in the past, when all his friends and teachers had been alive, with the present day, when he was embarking on a study of a work by a Daghestani Sufi.

The *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by al-Darbandī and Saidov's Subjectivity

As a prominent scholar in Soviet-era Daghestan, Muḥammad-Said Saidov enjoyed access to a wide circle of Islamic literature in private and state collections. Taking advantage of this acess, he chose to study the Sufi treatise *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq* by Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Darbandī [fig. 3].

What was it about this work that so interested Saidov that he devoted extensive time to studying it, and furthermore repeatedly urged prominent Soviet orientalists to publish it? And why was it that, given his negative attitude to Sufism and Sufi practices, Saidov nevertheless became interested in a work by an early Sufi? A short summary of this work will help to explain why it so engaged Saidov's interest. Known today from just a single copy made in 743 / 1342–43, the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* was composed around the turn of the 12th century, and belongs to the genre of the encyclopaedic glossary, in which the author typically explains a number of dogmatic issues as well as Sufi terms, and elucidates the moral categories which constitute Sufi ethics.[195] At the beginning of the work, al-Darbandī draws the readers' attention to the 'correct' understanding of faith (*īmān*). The author pays special attention to

194 'Alī al-Kabīr al-Ghumuqī, *Mukhtaṣar* (Temir-khān Shūrā: al-Maṭba'a al-islāmiyya li Muḥammad Mirzā Mawrāyūf, 1911), 8.

195 A.K. Alikberov, "Ad-Darbandi,", *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, ed. by S.M. Prozorov. Issue 1 (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1998), 32–33.



Figure 3. *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq* by Abū Bakr al-Darbandī. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2191.

issues of monotheism (*tawḥīd*). For al-Darbandī, this is such an important matter that he places it at the very beginning of the work, thus stressing that Sufism is based primarily on a strict following and recognition of monotheism. Al-Darbandī had a very critical attitude towards attempts to explain the nature of monotheism by means of rational intellection. His take on strict monotheism and on the attributes of God (*ṣifāt Allāh*) is very close to the fundamentalist position of those who believed that it was necessary to "believe but not think". In particular, when he discusses the attributes of God, al-Darbandī criticises the representatives of speculative theology (*kalām*), who sought to use rational methods to explain the essence of the epithets of God. He thus quotes the sayings of prominent Muslim scholars who criticised the rational approach to explaining the attributes of God:

> A man came to al-Muzanī and asked him to say something about dogma, to which he responded: "I myself feel repulsed by it and even forbid it… The monotheism of scholars is enshrined in the words: 'I bear witness that there is no god but God, and that Muḥammad is His messenger.' The monotheism of the lying *mutakallim*s are the discussions of phenomena and substances. While the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, was sent to eradicate such discussions…" Shaykh Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Khaladī saw in a dream the Prophet Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, and asked him: "What is reason?", whereupon he replied: "The initial degree of reason is the renunciation of worldly things, and its ultimate degree is renunciation of reflections on the essence (*dhāt*) of God Almighty."[196]

This critical attitude towards the rational method of explaining the attributes of God is very close to the Sufi view that knowing God is a non-rational experience. It is probably for this reason that at the beginning of his narrative, where he discusses the nature of monotheism, al-Darbandī remarks that it is impossible to know God through rational intellection. Knowing God is the ultimate goal of Sufism, but according to al-Darbandī such knowledge is possible only by non-rational means, through personal experience and emotions cultivated by Sufi practice. Al-Darbandī's strict adherence to monotheism is close to the views of his contemporary, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and differs from the opinion of other Sufis, who were proponents of pantheism.[197]

As one can see, in matters of speculative theology (*kalām*), al-Darbandī was very close to the views of scholars who were harsh critics of the rational approach of the *mutakallim*s. It is not by chance that al-Darbandī speaks very highly in his work on the founder of the Ḥanbali *madhhab*, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, noting 'the righteous way' that this latter individual followed:

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196 Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Faraj al-Darbandī, *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2191, fols. 12b–13a.

197 On this, see: Alikber K. Aliberov, *Epokha klassicheskogo islama na Kavkaze*, 500–503.

> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal gave all his strength to the learning of this way and to understanding the truth of the meanings contained therein through the words of the Messenger of God. He studied in detail all the subtleties of *ḥadīth*s, including the accuracy or faults of their transmitters. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was followed by most *imām*s at all times, especially those of them who understood the truth (*ḥaqīqa*). For in this case, the word of the Prophet has the supreme role. And we also follow in their footsteps, in particular on matters of dogmatic (*'aqīda*)… Our shaykh Abū-l-Maḥāsin ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Ismāʿīl told me: "If anyone says that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal is no *imām*, you can doubt their faith… It is transmitted along the chain from *Imām* al-Shāfiʿī, who said 'I have left Baghdad and left behind no-one so pious, virtuous and knowledgeable of the law (*al-fiqh*) as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal."[198]

The matters of doctrine quoted by al-Darbandī in his work clearly mark him as a member of the *Ash'arī* school. The explanation of the 'essence of faith' in such matters as 'the enthronement of God' (*al-'arsh*), the possibility for Muslims to see God in the Hereafter, the immanence or created nature of the Word of God, the essence of human predestination and free will, and the creation by God of heaven and hell once and for all are seen by al-Darbandī from the point of view of the *Ash'arī* school of theology. In particular, when he comments on the verse of Qur'ān '*The Most Merciful; on the Throne He settled*',[199] al-Darbandī takes the view that the direct definition of these words should be sufficient as their true nature is impossible to verify and denying that God setteled on the Throne means faithlessness.[200]

On the matter of the immanence of the Qur'ān as the Word of God, al-Darbandī writes: "God Almighty, mentioning in one place the Qur'ān, which represents His speech and one of His immanent attributes, stresses

198 al-Darbandī, "*Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*", fol. 12b.
199 Qur'ān 20:5.
200 al-Darbandī, "*Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*", fol. 3a.

that the Qur'ān is sent specifically to be studied, while the man is [but] one of His creations."[201]

At the same time, al-Darbandī refers to his predecessors, whom he also includes in the chain of transmitters, writing that those who believe the Qur'ān to be a contingent human creation will find themselves in the lowest level of Hell. Here, he is evidently criticising his contemporary *mu'tazilit*es in Derbend who believed the Qur'ān to have been created in historical time. As for the matter of the existence of heaven and hell, al-Darbandī also clearly positions himself as a follower of the *Ash'arī* school when he criticises the views of the *jahmi*s of Derbend who believed that heaven and hell were not created permanently.

Another feature of al-Darbandī's work which sets it apart from all subsequent Sufi works is his frequent reference to *ḥadīth*. At the same time, al-Darbandī quotes both the *ḥadīth* and the continuous chain of transmission, noting also the accuracy of the transmitters of these *ḥadīth*.[202] It is noteworthy that al-Darbandī quotes this chain of transmitters not just for *ḥadīth* but also for the sayings of his theologian predecessors, and even for poetry that he quotes in his book. This chain of transmitters of both *ḥadīth* and simple scholars' sayings serves in al-Darbandī's work to offer additional legitimisation of his ideas. This is al-Darbandī's way of stressing that these sayings are attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad or other major scholars rather than to al-Darbandī himself. To avoid accusations of deliberate corruption of sayings, facts or events on the part of his readers, al-Darbandī voices his own concerning the *ḥadīth* transmitters or scholars' opinions. This careful focus on the genealogical chain of transmission (*isnād*) sets the works of al-Darbandī apart from those of most of his contemporaries.

In his work al-Darbandī takes a deep dive into ethical and moral issues, which he addresses individually in a series of chapters on repentance and piety, fear of God, modesty, solitude, trust in God, humility, honesty, sadness, envy, freedom, following the rules of honouring the elders, fear and awe of God, hope of salvation on the Day of Judgment,

201 al-Darbandī, "*Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*", fol. 4b.
202 Ibid., fols. 3a, 12b.

hypocrisy, sanctimoniousness, asceticism, generosity, magnanimity, gratitude, and compassion.[203] The author pays special attention to asceticism (*zuhd*), patience (*ṣabr*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*). Inter alia, he writes:

> Most Sufis are united in believing that when a slave appeals to God and begins to serve Him diligently, then God tests him with destitution, depriving him of material comfort and authority he had enjoyed among human. The Sufi's condition changes abruptly, his ailments increase, his family turns away from him, and everyone around him try to cause him suffering. And if he has been sincere in his repentance, he will understand that it is impossible to receive a reward and forgiveness from God Almighty unless he bears these misfortunes stoically and shows patience and humility. All things other than the reward from Almighty God and His retribution become as nothing to him…[204]

Thus, al-Darbandī's treatise highlights the ethical norms and spiritual imperatives that he regards as central to the Sufi path. An 'ideal human' (*al-insān al-kāmil*) – one who has attained the highest level of spiritual perfection – is expected to observe these norms and imperatives.

Another feature of al-Darbandī's treatise is that he often refers to his contemporaries, including teachers, thus providing some information about the intellectual life that surrounded him. This information allows the reader to glean from the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* a wonderful range of historical and biographical information, and also explains the interest in the work on the part of representatives of the 'reformist subject' models, who paid especially close attention to history and biography.

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203 M.-S. Saidov, "Rukopis' Abu Bakra Mukhammada, syna Musy, syna al'-Faradzha ad-Derbendi 'Raikhan al-khakaik va-bustan al-dakaik," *Rukopisnaia i pechatnaia kniga v Dagestane,* ed. by A.R. Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala: Daghestanskii nauchnyi tsentr AN SSSR, 1991), 38–41.

204 M.G. Shekhmagomedov, *Raikhan al-khakaik wa-bustan al-dakaik (Basilik istin i sad tonkostei) Abu Bakra Mukhammada b. Musa b. al-Faradzha ad-Darbandi: perevod otdel'nykh glav, istoricheskie i linvisticheskie kommentarii, 2017–2019*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3*, opis'*1, no. 248, fol. 74a.

Al-Darbandī provides a detailed description of the 'stations' (*al-maqāmāt*) and 'conditions' (*al-aḥwāl*) of those who follow Sufism. He also describes the emotions, feelings and experiences that a disciple should feel, including the state of mystical ecstasy reached by a Sufi.[205] According to al-Darbandī, these emotional experiences can determine whether a Sufi is following the way of success in his practices. As a result of performing these practices, a Sufi can acquire a number of supernatural abilities, such as dreaming about the Prophet Muḥammad or the ability to perform miracles (*karāmāt*). However, al-Darbandī argues that Sufis should regard the acquisition of miraculous powers not as a goal in itself but rather just a consequence of having mastered various spiritual practices.[206] Al-Darbandī, like all Sufi writers, completely rejects any subjectivity in a Sufi. In his account, a Sufi must seek as far as possible to minimise the desire to exercise his own ego, possess his own will and express his own self (*nafs*). The Sufi, al-Darbandī writes, should overcome his personal individuality as part of his pursuit of a single goal, namely to dissolve the self and dilute it in God. In this regard, as well as in their ability to perform miracles, a clear similarity can be seen between the views of al-Darbandī and those of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. Both Sufi shaykhs believed that the ability to perform miracles should not be an end in itself for a Sufi and certainly cannot serve as proof of a Sufi's sanctity. It is possible to say that miracles as presented by al-Darbandī are merely supplementary to the main issues of strict adherence to the principles of Sufi ethics and morality, self-improvement and ascetic practices.

We get a clue as to the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*'s intended readership when we consider the manuscript's physical features. Despite the relatively neat handwriting, the absence of diacritics or vowels indicates that the manuscript text was produced for the intellectual elite, who possessed a firm command of Arabic, rather than for ordinary readers, who relied on such visual aids.[207] This is further corroborated by the contents of the work it-

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205 Alikber K. Aliberov, *Epokha klassicheskogo islama na Kavkaze,* 657–675.

206 Ibid., 669.

207 M.-S. Saidov, "Rukopis' Abu Bakra Mukhammada, syna Musy, syna al'-Faradzha ad-Derbendi 'Raikhan al-khakaik va-bustan al-dakaik," 24; A.K. Aliberov, *Epokha klassicheskogo islama na Kavkaze*, 328.

self, which are somewhat abstruse, and quite difficult to understand for unprepared readers. The work is characterised by its codification of Sufi terms and concepts and its deep immersion in ethical and moral norms, intertwined with stories about the piety of holy Muslims, with a deep immersion in the complex issues of Muslim dogmatics with an emphasis on *ḥadīth* and the chain of their transmitters (*isnād*).

That the work had a limited readership is suggested also by the fact that it is known to exist just as single manuscript. As Saidov writes: "It has been extremely rarely used, which is evidenced by the absence of any copies of this manuscript in Daghestan made by anyone or at any time. This was a time when *sulūk* was a popular topic in Daghestan."[208] Furthermore, the external condition of this manuscript indicates that even this one copy was read only extremely rarely. Evidently, hardly anyone consulted the work in the period of almost 800 years since it was made. We see no mention of the author or references to his work in Arabic Daghestani manuscripts, nor in Sufi literature, Muslim Law, *ḥadīth,* dogmatics and other genres. Arabic authors make no mention of this work and rarely mention its author.

The factor that helps explain why the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* was overlooked by Daghestani scholar is related to the chronology of the provenance of this treatise in Daghestan. We do not have any solid data on the time of its arrival in Daghestan. The most obvious default hypothesis is that it was brought to Daghestan in the second half of the 14th century, soon after it was copied. However, we do not see a single mention of this work until the 20th century. This is striking, given that the text could have been of interest for all the afore-mentioned models represented in Daghestan since the 15th century. Thus, for example, the Sufi ethics presented in the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* could have been of interest to those who held to the Sufi models. The hagiographical passages contained in the work, including the stories of the miracles of shaykhs, could have also been of interest to Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykhs, who composed similar hagiographical works. However, none of them mention al-Darbandī and

208 M.-S. Saidov, "Rukopis' Abu Bakra Mukhammada, syna Musy, syna al'-Faradzha ad-Derbendi 'Raikhan al-khakaik va-bustan al-dakaik," 24.

Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq anywhere. Surprisingly, the only people who paid close attention to this Sufi text by al-Darbandī were those who did not recognise the legitimacy of Sufism. Considering the fact that some Daghestani scholars simultaneously acted as collectors of manuscripts,[209] it is all the more remarkable that this unique manuscript was thus ignored by them. This being the case, therefore, it is likely that this manuscript came to Daghestan relatively late, probably through Daghestani pilgrims who acquired it in the countries of the Near East, possibly in Iran, in the late 19th or even in the early 20th century. This could explain the complete absence of any information, references, or mentions of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by Daghestani scholars in earlier periods.

Interest in this work began to flourish in the first third of the 20th century when the representatives of the 'reformist subject' model extensively consulted this manuscript for biographical data when compiling their Arabic biographical dictionaries of Daghestani scholars. While some of them use the book without referring to it,[210] others provide direct references to the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*.[211] 'Alī Kaiaev, who was the first Daghestani scholar to make reference to the manuscript, mentions al-Darbandī and says: "Abū Bakr al-Darbandī is the author of the book *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq,* which is kept in the library of the village of Gapshima. This manuscript was copied in AH 743."[212]

So why was this work of such interest for the Daghestani scholars who fall under the 'reformist subject' model?

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209 Ali Kaiaev, "Biblioteki Dagestana," translated from Turkic by G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Rukopisnaia i pechatnaia kniga v Dagestane*, 48–51.

210 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 95, fols. 5a–6a; Michael Kemper, Amri Shikhsaidov, Alfrid Bustanov, *Nazir ad-Durgeli, Uslada umov v biografiiakh dagestanskikh uchenykh: dagestanskie uchenye 10–20 vv. i ikh sochineniia. Progulka umov v biografiiakh dagestanskikh uchenykh* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Mardzhani, 2012), 28–31.

211 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Hamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān* (in Arabic). Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 9, fols. 2a–4a; Mansur Gaidarbekov, *Khronologii istorii Dagestan*, Vols. 1–14. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3, *opis'* 3, no. 236.

212 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Hamīd al-Ghumuqī. *Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*, fol. 3a.

We already noted above that a key feature of this work is the particular attention paid by al-Darbandī to *ḥadīth*, with listing of the transmission chain (*isnād*), including those individuals whom al-Darbandī met and under whom he studied. And as noted above, *ḥadīth*s were of key interest to reformists, meaning that this work could have been of use to them. The keen interest shown by representatives of this model in al-Darbandī's works is quite understandable given their focus on matters of history and biography. Scholars have already pointed out that it was the reformists who began to resurrect the classical Islamic heritage.[213] What attracted them to the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* was its status as a source on the intellectual history of East Caucasus. The reformists in Daghestan paid close attention to the genres of history and biography,[214] and the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* may thus have been particularly interesting for them. In their historical and biographical works, ʿAlī Kaiaev, Nadhīr al-Durgilī, Manṣūr Gaidarbekov, and Saidov used this treatise as a source of information about the Derbend scholars whom Abū Bakr al-Darbandī mentions in the work. All of the matters touched upon by al-Darbandī – history, biography, dogmatics, and *ḥadīth* with a chain of their transmitters – ensured the keen interest of reformists in this work.

Saidov was for a long time involved with Soviet academic institutions, so his interest in al-Darbandī, apart from the personal experience, was also academic in nature. His long study of this work led him, according to his colleagues' reminiscences, to make a complete copy of this text[215] and to prepare an academic article based on it.[216] I have found a lot of material in his archive which shows Saidov at work on his research on the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*. In particular, apart from a draft of the

213 Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020).

214 See more about it in the chapters 5 and 6.

215 Interview with Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov (1924–2015), who was Muḥammad-Said Saidov's friend and colleague (Makhachkala, February 15, 2011).

216 Muḥammad-Said Saidov. *Dagestanskaia literatura na arabskom iazyke. Tvorchestvo derbendskogo uchenogo Abubakra Muhammeda b. Musa b. al-Faradja*. 1963. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 146.

article I found in the archive Saidov's notes in Arabic, listing 59 scholars and 12 Sufi shaykhs mentioned in the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*,[217] as well as the titles of chapters of this manuscript.[218] It is interesting that the table of contents of the manuscript, i.e., *fihris* [fig. 4], was compiled by Saidov in accordance with the Islamic literary tradition. One can encounter such *fihris* tables of contents in many Islamic manuscripts. This tradition was also used in publications of Arabic literature in Muḥammad Mirzā Mawraev's Islamic printing house (1905–18) in Temir-khān Shūrā. The design of the title page of this document is also consistent with the title (*'unwān*) design used in the Islamic book publishing.

In compiling this list, Saidov does not follow the Orientalist academic tradition of name indexes but rather lists the *isnād*, in the same way as was conventional in the Muslim tradition of *ḥadīth* studies. At the same time, as Saidov was working on this text, he drew up a list of Arabic and Russian literary sources as reference points for the study of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*[219] and made up a geographical index to settlements mentioned in the manuscript with the corresponding pages.[220] Here, one can see Saidov being clearly influenced by the academic Orientalist tradition. Thus, one can say that as Saidov was studying *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*, he drew on both the Islamic and academic epistemes, of each of which he had a firm command.

It is striking that unlike his predecessors ʿAlī Kaiaev and Nadhīr al-Durgilī, who did not intend their texts for publication but made use of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* to produce new historical or biographical works, Saidov was committed to publishing this work and put a lot of effort into doing

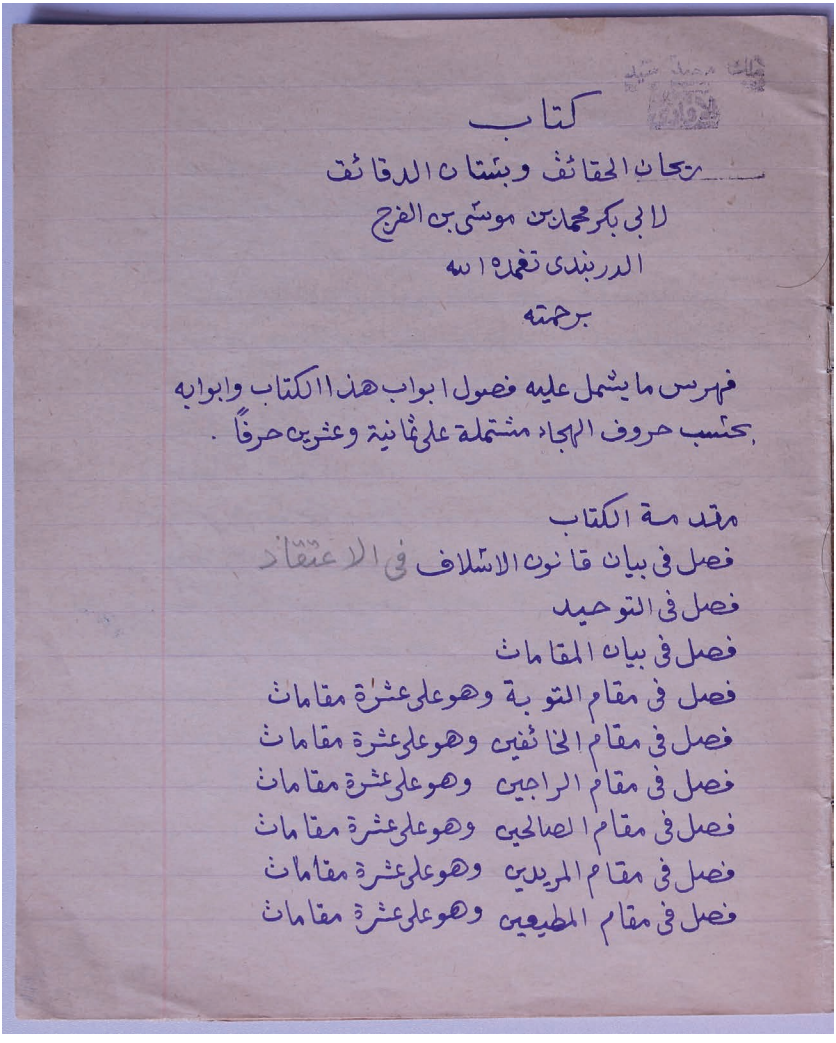
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217 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Hāzā masānīd al-shaykh Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. al-Faraj al-Darbandī fī kitābihi Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 182.

218 Idem, *Fihris Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 184.

219 Idem, *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq li Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. al-Faraj al-Darbandī*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 187.

220 Idem, *Multaqiṭāt min Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq wa-bustān al-daqā'iq*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 220.



كتاب

ريحان الحقائق وبستان الدقائق

لابي بكر محمد بن موسى بن الفرج

الدربندي نعمه الله

برحمته

فهرس ما يشمل عليه فصول ابواب هذا الكتاب وابوابه

بحسب حروف الهجاء مشتملة على ثمانية وعشرين حرفاً .

مقدمة الكتاب

فصل في بيان قانون الاسلاف في الاعتقاد

فصل في التوحيد

فصل في بيان المقامات

فصل في مقام التوبة وهو على عشرة مقامات

فصل في مقام الخائفين وهو على عشرة مقامات

فصل في مقام الراجين وهو على عشرة مقامات

فصل في مقام الصالحين وهو على عشرة مقامات

فصل في مقام المريدين وهو على عشرة مقامات

فصل في مقام المطيعين وهو على عشرة مقامات

Figure 4. Muḥammad-Said Saidov's title (*'unwān*) and table of contents (*fihris*) of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 184.

so. Saidov's archive contains his correspondence with prominent Soviet and foreign orientalists in which he described his work on al-Darbandī's manuscript and justified the need for an academic edition and publishing of this manuscript. In particular, in a letter addressed to Dr. Ḥusayn ʻAlī Maḥfūẓ (1926–2009), a prominent scholar from Baghdad, Saidov wrote that he was going to prepare the text of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* for publication.[221] In his response, Ḥusayn ʻAlī Maḥfūẓ wrote that he had no doubt that the preparing of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* for publication would be successfully completed by Saidov, noting that this work, represented by an ancient manuscript, is a rich source of Sufi terminology.[222]

It is worth here examining the letter written by Saidov to Babajan Gafurov, Director of the Oriental Studies Institute in Moscow, with which we started the beginning of the first chapter. Arguing that there was a need for the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* to be published, Saidov writes:

> This work by al-Darbandī was produced in Derbend, and the author uses it to set out his philosophical system before this was subsequently done by al-Ghazālī… The relevance of research into the ways of evolution of philosophical views in the Muslim East is dictated by the circumstance that it is commonly believed among Western orientalists that the originator and canoniser of medieval Islamic Neo-Platonism was al-Ghazālī. Our manuscript, composed as early as 1079, which is before al-Ghazālī became active as a scholar, disproves this hypothesis and invites alternative approaches to this matter. We believe that it would introduce the appropiate adjustments and corrections into the understanding of the evolution of philosophical ideas in the medieval Islamic East.[223]

This letter clearly reflects the style and language deemed appropriate by Saidov for solving the question of publishing the work by al-Darbandī. Knowing Babajan Gafurov to be a Soviet orientalist rather than an Islam-

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221 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Ḥusayn 'Alī Maḥfūẓ*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 205.

222 [*Letter from Ḥusayn 'Alī Maḥfūẓ to Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 238.

223 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Babajan Gafurov*].

ic scholar, Saidov justifies the need to publish the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by using the language of academic style familiar to Gafurov. He does not draw Gafurov's attention to the fact that al-Darbandī's work is Sufi in essence, or mention anything to do with dogmatics, law, or *ḥadīth* that are addressed in the manuscript; instead, he justifies his position using the terms of academic discourse.

Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov (1924–2015), a prominent Soviet and Russian orientalist and expert on Persian literature, who was working at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow at the same time, corresponded intensely with Saidov and contributed greatly to his efforts to get the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* published. In one of his letters he describes the complications of publishing the Arabic text of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*, pointing out that "Ultimately, the decision on the publication of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* will not be taken by the Academy of Science Presidium but by the relevant department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and they take a dim view of publishing Oriental literature."[224] In another letter, concerning the publishing of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*, Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov writes as follows:

> As for your manuscript, we need a reminder letter signed by Gadzhi Ali,[225] because I am unable to get anything other than promises to publish the manuscript. I also advise you to write to Braginskii.[226] I am not on the best of terms with him, but he thinks highly of you.[227]

In yet another letter that Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov addressed to Saidov after returning from Iran in 1970, he notes that the prominent Iranian

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224 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov to Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] (in Russian). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 64.

225 Gadzhiali Daniialov (1911–2006), a Soviet and Russian historian. Between 1954 and 1972, he was Director of the Institute of History, Language and Literature at the Daghestan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

226 Yosif S. Braginskii (1905–1989), a Soviet orientalist. Between 1950 and 1989 he was Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Narody Azii i Afriki* published by the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow.

227 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov to Muḥammad-Said Saidov, 1 March 1963*] (in Russian). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 66.

scholar Danesh Pajouh, from Tehran University,[228] had examined the text of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* and confirmed that there was no such manuscript in Iran. It is likely that Saidov had sent a photocopy of the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* with Osmanov. According to Osmanov, Danesh Pajouh was so curious about the text that he offered to have it published in Iran and proposed being the editor himself, including typesetting it so that Saidov did not have to provide a calligraphic copy for the printers.

In another letter to Saidov, Osmanov reported that "Dreier[229] has had his paper allowance cut drastically, so he is not sure when he can publish your manuscript." In the conclusion of his letter, Osmanov strongly encouraged Saidov to have the manuscript published in Iran, "since it is both prestigious and interesting."[230] Saidov also discussed the need to publish *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* with other orientalists as well, including Y.E. Borshchevskii (1924–1984), P.A. Griaznevich (1929–1997) and Y.S. Braginskii (1905–1989).[231] Nevertheless, Soviet orientalists were not particularly moved by Saidov's enthusiasm. They had no interest in al-Darbandī's manuscript or in the author's personality. They were more interested in poetry and the history of the Daghestani manuscript tradition, as Braginskii made explicitly clear to Saidov.[232] Saidov was ultimately unable to publish either the full text of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* or even just a part of it during his lifetime. The groundwork that he laid was used by Khulatta Omarnov, a research fellow of the same Institute of History, to publish posthumously, under the name of Saidov, the draft of an

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228 Muḥammad Taqī Danesh Pajouh (1911–1996), a prominent scholar from Iran, writer, musician, translator, expert on Islamic Literature and codicology.

229 Oleg K. Dreier (1911–1997), a Soviet and Russian orientalist. Between 1956 and 1992 he was Editor-in-Chief of the "*Vostochnaia Literatura*" publishing house.

230 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov to Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] (in Russian). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 69.

231 *Pis'ma M.-S. Saidovu* [*Letters to Muḥammad-Said Saidov*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 280.

232 [*Letter from Yosef S. Braginskii to Muḥammad-Said Saidov, 1963*] (in Russian). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 678.

article which Saidov had written and which was found in his archive.[233] This was the first publication about Abū Bakr al-Darbandī and his work the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*.

Saidov was well aware of the history of Sufism and Sufi literature. Moreover, he had taken parts in debates over Sufism in the milieu of the Muslim scholars, and later, as a Soviet orientalist, was involved in an academic study of the works of Sufi shaykhs. These different trajectories informed Saidov's own reflections on Sufism, and thus influenced his preferences for certain models of Muslim personhood. Based on materials from Saidov's archive, one can see that he ignored the Sufi models. The 'legal subject' model was of some interest for him, which was probably due to the fact that Saidov valorised rationalism[234] as a core category that defines human behaviour. Saidov believed that reason was the only criterion for distinguishing moral things from immoral ones, and it was the only factor in cultivating an ideal Muslim personality in the conditions in which he himself was living at the time. At the same time, Saidov believed that ethics and morality derived not from Sufi imperatives but from legal norms as well as *ḥadīth*.

Saidov thus emerges as a multi-faceted figure. On the one hand, he was a theologian who represented the non-conformist position and was a harsh critic of Sufism while sharing the views of some representatives of the 'reformist subject' model, and who indeed was a more principled opponent of Sufism than even his friends such as Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī. At the same time, however, documents indicate that he was one of the first scholars in the Daghestani academic tradition to embark on the study of Sufi literature.

Although Saidov's attitude to Sufism was initially conditioned by his view of Islam as a Muslim, when it came to the study of Sufi literature he can be squarely categorized as a Soviet orientalist, who embarked on a study of the Islamic written heritage from the academic perspective –

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233 Saidov, M.-S. "Rukopis' Abu Bakra Mukhammada, syna Musy, syna al'-Faradzha ad-Derbendi "Raikhan al-khakaik va-bustan ad-dakaik," 24–47.

234 Michael Kemper, "Ijtihad into philosophy: Islam as cultural heritage in post-Stalinist Daghestan," 390–404.

as was typical of Soviet academic scholarship. However, Saidov's personal archive, the documents he was collecting, his correspondence with theologians and orientalists, and his research into the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* together reveal a more sophisticated and complex picture. Saidov's engagement with various different models of personhood, his adherence to the reformist model while simultaneously following the Soviet academic tradition, and his combination of theological and academic approaches together demonstrate how he was able to turn to different epistemes, both Islamic and Soviet, and draw upon various different experiences in his work. Such a selective approach shown by Saidov, and his ability to engage with different systems simultaneously, together characterise Saidov's personality as a Muslim, when he criticises Sufism from a theological perspective, and as a Soviet academic scholar, when he is studying the *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq*. These two seemingly opposite concepts, theology and academic Islamic studies, are able to organically coexist and complement each other within Saidov's personality.

In this chapter I have attempted to offer a nuanced account of the ethical and epistemological pluralism that characterised 20th-century Daghestani Islamic thought. At the centre of our discussion stands a figure whose intellectual trajectory encapsulates the tensions, adaptations, and negotiations between rival models of Islamic subjectivity. Far from being a passive observer or ideological absolutist, Muḥammad-Said Saidov emerges as a historically embedded thinker whose complex relationship with Sufism, reformism, and rationalism unfolded in response to both personal conviction and broader socio-political currents.

A defining feature of Saidov's thought is his commitment to what I term the 'reformist subject' model – a disposition grounded in scriptural rationalism, ethical vigilance, and a desire to purge Islam of perceived accretions. Yet Saidov's reformism is neither derivative nor dogmatic. Instead, it reflects a layered and often ambivalent engagement with the Islamic intellectual tradition. His harsh early criticism of Sufism, expressed in poetic invective and framed in the language of *takfīr*, gradually gives way – decades later – to a more tempered and methodologically sophisticated inquiry into the doctrinal content of Sufi texts. This

evolution suggests not a reversal of opinion but an expansion of critical depth – a shift from polemical assertion to philological excavation.

We thus see how Saidov's intellectual development unfolded through sustained intertextual engagement. His readings of and annotations to al-Darbandī's *Rayḥān al-ḥaqāʾiq*, a Sufi theological work deeply concerned with the limits of rational knowledge, mark a pivotal moment in this trajectory. That Saidov, a declared critic of contemporary Sufism, would devote serious attention to such a work is by no means paradoxical, but rather emblematic of the epistemic fluidity that we have traced throughout the chapter. The dogmatic boundaries between Sufi and anti-Sufi positions are shown to be porous, with Saidov inhabiting and performing multiple modalities of Islamic subjectivity – at times simultaneously.

Crucially, Saidov's critique of Sufism must be situated within the broader context of his intellectual environment. His rejection of the Naqshbandi model is not merely theological but deeply political, rooted in the Soviet-era debates over religion, tradition, and modernity. His insistence on textual proof, appeals to the Qur'ān and Sunna, and denunciations of "polytheism" in Sufi practice mirror the epistemic grammar of both Islamic reformist discourse and the secular rationalism of Soviet ethnography. Yet Saidov never entirely collapses into either domain. He maintains a distinct Islamic vocabulary of critique, resisting both the romanticisation of tradition and the reduction of religion to ideology.

At the same time, Saidov's engagement with figures such as al-Harakānī functions as a form of ethical autobiography. His portrayal of al-Harakānī as a fearless, principled, and eloquent opponent of Sufism serves not only as biographical documentation but also as a coded self-representation. By tracing al-Harakānī's intellectual journey from Sufi initiate to reformist polemicist, Saidov narrates his own transformation, positioning himself within a genealogy of reform that values intellectual independence, rhetorical prowess, and uncompromising moral clarity. This layered performance of identity – through memoir, annotation, and curation – demonstrates how Saidov negotiated authority within a shifting landscape of religious and ideological contestation.

I should emphasise that I do not seek to isolate Saidov's reformist model from its various interlocutors. Rather, I seek to place it in tension with the Naqshbandi model, not merely as opposing poles but as dynamically co-constitutive. The reformist critique compelled Naqshbandi shaykhs to respond, prompting them to codify, defend, and even reconfigure their practices. The discursive space between Saidov and figures such as Ḥasan al-Qaḥī or al-Ya'sūbī thus emerges as a field of mutual constitution, in which opposition produces new forms of clarity, systematisation, and boundary-work. These polemics are not merely episodes of ideological entrenchment; they are engines of epistemic innovation.

I hope furthermore in this chapter to have challenged the assumption that behavioural models in Daghestan evolved simply through linear succession. Instead, we see how multiple, sometimes conflicting, behavioural models could coexist within single biographies and texts. Saidov's own life – spanning nearly a century of radical upheaval – illustrates how an Islamic scholar could inhabit multiple modalities of thought over time without collapsing into inconsistency. His corrections to earlier writings and the re-copying of a youthful polemic decades later with a crucial emendation – from 'unbelievers' to 'mistaken' – is emblematic of a deeper intellectual self-reflexivity. This suggests that Saidov's reformism, while principled, was not frozen in time; it was dialectically shaped by the very Sufi legacy it opposed and by the personal and political shifts of his milieu.

Moreover, Saidov's archival practice – his meticulous collection of letters, treatises, and marginalia – testifies to his broader vision of Islamic knowledge as both a repository of doctrinal clarity and a terrain of critical struggle. His role as archivist and commentator underscores his desire not simply to preserve the past but to curate it in alignment with his ethical and theological vision. In this sense, Saidov embodies the reformist subject not only through his polemics but also through his practices of historical memory.

In sum, Saidov emerges from this chapter as a paradigmatic figure of Islamic modernity in the Soviet periphery: a scholar rooted in tradition yet unafraid to question it; a critic of Sufism who nevertheless recognised its textual and theological sophistication; a rationalist whose

engagement with non-rational modes of religiosity was as much intellectual as it was personal. His legacy lies not in the fixity of his views but in the methodological rigour and ethical seriousness with which he approached the Islamic past. The reformist model that he embodied was not one of wholesale rupture but of critical continuity – a project of epistemic purification that sought to reclaim Islam's moral clarity without severing its discursive complexity.

CHAPTER 3

Islamic Libraries and Collections in Soviet Daghestan

Islamic libraries in the North Caucasus have traditionally been regarded as key sites for the transmission of religious knowledge and cultural continuity. However, in the context of 20th-century Daghestan, these collections were neither static nor secure.

Under Soviet rule, Islamic libraries underwent profound transformations: some were dispersed, partially preserved, concealed, or destroyed, while others were repurposed or slowly reconstructed through individual efforts. In these circumstances, the library became not only a repository of knowledge but also a flexible and adaptive form of scholarly activity. For Muḥammad-Said Saidov, whose intellectual and professional life was closely tied to the fate of Islamic collections – from family holdings to the establishment of a formal state manuscript archive – engagement with libraries was continuous and central to his scholarly outlook.

From his early years of study, Saidov approached manuscripts not simply as historical documents but as sources of active engagement. The texts he read and copied were part of living intellectual contexts: handwritten, annotated, and transmitted within intimate scholarly circles. These formative experiences shaped his understanding of the manuscript not as a relic, but as a functioning element of religious learning and source of knowledge. Later, this approach informed his development of a personal collection, and, eventually, his efforts to assemble and institutionalise a state manuscript repository on the regional level – an undertaking without direct precedent in Daghestan and situated within a complex Soviet intellectual landscape.

Saidov did not treat collections as neutral accumulations of texts. He was acutely aware that every library reflects a series of decisions – what is preserved, what is prioritised, and what is omitted. Collections are shaped by the intellectual commitments, interests, and methodological choices of their compilers. Those he encountered often bore the imprint of particular traditions: some centred around Sufi devotional texts, while others emphasised jurisprudence, *ḥadīth,* or grammatical works. In each case, the structure of the collection conveyed a particular orientation within the broader Islamic scholarly tradition. The act of assembling a library was not merely archival; it was a process of intellectual articulation and positioning of its owner himself.

This chapter focuses on Islamic manuscript collections – private, communal, and institutional – as complex historical phenomena. Rather than viewing them solely as instruments of preservation, it examines their role in the formation and articulation of scholarly identity. Although Soviet policy was ideologically opposed to religious institutions, access to Islamic texts was not entirely curtailed. Manuscripts continued to circulate, both among Muslim scholars and, later, among academic researchers. They were transmitted through family lines, stored in private homes, deposited in local libraries, or copied anew. In the absence of official institutions such as mosque libraries or *waqf*-supported madrasas, these informal practices sustained textual knowledge throughout the Soviet period.

Saidov played an active role within this environment. He was involved in copying texts, preserving private collections, documenting the content and provenance of lost libraries, and maintaining detailed bibliographic records. His approach to manuscripts combined material care with consistent intellectual engagement: he treated them not only as evidence of the past but as functioning sources of knowledge that retained their relevance. This dual approach – preservation and scholarly use – was a defining feature of his work.

One of the more distinctive aspects of Saidov's scholarly practice was his capacity to conceptualise the library not just as a physical space but as a form of intellectual structure. Collections, in his view, were meaningful not simply because of their contents but because of the epistemological assumptions underlying their composition. A library represented a form of scholarly expression: a reflection of what its compiler considered authoritative, necessary, or instructive. In this way, Saidov approached collecting as a practice of shaping one's own scholarly position in relation to the broader tradition.

His later work, particularly the initiative to establish a state-recognised manuscript collection, reflects this understanding in institutional form. This effort took place at a time when Islamic texts were often subjected to reframing within ethnographic or heritage discourses. Saidov's project involved reconciling two different knowledge regimes. The first was the Soviet archival model, which focused on systematisation, classifica-

tion, and historical documentation. The second was the Islamic scholarly tradition, which treated manuscripts as active tools for instruction in law, theology, poetry, and ethics. Saidov sought to maintain continuity with the latter, even as he worked within the frameworks demanded by the former.

In organising the manuscript collection, Saidov's aim was not merely bureaucratic. He intended for the collection to function as a continuation of Islamic library traditions, even within the institutional space of a Soviet academic archive. His approach reflected a deliberate attempt to preserve the underlying logic of Islamic scholarship, where the manuscript is not simply an object of preservation but a resource for intellectual engagement. This effort unfolded within the confines of Soviet academic life, where the category of "cultural heritage" often necessitated the detachment of texts from their religious content and normative authority.

Saidov's experience of loss shaped his efforts. He was acutely aware of the scale of manuscript destruction and the disappearance of private libraries. He collected oral accounts, recorded bibliographic details, and documented the names of scholars whose collections had been lost. For him, each surviving manuscript was not only a discrete textual object but also a fragment of a broader intellectual world – one that could, at least partially, be reconstructed through systematic research and informed curation.

Understanding Saidov thus requires attention to the material culture of manuscripts and the practical labour of collecting. His intellectual project cannot be separated from the concrete practices of copying, preserving, cataloguing, and annotating. Nor can it be understood without situating it within the dual framework he inhabited: one shaped by Islamic educational ethics and the reformist concern for clarity and authenticity, and another shaped by the technical and ideological constraints of Soviet archival systems. In navigating these two frameworks, Saidov developed a hybrid scholarly practice that selectively drew from both the Islamic and the Soviet traditions.

The chapter traces these trajectories: from private libraries maintained in domestic spaces to manuscripts safeguarded informally or hidden, and to the gradual emergence of formal institutions dedicated to their study

and preservation. It considers the typological diversity of collections, the social and doctrinal orientations of their compilers, and the shifting meanings of Islamic texts across different historical moments. Most importantly, it analyses how collections functioned as media through which Islamic scholarly agency was exercised, challenged, and sustained.

Saidov's career illustrates how manuscript culture in Daghestan persisted despite the weakening or dissolution of the formal institutions that had historically supported it. His work reflects a broader phenomenon in which Islamic intellectual life continued to operate through decentralised and often improvised channels – private Islamic libraries, underground transmission networks of Islamic knowledge, and scattered personal archives. The collections that he helped preserve and institutionalise served not only as repositories of the past but also as platforms for re-engaging Islamic knowledge under new conditions.

To understand what was distinctive about Saidov's approach to building both his personal and institutional libraries, this chapter situates his work in relation to a wider field of collection practices. It compares his methods with those employed by his contemporaries and predecessors, tracing both convergences and divergences. In doing so, it sheds light on how Saidov's intellectual and ethical commitments informed his curatorial decisions and how his collections – rather than being purely retrospective – participated in the active reconstitution of Islamic learning in the twentieth century.

Typology of Libraries and Collections

The manuscripts and old printed books that are today held in local Daghestani collections have diverse origins. Some of these materials were copied or published in various regions, including the Near East, Iran, Central Asia, and inner Russia. Islamic literature made its way to Daghestan through a multitude of routes: through pilgrimages, educational journeys, or as a consequence of forced exile to inner regions of Russia during the Imperial period. In the latter scenario, exiled Daghestanis came into close contact with local Muslim scholars, from whom they

either copied or acquired literature that was common to such regions. Upon the conclusion of their exile, they returned to Daghestan, bringing with them manuscripts from the Volga-Ural region or Siberia, as well as some old printed books published in Orenburg, Kazan, or Ufa. The Daghestani collections also encompasses printed texts published by Daghestani scholars in Istanbul, Kazan, and Bakhchysarai.

In 1903, an Islamic printing house was established in Temir-khān Shūrā, former capital of Daghestan, producing literature in high demand across the North-Eastern Caucasus.[235] Additionally, there existed commercial distribution networks for books, whereby Daghestani publishers imported volumes from Egypt or Istanbul that were otherwise unavailable in Daghestan but highly sought after by the local intellectual elite.[236] The majority of extant Islamic literature in Daghestan collections consists of manuscripts painstakingly copied by local scholars or professional scribes who reproduced the works of Arabic, Ottoman, Persian, Central Asian, and Tatar scholars.[237]

Islamic literature serves as a mirror reflecting the evolving intellectual landscape of Daghestan, which, in turn, has influenced the repertoire of books and genres over time. Historians, drawing from written sources, have observed that Daghestani intellectual tradition up until the 17th century was characterised by its focus on *hadīth* studies, lexicography, and Sufism.[238] It is a reasonable inference that works in these genres dominated Daghestani collections prior to the 17th century.

However, a shift occurred in the intellectual landscape of Daghestan, particularly around the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. This transformation was closely associated with the prolific contributions of Muḥam-

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235 A.A. Isaev, *Magomedmirza Mavraev – pervopechatnik i prosvetitel' Dagestana* (Makhachkala: IIAE DNTs RAN, 2003), 19–54.

236 M.N. Osmanova, *Arabskaia pechatnaia kniga v Dagestane v kontse 19 – nachale 20 veka* (Makhachkala: Izdatel'skii dom "Nauka plius", 2006).

237 A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Dagestantsy – perepischiki arabskikh rukopisei", A.R. Shikhsaidov, N.A. Tagirova, D.Kh. Gadzhieva, *Arabskaia rukopisnaia kniga v Dagestane*, 36–45.

238 A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Dagestanskie avtory 10 - nachala 20 vekov i rukopisi ikh sochinenii", A.R. Shikhsaidov, N.A. Tagirova, D.Kh. Gadzhieva, *Arabskaia rukopisnaia kniga v Dagestane*, 77–79.

mad al-Quduqī. Under the influence of al-Quduqī and his students, a new scholarly and educational paradigm emerged. This shift was mirrored in the changing composition of literary works. During this period, the traditional emphasis on *hadīth* studies, lexicography, and Sufism gradually gave way to a broader engagement with grammar, Islamic law, logic, and the dialectics. Consequently, the repertoire of book collections underwent a significant transformation. Daghestani scholars began to copy and acquire works that aligned with the evolving intellectual standards, while genres prevalent in the period before the 17th century saw a decline in their significance.

Hence, the alteration of genres and the evolving content within these genres became evident in Daghestan in the mid-17th century, with the crystallization of a new scholarly and educational tradition around the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. An examination of literature lists (*fihris*) dating back to the 18th century and an analysis of modern Daghestani collections reveal that, between the 18th and 20th centuries, the local intellectual landscape experienced relatively little change. The repertoire of books in contemporary Daghestani collections reflects the enduring intellectual trends spanning the 18th to the 20th centuries, with occasional remnants of earlier layers from the period before the end of the 17th century.[239]

These manuscripts and printed items are now to be found in three primary collection types: private collections, characterised by their wide range of contents, and even today still holding the largest number of items; *waqf* collections held in mosques; and state collections attached to institutions such as the Institute of History in Makhachkala, Daghestan State University, and the Daghestan Historical Museum and its affiliated branches. Each of these collection types possesses distinct characteristics regarding its creation and development.

The continuing underground teaching of Arabic language and Islam required the use of Islamic literature, which was not openly published in the USSR. Since there was no access to new Islamic literature, local

[239] Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Archives of Discrimination: The Evolution of Muslim Book Collections in Daghestan," 82–109.

Muslim scholars searched through extant private libraries and collections to find books, exchanged items, or bought individual texts or whole libraries and collections from the heirs of other scholars. Such strategies meant that the contents of certain private book libraries and collections changed considerably throughout the Soviet period.

Some of the private libraries and collections that existed and were functional during the Soviet period were new creations, products themselves of the 20th century. But many others were much older, having first been assembled and developed decades or even centuries earlier. In some libraries of Muslim scholars, indeed, we find traces of collections from as early as the 16th–17th century. Such libraries were passed down in families, with their repertoire changing over time, so that only some remnant layers from earlier libraries can be found in modern private Islamic collections. These layers are represented by a small number of manuscripts which, according to owners' records, once belonged to a distant ancestor of the owner of the 20th-century collection.

Over the course of the centuries, these libraries doubtless experienced widely varying fortunes. So too did their respective fortunes vary during the Soviet period. We can discern three distinct trajectories for private libraries and collections of Islamic literature in Daghestan during the Soviet period, which we can define as 'transformation', 'destruction', and 'conservation'. Each of these trajectories was determined by factors both exogenous (such as shifting policies towards Islam over the course of the Soviet period) and endogenous (notably the varying interests and strategies of the owners of the collections in question).

Some of these libraries and collections, which developed during the owner's lifetime, continue to evolve and alter their repertoire in the present day. Others, also developing during the owner's lifetime, ceased to exist as cultural entities after their owner's passing. The third type of collections, which evolved during the lifetime of their previous owners and also underwent a phase of 'transformation,' maintained their composition unchanged after their owner's death, and their repertoire remains constant. Hence, whereas the first strategy involves the ongoing process of replenishing such libraries and collections until the present day, I have classified the latter two strategies as 'destruction' and 'con-

servation,' based on their current states, notwithstanding the transformations these collections underwent in the past.

The first discernible trajectory of collections that we can discern when tracing the history of Islamic collections, which I have labeled as 'transformation,' relates to instances where the library or collection continues to evolve in terms of its content. It is not important whether such a library is inherited by a later contemporary theologian or instead created from scratch by such an individual. As these scholars develop and craft their personae, they mold and modify the library's contents based on their individual preferences or under the influence of intellectual models.

An illustrative example is my own personal collection of Islamic literature, which initially took shape during the late Imperial period and continued to evolve throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. This collection, which I inherited from my grandfather, the Muslim scholar Zainalbek Shikhaliev (1911–1993), is currently kept in my ancestral home in the village of Nizhnii Dzhengutai and contains around 200 manuscripts and old printed books in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish languages.

This collection was not inherited by my grandfather, but rather was gifted to him by his teacher Muḥammad-Ẓāfir Magomedov (1903–1982). This latter individual studied at the madrasa of Nizhnii Dzhengutai during the late Imperial and early Soviet period. He was taught by the prominent Daghestani scholar Yūsuf al-Jungūtī (Gasanaev, 1869–1929), the *qāḍī* of the village.[240] After Yūsuf Gasanaev was arrested and subsequently executed, Muḥammad-Ẓāfir served as an *imām* in the village of Nizhnii Dzhengutai until the mosque was closed down in the 1930s and he was arrested by OGPU. When the mosque was transferred into the management of a newly-organised collective farm, all the manuscripts that had been stored there were taken by locals, who hoped to restore them all if

[240] Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' al-dāghistāniyyīn*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 509, f 28a; Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, "Polemika mezhdu Nazirom ad-Durgili i Iusufom ad-Dzhunguti," V.O. Bobrovnikov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Fikkh i musul'manskii obychai v rossiiskom Dagestane: istochniki i issledovaniia*, 186–226.

the mosque were ever to reopen.[241] After returning from exile, Muḥammad-Ẓāfir also received a random part of the mosque library, adding it to the books that he had already amassed during his studies. Throughout the post-war period, Muḥammad-Ẓāfir was essentially the only scholar in the village, and he was approached by villagers seeking advice on various Islamic practices such as marriage, divorce, and the settlement of inheritance issues. Thus, Muḥammad-Ẓāfir's library was formed as a result of his purchasing books in accordance with his personal interests and due to the inclusion of books taken at random for temporary safekeeping out of the former mosque library.

In the late 1950s and the 1960s, my grandfather Zainalbek Shikhaliev studied under Muḥammad-Ẓāfir for a long time. Once, when he came for his lesson, Zainalbek found Muḥammad-Ẓāfir sorting through his library. Muḥammad-Ẓāfir kept several books for himself; these were mostly printed items that he had some use for and that he was interested in. He gave the remaining, much larger, part of his collection to his student Zainalbek, who put the books into three sacks and took them for himself.[242] What prompted Muḥammad-Ẓāfir to part with most of his library was not pressure by government authorities, but rather an evolution of his own interests. It is clear that as he sorted through his books, the elderly Muḥammad-Ẓāfir made the selection based on his own interests at that stage of his life. He retained for himself only those books that he continued to interact with directly. In his everyday activities as a religious authority and in order to solve some matters of marriage, inheritance, or ritual practices for the village, he was in need of legal texts. This is why he retained four volumes of a printed edition of *Kanz al-rāghibīn sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭālibīn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 1460) – a work that was particularly influential in the local legal tradition. He also kept two volumes of a printed edition of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahalli (d. 1460) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), which he probably needed for an in-depth understanding of some of the vers-

241 Interview with Idrīs Magomedov (b. 1939), son of Muḥammad-Ẓāfir Magomedov (Nizhnii Dzhengutai, March 28, 2011).

242 Interview with Idrīs Magomedov (Nizhnii Dzhengutay, March 28, 2011).

es of the Qur'ān which he read on a regular basis. As for the remaining literature that he had no interest in, either textbooks or any other literature, he gave it to his only student Zainalbek, because none of his own children had ever learned Arabic, and thus they could not read these books and manuscripts.

Subsequently, Zainalbek also bought whatever Arabic books he required, including a number of works by Soviet orientalists, such as the Arabic-Russian dictionary by Kh.K. Baranov and the Russian-Arabic dictionary by V.M. Borisov. His library also included a number of issues from *Muslims of the Soviet East* (*Musul'mane Sovetskogo Vostoka*), a journal that was published in the USSR between 1969 and 1980 and distributed by the Soviet Muftiates.[243] Shortly before his passing, Zainalbek entrusted his entire library to me, as the only one of his grandchildren who had learned Arabic.[244] The library contained a lot of manuscript textbooks, including works on Arabic grammar, Islamic law, *ḥadīth*s, logic, dialectics, mathematic, ethics, and Sufism. There were also old printed books in Kumyk and Ottoman Turkish, including works on ethics, poetry, and dictionaries. However, the library that I inherited from Zainalbek was somewhat smaller in number than what he had received from his teacher in the 1960s. This can probably be explained by the fact that Muḥammad-Ẓāfir had also given my grandfather some *waqf* mosque books which he had taken after the mosque was shut down. When the mosque was reopened in 1989, Zainalbek replaced the manuscripts containing *waqf* records, because removing *waqf* mosque property is considered a grave sin by Muslims. While I was working with the mosque's collection between 1998 and 2006, I encountered certain books that had previously been part of Zainalbek's library. At the same time, it is possible that some books and manuscripts, which were orig-

243 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, "Islamskaia pressa v rannesovetskom Dagestane i zhurnal 'Musul'mane Sovetskogo Vostoka'," 74–100.

244 About my study of Arabic in late-Soviet and post-Soviet period see: https://www.oeaw.ac.at/sice/sice-blog/dagestan-1984-how-i-learnt-arabic-under-late-socialism-part-1 and https://www.oeaw.ac.at/sice/sice-blog/dagestan-1991-the-madrasa-and-the-wahhabis

inally from the mosque but lack any *waqf* records, may still be present in my collection today.

Since, due to economical difficulties in the immediate post-Soviet world, no new Islamic literature was being produced in the early 1990s, books from private libraries and collections began to circulate widely in Daghestan. These libraries and collections were able to meet the high demand for Islamic literature, which increased as networks of Islamic education were legalized and began to expand.[245] During my studies at the Islamic University, I also purchased manuscripts and old printed books that were not included in my grandfather's library or that I needed for my studies. In the early 1990s, it was relatively easy to find and buy the required manuscripts in Daghestan; they cost little more than ordinary literature in Russian, and neither the sellers nor the buyers considered them as being of any particular antiquarian value. Thus, being a student, I transformed the contents of my library by buying some manuscripts or exchanging them for others, not out of antiquarian sentiment but in the course of my own interaction with Islamic literature. I added all the newly-acquired manuscripts and books to my grandfather's library, expanding it and consequently altering its repertoire. At this stage of my life, what I inherited from my grandfather was a library rather than a collection. I had used it for my studies in the 1990s, and this library served for me as a source of knowledge about Islam. Subsequently, as I became a linguist and historian, I also bought Arabic-language sources and specialist academic literature. In 2016 I added to my library the surviving remnants of an entirely different collection, once owned by ʿAlī Magomedov (d. 1987) from the village of Manaskent, which was gifted to me by his descendants. At this stage, I began to regard my own library as an object of study from a historian's perspective. I, in my capacity as a historian, continued this process of transforming and altering the collection by adding to it items that reflected my own professional academic interests – primarily Sufism, history and legal works.

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245 Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, Amir R. Navruzov, Shamil Sh. Shikhaliev, "Islamic Education in Soviet and post-Soviet Daghestan," 107–167.

The second trajectory, which I have designated as 'destruction', involves the entire destruction of a library and collection as a cultural entity that reflects the personhood of its owner who shaped it in accordance with their personal or professional interests. By way of example, it may be useful here to consider the history of the library that belonged to one of Saidov's teachers, the Daghestani scholar Rāfi'-hājjī b. Ismā'īl al-Shamghudī from the village of Shangoda (1863–1932), who was a *qāḍī* and practised medicine. In the late 1920s, Rāfi'-hājjī possessed one of the richest Islamic libraries in Daghestan in terms of its number and range of holdings. 'Alī Kaiaev, whom we have encountered above and who had friendly contact with Rāfi'-hājjī, knew about his library and left the following description of it:

> One of the largest private libraries in Daghestan was the splendid library created by Rāfi'-efendī in the village of Shangoda. Rāfi'-efendī, being a great lover of books and devoted enthusiast for their collection, had walked around all of Daghestan, gathering books, and thus succeeded in creating a library that was believed to be first in Daghestan in terms of the number of books therein. Rāfi'-efendī had put so much effort into searching for books and had walked around so many villages that one might say there is not a single book in any corner of Daghestan that Rāfi'-efendī had not seen. And to this day Rāfi'-efendī, even being as advanced in years as he is, continues to expand his library and collect books for it.[246]

In late 1931, Rāfi'-hājjī was arrested by Soviet secret service (OGPU) officers, who confiscated a small part of his library. However, most of the library remained untouched in his house. Fearing arrest, his relatives hid a part of Rāfi'-hājjī's library in a mosque cellar under the minaret. His fellow-villagers used stone to wall in a niche in the mosque (*miḥrāb*) which offered access to the cellar. The mosque was later shut down and its building used as a club; the manuscripts remained in the cellar until 1989. But there were already so many books that the small space of the

246 Ali Kaiaev, "Biblioteki Dagestana," 50.

mosque cellar, already full to the brim, could not contain the remaining library. The remaining part of Rāfi‘-hājjī's library, numbering more than one thousand books that could not fit into the mosque, was inherited by his son Ismā‘īl (1911–1986).[247]

Saidov himself became acquainted with this library while studying under Rāfi‘-hājjī,[248] and he had unlimited access to it. Saidov's personal library and the collection of the Institute of History in Makhachkala contain a number of manuscripts from Rāfi‘-hājjī's library, which had been gifted to him either by Rāfi‘-hājjī himself during his lifetime or by his son Ismā‘īl, who remained friends with Saidov for most of his life.[249]

After Ismā‘īl's death in 1986, his widow ‘Ā'isha decided to sell the entire collection. Upon learning about this, some Dargin Muslim scholars came to the village. Having spent several days in her house studying the collection, they selected the items that they were interested in and purchased those. The remaining manuscripts were either copies of the Qur'ān or fragmentary texts in Turkic or Persian. This remaining part of the collection was subsequently inherited by Rāfi‘-hājjī's great-granddaughters. Here, one can also observe the evolution of the library into a collection following Ismā‘īl's passing. His wife, ‘Ā'isha, who did not have knowledge of Arabic, ascribed material significance to it. For her, books ceased to serve as a source of knowledge and became a source of material wealth. For Rāfi‘-hājjī's great-granddaughters, this library also evolved into a collection to which they began to ascribe sentimental value, as a remembrance of their ancestor, a distinguished Muslim scholar

In 1989, the *imām* of the Shangoda mosque, Khālid Yusupov (b. 1954), decided to reopen a mosque in the building. During the renovation works, he removed the stones from the niche in the mosque and

247 Author's field trip to the village of Shangoda, (5–20 June 2019). Interview with *imām* of Shangoda's mosque Khālid Yusupov (b. 1954), Shangoda, July 7, 2019.

248 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba‘ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash‘ār*, fol. 5a.

249 In Saidov's personal archive, there exists a receipt issued to him by Ismā‘īl, confirming that the latter received 7 meters of calico fabric from Saidov for the Arabic books and manuscripts, given to Saidov. The document bears the date of September 10, 1945. *Lichnye bumagi i dokumenty Saidova*. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, not inventoried, fol. 26a.

came across the entrance to the cellar, where he discovered the manuscripts, the vast majority of which had crumbled to dust over the intervening 50 years because of damp and inappropriate storage conditions. Khālid Yusupov removed the rest of them from the cellar, cleaned them, reassembled loose pages, and placed them in a case inside the mosque [fig. 5]. What remained of Rāfi'-ḥājjī's rich library, which is known to have once comprised several thousand volumes, were only 102 manuscripts preserved in the mosque, as well as 53 manuscripts and books inherited by his great-granddaughters.

Rāfi'-hājjī's extensive library was thus effectively destroyed during the Soviet period. A part of the library is irretrievably lost, crumbling into dust. Another part was absorbed into the libraries of some Dargin Muslim scholars in 1986. A third part has remained with his great-granddaughters. And a number of items were additionally acquired the Institute of History in Makhachkala and by Saidov himself. Such a trajectory can be designated as 'destruction', because a single collection, shaped in accordance with its owner's personal and professional interests, has disintegrated as a cultural entity.

We should emphasise here that the fact that Rāfi'-hājjī's library was destroyed in the Soviet period does not mean that the Soviet authorities themselves were responsible for this destruction. Indeed, as we have seen, repressions by Soviet authorities played but an insignificant part in the destruction of this library. Rather, responsibility for what happened lies primarily with Rāfi'-hājjī's heirs, and the choices that they made. As we can see, the destruction of a library can thus have many authors.

A similar trajectory can be observed in the case of the personal archive and library of the Muslim scholar Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī (Altunchachev, 1858–1948). This library, assembled and curated during the Imperial and early Soviet periods, was also destroyed after his death. A small part of this library is still with his heir, Jamāl al-Dīn Gadzhiev (b. 1948). Another part was added to the library of his student, Ṣadr al-Dīn Karanaev (1891–1968) during the Soviet period and was donated to



Figure 5. The remnants of Rāfi‘-hājjī’s library in Shangoda village mosque. Photograph by the author, June 2019.

a mosque by the latter's son Muḥammad-Amīn Karanaev (1929–2002) in 1991. Most of his library has vanished without a trace.[250]

The trajectory that we can discern in tracing the history of Islamic libraries and collection, which I term 'destruction', does not necessarily imply a physical destruction or disappearance, as can be seen from the example of Rāfi'-hājjī's library. The contents of the entire library may be preserved, but at the price of its losing its integrity and being disassembled into multiple separate depositories, which we can see when several Dargin Muslim scholars acquired part of Rāfi'-hājjī's library. Alternatively, a collection can be absorbed by the archives of a state institution, where it is merged with other similar collections, decontextualised and forgotten, as we shall see below, when discussing the Daghestani state collections. Rāfi'-hājjī's library offers example of how a library can be 'destroyed', with the consequence that it becomes difficult to reconstruct the state in which it existed during the life of its owner. A library's destruction can be physical, or it can be contextual. In either case, the library ceases to exist as a discrete cultural entity. There were numerous instances in Soviet Daghestan in which individual collections were destroyed either physically or through the loss of their cultural and intellectual context. The case of Rāfi'-ḥājjī's library discussed above is sufficiently illustrative of this phenomenon, and therefore I shall refrain from examining additional examples in detail.

The third trajectory that we can observe when tracing the development of libraries may be termed 'conservation'. The term 'conservation' denotes how these libraries, which were actively developed during the lifetime of each successive owner, ultimately remain unaltered after their passing and enter a state of conservation. This means that their composition becomes unchanged, reflecting the library's state during the final years of the previous owner's life. As a rule, such libraries no longer serve as a source of practical knowledge for heirs, and evolve from libraries into collections. The heirs thereby come to view them as a sa-

250 Author's field trip to the village of Karabudakhkent (July, 2000). Interview with Muḥammad-Amīn Karanaev (1929–2002) (Karabudakhkent, July 5, 2000).

cred or material object linked to the memory of their ancestor as a bearer of Islamic traditions.

A typical example of a library evolving into a collection and being conserved is exemplified by two private collections preserved in the village of Machada.[251] One of them belonged to the Daghestani scholar Ḥadīth al-Machadī (1689–1771);[252] it included some manuscripts which had earlier belonged to a local scholar called ʻAndrī (d. in the first half of the 16th century), the heir to Hājjī ʻUdurat (d. after 1475), who preached Islam in this region.[253] Subsequently, this library continued to evolve over three centuries until the 1930s, partly by the efforts of Ḥadīth al-Machadī's father (late 17th – early 18th century), Ḥadīth himself, and some unknown later owners of the library. It can be stated with certainty that the original, earliest layer of this library was displaced by later acquisitions. In order to engage dialogically with the collection, each subsequent owner altered its repertoire by adding or removing books in accordance with their preferences.[254]

The second collection was owned by the Daghestani scholar Muḥammad Baghuzhalaw, known in the Daghestani Islamic tradition as Baghuzhalaw al-Machadī (1696–1771).[255] As with the afore-mentioned Ḥadīth al-Machadī library, so too here each subsequent owner, including Baghuzhalaw's son Muḥammad (d. in the first third of the 19th cen-

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251 Both these collections were studied by me as part of five archeographic field trips in the village of Machada in July 2002, July 2015, August 2016, January 2017, August 2020.

252 Michael Kemper, Amri Shikhsaidov, Alfrid Bustanov, *Nazir ad-Durgeli, Uslada umov v biografiiakh dagestanskikh uchenykh*, 53; Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim ʻulamāʼ Dāghistān*, fol. 15a.

253 Sh.M. Khapizov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, "K voprosu ob islamizatsii tsentra gornoi Avarii v XV v., na primere biografii khadzhi Udurata iz Gidatlia," *Kavkazovedcheskie razyskaniia* 7 (2015), 266–270.

254 Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Archives of Discrimination: The Evolution of Muslim Book Collections in Daghestan," 82–109.

255 Both Ḥadīth and Baghuzhalaw of Machada died in the same year because of plague. See: Sh.M. Khapizov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, *Murtazaʻali iz Urada – verkhovnyi kadii Imamata* (Makhachkala: Epokha, IIAE DNTs RAN, 2018), 11.

tury), Muḥammad-Amīn al-Machadī (d. in 1873),[256] and Muḥammad al-Machadī (d. in the 1930s), made changes to its repertoire.[257] Finally, in the 1930s, the library was owned by Sheikhmuḥammad Shekhmagomedov (1881–1962), who was by that time the only Muslim scholar in the village. With permission from Ḥadīth al-Machadī's heirs, he brought together the two libraries which were attributed to Ḥadīth and Baghuzhalaw and which had been developing in parallel up until the 1930s.[258] As a prominent Muslim scholar and Sufi, Sheikhmuḥammad Shekhmagomedov continued to transform this merged library by varying its repertoire and acquiring works that reflected his own interest in Muslim law and Sufism. It includes Sheikhmuḥammad's notes and comments in the margins of books and manuscripts, Avar texts written by Sheikhmuḥammad, letters, and documents both addressed to him and authored by him in correspondence with other Muslim scholars. Additionally, it contains some original works by Sheikhmuḥammad himself, as he actively engaged with the literature in his library.

In the 1950s, Muḥammad Dibirov (d. 1980s), who was a descendant of Ḥadīth, was studying under Sheikhmuḥammad. Since some of the manuscripts owned by Ḥadīth al-Machadī contained charitable endowment (*waqf*) notes concerning the bequest of his collection to his heirs, in the mid-1950s Sheikhmuḥammad selected the books that used to belong to Ḥadīth and gave them to his student Muḥammad Dibirov. He bequeathed the rest to his heirs who would study Islamic subjects.[259] As for Muḥammad Dibirov's collection, it too evolved during his lifetime. He added to his collection some manuscripts as well as printed books published during the Imperial period in Temir-khān Shūrā and Istanbul,

256 Michael Kemper, Amri Shikhsaidov, Alfrid Bustanov, *Nazir ad-Durgeli, Uslada umov v biografiiakh dagestanskikh uchenykh*, 70.

257 Author's field trip to the village of Machada (July 13, 2015).

258 M.G. Shekhmagomedov, "Opyt arkheograficheskikh issledovanii chastnykh araboiazychnykh rukopisnykh kollektsii Dagestana na primere izucheniia kollektsii Baguzhalava al-Machadi al-Khidali (18 v.)," *Gumanitarnye i sotsial'no-politicheskie problemy modernizatsii Kavkaza* (Magas: OOO "Kent", 2018), 505.

259 This collection which contains about 200 manuscripts and old printed books is now in the private possession of Sheikhmuḥammad's great-grandson Magomed Shekhmagomedov (b. 1983) in the village of Machada.

which he continued to purchase between the 1960s and 1980s, up until his death.[260]

One can thus observe both libraries evolving over the last four hundred years. Each subsequent owner of these collections, from ʿAndrī (16th century) to Sheikhmuḥammad Shekhmagomedov and Muḥammad Dibirov (d. 1980s), altered its repertoire in accordance with their own preferences against a changing intellectual landscape. The subsequent destiny of these collections is noteworthy. Magomed Shekhmagomedov (b. 1983), who received both an Islamic and a secular education, has continued to work with the library, inherited from his great-grandfather Sheikhmuḥammad and connected with Baghuzhalaw. But unlike Sheikhmuḥammad, he has not altered the repertoire of the collection or dialogically engaged with it as a Muslim scholar. Instead, he has been studying the materials of his collection, doing so within both the Islamic and Orientialist academic approaches, and has published a number of books and articles on them. Here, we observe the transformation of the library into a collection. The library has evolved from primarily serving as a means to acquire practical knowledge about Islam into a collection that itself has become the subject of scholarly inquiry. Unlike his predecessors, Magomed Shekhmagomedov has not interfered with the contents of the collection or appended glosses and comments on the margins of manuscripts, as his great-grandfather did. Instead, he has objectified the collection, numbered it, catalogued it and researched it within the discplinary constraints of an academic tradition.

As for the second library owned by Muḥammad Dibirov, it has been conserved by his son Murtaḍā ʿAlī Dibirov, who has transformed his father's library into collection. He is not a Muslim scholar, and shows no interest in studying the collection. Nor is the collection available to academics who might wish to catalogue or research it. The only scholar to have access to the collection is probably Magomed Shekhmagomedov, who lives in the same village as Murtaḍā Alī. But just like with his own

[260] This library, which contains approximately 250 volumes of manuscripts and old printed books, is now in the private possession of Muḥammad's son Murtaḍā ʿAlī Dibirov (b. 1938), in the same village of Machada.

collection, here too Magomed Shekhmagomedov has been studying the collection within the framework of academic interests: he has been extracting sources from this collection, studying them and citing them in his academic publications.

A similar picture of transformation resulting in conservation can be observed in the case study of the collection of Magomedbek Mamaev from the village of Karabudakhkent (d. 1973).[261] During the late Imperial and early Soviet period, Mamaev studied under the afore-mentioned Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī. His descendants recollect that from his time as a student during the Imperial era until his death, he expanded his library by purchasing books and manuscripts in his native and the surrounding villages. Some books were gifted to him by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī himself.[262] After Magomedbek's death, his heirs conserved it and this library transformed into a collection. In 2007, my colleagues and I had a chance to see and study it. However, the collection was later closed, and access to it became highly restricted. The heirs responsible for safeguarding the collection account for this phenomenon by asserting that unexplained supernatural occurrences have been transpiring within the room housing the collection. Audible voices, possibly attributed to supernatural beings known as *jinn*, and the inexplicable movement of books have been reported.[263] A distinctive trajectory thus emerges. The library was begun in the Imperial period and continued to evolve throughout the Soviet era. Magomedbek engaged closely with the library and altered its repertoire. But after his death, the library was conserved and objectified by his heirs, who gave it a material meaning by sacralising it; in their eyes, it provides evidence of Magomedbek's piety which stemmed from his profound knowledge of Islam that he got from the books he was reading.

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261 I studied this collection during a field trip to the village of Karabudakhkent in August 2007. Later, in July 2013, I again turned to this collection in search of one historical manuscript.

262 Author's field trip to the village of Karabudakhkent (July 2000, July 2006, August 2007, July 2013).

263 Interview with Absaid Muselemov (b. 1945), (Karabudakhkent, August, 20, 2021).

A more heartening example of a collection that has followed a trajectory of evolution followed by conservation is that of the Muslim scholar Sulṭān-Muḥammad (d. 1996), from the village of Tlokh. The origins of this collection go back to the second half of the 17th century, as it contains some manuscripts formerly owned by his ancestor Ṭayyib al-Kharakhī (d. 1696/97). As it was passed down through generations, the library evolved, including by the addition of manuscripts purchased or copied by Sulṭān-Muḥammad himself. During his lifetime, he exchanged books with other Daghestani scholars.[264] After his death, the heirs no longer made any changes to this former library; neither did they lend any of the books to anyone else or add any new ones. Nevertheless, despite the conservation of this collection, some contemporary Muslim scholars are able to work with it. This conserved collection became a *waqf* collection following the death of its owner.[265]

What emerges from the above discussion is that conserved collections could ultimately have different destinies. Some of them have continued to function as *waqf*, like Sulṭān-Muḥammad's collection. Meanwhile, collections like those of Murtaḍā ʿAlī Dibirov, and Magomedbek Mamaev have been entirely closed, rendering it exceedingly difficult and often impossible to study the books they contain.

Thus, the main characteristic of this type of collections is the fact that they begin as libraries and evolve during the lifetime of their owners, who engage with them by changing their repertoire. Such libraries reflect the preferred versions of their owners and their personal preferences and/or professional interests. However, following the owner's death, these libraries evolved into collections, which were conserved by their

264 Interview with ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Magomedov of Muni village (1964–2021), (Muni, August 7, 2015). Being a Sulṭān-Muḥammad's student, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd had access to his rich library when he was alive.

265 My teacher Amri Shikhsaidov, who worked in this collection for some time in the late 1990s, told me in one of our conversations that Sulṭān-Muḥammad, shortly prior to his demise, bequeathed this library to his heirs as a *waqf*, under the condition that it should not be relocated to alternative repositories, and that its contents shall remain immutable. Consequently, this collection, on one hand, was vested as a property of *waqf*, and on the other hand, it was conservated.

subsequent owners. These owners did not engage with the literature in these collections and did not alter their repertoire.

It should thus be clear that my proposed tripartite categorisation of the functional trajectories of private libraries during the Soviet period is not absolute. The boundaries between what I term 'destruction', 'conservation' and 'transformation' are highly porous, and we can discern how various individual collections have in fact been shaped by multiple such trajectories. My purpose in offering this schematic typology of trajectory-types is to help understand the logic which informed Saidov's own chosen methodology for assembling his own personal library and the Manuscript depository at the Institute of History in Makhachkala.

Saidov's Library: between Institutional Collection and *Waqf* Endowment

Saidov's process of assembling his personal library of Islamic literature followed a pattern similar to that observable in the case of other private libraries. The process began with the manuscripts inherited from his grandfather Maḥadada, serving as the basis around which he developed his own library. Saidov himself followed the example of other Muslim scholars and added to the part of the library that he had inherited. The vast majority of books and manuscripts in the library were either copied by Saidov's contemporaries or purchased by him, and thus constituted a deliberate selection made by Saidov himself. Over his lifetime, Saidov amassed a library of Islamic literature, which included 103 manuscripts, 412 old printed books in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, and various Daghestani languages in Arabic script, and nearly 1,500 letters and documents.

In fact, however, when compared to contemporary libraries such as those of of Alī Kaiaev or Rāfi'-hājjī of Shangoda, the extent of Saidov's library appears rather modest. This is particularly striking given that Saidov organised, led and participated in archaeographic field trip for almost 30 years, and thus had significantly more opportunities to expand his library than most of his contemporaries did. There is a reason, though, for the limited number of Islamic manuscripts in Saidov's col-

lection. Saidov was a founder of the collection held by the Institute of History, Language, and Literature and the creator of the Department of Oriental Manuscripts Studies there. He was also directly connected to the state manuscript depository, so that he could borrow and return any manuscripts there without any bureaucratic procedures. The Institute has not retained a single document confirming that manuscripts were given or returned to it, such as would be expected in a state library. Undoubtedly, Saidov viewed the state collection of Islamic literature that he had founded as an Islamic *waqf*, meaning that he and his colleagues could draw on it and use its manuscripts without hindrance. What was more, Saidov had no antiquarian reverence for manuscripts as cultural artifacts. While studying some manuscripts from the Institute's collection, Saidov often added glossed comments to clarify or add certain details. On other occasions, he wrote the title of the work and sometimes a short biography of the author on the title page. Saidov made such notes both in his own manuscripts [fig. 6] and in the manuscripts from the Institute's collection [fig. 7]. In such notes we see him engaging directly with a book, just as the afore-mentioned Sheikhmuḥammad Shekhmagomedov did. Such dialogic engagement with the text is not typical of the academic tradition, as orientalists tend to assign a highly privileged status to a manuscript as a cultural artifact. This shows that Saidov was far from objectifying the Institute's collection as a depository of the 'heritage of Oriental culture' ('*nasledie Vostochnoi kul'tury*'). He treated this collection the same as any other private or mosque *waqf* library he worked with during the course of his studies. And, as was usual in the Muslim tradition, he felt able to append notes, comments, supplements or clarifications directly to the manuscript itself.

Even as he handed over to the Institute's collection the manuscripts that he had discovered, Saidov still retained some books for his own library if they were of particular importance to him. These could be manuscripts that he had inherited from his ancestors; works whose authors he had known personally; books with which he came into direct contact as part of his work at the Institute; or works of Islamic literature, which was the subject of his personal interest, separate from academic research.



Figure 6. Saidov's attribution of a manuscript from his private collection (blue ink), and a *waqf* record stating that this manuscript used to belong to his grandfather Said and was inherited by Saidov himself. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 18.

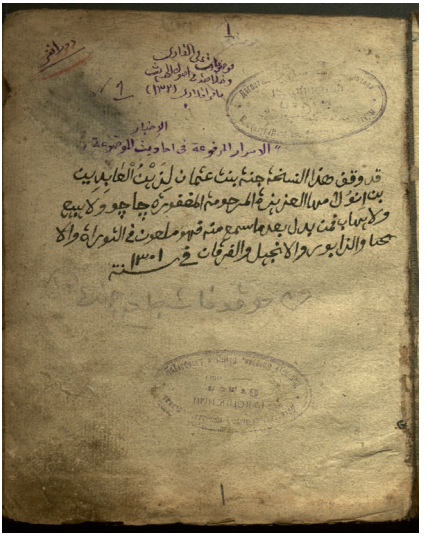


Figure 7. Saidov's attribution of a manuscript from the collection of the Institute (purple ink). Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 56.

The latter were mostly represented by collections of Arabic poetry, which had a special meaning for Saidov.

It is evident that Saidov, who had received an education not only at madrasas but also in Soviet institutions, and who established close connections with numerous prominent Soviet orientalists, possessed a deep understanding of the academic approach to manuscript studies. He used this method when cataloguing or publishing, and it enabled him to build a successful career within Soviet academic scholarship, as will be discussed later. At the same time, Saidov displayed an organic combination of the Islamic and Soviet epistemes in his approach to manuscript studies and the reception of collections of Islamic literature.

Saidov's entire library was kept in his house, and, as his daughter Rabiyat, who helped him in organasing of his library, recalls, the library

was strictly structured. Saidov divided it into three main sections. The first such section comprised Arabic manuscripts and old printed books, with the items arranged thematically, regardless of their physical characteristics, or of whether the item in question was a manuscript or a printed book. This structure of the library clearly indicates the Islamic principle of organising private libraries by topic rather than by physical appearance.[266] The second section of the library contained a personal archive comprising letters and documents, meticulously organised by Saidov into folders. The third section comprised about two thousand books in Cyrillic and Latin script. These books are academic publications on history, linguistics, lexicography and poetry by Soviet and European scholars. This type of literature was divided on the one hand into specialised literature, which Saidov uses in his academic research, and, on the other hand, into fiction and poetry.[267] This section of his library, consisting of academic books in both Cyrillic and Latin scripts, suggests that its repertoire closely resembled the libraries of other Soviet historians and linguists. Saidov meticulously organised other section of his library represented by Arabic-script Islamic literature in accordance with Islamic principles, with the exception of his private archive, which demonstrates the simultaneous coexistence of both Islamic and European cultures of documentation.[268]

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266 In fact, in all my time working with dozens of private collections of Islamic literature, I have never seen items taxonomically separated into categories of manuscripts, printed books, or documents.

267 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, August 4, 2015).

268 James Pickett and Paolo Sartori introduce the concept of 'cultures of documentation' in relation to Muslim archives, which have a distinctive feature when compared to the European tradition. Pickett and Sartori contend that the term 'archive' inherently carries a specific structural framework, a set of underlying assumptions, and theoretical baggage deeply rooted in European historical contexts. They raise concerns about the application of this term to Islamic collections, highlighting potential epistemological challenges. The authors emphasise the presence of a variety of alternative approaches to record-keeping and documentation within the Islamic world, diverging significantly from the European paradigm. For more details, see: James Pickett, Paolo Sartori, "From the Archetypical Archive to Cultures of Documentation," 773–798. Applying Sartori and Pickett's analytical lens to Saidov's archive reveals intriguing insights. Although initial observations may

Shortly before his passing, Muḥammad-Said Saidov explicitly expressed to his family a desire to bequeath his library to the Institute as a *waqf*, as outlined in a Muslim will (*waṣiyya*), and he even documented this in Arabic. Simultaneously, during a session at the Institute of History, Saidov formally declared his intention to bequeath his entire library to the Institute.[269]

Bequeathing books or entire libraries as a *waqf* to one's heirs or mosques was a common occurrence in the Islamic tradition. Many of the above collections originated from books inherited by their owners. The title page or flyleaf of a manuscript would often contain the formulaic phrase attesting that the owner had bequeathed the item in question to his heirs or mosques. The earliest *waqf* note which I have found in Daghestan goes back to 1052/1643 and was written on a copy of *Tāj al-lugha wa-l-ṣiḥāḥ* by Ismāʿīl al-Jawharī, preserved in Akusha.[270] But these *waqf* inscriptions make a special point of stating that the item in question or the collection to which it belongs is bequeathed only to those individuals 'who would benefit from them' (*man yantafiʿu minhā*), which implies that the collection should go to those descendants who would

suggest similarities with European documentation practices, a more in-depth examination of Saidov's library and archive reveals a distinct internal organisational structure closely aligned with Islamic principles. In his practice, Saidov had his own take on the library and archive that did not spatially intersect – he kept them separately for different purposes. The library, organised according to Islamic principles, was for his research and teaching, while the archive kept the results of this interaction with literature. It is worth noting that all materials in Saidov's archive adhered to the organisational principles he applied to his Islamic collection of manuscripts and books: there was no division by language or physical type, and all materials within the archive were arranged thematically. Consequently, Saidov's archive presents an alternative approach to documentation, as articulated by Pickett and Sartori.

269 Unfortunately, I could not find the Arabic text of this will in his archives. His daughter Rabiyat did not care about retaining this Arabic text of the Islamic testament because it was not valid under Soviet conditions. More important to her was her father's will, which he announced at the Institute of History. Interview with Rabiyat Saidova. Makhachkala, July 17, 2020. I conducted a more detailed interview with her at her home in Makhachkala three times: on August 4, 2015; November 3, 2019; July 17, 2020.

270 Author's field trip to Akusha (8–16 August 2017).

become scholars and would be able to help others using the knowledge that is contained in these books. The endowment of books as a *waqf* to a mosque inherently signifies their intended use, as mosques frequently double as centres for scholarly and educational pursuits.

The inalienable nature of *waqf* property in pre-Soviet era was strictly adhered to. There is a known case when Shamil (1797–1871), the famous leader of the Muslim resistance to the Russian conquest of the Caucasus, seized the collection of the prominent Daghestani scholar Muḥammad al-Ubrī (1682–1733): because many of the manuscripts in the collection contained a *waqf* note stating that the collection was bequeathed to al-Ubrī's descendants, Shamil had to return it to them in its entirety.[271]

Collection owners also provided for such eventualities as their line of descent being broken on both the male and female sides. In that case, they frequently bequeathed their collections to any scholar, often stipulating that the items bequeathed were not to leave a certain micro-region. Typical in this regard is the inscription that can be found on the flyleaves of manuscripts that once belonged to the collection of the afore-mentioned Ḥadīth al-Machadī. The inscription reads as follows:

> As for the books of Muḥammad Ḥadīth b. Muḥammad al-Machadī, he bequeaths them to his descendants who will benefit from them.[272] If none such present themselves, then [he bequeaths them] to his relatives on the side of those who should get an inheritance. If no scholars remain in his family, then [he bequeaths them] to those residents of the village of Machada who will benefit from them. If no such scholars are left in Machada, then [he bequeaths them] to those residents of Gidatl' who will benefit from them. But this collection may by no means be moved outside the confines of Gidatl' without an appropriate deposit being received for this collection to guarantee its return.[273]

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271 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*, fol. 26a.; Ali Kaiaev, "Biblioteki Dagestana," 49.

272 I.e., to those of his descendants who will become a scholar.

273 Machada, private collection of Murtaḍā 'Alī Dibirov, no. 27, fol. 64a. Field trip to Machada village (August 2015).

The practice of transferring collections as *waqf* to those who would use them was widespread in Daghestan throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, when ʿAbdullāh Omarov (who in the 1860s and 1870s served in the Imperial administration as a translator) described his studies at a madrasa in the mid-19th century, he noted that the library owner "leaves them as *waqf* to those who will learn from them. Such books are not to be divided between heirs but should go only to those who are literate."[274]

Al-Machadī's and Omarov's accounts indicate that the Islamic tradition of transferring knowledge, and the books which contain knowledge, takes precedence over family ties. It can be seen that al-Ghazālī's ideas of mandatory transfer of knowledge to others[275] were quite popular in the local tradition. Bequeathing libraries on the condition that they should function subsequently as a source of learning was, in the minds of Muslim scholars, a transfer of knowledge akin to teaching. This is why the owners of libraries preferred to pass them on only to those who would be studying Islamic disciplines, prioritising such individuals even over their own descendants. Such material valuables as the house, land and livestock were bequeathed by library owners to their descendants in accordance with the standards of inheritance law. But books were not, in their understanding, classified as material valuables. Books and libraries were thus a distinct category of property, and an owner's direct heirs were not necessarily entitled to them.

There were even cases when individual books were gifted as *waqf* to mosques or madrasas, even when the owner had direct descendants who were Muslim scholars and might be expected to have had valid claims of their own. For instance, Muḥammad al-Quduqī gave some of his books as a *waqf* to a madrasa where he had studied. The title page of a manuscript once owned by al-Quduqī contains the following inscription:

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274 Abdulla Omarov, "Vospominaniia mutalima," *Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh*. Vypusk 1:7 (Tiflis: Tipografiia Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1868), 19.

275 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Bidāyat al-hidāya*, 61.

> This feeble, contemptible slave [of God] Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Quduqī has bequeathed (*waqafa*) this volume alongside the other three volumes of the work *Sharḥ al-Minhāj* by Ibn Ḥajar, may God have mercy upon him, to the madrasa in the village of Oboda (al-ʻUbūdī). May those who benefit from them profit…[276]

Al-Quduqī did not bequeath these manuscripts to his two sons, who were scholars in their own right; instead, he gave them to the madrasa in Oboda. He may have reflected that the line of scholars in his family might in the future be interrupted, like his blood line itself. A madrasa, by contrast, was a permanent institution which oversaw the transfer of knowledge and the changing of generations. Each new student to open this book would gain the knowledge contained in it. As a result, al-Quduqī himself would, in accordance with the Islamic tradition, receive unending spiritual rewards (*al-ṣadaqa al-jāriyya*) in the afterlife, while his books would continue to be used by students. The role of transferring knowledge through teaching or through books was extremely important for Muslim scholars, and conferred a spiritual capital which did not end with the death of their owner.[277] Thus, the transfer of knowledge to subsequent generations as part of the educational process or through books

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276 Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj sharḥ al-Minhāj*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 74, fol. 2a.

277 It is noteworthy that over the last twenty years of my field trips I was a witness that the last owners, who did not know Arabic, voluntarily gave the collection to the local mosque or madrasa. They explained this by saying that if there is no one left in the family who can read Islamic texts, then the mere possession of Islamic literature is a sin and there will be no grace (*barāka*) in such a family. In this case, they said, Islamic literature should be transmitted to the mosque or to those who study Islamic sciences. Such a narrative is very common in various regions of Daghestan. There were even cases where the particular subsequent owner could read the Qur'ān but did not know Arabic. In this case, he left the Qur'ān in the house and took the rest of the literature to the mosque or madrasa. In most cases, the *waqf* manuscript collections found in mosques reopened after the collapse of the Soviet Union were assembled under similar circumstances: individuals, typically lacking knowledge of Arabic and no longer engaged with Islamic texts, transferred their collections to the mosque, motivated by a desire for grace (*barāka*) or unending spiritual rewards (*al-ṣadaqa al-jāriyya*).

was made a particular priority in the Islamic tradition. In this way, the circulation of Islamic literature, and even the emergence of new libraries, occurred when the next student received individual manuscripts or an entire collection for his use.

Due to the fact that mosques often functioned as centres for scholarship and education, Muslims also frequently made donations of their books as *waqf* to these mosques. Consequently, the libraries within mosques were made accessible to the public, allowing literate Muslims to conveniently access the available books. Typically, mosque libraries were designated as *waqf* properties, thereby ensuring that the books held within them could neither be sold nor given away. This practice of maintaining a permanent collection or expanding it through donated books was a characteristic feature of the pre-Soviet era. Nevertheless, the situation underwent a profound transformation during the Soviet period, leading to what we can refer to as an illusion of stability, as our recent studies on the Akusha mosque have illustrated.[278]

Throughout the Soviet era, a thorough dismantling of the entire legal framework governing *waqf* operational conditions took place. Mosques' assets were subjected to confiscation, and the vast majority of mosques, alongside all madrasas, remained closed until the conclusion of the Soviet period. The previously established regulations of Islamic legal practices concerning the legitimacy and operational aspects of *waqf*[279] became mere formalities, effectively ceasing to apply within the framework of Soviet legislation. Notwithstanding these changes, the tradition of *waqf* itself persisted. During the Soviet era, those who owned libraries continued to pass them on as *waqf* to their descendants. However, the notarisation of property donation acts as *waqf*, that took place in *sharī'a* courts as a common practice during the Imperial period, was replaced with a straightforward recording by the owner. In some cases, the owner would express their intention orally, as was the case with my own col-

278 Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Archives of Discrimination: The Evolution of Muslim Book Collections in Daghestan," 104–109.

279 See: Jalāl al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maḥallī, *Kanz al-rāghibīn sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭālibīn. Al-Mujallad al-thānī* (Jidda: Dār al-minhāj, 2013), 95–106.

lection when my grandfather, Zainalbek, orally transferred his library to those of his descendants who would study Arabic.

With the shift in the circumstances surrounding the transfer of collections during the Soviet era, there was also an alteration in the perception of the institutions involved in *waqf* management. In light of the mosque closures, many Muslims who inherited libraries from their ancestors opted to donate manuscripts and entire collections to the custody of the Institute of History. Despite the Institute's non-Islamic nature, Muslims were aware that their manuscripts would be securely preserved within its confines, and that the Institute's collection would function in a manner consistent with standard Soviet libraries. By donating Islamic literature to the Institute, they remained committed to the same objective – performing charitable acts in order to receive unending spiritual rewards in the afterlife. In the process of transferring Islamic books and libraries to the Institute, the prominent role of intermediaries, primarily Saidov himself and his colleagues with Islamic backgrounds, comes into focus – a subject that we shall address further in subsequent sections.

Why, then, did Saidov transfer his collection to the Institute, designating his will both as a *waqf* and a Soviet act of donation? What alternatives were available to him, and how does his decision align with the Islamic legal norms of *waqf*?

Saidov lived through a period when mosques and madrasas served as prominent centres for Islamic scholarship and education. He also witnessed the repression and persecution carried out by the Soviet government against Muslim scholars. During the Imperial period, there were many hundreds of mosques and madrasas; however, by the 1980s, when he made his will, only 26 mosques were still in operation in Daghestan, and no madrasas remained.[280] Saidov realised that in the atheistic Soviet state, mosques proved to be highly precarious institutions. During his archaeographic expeditions, he transported manuscripts to the Institute of History that had previously been considered the *waqf* property of mosques or madrasas. However, during Soviet times, these manuscripts became ownerless. An illustrative example is the trajectory of the

280 E.F. Kisriev, *Islam v Dagestane* (Moscow: Logos, 2007), 40.

afore-mentioned manuscripts once belonging to al-Quduqī, which he had designated as a *waqf* to the Oboda madrasa. The madrasa ceased to exist a mere 200 years after al-Quduqī's death, and the manuscripts eventually found their way to the Institute. The expected reward in the afterlife for al-Quduqī also came to an end when the Oboda madrasa was ceased.

According to Saidov, the Institute of History had the potential to replace the former *waqf* libraries of mosques.[281] Saidov realised that, within Soviet conditions, academic institutions offered more stability and permanence. Hence, his efforts to build the Institute's collection were an endeavour to create a public library akin to the *waqf* libraries of the past. Saidov also saw that many Muslims chose to transfer their manuscripts to the Institute as *waqf*, with the expectation of spiritual rewards in their afterlife, realising that these manuscripts would be read and studied there. For example, some of the Institute's manuscripts collected during field trips contain similar Arabic inscriptions confirming the donation of individual books to the Institute as *waqf* in the 1960s and 1970s.[282] Probably, Saidov acted on behalf of the owners themselves and made the tra-

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281 As Amri Shikhsaidov recalled, indeed, during Saidov's era, access to the Institute's collection was more open compared to the repositories in Moscow, Leningrad, Kazan, or Ufa. Saidov and his colleagues regarded the Institute's collection as an everyday library, similar to the *waqf* mosques they had readily frequented when they studied at madrasas. To them, the Institute's collection was not merely a repository of rare manuscripts, but rather an extensive holding of Islamic literature. Moreover, certain Muslim scholars within Saidov's personal network were also granted access to the manuscripts held at the Institute. Although the removal of manuscripts from the premises was formally prohibited – a restriction likewise characteristic of *waqf* mosque libraries – limited use under controlled conditions was nonetheless possible. "One could say that Muḥammad Said created an endowment collection (*sozdal vakufnuiu kollektsiiu*) of manuscripts at the Institute, similar to what he had seen in Daghestani mosques when he was studying at the madrasa," Amry Shikhsaidov told me. Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala, November 16, 2011).

282 The Institute of History holds some manuscripts, which bear follow inscriptions on their title pages, written in Arabic by either Saidov or his colleagues: "I, [Name], from [Village Name], bequeath this book as a *waqf* to the Institute of History (*waqafty hādha l-kitāb 'alā ma'had al-ta'rīkh*)." Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, nos. 430, 435, 438, 442, 496, 1102, 1128, 1140, 1141, 1238, 1842, 1997, 3066, 3089, 3118.

ditional Arabic entry on the title page of the manuscript itself, as was common within the Islamic tradition.

Motivated by the desire to receive unending spiritual rewards in the afterlife, Saidov also opted to bestow his library upon the Institute. He believed that this choice would endure longer than the mosques in operation during his lifetime, given the potential for the Soviet government to close them, similar to what happened in the 1930s.

During the Soviet period, mosques, even when operational, no longer functioned as centres for scholarly and educational activities. *Imām*s of mosques seldom engaged with these libraries,[283] and studying Islamic texts in these places became risky under the watchful eye of Soviet authorities. Academic institutions, during this time, were among the few places where Muslims could engage in such activities without legal repercussions. Saidov was an integral part of this new reality, and saw the impermanence of mosques, as well as the difficulty of studying Islamic literature there during the Soviet period, and therefore receiving unending spiritual rewards. For this reason, he chose the Institute of History as the recipient of the transferred *waqf* (*mawqūf ʻalayh*).

Regarding the legitimacy of *waqf* as an Islamic legal practice, Saidov realised that this system was inoperative within the Soviet legal system. The absence of *sharīʻa* courts to validate his act of donation and the lack of Islamic institutions responsible for managing and overseeing *waqf* (*nāẓir al-waqf*) rendered formal procedures unfeasible. In response, he employed available means within the prevailing conditions, recognising ordinary, non-notarised records of manuscript transfers as *waqf*, mirroring the practice found in the inscriptions of the manuscripts donated to the Institute. He composed the act of donating his library as a *waqf* on a separate sheet of paper in Arabic.

Concerning Soviet practices of bequests, Saidov also understood that the library and archive he conveyed, containing numerous unique manu-

283 In my work with mosque collections between 1998 and 2021, I have found that even in the provision of religious freedom in Russia, mosque libraries remain underutilized. This includes both *imām*s of mosques and students of madrasas, who do not engage with these resources, both manuscripts or old printed books.

scripts and books, including sources related to the history of Daghestan, would offer substantial benefits to Soviet academic scholarship. The Institute's staff would gain access to this collection following his demise, study the sources he had accumulated throughout his life, and produce academic publications. This explains why, alongside the written *waqf*, Saidov also left a will in Russian, publicly disclosing this decision during a session at the Institute. As with other cases detailed in Chapter 6, we here discern Saidov's engagement with both Islamic and Soviet traditions.

The subsequent history of Saidov's library shows a number of changes to both the structure of his collection and its repertoire, starting immediately after his death and continuing until 2008. After Saidov's passing, his daughter Rabiyat noticed that certain manuscripts were disappearing from the collection. It came to light that Saidov's sister Patimat, who had lived with him during his final years, had given some manuscripts to a relative who requested them as keepsakes of Saidov. Subsequently, a few of Saidov's friends approached Rabiyat, requesting the return of books that her father had temporarily borrowed during his lifetime. Realising that the collection faced an imminent risk of dispersal, and following the will of her father, she immediately contacted Gadzhi Gamzatov, Chairman of the Daghestani Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who had known Saidov from an early age,[284] and asked him to take the collection to the Institute. Later, Saidov's three friends Manṣūr Gaidarbekov (1906–1987), Magomed Nurmagomedov (1909–1997) and ʻAbd al-Majīd Gaidarosmanov (d. in the late 1980s) each compiled a list of books that Saidov had borrowed from them and asked for them to be returned.[285] Comparing the books currently present in Saidov's collection with the contents of these three lists reveals that the listed books appear to be lacking from Saidov's collection. They had clearly been returned to their three owners.

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284 In particular, Muḥammad-Said Saidov himself in 1917 studied Islamic sciences with the father of Gadzhi Gamzatov, Gamzat Tsadasa, who later became the national poet of Daghestan. For more on this, see Chapters 6 and 7.

285 Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 85, 91, 93.

After Saidov's library was moved to the Institute, it was recorded as a separate collection within the Institute and received the designation of '*Fond Magomed-Saida Saidova'* ('Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection'). Saidov's colleagues Amri Shikhsaidov and Khulatta Omarov, who had worked with him for thirty years, arranged his collection according to a different principle from that used by Saidov himself. Having previously been organised, as we saw, in three sections, Saidov's collection was now divided into five inventories (*opis'*): manuscripts (*opis'* 1), printed books in the Arabic script (*opis'*2), photocopies (*opis'* 3), books in Cyrillic and Latin scripts (*opis'* 4), and Saidov's private archive (*opis'* 5). Even as the contents of Saidov's library were thus preserved, the logic with which Saidov himself had organised his library was now destroyed. Upon its transfer to the Institute, Saidov's collection was now structured in accordance with the system adopted in the Soviet academic tradition and thereby decontextualised. The Soviet orientalists considered it appropriate to shape the collection anew and to divide it between the aforementioned inventories, using the method for arranging all other Islamic manuscripts, books, and document in the Institute's depository (*Rukopisnyi Fond*). Subsequently, Saidov's collection was described and partly studied in five aforementioned inventories (*opisi*) in its decontextualised form, detached from the internal logic used by Saidov himself when arranging it. Thus, the above mentioned Amri Shikhsaidov and Khulatta Omarov produced separate descriptions of Saidov's manuscripts which were included in inventory one (*opis'* 1) and published a catalogue, ignoring the printed books in Arabic script.[286] Khulatta Omarov compiled a separate short inventory of Saidov's archival documents included in inventory five (*opis'* 5), but this archive still remained uncatalogued till 2012.

Later, when I was employed at the Institute of History, I was required to compile a catalogue of both Saidov's Arabic printed books and his

[286] A.R. Shikhsaidov, Kh.A. Omarov, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei (Kollektsiia M.-S. Saidova)*.

documentary archive.[287] The task assigned to me was limited to describing the Arabic documents from Saidov's archive, ignoring other documents in Russian and various Daghestani languages. Following the department head's logic, all Russian-language documents from Saidov's archives were a potential object of study for another department of the Institute, the Department of Source Studies and Historiography, whose staff also worked exclusively with Russian archival materials. For this reason, the Institute has not made a complete description of Saidov's archive, which would include both Arabic and Russian texts.

Similar to this division of Saidov's collection according to the physical nature of the materials and the language, the structuring of the materials within each inventory was also altered. When I began to compile the catalogue of the Arabic-language materials in Saidov's archive by comparing some of the documents with Khulatta Omarov's inventory, I discovered that some materials were missing. An entire range of materials, including documents, letters, notes, diaries, had been removed from the folders in which Saidov had filed them, mixed up and reassembled into folders in a haphazard order. Naturally, such a chaotic mixing of documents disrupted the logic of the archive structure that Saidov himself had followed. Some of Saidov's colleagues, who had access to the archive immediately after his death and until 2008, selectively removed the materials they were interested in from the archive and published some of them. Documents, letters and other texts, including manuscripts, were researched separately, in disregard of the context in which Saidov himself compiled this collection. Some materials from Saidov's archive and collection were also lost in the absence of proper oversight. Clearly, employees of the Oriental Studies Department had free access to his collection and borrowed some books, manuscripts and documents from his collection to use for their own research.

Curiously, the inventory of Cyrillic texts revealed some books that were published after Saidov's death in 1985. For example, the Russian

287 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Araboiazychnye pis'mennye pamiatniki Dagestana: Opisanie araboiazychnykh dokumentov lichnogo arkhiva M.-S. Saidova (2010–2012)*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3, *opis'* 1, no. 425.

edition of the *Kitāb al-tadhkira* by ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ghāzīghumuqī was listed as belonging to his collection, even though it was not published until 1997. Saidov had translated the manuscript of this work from Arabic into Russian. Subsequently, his colleagues Amri Shikhsaidov and Khulatta Omarov edited this translation and published it. It seems clear that they wanted to honour Saidov's memory by donating a copy of this book to the collection.

After Saidov's collection was fully catalogued in 2014, I, as head of the Department of Oriental Manuscripts, sought to prevent its further destruction or transformation: all materials from the collection were to be released only against signed acknowledgment of receipt and could only be viewed in the Institute's reading room. Furthermore, any intervention or change in the repertoire of Saidov's collection has ceased. Anyone can get access to the collection, but the integrity of the collection is now strictly monitored.

Thus, the history of Saidov's collection demonstrates all three developmental trajectories typical of private collections. The first trajectory is destruction, and reflects the process whereby Saidov flushed out the traces of the ancient collection that he inherited from his ancestors. This can also be applied to the destiny of his collection after his death, when some manuscripts disappeared from his library. The example of Saidov's library demonstrates that destruction does not have to be understood exclusively as the straightforward elimination or loss of certain books. In the case of Saidov's collection, destruction can also mean changes and reformatting of the collection's internal logic. Orientalist scholars rearranged the collection following a completely different taxonomical logic from that which Saidov himself had observed, reformulating it instead in line with Soviet archival principles, which Saidov had avoided with regard to his own collection. All of Saidov's materials were split into five parts, so that all the archival materials were also stripped of their organisational logic. The second trajectory is transformation, and reflects a process that took place not only while Saidov himself was still alive and continued to shape his collection, but also after his death, when posthumously published books were added to his library. And finally, the third trajectory is conservation. As noted above, once Saidov's collection had

been fully catalogued, I restricted the removal and addition of any materials from and to it. However, anyone could have access to his collection – just as Saidov wished when he bequeathed this collection to the Institute as a *waqf*.

Jadīd Historians at the Soviet Institute of National Cultures

The principles underlying the forming of private Islamic and Soviet state collections were not uniform. This reflects the fact that Muslim scholars on the one hand and orientalists on the other have long had very different approaches to Islamic literature.

For Muslim scholars, a book was a source of practical knowledge. In their understanding, a book was self-sufficient and contained a certain body of knowledge that a scholar could learn and absorb. Subsequently, a scholar would transmit the knowledge obtained from books to the community: an *imām* of a mosque would instruct Muslims while preaching in the mosque; a jurist would write *fatwā*s; a *qāḍī* would draw on legal norms during court proceedings; a teacher would use the new knowledge for educational purposes; an astronomer would calculate the direction of *qibla* when building mosques or determine the time for prayer; and a historian would write historical studies based on the knowledge received from books. According to such an approach, a book is significant for Muslim scholars as an autonomous source of knowledge, irrespective of the format in which this knowledge is recorded, be it in a manuscript or a printed work.

Treating a book as an autonomous ource of knowledge and engaging with it also shaped the attitude of Muslim scholars towards books as an information medium. They paid little attention to the age of a book, or its artistic or cultural value, except in cases where they deemed that an autograph or an early copy of an autograph was preferable because it was more reliable and authoritative than some alternative version. Unlike orientalists, Muslim scholars were not prone to exoticising manuscripts or to ignore printed sources. This is why the curated collections of Muslim scholars do not tend to focus specifically upon ancient and

unique books. As noted above, Muslim scholars organised their collections thematically rather than based on physical characteristics. Moreover, Muslim scholars paid little attention to the history of a book, its dating or palaeography, because what mattered to them was the text itself. They collected exclusively those texts that they would interact with or require in the course of their professional or private lives. For instance, jurists or *qāḍī*s would mostly collect legal texts and would often get rid of works on other disciplines which they did not need or were not interested in, unless these fell within their non-professional private interest, as might be the case with works of Sufism or poetry. A teacher would keep the literature he needed in an educational setting. And it is extremely rare for Muslim scholars to acquire ancient manuscripts on sciences that are of no interest to them: this is particularly the case in Daghestan, where concepts of antiquities and museumisation were not developed in the local Islamic tradition.

Unlike Muslim scholars, orientalists objectify the Islamic book *qua* artefact. For them, the value of a work is not, as it is for Muslim scholars, as a source of practical knowledge. Rather, orientialists use the expertise that they have acquired at professional institutes to study manuscripts as a historical and cultural witness. For orientalists, the information contained in Islamic manuscripts constitutes an object of study rather than a source of practical knowledge. Accordingly, orientalists tend to focus on things that are irrelevant for Muslim scholars: manuscript codicology, palaeography, textual studies, and the production of translations and critical editions. In pursuing such an approach, orientalists frequently assess the value of a given manuscript based on the date of its copying or uniqueness, rather than on its contents. Orientalists tend to pay close attention even to run-of-the-mill texts if these are represented by scholars' autographs or early copies. Such objectification and exoticisation of manuscripts is on the whole typical of the European tradition. Since Muslim scholars and orientalists tend to have diametrically opposed visions of what constitutes both the value and the study of Islamic literary works, one can observe that collections within the Islamic and Orientalist epistemes are arranged in completely different ways. This also affects the way they engage with the literature in their collections. Such

contrasting interpretations of the Islamic books and documents have also ensured that collections are formed and texts are studied in completely different ways within the Islamic and Orientalist traditions.

The historical exploration of Islamic written sources in Arabic, Turkic, and Persian languages originating from the East Caucasus can be traced to the middle of the 19th century when Imperial scholars and civil servants began to collect and study such materials.[288] However, Russian orientalists did not make efforts to establish a distinct repository for Islamic manuscripts and documents in Daghestan, similar to those in St. Petersburg or Kazan. Instead, they opted to transfer the manuscripts to existing repositories in St. Petersburg, Tiflis, or other locations. For instance, Adolph Bergé (1828–1886), Chairman of the Caucasian Archaeographic Comission, preferred to pass on the manuscripts and documents that he found in Daghestan to the National Library of France.[289]

A more extensive exploration of Muslim manuscripts and documents was closely linked to the initiatives undertaken by the Institute of National Cultures, which was established by the Soviet government in Daghestan in 1924. I will detail two approaches to the collecting and research of Islamic sources that developed sequentially during the Soviet period, the first of which served to inform and shape the second. The first such approach was associated with the activities of Muslim reformist scholars, who were integrated into academic institutions by the Soviets and with whom Saidov was closely associated even before the start of his academic career. In this phase, between 1924 and the 1940s, the collection of sources was organised selectively, with *jadīd* historians purchasing or using in their research exclusively manuscripts and documents that had something to do with the history of Daghestan and ignoring the rest of Islamic literature. At this initial stage, *jadīd* historians did not set themselves the task of collecting the entire Islamic heritage or creating a national manuscript collection.

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288 A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Arabic historical studies in twentieth-century Dagestan," *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, ed. by Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann (London & New York: Routledge, 2011), 203–216.

289 See e.g. *Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits.* Suppl. 679, R 57987.

The second approach, covering the period between the 1950s and the late 1980s, is directly related to Saidov's career. Saidov followed the examples of developing collections of Islamic literature in Kazan and Leningrad and initiated archaeographic field trips in Daghestan, leading to the establishment of the Collection of Oriental Manuscripts at the Institute in 1959. The Institute's state collection pioneered by Saidov includes the materials collected by his predecessors, as well as the manuscripts, books, and documents gathered by him and his colleagues during field trips. At the same time, the arrangement of the collection and the stock-taking of its materials indicate that Saidov was relying on both the Islamic tradition and the Orientalist approach in his work. These two epistemes were closely associated with Saidov's career and activities.

Below, I will discuss these two approaches to collecting and researching Islamic literature, as well as the differing perceptions of Muslim scholars and orientalists as to what constituted the nature and the importance of Islamic literary works, and how these should be studied.

In 1924, the Institute of National Cultures was founded in Makhachkala.[290] Starting from this period, until the 1940s, the majority of the Institute's work focused on historical and linguistic research and the organisation of field trips collecting linguistic and folkloric materials, as well as historical sources in Arabic, Turkic, Persian, and various Daghestani languages.[291] In the early Soviet period, many of the people working at the institute were Muslim scholars. The logic of Soviet officials who integrated such scholars into Soviet schools and academic institutions is quite understandable. During the early Soviet period, Muslim scholars were essentially the only educated people in Daghestan. It was impossible to find other human resources for research or teaching. Under these conditions, the Soviet authorities were prepared to act prag-

290 In 1949 it was renamed the Institute of History, Language and Literature, and it is now the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography. See A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Vostokovednye issledovaniia v Dagestane," *Istoriia, arkheologiia i etnografiia Kavkaza* 10:4 (2014), 11–32.

291 A.I. Osmanov, "Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii DNTs RAN – krupneishii tsentr akademicheskoi nauki na Kavkaze," *Vestnik Instituta istorii, arkheologii i etnografii* 1 (2005), 4.

matically. Former Muslim scholars who previously had served as *qāḍī*s, mosque *imām*s and madrasa teachers were sent to Soviet teaching schools (sing. *Pedagogicheskii tekhnikum*) for retraining. Some of them thereafter began working in Soviet schools. Others who also had no Soviet education nevertheless entered academia and studied history or linguistics.[292] Apart from political reasons, notably the fact that the *jadīd*s had supported the socialists in the establishment of Soviet power in Daghestan, [293] the decision to recruit such individuals also reflects the *jadīd*s' approach to historical scholarship and their view of the development of national culture, which were similar to the Soviets' approach.

The historical works authored by scholars from Daghestan between the 14th and 19th centuries primarily represented instances of descriptive history with a discernible narrative bias. Specifically, the authors of early historical chronicles depicted a simultaneous and pervasive ascent of Islam in the Eastern Caucasus, while portraying local political leaders as sacred figures, tracing their lineage back to the Prophet Muḥammad. Nevertheless, these works allotted limited space for historical precision or chronological organisation of events.[294] Daghestani historians in the period between the 14th and 19th centuries typically did not work with existing written sources, or alternatively they fashioned narratives by compiling material from earlier works without critical analysis.

By contrast to such practices, *jadīd* writers adopted a more critical approach to the coverage of events and biographies. When writing his-

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292 V.O. Bobrovnikov, "Iz istorii vostochnoi archeografii v Dagestane," *Istoriia, arkheologiia i etnografiia Kavkaza* 14:3 (2018), 119–127. A similar practice, when in the early Soviet period Muslim scholars were integrated into academic institutions, was also characteristic of other regions of the USSR. See, for instance: Bakhtiyar M. Babajanov, "'Ulama'-Orientalists: Madrasa Graduates at the Soviet Institute of Oriental Studies", 84–119.

293 Naira E. Sahakyan, "A Local Face of Revolution: The Confrontation of the Dagestani 'Ulamā' over Najm al-Dīn Gotsinskii's Imamate and the Russian Revolutions of 1917," *Revolutionary Russia* 35:1 (2022), 72–93; idem, *Muslim Reformers and the Bolsheviks: The Case of Daghestan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022).

294 For discussion of the Daghestani historical treatises compiled between the 14th and 19th centuries see: A.R. Shikhsaidov, T.M. Aitberov, G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Dagestanskie istoricheskie sochineniia* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1993).

torical and biographical treatises, the *jadīd*s often referred to the works of Arab and Turkish historians and used a wide range of sources, drawing for instance upon letters, documents and biographies that testified to specific events that they described in their works. At the same time, they had a rather sceptical approach to the sources they used, refuting or reformulating the historical information previously recorded by Daghestanis. For instance, *jadīd* historians challenged previously accepted notions of the immediat Islamization of Daghestan, which had been endorsed by earlier Daghestani theologians. They also criticised claims that specific local dynasties were sacred.[295] The *jadīd*s' research within the national and geographical paradigm of what they understood as Daghestan coincided with the view held by the Soviet authorities concerning the national borders of the new republics. In the USSR, humanities scholarship itself made the study of history and linguistics relevant within the borders of newly-established national Union and autonomous republics.[296] For this reason, early Soviet officials were often keen to integrate the *jadīd*s into educational and research institutions. Thus, ʻAlī-bek Takho Godi (1892–1937), People's Commissar for Education (*Narkom prosveshcheniia*) of the Daghestani ASSR and founder of the Institute of National Cultures, invited the afore-mentioned *jadīd* ʻAlī Kaiaev to work at the Institute of National Cultures [fig. 8].[297] Kaiaev accepted this invitation, and worked at the Institute as a research fellow from 1927 to 1930 and from 1934 to 1938 until his arrest and exile by the *NKVD*.

The other *jadīd*s who worked at the Institute in the 1920s and 1930s were either ʻAlī Kaiaev's students or were in regular correspondence with him. These scholars, who also collected historical and biographical

295 It is noteworthy that Saidov himself was the first individual in Daghestani Soviet scholarship who critically analyzed this narrative, which is well-established in Muslim historiography. See: M.S. Saidov, "O rasprostranenii Abumuslimom islama v Dagestane," 42–51.

296 On the history of philological Orientalism in the Soviet Union see: Alfrid Bustanov, *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 1–77; Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann (eds.), The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies. (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

297 [*Letter from ʻAlī-bek Takho Godi to ʻAlī Kaiaev*] (in Arabic). Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 273.

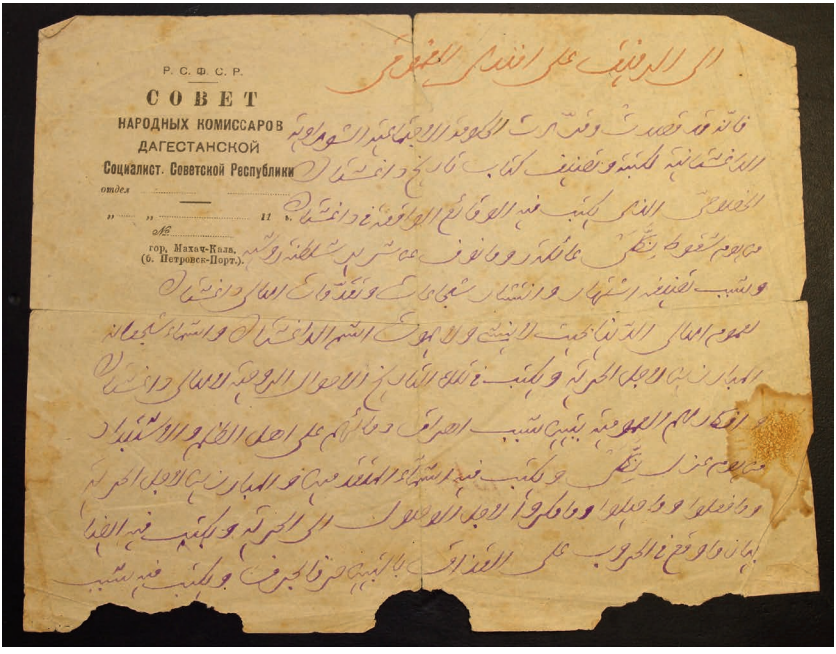


Figure 8. Letter from ʿAlī-bek Takho Godi to ʿAlī Kaiaev asking him to write the history of the Revolution and the Civil War in Daghestan. Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 273.

works, were familiar with many of the local Islamic collections, including original works by Daghestani authors. They also had personal relationships with those Muslim scholars who did not work for the Institute but who also copied or compiled historical works. On behalf of the Institute, the latter produced their own historical works in Arabic, which then were added to the Institute's archive.

It may be useful here to consider the career trajectories of some of the Daghestani *jadīd*s who were thus recruited into the early Soviet scholarly establishment. One such individual was the Muslim scholar Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī (1858–1947). In the mid-1920s, he produced a comprehensive treatise on the history of Daghestan for his own purpos-

es.[298] In 1927, on request from the Institute of National Cultures, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī produced a concise version of this work, which was recorded in the Institute's documents as *Excerpts from Arabic Books Concerning the History of Daghestan*.[299] In 1933, the Institute of National Cultures bought from his son-in-law Niẓām al-Dīn Kaziev a short Kumyk text written in the Arabic script entitled *The History of Karabudakhkent*, which he probably had produced on request from the Institute.[300]

A second such scholar, who was employed at the Institute from 1925, was the well-known historian Muḥammad Inkwachilaw (d. 1957). Inkwachilaw, who was an uncle of Saidov, had received an excellent Islamic education and possessed his own collection of manuscripts and documents.[301] On behalf of the Institute, he devoted much time and energy to collecting manuscripts and documents in Arabic on the history of Daghestan. In particular, he copied several Arabic texts on the history of some Daghestani villages for the Institute.[302] He continued to work at the Institute until 1936, when widespread repression began in Daghestan. In the same year, fearing arrest, he managed to travel via Baku to Central Asia, where he died in 1957.[303]

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298 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharābudāghī. *Ta'rīkh al-Qawqāz wa qaryat Gharabudāghkent*. Karabudakhkent, private collection of Magomedbek Mamaev (b. 1978).

299 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharābudāghī, *Is istorii Dagestana i shamkhalov kumykskikh.* Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 1*, opis'* 1, no. 414.

300 *Istoriia Karabudakhkenta. Perevod s arabskogo na kumykskii iazyk Nizamuddina Kazieva*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 5, *opis'* 1, no. 262, 15 fols. The editing of this text see: G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Istoriia Kavkaza i seleniia Karabudakhkent Dzhamaluddina-hadzhi Karabudahkentskogo* (Makhachkala: Tsentr-poligraf, 2001).

301 L.G. Kaimarazova, Iu.M. Lysenko, N.D. Chekulaev, *Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii; Institut iazyka, literatury i iskusstva im. G. Tsadasy, 1924–2014 gg. K 90-letiiu so dnia osnovaniia. Dokumenty i materialy* (Makhachkala: Nauka-Dagestan, 2014), 3.

302 *K istorii Dagestana. Zapis' Inkvachilau*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 1, *opis'* 1, no. 378.

303 V.O. Bobrovnikov, "K epistemologii vostochnoi arkheografii v Dagestane: ot musul'manskogo kraevedeniia k istochnikovedeniiu," *Tiurko-musul'manskii mir: identichnost', nasledie, perspektivy izucheniia (K 80-letiiu professora M.A. Usmanova)*, ed. by D.M. Usmanova, D.M. Mustafina, M. Kemper (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2015), 101–113.

A further Muslim scholar, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Abdurakhman) Kaziev (1899–1942), from Nizhnii Dzhengutai, was also invited to collect Arabic-script sources on the history of Daghestan. Fascinated by history since childhood, Kaziev enthusiastically started collecting and copied Islamic manuscripts and documents.[304] Some of the rarest and most original documents in Daghestan were brought to the Institute by Kaziev. When the owners of some manuscripts refused to sell them, Kaziev copied them in his own hand and brought them to the Institute. He had also collected a number of documents from the period of Shamil's Imamate (1834–59), which he passed on to the Institute. Between the 1930s and 1940s Kaziev also helped and advised Soviet orientalists from Moscow and Leningrad who came to Daghestan on field trips and were searching for Islamic sources.[305]

Saidov closely interacted with these afore-mentioned Muslim scholars and remained in touch with them, even though he was not yet employed by the Institute in the 1920s and 1930s. He studied under ʿAlī Kaiaev in 1919–20, and evidently continued the relationship in the years thereafter: he bought some of Kaiaev's works while his teacher was still alive,[306] copied some of his writings, and composed a short biography after his death.[307] Saidov's uncle Muḥammad Inkwachilaw, meanwhile, had given him a primary education, while ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Kaziev was a relative of his wife, Ḥabiyat. Apart from these three afore-mentioned scholars, Saidov also maintained close contacts with his friends who were teaching at Soviet schools in the 1920s and 1930s and also had a keen interest in Daghestani history and Arabic literature. These close ties can be traced in his documents and works, and in his correspondence with these scholars. Thus, the materials collected by Inkwachilaw laid the foundation for

304 I studied Kaziev's collection in in his native village of Nizhnii Dzhengutai three times: In November 1998, in September 2002 and in July 2007. The last visit to this collection was together with my mentor Amri Shikhsaidov.

305 A.A. Abdurakhmanov, "Materialy ob Abdurakhmane Kazieve iz Nizhnego Dzhengutaia i ego nasledii", *Rukopisnaia i pechatnaia kniga v Dagestane*, 176–182.

306 Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, nos. 37, 50, 92; *opis'* 5, nos. 134, 185, 191, 233, 512.

307 M.-S. Saidov, *Materialy k tvorchestvu Ali Kaiaeva*, 60 fols.

Saidov's studies of Arabic historical sources, including the famous *Derbend-nāme* by Muḥammad Awābī Aqṭāshī.[308] The manuscripts of *Kitāb al-Kuttāb* by ʿAlī al-Yazdawī and *Kitāb al-sāmī fī l-asāmī* by Aḥmad al-Maydānī brought by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Kaziev from a private collection to the Institute were also described by Kaziev at Saidov's request. Saidov went on to research the trilingual Arabic-Persian-Turkic dictionary by Dibir-*qāḍī* al-Khunzākhī that had been brought to the Institute by Kaziev,[309] and produced a number of draft notes on this manuscript.[310] As we saw above, meanwhile, Saidov also undertook an extensive study of the manuscript of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by Abū Bakr al-Darbandī, which was also brought to the Institute by Kaziev.[311]

*Jadīd*s travelled through Daghestan, concentrating their attention on local manuscripts and documents that contained information on the the history of Daghestan or biographies of Daghestani scholars. The collecting, analysis, and interpretation of sources, as well as production of new studies based on them, which the *jadīd*s had carried out even in the pre-Soviet period, later continued organically in the Soviet Institute. At the same time, however, one can identify a number of works on histo-

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308 M.-S. Saidov, A.R. Shikhsaidov, "'Derbend-name': (k voprosu ob izuchenii)," *Vostochnye istochniki po istorii Dagestana: sbornik statei i materialov* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1980), 5–64.

309 Mirzā Muḥammad Shafīʿ (Dibir-qāḍī) b. Maqṣūd al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī, *Jāmiʿ al-lughatayn fī taʿlīm al-akhawayn*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 535. See more about this dictionary: P.M. Alibekova, *Dibir-kadi iz Khunzakha. Sobranie dvukh iazykov dlia obucheniia dvukh brat'ev. Persidsko-arabsko-tiurkskii slovar'* (Makhachkala: IIaLI DNTS RAN, 2014); idem, *Zhizn' i tvorcheskoe nasledie Dibir-kadi iz Khunzakha* (Makhachkala: IIaLI DNTS RAN, 2009).

310 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Materialy k tvorchestvu Dibir-kadi al-Khunzakhi at-Talti*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 78, 18 fols; idem, *Svedeniia o sochineniiakh Dibira-kadi iz Khunzakha*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 285, 16 fols.

311 During a field trip to Nizhnii Dzhengutai in July 2007, I discovered documents and a note from Kaziev indicating that the manuscript of *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* had been delivered to the Institute of National Cultures upon the request of Rasul Magomedov (1910–2005), the former director of the Institute (1937–41). Author's field trip in the village of Nizhnii Dzhengutai (2–14 July 2007).

ry and biography produced by Daghestani *jadīd*s, written either during the Imperial or the Soviet period, but without any connection to Soviet academic institutions.[312]

In such instances, manuscripts of interest to the *jadīd*s were extracted from private collections, thereby dislodging them from their contextual and collective logic. They were dissociated from their original temporal and geographical contexts of copying and acquisition, ultimately severing all ties with their respective collection owners. Neither the inventory book nor other bureaucratic documents of the Institute preserve any information about the collections from which sources were brought to the Institute by the *jadīd*s.

With few exceptions, *jadīd* scholars had little interest in purchasing for the Institute works in genres other than those directly to do with the history of Daghestan. They were not interested in the remaining mass of manuscripts or even the presence of certain works in private collections. What they were interested in were the texts themselves, regardless of their form, whether manuscript or printed. And they did not care about the intellectual context of a particular manuscript, a collection as a whole, or its owner.

Such a selective approach to purchasing manuscripts was broadly typical of Daghestani historians *jadīd*s in the early Soviet period.[313] When acquiring manuscripts for the Institute, historians *jadīd*s often purchased items that reflected their own subjective interests as historians, which at that time just so happened to coincide with the interests of the heads of Soviet institutions who were keen to amass such artefacts.

Such a selective, appropriative approach was a violent breach with the sociological notion of a book as a cultural phenomenon. Amri Shikhsaidov pointed out the shortcomings of this tendency:

312 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharābudāghī. *Ta'rīkh al-Qawqāz wa qaryat Gharabudāghkent*; Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*.

313 Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala, February 19, 2019).

> Just in the search and selection of old and unique specimens, the principle of preferential study or acquisition of valuable manuscripts had both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, we have acquired, explored and preserved our most valuable cultural heritage. On the other hand, we have impoverished this heritage because, when considering and examining the manuscript estate and book collections in field conditions, scholars ignored simple manuscripts that were not suitable for the rankings we created. The result was the disappearance of a very important cultural and historical entity, namely the book collection as a cultural phenomenon, a very valuable part of the spiritual heritage that took years to build. What was ignored was that the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of a book do not only serve to reconstruct the range of books available in Daghestan. A book is a material medium for spiritual values that summarises and records the advances in science, literature and philosophy of its time. There is another side to book culture that we do not study. This concerns the provenance of the manuscript after it was written, the life of a manuscript or printed book in the community: its readers, literary centres, book collections, libraries, the distribution of book production over centuries. This is about the historical sociology of book culture.[314]

Such practice of selective acquisition of individual manuscripts continued at the Institute until the 1950s.

Saidov and the Establishment of the Institute Collection

The early 1950s saw the beginnings of a broader effort to expand and diversify the Institute of History's collection of holdings. A key figure behind this shift was Saidov, who was fully aware of the methodological shortcomings of the early tradition of purchasing individual manuscripts,

[314] A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Arkheograficheskaia rabota v Dagestane," *Izuchenie istorii i kul'tury Dagestana: arkheograficheskii aspect*, ed. by A.R. Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1988), 10–11.

and made some changes to the strategy of archaeographic acquisition. While continuing the previous programme of acquiring individual manuscripts that he deemed to be of particular interest, Saidov at the same time encouraged the wider acquisition of manuscripts, and sought to create a state collection of Islamic literature at the Institute. One key innovation that he helped spearhead was the organisation of archaeographic field trips. At first, he personally travelled to different areas of Daghestan where he studied private collections and epigraphy. In view of the large number of private libraries in Daghestan, he sought to recruit for these expeditions other Islamic scholars, who had studied in madrasas in the early Soviet period and did not have a formal Soviet education.[315] Starting from the 1960s, a young graduate of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad State University called Amri R. Shikhsaidov (1928–2019) also got involved in manuscript studies and archaeographic work.

Saidov launched active efforts to collect Islamic texts from across Daghestan and began by adding to the Institute collection those manuscripts, books, and documents that had been collected by *jadīd*s in the 1920s and 1930s. From the very start of these archaeographic field trips, he began to alter his predecessors' practices of only bringing individual manuscripts and documents to the Institute; instead, he would buy whole private collections that he could get access to. Such a break with the *jadīd* tradition of selective removal of individual manuscripts and documents and move towards a wider acquisition of Islamic literature was reflective of Saidov's own breadth of scholarly interests.

Saidov and his colleagues who had once studied in Daghestani madrasas had a wide network of informants. Many of these had either studied together with Saidov or met him during Islamic events (*majlis*), or were in correspondence with him. Given his acquaintance with a wide circle of Muslim scholars and his own previous Islamic education, Saidov found it

315 Amri R. Shikhsaidov told me the history of the creation of the Institute of History's collection in several interviews, the last of which took place on February 19, 2019. He was one of the main employees of the Institute who completed this collection between the 1960s and 1980s, and led the annual expeditions provided by the Institute of History between 1994 and 2016. Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala, February 19, 2019).

easy to establish contacts with religious scholars who were well aware of Islamic collections in Daghestan and even had their own libraries. Thus, Saidov's archive contains correspondence with local religious scholars who informed him of newly-discovered manuscripts or collections. For instance, the afore-mentioned collection of Muḥammad al-Ubrī and the remnants of the collection of the Daghestani scholar Ḥusayn Bashlarov (d. 1950s) were found by Saidov due to the efforts of his friend ʻAbd al-Laṭīf Tsakhaev, with whom he had studied at the madrasa.[316] According to Amri Shikhsaidov, "Muḥammad-Said found it easy to get on the same page with collection owners. As a rule, he was accepted as 'one of them', a person who had an Islamic education like they themselves or their fathers. Saidov had an excellent knowledge of Islamic subjects and he personally knew former or current collection owners, who treated him as a Islamic scholar rather than an orientalist. For that reason, he had wide access to private Islamic collections."[317]

The launch of a wide-ranging programme of field trips meant that all the manuscripts which had been brought to the Institute by *jadīd* historians in the 1920s and 1930s and still remained undescribed and uncatalogued had to be accounted for. Saidov himself initiated the process of inventorying these manuscripts, with the first entry in the initial inventory register dating to 28 August 1959 – thus coinciding with the year when a collection of Islamic literature known as 'The Manuscript collection' was founded. The initial description of manuscripts and their recording in the inventory book was undertaken both by Saidov himself and by those afore-mentioned other fellows of the Institute who had similarly received an Islamic education. Graduates of Soviet Oriental faculties who did not have an Islamic background, like Amri Shikhsaidov, were not involved in this inventorying process. Indeed, the inventory book contains no records made by orientalists, although some notes say that

316 [*Letter from ʻAbd al-Laṭīf Tsakhaev to Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 197. Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Fihris al-kutub li Muḥammad b. ʻAlī al-Ubrī*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 198.

317 Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala, February 19, 2019).

a number of manuscripts was brought to the Institute by them. Amri Shikhsaidov himself took an active part in expanding the Institute's collection. It is likely that Saidov had some doubt as to the orientalists' competence when it came to manuscript descriptions, and was content simply with having them bring manuscripts to the Institute. As for the identification and description of manuscripts, he left this to his old colleagues – that is, to former Islamic scholars, who had an excellent knowledge of the literature that was widely circulated in Daghestan.

The inventory register itself was a printed volume with columns listing certain parameters necessary to describe a manuscript.[318] The inventorying system used was a conventional one, employed not just in Daghestan but also in other regions which had collections of Islamic manuscripts, and established on principles developed by Soviet orientalists. The employees working in the field were meant to describe manuscripts based on a strict set of parameters. But Institute employees were in fact free to fill in the fields as they saw fit. And given that the description of manuscripts was delegated to the scholars with an Islamic background, this was reflected in how the inventory register was compiled. While the inventorying system was clearly founded on academic principles, the actual practice of inventorying the Institute's collection also bore some resemblance to the Islamic tradition.

In order to get a sense of how these two intellectual traditions together shaped the inventorying process, let us consider first of all the Soviet orientalist principles on which the process was founded.

As we can see from the printed parameter categories in the inventory register, inventorying focused on the provision of codicological information pertaining to the manuscript as a historical artefact. The copying date had to be converted from the *Hijri* date to the Gregorian calendar, which was not a feature of the Islamic tradition. Archival tradition necessitates dating manuscripts and recording their origin and format.

318 The inventory book consisted of the following items according to which the manuscript was to be described: date of inventarisation, author, title of the manuscript, date of compilation, copyist, date of copy, number of sheets and format, binding, place of origin, notes.

Additionally, orientalists closely examine manuscript colophons, which usually provide information about the date and place of copying as well as the identity of the copyist. Some titles of works and names of authors were furthermore recorded in the original language and Cyrillic transliteration, using additional diacritical signs above and under characters, as required by the academic tradition. The names of texts were originally translated into Russian but subsequently, as the inventory book filled with entries, scholars started to forgo this practice. Moreover, during the first year when the inventory book was being filled in, scholars tried to group similar works together, in a similar fashion to what one can see in catalogues. For instance, at the start of the inventory book, multiple copies of the same work would be recorded in consecutive order. It is clear that Saidov and his colleagues had made a selection from the great number of manuscripts brought to the Institute from various collections. In that, they followed the tradition seen in the arrangement of state libraries.

Balanced against these afore-mentioned orientalist inventorying principles, however, we can also discern the imprint of local Islamic convention. This imprint is perhaps clearest in the rendering of manuscript titles, many of which were recorded in the inventory register not as they were identified in scholarly catalogues, but rather in accordance with local Islamic tradition. For instance, a work identified in the European and Russian catalogues as *Kanz al-rāghibīn sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭālibīn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī is recorded in the inventory register not under the above title but rather as '*al-Maḥallī*,' in keeping with the Daghestani Islamic tradition. Similarly, *Sharḥ taṣrīf al-ʻIzzī* by Saʻd al-Dīn Masʻūd b. ʻUmar al-Taftazānī is recorded in the inventory book as '*Saʻadu*,' again in accordance with how the work was locally known. Local Islamic convention is discernible also in terms of the inventory register's taxonomic arrangement. Unlike what one would expect in a Soviet Orientalist publication, the register is not divided according to language; Arabic manuscripts are mixed with works in Persian, Turkic, and various Daghestani languages, just as was the case in pre-Soviet book lists (*fihris*). Muslim scholars almost never paid attention to the time and place of copying of the manuscript or the name of the copyist. These details are frequently omitted in various descriptions, even when the manuscript itself in-

cludes information about the place where the work was copied and the scribe's name. For Muslim scholars these were useless bits of information. Initially, Saidov and his colleagues converted the *Hijri* date to the Gregorian calendar but quickly they abandoned this practice, recording the date exclusively in the *Hijri* format, as it was presented in the manuscript itself. As mentioned above, Islamic theologians were primarily interested in the text itself, and they paid little attention to the codicological characteristics of the manuscript. And if at the beginning of filling out the inventory register, they tried to adhere to orientalist academic principles, they soon abandoned this, continuing to fill it out in their usual manner.

A further distinct feature is the lack of attention to the provenance of individual manuscripts. Reflecting a general lack of interest in the histories of particular collections, their links to owners, and the chronological dynamics of their evolution, the scholars who described and catalogued the manuscripts paid no attention at all to the origins of the collections. The inventory register contains very few records that indicate from which village a particular manuscript was brought, or the name of an item's former owner. When I later compiled the catalogue of the Institute's manuscripts myself, I had to rely on bureaucratic archival documents and records of manuscripts brought to the Institute on field trips in order to determine where these manuscripts had actually come from.

Saidov and his colleagues were little concerned to maintain the integrity of private libraries once the Institute had acquired their holdings. For instance, the collection of Muḥammad al-Ubrī, which Saidov purchased for the Institute, was not recorded in the inventory as a single collection, with its constitutive contents listed in consecutive fashion, but rather it was split up and dispersed among thousands of other manuscripts at the Institute which came from other collections.[319] A similar picture can be observed with regard to other collections of Muslim scholars, including one that had belonged to *qāḍī* Murtaḍā ʿAlī al-Jārī (d. 1745), a scholar

[319] Based on the list (*fihris*) compiled by Saidov when this collection was in the private possession of al-Ubrī's descendant, I was able to fully restore the appearance of this collection.

from the Jār rural community in northern Azerbaijan, whose library was also mixed up with other collections during the inventorying process.[320] This practice closely resembles the approach used by Muslim scholars in organising their own libraries. As a rule, they rarely leave notes indicating that a manuscript or a library had been acquired by a certain person. Rather, scholars generally merged individual manuscripts or collections that they acquired with their own prior holdings. Any notes drawn up by a library owner attesting to the gift or purchase of a certain manuscript were intended to function not as scholarly resources but rather as proof of the owner's rightful possession of the item in question. Given the wide circulation of Islamic literature in the region, and the extensive lending, borrowing and copying of manuscripts, such notes performed an important legal function, serving to identify ownership of items that might end up travelling far afield.[321] Meanwhile, more rarefied questions about literary mobility, diachronic shifts in reading habits and the archaeology of private library collections were of little interest for Muslim scholars. Such a decontextualization of manuscripts and collections was on the whole typical of this period.[322]

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320 There is no any information about the history of this collection or the circumstances of its acquisition for the Institute's collection.

321 P.A. Ibragimova, "Vakf v Dagestane," *Vostok* 3 (2007), 94–106.

322 A prime example of this approach is the history behind the establishment of the Islamic literature library at Kazan Federal University (KFU). A significant portion of this library comprises manuscripts and printed books sourced from various private collections, which were acquired by the University between 1930 and 1980. When each private collection, often encompassing both manuscripts and printed books, becomes part of the University library, orientalists inventorised it separately based on physical criteria (manuscripts and printed books are separated) and linguistic criteria (separately Arabic, Persian and Turkic). Subsequently, within the library's depositories, these formerly separate private collections are intermingled with other collections cataloged in a similar manner. A similar approach is typical for the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg. Consequently, when orientalists compile catalogues, they exclusively adhere to the linguistic criterion, publishing separate catalogues for Arabic, Persian, or Turkic materials. See for example: *Arabskie rukopisi Instituta Vostokovedeniia. Kratkii katalog*, ed. by A.B. Khalidov (Moscow: Nauka, 1986); L.V. Dmitrieva, *Katalog tiurkskikh rukopisei Instituta vostokovedeniia Rossiiskoi akademii nauk* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2002); P.M. Alibekova, *Katalog persidskikh rukopisei Instituta istorii,*

Clearly, then, the inventorying of manuscripts at the Institute was shaped by both the Soviet academic tradition and the Islamic tradition. This amalgamation of Soviet and Islamic principles and practices was evidently developed, or at least enabled, by Saidov himself. He was the only scholar to work with these manuscripts who had both an Islamic and a Soviet education. His other colleagues had either an Islamic education or a Soviet Orientalist one: Saidov, by contrast, was alone in having both.

This combination of intellectual traditions was to prove invaluable. In particular, Saidov's recruitment of Islamic scholars ensured that the Institute benefited from a wealth of practical experience that Soviet-trained orientalists on their own could never offer. Typically, manuscripts from Daghestan seldom contain titles of the works or the names of their authors. To identify and attribute such manuscripts, including incomplete ones lacking both the beginning and the end, a profound familiarity with these texts is essential. Saidov and his fellow *jadīd* colleagues possessed an excellent grasp of the repertoire of Islamic literature accessible in Daghestan. The system of Islamic education in Daghestan was grounded in the study of an extensive array of texts, some of which required memorization. This enabled Saidov and his *jadīd* colleagues, who had received a comprehensive Islamic education, to readily identify and attribute manuscripts with which they were familiar. For instance, Gasan Orazaev, a historian and philologist of the Institute who worked for a time alongside Saidov, recalled that it would be enough for Saidov to leaf through several pages of a manuscript not only to attribute it but also to identify the name of its aithor. Saidov's familiarity with the Islamic literary works that were in circulation within Daghestan was exceptionally profound.[323]

One can acknowledge certain deficiencies in the organisation of the Institute's collection. These inadequacies primarily stem from the fundamental principles employed in forming the state depositories, which

arkheologii i etnografii (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii nauchnyi tsentr RAN, 2001). A.A. Arslanova, *Opisanie rukopisei na persidskom iazyke Nauchnoi biblioteki im. N.I. Lobachevskogo Kazanskogo (Privolzhskogo) federal'nogo universiteta* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2015).

323 Interview with Gasan Orazaev (Makhachkala, May 24, 2002).

significantly diverge from the conventions observed in the Islamic tradition of collection arrangement.

In many instances, private or mosque libraries also included old printed books produced by printing houses in various locations such as Kazan, Temir-khān Shūrā, Cairo, and Istanbul. These private libraries were usually methodically structured, often based on thematic principles similar to those whereby Saidov's organised his own collection: manuscripts and printed books were grouped together on the same shelf if they shared a common genre.

Documents, including letters and various records, held limited significance for Muslim library owners. Typically, these scholars would receive letters in their correspondence and utilize the blank reverse pages for glosses, inserted adjacent to the corresponding page containing the fragment they commented on. Upon the arrival at the Institute of a new collection, Daghestani orientalists commenced an initial processing phase, dismantling the originally coherent collection into separate categories based on the physical characteristics of the items. Manuscripts, old printed books and letters with documents were categorized separately. Subsequently, each source type was allocated to one of three distinct depositories based on their physical nature: manuscripts (*fond 14, rukopisi*), old printed books (*fond 15, staropechatnye knigi*), letters and documents (*fond 16, pis'ma i dokumenty*).

Within a separate depository (*fond*), each private collection transferred to the Institute was assimilated with another similar collections. It led to the intermingling of manuscripts, books, or documents from various collections in one depositary. Thus manuscripts from various collections were aggregated into one depositary (*fond 14*). Similarly, old printed books and documents from various collections were intermingled within their own respective depositaries: old printed books in *fond 15*, and letters and documents in *fond 16*. Consequently, the adopted approach resulted in the decontextualization of each private collection, dissolving the integrity of this cultural entity and dismembering its original context into three separate facets.

The disadvantages of this approach were numerous. The removal of documents and letters from manuscripts and books obscured their con-

nections with their former owners and complicated the establishment of a clear link between a particular letter or document and the manuscript or book from which it was extracted. It also hindered the identification of the owner who may have been the intended recipient. Additionally, the glosses written on the back of these letters became challenging to associate with glosses's author, the relevant text, or even the manuscript in which they were stored and later was extracted.

Another facet of this amalgamation of collections was the obscuring of Daghestan's ethno-linguistic landscape. In general, the southern regions of Daghestan were more significantly influenced by Persianate and Turkic traditions, in contrast to the central and north-western regions, where Arabic literary traditions were more prevalent. As these collections became part of the Institute's holdings, their geographical origins became obfuscated, making it difficult to reconstruct the linguistic attributes of book culture in specific micro-regions from a diachronic perspective.

Saidov and his colleagues were the product of a *jadīd*-inflected Islamic education which focused on the Arabic tradition and tended to ignore the Persianate book culture. It is for this reason that they paid little attention to the acquisition of Turkic or Persian manuscripts at the initial stage of the manuscript collection process. During the second stage, when collections were being acquired wholesale, manuscripts in Turkic or Persian languages that were purchased for the Institute as part of such collections received only a very perfunctory description.

It is clear that the shift towards the Arabic tradition, which gained strength and evolved in Daghestan from the late 17th century, had a more pronounced impact on the erosion of earlier cultural layers represented by Persianate texts than in the subsequent centuries. This transition resulted in the displacement of the Persianate tradition by the Arabic-language tradition during this period, despite the deep-rooted cultural heritage of the former in Daghestan before the 17th century. The *jadīd*s, who focused on the Arabic tradition and ignored the Persianate one, further contributed to the neglect of this layer of Persianate literature, traces of which still remained in private collections. It can be confidently asserted that Saidov, with his *jadīd* background and approach, played a piv-

otal role in shaping the perception of Arabic-language dominance within the Institute's collection.

Saidov was aware that the materials already gathered and still being gathered during field trips needed interpretation and research. It was for this reason that in 1963 he initiated the creation of a separate department within the Institute, the Department of Oriental Manuscripts (*Sektor vostochnykh rukopisei*). The primary focus of the Department's work was the acquisition, cataloguing, and in-depth study of separate manuscripts. It goes without saying that in his approach to description and cataloguing of manuscripts, Saidov followed the Soviet Orientalist tradition. This could not have been otherwise, because in order to publish texts, it was necessary to comply with academic expectations regarding the structure and approaches to manuscript description; otherwise, his works might not have been published at all. For this reason, Saidov followed the principles established by the Soviet academic tradition in compiling his catalogue of Arabic manuscripts at the Institute. Simultaneously, he devoted greater focus in his catalogue to the unique manuscript characteristics associated with Daghestan. He was instrumental, for instance, in identifying a distinct variety of script as 'Daghestani *naskh*' and wrote about this in his afore-mentioned catalogue.[324] The script in question was a local Daghestani variant of Near Eastern *naskh* that by the 17th century had acquired certain specific traits not seen in the manuscript tradition of other Muslim regions. It was characterised by a typically flat sharpening of the *qalam* and the fact that it was tilted by 90 degrees during the writing, which means that the vertical ligatures were thin and the horizontal ones were thick [fig. 9]. Daghestani manuscripts thus visibly differed from contemporary manuscripts that were copied in the Near East.

In his catalogue, Saidov introduced the term 'Daghestani *naskh*' to emphasise the origin of some of the manuscripts he described. He not only focused on script type but also placed a strong emphasis on detailing the history of Daghestan. This included providing extratextual notes

[324] *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei Instituta Istorii, iazyka i literatury im. Gamzata Tsadasa Dagestanskogo Filiala AN SSSR,* 9–54.



Figure 9. Manuscript copied in Miatli, Daghestan, in 1193 A.H. (18 January 1779 – 6 January 1780), written in the 'Daghestani *naskh'* script. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 1179, fol. 44a.

and references to Daghestani scholars, and noting circumstances related to the manuscripts' creation in Daghestan. Furthermore, Saidov provided comprehensive descriptions of works associated with Daghestani scholars and offered full translations of historical or deed records authored by Daghestani scholars, even if they were not directly related to the main text in the manuscript being described. This focus on the local Daghestani Arabic tradition marked a departure from the prevailing approach of contemporary Soviet orientalists in Moscow and Leningrad.

This chapter has traced the complex topography of manuscript culture in Soviet Daghestan through the scholarly life of Muḥammad-Said Saidov, revealing that his work with Islamic libraries and collections was much more than an act of preservation. It was an intellectual project, carefully calibrated to navigate the epistemic tension between Islamic modes of textual engagement and Soviet regimes of archival knowledge. By contextualising Saidov's practice, we gain access not only to the external histories of Islamic libraries but also to an inner logic – one that reveals how collections served as vehicles for articulating scholarly identity, and intellectual continuity.

Saidov emerges in this landscape as a figure whose commitments exceeded both the formal boundaries of the Soviet academic system and the more intuitive reverence for Islamic manuscript culture. What distinguished his approach was neither nostalgic traditionalism nor pure methodological compliance with Soviet norms. Rather, it was a hybrid epistemology. He adopted the tools of Soviet scholarship not as ends in themselves, but as instruments that could – under certain conditions – be made to serve Islamic learning. This was a pragmatic stance, but also a principled one: he did not merely catalogue manuscripts but actively engaged with them, treating them not as closed relics but as active companions in the production of knowledge.

This dual orientation is evident in his curation of collections. Saidov viewed every library as an intellectual constellation – a record of past decisions regarding what to collect, what to keep, and what to forget. His sensitivity to the hermeneutics of collection – how a library reflects the worldview and doctrinal affiliations of its compiler – enabled him

to treat libraries not as stable artefacts but as dynamic configurations of knowledge. For Saidov, the material arrangement of manuscripts was an epistemic act, and the classification schemes that he employed or challenged reflected both his own intellectual commitments and the norms of the institutions he worked within.

Yet Saidov's project was not purely oppositional. Rather than outright rejecting Soviet academic conventions, he selectively appropriated them. This is evident in his establishment of a manuscript department within the Daghestani Institute and in his carefully worded catalogue entries, which met formal scholarly criteria while subtly conveying an implicit narrative of Islamic textual continuity. His emphasis on local script types, such as the identification of 'Daghestani *naskh*,' and his attention to extratextual elements – such as scholars' biographies, historical marginalia, and *waqf* records – reveal a parallel documentary impulse. This impulse sought to preserve not only the contents of the manuscripts but also the lifeworld surrounding them.

The case of Saidov's private collection is similarly instructive. It reflects not only the accumulation of texts but also a carefully curated intellectual universe. What is most striking is how the collection mirrors Saidov's broader vision of the manuscript as a site of interaction – between reader and text, compiler and tradition, and ultimately between the past and the present.

Equally significant is the fact that Saidov's vision for the state manuscript collection was informed not only by Soviet archival paradigms but also by the longstanding model of *waqf* libraries traditionally associated with mosques. In organising the institutional repository, he drew on the logic, functions, and ethical framework of these earlier Islamic collections. Much like the mosque-based libraries, which were embedded in local educational and devotional life, Saidov viewed the state collection as a space for active scholarly engagement rather than passive preservation. By modeling a state collection on a religious institutional form, Saidov implicitly challenged the secular assumptions of Soviet manuscript culture and demonstrated that Islamic traditions of textual stewardship could be adapted to new bureaucratic contexts without losing their epistemic coherence. This blending of institutional form and

religious function constitutes one of the most distinctive – and least visible – aspects of his legacy. The fact that a manuscript culture survived at all within Soviet structures is largely due to Saidov's ability to work simultaneously within the system and against it.

Saidov's lifelong engagement with Islamic texts furthermore sheds light on broader patterns of knowledge transmission in the 20th century. His role as a mediator between written testimony and bibliographic reconstruction, as well as between private manuscript exchanges and public cataloguing, highlights an ecosystem of textual life that was far more resilient and adaptive than Soviet state policy might suggest. The survival of collections – often incomplete, fragmented, or hidden – depended not only on chance or secrecy but also on figures like Saidov, who actively intervened to stabilise and reanimate them.

To handle a manuscript, for Saidov, was not only to preserve it but also to engage in a broader ethical and intellectual relationship with the tradition it embodied. His curatorial practices were informed by a view of Islamic scholarship that extended beyond the content of texts to include the methods by which they were transmitted, interpreted, and inhabited. In this regard, his work bridged the gap between institutional procedures and inherited norms of learning, enabling a continuity that was neither static nor compromised.

By situating Saidov within the broader epistemology of Islamic manuscript culture in Soviet Daghestan, I have attempted in this chapter to demonstrate that collections were not merely repositories but laboratories of intellectual possibility. Saidov's life exemplifies how one might respond to epistemic displacement not by retreating but by transforming the tools of preservation into instruments of critique and renewal. His libraries were not only archives of the past; they served as engines for the reanimation of Islamic knowledge in the present.

CHAPTER 4

The Scholarly Persona in Private Collections

In this chapter I seek to investigate the connection between Muslim scholars' personal archives and libraries and the construction of their respective archival personae. My aim is to demonstrate how a scholar's private collection may serve as a reflection of their personality, shaped through their interaction with specific literary models within the surrounding cultural landscape. As we shall see, one can discern a dynamic interplay between a particular scholar's personal preferences and the broader intellectual milieu, as the individual in question engages with a range of models. The act of curating their own archive and library allows a Muslim scholar to express a distinct archival personality that is closely associated with a specific persona, such as that of Sufi, jurist, teacher (*mudarris*), judge (*qāḍī*), or philologist. An analysis of the literary genres and repertoire within Muslim scholars' private collections illuminates how the individuals in question strategically employ this interaction to construct their archival persona, seeking thereby to record a singular, preferred version of themselves.[325]

In the case of Saidov, his extensive archive and library, which housed a wide array of materials in Arabic, Turkic, Persian, Russian, and various Daghestani languages, can be viewed as a manifestation of his self-reflection. An analysis of Saidov's archive and library reveals his deliberate construction of a distinct scholarly persona, characterised by specific habits, virtues, skills, and competencies within the realms of Islamic and Soviet epistemes. This aligns with Herman Paul's concept of the scholarly persona,[326] as discussed in the introduction of this book, which proves useful in understanding how Saidov shaped his own identity. Saidov's interaction with his persona operates on two levels: the micro-level, represented by his self-description through the biography of al-Harakānī, and the macro-level, encompassing his broader self-representation of what it means to be a scholar. In mediating between these two levels, Saidov can be seen to combine, or juggle, the persona of both a Muslim reformist scholar and a Soviet historian, possessing the multifaceted skills and

325 Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, Ilona Chmilevskaya, "Building an Archival Persona: The Transformation of *Ijāza* Culture in Russia, 1880s-1920s," 216–252.

326 Cf. Herman Paul, "Scholarly Personae: What They are and Why They Matter," 3–4.

competencies of both Muslim theology and Soviet academic scholarship. His archive and library serve as a reflection of these habits, skills, and competencies, illustrating his intricate engagement with and synthesis of these two epistemes.

In my examination of Saidov's persona, I employ a statistical genre analysis to examine the range of works and authors present in his library. This approach allows me to investigate how Saidov deliberately curated his collection to mirror his professional and personal interests – and did so, furthermore, without the imposition of self-censorship.

As demonstrated in the first chapter, we can discern a range of distinct models that together encapsulate the patchwork nature of Islamic forms emerging within the expansive Islamic intellectual landscape of Daghestan between the late 17th and 20th centuries. In this chapter, I aim to illustrate how Saidov's collection, along with similar contemporary collections owned by other Muslim scholars, can be correlated with these existing intellectual models. This correlation sheds light on the social behaviour and cultural background of the collectors in question, thereby giving a sense of the various scholarly personae, including those of Sufi scholars, linguists, teachers (*mudarrisūn*), *jadīd* scholars, and orientalists, that were available to scholars living and working in this environment. By conducting a statistical analysis of the genre range in Saidov's library and comparing it with similar private collections from the same period owned by his contemporaries, we gain insight into the personal preferences of these individuals, and thus glean a sense of their respective scholarly persona.

Before I proceed further, I should acknowledge a note of methodological caution. As Jennifer Douglas and Heather MacNeil have recently observed, archival readings of the sort that I am here attempting are sometimes compromised by the investigator's assumption that one can convey the personality of an archive owner without taking into account the way in which the individual in question consciously used their archive as a tool of self-presentation.[327] In deference to this observation, I seek

[327] Jennifer Douglas, Heather MacNeil, "Arranging the Self: Literary and Archival Perspectives on Writers' Archives", *Archivaria, The Journal of the Association of*

to consider the self-presentational strategies that informed how Saidov amassed his own archive and collection and stocked it with a particular range of literary works and genres. As we shall see, Saidov's private archive and collection project a distinct persona, aligning him with the archetypes simultaneously of Muslim reformist scholar and Soviet historian and linguist. Despite what would seem to be their irreconcilable mutual contradictions, the Islamic and Soviet facets of Saidov's identity are in fact intricately interwoven and mutually reinforcing. In this chapter, I focus on an in-depth analysis of the diverse works and genres represented in Saidov's collection and archive.

The extensive acquisition of collections by Daghestani orientalists during the second half of the 20th century, and the subsequent amalgamation of diverse collections at the Institute, obscured the agency and personality of former owners who had originally assembled these libraries based on their personal interests. Simultaneously, the substantial expansion of the Institute's holdings resulted in the inclusion of numerous manuscripts and printed books that had circulated in Daghestan during this era. The repertoire of the Islamic literature within the Institute's collection enables us to discern a shared intellectual landscape which was typical of Daghestan between the 18th and 20th century.

When I speak of an intellectual landscape, I speak in particular of two distinct layers within the repertoire of works that enjoyed broad circulation in Daghestan during this period. The first layer encompasses the literature that constituted an integral component of the Islamic education system in Daghestan. There was a certain repertoire of works of this level that did not undergo any substantial changes at least between the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, ʻAbdullāh Omarov, who had gone through all the stages of Islamic education in the mid-19th century, provides in his memoirs a list of disciplines and titles of works that he had studied at the madrasa.[328] Writing later on, in the early 20th century, the Naqshbandi shaykh Shuʻayb al-Bāginī also provided a description of the

Canadian Archivists 67 (Spring 2009), 25–39, at 27.

328 Abdulla Omarov, "Vospominaniia mutalima," 53–69.

sequence of Islamic education and a list of books he studied, which was not very different from ʻAbdullāh Omarov's account.[329]

The course of education began with the study of the Qur'ān, after which pupils would peruse three small booklets on the foundations of Islam and then move on to learning Arabic grammar, which was presented in around 10 books. They would then proceed to the study of logic, dialectics, and rhetoric, represented by several treatises. After this, Islamic law was studied from the *Kanz al-rāghibīn* by al-Maḥallī or from *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj* by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī. Students would study the theory of Muslim law, dogmatics, and *ḥadīth*s from strictly regulated textbooks which did not allow for a lot of variety.[330] Some madrasa teachers could also opt to teach astronomy and mathematics, which were not part of the mandatory Islamic school education. This marked the completion of the level of education received by the students. This first layer of Islamic literature thus predominantly comprises educational textbooks that were an essential component of the Islamic educational curriculum. These textbooks were authored by Muslim scholars primarily from Egypt, Syria, and Iraq between the 11th and 16th centuries. The repertoire of these textbooks studied at madrasas varies between 25 and 30 works in different genres, with more in-depth focus on such genres as Arabic grammar, Muslim law, logic and dialectics. Other disciplines such as *ḥadīth*, dogmatics, or *tafsīr* were given much less attention.

The second layer within the literary repertoire was represented by more specialised literature which deepened the awareness of a certain field of knowledge that students received at a madrasa. Thus, after each madrasa graduate completed his course of studies, he would select a certain scholarly persona for himself depending on his subjective interests or his further professional life trajectory, and he would proceed to deepen his knowledge of certain discipline. For instance, those who decided to expand their knowledge of Arabic grammar would study the

329 Shuʻayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya* (Damascus: Dār al-nuʻmān li-l-ʻulūm, 1996), 434–436.

330 Michael Kemper, Shamil Shikhaliev. "Qadimism and Jadidism in Twentieth-Century Daghestan", 593–624.

Alfiyya by Ibn Mālik al-Andalūsī (d. 1273), *I'rāb 'an qawā'id al-i'rāb* by Ibn Hishām (d. 1360), *Sharḥ al-Alfiyya* by Ibn 'Aqīl (d. 1367), and *al-Fawā'id al-ḍiyā'iyya* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492), as well as multiple commentaries (*sharḥ*) and sub-commentaries (*ḥāshiya*) on the afore-mentioned works, including some works by Daghestani authors on Arabic grammar.[331] A similar pattern can be observed in other fields of study, where former students furthered their understanding of specific subjects by delving into various works that were not included in the madrasa curriculum. These included texts that were infrequently encountered in Daghestan. The number of such works on various genres was quite considerable. For example, my examination of private collections has turned up 64 titles related to logic and dialectics that were studied in Daghestan. It is clear that the vast majority of such works were studied by scholars after they had completed their standard education. This second level of literature far exceeds the first one in terms of its repertoire, scale, and diversity. It is this second level of literature, I suggest, that reflects the subjectivity of the Muslim scholar who collected and preserved it. Most private collections contain both layers of works, one represented by 'mandatory' educational literature and the other reflecting the autonomous choices and preferences of of their owners.[332]

Statistical genre analysis of the Institute of History's depository, encompassing various private and mosque collections, provides a comprehensive representation of the scholarly and educational traditions that were prominent in Daghestan between the 18th and early 20th centuries. For the purposes of such a comparison, I will present below a statistical analysis of the genres of Islamic literature seen in state collections which reflect the intellectual landscape in the region between the 18th and 20th

331 For more details on the Arabic grammar works distributed in Daghestan, see D.Kh. Gadzhieva, "Grammaticheskie sochineniia arabskikh avtorov i ikh dagestanskie kommentarii," A.R. Shikhsaidov, N.A. Tagirova, D.Kh. Gadzhieva, *Arabskaia rukopisnaia kniga v Dagestane*, 214–236.

332 Certainly, some scholars opted to divest themselves of surplus educational literature, driven by their specialisation in specific domains of knowledge. Nevertheless, this literature was not discarded; instead, it found its way into the collections of those who held an interest in it.

centuries. Next, I will provide a comparative analysis of the repertoire of works in state collections with a similar analysis of private collections of two 20th-century Muslim scholars: Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov from the village of Gurik in south Daghestan, and Muḥammad Dalgatov from the village of Somoda in north-west Daghestan. Then, I will offer a similar comparison between the repertoire of Islamic literature from state collections and the collection of Saidov. Such a comparison will reveal the peculiarities of how each of these scholars assembled their own collections based on their interests and preferences.

My decision to select as comparators the collections of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov and Muḥammad Dalgatov is not purely accidental. Both men were contemporaries of Saidov, received their education at approximately the same time as he, and evolved as scholars within a similar intellectual field. Despite their shared educational tradition, each of these scholars chose their own path in life and established themselves as different scholarly personae. Comparing these three collections gives a useful sense of the range of intellectual models available at the time, as well as the ways in which individual scholars could combine these models in pursuit of their own sense of self. Furthermore, the comparative analysis of the contents of these three libraries will show how the three men's collections complement and complicate what we know about them as scholars from other alternative sources, such as the reminiscences of family members and colleagues.

Regarding Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, we know of him as an Islamic Sufi scholar and a follower of his own father, the Naqshbandi shaykh Yūsuf-ḥājjī al-Kurīkhī (1860–1932).[333] The analysis of his collection will serve largely to confirm what we already know from his biography and the accounts given by his descendants. As for Muḥammad Dalgatov, meanwhile, we know little about his life apart from some general information of him being a Muslim scholar. In the absence of detailed biographical information, analysis of the repertoire of his collection will be invaluable in demonstrating which genres he was interested in and what kind

[333] Yusuf-khadzhi Yusufov, *Dukhovnoe rodstvo* (Makhachkala: Ikhlas, 2005), 254–266.

of texts he collected, allowing us thus to reconstruct his scholarly persona. As for Saidov, we noted at the outset that he is generally known exclusively as a Soviet orientalist. Very little, meanwhile, is widely known about him in his capacity as a Muslim scholar. The statistical analysis of his collection will demonstrate the evolution of his persona as a Muslim scholar and/or Soviet orientalist, and will trace how he engaged simultaneously with Islamic and academic scholarship.

The Statistical Analyses of Daghestani Islamic collections

The statistical analysis of Islamic literature that I will use to evoke and reconstruct the shared intellectual landscape between the 18th and the 20th century relies on the manuscripts and printed works from the state collections of the Institute of History and Daghestan State University (DSU).[334] In a departure from the Orientalist approach that divides texts into manuscripts and printed books, I instead treat them as a single textual domain. Such an approach allows me to consider the Islamic literature within a wider Islamic perspective, tracing the intellectual background of the region between the 18th and 20th centuries.

Let me now outline the methods employed for my statistical analysis of the three afore-mentioned scholars' collections. My analysis draws, first, on the Catalogue of Manuscripts at the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, which consists of 5,126 manuscript works.[335] Secondly, it draws on the DSU collections, numbering 755 manuscripts that have been formally catalogued by Daghestani orientalists.[336] Third-

334 Daghestan State University (DSU) archaeographic expeditions began in the 1960s thanks to the efforts of Muḥammad Ghālib Sadyqī (1918–2000) and ended in the late 1980s. As was the case with the Department of History between the 1950s and 1980s, the DSU library was supplemented by the massive acquisition of manuscripts from private and mosque collections. That is why I included the DSU collection in these statistics.

335 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev (ed), *Kratkii katalog arabografichnykh rukopisei IIAE DFITs RAN.*

336 A.R. Shikhsaidov, Kh.A. Omarov, P.M. Alibekova, D.Kh. Gadzhieva, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei Nauchnoi biblioteki Dagestanskogo Gosudarstvennogo Univer-*

ly, I consider the old printed books in the Institute of History collection, numbering 1,505 in total. Unfortunately, no catalogue of such printed books has been compiled thus far, so my analysis relies on the extant Institute of History inventory book which records all the old printed books found in Daghestan and brought to the Institute. I have additionally incorporated an analysis of ten private and mosque collections into the overall statistical data.

While compiling the catalogue of Arabic manuscripts and conducting my statistical analysis of genres, I adhered to the principle of subject classification as reflected in Muslim literature [see table 6].[337]

When one compares the generic repertoire of manuscripts with that of printed books, one notices an interesting feature. First of all, some genres, such as fiction, medicine, philosophy, and history, are relatively poorly represented by manuscripts. Conversely, such genres as occult sciences, Sufism, interpretation of dreams, preachings, instructions, rituals, and astrology, are poorly represented by printed books and sometimes indeed are not represented at all. Furthermore, in the genres that were fairly prevalent in Daghestan, like Muslim law, grammar, or dogmatics, a broader array of texts can be observed in printed works than in the manuscript tradition.

This contrast in the generic repertoires of manuscripts and printed books can be explained by the fact that printed texts published in Cairo, Istanbul, Kazan, Orenburg and Bakhchisarai came to Daghestan relatively late, at the very end of the 19th century. The Petrovsk (now Makhachkala) and Temir-khān Shūrā printing houses located in Daghestan did not begin operations until 1903.[338] During this era, there was a notable

siteta (Makhachkala: Narody Dagestana, 2004).

337 Muḥammad Sachaqlī Zādeh al-Marʿashī, *Tartīb al-ʿulūm* (Kazan: Tipografiia brat'ev Karimovykh, 1902); Kātip Çelebi, *Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn* (London: Mu'assasat al-furqān li-l-turāth al-Islāmī, 2021); Ismāʿīl Pāshā al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyyat al-ʿārifīn asmā' al-mu'allifīn wa asrār al-muṣannifīn* (Baghdād: Maktabat al-muthannī, 1951); ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn.* Vol. 2 (Damascus: Maktabat al-hidāya, 2004), 171–372.

338 A.A. Isaev, *Magomedmirza Mavraev – pervopechatnik i prosvetitel' Dagestana*, 19–54; M.N. Osmanova, *Arabskaia pechatnaia kniga v Dagestane v kontse 19 – nachale 20 veka*.

surge in Muslim reformist ideas within Daghestan, leading to a shift in Islamic paradigms. Consequently, there was a notable shift towards genres like history and philosophy. Additionally, the initial decades of the 20th century witnessed a widespread increase in the creation of literary works in the indigenous languages of Daghestan. Classical works of Islamic *belles lettres*, including poetry, were translated into local languages and published in Arabic script in Daghestan's printing houses.[339] Besides, in this period we can also see a renewed interest on the part of Daghestani scholars in such genres as *ḥadīth* studies and the *sīra*, which meant a surge in the production of printed books in these genres as opposed to the extant manuscript tradition. At the same time, the late 19th and first third of the 20th century saw a considerable decline of interest towards such subjects as occult sciences, astrology, or dream interpretation. This explains the fact that these genres of literature were less widely published in Daghestan, and that little of the literature produced on these subjects in Cairo, Istanbul, or Kazan was brought to Daghestan.

The development of Islamic reformist ideas brought about a supremacy of rationalist concepts, which, in turn, contributed to a wider proliferation of genres that relied heavily on rationalism, such as Muslim law, philosophy, medicine, logic, mathematics, history. The combination of all of these factors explains the wider range of printed books representing these genres compared to how they had been reflected in the earlier manuscript tradition. At the same time, in the early 20th century, manuscripts and printed books complemented each other organically. Since a range of different Islamic models were available in Daghestan at that time, each audience could gravitate towards whatever literary works were specificially interesting and relevant for them. For some, these were Sufi works or essays on occult subjects, whereas for others, it was fiction, philosophy, or history. But both the former and the latter readerships relied on the mastery of Arabic grammar, Muslim law, logic, rhet-

339 M.A. Gusenov, *Natsional'naia literatura kumykov 1920–1930-kh godov* (Makhachkala: IIaLI DNTs RAN, 2009), 24–38; S.M. Khaibullaev, *Istoriia avarskoi literatury* (Makhachkala: Delovoi mir, 2006), 13–24.

oric, and dialectics as a basis of their education that they all commonly obtained from the same textbooks.

The subsequent shift in accents and trends, and the evolving interests of local scholars, as well as their construction of specific personae, had an impact on the overall intellectual tradition in the region. Each model of persona exhibited a particular focus on a specific field of knowledge and, correspondingly, a particular genre of text. For example, despite the sceptical stance of reformists towards occult subjects, astrology, or dream interpretations, manuscripts of works in these genres continued to circulate, even being copied concurrently with the production of the first printed books in Daghestan. Simultaneously, scholars who copied such texts also added printed books, such as those on Sufism or law, to their collections. Printed books did not replace the manuscript tradition but rather complemented it, the two forms of production coexisting harmoniously. The presence or absence of certain types of texts in specific collections can be attributed to each individual owner's interest in constructing a scholarly persona aligned with a particular model. Collectively, these elements reflected the intellectual landscape characteristic of Daghestan between the 18th and 20th centuries. A genre-based statistical analysis of the corpus of printed books and manuscripts within collections thus sheds invaluable light on what was studied in Daghestan and to what extent.

In my statistical analysis of Islamic literature, I have used the percentage-based calculation system for each particular genre in relation to the total body of literature in the collections. I have used the same system for analysing the private collections of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, Muḥammad Dalgatov, and Muḥammad-Said Saidov.

The statistical analysis of collections of manuscripts and old printed books at Daghestani State University (DSU) and the Institute of History (IHAE) reveals the following picture [tab. 6].

It transpires from table 6 that the three most prominent genres in terms of the number of books in both collections are Arabic grammar (25.5%), Muslim law (18.5%), and logic and dialectics (13.2%). If we compare these combined statistics with separate figures for printed books, manuscripts from the Institute of History and DSU manuscripts, the pic-

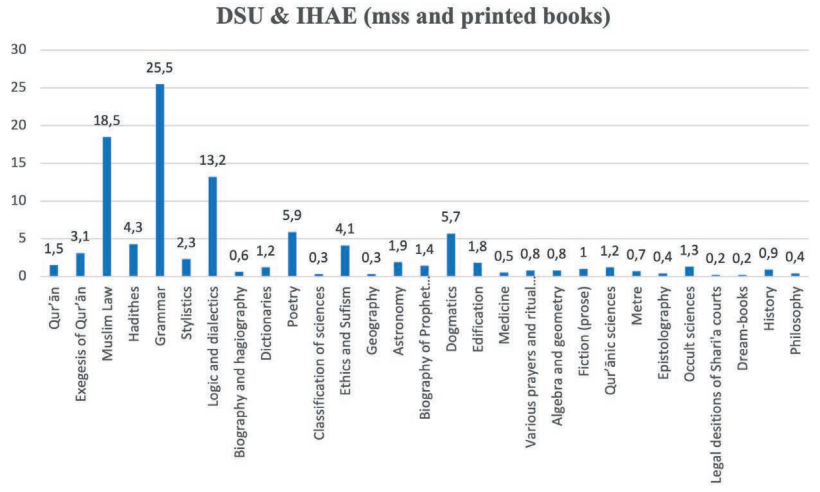


Table 6. Statistical analysis of the genres of the two state collections: the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, and Daghestani State University.

ture remains broadly similar. The most prominent three genres in each of these two collections are again respectively Arabic grammar (Institute of History manuscripts – 24%; Institute of History printed books – 26.8%; DSU manuscripts – 31.7 %); Muslim law (Institute of History manuscripts – 18.8%; Institute of History printed books – 18%; DSU manuscripts – 17.3 %); and logic and dialectics (Institute of History manuscripts – 13.5%; Institute of History printed books – 13.4 %; DSU manuscripts – 11 %). The prominence of these three genres attests to their broad popularity in the Daghestani Islamic scholarly and educational tradition. The genres that were of greatest interest for Daghestani archaeographers, namely historical and biographical texts, are much less frequently seen in these collections, respectively constituting just 0.9% and 0.6% of holdings. When examining these genres separately within the collections of the Institute of History and DSU, a broadly similar pattern becomes apparent. This observation indicates, furthermore, that the comprehensive acquisition of collections by Daghestani orientalists provides an illustrative depiction of Daghestan's intellectual landscape spanning from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Indeed, the substantial pres-

ence of works on Arabic grammar, Muslim law, and logic within the indigenous Islamic literary tradition seems to be a fair reflection of the prolific output of Daghestani scholars in these respective domains. By contrast, other genres, such as *tafsīr* (3.1%), medicine (0.5%), algebra and geometry (0.8%), biography and hagiography (0.6%), and fiction (1%), are those in which Daghestani scholars produced the least works or none at all. As a rule, wider interest in a certain genre implies that more works would be written on that subject.

The mosque collections present a similar pattern, with minor variations. Specifically, when conducting a statistical analysis of the Akusha mosque's collection [tab. 7],[340] we observe a pattern that closely resembles that of the state collections:

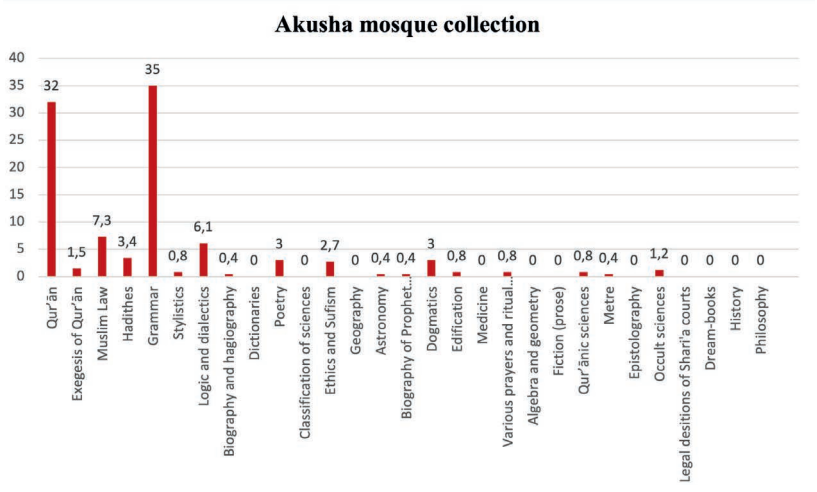


Table 7. Statistical analysis of the genre of the Akusha village mosque collection.

We see from table 7 that the most substantial holdings (if we leave aside copies of the Qur'ān) in the Akusha mosque collection comprise those same three genres as in the state collections: Arabic grammar (35%), Muslim law (7.3%), logic and dialectics (6.1%). The fact, meanwhile,

340 This analysis is based on the author's materials from the field trip to Akusha (8–16 August 2017).

that the mosque collection proportionately possesses far more Qur'ān copies than do the state collections should not surprise us. Daghestani orientalists clearly did not prioritise the acquisition of manuscripts of the Qur'ān: their primary focus was on the texts themselves, and manuscript copies of the Qur'ān were of interest to them only as historic artefacts when distinguished by their decorative beauty or antiquity. Accordingly, the Institute collection acquired only the most attractive such manuscripts: several copies of the *kufic* Qur'ān, the earliest of which was copied on the 11th of *Rabī' al-thānī* 400 A.H. / 7 December 1009;[341] seven large-size Qur'ān volumes copied between 702 / 1302 and 704 / 1303, which were later kept in the personal collection of the Iranian ruler Nadīr Shāh Afshār (1688–1747);[342] and several highly aesthetically accomplished copies of the Qur'ān. Since the text in all copies of the Qur'ān is completely identical, archeographers paid little attention to the vast majority of such items, and did not bring them to the Institute. By contrast, the Qur'āns had a sacral meaning for private collectors. While a decline in the knowledge of Arabic in the Soviet period meant that people who inherited private collections were generally unable to read most of their collections' holdings, they still frequently wished to keep their copies of the Qur'ān and pass these on from generation to generation. The owners of private collections regarded it a mark of piety to keep a copy of the Qur'ān in their homes, even if they were unable to read it, and so they were unwilling to part with it and give it to the orientalists.

Regarding the presence of Qur'ān copies in mosque collections, their abundance can be attributed to two primary factors. First, the Qur'ān served as a prominent educational resource, and mosques frequently functioned as educational centres. Certain Islamic rituals conducted within mosques, such as the *tarāwīḥ* prayers during the fasting month of Ramaḍān, furthermore necessitated the use of the Qur'ān readings,

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341 Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2822. Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Torzhestvo sviatosti i krasoty: Korany Dagestana* (Moscow, Nizhnii Novgorod: Isdatel'stvo "Medina" 2008), 153–157, 161–163.

342 Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, nos. 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288; Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Torzhestvo sviatosti i krasoty: Korany Dagestana*, 61–65.

resulting in a high number of Qur'ān copies in these settings. Secondly, Qur'ān copies were utilised for various types of record-keeping, including agreements, sales and purchases, commemorative documents, *waqf* records, and inheritance-related records (*nadhr, waṣiyya*). Such deed records made on the margins or flyleaves of Qur'ān copies did not just gain legitimacy by dint of being written down in the sacred book of the Muslims, but they were also *safer*, since copies of the Qur'ān were less likely to be stolen or lost. For these various reasons, therefore, there are many more manuscript and printed copies of the Qur'ān in communal collections than in private or state ones.[343]

The relatively low number of works on Muslim law in the Akusha collection (7.3%) compared to in state collections (18.5%) can also be attributed to the reduced significance of legal texts during the Soviet era, during which the functioning of Muslim law diminished considerably. Nonetheless, despite these particularities, tradition mandated the inclusion of Arabic grammar, Muslim law, logic, and dialectics as main subjects within the Daghestani Islamic educational curriculum. Therefore, the comprehensive procurement of Islamic texts through field trips organised by the Institute of History and Daghestani State University provides us with a generally fair overview of the intellectual environment in Daghestan between the 18th and early 20th centuries.

It is evident that private collections exhibited significant diversity in terms of their content, with each collection differing in its repertoire from others. Nevertheless, when aggregating all private collections and analysing the collective repertoire of works categorised by genre, we arrive at a representative pattern that closely resembles what we observe in state collections. The disparity between state collections on the one hand, and private and mosque collections on the other is relatively minor and does not significantly impact the overall representation. The findings presented below in table 8 demonstrate that, in terms of percent-

343 Shamil Shikhaliev, Ilona Chmilevskaya, "The Qur'ans of Dagestan: Practices of Copying, Using, and Translating," *European Muslims and the Qur'an Practices of Translation, Interpretation and Commodification*, ed. by Gerard Wiegers and Gulnaz Sibgatullina (De Gruyter, 2023), 117–142.

ages, the genre repertoire of state collections (Institute of History and DSU, totaling 7386 items) on one hand, and contemporary mosque and private collections (comprising 3 mosque plus 7 private collections totaling 2551 items) on the other, are generally similar.

As transpires from table 8, the generic repertoire of the various state collections that were assembled in the period 1950–1980 does not significantly differ from that of contemporary private collections. In both types of collections, the top five genres (leaving aside copies of the Qur'ān) are consistently represented as Arabic grammar, Muslim law, logic and dialectics, poetry, and dogmatics or Sufism.

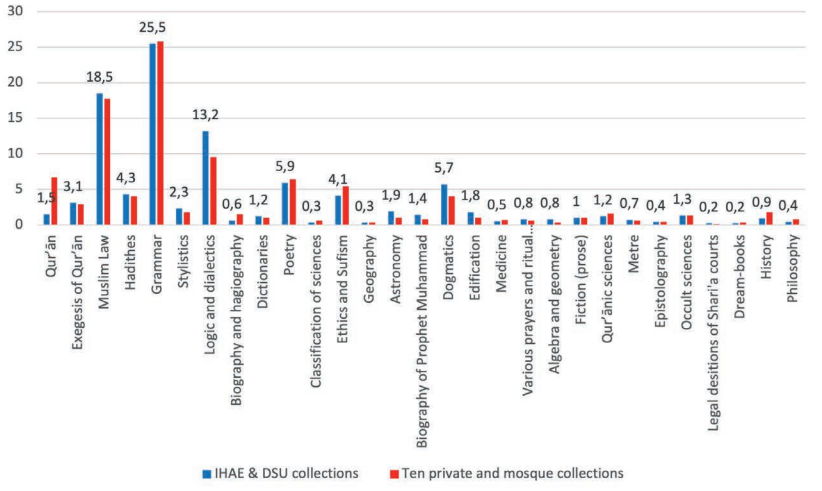


Table 8. Comparison between the genre repertoires of state (blue), private and mosque (red) collections.

A Sufi Occultist

As I have argued in the last few pages, the statistical analysis of state collections provides invaluable insights into the intellectual landscape of Daghestan between the 18th and 20th centuries. When we shift our attention to separate private collections, however, it transpires that the ge-

neric repertoire of their holdings frequently differs from those of state collections – and, indeed, that the holdings of one such private collection may be very different from those of another. This divergence stems from the fact that each private collection mirrors the unique archival persona of its owner. Below, I will present an analysis of the genres within Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov's collection, shedding light on the scholarly persona reflected by this collection.[344]

The foundation of this collection was established with manuscripts collected during the lifetime of Ḥusām al-Dīn's grandfather, *mallā* Ramalḍān (1826–1870). Specifically, the collection contains both the manuscripts that he copied and those that he acquired. Strikingly, however, Ramalḍān was not the only person to acquire items in the collection: so too, evidently, did his wife *mallā* Fāṭima. Thus, for example, one of the manuscripts in the collection bears the following inscription:

> In the year 1295 [1878], I, *mallā Fāṭima, wife of mallā* Ramalḍān-efendī al-Kurīkhī, daughter of shaykh Sha'bān-efendī, sister of shaykh, martyr (*shahīd*), *al-ghāzī* al-shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm-efendī al-Khasīqī, have purchased this book from *mallā* Aḥmad al-Rukujī for five roubles (*manāt*).[345]

The addition of the sobriquet '*mallā*' to the name of Fāṭima indicates that Ramalḍān's wife was an educated woman who was knowledgeable about Arabic literature; and, eight years after her husband's death, Fāṭima evidently continued to maintain her interest in the subject.

Subsequently, the collection passed on to Ramalḍān's and Fāṭima's son Yūsuf-hājjī al-Kurīkhī, who also added to the library and altered its

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344 I researched alongside my colleagues this collection three times from 16 to 28 July 2006, again from 4 to 15 October of that same year, and again from 15 to 29 August 2007. The annual archaeographic field trips, in which I took part between 1998 and 2021, were led by Amri R. Shikhsaidov (between 1994 and 2014) and Amir R. Navruzov (between 2015 and 2021).

345 Aḥmad b. Dīnqūzī al-Rūmi, *Sharḥ Marāḥ al-arwāḥ.* Gurik, private collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, no. 117, fol. 1a. See A.R. Shikhsaidov, A.R. Navruzov, Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, N.G. Mamed-zade, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei i staropechatnykh knig: kollektsiia Diia'addina Iusuf-khadzhzhi al-Kurikhi*, no. 165.

contents. Some of books in this library were either acquired or copied by Yūsuf-hājjī himself. Afterwards, the collection was inherited by its last owner, Yūsuf-hājjī's son Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov (1915–2002), who dialogically engaged with it, copied some of the texts, and added various items to the collection. It is noteworthy that this collection contains numerous extratextual notes such as marginal glosses in manuscripts and books, *waqf* and ownership notes, and family records of the birth of children made by all three generations of scholars: *mallā* Ramalḍān, Yūsuf-hājjī, and Ḥusām al-Dīn; clearly, therefore, successive owners interacted closely with the collection. Apart from individual notes, the collection also contains individual manuscripts compiled by these scholars, including Ḥusām al-Dīn himself.[346] On 27 December 1982, Ḥusām al-Dīn compiled a full inventory of his collection, which, as he put it, "came down to him from [his] fathers." The dated manuscripts in this collection span from the second half of the 15th century to the late 1970s. Specifically, the earliest manuscript was copied in Herāt and dates back to 888 / 1483,[347] while the latest dated one was copied by Ḥusām al-Dīn himself in 1390 / 1970.[348] In total, Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection contained 213 manuscripts and old printed books published in Cairo, Istanbul, Kazan, and Temir-khān Shūrā between the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Just like the various collections discussed above that were passed down through generations, so too Ḥusām al-Dīn's library evolved over time as it incorporated new works that held appeal and interest for each

346 One of these manuscripts was copied by Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov on the 16th of Shawwāl 1375 / 26 May 1956. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Kurīkhī, *Qiṭ'a min kutub mukhtalifa fī l-fiqh wa-l-kalām*. Gurik, private collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, no. 6; A.R. Shikhsaidov, A.R. Navruzov, Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, N.G. Mamed-zade, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei i staropechatnykh knig: kollektsiia Diia'addina Iusuf-khadzhzhi al-Kurikhi,* no. 15.

347 Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Baghawī, *Maṣābīḥ al-sunna.* Gurik, private collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, no. 7; A.R. Shikhsaidov, A.R. Navruzov, Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, N.G. Mamed-zade, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei i staropechatnykh knig: kollektsiia Diia'addina Iusuf-khadzhzhi al-Kurikhi*, no. 19.

348 Yūsuf al-Muskurī, *Ṭifl al-ma'ān*. Gurik, private collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, no. 11; A.R. Shikhsaidov, A.R. Navruzov, Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, N.G. Mamed-zade, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei i staropechatnykh knig: kollektsiia Diia'addina Iusuf-khadzhzhi al-Kurikhi*, no. 45.

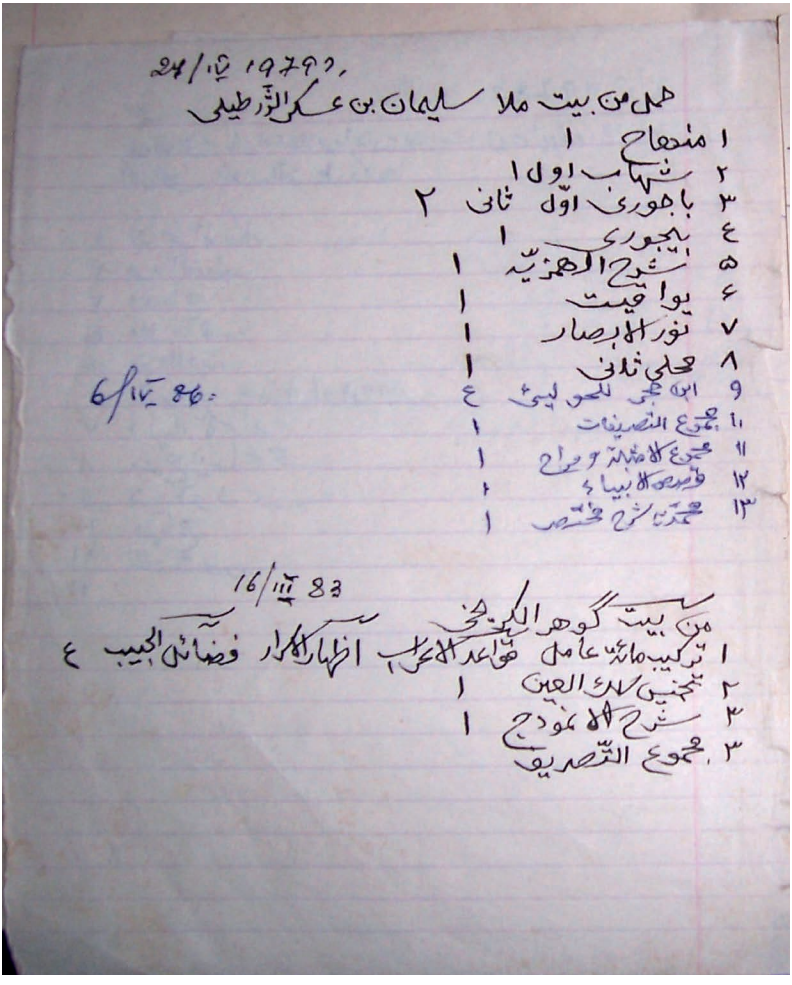


Figure 10. Ḥusām al-Dīn's notation documenting the inclusion of books he obtained from four distinct collections into his personal library. Photograph by the author. Village of Gurik, 24 August 2006.

successive owner. Across three generations of scholars who possessed this collection, there was ongoing interaction with the library, the introduction of new materials, exchanges of texts with other scholars, and acquisitions of items that were of interest to each owner in turn. In particular, one of the manuscripts bears Ḥusām al-Dīn's notes recording the addition to his collection in 1979, 1982, 1983, and 1986 of 64 manuscripts and books which had formerly belonged to four various owners [fig. 10]. Given that Ḥusām al-Dīn obtained one of these four collections in two phases, first in 1979 and then in 1986, it is clear that he first made an initial purchase of certain texts and subsequently, seven years later, augmented his personal library with additional books from the same collection.

Hence, a substantial transformation of the original collection, initially established by *mallā* Ramalḍān, occurred over time through the contributions of his son Yūsuf-hājjī and grandson, Ḥusām al-Dīn. The library can thus be linked to the name of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, as its development was influenced by his personal interests, shown as he interacted with the collection, added to it and altered its repertoire.

A comparative statistical analysis of the generic repertoire of the collections of the Institute of History and Daghestani State University against that of Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection yields the following findings [tab. 9].

As we see from table 9, the generic repertoire of Ḥusām al-Dīn's personal collection is broadly similar to that of state collections. The two most widely represented genres in both collections are works on Arabic grammar (23.6% in Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection and 25.5% in state collections, respectively) and Muslim law (16% in Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection and 18% in state collections); we furthermore observe a relatively similar ratio between the two collections in genres such as *ḥadīth* (4.5% vs. 4.3%), poetry (6.4% vs. 5.9%), and dogmatics (6.4% vs. 5.7%). However, there are also significant differences between the state collections and the private one. For instance, Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection lacks any works in genres such as geography, medicine, algebra, fiction, and philosophy. The number of works on logic and dialectics in Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection is less than half of what was typical for the Daghestani scholarly and educational tradition of the time (6.4% vs. 13.2%). By contrast,

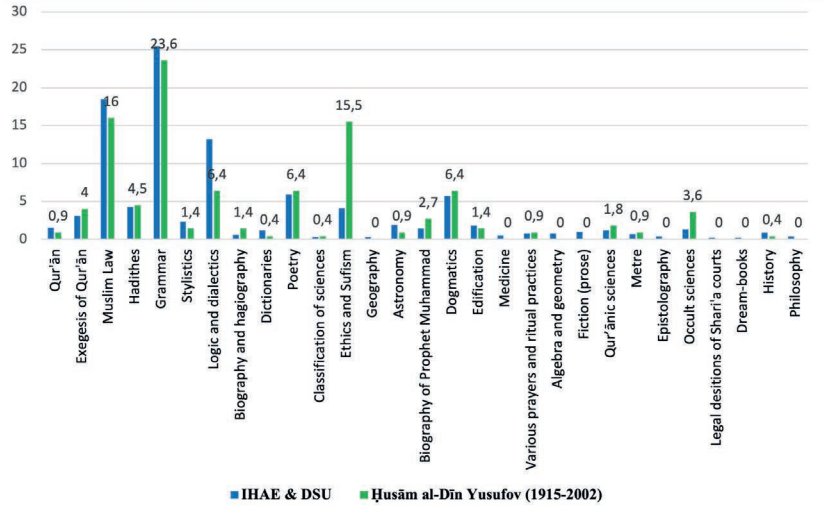


Table 9. The comparison between the genre repertoires of the state collections at IHAE and DSU and the collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov (1915–2002).

however, Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection contains more than three times as many works on Sufism and ethics as were typical for the intellectual landscape of the period (15.5% vs. 4.1%). The same trend is evident in the case of occult sciences (3.6% vs. 1.3%).

The predominance of genres such as Sufism and occult sciences in Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection can be explained by the fact that he had a deep family connection to Sufism that extended over several generations. His grandfather *mallā* Ramalḍān and his grandmothers' relatives were Sufi followers of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood. His father, Yūsuf al-Kurīkhī, had traveled to Istanbul in 1913, where he became a disciple of the prominent Naqshbandi shaykh Aḥmad Ḥamdī Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Dāghistānī (1848–1925),[349] who bestowed the *ijāza* upon Yūsuf, specifically within the prestigious Mujaddidī branch of the Naqshbandi-

[349] Aḥmad Ḥamdī Ḥusām al-Dīn was a Muslim scholar, originally from the Daghestani village Rukel'. In the mid-19th century, he together with his family immigrated to the Ottoman empire, where he settled in Istanbul. For more details about this individual, see: Turan Alptekin, *Seyyid Ahmed Hüsameddin Eserleri ve Nakşibendi Öğretinin Kökleri* (Istanbul: Demos Yayınları, 2012).

yya brotherhood. Yūsuf subsequently passed on this *ijāza* to some of his own disciples in Daghestan, including ʻAbdullāh-efendī (d. 1998) from the village of Khurik in Tabasaran. Ḥusām al-Dīn himself was one of the disciples (sing. *murīd*) of ʻAbdullāh-efendī, and he was named after shaykh Aḥmad Ḥamdī Ḥusām al-Dīn at birth.[350]

Ḥusām al-Dīn's close ties to Sufism are attested by several manuscripts that he copied and compiled by hand for inclusion in his collection. These manuscripts include the *Silsilat al-arwāḥ* and *Ṭifl al-maʻān* by the afore-mentioned Khalwati shaykh Yūsuf al-Muskurī,[351] from whom Ḥusām al-Dīn claimed to be descended. Additionally, Ḥusām al-Dīn authored a short work that contains the biographies of several Sufi shaykhs who resided in the 'holy' cave of Diurk near the village of Khustil in Tabasaran.[352] There is a clear connection between occult subjects and Sufi practices, which explains why Ḥusām al-Dīn, a Sufi himself, showed a keen interest in these subjects, resulting in a substantial number of works in this genre in his collection.

Works on logic and dialectics, which constitute the third most widely represented genre for the Daghestani intellectual tradition between the 18th and 20th centuries, are rarely represented in Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection. These are mostly works which were part of the general tradition of Islamic education in Daghestan and were confined to the standard textbooks in these disciplines. It is clear that Ḥusām al-Dīn did not pay close attention to these subjects, and limited himself just to a general introductory course in these disciplines. The fact that his collection has no works whatsoever on geography, medicine, algebra, or philosophy also indicates that Ḥusām al-Dīn had little interest in these genres.

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350 Yusuf-khadzhi Yusufov, *Dukhovnoe rodstvo*, 254–255.

351 Yūsuf al-Muskurī, *Silsilat al-arwāḥ*. Gurik, private collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, no. 15; A.R. Shikhsaidov, A.R. Navruzov, Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, N.G. Mamed-zade, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei i staropechatnykh knig: kollektsiia Diia'addina Iusuf-khadzhzhi al-Kurikhi*, no. 128.

352 Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Kurīkhī, *Qiṭʻa min kutub mukhtalifa fī al-fiqh wa-l-kalām*, Gurik, private collection of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, no. 13; A.R. Shikhsaidov, A.R. Navruzov, Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, N.G. Mamed-zade, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei i staropechatnykh knig: kollektsiia Diia'addina Iusuf-khadzhzhi al-Kurikhi*, no. 112.

We do not know the contents of the collection owned by his father Yūsuf and his grandfather *mallā* Ramalḍān. If works in these genres had ever been present in their collections, we can surmise that Ḥusām al-Dīn subsequently disposed of them, either by selling them or exchanging them for works of other genres.

The image of Ḥusām al-Dīn's scholarly persona as it transpires from an analysis of his library is particularly interesting when set in dialogue with what we know of his life from the biography authored by his son Yusuf-khadzhi Yusufov. In this latter work, Yusuf-khadzhi emphaiszes the central role that Sufism and Sufi ethics played in Ḥusām al-Dīn's life.[353] This chimes with the generic repertoire of Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection, and the prevalence within it of Sufi literature, which similarly attests to Ḥusām al-Dīn's endeavor to shape his identity as a Sufi scholar. Genre analysis and literary biography thus combine to accentuate this aspect of Ḥusām al-Dīn's self-presentation.

Elsewhere, by contrast, we find points where the picture accruing from analysis of Ḥusām al-Dīn's private collection differs from that offered in the literary biography. One such instance relates to Ḥusām al-Dīn's extensive holdings of works on occult sciences. That Ḥusām al-Dīn should have been interested in occult sciences is perhaps unsurprising, given that this was a field closely related to Sufi belief and practice. It is noteworthy, however, that written testimonies by Ḥusām al-Dīn's children make no mention of his engagement in occult practices. All of his children pursued Soviet education, earning PhD and even post-doctorate (*Habilitation*) degrees, and were shaped by Soviet ideology. Ḥusām al-Dīn's son, Yusuf-khadzhi Yusufov became a surgeon and defended a dissertation in medicine. His father's interest in occult healing practices stood in stark contrast to his own embrace of modern medicine and rationalistic view of occult practices as an 'ignorant relic of the past' within the Soviet paradigm. Consequently, he chose to omit this potentially embarrassing aspect of his father's life from his book. However, the presence of books on occult sciences in Ḥusām al-Dīn's collection, complete with annotations and notes in his own handwriting, suggests

353 Yusuf-khadzhi Yusufov, *Dukhovnoe rodstvo*, 254–255.

his genuine interest in occult practices, even though his official biography remains silent on this matter.[354] It thus becomes apparent that the picture of Ḥusām al-Dīn that we encounter in his literary biography is only partially supported by the statistical analysis of genres within his collection. Such analysis thus allows a more precise understanding of Ḥusām al-Dīn's persona, which complements and at times challenges the depiction found in his official biography.

Following the completion of his Islamic education – which emphasised the study of Arabic grammar and Muslim law, as was generally customary in Daghestan – Ḥusām al-Dīn embraced the Sufi model, which as we saw in Chapter 1 constituted a hybrid of the 'reflective subject' and 'esoteric subject' models. Ignoring other models, Ḥusām al-Dīn opted to craft his distinct persona as a Sufi scholar and occultist, as can be seen from the items in his collection. This intersection underscores the confluence of two levels within the intellectual tradition: the first, represented by the educational system, and the second, intimately connected with personal subjectivity. Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov effectively leveraged his acquired Islamic knowledge to construct his unique identity as a Muslim Sufi scholar and occultist.

A Sufi and a Teacher

The second example of constructing an archival persona is equally intriguing. This is the case of Muḥammad Dalgatov, a Muslim scholar hailing from the village of Somoda in west Daghestan. Whereas in the case of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov we have the opportunity to compare his biography, authored by his son, with the analysis of his collection, regarding Muḥammad Dalgatov's life by contrast we possess very limited external information. In the absence of other known sources, a statistical

354 In my interview with the *imām* of the Gurik mosque, Sefer Alikhanov (b. 1956), who was a student of Ḥusām al-Dīn and an unspoken caretaker of his collection, he mentioned that Ḥusām al-Dīn was actively involved in occult practices. He wrote amulets, talismans, and used manuscripts related to the occult sciences for healing purposes. Interview with Sefer Alikhanov (Gurik, 23 August 2006).

analysis of his collection is invaluable in indicating how he personally shaped his scholarly persona and which of the available Islamic models he adhered to.

Muḥammad Dalgatov's collection is currently kept in the village of Somoda by his grandson Magomed Dalgatov (b. 1952), a former officer in the Daghestani law enforcement agencies. Since he himself is not a Muslim scholar, Magomed Dalgatov has preserved his father's library exactly as he inherited it.[355] Overall, it comprises 246 manuscripts and old printed books, some of which comprise several works in one volume. A comparative statistical analysis of the genres present in his collection against the generic repertoires of the state collections yields the following findings, as illustrated in table 10.

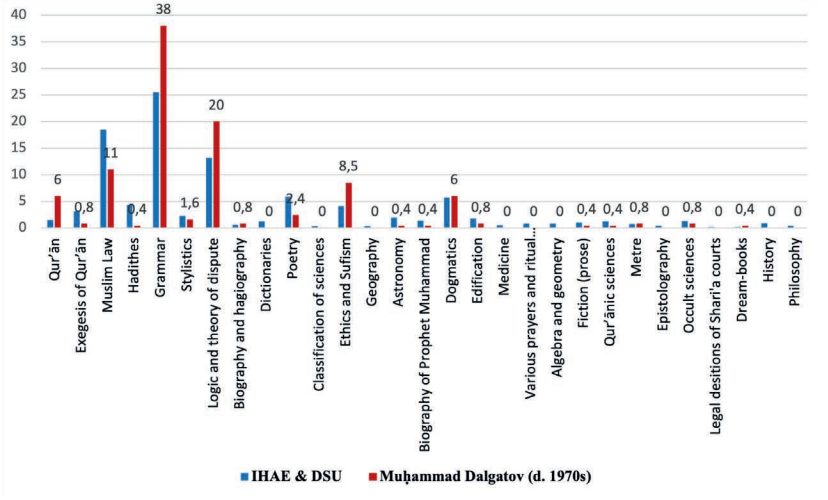


Table 10. Comparison between the genre repertoires of IHAE and DSU state collections and the collection of Muḥammad Dalgatov (d. 1970s).

Upon initial examination, Dalgatov's collection appears to largely align with the typical features of the Daghestani intellectual tradition, as de-

355 Author's field trips in the village of Somoda led by Amri R. Shikhsaidov (13–21 August 2013) and Amir R. Navruzov (15–21 July 2018 and 3–12 August 2019).

rived from our earlier analysis of state collections. The top three positions in his collection are occupied by Arabic grammar, logic with dialectics, and Muslim law, consistent with the intellectual landscape of the region. However, a more detailed scrutiny of Dalgatov's collection reveals certain differences from what we find in the state collections.

The percentage of works on Arabic grammar in Dalgatov's collection significantly surpasses that in the state collections (38% vs. 25.5%). Unlike in the state collections, the second most common genre in Dalgatov's library is logic and dialectics, rather than Muslim law (22% vs. 13.2%). Although Muslim law ranks among the top three categories in Dalgatov's collection, it constitutes a smaller portion of the total number of books compared to the average for the state collections (11% vs. 18.5%). Furthermore, Dalgatov's collection contains proportionately more than twice as many works on Sufism than the state collections (8.5% vs. 4.1%). Dogmatics accounts for a similar percentage in both collections (6% vs. 5.7%). On the other hand, certain genres are notably less represented in Dalgatov's collection when compared to the state collections. This is evident in genres such as *tafsīr* (0.8% vs. 3.1%), *ḥadīth*s (0.4% vs. 4.3%), poetry (2.4% vs. 5.9%), and astronomy (0.4% vs. 1.9%). Importantly, Dalgatov's collection is entirely lacking in works in the fields of geography, medicine, algebra, history, and philosophy.

In assembling his collection, therefore, Dalgatov clearly exhibited a keen interest in certain genres such as Arabic grammar, logic and dialectics, Sufism, and dogmatics, while showing less enthusiasm for Muslim law, poetry, history, or the natural sciences. We thus get a sense of which subjects were meaningful and important to him, and which were not. Arabic grammar, for instance, was evidently a particular interest, even beyond the usual emphasis on its mastery as a gateway discipline affording deeper insights into subjects such as law, dogmatics, *ḥadīth*, and *tafsīr*. Dalgatov's collection repertoire demonstrates a more profound interest in grammar that extended beyond its utilitarian applications. It is evident that he dedicated substantial effort to a thorough examination of grammar, considering it a distinct area of study rather than a mere tool for mastering other disciplines.

A similar observation can be made regarding logic and dialectics, closely intertwined with the study of dogmatics and Muslim law. Dalgatov's collection not only contains a significant number of works on logic and dialectics but also encompasses a wide range of such materials that go far beyond the conventional role of logic and dialectics as a mere supplementary subject. For instance, the collection includes two copies of the work *Fatḥ al-ghālib* by the Daghestani scholar 'Umar al-Kudālī (d. 1801), a rarity in Daghestani collections. Again, therefore, Muḥammad Dalgatov evidently regarded logic as an independent discipline deserving of in-depth exploration.

The presence of the two afore-mentioned copies of *Fatḥ al-ghālib* in Dalgatov's collection alerts us to a further point, namely the presence of multiple copies of certain works on grammar, logic and dialectics, with some of them appearing in three or more copies. Additionally, a distinctive characteristic of Dalgatov's collection is the proportionately higher number of copies of the Qur'ān (6%) than what we find in most typical private collections. Concerning the works on law, *ḥadīth*, and dogmatics in Dalgatov's collection, these generally align with the standard treatises utilised for educational purposes in Daghestan between the 18th and 20th centuries.

Thus, an examination of Dalgatov's collection enables us to draw insights into his scholarly persona. The presence of multiple copies of works on Arabic grammar, logic, and the Qur'ān suggests their intended use for educational purposes and for lending to his students. Overall, the repertoire of his collection closely resembles that of mosque collections, including the previously mentioned Akusha collection. Since mosques typically served as educational centres, they would possess a comprehensive set of textbooks, mirroring the repertoire found in Dalgatov's collection. This suggests that Muḥammad Dalgatov's primary focus was on education, particularly specialising in the instruction of Arabic grammar, logic, and dialectics. He seems not to have identified as a jurist, and displayed limited interest in *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* as sources of Islamic law, as indicated by their relatively small representation in his collection. Furthermore, he exhibited no evident interest in lexicography, geography, medicine, algebra, history, or philosophy, as evidenced by

the absence of texts on these subjects. Additionally, genres such as astronomy, fiction, and occult sciences evidently held little appeal to him, as they are only minimally represented in his collection.

Conversely, Dalgatov's collection includes a substantial number of manuscripts on Sufism, featuring works by both prominent Near Eastern shaykhs like Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad al-Jazūlī (d. 1465), Muḥammad al-Sanūsī (d. 1490), ʿAbd al-Qāḍir al-Ṣafadī (d. 1509), ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī (d. 1565), and local Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykhs such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumuqī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣughūrī (d. 1882), and Muḥammad al-ʿUbūdī (d. 1895), as well as two works by the Qādiri Chechen shaykh Kunta-hājjī Kishiev (d. 1867). However, given that he was not a Sufi shaykh himself, Dalgatov could not have disciples (*murīd*s) because Sufi traditions are not transmitted through text but entail following the Sufi path under the guidance of a shaykh. The abundance of Sufi literature in his collection can be attributed to his status as a disciple of one of the shaykhs from the neighbouring Gidatl' rural community, along with the broad popularity of the Maḥmūdi branch of the Naqshbandi brotherhood in the region during the Soviet era.[356]

In the absence of any biographical evidence, the statistical analysis of Muḥammad Dalgatov's collection usefully enables us to deduce that he perceived himself as a scholarly teacher (*mudarris*) and as a Sufi who could offer a deeper understanding of Arabic grammar and logic with dialectics, as well as convey elementary knowledge of Muslim law. His commitment to teaching grammar and logic with dialectics reflects his professional interests as a teacher, while the substantial presence of works on Sufism underscores the significant role that Sufism played in Dalgatov's personal life. He evidently compiled his collection based on these dual interests. The repertoire of Muḥammad Dalgatov's collection reveals how he shaped his identity as a Muslim teacher closely aligned

356 Shamil Shikhaliev, "Downward Mobility and Spiritual Life: The Development of Sufism in the Context of Migrations in Daghestan, 1940s – 2000s," *Allah's Kolkhozes: Migration, De-Stalinisation, Privatisation and the New Muslim Congragations in the Soviet Realm (1950s – 2000s)*, ed. by Stephane A. Dudoignon and Christian Noack. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014), 398–420.

with Sufi networks, thereby engaging with the contemporary 'reflective subject' model.

Saidov's Persona in His Collection

As previously illustrated, the collections amassed by Ḥusām al-Dīn and Dalgatov, along with their particular genre preferences, provide insights into the formation of distinct scholarly personae. To gain insights into Saidov's personal preferences and his specific interests within the realm of Islamic literature, I have conducted an analysis of the generic composition of his library. As is the case with the afore-mentioned collections belonging to Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov and Muḥammad Dalgatov, Saidov's collection similarly reflects a blend of conventional educational paradigms and his own more individual choices and preferences. The collection thus served as a means for him to shape his self-perception. The statistical breakdown of Saidov's collection, encompassing both Islamic manuscripts and printed books, amounts to a total of 515 items, and is presented in the table 11 for reference:

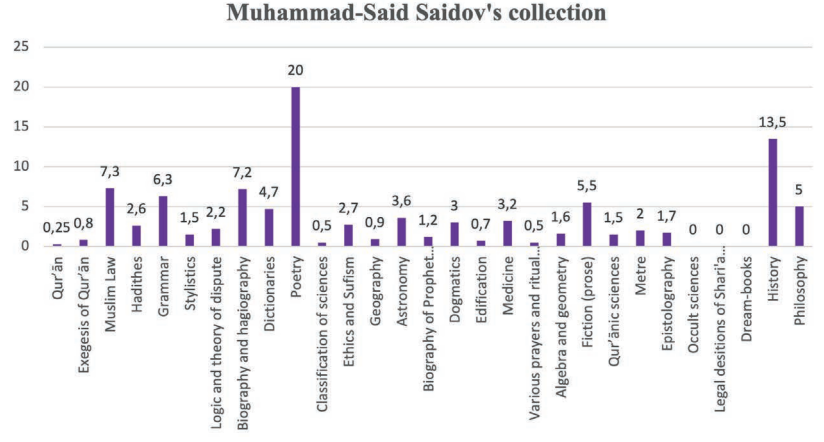


Table 11. The genre repertoire of Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection.

Unlike the case in other similar private collections, the top five genres in terms of the number of works are, respectively, poetry (20%), history (13.5%), Muslim law (7.3%), biographies (7.2%), and Arabic grammar (6.3%). These are followed, consecutively, by fiction (5.5%), philosophy (5.1%), lexicography (4.8%), astronomy (3.6%), and medicine (3.2%).

Saidov's collection attests to his strongly individualized personal choices, especially when contrasted (see table 12) with the intellectual backdrop evident in the state collections, thereby reflecting the Islamic intellectual landscape to which he had access and which contributed to his own development as a Muslim scholar.

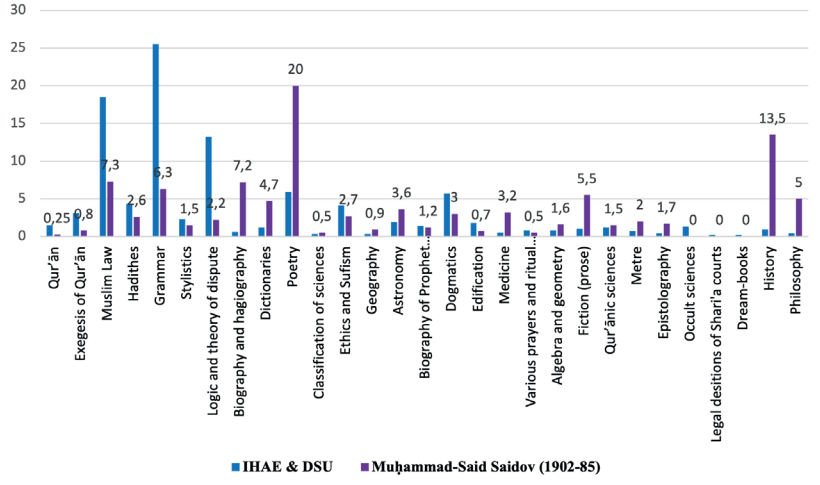


Table 12. Comparison of repertoires in state collections and Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection (both mamuscipts and printed books).

Table 12 reveals a considerable difference in terms of the numbers of works belonging to various genres between Saidov's collection and those held in the state instutions. This table illustrates that poetry, history, biography, and philosophy held a central position among Saidov's intellectual interests. Even Muslim law, typically ranking second in terms of the number of works in various collections, is relatively underrepresented in Saidov's library. In total, his collection comprises 32 works on

Muslim law, encompassing both manuscripts and printed books. A closer examination of these works sheds light on the rationale for their inclusion in Saidov's collection. For instance, he inherited a four-volume manuscript of *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj* by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī from his grandfather. However, it is noteworthy that Saidov inscribed the following on the title page of one of these volumes [fig. 11]:

> This is the book that my grandfather bequeathed to his male descendants who can benefit from it. He who is writing these lines [i.e., Saidov himself] is not one of those to whom this book must be bequeathed because I have not profited from it.[357]

Evidently Saidov did not make use of this manuscript, but it nevertheless held an important meaning for him as a link to his grandfather. There are two volumes of the treatise *Al-Muḥarrar* by Abū-l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Rāfiʿī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1226) in his collection. The volumes in question are among the oldest dated manuscripts on law to be copied by local Daghestani Muslim scholars: the first volume was copied in Derbend by a certain Darwish ʿImād al-Dīn from the village of Ṭanūsī (now the village Tanusi in the Khunzakh district of Daghestan) in 884 A.H. / 1479–80,[358] and the second volume was copied by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad from the village of ʿAndī (now in the Botlikh district of Daghestan) in 974 / 1566–67.[359] It appears that these two manuscripts held little interest for Saidov in terms of their legal content; rather, he valued them for their uniqueness as some of the earliest dated legal texts copied by Daghestani scholars. In this regard, Saidov's approach aligns with a distinctively academic orientalist perspective that regards a manuscript's rarity as its primary appeal.

Saidov's orientalist perspective is perhaps manifested also in his possession of a manuscript of *Najāḥ al-ṭālib* by Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī,[360] who was

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357 Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 3, fol. 1a.

358 Ibid., no. 26.

359 Ibid., no. 15.

360 Ibid., no. 29.



Figure 11. *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj* by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī with the note of Saidov's grandfather that he bought this manuscript. Below is Saidov's note that this book was inherited by him. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 3, fol. 1a.

the teacher of the afore-mentioned Muḥammad al-Quduqī, whose personality was of great interest for Saidov. The works by Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī were particularly popular among early 20th-century Daghestani reformists.[361] The manuscript in question is intriguing, as it represents an autographed copy created by a Daghestan scholar in the late 17th century while the author was still alive, as confirmed by the inscription found on the manuscript's title page.[362] It is probable that this book held significance for Saidov, not only due to his historical and archival interest in a unique text but also because it was associated with two scholars, Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī and Muḥammad al-Quduqī, whom he held in high regard as proponents of *ijtihād*. It is noteworthy that Saidov affixed his own note to the manuscript's cover, indicating his personal connection to the work:

> *Najāḥ al-ṭālib fī sharḥ al-Muntahā Ibn Hājib* by the great scholar (*al-'allāma*), *imām*, *mujtahid* Ṣāliḥ b. al-Mahdī al-Maqbalī al-Yamanī, a teacher of an *imām*, renewer (*al-mujaddid*) Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Qudūqī al-Dāghistānī. The book was copied for him by his friend Muḥammad al-Baklukhī al-Dāghistānī, when he was in the author's presence. This manuscript points to a close and ancient connection between the Daghestanis and Yemenis. It offers proof that the people of Daghestan and Yemen were as one in their desires.

Saidov's collection contains 19 legal works authored or copied by Daghestani scholars, some of whom were his contemporaries, including his teacher, 'Alī Kaiaev. The presence of legal texts authored by Daghestani scholars underscores Saidov's academic curiosity as a Soviet historian. Some of these works are unique autographs, existing in sole copies today. The remaining Muslim legal texts conform to the prevailing tradition of legal scholarship in early 20th-century Daghestan. As previously

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361 Shamil Shikhaliev, "Muslim Reformism in Dagestan (1900–1930)," 35–63; idem, "*Taqlīd* and *Ijtihād* over the Centuries: The Debates on Islamic Legal Theory in Daghestan, 1700s – 1920s," 245–254.

362 Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 29, fol. 1a. Thus, this manuscript was copied befor 1687.

mentioned, Saidov inherited these texts from his grandfather and expressed minimal practical interest in them, as he himself acknowledged.

Thus, the repertoire of legal works in Saidov's collection suggests that Islamic law was not one of his prime intellectual concerns – perhaps unsurprisingly, given that unlike his grandfather he was never a *qāḍī*. Evidently, his motivation for collecting these manuscripts was not a jurist's professional interest in their contents but rather the scholarly interest of a Soviet orientalist in exploring the intellectual history of Daghestan.[363]

Saidov intentionally amassed the genres that held his interest, contributing to their development. As indicated in table 11, these genres notably encompassed poetry, history, philosophy, and fiction. He selectively utilized works in other genres, like law or Sufism, primarily as sources of historical or biographical information, reflecting his orientation as a Soviet historian. Historical and biographical literature is widely represented in Saidov's collection: 87 works on history (13.5%), including various copies of works by Daghestani authors between the 14th and 19th centuries and 46 works of the biographical genre (7.2%). A number of historical works in his collection also served as sources for his subsequent researches produced for the Institute of History, when he was collecting historical and biographical works and prioritising the study of literature produced by Daghestani authors.

In Saidov's collection, philosophy manuscripts comprise a significant portion of holdings, amounting to 5% of the total, in contrast to the minimal representation of this genre in the Daghestani intellectual tradition more generally, where it stands at only 0.4%. It is noteworthy that Daghestani reformists began showing an interest in philosophy, both in the works of Islamic and European philosophers, during the early 20th century. This period witnessed the copying of philosophical texts and the exploration of European philosophy, often accompanied by critiques of materialism from an idealist philosophical perspective.[364] While ratio-

363 M.S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," 118–123.

364 ʻAlī b. ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *al-Sahm al-ṣā'ib li ṣāḥib al-zaʻm al-kādhib*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 90c; Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, *al-Burhān al-qāṭiʻ fī ithbāt al-ṣāniʻ*.

nalism was significant in both materialist philosophy and the ideas of reformers, the idealistic rationalism of philosophers like René Descartes (1596–1650), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) was more aligned with the reformists' thinking than was Karl Marx's materialistic approach which was widespread in the Soviet era. It is evident that Saidov, who had been a student of the reformists scholar 'Alī Kaiaev, known for his treatise against Soviet materialism,[365] developed his interest in philosophy through the 17th–18th-century idealist rationalists. Despite later exposure to materialist philosophy during his studies at Soviet institutions, Saidov's convictions remained more aligned with the ideas of the reformists who adhered to the concepts of idealist philosophy. It is perhaps telling that Saidov's collection, which includes Russian-language books, lacks any texts on dialectical materialism or Marxist philosophy.

Saidov held poetry in high regard, recognising its significance not only within his professional domain of history and philology but also on a personal level. Notably, in one of his works, Saidov acknowledged the profound influence of Arabic poetry on the development of literature among the peoples of Daghestan during the Soviet era. Strikingly, and perhaps rather boldly, he omitted in his analysis any mention of the impact on the Daghestan literary landscape made by Soviet poetry.[366] Saidov evidently deemed Arabic-language poetry to be more historically significant than contemporary Soviet writing. In ignoring any influence on Daghestani poetry made by Soviet literature, Saidov was here clearly articulating his own self-understanding as a Muslim poet.

The persona of Muslim poet was important to Saidov. Many of his most intimate thoughts, emotions, and feelings, too personal to be shared even with his closest family members, found expression in his own po-

Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 90d.

365 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *al-Sahm al-ṣā'ib li ṣāḥib al-za'm al-kādhib;* Yu.V. Medzhidov, M.A. Abdullaev, *Ali Kaiaev: ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1993), 89–184.

366 Muḥammad Sayyid b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī al-Sayyidī, "Ta'rīkh al-adāb al-'arabiyya fī Dāghistān," 1–14.

ems. Throughout his lifetime, Saidov continued to write poetry and diligently amassed collections of Arabic verse authored by Daghestani scholars. His poetic exchanges extended beyond the realm of orientalists to include contemporary Muslim scholars, exemplifying how his professional fascination with Arabic poetry intertwined with his deeply personal engagement with the subject. Saidov not only collected poetry but also provided commentary and penned concise historical notes on Arabic poetry in Daghestan. His archive contains both original Arabic verses composed by Saidov himself and manuscripts of Arabic poetry that he collected over the years. Among the invaluable materials in his archive lies a draft of his Arabic notes on Arabic poetry discovered in the Avar regions of Daghestan. In these notes, he recounts encountering such verses, which span both *Jāhilī* and classical Islamic poetry, not solely in manuscripts but also in epigraphic forms, such as inscriptions adorning mosque walls, mausoleums, and even edifying verses etched onto tombstones. Furthermore, Saidov quotes several examples of these verses and offers commentary on vocabulary exclusive to the realm of poetry.[367]

Saidov's library comprises numerous poetic works from Classical Arabic and Persian literature, featuring renowned authors like Imru' al-Qays (d. 500), ʿAntara b. Shaddād (d. 608), Hammām b. Ghālib (al-Farazdaq, d. 728/730), Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Kinānī al-Baṣrī (Jāḥiz, d. 868/869), Abū-l-Walīd al-Buḥturī (d. 897), Abū Ṭayyib Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī (d. 965), Abū-l-ʿAlā al-Maʿarrī (d. 1057), Abū Muṣliḥ b. ʿAbdullāh Saʿadī Shīrāzī (d. 1291/92), Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Būṣīrī (d. 1294), and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1566), both printed and copied by him personally. His library also includes collections of Arabic poetry by modern authors such as ʿAbbās Fawzī (d. 1910), Fu'ād Ḥasan al-Khaṭīb (d. 1956), and Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (d. 1932). In fact, during more than 20 years of archaeographic field trips, I have not encountered a single collection in Daghestan that contains such a diverse range of Arabic poetry and fiction as Saidov's library. Saidov's extensive knowl-

[367] Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Qitʿā mukhtalifa min al-ashʿār*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 112.

edge of Arabic was a result of his profound appreciation for Arabic poetry and fiction, which encompassed rich allegories, idioms, metaphors, and stylistic tropes.

Saidov's impressive knowledge of Arabic was also acknowledged by his contemporaries. For example, during one of my interviews with Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov he recalled: "Muḥammad-Said did not have extensive knowledge of the Persian language, but his command of literary Arabic was outstanding. Especially in Arabic poetry, he was like God!"[368]

As for the works categorised within the Muslim tradition as 'rational sciences' *('ulum al-'aqliyya*), Saidov's library contains a significantly larger and more diverse repertoire of them than what we find in the majority of other Daghestani collections. These notably include works in the fields of astronomy, medicine, algebra, and geometry. However, Saidov, as a Muslim scholar, did not have a strong inclination towards these sciences. There are no records in his archive indicating an in-depth study of these subjects within an Islamic context. The abundant representation of these works in Saidov's library seems to reflect instead his orientalist interest in the history of Islamic rational sciences in Daghestan.[369] Strikingly, meanwhile, his collection contains next to no works in such genres as astrology, dream interpretation, edification, or occult subjects. The fact that he ignored these genres is quite understandable given the negative view of them taken both by Islamic reformers and by Soviet academic scholarship.

The repertoire of Islamic literature in Saidov's library reflects his multifaceted personality, situated at the intersection of Islamic and Soviet traditions. Poetry and fiction represent his personal interests and reflect the Islamic aspect of his character. In his professional capacity as a Soviet historian and linguist, he never delved into the literature of these genres as found in his collection. Conversely, his professional interest was piqued by essays in the natural sciences. He studied the works of

368 Interview with Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov (Makhachkala, February 15, 2011).

369 M.S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," 118–123; Muḥammad Sayyid b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī al-Sayyidī, "Ta'rīkh al-adāb al-'arabiyya fī Dāghistān", 1–14.

prominent Daghestani scholars who contributed to fields such as astronomy, medicine, and arithmetic. However, these sciences held little significance for him within the Islamic context. A similar perspective can be applied to his approach to Sufism. Despite his negative stance toward Sufism as a Muslim, he analysed Sufi works from the viewpoint of a Soviet historian, as highlighted in the second chapter. Historical and biographical literature, meanwhile, was of interest to him in his capacity both as Muslim scholar and as Soviet historian. In these genres, he continued the legacy of the *jadīd*s, who authored works in these areas during the Imperial era. During the Soviet period, some of these scholars were incorporated into Soviet academic institutions, where they continued to produce works in these genres.

Saidov's collection thus shows him combining the scholarly persona of Muslim *jadīd* poet and Soviet historian. What is striking is that there is no evidence of one of his personae predominating over the other, despite their ostensible mutual irreconcilability. Within the context of his self, Saidov's works demonstrate his mastery of both Islamic and Soviet academic traditions. Determining which took precedence is challenging, given the intricate interplay of Soviet and Islamic aspects in his character.

In conclusion, the three private collections described above, which were owned by contemporaries and were concurrently assembled and maintained, exhibit significant diversity in terms of the quantity of books and manuscripts across various genres and in the variety of works they encompass [tab. 13].

The divergence in genres among these three libraries allows us to draw insights into the diverse intellectual Islamic models prevalent in Daghestan in the 20th century, as well as the individual endeavours of private library owners in shaping their archival identities.

The holdings of state collections mirror a fusion of various models characteristic of Daghestan during this period. When we examine private collections individually, each forged under the subjectivity of its owner, a more intricate tapestry emerges. The heterogeneity of genre within individual private collections signifies that each owner was constructing their own scholarly persona based on existing Islamic models. Numerous other variations of persona aligned with one model or anoth-

er also existed. These personae, shaped by existing Islamic models and the composition of their respective collections, collectively constituted the shared intellectual milieu that was characteristic of Daghestan in the 20th century.

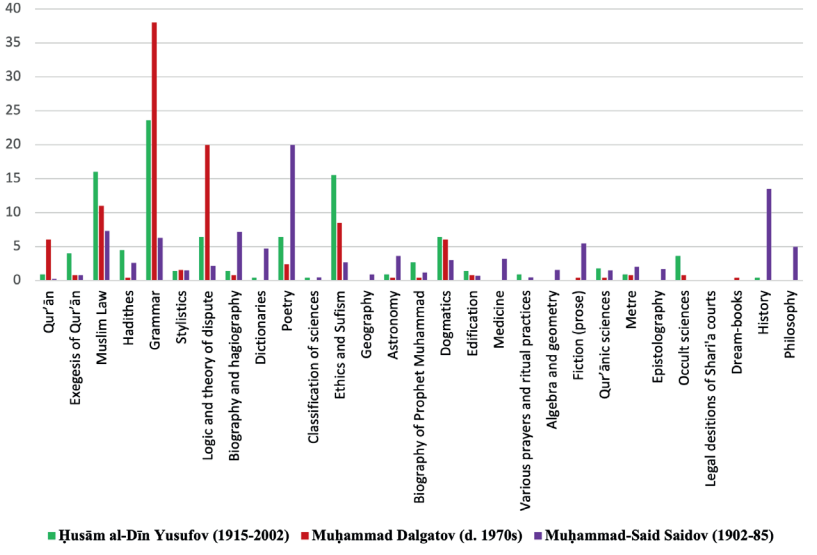


Table 13. Comparison the repertoires in three private collections (collections of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov, Muḥammad Dalgatov, Muḥammad-Said Saidov).

This chapter has demonstrated that private manuscript collections in twentieth-century Daghestan function not merely as repositories of historical texts, but as material articulations of scholarly personae. They offer insight into the intellectual orientations, ethical commitments, and self-representational strategies of their compilers. Through the case studies of Ḥusām al-Dīn Yusufov Muḥammad Dalgatov and Muḥammad-Said Saidov, we see how these collections reflect not only personal preferences and intellectual trajectories, but also the broader cultural and epistemic models of what it means to be a Muslim scholar. Saidov's collection stands out as a highly curated and ideologically charged archive, constructed over decades to reflect a persona that straddled rev-

erence for the Islamic scholarly tradition and the rationalist, philological imperatives of Soviet academia.

In contrast, Yusufov's collection reveals a different scholarly persona – one oriented toward spiritual authenticity and genealogical continuity. His archive, composed of carefully preserved and often personally annotated manuscripts from Khalwati and other Sufi lineages, suggests a lived fidelity to Sufi ethical ideals. Unlike Saidov, Yusufov did not engage in editorial reconfiguration or overt polemic; rather, his approach to the archive was one of custodianship and devotional preservation. His collection represents a form of authority grounded in the lived embodiment of a particular spiritual model and representation of the certain scholarly persona. Whereas Saidov's archive operates as a site of negotiation and transformation, Yusupov's serves as a space of affirmation and reproduction of Sufi norms.

Dalgatov's archive, meanwhile, reveals yet another mode of scholarly self-representation – one centred on his scholarly persona as both a teacher and a Sufi. His collection reflects a pedagogical persona shaped by texts on grammar, logic, and dialectics, alongside works from the Sufi tradition. This selection suggests a scholar who saw his authority not in legalism or jurisprudential mastery, but in the transmission of intellectual tools and ethical-spiritual refinement. The presence of both instructional and mystical texts indicates a dual commitment. In Dalgatov's case, the collection functions as a space for modelling the ideal of the morally and intellectually equipped Muslim teacher – one who guides both the intellect and the soul.

Together, these three collections illuminate the diversity of scholarly personae in Daghestan's intellectual landscape. Far from being uniform or ideologically neutral, manuscript collections emerge as deeply personal and politically significant acts of self-fashioning. Each reflects a different understanding of religious authority, textual legitimacy, and ethical responsibility. The collection, in each case, operates not merely as a storehouse of books, but as a performative space in which the scholar constructs and projects his scholarly persona.

This comparative perspective underscores the broader argument that manuscript collections in the Muslim world – especially in periods of

epistemic upheaval – should be read as texts in their own right. They are curated assemblages shaped by the values, polemics, and aspirations of their compilers. In this sense, the private collections become a medium through which models of religious subjectivity are not only preserved but actively produced and contested.

Ultimately, Saidov's example invites us to view manuscript collections as active resources in the shaping of intellectual history. They are not passive residues of the past but dynamic tools through which scholars like Saidov articulated, contested, and performed their place within a broader religious and epistemological tradition. The study of such collections thus opens up new perspectives on the formation of Muslim subjectivities – not as abstract models, but as lived practices inscribed in text, margin, and memory. It is through this lens that we come to appreciate the private archive not only as a window into the intellectual landscape of 20th-century Daghestan, but as a mirror in which the scholar sees and shapes himself.

CHAPTER 5

The Scholarly Persona in (Auto)-Biographical Literature

As we have seen in the previous chapter, despite the existence of a single broad literary landscape that was reflective of the general intellectual tradition of Daghestan in the late 19th and 20th centuries, each individual collection of books and manuscripts nevertheless differed from others. Each owner exercised subjective agency by amassing his own collection in accordance with his own intellectual preferences and literary tastes, and each collection reflects some version of the scholarly persona that its owner established for himself. In this present chapter, I shall consider how a certain type of scholarly persona and vision of what constituted the 'ideal Muslim' manifested itself in autobiographical, biographical and hagiographic literature in Daghestan.

Despite the broadly common educational tradition and shared Islamic intellectual landscape that existed in Daghestan in the 18th-20th centuries, each author nevertheless had his own distinct understanding of who he was and what values and norms he embodied. The variation between individual visions of the desired scholarly persona reflects the subjectivity of individual authors of autobiographical works who, in interaction with the surrounding intellectual and cultural landscape, exercised their autonomy to choose and curate the models of selfhood that were meaningful to them, while simultaneously ignoring or rejecting others. This does not mean, of course, that the models in question existed as objectively discrete entities, to be selected or rejected like items on a menu. Rather, they were dialogic, simultaneously influencing authors even as they themselves were given shape and contour by the authors who embraced or discarded them. Living in a cultural landscape that informed – though did not, I should emphasise, go so far as to simply *dictate* – each individual's values and preferences, each author articulated his own scholarly persona. The personae that we find delineated in various autobiographical works discussed below are thus not individual historical figures, but rather the aspirational archetypes that every author consciously or subconsciously evoked and articulated.

In (auto)-biographical literature, each author articulated an "ideal scholarly persona" that he envisaged for himself or wanted others to see in him. When talking about himself, an author sought to demonstrate how his individuality corresponded to this ideal image. And the wide

variation in scholarly personae encountered below reflects the individual subjectivity of each author. Clearly, therefore, we cannot speak in the abstract about some general Muslim subjectivity, since the contours and experience of this subjectivity will have been different for every Muslim. Personal interaction with one's cultural background and one's own perception of certain ideas, practices, and models directly determined the subjectivity of each individual. Thus, rather than speaking of 'Muslim subjectivity' we can perhaps speak more usefully about the 'subjectivity of individual Muslims.'[370]

Although there exists an extensive tradition of Islamic autobiographical writing on Daghestan, the works produced within this tradition lack a clearly defined structure that might otherwise enable us to separate them into a distinct genre. Rather, autobiographical narratives written by Daghestani Muslim scholars demonstrate that the tradition of 'writing about the self' is organically embedded in writings in other genres. Autobiography in the Daghestani written tradition is not so much a distinct genre as it an authorial concern animating and informing individual works that in terms of style and content are otherwise clearly identifiable as belonging to the genre of history, say, or Sufism, or Muslim ethics.[371] With reference to the Daghestani Islamic literature, I shall thus be using the term 'autobiographical essays', as distinct from autobiography as a discrete genre.

Below I present five autobiographical essays compiled by Daghestani Muslim scholars dating from the last quarter of the 18th century to the 1940s. In selecting these case studies, I have not done so simply at random. Key to the selection is the fact that Saidov himself was well ac-

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370 See: Bessmertnaia, O.Yu. "Chto nam delat' s «musul'mansko' sub'ektivnost'iu»? Perspektivy i «lovushki» issledovatel'skogo podkhoda v istoriograficheskom kontekste," 174–187.

371 Abū Bakr b. Muʿāwiya al-ʿAymakī, *Majmaʿ al-awbāsh* (Makhachkala: Dār al-Risāla, 2021); Ḥasan-efendī al-Alqadārī, Āthār-i Dāghistān (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1894); idem, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn* (Temir-khān Shūrā: al-Maṭbaʿa al-islāmiyya li Muḥammad Mirzā Mawrāyūf, 1913); Translation of this book see: *Gasan Alkadari. Divan al-Mamnun,* perevod s arabskogo i kommentarii I.R. Nasyrova (Moscow: Nauka – Vostochnaia literatura, 2020); Shuʿayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*.

quainted with all the works in question, and even with some of their authors. Saidov possessed in his collection copies of several of the autobiographical works discussed below; in certain instances, he transcribed his own copies of these works, or appended to them his own notes. All these works evidently served as inspiration for Saidov, and, alongside his Islamic and Soviet orientalist intellectual training, his engagement with these works was of key importance in shaping his own writings.

Some autobiographical essays are nothing but reminiscences of past events. While in a number of cases autobiographical essays provide the main topic of the narrative, with historical or didactic elements confined to the background,[372] others by contrast situate the autobiographical element as a mere passing detail encountered in the course of the historical that serves as the main plotline of the story.[373] As one reads such works, it is rather hard to draw a firm distinction between a story about oneself and a story about the world in which one has lived or the events that one has witnessed. Nonetheless, all autobiographical essays presented below – even when embedded within works of other genres – serve as clear articulations of scholarly persona. They reveal the type of scholar the authors aspired to become, or, at the very least, how they wished to be perceived.

372 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*; Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Kitāb ʻibārāt al-iʾtibār fī istiṣlāḥ al-aʻmāl bi qadar al-iqtidār*. Autograph. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 653h; the translation see: *Mukhammadtahir al-Karakhi. Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*, perevod s arabskogo i kommentarii R.S. Abdulmazhidova, D.M. Malamagomedova, M.G. Shekhmagomedova. (Moscow: Nauka – Vostochnaia literatura, 2014).

373 ʻAbd al-Raḥmān b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumuqī, *Kitāb al-tadhkira fī bayān aḥwāl ahālī Dāghistān wa Chachān.* Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 29b; ʻAlī b. ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥarb al-ahliyya fī Dāghistān*; idem, *Tadhkira*. Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 218.

Abū Bakr al-ʻAymakī: A Teacher and Legal Scholar

The earliest essay in which a Daghestani author supplies a short autobiographical fragment dates back to the second half of the 18th century, and was written by the scholar Abū Bakr al-ʻAymakī (1711–1791).[374]

The work itself, which he self-deprecatingly called *Majmaʻ al-awbāsh* (*The Fool's Collection*), is in fact a treatise on ethics, consisting of four chapters. The author called the third chapter "Of my innate and acquired traits of character". It is hardly possible to classify this chapter even as an autobiographical essay, let alone an autobiography. The author omits to mention multiple episodes from his life, including his birth, his studies, or his travels. Nor does he write anything about the people who surrounded him: his parents, his family, children, or loved ones. This essay, which we can only very tentatively label autobiographical, is written rather in the genre of Islamic ethics, with the author describing his own traits of character in order to talk rather about his inner self than about the events of his life, and disclosing his inner qualities which he measures against Islamic ethics. In effect, this essay, despite its autobiographical content, seeks primarily to discuss the upbringing of an ideal scholarly persona with its readers and is written as an address and "guidance for my brothers and grandchildren."[375] This part of the work is a form of ethical instruction, which the author explains using the example of his own personality traits which are correlated with Islamic ethics. It is evident that as the author was compiling this chapter, he was inspired by the work entitled *Laṭa'if al-minan wa-l-akhlāq* (though better known as *al-Mīzān al-kubrā*) by ʻAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʻrānī,[376] a manuscript of which, alongside al-Shaʻrānī's other work, was brought to Daghestan personally by Abū Bakr al-ʻAymakī, as he describes directly in his essay.[377] Since the earliest al-Shaʻrānī manuscript was copied in Daghestan by a certain Muḥammad Qāsim in Dhū-l-qaʻda 1199 /

374 Abū Bakr b. Muʻāwiya al-ʻAymakī, *Majmaʻ al-awbāsh*.

375 Ibid., 37.

376 ʻAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʻrānī, *Laṭā'if al-minan wa-l-akhlāq* (Damascus: Dār al-taqwā, 2004).

377 Abū Bakr b. Muʻāwiya al-ʻAymakī, *Majmaʻ al-awbāsh*, 43.

December 1784 – January 1785[378], we can date the composition of *Majma' al-awbāsh* by Abū Bakr al-'Aymakī to 1770–80.

In order to avoid accusations of self-aggrandisement from his readers, the author presents the narrative in the third section, adding derogatory epithets about himself, describing himself variously as feeble, wretched, stupid, weak in mind and body, and little-educated. Moreover, the author states at the very beginning of his narrative that all he has is what God has bestowed upon him and that none of it is due to his own merits.[379]

While addressing his audience and recounting certain episodes from his own life, al-'Aymakī constructs an imaginary representation of a scholarly persona that every Muslim should seek to emulate. The character traits, as well as the preferences or life choices that serve as personal qualities in al-'Aymakī's work, can be divided into several categories.

First of all, there is the author's relationship with his family. Al-'Aymakī writes that he always sought to please his parents and avoided anything that might anger them; he was always softly spoken when he addressed them, and always prayed for them when they were not around. As for his brothers, sisters, and other family members, al-'Aymakī also mentions his mildness in dealing with them, and his forgiveness if they did something unpleasant. At the same time, he emphasises that his commitment to God and to *sharī'a* as a whole is immeasurably higher than his love for his family. He directly admits that he would berate and admonish his relatives if they acted in ways that were in breach of *sharī'a* norms.[380]

The second category of personality trait that al-'Aymakī notes relates to his views of Muslim everyday life. Using his own example, al-'Aymakī writes that he studied sciences, taught them to his family members, and used the knowledge that he obtained in everyday life; he earned his keep and acquired a profession, using his free time to rest rather than to frequent idle gatherings of men full of useless gossip. This final point is noteworthy as it clearly relates to the Sufi tradition holding that while

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378 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, *al-Mīzān al-kubrā*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 1757a.

379 Abū Bakr b. Mu'āwiya al-'Aymakī, *Majma' al-awbāsh*, 37.

380 Ibid., 37.

a Muslim is asleep, he does not commit any unseemly acts and thus is spared from committing sins.

Further in his narrative, he moves on to recount his relationship with the people around him who were not his own blood relatives. Here he writes that he never swore and was always polite to people, especially his pupils. Furthermore, he notes, if anyone asked him to convey some rude words to someone else, he would substitute milder equivalents.

The next passage is a striking account of asceticism, which he depicts as befitting a scholar. He writes that he never sought wealth and did everything he could to avoid it, believing that the more possessions a man has, the greater responsibility he has to justify his acquisitions before God. Moreover, he recounts, he was fond of solitude, and if it were not for his pupils, he would have found a refuge in a mountain cave as he sought not to stand out in any way among men.[381]

Al-ʿAymakī goes on to describe, offering himself as an example, the appropriate role of a scholar in community and social life. He says that he never sought to become a Muslim judge (*qāḍī*) and always avoided that position, despite promises of a good allowance from those who sought to appoint him, which would have been tempting given his own straitened financial means. When he was told that one of his close friends, a man known for his piety, had begun to perform the office of a *qāḍī*, he was deeply upset. Moreover, when he was once invited to take up the position of *qāḍī* and teacher in the village of Kubachi, he declined, opting instead for a teaching post at the local madrasa. In particular, he remarked:

> If you wish me to engage in the same activities as your former *qāḍī*s, then I kindly ask you to leave me in peace in my homeland, so that all may remain content… I do not refuse to show benevolence to everyone by delivering sermons, educating people, and issuing *fatwās* to the extent of my ability. Yet, I do not wish to throw the rope of public burden around my own neck [by assuming the office of *qāḍī*].[382]

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381 Ibid.

382 This letter was incorporated into the manuscript of *Tawārīkh ʿulamāʾ Dāghistān* by the Daghestani scholar ʿAlī-Ḥājjī al-Saltī (1861–1946). The manuscript is pre-

To justify his choices, he quotes the example of Abū Ḥanīfa, who always rejected the office of *qāḍī*, in spite of his extensive legal expertise.[383] Moreover, al-ʻAymakī says of himself that he always avoided the company of rulers, and that even when some Daghestani ruler invited him to visit, he found a polite pretext to avoid coming. Once again, al-ʻAymakī justifies his choice by referring to the example of Abū Ḥanīfa, who also sought to avoid the company of powerful people. Here we can see one persona, in this case Abū Ḥanīfa, inform a new scholarly persona as represented by al-ʻAymakī himself – one that emulates Abū Ḥanīfa on account both of his legal knowledge (something that was very important for al-ʻAymakī himself) and of his ascetic disavowal of the temptations of office and status.

Al-ʻAymakī goes on to explain to his audience what constitutes the sciences, and what sciences a scholar should be guided by. To this end, he urges against the study of natural sciences and advocates exclusively the study of theology. Moreover, he writes that during his teaching, he paid close attention to *sharīʻa* subjects, according particular importance to the studying and teaching of Islamic law[384] – thereby reflecting an intellectual outlook that, as we saw in Chapter 1, was typical of the 18th century as a whole.

Al-ʻAymakī clearly believed that it was very important for scholars to teach and transmit the knowledge they have mastered to others. He becomes very animated when he describes the great joy of teaching and the fact that he never tried to make money from it. His main intention, he writes, was to pass on to his pupils all the knowledge that he had amassed, and this commitment was what was required of a teacher above all. His commitment was such that he travelled widely so as to communicate his knowledge to as many pupils as possible, despite the meagre wages that he received in return; as he writes, he "did not ask either for payment or for any goods in recompense for his teaching, nor for any respect to be

served in the collection of ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Magomedov from the village of Andykh, Shamil District, Republic of Daghestan. Translated from Arabic by M.G. Shekhmagomedov.

383 Abū Bakr b. Muʻāwiya al-ʻAymakī, *Majmaʻ al-awbāsh*, 39–41.

384 Ibid., 42.

shown him, being content to sustain himself for the most part with oatmeal bread, unflavoured with anything except occasionally vinegar."[385]

Abū Bakr al-'Aymakī thus used his autobiographical essay to present to the readers his vision of a scholarly persona. In his use of self-description to evoke a scholarly persona, we can see the imprint of his Sufi beliefs, and his firm conviction as to the necessity of ethical commitment and asceticism. It was this conviction that underlay his belief that teaching and transferring one's knowledge to others were much more important and necessary than holding the office of *qāḍī*. He argued that teaching was the duty of all scholars, and that in taking up this duty they should disregard their material interests. We can see that he is constructing his scholarly persona based on the 'moral subject' model offered by al-Ghazālī that we outlined in the Chapter 1. Even despite the fact that his work contains no references to the works of al-Ghazālī, we can still trace his autobiographical essay back to al-Ghazālī's ideas about the need for a close bond between ethical standards and the law, as well as the imperative to transmit acquired knowledge to others.

But al-'Aymakī does not simply draw wholesale upon al-Ghazālī's 'moral subject' model when conjuring up a scholarly persona. Availing himself of the autonomy to formulate his own personhood, he draws also upon elements from another, entirely distinct model, namely that of al-Quduqī's 'legal subject' (as when he writes that the main occupation of a scholar should be the study and teaching of Islamic law), and even adapting aspects of Abū Ḥanīfa's earlier persona. Out of the wide repertoire of models available in his time, including those of the 'moral subject' and the 'legal subject', he constructs a distinct new scholarly persona of his own. According to al-'Aymakī, the ideal scholarly persona associated with both 'moral' and 'legal' subject models is that of a teacher and a legal scholar.

385 Ibid., 44.

Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī: A Sufi Judge

Another work, *Kitāb ʻibārāt al-iʻtibār fī istiṣlāḥ al-aʻmāl bi qadar al-iqtidār* (*Book on the Importance of Improving One's Knowledge to the Best of One's Abilities*) was written by the Daghestani scholar Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī (1809–1880) about one hundred years after the work by Abū Bakr al-ʻAymakī, in the month of Safar 1295 / February 1878.

Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī was known in Daghestan as a prominent scholar who produced several works on Arabic grammar, metre, logic, and Islamic law. Having received an excellent education in the 1840s, during the Caucasian War he served as a *qāḍī* in the villages of Tliarosh, Gochob, Tsulda, and was a *muftī* in the Imamate of Shamil (r.1834–1859). Between 1850 and 1858, Muḥammad Ṭāhir served as Shamil's secretary and simultaneously wrote the history of the Imamate.[386] After Shamil's capture by the Russian authorities, he worked as senior *qāḍī* at the Daghestani People's Court already under the Imperial administration of the Caucasus.

Kitāb ʻibārāt al-iʻtibār by al-Qarākhī is an autobiographical essay in which the author weaves together the story of his own life with the historical events in Daghestan that he had witnessed and even taken part in.[387]

It is striking that at the very beginning of his work, the author notes that he was inspired and prompted to write the book by his reading of the above-mentioned work *Majmaʻ al-awbāsh* by al-ʻAymakī and *Mīzān al-kubrā* by al-Shaʻrānī.[388] Here we see that the reading of autobiographical essays of two scholars prompted him to assess his past life and use

386 Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Bāriqat al-suyūf al-jabaliyya fī baʻḍ al-ghazawāt al-Shāmiliyya*. Autograph. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, no. 653b. See translation: *Khronika Mukhammeda Takhira al-Karakhi o dagestanskikh voinakh v period Shamilia* perevod s arabskogo A.M. Barabanova (Moscow, Leningrad: Isdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941).'

387 *Mukhammadtakhir al-Karakhi. Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*.

388 Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Kitāb ʻibārāt al-iʻtibār*, fol. 1a; *Mukhammadtakhir al-Karakhi. Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*, 17.

the prism of his biography to provide instructions to the readers on the need to improve their spiritual life.

The autobiographical essay by al-Qarākhī is more immediately informative than al-'Aymakī's work. It contains more facts and straightforward descriptions of the people who surrounded the author: *qāḍī*s, provincial district-chiefs (*nā'ib*), the outstanding figure of Shamil himself, and representatives of the Imperial administration in the Caucasus that he had to deal with. The author's narrative follows the chronological principle, starting from an account of himself as a person who "from [his] very childhood had a thirst for justice and a hatred for oppression."[389] The persona that he constructs is an embodiment of asceticism, high moral qualities, fear of God, and a deep engagement with the study of sciences.

As noted by his contemporaries, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī was a Sufi, a disciple (*murīd*) of the Naqshbandi shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumuqī.[390] He stresses his reverence for the Sufi shaykhs and notes that he himself was a recipient of their generosity: "One of the pious people said that someone's special care and attention can be sensed around me. This must have been the grace that emanated from the [Naqshbandi] shaykh al-Yarāghī to reward me for being a sincere and loyal friend to his sons."[391] When describing his service under the Imperial administration, he recalls how he spoke up for the Naqshbandi shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣughūrī, who was considered to be the ideologue behind the 1877 uprising in Daghestan, and had been placed under house arrest. Thanks to his intercession, the Imperial authorities relaxed the rules so

389 Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Kitāb 'ibārāt al-i'tibār*, fol. 1b; *Mukhammadtakhir al-Karakhi. Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*, 18.

390 *Abdurakhman iz Gazikumukha. Kniga vospominanii,* perevod s arabskogo iazyka Mukhammad-Saida Saidova, redaktsiia perevoda, podgotovka faksimil'nogo izdaniia, kommentarii, ukazateli A.R. Shikhsaidova i Kh.A. Omarova, predislovie A.R. Shikhsaidova (Mahachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1997), 81.

391 Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Kitāb 'ibārāt al-i'tibār*, fol. 1b; *Mukhammadtakhir al-Karakhi. Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*, 18.

that the shaykh was allowed to communicate with his disciples.[392] Frequently throughout his narrative al-Qarākhī compares himself to a *dervish* and reports that the people around him referred to him in this way.

Like his predecessor al-ʿAymakī and the later authors who wrote about themselves, Muḥammad Ṭāhir places emphasis on morality. Something that al-Qarākhī shared with al-ʿAymakī was a common focus on the need for in-depth study of Islamic law. But while al-ʿAymakī is satisfied just with teaching Islamic law, al-Qarākhī goes one step further and contributes to its theoretical development by participating in legal debates with other Daghestani theologians[393] and, more practically, by working as a *qāḍī* and *muftī* under Shamil's Imamate, and then proceeding to serve as a senior *qāḍī* of the Daghestani People's Court in the Imperial period. This is the fundamental difference between him and al-ʿAymakī: whereas the latter was at pains to avoid taking up any official positions, the former served as a *qāḍī* for a lengthy period of time. In doing so, al-Qarākhī was not simply indulging in the temptations of power: indeed, his contemporaries commented on how extremely principled he was in the settlement of all issues, and how scrupulous he was in financial and material matters. We get a sense of this scrupulousness from the will that he left for his son Ḥabībullāh. The latter writes:

> When he was already sick and on his death-bed, my father addressed me with the following words: "I was *Dīwān-beg* (senior *qāḍī*) in Shūrā[394] under the imperial authorities, not of my own will, and in going to work for them I was not motivated by wages. Before I went to them, I had 30 *tuman*s of silver of my own hands. After I die, divide them between your-

[392] Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Kitāb ʿibārāt al-iʿtibār*, fol. 7b; *Mukhammadtakhir al-Karakhi. Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*, 38–39.

[393] His prolonged debate with another Daghestani scholar, al-hājj ʿAlī al-Aqūshī, regarding the legal practice of *naẓr* (votive will) is well-documented. See: Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Mas'alat nadhr*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 134; R.S. Abdulmazhidov, "Polemika ob otchuzhdenii sobstvennosti po "nazru" v Dagestane," *Islam v sovremennom mire: vnutrigosudarstvennyi i mezhdunarodno-politicheskii aspekty* 4 (2018), 183–200.

[394] In Temir-khān Shūrā, where the Daghestani People's Court was located.

> self and your sisters." Then he told me, while he still was alive, to separate the said amount from the rest of the money. Then he said: "Spend the remaining amount on the common good. I do not know if this money is licit, since I received it by dint of interacting with infidels and serving them. Nor do I know whether it is forbidden, for I was not performing this work of my own free will." I did as my father had instructed me, and I do not know the remaining amount of money; all I know is that it was a large sum.[395]

Thus, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī uses his narrative about himself to construct his own vision of a scholarly persona. At first glance, it seems that the persona constructed by al-'Aymakī and al-Qarākhī have a lot in common. For both individuals, morality and moral considerations are among the key defining qualities of a scholar. But when we take a closer look at the two men's autobiographical accounts, it becomes clear that despite some shared traits, they were relying on completely different models. While al-'Aymakī's persona relies on the 'moral subject' model, with a deep engagement with ethical matters, analysis of al-Qarākhī's self-description shows that his scholarly persona relies primarily on the 'reflective subject' model. As a Naqshbandi, he frequently emphasises his commitment to Sufi beliefs and practices. At the same time, his self-description and all his extant works indicate that he clearly avoided any esoteric practices such as the magic of numbers or letters and issued all legal judgments on the basis solely of *sharī'a*. The image that he presents of himself is thus far from that of an 'esoteric subject' model. The legal norms to which he paid close attention, along with his performance of Naqshbandi practices and his love and reverence for Sufi shaykhs, together indicate that he drew on a mixed repertoire when forming his persona, relying mainly on the 'reflexive subject' model with deep engagement with Naqshbandi ritual practices while drawing also on the 'legal subject' model.

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395 Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, *Kitāb 'ibārāt al-i'tibār*, fol. 9b; *Mukhammadtakhir al-Karakhi*, *Kniga o znachimosti stremleniia uluchshat' svoi deianiia po mere sil*, 43.

The key point that transpires from the two autobiographical essays discussed above is that when articulating a vision of the 'ideal Muslim' authors do not rely wholesale on a single model. Rather, they drew upon a palette of different models, framing their scholarly persona with reference to one main model but incorporating elements of other models at the same time. In the case of al-'Aymakī, we see that he framed his vision of the 'ideal Muslim' with reference primarily to the 'moral subject' model, while drawing also upon the 'legal subject' model. Al-Qarākhī, meanwhile, presents a scholarly persona which draws primarily on the 'reflective subject' model that was very popular in the 19th century, while simultaneously like al-'Aymakī incorporating elements of the 'legal subject' model. But although both al-'Aymakī and al-Qarākhī draw on the 'legal subject' model, we should note that they articulate this model somewhat differently from what we find in the period of its late 17th–18th-century heyday, in which moral norms arising from the concepts of Sufi ethics are subjugated to issues of legal ethics and the dominance of law in all spheres of Muslim life, where following the legal norms is considered to be definitive for determining a Muslim's morality.

Shu'ayb al-Bāginī: A Sufi Shaykh

The next autobiographical essay that we shall consider was written by the Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykh Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī (1856–1912) from the Avar village of Baginub and included in his work *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*.[396]

Shu'ayb al-Bāginī's autobiography is especially interesting because despite the fact that, writing within the Sufi tradition, he viewed the idea of personality as a manifestation of that corrupted selfhood that Sufis were bound to struggle against and master, he nevertheless presents his own autobiographical narrative as a means of articulating the ideal persona of a Sufi shaykh. In order to analyse this part of the autobiogra-

396 For the English translation of this text from Arabic, see the Appendix.

phy, below I shall provide a brief summary of it, as al-Bāginī described his own character.

The life of al-Bāginī, described by himself, is as a testament to a spiritual journey characterised by profound ethical rectitude, humility, and a conscious withdrawal from the trappings of worldly power. Born into a lineage of erudite scholars, al-Bāginī's path was determined long before his birth, as his father, the venerable Idrīs-efendī, fervently prayed for a pious and learned son. His very upbringing was steeped in sanctity and vigilance; his mother refrained from allowing any other woman to breastfeed him, in order to preserve the purity of his spiritual essence.

From his earliest years, al-Bāginī was nurtured in a household where scholarship and piety were the prevailing norms. At the tender age of three, he came under the close supervision of his grandfather, who predicted his scholarly destiny. His father initiated his Qur'ānic education early, marvelling at the child's precocious understanding and interpretative insight. Such was the rigour of his upbringing that al-Bāginī was kept away from all social amusements and gatherings, and thereby formed an austere temperament akin to that of lifelong scholars. He memorised complex theological and grammatical texts with remarkable speed and accuracy, often reciting them aloud under his father's strict tutelage.

Upon his father's passing, al-Bāginī was so overwhelmed with grief that he momentarily lost his ability to recall the texts he had committed to memory. His sorrow plunged him into a state of detachment from all worldly concerns. So intense was his mourning that he would lie on the ground lamenting, arousing astonishment among those who observed him. His lack of interest in material possessions reached such a point that he could not distinguish between different coins; nor did he value clothing beyond what chance brought him.

This early experience of grief and withdrawal appears to have solidified a life-long disposition towards asceticism and seclusion. Even as he resumed his studies, al-Bāginī's focus remained intensely inward, aimed at spiritual and intellectual refinement rather than public renown. His appointment as a *qāḍī* in Tsakhur village did not alter his lack of interest in public office; letters from state authorities, he confesses, felt

like ‘burning coal’ in his hands – a vivid simile for his aversion to power and proximity to rulers.

A pivotal moment in his spiritual journey occurred during his encounter with three renowned Sufi shaykhs in Tsakhur. Their guidance reoriented his perception of the material world, which he came to see as no more substantial than a shadow. From this point forward, he dedicated himself more fully to the Sufi path, receiving formal training and spiritual exercises under the guidance of shaykh *al-ḥājj* Qusay-efendī. Although granted the *ijāza* to teach the spiritual path (*ṭarīqa*), he initially kept this a secret for seven years out of humility and fear of spiritual presumpuousness.

His eventual public role in guiding others in the Naqshbandi brotherhood was not sought, but rather accepted reluctantly as a form of spiritual duty. Even then, he admits that each time someone approached him to receive spiritual instruction, he would tremble – out of reverence for God and unease in assuming the mantle of leadership. This deep sense of moral accountability and personal modesty shaped every aspect of his interaction with his community.

One of the recurring themes in al-Bāginī’s reflection is his lifelong struggle with modesty. He likens his sense of shame to that of a young maiden, stating that he could not bring himself to look into the faces of men, let alone women. His interactions with the opposite sex were marked by such restraint that even among his many spiritual followers – numbering over a thousand – he never looked at any woman more than three times. This intense sense of ethical decorum was not driven by social convention, but emerged as a sincere internalised expression of faith.

He tells us that he equally avoided interpersonal conflict and bore no hatred or jealousy toward his contemporaries – except in cases where individuals blatantly transgressed divine laws. Even when his property was forcibly taken, he refrained from showing enmity, maintaining civility and contact despite inner temptations to retaliate. His resistance to such negative inclinations, he affirms, was made possible solely by the strength and support of God.

His scholarly achievements were manifold, though never a source of pride. Among them was his editorial work on the challenging text *Silk*

al-ʿAyn, a feat that few scholars of the time, even within the Ottoman scholarly elite, could claim. Furthermore, he authored a comprehensive biography of his spiritual lineage, beginning with the Naqshbandi shaykh Ismāʿīl al-Kurdamīrī (1782–1848), thus preserving an essential record for posterity. These scholarly contributions were, in his own words, born not of pride but of obedience to divine will.

Spiritual vision and intimacy with the Divine formed another layer of his ethical world. A significant moment in his mystical development occurred when his master, Qusay-efendī, observed in him the spiritual imprint of the entire Qur'ān – a rare gift likened to the qualities of the four great Imāms. His love for all saints and prophets, both living and departed, underscored his spiritual inclusivity. He narrates a particularly moving encounter in Medina with the shaykh Yāsīn al-Miṣrī al-Madanī, who, after grasping his hand, declared that al-Bāginī had been recognised by the Messenger of God. The shaykh's words filled him with such joy that he nearly passed out. This episode encapsulates the spiritual depth of his experience and the validation he received from figures of great piety.

Equally remarkable is al-Bāginī's assertion that his spiritual guides continue to observe him from beyond the grave. Their satisfaction with his conduct serves as both comfort and motivation. He suggests that this ongoing spiritual companionship is a consequence of his strict adherence to the Naqshbandi way and his consistent inner purification. Receiving the blessing of one's shaykh, he insists, is a profound honour – one not easily attained nor lightly regarded.

At the culmination of his narrative, al-Bāginī addresses contemporary shaykhs and scholars in a trenchant admonition. He calls out those who lead others without proper authorisation, branding such conduct as arrogant and spiritually dangerous. In contrast, he describes his own extended periods of spiritual retreat and continual self-purification, acknowledging the challenges of even approaching the ideal of true ethical and spiritual completeness.

He insists that his words are offered not in vanity but in a sincere attempt to set a moral and spiritual standard. His autobiography is, in this sense, not merely a personal record, but a didactic tool, crafted to awaken the conscience of the reader and the heedless scholar alike. With a

mixture of stern rebuke and humble self-examination, al-Bāginī positions himself not as an exemplar to be admired, but as a mirror in which others might examine their own flaws.[397]

There are several points that are noteworthy about this autobiographical picture. Al-Bāginī's autobiographical essay is a clear articulation of the 'reflective subject' model as applied to the figure of an ideal Sufi shaykh. The persona is one that is manifested over the entire course of one's life. In al-Bāginī's telling, the first intimation of this persona is a symbolic one, when he describes his mother not allowing him to be breastfed by other women. He then recounts his love and affection for his grandfather and father, and his spiritual turmoil after the death of the latter. Spiritual bonds and emotions play an important part in his life story. Asceticism, avoiding the transient joys of this life, distancing from anything that distracts him from the study of sciences, are in his view integral manifestations of his persona. The works that he claims to have studied would have been quite sufficient for forming the persona of a scholar – but not, however, for forming the persona of a shaykh, which in al-Bāginī's view was something very different.

Following Sufism is an important feature of a scholar's persona. In al-Bāginī's understanding, it is not enough to study Islamic subjects such as law, *ḥadīth*, or dogmatics. An expert knowledge of these subjects and teaching them to others may make somebody a good scholar, but they in themselves do not make the individual worthy of being followed. Similarly, al-Bāginī indicates, esoteric knowledge (*'ilm al-bāṭin*), which is not susceptible to confirmation by evident knowledge (*'ilm al-ẓāhir*), is also insufficient for the cultivation of a shaykhly persona. Nor evidently does he regard as sufficient for said persona the conferral of esoteric knowledge through a dream or through spiritual communication (*rūḥaniyya*) with another shaykh – an outlook that distances him from the Khalwati tradition. In al-Bāginī's account, the shaykhly persona is contingent upon progressing along the Sufi way under the tutelage of a living shaykh.

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397 Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*, 434–440.

It is interesting to note al-Bāginī's conception of the role of the self. He makes it clear that his various positive qualities and achievements are not the result of his own intrinsic talents or efforts. Although, for instance, he mentions that he found studying relatively easy, and was thus able to learn many writings by heart, he stresses that such ability was simply a consequence of what God bestowed upon him. He thus defers to the Sufi tradition of interpreting the cult of saints (*wālī*, pl.: *awliyā'*), who are under the protection of God. In this telling, personal initiative, talents, will, rationalism and reason are all simply relegated to the background, in a move that clearly distinguishes al-Bāginī from the 'legal subject' model. This is not to say, however, that al-Bāginī's autobiographical account conveys no sense of individual subjectivity. Among other things, he mentions his achievements and positive qualities, such as editing *Silk al-'ayn*, knowing the Qur'ān by heart, his modesty and becoming bashfulness in front of people, and his love of prophets and shaykhs. All of these are his individual qualities, which he describes and which become in his self-description an expression of his own shaykhly persona.

In his autobiographical essay, Shu'ayb al-Bāginī imagines and represents the persona of an 'ideal Muslim' that every Muslim should emulate. In his understanding, Sufism occupies an important place in the rearing of an 'ideal Muslim'. Despite the fact that he was a *qāḍī*, he mentions this detail only in passing, without focusing on it. He talks more about his relationship with the Sufi shaykhs, who for him represent a model of Muslim purity, morality and decency.

In the final analysis, al-Bāginī's life presents a profound example of how ethical conduct, humility, and separation from political authority can shape a spiritually rich and morally coherent existence. His self-imposed distance from rulers and positions of power was not borne out of cowardice or indifference, but from a deep understanding that true authority in the Sufi tradition comes not from titles, but from inner transformation, proximity to the divine, and the trust of one's spiritual lineage.

At first glance, the biographies of al-Bāginī and Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī are very similar to each other. Both individuals were Sufis, both were *qāḍī*s during the Imperial period, and both went through approximately the same system of education – and they even were born

and lived in neighbouring villages. At the same time, there are significant differences between their respective perceptions of the persona of the ideal Muslim. Whereas al-Qarākhī as a Muslim judge was highly integrated into imperial institutions, Shu'ayb al-Bāginī tried to distance himself from them and to avoid any contact with the imperial administration. As he writes: "…although I was appointed as a *qāḍī*, I regarded the letters from rulers to me as a burning coal in my hands, for I had no desire for offices or being near to the authorities."[398] This attitude to administrative office and authority is the essential difference between the two men. After much deliberation, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī agreed to take the post of chief *qāḍī* in the Imperial Daghestani People's Court, and in the course of his duties he had close contacts with Russian Imperial officials. For al-Qarākhī, his position of *qāḍī* was more important than his passion for Sufism. Al-Qarākhī believed that becoming a *qāḍī* would bring more benefits to Islam and to Daghestani Muslims, whereas a deep immersion in Sufism would bring benefits in the afterlife only to himself, and not to Muslim society.

Al-Bāginī tried to avoid any contacts with the imperial officials and in his essay repeatedly criticised the Russian authorities as well as all those Daghestanis who were in imperial service.[399] Al-Bāginī believed that being a Sufi shaykh would bring more benefits to Muslims through

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398 Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*, 436.

399 In particular, in his work, al-Bāginī repeatedly writes in very negative terms about Russians and Daghestanis who serve the Russians: "The damned Russians burned nine villages of the Samur region … The enemy of religion, the Russian General-Major Tarkhanov, may he be cursed … These damned Russians captured the state of Shamil … May God be preserved by his mercy and the favor of Istanbul and our Daghestan lands from all troubles and hardships, the misfortune of the reign of the Russian state, as well as from the devilish English state and other unbelievers (*kāfirūn*) states. And may the Almighty God turn their intrigues and misfortunes emanating from these states against themselves, and may God abandon the Russians and other unbelievers to the mercy of fate … The time has come for the death of pure *sharī'a* and the dominance of the damned unbelievers, Russian wicked over the Daghestan lands … .. Now in Daghestan there are too much of unbelievers and are increasing amount of hypocrisy and wicked from among the Daghestanis, who serve as a damned Russian…", (Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī,

introducing them to Sufism and educating them – these, in his opinion, being the only activities that can help rear an ideal Muslim. In this way, he unequivocally presents for himself the persona of a Sufi shaykh, in so doing drawing upon the 'moral subject' and 'reflective subject' models – with the latter assuming particularly salient importance.

Thus, in narrating his own life, al-Bāginī simultaneously constructs his vision of the ideal scholarly persona. In his view, this ideal is embodied exclusively in the figure of the Sufi shaykh – one who guides others not so much in matters of Islamic law or dogmatics, but primarily in their spiritual cultivation. For al-Bāginī, it is the Sufi shaykh alone who may rightfully serve as the exemplar of the ideal scholarly persona.

Ḥasan al-Alqadārī: a Teacher, Poet, and Reformist

The next work that we shall explore is *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*[400] (*Mamnun's poetry collection*[401]), by the Daghestani scholar Ḥasan al-Alqadārī (1834–1910). This work includes more autobiographical information than the texts considered above. In terms of genre, it can be classified as poetry, with the author constructing his autobiography by first recounting the story of his ancestors and then proceeding on to the narrative of his entire life, interweaving this narrative with an account of the events that he was a part of. The structure of al-Alqadārī's autobiography is thus similar to the above-mentioned *Kitāb 'ibārāt al-i'tibār* by Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī. However, whereas al-Qarākhī embeds his autobiographical account within a wider historical context, al-Alqadārī places his autobiography centre stage, with wider historical events serving to frame this story rather than the other way round.

Al-Alqadārī embeds his autobiography within items of correspondence and poetry. He recounts certain events from his life, and he com-

Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya, 187–188, 381, 384, 395).

400 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*.

401 *Mamnūn* was the literary pseudonym of Ḥasan al-Alqadārī.

poses poems to mark each specific occasion to which he accords particular attention. Some of these poems have no addressee and reflect a certain emotional state – be this love of God, fear of Him, joy of meeting this or that scholar or of returning home, love of his motherland, grief over the death of his son or wife, or yearning for his dead wife. His other poems are written as responses to specific addressees who have posed questions to him.

While speaking of himself or the events in his life, al-Alqadārī frequently cites verses pertaining to the event in question or reflecting his emotions at the time. Poetry allows him to make a greater emotional impact on the audience than would be possible with prose, and it serves as a way for the author to convey the full range of dimensions of his selfhood.

His description of himself reveals his familiarity with, and adherence to, a wide repertoire of different models. This familiarity seems to be reflective of his particular life trajectory. Al-Alqadārī studied the subjects and books that were widely available in his time within the Islamic educational tradition. Apart from Arabic-language writings on grammar, law, dogmatics, and logic, al-Alqadārī also learned Turkic and Persian, which allowed him to turn to the Persianate cultural tradition, with a focus on studying classical Persian poetry. His study of the latter was so successful that he wrote poetry in all three languages – Arabic, Turkic, and Persian – using the symbols, imagery, metaphors, and metonymy typical of Persian poetry.[402] Access to Turkic and Persian languages opened up wider opportunities for his literary studies, including access to contemporary Ottoman literature.

Al-Alqadārī begins his verse autobiography by praising the Prophet Muḥammad, and then moves on to poems dedicated to ʿAlī, Fāṭima, and their children Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. During his lifetime, al-Alqadārī had regular close contact with Shīʿi scholars both in Derbend and in Azerbaijan, and was even invited by Shīʿi *akhund*s to take part in ritual funerary events commemorating the death of Ḥusayn.[403] Al-Alqadārī doubtless be-

402 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*, 8, 34, 53, 68, 119, 134, 143, 150, 232, 236, 254, 261, 274, 274.

403 Ibid., 52, 139–142.

came familiar with the Shī'a tradition through his knowledge of Persian literature. Such familiarity evidently gave rise to accusations that he harboured Shī'i sympathies,[404] in response to which al-Alqadārī wrote the following verse, confirming his allegiance to the Shāfi'ī legal tradition:

> Following the *rāfiḍī*s[405] is not my religion,
> Or my belief.
> But if love for the closest relative of the Prophet Muḥammad
> Is a sign of being a *rāfiḍī*, then consider me to be one of them.[406]

Al-Alqadārī's career as a teacher is also worth mentioning. There is an entrenched belief in Soviet literature that al-Alqadārī had founded a new-method school in his native village, where he supposedly taught pupils the 'secular disciplines'. Leaving aside the question of whether the dichotomy of 'secular' vs. 'religious' subjects within the Islamic tradition is in fact a useful or meaningful one, his putative foundation of a secular school, as described by Soviet historians,[407] is itself the subject of some doubt. See, for instance, how al-Alqadārī writes in *Jirāb al-Mamnūn*:

> Upon my return from exile in 1883, I restored (*aṣlaḥtu*) the derelict building of a madrasa in the village of Alqadar and set out to teach the pupils who came from different districts.[408]

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404 Ḍamīr-efendī al-Nūradī, *Al-radd 'alā Ḥasan al-Alqadārī fī mas'alat taqdīm 'Alī*. Institute of History's collection, Makhachkala, *fond* 14, no. 2794a.

405 One of Shī'ī sects, i.e., "Twelver Shī'a" sects. See: E. Kohlberg, "al-Rāfiḍa," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 06 February 2023 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573–3912_islam_SIM_6185

406 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*, 20.

407 M.A. Abdullaev, *Iz istorii filosofskoi i obshchestvenno-politicheskoi mysli narodov Dagestana v 19 v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), 216–217; A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Gasan-efendi Alkadarskii: zhizn' i tvorcheskoe nasledie," *Zhizn' i tvorcheskoe nasledie dagestanskikh uchenykh 19 – nachala 20 vv.: voprosy istoriografii i istochnikovedeniia*. (Derbent: Tipografiia-M, 2016), 5–20.

408 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*, 9.

There might be a temptation here to construe the word 'restored' (*aṣlaḥtu*) in figurative terms, as relating to 'educational reform' (*iṣlāḥ*),[409] but in fact the meaning is much more straightforward, namely that al-Alqadārī 'repaired' the madrasa from its previous state of disrepair. Of course, al-Alqadārī was doubtless quite familiar with the new method of education, which was widely popular in the late 19th century. Through Ḥasanbek Zardabī (1837–1907), the founder of the Azerbaijani newspaper *Ekinchi*, where he used to publish some of his poetry,[410] al-Alqadārī was also familiar with the ideas of Ismā'īl Gasprinskii (1851–1914) concerning the need to reform the Islamic education system, which were popular at the time among Turkic Muslims in Russia.[411] He was also acquainted with Zanalabidin Tagiev (1838–1924), an Azerbaijani industrialist and art patron, who provided financial assistance to Turkic schools; he donated funds for the publication of al-Alqadārī's historical work Āthār-i Dāghistān in St. Petersburg. At the same time, though, al-Alqadārī himself does not seem to have been part of that so-called 'jadidist' project to introduce Muslims to the system of European values and to teach Russian in Islamic madrasas. From various autobiographical details that we can glean from his work, we see that al-Alqadārī in fact taught a range of subjects that were highly conventional in Daghestan, such as grammar (from old-method textbooks), logic, Islamic law, and dogmatics; at one point in the work, furthermore, he lists the disciplines that in his view ought to be studied, and notably fails to mention any 'secular' subjects among them.[412] Nor evidently did al-Alqadārī regard the new-method

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409 For more on the terms "*iṣlāḥ*" and "*tajdīd*" as "reform" and "renewal", see: Shamil Shikhaliev, "Muslim Reformism in Dagestan (1900–1930)," 35–63; Michael Kemper, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Qadimism and Jadidism in Twentieth-Century Daghestan," 593–624.

410 *Istoriko-literaturnoe nasledie Gasana Alkadari*, ed. by A.R. Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1988).

411 Edward J. Lazzerini, "Ğadidism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: A View from Within," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 16 (1975), 245–277; Ahmed Kanlidere, *Reform within Islam: The Tajdid and Jadid Movement among the Kazan Tatars* (Istanbul: Eren, 1997); Stephane A. Dudoignon, "Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 37 (1996), 13–40.

412 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī. *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*, 262–264.

teaching system to be the only correct one, despite the claims made by Russian historiographers. We note, for instance, that in one of the poems addressed to his grandson who was studying at a new-method school in Nukha, al-Alqadārī instructs him not to be content with mastering the new-method system, but also to learn everything that the old-method educational system offers as well: "Make use of both educational methods".[413]

We get a sense of Ḥasan al-Alqadārī's liminal, or transitional, position within Islamic reformism in Daghestan also when we consider his views on legal matters, and particularly the relationship between *taqlīd* and *ijtihād*.[414] After a long period of criticism targeting the practice of *ijtihād* in the Daghestani tradition, al-Alqadārī was notable in rehabilitating the scholarly reputation of Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī, who had been instrumental in promoting *ijtihād* in 18th-century Daghestan.[415] More evidence concerning Ḥasan al-Alqadārī's cautious preference for *ijtihād* and the blurring of boundaries between the legal schools (*madhhab*s) is provided by his positive reaction to the reformist scholars to whose opinions he referred when issuing certain legal decisions in his works *Dīwān al-Mamnūn* and *Jirāb al-Mamnūn*. For instance, al-Alqadārī writes in his *Dīwān al-Mamnūn* that he was presented with a book by Shah Walīullāh al-Dihlawī, who was known as a proponent of *ijtihād* in the Islamic legal tradition. Al-Alqadārī was so impressed by the book that he dedicated a special *qaṣīda* to it and its author.[416]

He also paid considerable attention to natural sciences, such as mathematics and astronomy. Within these sciences, he identified what constituted 'old' knowledge and advocated the need for studying contemporary advances in these areas:

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413 Ibid., 253.

414 Rebecca Gould, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Beyond the *Taqlīd*/*Ijtihād* Dichotomy: Daghestani Legal Thought under Russian Rule," *Islamic Law and Society* 24:1–2 (2017), 142–169.

415 V.O. Bobrovnikov, M.G. Shekhmagomedov, Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, *Fikkh i musul'manskii obychai v rossiiskom Dagestane: istochniki i issledovaniia*, 166–185.

416 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*, 179–180.

I have twice looked through books
On natural sciences, and I found
That the old writings are full of errors,
Whereas the new works are awe-inspiring
And more worthy of attention.[417]

At the same time, al-Alqadārī noted that he a high regard for works published in Istanbul. Given that he was writing at the very end of the 19th century, it is clear that al-Alqadārī was referring here to various publications on natural sciences translated by Turkish scholars or written by them on the basis of new research by European scientists in these fields. For instance, he writes to one of his friends as follows:

If you want to learn something new [about natural sciences],
Then study them in Turkish translations,
Which have been printed in great numbers in Istanbul.
Read them, and you will realise how fundamental they are.[418]

Ḥasan al-Alqadārī's maternal grandfather, Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, and his father 'Abdullāh were Naqshbandi shaykhs,[419] which means that he also had access to the 'reflective subject' model. In fact, however, he was quite sceptical of Sufism, and he certainly never gives any indication that he himself was a Sufi. Moreover, we do not see any echoes of or references to Naqshbandi literature in his writings. Of course, he does say in his autobiography that when he had been in Astrakhan, he made a 'holy visitation' (*ziyāra*) to the tombs of the Sufi shaykhs buried there, including the Naqshbandi shaykhs Tawakkulī Buba and Maḥmūd al-Almālī[420]. However, he seems to have regarded this *ziyāra* visit not as Naqshbandi ritual practice but rather as an expression of the wider Islamic tradition

417 Ibid., 48.
418 Ibid.
419 Ibid., 70.
420 Ibid., 177.

of the veneration of saints. In his poetry, meanwhile, we can discern certain Sufi motifs. In one of his poems he writes as follows:

> It looks like you have tried wine from the cup of eloquence…
> His speeches to me were sweeter than ripe wine…
> And if you want to drive the sadness and woes away and taste some wine,
> Turn to his poems.[421]

Clearly, the wine that he mentions is a trope derived from Sufi poetry and is used as a metaphor for being drunk on the knowledge of God. But this is more of a case of him borrowing poetic phrases from Classical Islamic poetry than any real engagement with Sufism. Moreover, the allegories and metaphors relating to 'wine' or 'inebriation' were typical more of the Khalwati tradition than that of the Naqshbandi. Clearly, al-Alqadārī's adherence to rational knowledge and commitment to exploring the world by means of reason did not allow him to follow the Sufi tradition; in his view, the world, God, and all things are to be perceived and understood by empirical means.

By the time Shamil was taken captive in 1859, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī had already received a good education and maintained close ties with contemporary scholars; by this time, he had been working for the imperial civil servant Yūsuf-khan Kurinskii, and so had first-hand knowledge of all the events relating to the Caucasian War. Since 1866, for twelve years, al-Alqadārī was in Imperial service as the district-chief (*nā'ib*) of South Tabasaran, initially holding the rank of junior ensign (1867), then sub-lieutenant (1870), and finally lieutenant (1874). During this period, he also gained a good knowledge of the Russian language and culture. Moreover, he did not reject the Russian language, unlike some of his contemporary theologians. It is not accidental that in one of his poems, written as an instruction to his son who went to study in Temir-khān Shūrā, al-Alqadārī advises him not only to study all sciences in Arabic and Persian, but also "to be diligent in the study of the Russian language".[422]

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421 Ibid., 32, 209, 93.
422 Ibid., 134.

Clearly, al-Alqadārī's cautious adherence to the practice of *ijtihād*, the blurring of the boundaries between the Islamic legal schools, and his interest in rationalism and natural sciences together all imply that he was in part a proponent of the 'reformist subject' model. At the same time, however, his deference towards Sufism as an ethical standard for the behaviour of Muslims prevents us from completely associating him with this model, as is the case also with Saidov.

In the autumn of 1877, al-Alqadārī was apprehended for his sympathies towards those involved in the anti-imperial uprising of 1877 and for neglecting to report the impending rebellion to the tsarist authorities. Following a seven-month incarceration in the Derbend prison, al-Alqadārī was released and subsequently resumed his educational pursuits in his village Alkadar. In March 1879, he faced a second arrest, resulting in his exile to the Tambov province, specifically to the city of Spassk. In June 1883, thanks to an imperial amnesty declared by Emperor Alexander III, he returned to Alkadar, where he resided almost uninterruptedly until his death in 1910.[423]

During his time in exile, al-Alqadārī maintained close ties with the local Tatar community.[424] His good knowledge of Turkic and the Persian tradition, which still remained popular among the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region, allowed him to find some common ground with the local Tatar theologians who did not see him as a representative of an alien culture and often invited him to their family or religious events.

Ḥasan al-Alqadārī held a strongly critical view of attempts to defy Russian imperial rule. While he does not speak out against the Daghestani *imām*s Ghāzī Muḥammad and Shamil, who had immense authority among local Muslims, and whom his own grandfather al-Yarāghī had served as teacher, he nevertheless writes that their military resistance to the Empire was the cause of the persecutions suffered by all the residents of the region at the hands of the Russian authorities. Subsequently, following the end of the Caucasian War, al-Alqadārī also condemned those Daghestanis who spoke out against imperial power, including the

423 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī. *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*, 155–162, 168–173.
424 Ibid., 174–180.

participants of the 1877 uprising in Daghestan. In his poems, he criticises their senseless cruelty towards Russians and claims that it was their actions that forced the Russians to destroy settlements and execute the most active figures in the uprising and exile others. In al-Alqadārī's view, the actions of the imperial authorities were simply a response to the heedless behaviour of the Daghestanis who had provoked the retaliatory measures.[425] In *Dīwān al-Mamnūn,* al-Alqadārī attributed his exile by the Imperial authorities not to his involvement in the uprising but rather to the machinations of envious imperial officers who envied his impeccable service to the Russian Empire.[426] Al-Alqadārī's criticism also targets representatives of the aristocracy, who, in his account, incited local residents to rise against Russian rule out of a sense of resentment at the Russians' imposition of limits to their own personal authority. As for imperial power itself, meanwhile, he praises it by saying that following the end of the Caucasian War, the imperial authorities "established good administrative arrangements satisfactory to the needs of its residents".[427] Al-Alqadārī describes the magnanimity that Russians showed after the capture of Shamil, when they treated him mercifully and nobly, showing respect to Shamil and his family and presenting them with rewards. At the same time, he claims that resisting the Empire is futile and writes as follows:

> In the hunt that the Russians have begun,
> The hare will not be saved by the speed of his legs or by his cunning.[428]

In some of his poems touching upon the events of the Caucasian War, he gives a subtly critical assessment of the actions of Shamil and his followers. In particular, he recounts a narrative relayed to him by his teacher, Mirzā-ʻAlī al-Akhtī (1771–1859). In September 1848, the Russian garrison stationed in the fortress near the village of Akhty found itself un-

425 Ibid., 91.
426 Ibid., 7.
427 Ibid., 63.
428 Ibid., 65.

der siege by Shamil's forces. The siege persisted, and Mirzā-ʻAlī, who aligned himself with Russia and thus sought refuge within the fortress, opted to approach Shamil, hoping that his status as a Muslim scholar would earn him clemency. Regrettably, Shamil apprehended Mirzā-ʻAlī and compelled the 77-year-old man to traverse the journey on foot from Akhty to the village Irib under guard.[429] Subsequently, he was incarcerated in a prison (*zindān*), where he endured harsh conditions for nearly a year. He was eventually released in exchange for the release of some of Shamil's supporters who had been held in Russian captivity. Al-Alqadārī describes Shamil's *murīd*s sent to guard him as 'bandits'.[430] At the same time, he gratefully lists the honours and rewards he received from the Russian Government for his own loyal service.[431]

Towards the end of his life and his book, as if drawing a line under his life, al-Alqadārī offers an overview of his attitude towards imperial power, as well as all the troubles and uprisings that he witnessed during his lifetime. Thus, describing a celebratory event organised to mark the 50th anniversary of the capture of Shamil, al-Alqadārī writes:

> All the surviving witnesses of Shamil's capitulation were invited to the festivities. They were shown how the situation had changed for the better for these lands and their population, so that they could draw a lesson therefrom; they realised the scale of Russia's military might and harboured no more thoughts of an armed uprising against it.[432]

Considering all the trials and tribulations of the Caucasian War, as well as the lawlessness that was rampant in Daghestan before it, al-Alqadārī states in his verses that Russian imperial dominion in Daghestan was a good thing, and that life in Daghestan changed for the better after the Russian victory:

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429 The walking distance between Akhty and Irib is more than 150 kilometers.
430 Ibid., 44.
431 Ibid., 92.
432 Ibid., 271.

> Look at what happened [in Daghestan] after the victory [of the Russians],
> You shall see that our land has become like the eternal gardens of paradise,
> They are adorned with tall and spacious houses.
> Straight, wide roads have been built,
> Along which people can move swiftly and safely.
> And everywhere, conditions have been created allowing people to trade…[433]

Throughout his writings, therefore, al-Alqadārī demonstrates that he had access to a wide range of various cultural templates, from the Persian-language tradition, reformism and Sufism and to the Russian cultural landscape. When recounting his own life, al-Alqadārī constructs for himself a biographical trajectory that draws upon all the above models. By drawing selectively upon this repertoire, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī's autobiographical account is broadly similar to the biographies of the three other scholars whose autobiographical writings we have considered above. Al-Alqadārī received the same general Islamic education as his predecessors, though unlike the three others he drew extensively also upon the Persianate literary tradition, at a time when this was no longer commonly the case in Daghestan. Like Abū Bakr al-ʿAymakī, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī had a profound knowledge of legal matters, as evidenced by his legal opinions in *Jirāb al-Mamnūn*.[434] Here we see the undoubted influence of the 'legal subject' model on him. Like al-ʿAymakī, al-Alqadārī spent much of his life engaged in teaching, believing that education plays a dominant role in the upbringing of the 'ideal Muslim', and that he had a responsibility to share with others the expertise that he possessed. This clearly shows al-Alqadārī's perception of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's ideas about the need to pass on knowledge to others, which reflects the influence of the 'moral subject' model on al-Alqadārī. Like Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qarākhī, meanwhile, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī had close contacts with the Russian imperial administration and was even integrated into its institutions for some time. And being the grandson of a major Naqshbandi shaykh

433 Ibid., 273.

434 Rebecca Gould, Shamil Shikhaliev, "Beyond the *Taqlīd*/*Ijtihād* Dichotomy: Daghestani Legal Thought under Russian Rule," 142–169.

Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, he, like Shuʿayb al-Bāginī, was undoubtedly directly related to the 'reflective subject' model.

At the same time, however, despite the broad structural similarities between his autobiographical account and the other, al-Alqadārī nevertheless presents what is clearly his own distinct persona. Unlike al-ʿAymakī, who rejected any rational sciences, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī writes at length about the need for Muslims to study these subjects, and is at pains to show off his own mastery in the fields of history, natural science, mathematics and logic.[435] Unlike al-Qarākhī, meanwhile, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī makes clear that he never held the position of *qāḍī*. And whereas al-Qarākhī wrote that he collaborated with the Russian imperial administration only when required to do so, al-Alqadārī voluntarily and actively collaborated with imperial authorities, maintaining a favourable disposition towards them. Even after his exile, he continues to express his positive attitude towards the Russians, their culture and science. Unlike Shuʿayb al-Bāginī, who displays an uncompromisingly negative attitude towards the Russians, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī takes the view that the inclusion of Daghestan into the Russian Empire brought nothing but benefits to the Daghestanis. This opinion seems in fact to have earned him notoriety in certain quarters: indeed, al-Bāginī classes him in that category of Daghestanis whom he calls 'the wicked and the hypocrites' on account of their service to the Russian Empire. Unlike al-Bāginī, meanwhile, al-Alqadārī clearly distances himself from Sufism. Without explicitly rejecting or criticizing Sufi beliefs and practices, he nevertheless makes clear that he has more respect for the early Persianate Sufi tradition, which was not heavily institutionalized, than for the likes of the contemporary Naqshbandiyya.

Thus, we see that rational sciences, teaching and poetry together play a leading role in al-Alqadārī's ideas. By drawing on the range of models available to him, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī builds his own scholarly persona – namely that of a teacher-poet and a reformer who closely interacts with Russian culture. As we shall see, this persona is in fact very similar to the one that Saidov crafted for himself. Like al-Alqadārī, Saidov pri-

435 Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, *Jirāb al-Mamnūn*, 9–14, 29–41, 47–49, 82–90, 251–253.

oritised the importance of rational knowledge, was fond of poetry, had a cool attitude towards Sufism, served for a long time as a teacher, and closely interacted with Russian culture and literary tradition. Perhaps this similarity explains why, during the course of his research at the Institute of History in Makhachkala, Saidov chose to produce a Russian-language study exploring the legacy of Ḥasan al-Alqadārī.[436] Al-Alqadārī's persona of a teacher-poet and reformer was evidently one that Saidov found meaningful, relevant and attractive.

Gamzat Tsadasa: A Soviet Poet

Finally, it may be useful to consider some autobiographies that are closer to Saidov's own lifetime, were composed by his contemporaries, and have a direct connection to him. One such work is the autobiography of Gamzat (Ḥamza) Tsadasa (1877–1951), an Avar national poet from Daghestan, a former Muslim scholar and *qāḍī*, winner of the Stalin Award (1951) and double recipient of the Order of Lenin (1944, 1947), from whom Saidov learned Arabic.

Gamzat Tsadasa's life and activities during the Imperial period were very similar to those of hundreds of Muslim scholars who were his contemporaries. He received an excellent Islamic education in various Daghestani villages, and then served as a *qāḍī* in a number of locations. He combined his positions of *imām* and *qāḍī* with teaching at the mosque and the madrasa. He set up a small madrasa at his own home, where he kept pupils that he partially paid for himself. In 1917–19, he was a member of the Khunzakh Sharī'a Court, and in 1923–25 he was its chairman. From the mid-1920s, he began to juggle a career as a poet with that of a Soviet public figure. In 1925, he was elected a deputy of the Khunzakh District Council of Workers' Deputies; in 1925–32, he was a record manager at the Khunzakh District Executive Committee; in 1934,

436 M.-S. Saidov, *Dagestanskaia literatura na arabskom iazyke: Khasan iz Alkadar, ego tvorchestvo i nauchnaia deiatel'nost'* (1970). Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3*, opis'* 1, no 237.

he joined the Union of Soviet Writers, and in the same year, he became a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Daghestani Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic; and in 1950, he was elected a deputy of the USSR Supreme Council. Meanwhile, in 1921 he began to publish his first poems in the newspaper *Krasnye Gory* (*Red Mountains*), and the following year, his poems were reprinted multiple times in a large number of copies.[437]

In Saidov's archive, I discovered a translation of Gamzat Tsadasa's autobiographical poetry. The original of this autobiography dates back to 1937 and appears to have been written in Avar using the Arabic script because Tsadasa was proficient in the Arabic language and did not know any Russian. Later, in the 1950s, Saidov translated it from Arabic-script Avar into Russian.[438]

The fact that the translation is Saidov's own is, I suggest, significant, reflecting as it does his subjective interpretation of this richly suggestive work. A succinct account of this section of the autobiography is presented below so as to compare it with the previous autobiographies that we have discussed.

The author opens his account with an admission: he is the son of a pauper, born into a home so impoverished that even the flat stone placed at the threshold, in lieu of a door, seemed a heavy and fitting emblem of destitution. His father, he writes, never once wrapped himself in a blanket, and passed away upon straw, having never known the feel of an undershirt. Such was the world from which he emerged – devoid of privilege, rooted in hardship, and profoundly bound to the soil he never fully left behind, despite life's adversities.

Of his birth, the author speaks with a kind of measured indifference: the exact date or even month is unknown to him. By his estimation, twenty of the years he has lived fall within the era of Soviet rule, while the

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437 See more on him in: *Istoriia dagestanskoi sovetskoi literatury*, ed. by R. F. Yusufov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1967); G.G. Gamzatov, *Gamzat Tsadasa: zhizn' i tvorchestvo do revoliutsii* (Makhachkala: Daguchpedgiz, 1973).

438 For the English translation of this manuscript from Russian, see the Appendix.

remainder belong to the imperial regime, which, in his view, brought little benefit to people like him.

At the age of seven, he writes, his father passed away, and the care of an elderly and infirm mother fell to his young shoulders. The household grew silent and empty, and he alone remained under a roof stripped of warmth and bread. Soon after, he was sent to a neighbouring village to learn Arabic. He notes that during the Imperial period, when he studied in a madrasa, there were no schools in the modern sense – none that called upon the children of the poor to study, nor did the state offer any assistance. Education, as he experienced it, was directionless and unstructured: a single lesson per day, held near the mosque. His teachers and surroundings he sardonically dubs "a path of ignorance laid down by *qāḍī*s".

As he describes it, his life during the Imperial period as a student was meagre. They subsisted on whatever could be boiled over a fire fuelled by straw. He recalls going around begging door to door on Fridays in the villages where he studied. Such abject poverty defined ten years of his education. One of those years was spent working with other youths, rafting timber from the highlands of Daghestan to the lowland slopes; another he laboured in Grozny, where he contracted malaria and remained unwell for four years.

With evident bitterness, he remarks that true learning eluded him: the lessons were poor, the instructors barely literate, and he himself remained sidelined among the students. His name was remembered only when there was writing to be done, thanks to his fine penmanship – particularly in documents dealing with the imperial authorities. In all other respects, he was passed over. He concedes, with resignation, that despite his efforts, he never experienced the sweetness of true knowledge.

Upon returning home, he found little but desolation. His mother had died, and his six sisters were either deceased or married off. The house stood like an orphan, circled by crows. Meanwhile, his peers were leading their children hand in hand, and he remained alone. He recalls how people teased him – was it not time to marry? He did not resist the idea, but, as he puts it, happiness seemed to elude him. With characteristic self-irony, he attributes this misfortune to two things: his extreme pover-

ty and his "large nose". Moreover, his reputation as a songsmith – an unorthodox trait among religious scholars – cast further suspicion upon him.

Fate, however, eventually softened. He married a woman named Khandulai. With warmth and gentle humour, he describes how "two minds and four hands" brought new life to a dilapidated home. The heavy stone at the threshold gave way to a proper door; the owl's nest on the balcony was replaced by a white dove. He was registered in the village records as a peasant. Thus began a new chapter – one marked by labour and domesticity.

At the same time, the author writes, he found himself acting as a *mullā*, though he stresses that he only "played the part", and never sought the position. When people came with pleas, he found it difficult to refuse. He asserts that he never exploited others' labour and always remained close to the common peasants. His pen served the people: he assisted in legal matters without charging a fee. He notes with evident pride that he gladly joined in communal affairs, shared in the burdens of others, supported the poor, and stood shoulder to shoulder with the village youth when they rallied to help those in need.

With quiet dignity, he affirms that he did not engage in "the useless work of the *mullā*". By this, he means that he never wrote talismans for payment, never gave hollow sermons while rattling prayer beads, never traded in the illusion of piety. He deliberately distanced himself from superstitious practices: he did not tie protective knots to ward off wolves, nor parade sabres through the village in hopes of dispelling illness. He did not sprinkle water to stave off pestilence, nor subscribe to the pseudo-scholarship of wandering preachers who regarded eclipses as signs of divine wrath. He declares openly that he was alien to such "games of religion". He stood in opposition to deceit and mystification. He openly criticised the *kulaks* and called out corrupt religious figures. His songs, he writes, composed in a living vernacular, struck directly at the "rotting roots of power".

The revolution holds a prominent place in his reflections. The old regime, he claims, was "mad" – sustained by the oppression of peasants. The khans, long grown fat on the labour of others, grew uneasy as their dominance began to falter. The entire state, built on slavery and khanate

rule, began to tremble under the force of change. The people, he writes, rose "like a stormy sea", directionless but defiant. The October Revolution of 1917 marked a decisive turn, though it did not put an end to the struggle for power. Those who dreamed of restoring the khanate also rose to vie for power.

Writing about the turbulent events of 1917–19, the author makes his position clear: he did not seek authority, did not pose as a saint, and never profited from other people's fear. He remained what he had always been – an honest, simple man, a peasant, and a poet. His life, as he presents it, is a chronicle of resilience, integrity, and refusal to deceive. He does not claim sainthood, but he has striven, he says, never to become a hypocrite.[439]

This text is particularly interesting for our purposes because it is an autobiography written by a contemporary of Saidov who was known to him personally. Much of what Tsadasa writes about – the events between the revolution and the Civil War, the nuances of Islamic education, the features of certain Islamic practices – would have been intimately familiar to Saidov, and in reading this text we are encountering a world in which Saidov himself lived.

Rather than merely recounting facts, Gamzat Tsadasa constructs his self-image through deliberate rhetorical choices that align him with the rural proletariat. He opens his narrative with vivid, almost emblematic images of poverty – a stone in place of a door, the absence of a blanket or undershirt – framing his life story within the paradigm of hardship and deprivation. This emphasis on humble origins and suffering under the Imperial regime is not merely autobiographical detail; it is a strategic positioning that echoes the ideological imperatives of the Soviet era. By foregrounding his class background and identifying with the downtrodden peasantry, Tsadasa effectively legitimizes his voice as that of an authentic representative of the people. As we shall see, Saidov employs a comparable repertoire of self-presentation techniques in his own offi-

439 *Avtobiografiia Gamzata Tsadasa*, translation from Arabic-script Avar into Russian by Muḥammad-Said Saidov. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 44.

cial autobiography, drawing on similar motifs to craft an image consistent with the expectations of Soviet ideological discourse.

In fact, the position of *qāḍī* held by Tsadasa first as a member of the *sharī'a* court and then as its chairman meant that he belonged to a privileged social group which often had no less authority than the local aristocrats. An impoverished childhood and orphanhood were a common cliché in Soviet literature, serving to a emphasise a marked contrast between the Imperial period and the new Soviet era which was presented as an improvement on what had gone before.

Gamzat Tsadasa is similarly a little economical with the truth in the account that he gives of the system of Islamic education that existed in his childhood. As we saw above, he recounts how poor people were unable to access education, and how the pupils were starved and were obliged to beg for alms every Friday. In actual fact, even the imperial colonial civil servants who were less than sympathetic towards the Islamic education system wrote that "education is available to any highland boy. In every aul, there are one or two people who teach children to read and write for a piece of bread; there are schools at every mosque where those eager to learn can continue their studies".[440] Studies at a madrasa or mosque were free for all highlanders, and pupils, *qāḍī*s and madrasa teachers (sing. *mudarris*) were all supported by the community. As for the pupils, their situation was not as dire as Tsadasa describes it. Starting from the late 17th century, following a number of *fatwā*s issued by Daghestani scholars, it became commonplace practice in Daghestan to allocate some of the mandatory tax (*zakāt*) to help with the maintenance of students. Indeed, Saidov himself described this practice:

> Al-Quduqī developed a system for the mountains of Daghestan which provided the pupils with grain for their sustenance. Al-Quduqī issued a *fatwā* for the feasibility of saving a part of the *zakāt* raised for a whole year in safe places and of allocating it in accordance with the need to feed the pupils. Thus, each pupil received one measure of grain (14 kg)

[440] Peter Uslar, "O rasprostranenii gramotnosti mezhdu gortsami," *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh* 3 (4), Part 1 (Tiflis, 1870), 3.

> a month from the store created out of *zakāt* takings, as well as one measure for five pupils to be exchanged for fat (tail fat or melted butter). In the context of highland life, this provision was a well-designed system which sustained the pupils who came from poor mountain families. Depending on the presence of a major scholar in the village who could teach sciences to the visiting pupils, it was determined what part of the *zakāt* received (a third or a half) should be allocated for sustaining the pupils.[441]

Saidov himself had first-hand knowledge of such a practice of supporting students (*nafaqa*) out of *zakāt* takings, because he himself had received such support, which he describes in his memoirs (as discussed in Chapter 6). Of course, the amount of grain that could be allocated to feed the students depended on the wealth of the community itself. But the villages of the Khunzakh region where Gamzat Tsadasa and subsequently Saidov received their education were sufficiently large and well-off to sustain students. Moreover, the practice of students receiving raising additional support (*nafaqa*) was a widespread tradition that was commonly practised in Daghestan, as recorded in the letters from madrasa pupils addressed to important figures requesting them to make a voluntary contribution to help with their support. Apart from the mandatory tax to sustain the destitute, including pupils, the residents of the village also gave voluntary contributions (*ṣadaqa*) which were considered a deed pleasing to God (*thawāb*).

Further in the text, the author directly criticises the Islamic education in Daghestan during the Imperial period, claiming that literacy levels were backward and that teachers were ignorant. In fact, the Muslim clerical elite was the most educated part of Daghestani society. Apart from literary or theological texts, Daghestani Muslim scholars also produced original works on history, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. The average graduate of an Islamic madrasa or those who, like the au-

441 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Obshchii obzor dagestanskoi literatury na arabskom iazyke 17–19 vekov* [*A general outline of Daghestani literature in Arabic from the 17th-19th centuries*]. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 163, fols. 13a–13b.

thor, had studied Islamic subjects for 10 years, had a wide-ranging expertise in various fields, from theology to natural sciences and poetry.

On the face of it, Tsadasa's criticism of the Islamic education system may seem to share certain similarities with reformist criticism of the old-method education system. But in fact, the respective critiques are somewhat different. The pre-Soviet *jadīd*s themselves were particularly exercised by the absence of a curriculum and a standardised educational time-frame.[442] While Saidov himself was aware of this critique and indeed shared it, this was not the opinion of Gamzat Tsadasa himself, who was not a proponent of the Muslim reformist movement. Indeed, Saidov notes in his memoirs that Gamzat Tsadasa "had a brilliant knowledge of Arabic, which he had studied using the old-method system (*al-namaṭ al-qadīm*)".[443] Rather than a *jadīd* criticism of the old system of Islamic education, Tsadasa is here instead offering a distinctly Soviet criticism – one that coincides in part with certain details of the *jadīd* critique, but whose sources and motivations are very different.

In his poem, Gamzat Tsadasa uses the slightly condescending term '*mullā*s' to describe the representatives of the Islamic clerical elite. In so doing, he is following a widespread tendency in Soviet satirical texts to replace such terms as '*qāḍī*', '*imām*', '*mu'allim*' and '*mudarris*' with what in the Soviet period became the derogatory single term '*mullā*'. His choice of terminology here is again perhaps a conscious political move, seeking to obscure what in the Soviet period was the rather embarrassing fact that he had once served as a *qāḍī* and later as chairman of the Khunzakh Sharī'a Court. Of course, he could not entirely overlook the fact that he had served as a *qāḍī*, so instead self-deprecatingly refers to himself as a *mullā*, thereby papering over the question of what exactly his duties and responsibilities had been. At the same time, he is at pains to emphasise his proximity to the lower social classes as viewed within the Soviet system, whom he refers to as 'peasants'. Moreover, he claims

442 A.R. Navruzov, *"Dzharidat Dagistan" – araboiazychnaia gazeta kavkazskikh dzhadidov* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Mardzhani, 2012), 43–56.

443 Muḥammad-Sayyid b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Awārī. *Murūr mi'at 'āmm min al-mīlād Ḥamza b. Muḥammad al-Tsādī*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 522, fol. 1a.

that he became a *mullā* not of his own accord but rather at the request of the community with which he maintained close ties, thereby helping to organise and participate shared social support networks helping the community. Even then, however, he claims that he nevertheless tried to set aside his office and become a simple shepherd – this latter being almost the archetype of an oppressed social class within the Soviet paradigm. And he is careful also to distinguish himself from other *mullā*s, emphasising that unlike them he never took any property from orphans, and that he took no part in Islamic practices denounced by the *jadīd*s as 'superstitions' (*khurāfāt*) and later criticised by the Soviet authorities as 'relics of the ignorant past'.

Professional literary critics have highly commended Gamzat Tsadasa's poetic talent. His poetry, which is believed by a number of scholars to outshine even the works of his famous son, poet Rasul Gamzatov (1923–2003), is characterised by its subtle satire, richly expressive language, depth, and vibrant imagery. At the same time, Gamzat Tsadasa's undoubted poetic talent was supplemented by his in-depth expertise in Arabic-language subjects, such as metre, poetic theory and classical Arabic poetry, which he had studied within the context of the Islamic educational system, which he himself had berated. Saidov himself noted that Gamzat Tsadasa "had an excellent command of Arabic and dived deep into the sea of knowledge (*tabaḥḥara*) in the areas of Islamic law, rhetoric, and stylistics",[444] and that "in order to perfect his works, Gamzat made brilliant use of his knowledge of Arabic".[445] The Soviet regime did nothing to contribute to his education and intellectual growth, because Tsadasa was never a student at any Soviet educational establishment, and did not even know any Russian. The merit of the regime, in Tsadasa's eyes, was that it gave him an opportunity to write and publish his poetry in the Avar language, and actively sought to promote Tsadasa's works by providing the readers with an ideologically consistent image of a So-

444 Ibid.

445 Magomed-Said Saidov, "Mutalim ob uchitele," G.G. Gamzatov, E.V. Spivak, *Vospominaniia o Gamzate Tsadase: 1877–1951* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1991), 127.

viet poet. We can witness such ideological bias in the examples of other early Soviet poets and writers. Professional Soviet translators of poetry who worked with texts by Daghestani poets subjected their originals to a considerable amount of stylistic and textual editing, which sometimes altered their meaning. This is clearly visible in the case of another national Daghestani poet, Suleiman Stalskii (1869–1937), whose poems were deliberately edited by translators who altered the ideological context of his works, making them more 'Soviet'.[446] Such talented, or even brilliant, Daghestani poets as Maḥmūd of Kakhab-Roso, Gamzat Tsadasa, Etim Emin, Irchi Kazak, Suleiman Stalskii and others would probably have remained little-known under the Imperial regime, perhaps only familiar to a narrow circle of specialist scholars. Due, however, to the Soviet Union's national policies and a wide-ranging promotion of cultural autonomy in the marginal ethnic regions, these clearly talented poets and writers became known to wide audiences.

Thus, in the personality of Gamzat Tsadasa, we see a completely different persona from those that we have encountered above. Although he had a rich Islamic background and boasted a former career as a *qāḍī* and madrasa teacher, during the Soviet period he completely rejected any sense of Islamic self-perception. This was in part, of course, a form of survival tactic, whereby he tailored his autobiographical narrative in such a fashion as to conceal certain details from a Soviet state that was profoundly suspicious of religion and religiosity. But his verses were not simply programmatic statements of Soviet political correctness: after all, we are talking here about a text in which Tsadasa is articulating his creative selfhood, and at some level the non-Islamic picture that accrues seems to be reflective of the persona that Tsadasa was forming for himself.

There is of course an irony here, namely that it is specifically thanks to Tsadasa's deep knowledge of Islamic literature and Arabic poetical theory that he is able to render in verse the non-Muslim picture of

446 See, for instance a critical analysis of the translation of the poetry of Suleiman Stalskii published during the Soviet period: F. Nagiev, *Poeticheskoe nasledie Suleimana Stal'skogo. Problemy tekstologii* (Makhachkala: Poligraf-Servis, 2000).

himself that he offers. But it is an irony that he does not acknowledge: throughout his works, including his autobiography, there is no acknowledgement that his poetic talents depend, among other things, on his outstanding knowledge of Islamic literature. Instead, Tsadasa consciously presents himself as a Soviet poet, ignoring the Islamic context of his life and any of the various Islamic models of selfhood that may have shaped his early life. It is difficult to say whether Tsadasa was guided by Islamic social realities during his lifetime, just as we do not know whether he observed Islamic practices such as prayer, fasting, and *zakāt* during the Soviet period. Certainly, he says nothing about doing so, but this is again unsurprising given his visibility as a significant public figure who indeed was personally acquainted with Joseph Stalin: any public declaration that he observed Islamic rituals would doubtless have incurred a negative reaction from Soviet officials. Similarly, it is unclear whether he was buried according to Islamic traditions; certainly, though, like other contemporary Soviet poets, he was buried not in the Muslim cemetery, but on a separate square in Makhachkala, and a Soviet monument was built over his grave.

Saidov's interest in Gamzat Tsadasa's autobiographical account seems not to have been merely accidental. As one of Tsadasa's former pupils, Saidov knew him personally, and retained close ties with him for decades, starting from the time when he was a pupil in the latter's house in 1917 right up until Tsadasa's death in 1951. The two men were very much products of the same Islamic educational system, for instance, even though they differed in their interests: whereas Tsadasa was a *qāḍī*, Saidov never saw himself as a theologian, and he had little interest in matters of Islamic law. Where the two men's interests most closely met was in their shared passion for poetry; Avar poetry, which was little known in the Imperial period, was particularly important to both of them. In the figure of Tsadasa, therefore, Saidov virtually saw the image of himself, and in reading and translating these poems into Russian, he found himself involuntarily thrown back to his own past.

In this section, we have explored how Daghestani authors built their scholarly persona in autobiographical works. Tsadasa's autobiography,

like those of other writers we have examined, played a significant role in shaping Saidov's perspective. Despite the fact that Saidov did not write an autobiography of his own, Saidov's interaction with these literary works and the various models they presented greatly influenced how he perceived and presented himself to others. For example, Saidov frequently addresses the importance and value of poetry, in a fashion akin to Gamzat Tsadasa. Like al-Alqadārī, he pays tribute to natural sciences, reason, and rationalism; like al-Qarākhī and al-Alqadārī, he engages with government institutions; and in underscoring the significance of teaching he echoes al-'Aymakī.

Saidov, however, does not directly expound upon his own life but instead articulates a scholarly persona indirectly through his library, as was discussed in Chapter 4, and while composing biographies of others or in his own works on poetry and history.

His subsequent career choice, leading him to become a Soviet teacher and an orientalist scholar, closely intertwines with the Islamic education he received during both the Imperial and Soviet eras. In this context, we observe a certain resemblance between Gamzat Tsadasa and Saidov. Tsadasa harnessed his profound knowledge of Islamic disciplines and Arabic literature to establish himself as a Soviet poet. By contrast, Saidov leveraged his Islamic experience to establish himself as a Soviet teacher and scholar.

Biographical Dictionaries and Hagiographies

Biography and hagiography are both forms of what we might call life-writing, but they differ in their main themes and their treatment of the individuals under discussion. Biographical works centre on factual accounts and events from the lives of individuals, encompassing elements such as childhood, education, career, family life, and other related facets. In contrast, hagiographic literature directs its attention towards the spiritual dimensions and the faith of the saint, encompassing their devotional practices, miraculous achievements, and spiritual impact on others.

I suggest that biographical and hagiographic literature (*tarājim*, *ṭabaqāt*, *manāqib*) extends beyond mere descriptions of individual life stories. In the context of examining Muslim subjectivity, biographical authors portray the ideal Muslim persona, or, as we shall see below, the ideal scholarly persona. Unlike the afore-mentioned autobiographies, where al-ʻAymakī, al-Qarākhī, al-Bāginī, al-Alqadārī and Tsadasa conveyed their conception of a scholarly persona through accounts of their own lives, the authors of biographical works depict a scholarly persona instead through recounting the lives of others. In the subsequent discussion, I will explore several Arabic-written biographical dictionaries and hagiographic works of Daghestani scholars from the 20th century.

One significant such work is Nadhīr al-Durgilī's *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān* (*Delight of Minds from the Biographies of Daghestani Scholars*) which covers the biographies of over two hundred Daghestani scholars between the 11th and 20th centuries. These biographies are arranged in chronological order, starting with 11th-century Derbend scholars and finishing with Nadhīr al-Durgilī's own contemporaries. Al-Durgilī evidently completed the *Nuzhat al-adhhān* at some point in or after 1931, as indicated by a passage in the draft of this work.[447]

I have found fragmentary drafts of the *Nuzhat al-adhhān* in several collections. One fragment from an autograph draft of this work was found in the collection of ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Kaziev, whom we encounted in Chapter 3, in the village of Nizhnii Dzhengutai.

Another draft of the work, again an autograph, is held in Saidov's archive. This draft is notable for including the biographies of several scholars which are not included in his main edited work, and for appending some strikingly critical comments about the individuals in question. For instance, regarding a scholar by the name of Ghazanūf al-Gubdānī (1871–1942) he writes as follows: "He held fanatical beliefs and was hardened in his convictions… He never completed his education, or he would have become one of the pearls of his time".[448] When describing the

447 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' al-dāghistāniyyīn*, fols. 36a.
448 Ibid., fols. 55b–56a.

life of the Tatar scholar Bayazid Khayrullin,[449] Nadhīr writes: "Bayazīd Mullā b. Khayrullāh is not very skilled in Arabic, but he draws knowledge from the Tatar books written in his own language".[450] In relation to his contemporary Abū Sufyān Akaev, Nadhīr al-Durgilī writes as follows:

> He wrote a book called *Du'ā' majmū'*, which contains multiple lies, as many scholars know. The Tatar scholar Ismā'īl Gasprinskii wrote a negative review of this book and published it in his newspaper *Terjimān*: It would have been better if Abū Sufyān had never published his book.[451]

In making such comments, al-Durgilī shows himself to be capable of acidulous judgment. Strikingly, however, he omitted these afore-mentioned entries from the main edited text of *Nuzhat al-adhhān*, where Nadhīr al-Durgilī is entirely positive about all the individuals under discussion. In this latter telling, nearly all the scholars were accomplished major Muslim scholars who penetrated into "the subtleties of sciences". This discrepancy in coverage and tone between his draft and edited text can be explained as follows. Al-Durgilī used his drafts and biographical notes about Daghestani scholars as his supplementary materials. Since he was using these drafts for his own work on the main text, he allowed himself some critical comments about certain scholars. But his completed work was probably intended for a wide audience. In this context, scholarly biographies were more than just a source of information for his contemporaries and future scholars. The biographies of scholars cited in *Nuzhat al-adhhān* were evidently meant to serve as edifying exemplars that everyone who studied Islamic sciences should strive to emulate. Al-Durgilī clearly intended the *Nuzhat al-adhhān* to be a didactic message to all those who would read his book in the future. Towards this end, all the scholars whose biographies are included in *Nuzhat al-adhhān* are presented as ideal figures. Indeed, the biographies in *Nuzhat al-adhhān*

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449 On him see: I. Minnullin, A. Minvallev, "Sufizm v sovetskom Tatarstane: k postanovke problem," *Gasyrlar avazy (Ekho vekov). Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1 (2007), 240–251.

450 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' al-dāghistāniyyīn,* fol. 35b.

451 Ibid., fol. 44a.

serve to articulate various ideal scholarly personae reflecting a range of models: legalists, a Sufis, linguists, scholars with an in-depth knowledge of logic, exact or occult sciences. Thus, in al-Durgilī's understanding, his completed work on the biographies of Daghestani scholars would serve both as a source of knowledge, including historical information, but also as an articulation of the image of an 'ideal scholarly persona' as personified by various scholars, each of whom is carefully disassociated from any of the negative characteristics that he mentions in his drafts. Any individuals towards whom in his drafts he is more generally critical, meanwhile, he omits from the final text.

It is evident that al-Durgilī in his work has presented biographies of Daghestani scholars spanning diverse fields of expertise, offering complimentary portrayals without singling out any individual as a distinct scholarly persona, as demonstrated in the preceding autobiographies. Instead, it may be argued that in his work *Nuzhat al-adhhān* al-Durgilī presents a broader concept of the 'ideal Muslim' which transcends any particular scholarly category. In his perspective, the ideal Muslim is inherently a scholar, with specialisation in a specific domain of knowledge – be it law, linguistics, or poetry – being of secondary importance. The paramount criterion is the scholar's ability to deduce ethical and moral precepts from sacred texts, discerning between what conforms to *sharī'a* law and what is prohibited, thereby fostering personal morality and adherence to Islamic principles. In this regard, there is a clear alignment with the idea that reason plays a central role in molding the 'ideal Muslim,' which is a distinctive feature of the 'reformist subject' model's representation of the role of Islamic education in the upbringing of Muslims.

Another work of biography that was produced at much the same time as al-Durgilī's *Nuzhat al-adhhān* was *Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*, by 'Alī Kaiaev. Three versions of this study have survived in Arabic, Lak and Azeri Turkic respectively, with the two latter ones written in Arabic characters. The Arabic and Lak versions of this work are housed within the

collection now possessed by his grandson, Ilias Kaiaev. The Turkic version of his work is preserved at the Institute of History in Makhachkala.[452]

In writing his book, ʻAlī Kaiaev drew upon various written sources, collected letters and amateur biographical essays, interviewed elders, and analysed the data he collected based on a critical approach to his collected sources. The structure of the work is similar to that of al-Durgilī's. The biographies of Daghestani scholars are here arranged in chronological order. First come biographies of a number of 11th-century Derbend scholars, which are rendered here in more detail than in *Nuzhat al-adhhān*.

In his work, ʻAlī Kaiaev generally focuses on the positive qualities of the scholars whom he describes, but unlike the edited text of al-Durgilī's *Nuzhat al-adhhān* he also adds some critical comments about certain individuals. Thus, when recounting the lives of several Daghestani theologians and characterising them as accomplished specialists in the fields of law, astronomy, mathematics, and logic, ʻAlī Kaiaev writes as follows:

> Saʻīd al-Harakānī would occasionally drink alcohol and allowed rulers to use it until they were lightly inebriated, despite the fact that these rulers did not stop at this and reached extreme stages of intoxication in their use of alcoholic beverages… Although Shaytān-ʻAbdullāh[453] al-Ṣughūrī reached great heights and perfection in astronomy and mathematics sciences, he was nevertheless fond of alcoholic beverages, did not have the willpower to restrain himself, and went so far in his craving for alcohol that he had to sell household utensils. He would then sink so low as to steal whatever came into his hands from his wife's belongings and

452 ʻAlī b. ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Terājim-i ʻulemā-i Dāghistān* (in Turkic). Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 25*, opis'* 1, no. 1; this manuscript was translated into Turkish, see: Ali Kayayev. *Terâcim-i ulemâ-yı Dagıstan: Dağıstan bilginleri biyografileri*, eds by Tûbâ Işınsu Durmuş and Hasan Orazayev (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2012).

453 ʻAbdullāh al-Ṣughūrī (d. 1830) was a Daghestani scholar who specialized in mathematics and astronomy. He calculated the movements of the orbits of the heavenly bodies and predicted lunar and solar eclipses. For this, the inhabitants called him ʻShaytān-ʻAbdullāh' or 'Devil-ʻAbdullāh', believing that he predicted these phenomena by communicating with the devils.

> to sell them in order to buy alcohol… ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm al-Tsuyshī, like his teacher Saʿīd al-Harakānī, drank alcohol in moderation and issued a *fatwā* that allowed this. He made a habit of drinking alcohol before the start of lessons, then would anoint himself with fragrances and begin the lesson. He said that alcohol made him more active in teaching… Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī spent most of his time working with poetry and literature so that he reached considerable heights in this compared to his contemporaries. His poetry is very eloquent and demonstrates that he was greatly talented, indeed one of the best versifiers among numerous Daghestani poets. At the same time, he was engaged in literary and poetic plagiarism. I heard from many of those who read and analysed his poetry that Najm al-Dīn used to steal from the works of ancient poets, especially from the collection by the well-known al-Abyūrdī [d. 1113]. He selected whatever he liked, sometimes borrowing the text itself and sometimes its meaning, presenting them as his own compositions.[454]

This inclusion of negative material perhaps suggests that ʿAlī Kaiaev had a more censorious outlook than Nadhīr al-Durgilī, who as we saw above was careful to omit any such criticisms from his own final text.

Simultaneously, within Kaiaev's work, there is a discernible inclination towards certain scholars whose biographies he portrays with a profound touch. His narratives are most extensive when he discusses scholars specialising in the natural sciences, such as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine.[455] Concurrently, Kaiaev provides a more detailed account of the biography of the afore-mentioned Muḥammad al-Quduqī, adorning him with commendatory epithets and conferring upon him the title of an 'eminent scholar,' a distinction rarely bestowed upon others. For instance, Kaiaev writes:

> Al-Quduqī stood as an outstanding luminary in the sphere of rational and traditional sciences (*ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya wa-l-naqliyya*). Brilliantly profi-

454 ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ Dāghistān*, fols. 55a, 69a, 79b, 139a.

455 Ibid., fols. 4b–5a, 9a–11b, 17b, 34a–35b.

> cient in Arabic, Islamic jurisprudence, the theory of Islamic law, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, astronomy, philosophy, and logic, he was also a craftsman of scientific instruments like astrolabes and sine quadrants. Moreover, al-Quduqī assumed a pivotal role in orchestrating the dissemination of knowledge within his community. Scholars from diverse domains gravitated towards him, their numbers rivalling those which congregated around any other scholar of his era, with none in Daghestan attaining his scholarly eminence.[456]

Kaiaev's interest in the figure of al-Quduqī can be explained by al-Quduqī's ideas concerning the theory of Islamic law, his critique of adherence to legal schools, and his endorsement of *ijtihād*, a parallel that Kaiaev meticulously highlights in his work:

> The eminent scholar al-Quduqī, during his pilgrimage to Mecca, encountered shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī, who had emancipated himself from the yoke of *taqlīd*, selectively adopting the rulings of four legal schools (*madhhab*) in harmony with fundamental principles while eschewing innovations. Al-Quduqī became his student and acquired a wealth of knowledge from him. Al-Quduqī was profoundly impressed by shaykh Ṣāliḥ's methodology, path, and ideas, which he embraced with fervour. Upon his return to Daghestan, al-Quduqī brought back several new books by his newfound mentor. Al-Quduqī initiated a call to action for scholars, encouraging them to embrace independent reasoning and the study of sciences, all the while grounding their analysis in the foundational sources – the Qur'ān and *hadīth*s – scrutinizing them in light of *sharī'a* principles, and selecting what aligned with these norms. Consequently, al-Quduqī became the first among Daghestani scholars to rouse himself from the dormancy of *taqlīd* and instruct his contemporaries to employ their intellect, encouraging intellectual freedom for the discernment of truth from falsehood. Regrettably, his call resonated with only a few, while the majority countered it with refutation and aversion, owing to

456 Ibid., fol. 6a.

> their frail confidence in their own intellect and their exaggerated reverence for *madhhab* they ardently followed.[457]

In contrast to al-Durgilī, Kaiaev displayed little inclination to present the biographies of all Muslim scholars as embodying the image of the 'ideal scholarly persona.' Consequently, he reserved the prerogative to selectively designate those deserving of the status of an ideal scholarly persona and those who fell short.

I suggest that this differences between al-Durgilī's and Kaiaev's works reflect these two men's differing priorities. Whereas al-Durgilī sought to present all those scholars whose lives he regarded as offering examples to be emulated by his readership, 'Alī Kaiaev by contrast adopted a discerning approach in his biographical narratives. He delineated scholars who should not serve as examples, alongside those whom he deemed worthy of emulation. As a consequence, Kaiaev's work encompasses two contrasting archetypes: ordinary scholars, symbolized by adherents of *taqlīd* who opposed al-Quduqī's notions of intellectual freedom and do not exemplify the 'ideal Muslim,' and the ideal scholarly persona, embodied by al-Quduqī, his disciples and scholars in the natural sciences. When narrating the biography of al-Quduqī, 'Alī Kaiaev unmistakably conveys his endorsement of the concept of *ijtihād*, which involves the hermeneutical interpretation of the Qur'ān and Sunna.

In other words, unlike al-Durgilī, Kaiaev posits that merely being a scholar is insufficient to aspire to the status of an 'ideal Muslim.' His focus on the portrayal of the biographies of scholars specialising in the natural sciences distinctly shapes the archetype of the ideal scholarly persona, with a pronounced emphasis on rationalism.

Critiquing *taqlīd* and prioritising rationalism, by an advocacy for the hermeneutical comprehension of the Qur'ān and Sunna, both in the domain of Islamic jurisprudence and the natural sciences, together constitute the defining feature of Kaiaev's representation of the ideal scholarly persona.

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457 Ibid.

The biographical works discussed above all contain references to certain scholars being Sufis or shaykhs. But none of these above authors focuses specifically on Sufism. The earliest text that is specifically dedicated to the lives and miracles of Sufi shaykhs is the afore-mentioned treatise *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya* by Shu'ayb al-Bāginī. The work itself consists of three parts, the first two of which are compilatory in nature and derived from earlier sources. The third part of the book is original and contains al-Bāginī's biographical accounts of various shaykhs of his own branch who lived in the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Alongside these biographies, he also recounts certain historical events that took place in the North-East Caucasus, about which he freely expresses his opinions. In his book, al-Bāginī not only details the biographies of Sufi shaykhs but also dedicates significant attention to a central issue important to him: the claims made by individuals who were not qualified to be Sufi shaykhs (*mutashayyikh*).

While recounting the biographies of the Daghestani Sufi shaykhs, Shu'ayb al-Bāginī was unable to avoid mentioning also those scholars who were not Sufis but still enjoyed considerable authority in Daghestan. Given that al-Bāginī's original purpose in producing the work was to compile the biographies of Naqshbandi shaykhs, the lives of these other Daghestani scholars who had nothing to do with Sufism were in a sense extraneous to the main logic of the text. Shu'ayb al-Bāginī found an ingenious way out: in the midst of his narrative, he abruptly introduces a unique categorization for scholars who, while not Sufis, held significant authority in Daghestan, and he bestows upon them the title of 'shaykhs among scholars'. He also wrote about those who were not affiliated with the Naqshbandi branch, as well as those who declared themselves to be shaykhs without having the authority to do so. He writes as follows:

> The rest of the Daghestani shaykhs are divided into three categories. The first are the shaykhs among scholars, who were not connected to Sufism but reached the knowledge of God through their deep study of sciences and strict adherence to the canons of Islam, the cleanliness of their bodies, thoughts, and asceticism. The second ones are those who did not possess deep religious knowledge but approached God because of

> their irrepressible love of God (*jadhba*). The third ones are those who pretend to be shaykhs (*tashayyakha*), but have no religious knowledge that could guide them in their everyday life, or a genuine shaykh to lead and guide them in the *ṭarīqa*. They are lost and lead many others astray; they are hypocrites, liars… and those who follow them are like those who worship idols.[458]

In the first category of scholars he includes such individuals as the afore-mentioned Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Quduqī, Abū Bakr al-ʿAymakī and others who were not Sufis.[459] Moreover, some of them, such as Muḥammad al-Quduqī, were in fact quite critical of Sufism, as was mentioned in Chapter 1 above, but al-Bāginī does not mention this in his work. In his second category, al-Bāginī lists the famous Qādiri shaykh Kunta-hājji as well as Daghestani Khalwati shaykhs who died before the author's lifetime. In his opinion, these shaykhs did not possess deep knowledge and were not linked by the chain of spiritual continuity (*silsila*) with the Naqshbandi branch, but were nevertheless holy because of their irrepressible love of God, their obedience, humility, asceticism, and impeccable conduct.[460] In the third category, meanwhile, comprising what he calls 'false shaykhs', he includes certain followers of shaykh Kunta-hājji, as well as a number of Daghestani Naqshbandi shaykhs from a parallel, rival branch.[461]

In constructing and organising the *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*, Shuʿayb al-Bāginī draws on entirely different principles from those informing the biographical works by Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʿAlī Kaiaev that we discussed above. He does not, for instance, distinguish between Daghestanis and scholars of other origins; the continuity of the Sufi branch (*silsila*) is more important to him than the origins of certain scholars or shaykhs. For this reason, we see a very broad geography in

458 Shuʿayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*, 397.
459 Ibid., 397–415.
460 Ibid., 416–418.
461 Ibid., 419–421.

his work, including the Sufi shaykhs of Central Asia, the Ottoman Empire, Shirvan, Azerbaijan, Iran, and the Volga-Ural region. The location or origins of individual shaykhs or their affiliation with this or that legal school is irrelevant for al-Bāginī.

Another difference between Shu'ayb al-Bāginī's work and the other biographical works is its focus on emotions and even sensory perceptions. In this regard, his description of his own emotions following the death of his father is quite telling. Besides, in his work al-Bāginī describes instances of shyness when confronted by others, profound shock when witnessing the miracles (*karāmāt*) performed by the shaykhs, the palpable hostility and anger directed towards the shaykhs by Daghestani imperial officials, the deep reverence accorded to the shaykhs, the sensory delight and warmth experienced during the practice of Sufi rituals, a profound fear of God resulting in tears, and numerous other sentiments. Specifically, within al-Bāginī's narrative, there is an account of an incident from the life of the Daghestani shaykh Mallā Muḥammad al-Ṭabasarānī. In this incident, he experiences a profound fear of God, leading to tears:

> One day, Mallā Muḥammad embarked on a journey from the village of 'Irīb to his native village in Tabasaran. All his worldly belongings, meagre as they were, perched atop the bony back of a humble donkey. As we neared his village, his gaze settled upon his possessions precariously stacked on the donkey's frame, and tears welled up in his eyes, streaming down his weathered cheeks uncontrollably. As I saw him unable to control his overwhelming sorrow, I could not help but inquire: "Oh, Shaykh, what has brought forth such profound grief?" With a heart-rending sigh, he replied: "Oh, my dear son, cannot you see the weight of my possessions? My wealth burdens this frail emaciated donkey. How shall I answer to God on the Day of Judgment for the abundance of my earthly riches!" I contemplated his anguished words and extended my heartfelt consolation, saying: "Oh, Shaykh, do not despair. Your possessions are modest. Have you not witnessed the opulence and extravagance of people in these times, their treasures of gold and gems?" However, his tears gushed forth with even greater intensity, and he uttered with profound

> emotion: "Oh, my son, indeed, this world is not our destined abode, and its allure holds no attraction for us. The load placed upon this donkey, the trappings of the material realm, prove overwhelmingly burdensome for those on the journey toward the divine. Alas for us, and woe unto those ensnared by the seductive allure of worldly riches, who, in their relentless pursuit, tragically lose their way![462]

The emotionally charged narrative is clearly more typical of the genre of hagiography, with its signifiers of how a reader is expected to respond to mystical demonstrations of divine will, than of the biographical works by Nadhīr al-Durgilī or ʻAlī Kaiaev. Al-Durgilī does not attempt to influence readers' emotions, and instead simply recounts the lives of the people whom he discusses, highlighting the shaykhs' achievements in certain subjects, and thereby conveying a sense of what any Muslim can achieve and should strive for. By investing his hagiography with emotional power, Shuʻayb al-Bāginī is thus choosing a very different course of action from these other two authors.

Another Daghestani hagiographical text that covers the biographies of Sufi shaykhs is *Sirāj al-saʻādāt fi siyar al-sādāt* by the afore-mentioned Ḥasan al-Qaḥī,[463] who was the successor of shaykh Shuʻayb al-Bāginī. The author completed his work on 2 Shaʻbān 1338 / 20 April 1920, approximately at the same when Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʻAlī Kaiaev were writing their own biographical essays.

The *Sirāj al-saʻādāt* is in large part an abbreviated retelling of Shuʻayb al-Bāginī's *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*. When describing the life of shaykh al-Bāginī, he repeats nearly verbatim the autobiographical material that al-Bāginī wrote down in *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*. Meanwhile, here we can see the autobiography of one scholar, al-Bāginī, becoming a biography when narrated by another scholar, al-Qaḥī.

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462 Ibid., 392.

463 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥī al-Dāghistānī, *Sirāj al-saʻādāt fi siyar al-sādāt* (Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2012).

Unlike Shu'ayb al-Bāginī, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī chose to omit the biographies of all shaykhs unrelated to the specific spiritual lineage (*silsila*) to which he himself belonged. What further sets al-Qaḥī's work apart is the dedicated section that delves into the biographies of two shaykhs who personally granted him the *ijāza*, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Asawī (d. 1907) and Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov; this is a feature not found in al-Bāginī's work.

Although al-Qaḥī presumably had the opportunity of producing a full biography of his teacher Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov, since they were both in frequent correspondence and in personal communication,[464] he nevertheless offers only a very concise summary of Bashlarov's life. He omits to mention a range of factual biographical data about Bashlarov, such as his date of birth, his studies at different madrasas, his exile, or his career as a doctor, and gives only the bare minimum of information concerning Bashlarov's Sufi path. For the most part, Bashlarov's biography as told by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī consists of descriptions of miracles (*karāmāt*) performed by shaykh Bashlarov himself.

Thus, Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov wrote to him that he had had dreams about God, angels, prophets, including Adam, Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ, Mūsā, 'Īsā, and repeatedly the Prophet Muḥammad, with the latter offering him a glass of milk, walking him home and praying with him in his dreams.[465] Ḥasan al-Qaḥī presents these dreams of Bashlarov as testimony to the shaykh's high level of sanctity, and proof that shaykh Bashlarov was following the way of legitimate *ṭarīqa*. At the same time, however, he relates some of Bashlarov's dreams as warnings for the reader not to stray from the path of righteousness, and as evidence of both the truth of their own branch of *ṭarīqa* and the error of alternative, rival branches. Let us consider, for instance, a dream described by Sayfullāh-qāḍī in his letter to Ḥasan al-Qaḥī:

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464 Michael Kemper, "Khālidiyya Networks in Daghestan and the Question of *Jihād,*" 60–71; Shamil Shikhaliev, Michael Kemper, "Sayfallāh-Qāḍī Bashlarov: Sufi Networks between the North Caucasus and the Volga-Urals," 171–175.

465 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥī al-Dāghistānī, *Sirāj al-sa'ādāt fi siyar al-sādāt*, 196.

> On the night between Saturday and Sunday of 17 October, I had a dream that I was performing the Friday prayer in the mosque with other people. While I was seated and recited '*al-Taḥiyya'*, people interrupted their Friday prayer without finishing it and arose. As for me, I did not interrupt it and continued to pray. At the end I heard: "May God accept [your prayers] for the sake of Sayfullāh's sanctity". After the prayer ended, I turned back to see what had made Muslims interrupt their prayer. Someone said: "Our shaykh Muḥammad-hājji al-Kikunī has come to the mosque, and this is why we arose, interrupting our prayer." Then I understood that these people were most ignorant in their religion, for they had interrupted a mandatory prayer for no reason. Then I saw Muḥammad-hājji sitting in the mosque; he greeted me warmly and embraced me. We spoke long together, and I made him understand that his disciples (*murīd*s) had behaved inappropriately when they interrupted their prayer. He agreed with me.[466]

This passage is instructive for several reasons. Muḥammad-hājji al-Kikunī (1836–1913),[467] who appears in Bashlarov's dream, was a shaykh of a parallel Khālidiyya branch of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood, whose legitimacy was questioned by both Shu'ayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī himself who belonged to the other, Maḥmūdiyya branch of the same brotherhood. In Bashlarov's recounting of the dream as reported by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, the fact that shaykh al-Kikunī's disciples interrupted a mandatory prayer is evidence that al-Kikunī's branch is illegitimate. The fact that Bashlarov pointed out how inappropriate it was for shaykh al-Kikunī to interrupt the prayer and that the latter agreed with Bashlarov's argument also indicates that al-Kikunī essentially acknowledged his own illegitimacy. As for the warm reception given by al-Kikunī to Bashlarov, as well as his prayer to God to accept their prayer for the sake of shaykh Bashlarov's sanctity, this detail serves to communi-

466 Ibid., 217.

467 For this figure see: Vladimir Bobrovnikov, "Dagestan in transnational Sufi Networks: Sheikhs from Kikuni and their shrine in Turkey," *Vostok (Oriens)* 5 (2018), 21–36.

cate to readers that shaykh Bashlarov stood at a far higher spiritual and moral level than al-Kikunī. Thus, the account of this dream, like those of all the dreams described by Bashlarov and recounted by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, serves to demonstrate to readers the image of an ideal shaykh – one who is so true of heart that he is able to commune with God, angels, prophets, and most Islamic authorities.

The hagiographic works mostly focus on a single scholarly persona: that of a Sufi shaykh, whose legitimacy and righteousness are founded on the miracles or special metaphysical abilities demonstrated by a shaykh as a result of his special sanctity and/or his adherence to that particular *ṭarīqa* which the author in question regards as authoritative and legitimate. The hagiographic works by Shu'ayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī articulate their vision of an ideal Sufi persona by drawing the readers' attention to the performance of miracles. The miracles performed by shaykhs and described in hagiographic works serve in these hagiographic narratives as manifestations of divine grace and favour; indeed, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī explicitly states that a shaykh's performance of miracles is a direct reflection of his sanctity.[468] The various shaykhly miracles described by Shu'ayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī in their works are quite typologically diverse, and include clairvoyance, the ability to become invisible, the ability to tame wild beasts, the ability to turn one material object into another, the ability to move through time and space, the ability to produce food during a bad harvest, and the power to heal the sick. The most common element in these various miracles is a power of "inner" knowledge – that is, a shaykh's ability to see and be aware of events that happen in his absence or far from the place where he currently resides.

Thus, in the hagiographic works by Daghestani shaykhs, miracles served to express the image of an ideal Muslim, who has acquired the ability of making supernatural things happen (moving through time and space, turning one object into another) as a result of his struggle against his inner vices and his impeccable obedience to his instructors' requests.

When we compare biographical and hagiographic works, we can also discern their authors' different views when it comes to the acquisition

468 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥī al-Dāghistānī, *Sirāj al-sa'ādāt fi siyar al-sādāt*, 194.

and dissemination of knowledge in the most general sense. Thus, Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʻAlī Kaiaev considered it necessary to add to their biographical works the names of scholars who had become accomplished in the mastery of such various fields of knowledge as linguistics, law, logic, rhetoric, medicine, and natural sciences. As for Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, he dedicated his work to the description of just the lives of shaykhs of his own branch (*silsila*), and spoke of the negative experience of those who followed the Sufi way but simultaneously studied other subjects as well. Thus, he writes:

> Shaykh al-ʻAsawī forbade me to read books and teach sciences, even to my children, while I was progressing on the way of *ṭarīqa*, and said: "There is nothing as harmful for a Sufi as reading books!" And this is indeed true! Indeed, the state of focusing one's entire heart on God (*ḥuḍūr*) disappears if we read books thoughtfully or reflect on the things written in them. And while *murīd* is in the state of focusing on God and reads a book at the same time, he does not understand anything in it! Focusing your entire heart on the reading and understanding of a text takes a *murīd* out of the state of being focused on God.[469]

Thus, the analysis of extant works dedicated to the biographies of Daghestani scholars and Sufi shaykhs allows us to draw the following conclusions. It is quite clear that all of these authors had their own purposes and notions of who constituted the audiences whom they each addressed in their own respective text. For Nadhīr al-Durgilī, Shuʻayb al-Bāginī, and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, the purpose of their work is to evoke for their readers the image of an ideal scholarly persona. Whereas Nadhīr al-Durgilī presents as ideal exemplars those who attain mastery in a wide range of sciences, Shuʻayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī identify such exemplars only among practitioners of Sufism. At the same time, Shuʻayb al-Bāginī takes it as self-evident that the 'proper' image or Muslim persona can exist in other *ṭarīqa*s as well, and can even be demonstrated by those scholars who reached the degree of knowledge of God because of

469 Ibid., 176.

their profound knowledge. In this respect, his notion of an ideal scholarly persona is close to the view of Nadhīr al-Durgilī. However, Shu'ayb al-Bāginī excludes from this image all those who claim to belong to a certain brotherhood without possessing a true spiritual bond and permission to teach obtained directly from their shaykh. Ḥasan al-Qaḥī is more categorical in his own work and excludes anyone who had no relation to his particular branch of *ṭarīqa*.

As for 'Alī Kaiaev, it appears that he did not set out to portray an image of an ideal scholarly persona. In his narrative Kaiaev tried to focus more clearly on his own brand of historical objectivity: he is critical of his sources and compares spoken testimonies about scholars collected by him with the extant written evidence.

At the same time, one distinctive aspect of Kaiaev's work reveals his personal preferences and demonstrates his concept of the ideal scholarly personae. Thus, Kaiaev offers more comprehensive and detailed biographies of scholars specialising in the natural sciences, while reducing the coverage and, at times, omitting the biographies of certain scholars who were Sufi shaykhs or engaged in occult practices. This suggests that despite Kaiaev's primary aim of delivering an unbiased narrative, factual and historical account, nevertheless, he inadvertently and contextually identifies individuals who epitomise ideal scholarly personae – those who adhered to rationalistic principles.

In this chapter, I have sought to illuminate how (auto)biographical texts function as more than mere chronicles of individual lives; they are, in the Daghestani context, deliberate acts of persona construction. This becomes particularly evident when we consider the life and scholarly production of Muḥammad-Said Saidov. As a historian, philologist, and intellectual shaped at the intersection of Soviet academic expectations and Islamic scholarly heritage, Saidov drew on biographical traditions not only to document others but also to implicitly define and project his own vision of self.

We have seen in his chapter how autobiographical essays embedded within Daghestani Islamic literature might serve as vehicles for the performance of a scholarly self. Whether situated within texts on ethics,

jurisprudence, or Sufism, these autobiographical fragments enable scholars to craft a self-image – whether aspirational or retrospective – that reflects their intellectual orientation and moral convictions. The integration of such narratives into otherwise unrelated genres further highlights the pervasive drive for self-articulation, even when genre conventions ostensibly focus on other matters. Indeed, the Daghestani tradition resists isolating autobiography as a distinct genre; instead, it reveals autobiography as a pervasive mode of self-fashioning intricately woven into the fabric of multiple textual traditions.

It is within this literary and intellectual environment that Saidov's use of biographical writing must be situated. His engagement with the biographical tradition was not merely incidental but rather foundational to his scholarly method. As we have seen, he was familiar with all the key autobiographical and biographical texts of his predecessors and contemporaries in Daghestan. Many of these works – such as those by al-ʿAymakī, al-Qarākhī, al-Bāginī, and al-Alqadārī – Saidov not only possessed or acquired but also studied closely and even transcribed with annotations in his own hand. He encountered these texts through both his formal training and personal interactions with leading scholars such as ʿAlī Kaiaev. This intertextual familiarity shaped Saidov's vision of what constituted a scholarly life, and influenced his approach to writing history and biography, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Saidov's deep interest in Daghestani biographical literature extended beyond the Islamic canon. He broadened his scope to include Turkish, Ottoman, and other Near Eastern sources, often seeking structural and conceptual models from these traditions. This eclectic engagement suggests a broader aspiration on his part – not only to document scholarly lives but also to assemble a normative archive from which the ethical and epistemological coordinates of Daghestani Islam could be discerned. Importantly, Saidov was not merely a transmitter of biographies; he was an editor, translator, and redactor, shaping these narratives through subtle interventions that reflected his own values.

This self-conscious approach to (auto)biography allows us to interpret Saidov's archival practice as an extended form of self-narration. His collection is not merely a repository of texts; it serves as a mirror of

his intellectual persona. Like his predecessors, Saidov utilised the tools of historiography and philology not only to recount the past but also to engage in a discursive tradition that shaped his scholarly identity. His choices regarding which texts to preserve, translate, or publish reveal as much about his personal commitments as they do about the content of those works. From this archive emerges a persona characterised by rationalism, ethical commitment, a distaste for esotericism, and a dedication to the educational function of scholarship.

This may explain why Saidov was particularly drawn to the figure of Ḥasan al-Alqadārī. Al-Alqadārī's biographical project, one which synthesised poetic, didactic, and reformist elements, offered a model of scholarly life that Saidov evidently found meaningful. Both men were teacher-intellectuals who navigated between Islamic and state paradigms, maintained a sceptical distance from institutionalised Sufism, and promoted the value of rational learning and public instruction. In al-Alqadārī's integration of poetic expression, historical narrative, and critical ethical reflection, Saidov likely found a precursor to his own intellectual vision. His decision to translate and study al-Alqadārī's works thus emerges not only as a scholarly endeavour but also as an act of intellectual and moral alignment.

Moreover, Saidov's engagement with the autobiographical tradition was not limited to his reading and collection habits. His own writings reflect an autobiographical impulse – albeit one that is often encoded and indirect. He did not compose an extensive autobiography, but fragments of his life appear in letters, essays, and editorial remarks. These fragments serve a similar function to the autobiographical essays considered in this chapter: they provide glimpses of the ideal scholar Saidov aspired to be and the way he wanted to be perceived. They reveal a man seeking to harmonise fidelity to the Islamic canon with the critical demands of Soviet academia.

The integration of Soviet and Islamic values in Saidov's work complicates any simplistic interpretation of his intellectual persona. While he outwardly conformed to the ideological expectations of his time, his archival activities and scholarly choices suggest a deeper continuity with the Islamic biographical tradition. The ethics of teaching, the transmis-

sion of knowledge, and the ideal of scholarly modesty – central themes in the works of al-ʻAymakī, al-Qarākhī, and al-Bāginī – also emerge in Saidov's work, albeit viewed through a different historical lens. In this sense, Saidov's persona can be seen as a 20th-century reformulation of earlier models, adapted to the epistemic and political conditions of his age.

Ultimately, the (auto)biographical texts discussed in this chapter demonstrate the enduring power of the scholarly persona as a mode of intellectual self-fashioning. Whether articulated through didactic prose, poetic lament, or historical chronicle, these texts do not merely record a life: they also *construct* one. Saidov's close interaction with such materials, through his deep reading, active curation, and selective transmission, places him firmly within this tradition. Through his collection and writing, Saidov gives shape and form not only to the histories of others, but also to an implicit history of himself.

It is through this lens that we should read the manuscripts Saidov chose to preserve, the essays he translated, and the marginalia he left in the texts he copied. These are not neutral artefacts of a detached historian; they are traces of a scholar's self-articulation, shaped by inherited models but refracted through the particularities of his time. In examining these materials, we do not merely encounter the past; we encounter Saidov's effort to live, embody, and transmit that past through the persona of a modern Muslim scholar.

CHAPTER 6

Saidov's Personality: The Soviet and Muslim Self

The study of personhood generally entails the study of various types of ego-documents: memoirs, letters, autobiographies, and diaries. It is in these sorts of materials that the individuals under study talk about themselves, the events that happened in their time, and the people who surrounded them, and where they share their impressions and emotions, articulating themselves both in the issues that they discuss and those that they omit.[470]

The various types of ego-documents that can be found in personal archives often help to reconstruct the biography of the individual who is the focus of the study. Amongst these materials, some may see an author consciously writing about themselves as a specific object of discussion. Such materials, which include autobiographies and memoirs, can vary widely in terms of their motivations and intended audiences. Some of these materials are written by authors for their own purposes – as *aides-memoires*, say, or as therapeutic exercises or prolegomena to the composition of other works – and are not intended for outsiders. In other instances, the author may envisage a future readership, whether this be an intimate circle of family members or a wider reading public. In either case, autobiographies and memoirs are generally highly selective in the stories that they tell, presenting an account that chimes with how the author sees themselves and how they would like to be seen by others, and omitting any details that conflict with this telling. In revealing the various choices and strategies with which an author constructs and curates a story about themselves, such works are highly indicative of the author's own subjective personhood.

In this chapter, I consider autobiographical narratives, reminiscences, and other sources that attest to Saidov's own inner self-perception, his

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470 See: Rudolf Dekker, "Jacques Pressere's Heritage: Egodocuments in the Study of History", 13–37. See also: *Theoretical Discussions of Biography Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, ed. by Hans Renders, Binne de Haan (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014); Valerie Anishchenkova, *Autobiographical Identities in Contemporary Arab Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 1–36; Julia Bray, "Literary Approaches to Medieval and Early Modern Arabic Biography," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20:3 (2010), 237–253.

vision of what constituted right and wrong, and how he situated himself within the community and the wider world that he lived in.

Saidov's extensive archive reveals the various dimensions of his personality in all its different facets: as a theologian, a linguist, a historian, a husband, and a father. Our materials also reveal how Saidov himself also articulated a range of different visions of himself over the course of his life. Within his complex personality such seemingly different models as those of Islamic scholar and Soviet orientalist could organically coexist. His ego-documents indicate that, in interactions with those around him, he could combine different models while simultaneously having a clear picture of what it meant to be a father, a Muslim, or a Soviet historian. He would select the language and terminology of communication in accordance with his own self-image within the field in question. For some matters, he would use the academic Russian language, for others, the language of Islamic discourse, and, for others still, the emotionally charged tone of Arabic poetry. In his various self-descriptions, Saidov uses both Islamic and non-Islamic literary models, availing himself of the linguistic resources that were available and appropriate to the needs of the moment, depending on where he was, what he was doing and when he was doing it, and whom he was talking to. The most important of these linguistic resources were the Islamic literary tradition – including poetry, to which he paid close attention – and the Soviet academic tradition. As we shall see, his contextual engagement with a range of linguistic, literary and discursive repertoires opens up a window to the dimensions of his authorial selfhood.

In the pages that follow, we will examine several types of ego-documents that can reveal information about Saidov's inner world, his self-awareness within imperial and Soviet realities, his attitude to Islam, his choice of profession, and the things he believed to be important for himself, for his family, and for the society in which he lived. There are, primarily, three categories of sources that characterise Saidov's self-representation: his short autobiographical accounts, his memoirs, and the reminiscences of his relatives and colleagues. Together, these sources allow us to pinpoint the ways in which Saidov used various different models

in different literary genres in order to present his 'self', and the ways in which his 'self' was perceived by others, i.e., his family and colleagues.

Autobiographical accounts

Although Muḥammad-Said Saidov engaged with a wide range of diverse literature, both Islamic and Soviet, he does not seem to have been particularly inspired either by autobiographical essays in the local Daghestani Islamic tradition, such as those that we discussed in the previous chapter, or by the autobiographies of poets or writers that were widely available during the Soviet period. Indeed, for a writer who was so hugely productive over the course of his life, he wrote remarkably little about himself. One possible reason for this is that he was a very introverted man who shared little even with the people closest to him, including his daughter and his friends, and he may well have been reluctant to have anyone read a story of his life. This is perhaps why we find little in his archive to fit the autobiographical genre, either in Russian or in Arabic. The only exception here are the short *curriculae vitae,* or autobiographical accounts (sing. *avtobiografiia*)[471] that he was required to provide to the Institute of History, Language and Literature, for the purposes of Soviet bureaucratic record-keeping. During the long years of his work at the Institute, he wrote several such autobiographical accounts, all of which are slightly different from one another, not just in terms of updates to his track record but also with some changes made to the internal structure by highlighting some facts and omitting others.

[471] In the examination of Saidov's autobiographies presented herein, it is imperative to recognise that these writings succinctly delineate his biographical particulars, resembling a *curriculum vitae*. It is important to underscore that these documents do not conform to the conventions of a distinct literary genre typically associated with autobiographies. Consequently, in the ensuing analysis of Caidov's *curriculum vitae*, composed by him in strict accordance with the bureaucratic requirements of the Institute, I will employ the term 'autobiographical account'.

His very first autobiographical account was penned in 1948 and just gives the bare facts about his career:[472]

> I, Saidov Magomed Said, was born in 1902 in the family of a poor peasant in the village of Genichutl, Khunzakh District, Daghestan ASSR. My parents were engaged in peasant labour both before and after the revolution. Their household was a poor one. My father died in 1918 of typhoid fever. My mother is my dependant.
> I began to learn Arabic (from 1910 onwards) and continued my studies until 1921. From May 1921, I was employed as secretary at the Department of People's Education in the Avar region and simultaneously worked as a teacher at the Soviet regiment of the Khunzakh garrison. In May 1922, the Avar *Narobraz*[473] sent me to the city of Buinaksk to train as a teacher, after which I was admitted to the Daghestani Ped[agogical] *Technikum* in August 1922.[474] I continued as a student there until April 1924, when I left because of illness. After that, I began to work as a teacher at a Gimri school (from May 1924 to August 1925). Having arrived for a teacher training course in the summer of 1925, I became employed as proofreader at the First State Printing House [*Pervaia Gosudarstvennaia Tipografiia*] on 1 January 1926. I was employed continuously as proofreader until 1 February 1931, whereupon I transferred to the ed[itorial office] of the regional newspaper *Sotsializmaialul bairakh* [*Banner of Socialism*], which was published in the Avar language, in the capacity of exec[utive] editor (1931–32).
> Then, between 1932 and 1936 (28 August), I was appointed editor of the Avar section of the Daghestani *Gosizdat*.[475] Between August 1936 and 30 August 1937, I studied in the city of Piatigorsk in the graduate department of the History and Linguistics Institute under the *Kraikom VK-*

472 The style, spelling, and punctuation have been preserved.
473 Avar *Narobraz*: Department of People's Education, Avar region, Daghestani Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (DASSR).
474 A ped[agogical] technikum is a teachers' polytechnic.
475 *Gosizdat (Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo)*: state publishing house.

> *P(b)*,[476] and, between 1 September 1937 and 31 December 1940, I continued my studies in the graduate department of the N.Ya. Marr Institute of Language and Thought (the Moscow branch) of the USSR Academy of Sciences and defended my candidate's dissertation.
> From February 1941, I was a sen[ior] research fellow at the Daghestani Research Institute of History, Language and Literature. During the Great Patriotic War,[477] due to the institute being suspended, I was transferred to the Daghestani radio committee, where I was broadcasting editor until 1.1.1943.
> Between 1.1.1943 and 1.1.1945, I was deputy director of research at the Daghestani Research Institute of History, Language and Literature.
> Since 1.1.1945, I have been a postdoctoral fellow at the N.Ya. Marr Institute of Language and Thought at the USSR Academy of Sciences.
> In the area of teaching: I worked as a teacher of Daghestani languages at the Daghestan Pedagogical Institute[478] in 1934, 1935, 1941, and 1942, and teacher of Arabic at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and at the graduate department of the N.Ya. Marr Institue of Language and Thought at the USSR Academy of Sciences in the academic year 1945–1946.
> From 1 September 1946 to February 1948, I have been deputy head of the Department of Arabic Language at the S.M. Kirov Azerbaijani State University. 23.4.1948.[479]

Saidov wrote similar autobiographical accounts, with minor updates and changes, in 1950, 1957, 1968, and 1973.

In effect, this is a typical bureaucratic document that was standard for any Soviet institution. As Yurii Zaretskii noted, "Unlike works be-

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476 *Kraikom VKP(b)* (*Kraevoi komitet Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii bol'shevikov*): North Caucasus District Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks – AUCP(b).

477 That is, the Second World War.

478 *Dag. Ped. Institut*: Daghestan Pedagogical Institute.

479 *Avtobiografiia M.-S. Saidova* [*Autobiographical accounts of Muḥammad-Said Saidov*], *(1948)*. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 27, fols. 1a–3a.

longing to the eponymous literary genre, these autobiographies are typically brief (ranging from one to three pages), factual in nature, and uniform in narrative structure. They almost never contain descriptions of personal experiences, reflections, or doubts that might offer insight into the authors' individual characteristics. A further distinguishing feature of these autobiographies lies in the fact that they were written out of external necessity – specifically, in response to the demands of Soviet bureaucratic procedures."[480]

The existence of so many autobiographical accounts by Saidov can probably be explained by the ongoing assessment of employees of academic institutions, with researchers having to submit their autobiographical accounts alongside other relevant documentation. That said, some of the updates and changes introduced to Saidov's autobiographical accounts still make it possible for us to glean some nuances, some variation in presentation over different periods, even in such a bureaucratic document recording practical information about one's studies and career.[481] A detailed comparison between all the autobiographical texts allows us to separate them into two distinct groups: those written during the rule of Joseph Stalin and those written during the Khrushchev Thaw, or under Leonid Brezhnev.

In the various autobiographical accounts that he produced in the earlier period, Saidov places particular emphasis upon his peasant background, highlighting his modest origins and harsh living conditions.[482] He is at pains to note that, due to his extremely precarious financial situation, his father was forced to work as a hired labourer, and stresses that his father's death he himself as a youngster had to work as a hired

480 Yurii Zaretskii, "Moia zhizn' dlia Gosudarstva: Massovaia praktika sostavleniia deloproizvodstvennykh avtobiografii sovetskimi liud'mi," 107.

481 Cf. Igal Halfin, *Terror in my soul: Communist autobiographies on trial*.

482 Indeed, in 1936, he obtained a statement from the Khunzakh District Local Council that confirmed that he came from a poor peasant background. *Spravka* (*Enquiry from the Khunzakh District Local Council*). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 362.

hand in order to provide for the family.[483] Here, one can see a similarity in tone to what we find in Tsadasa's account of his own childhood, as discussed in the previous chapter. Boasting a peasant background was generally a mark of civic and political virtue during the Stalinist period, and could be a boon in advancing one's career. Such pragmatic considerations doubtless spurred Saidov to emphasise his own humble origins.

When compiling his autobiographical accounts during the Stalinist period, Saidov cursorily describes his Arabic studies in a single sentence, placing emphasis on the language rather than on the Islamic subjects usually taught at the madrasas where he was a student. It is evident that, having narrowly avoided the repressions of the 1930s, Saidov was wary throughout the Stalinist period of drawing the attention of law enforcement agencies to this aspect of his biography, so he did not dwell on it. Of course, Saidov's Islamic education was no secret to anyone, as he was well aware: but he evidently deemed it politic to say no more about the subject than was strictly necessary.

Saidov's second group of autobiographical accounts, which he wrote in the later period of the Khrushchev Thaw, are slightly different in emphasis. Unlike in his earlier autobiographical accounts, for instance, he does not describe his humble origins in any great detail but simply states: "born in 1902 to a peasant family." Saidov evidently no longer felt the careerist need to emphasise his humble social origins, given that he was now a firmly established Soviet scholar in his own right. In de-emphasising his class status, Saidov was also perhaps demonstrating his own political independent-mindedness. A humble peasant background was still a boon if one wished to advance within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – but Saidov had no inclination even just to join the party. Despite the fact that party functionaries at the institute actively lobbied Saidov to join up, he remained resolutely opposed to becoming a member of the Communist Party throughout his entire lifetime.[484]

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483 *Avtobiografiia M.-S. Saidova* [*Autobiographical accounts of Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] *(1950)*. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 82, fol. 1a.

484 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020). Interview with Gasan Orazaev, who shared the same office with Saidov at the Institute of History, Language and Literature (Makhachkala, October 12, 2017). Interview with

Although membership of the Communist Party would have allowed him to build a more successful career, Saidov distanced himself from communists and was content with his 'non-party' (*bespartiinyi*) status. It is clear that the ideology of the Communist Party did not entice him; moreover, it can be confidently stated that, while he did not reject all things Soviet and was integrated within Soviet educational and academic institutions, Saidov was nevertheless quite lukewarm when it came to Communist Party ideology and disagreed with some of its central tenets, including its attitude to Islam.[485] As someone who had a profound interest in literature and was a keen book collector, whose vast collection of over two thousand volumes included books outside his professional sphere, Saidov clearly had little affection for Marxist classics. We do not find in his library a single book by Karl Marx (1818–83), Friedrich Engels (1820–95), Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), or Joseph Stalin (1878–1953). Telling in this regard is a story recounted by his daughter Rabiyat. As a little girl of eight or nine years old, she was playing in their house and accidentally came across several large cardboard boxes under the piano. When she looked inside, she saw that these contained new books forming the complete collected works of Lenin. After she opened one of these books, she realised that these were empty covers containing Arabic manuscripts. Saidov had torn out all the pages from the collected works of Lenin, leaving only the covers, and used them as bindings for his Arabic books. "When my father learned that I had looked into the boxes, he gave me quite a talking-to and gave me a strict warning never to tell anyone about it," Rabiyat said.[486] Saidov prioritised Arabic literature, the Islamic written tradition, and Daghestani Soviet literature over Communist ideology.

In his later autobiographical accounts, written after the death of Stalin, Saidov expanded his account of his Arabic studies:

Amri Shikhsaidov, former head of the Oriental Studies department (1975–98) at the same Institute, who worked with Saidov for more than 30 years (Makhachkala, February 19, 2019).

485 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

486 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

> From childhood (1910), I began to learn Arabic and continued my studies until 1920. I learned from different scholars in different Daghestani villages. I made a long hiatus in my studies in 1918 due to the death of my father. Then, in early 1919, I picked up my Arabic studies again.[487]

Clearly, after the mid-1950s Saidov no longer feared repression. Furthermore, starting from around this same period Daghestan saw increased interest in the study of Islamic literature, with yearly expeditions seeking to locate, acquire, and study Islamic collections.[488] By this time a number of graduates of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad State University, such as Amri Shikhsaidov (1928–2019), Khulatta Omarov (1937–2007), and Alexandra Kozlova (b. 1937), were already employed at the Oriental Studies Department. During the 1950s–1980s, all of them, like Saidov, wrote research papers on history based on the study of Arabic and Persian sources, translated various manuscripts from Arabic and Persian into Russian, or were engaged in adding to the Institute of History's collection of Islamic manuscripts. Working under the supervision of Saidov during the mid-1950s, Amri Shikhsaidov began to research issues related to the Islamisation of Daghestan based on Arabic written sources, which later led him to produce a number of major publications, defend a dissertation, and publish a monograph.[489] In view of this increased interest in and acceptance of Islam, Saidov in his later autobiographical accounts gave a more detailed account of his own Islamic education – one which was more embedded in the Islamic paradigm in keeping with the general course of the Soviet academic Oriental studies of the mid-1950s to the 1970s.

In these various autobiographical accounts we can trace the basic dynamics of Saidov's career, while at the same time gleaning something of

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487 *Avtobiografiia M.-S. Saidova* [*Autobiographical accounts of Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] *(1973)*. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 79, fol. 1a.

488 See more in: A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Arabic historical studies in twentieth-century Dagestan," 203–216; idem, "Vostokovednye issledovaniia v Dagestane," 19–30; V.O. Bobrovnikov, "Iz istorii vostochnoi arkheografii v Dagestane," 119–127.

489 A.R. Shikhsaidov, *Islam v srednevekovom Dagestane (7–15 veka)* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1969).

how Saidov recalibrated the details of his early life according to the political and cultural environment in which he found himself. In so far as they go, therefore, these accounts are invaluable sources for the study of Saidov's life and self-representation. But I emphasise *in so far as they go*: for these accounts are also extremely limited in nature. Constrained as they are by the narrow conventions of Soviet bureaucratic records, they are very concise, dry, and understated. They do not reflect Saidov's subjective view of events or processes as he understood them, and nor do they offer any reflections of his world view. Moreover, as we shall see below, authors when writing these bureaucratic autobiographical accounts often omitted or distorted certain details – a prudent step, given that such texts were composed under the totalitarian Soviet regime, where saying or writing the wrong thing could get one into trouble. Such autobiographical accounts were certain to be read by the relevant authorities, whether party functionaries or secret service agents *(KGB)*. With this in mind, the writers of such autobiographical accounts tried their best to 'purge' their biographies and present themselves in the best possible light, showing their loyalty to the current regime. In order to reconstruct Saidov's life story in more detail, therefore, we need to complement his professional autobiographical accounts with a range of other supplementary biographical sources, including ego-documents – which, as we shall see, shed light on the facts of his life that he omitted or distorted.

Reconstruction of Biography

The main sources that enable us to reconstruct Saidov's biography and compare it to the details he recorded in his own official autobiographical accounts are some fragmentary reminiscences he wrote down himself, as well as some denunciations of himself published in the local Avar-language paper in 1937. Additional information for the reconstruction of Saidov's biography is provided by the accounts and reminiscences of Rabiyat, his grandson Jamal, and his institute colleagues. In drawing upon these latter accounts, of course, we need to remember that they tell us less about Saidov's own self-representation than about how he was per-

ceived by family members and workmates. That said, even these sources, subjective as they are, provide important evidence as to how Saidov variously saw himself as father, grandfather, and colleague. They also point us to certain details in Saidov's life story that in his official autobiographical accounts he played down or neglected to mention.

Despite Saidov's repeated claim in his autobiographical accounts that he was of peasant origin, his daughter Rabiyat indicates that he was in fact a fifth-generation theology scholar. Rabiyat's oral observation is corroborated by several Arabic-language written sources. Thus, the afore-mentioned Nadhīr al-Durgilī in his *Tarājim 'ulamā' al-dāghistāniyyīn* wrote the biography of Saidov's grandfather, referring to him as 'Sayyid, son of Murtaḍā 'Alī, son of *al-qāḍī* 'Umar, nicknamed 'Maḥadada', from Genichutl, and lists his students, naming him as senior *qāḍī* (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of the Avar region (*nāḥiyya Awāristān*) and stating that he died in AH 1314 (1896).[490] This picture of Saidov's scholarly origins is also supported by what we find in some of Saidov's own, non-official writings. Thus, for instance, when recounting in his reminiscences the circumstances of his acquaintance with 'Alī Kaiaev in 1919, Saidov writes that Kaiaev had heard a lot about his grandfather Maḥadada, which he told Saidov during a prolonged conversation with him.[491]

Saidov himself was named after his grandfather, and all his relatives knew him better as 'Maḥadada' than as Muḥammad Said. His daughter Rabiyat recalled that, during her first visit to her ancestral village of Genichutl as a child, she heard women talking among themselves and saying in Avar: "This is Maḥadada's daughter who has arrived." When the surprised Rabiyat asked her relative who Maḥadada was, she laughed and said: "It's your father!"[492]

The social background of Saidov as recounted by Rabiyat, which he carefully suppressed in his Russian-language autobiographical accounts, is indirectly corroborated by an anonymous denunciation of him published on 10 November 1937 in the Avar newspaper *Ma'arul bolshevik*

490 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' al-dāghistāniyyīn,* fol. 6b.
491 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 4a.
492 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

(*Highland Bolshevik*). It alleged that Saidov was a 'bourgeois nationalist' and that his real name was Maḥadada. It also said that he was a *mullā* in his own village and that he had taught at madrasas in the villages of Kafyr-Kumukh, Kumtorkala, and Irganai. Moreover, the newspaper claimed that Saidov's father and grandfather were involved in the imperial administration of the Russian Empire. The anonymous author(s) of the denunciation alleged that Saidov's grandfather, Maḥadada, was a *qāḍī* in the *sharī'a* court in Khunsakh and that, because of him, many residents who openly resisted the head of the district during the Imperial period were exiled to Siberia, where they perished.[493]

Saidov began his studies in 1910, before he turned eight years old. Judging by the established Daghestani tradition, he would have received his initial education from his father, Jamāl al-Dīn, who was an educated man and served as the *mu'adhdhin*[494] in the mosque of his native village.[495] Young Saidov then began to study at various madrasas. Later in his life, he hardly ever mentioned his teachers. However, some of his letters dating back to the 1920s reveal that he studied under Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī, whom we encountered in Chapter 2. In 1917, Saidov spent a year studying in the neighbouring village of Tsada, four kilometres from his own home, with the poet Gamzat Tsadasa, whom we discussed in Chapter 5, who taught Islamic subjects from his own home.[496] After a short break in 1918, Saidov continued his studies under the above-mentioned Daghestani reformer 'Alī Kaiaev from late autumn 1919 until late December 1920.[497] As part of his education, Saidov completed the entire Islamic education course typical for Daghestan in the late 19th and early 20th century.

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493 "Burzhuaziial millyatchahazul qalbal tso ṭechogo zhan rakhe [Eradicate to the end the roots of bourgeois nationalists]," *Ma'arul Bolshevik* [*Highland Bolshevik*]. Newspaper in Avar. 10 November 1937.

494 *Mu'adhdhin* (from Arabic *adhān* – a call to prayer), a mosque servant who calls to prayer.

495 *Avtobiografiia M.-S. Saidova* [*Autobiographical accounts of Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] (1950), fol. 1a.

496 Magomed-Said Saidov, "Mutalim ob uchitele," 123–128.

497 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fols. 4b–5a.

In September 1920, an anti-Soviet uprising flared up in Daghestan, which spread to a number of regions in highland Daghestan populated by Avars, including the Avar region that was Saidov's ancestral home.[498] Military action leading to the suppression of the uprising continued until May 1921. In his reminiscences, Saidov mentions that, after he had completed his studies with ʻAlī Kaiaev in late 1920, he decided to go back to his native village. However, all the roads were blocked, as he puts it, "because of the grim events,"[499] which is clearly a reference to the hostilities leading to the suppression of the uprising. He was forced to stay with a man from his village by the name of Rajab, who was a *qāḍī* in the village of Maʻali, which Saidov was able to reach, and he continued his studies under Rajab. This involuntary sojourn in the village of Maʻali probably saved his life, judging by the events that unfolded at the time in his native village.

When the anti-Soviet insurgency was suppressed, a Red Army garrison was quartered in the fortress of Arani, about three kilometres from Saidov's ancestral village of Genichutl. In February 1921, a group of insurgents secretly stole through Genichutl to Arani and killed the Red Army sentry. Alexander Todorskii, commander of that Red Army garrison, decided that the people of Genichutl had aided and abetted this crime and so instructed his commissar, Najm al-Dīn Samurskii,[500] to carry out a punitive action against all the residents of Genichutl. The village

498 The anti-Soviet uprising of Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī (Gotsinskii) lasted from September 1920 to May 1921. See more in: Khadzhimurad Donogo, *Nadzhmuddin Gotsinskii*, (Makhachkala: DGPU, 2011), 299–386.

499 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Baʻḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ashʻār*, fol. 5b.

500 Najmudin Samurskii (1891–1938): a major Daghestani political figure. In 1920, he was the military commander of the Khunzakh garrison, in charge of one of its detachments sent to suppress Gotsinskii's uprising, and the leader of the punitive action in the village of Genichutl. For his part in the military operation to suppress Gotsinskii's insurgency and for his punitive action in the village of Genichutl, he was twice awarded the Order of the Red Combat Banner. In the 1930s, he was first secretary of the Daghestani Regional Committee of AUCP(b); in the mid-1930s, he was an active supporter and participant of repressions in Daghestan. He was later prosecuted himself and executed by the Soviet secret services (*NKVD*) on 1 August 1938. He was rehabilitated on 2 June 1956. For more details about this individual, see: K.M. Khanbabaev, *Nazhmuddin Samurskii (Efendiev) – vidnyi ob-*

was targeted by artillery fire, the entire male population over 15 years of age was killed by the Red Army soldiers, and the women and children were driven away for three months.[501] Saidov was lucky that he was unable to return to his village because he was 18 at the time, and so would be unlikely to have been spared by the Red Army. In his reminiscences, he expresses his pain over these events in Genichutl, and recalls that he was forced to become an agricultural labourer after his return.

In Saidov's Arabic-language reminiscences, he notes one detail that he carefully suppressed in his official autobiographical accounts and never mentioned to anyone. Although Saidov officially claims in his autobiographical texts that his father had died of typhoid fever in 1918, he mentions in his Arabic reminiscences that his father in fact perished in 1921 when tragedy befell Genichutl.[502] It appears that his father had been killed by the Red Army soldiers during the military reprisal. According to his daughter, when Saidov returned to the empty village, he was very upset by its destruction and the killing of his relatives at the hands of Red Army soldiers. "He never forgave Samurskii for this tragedy," Rabiyat recalled.[503] Passing mention of these events in a single sentence in his reminiscences hints at Saidov's depths of grief – a grief, furthermore, that he felt unable to share with anyone else. It was only in his own private writings that Saidov recorded his profound emotional reaction to this personal tragedy. Tellingly, he furthermore mentions that he was very impressed by how the Arab poet and writer Fu'ād al-Khaṭīb expressed in verse his pain at the loss of his father, thus drawing a parallel between the Arab poet and himself. Forced to conceal the circumstances of his father's death, Saidov proceeds to quote some of al-Khaṭīb's

shhestvenno-politicheskii i gosudarstvennyi dejatel' Dagestana (Makhachkala: Narody Dagestana, 2007).

501 M. Nurmagomedov, "Dagestanskoe Songmi," *Akhulgo* 1 (2002), 20–26.

502 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 5b.

503 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020). Rabiyat endorsed the official account of Saidov's father's demise in 1918, despite being cognisant of the tragic events that transpired in Genichutl. It is evident that she remained unaware of the circumstances surrounding the Red Army soldiers' involvement in Saidov's father's death, a piece of information concealed by Saidov himself, who briefly alluded to it in his Arabic reminiscences.

verses, stating that he is "stripped of the opportunity of speaking freely about some circumstances"[504] – thereby implying that he was unable to tell the whole truth about the death of his father. This terrible episode is not mentioned anywhere else amongst his writings: and yet it is the very sparsity of narrative detail that most eloquently attests to how the episode must have continued to reverberate for the rest of Saidov's life.

The leader of the anti-Soviet uprising was a figure called Najm al-Dīn Gotsinskii (al-Ḥūtsī, 1859–1925). Gotsinskii was a prominent Daghestani religious and political figure of the first quarter of the 20th century, a *muftī* of the Union of Allied Highlanders of the North Caucasus and Daghestan (1917–19), in which capacity he spearheaded the uprising from 1917 to 1921. After the suppression of the insurgency, Najm al-Dīn hid in the mountains of West Daghestan for a while, after which he was captured by OGPU officers and executed in 1925. Although Saidov does not formally acknowledge the fact, he and Gotsinskii were in fact kinsmen. According to Rabiyat, Najm al-Dīn Gotsinskii was related to her through her mother, Ḥabiyat,[505] and her father, Muḥammad Said. More specifically, Najm al-Dīn Gotsinskii's mother, a Kumyk from the village of Nizhnii Dzhengutai whose name was Ḥabiyat, and Saidov's mother-in-law were cousins. Besides, Saidov's own wife was named after Gotsinskii's mother. As for Najm al-Dīn's father, he was Muḥammad Donogo, an Avar from the village of Gotsob, whose ancestors came from Khunzakh, a village very close to Saidov's ancestral home, where he had many relatives.[506] According to Rabiyat, Saidov had even worked in Najm al-Dīn's library for a while and knew it very well. It is not entirely clear whether Saidov studied under Najm al-Dīn. Given the status of Najm al-Dīn and his role and importance in the social and political life of Daghestan in the first quarter of the 20th century, it is not very likely. But it is probably true that Saidov was familiar with Gotsinskii's

504 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 5b.

505 Saidov's wife was officially named Ḥabībat. However, all her friends and family members called her Ḥabiyat.

506 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

extensive library, as is corroborated both by Rabiyat's account and by some manuscripts in Saidov's collection that support Rabiyat's story.

In 1922, Saidov, as secretary of the Department of People's Education of the Avar region, received two sacks of grain for his family, one for his mother and one for himself, from the local executive committee. As he was passing the Khunzakh market, he noticed some Arabic-language books put up for sale by a local resident. Among these books, Saidov found a compilation manuscript from Najm al-Dīn's library, including the latter's poems. The bookseller asked for a sack of grain for the manuscript, so Saidov immediately exchanged one sack of grain for the manuscript and later told his mother that she did not have to feed him because he had swapped his share of grain for a book.[507] This manuscript is currently in Saidov's collection.[508] Subsequently, Saidov purchased another manuscript of Najm al-Dīn's poetry, which was copied in 1929, four years after the latter's execution. But since Najm al-Dīn was considered to be enemy number one for the Soviet powers in Daghestan, preserving his legacy was dangerous. Fearing denunciations and arrests but not wishing to destroy a manuscript of Najm al-Dīn's verses, Saidov simply erased Najm al-Dīn's name in the manuscripts whenever any poems were attributed to him.[509] At some later point, probably during the Khrushchev Thaw, Saidov copied some of Najm al-Dīn's poems from this collection, this time stating the name of the author.[510]

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507 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

508 Najm al-Dīn b. Donoghono b. Ḥamza al-Ḥūtsī, *Dīwān al-Najm*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 92b.

509 *Majmū' al-rasā'il li 'ulamā' Dāghistān*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 66b.

510 Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī, *Al-Ash'ār*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 66i; Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī, *Qaṣīda*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 41; Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ḥilmī al-Qaḥī, *Radd 'alā Najm al-Dīn*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 193; Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī, *Al-Ash'ār*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 294; *Risālat Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī ilā Suhayb*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 401; *Majmū' al-ash'ār li Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 405; *Al-Mubāḥatha bayna*

According to Rabiyat, Saidov admired Najm al-Dīn's poetic works and told her that, in terms of style, content, structure, and depth of his poetry, he knew no rivals among Daghestani poets. In one of his letters to the Soviet orientalist Ignatii Krachkovskii, Saidov sent his copies of poems by Najm al-Dīn, attributing them to "one of the Avar poets".[511] Clearly, Saidov felt unable to attribute them explicitly to Najm al-Dīn, who was then and indeed still remains unrehabilitated. Nevertheless, Krachkovskii expressed his admiration for the poems in his response:

> Dear c[omrade] Saidov! I express my sincere gratitude for forwarding the intriguing materials – Arabic poems authored by an Avar poet from the 20th century. These poems have left a profound impact on me, bearing witness to the undeniable talent imbued within them. I am committed to dedicating the necessary time to engage with these verses more comprehensively in the near future.[512]

Even if Gotsinskii and Saidov were not personally close, Saidov's family association with Najm al-Dīn was clearly problematic. The people who knew Saidov were well aware of his interactions with Najm al-Dīn, which allowed his ill-wishers to write denunciations of him. The above-quoted article in the *Ma'arul bolshevik* newspaper, which was published in the name of anonymous 'collective farm workers,' reported that Saidov had been fighting in Gotsinskii's forces against the Soviet Red Army and that, following the defeat of Najm al-Dīn's insurgency, Saidov, also known as 'Maḥadada', retreated with his defeated regiment to the Tsumada district, where he changed his name from 'Maḥadada' to 'Muḥammad-Said' and began to work in Soviet schools.[513] It is clear that these anonymous 'collective farm workers' must have known Saidov and his

Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī wa Shaykh 'Alī al-Ṣughūrī. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 406.

511 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

512 [*Letter from Ignatii Krachkovskii to Saidov, 25 December 1938*] (in Russian). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 35.

513 "Burzhuaziial milliatchahazul qalbal tso ṭechogo zhan rakhe [Eradicate to the end the roots of bourgeois nationalists]," 2.

background quite well, since they mentioned the name Maḥadada, which was known to those close to him, as well as his family ties to Gotsinskii.

In fact, of course, Saidov could not have taken part in Najm al-Dīn Gotsinskii's uprising because he was studying in the village of Kumukh at the time. Like his teacher and friend Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī, Saidov did not support Najm al-Dīn's political ambitions. The afore-mentioned Mas'ūd, under whom Saidov studied for a while, had once been a pupil of Najm al-Dīn and learned Islamic law and versification theory from him.[514] But, subsequently, Mas'ūd, like Saidov after him, went on to study with 'Alī Kaiaev, who was an ideological and political opponent of Najm al-Dīn.[515] After Mas'ūd became a student of 'Alī Kaiaev, Najm al-Dīn made his indignation known to his former student and even said: "Forget all about me and do not mention anywhere that you studied with me once!"[516] The enmity between Najm al-Dīn and Mas'ūd got to the stage where the two men exchanged expletive-laden abuse in their Arabic-language poetry. For instance, in his invective verses, Najm al-Dīn – through a polemical quatrain preserved in Saidov's manuscript – denounced Mas'ūd as illegitimate, alleging that his mother had engaged in extramarital relations and that Mas'ūd had been conceived while his father was intoxicated. In response, Mas'ūd accused Najm al-Dīn of engaging in homosexual acts and exchanging sexual favours for material gain.[517]

Despite their personal enmity and political differences, however, Mas'ūd was nevertheless able to appreciate Najm al-Dīn's poetic talent. Thus, in an Arabic letter addressed to certain Rajab al-Khunzākhī, Mas'ūd wrote as follows:

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514 Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Uḥlī, *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-l-akh al-muṣliḥ*, fol. 11a.

515 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥarb al-ahliyya fī Dāghistān*, fols. 12b–13a; idem, *Tadhkira*, fols 2b–8a. 'Alī Kaiaev was a sworn enemy of Najm al-Dīn in his political struggle. In turn, Najm al-Dīn wrote satirical verses about Kaiaev. See: Khadzhimurad Donogo, *Nadzhmuddin Gotsinskii*, 278–282.

516 Interview with Amirkhan Magomeddadaev (b. 1954), a native of the village of Mogokh and a relative of Mas'ūd (Makhachkala, October 15, 2006). According to Magomeddadaev, this story is widely known in his village.

517 *Najm al-Dīn wa Mas'ūd*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 37. For the English translation of this text from Arabic, see the Appendix.

> I once copied a splendid poem by Najm al-Dīn dedicated to the praise of the Prophet Muḥammad. But it was subsequently lost. If you have this poem, please send it to me through my student, Maḥadada al-Kinichuqī [Muḥammad-Said Saidov].[518]

Like Mas'ūd, Saidov also admired Najm al-Dīn as a major poet. But when it came to his political cause, Saidov, like Kaiaev and all of his pupils, was an opponent of Najm al-Dīn,[519] and certainly did not fight in his warband. When in 1923 a congress of Muslim scholars from Daghestan organised by the Soviet government passed a resolution denouncing the Najm al-Dīn Gotsinskii insurgency, Saidov (referred to in the minutes as 'Maḥadada Genichutlinskii') was listed alongside Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī among the delegates.[520] Saidov himself mentions in his reminiscences that he had received an invitation and took part in this congress.[521] However, even though the aim of the congress was to show support for the Soviet regime, Saidov chose to suppress his record of taking part in it in his Russian-language autobiographical accounts, briefly recounting the episode only in his Arabic-language reminiscences during the period of the Khrushchev Thaw. Saidov seems to have been wary of attracting the attention of the Soviet secret authorities to his participation in the congress since many of its delegates, including the organiser, shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, were later purged by the Soviet regime. Perhaps he furthermore wished to draw a curtain over his association with Gotsinskii, and the traumatic events of the uprising more generally.

In relation to the Genichutl tragedy and Saidov's reaction to these events, as well as Saidov's subsequent attitude to the Soviet regime, one can trace parallels with the figure of Ḥasan al-Alqadārī. The latter, a grandson of the Naqshbandi shaykh al-Yarāgī, who was an opponent of the imperial reign, was nevertheless critical of Shamil's anti-tsarist

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518 [*Letter from Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī to Rajab al-Khunzākhī*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 194.

519 Naira E. Sahakyan, *Muslim Reformers and the Bolsheviks: The Case of Daghestan,* 55–88.

520 Khadzhimurad Donogo, "S'ezd v Kakhibe. 1923 god," *Gazavat* 1 (2013), 25–31.

521 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 3a.

campaign, which, in his view, brought more pain than gain. Al-Alqadārī similarly criticised the 1877 uprising in Daghestan and saw its subsequent suppression as just retribution by imperial authorities. He had a generally positive view of the imperial regime in Daghestan and welcomed the economic and cultural development of the region.

As for Saidov, his subsequent active involvement in Soviet institutions also demonstrates that he had a generally positive view of the Soviet authorities' efforts aimed at cultural development in Daghestan. He seems not to have blamed Soviet policies as such for the tragedy that happened in Genichutl. As an opponent of Najm al-Dīn, Saidov believed that his revolt and the resulting reaction aimed at its suppression brought a lot of pain to the people of Daghestan, including his own people in Genichutl. Saidov saw the punitive operation as due retribution by the Red Army, even if excessively harsh. He laid blame not on the Soviet regime as a whole but on individual people, in this case, Red Army Commander Samurskii, who led the punitive action and displayed what he regarded as excessive, inexplicable cruelty towards the people of Genichutl. In spite of these dreadful events, which brought about the death of his father and other relatives, Saidov seems to have had little difficulty in reconciling himself to the Soviet authorities.

After his return, he stayed for a whole year in his ancestral village, repairing his destroyed house and doing agricultural work. Given that the village of Genichutl had been laid to waste, with the women and the children having been driven away and not permitted to return for three months following the events, it is likely that Saidov was unable to come home before May 1921. In any case, in one of his autobiographical accounts, Saidov claims that, in May 1921, he was appointed by Soviet authorities to serve as secretary of the Department of People's Education Department in the Avar district (*okrug*).[522]

In late 1922, he went to the city of Buinaksk, where he embarked on a teacher training course organised by the Soviet government. Saidov writes in his Russian autobiographical accounts that, after he had com-

[522] *Avtobiografiia M.-S. Saidova* [*Autobiographical accounts of Muḥammad-Said Saidov*] (1973). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 79.

pleted the teacher training course, he was sent by the Department of People's Education in the Avar *okrug* to work as a teacher and headmaster of a Soviet school in the village of Gimry between 1924 and 1925. But, in parallel with teaching at a Soviet school, he also taught Islamic subjects to children at a local mosque. Saidov made sure to suppress this fact in all of his Russian-language autobiographical accounts. At the same time, he recounts in his Arabic reminiscences that four pupils of the village of Gimry, whose names he notes, were learning Arabic from him, and he was reading to them from a book of law entitled *Kanz al-rāghibīn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and from *Sharḥ Jam' al-jawāmi'* by the same author.[523] It goes without saying that the teaching of Islamic law, probably performed in the Gimry mosque, would not have been welcomed by the Soviet authorities. Since this occurred in 1925, when mosques and madrasas were still open, Saidov would have seen nothing dangerous or unlawful in teaching his Gimry pupils the Arabic language and Islamic law, following the tradition he was brought up in. During the early Soviet period, Saidov saw no irreconcilable difference between Soviet and Islamic intellectual outlooks and traditions. He combined both in his teaching, which we can see in his experience of working in Gimry, where he taught Turkish at school and Islamic law at the mosque. But, subsequently, after the anti-religion campaign had gathered momentum, and especially in the 1930s, when Saidov's teachers and friends were being persecuted, he chose to suppress this fragment of his biography and did not feel safe to record it until the Khrushchev Thaw: and even then, he preferred to record it just in Arabic.

While working in Soviet schools in the mid-1920s to 1930s and teaching Turkic and Avar language and literature, Saidov began to develop a new spelling system: first for moving from Arabic letters to the Latin alphabet, and then, after the late 1920s, to the Cyrillic alphabet. These moves can be situated within the wider context of *jadīd* interest in native languages and teaching in local languages. Saidov's *jadīd* interest in promoting native languages (in this case, Avar) was fully aligned with the Soviet authorities' interest in promoting national literatures and cul-

523 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 3a.

tures, so he was recruited to compile and edit texts in the Avar language. Thus, Saidov writes in one of his autobiographical accounts that he was invited by Soviet authorities to "correct party and Soviet literature being published in the Avar language; to develop a project for a new alphabet using Russian characters, and to take an active part in the development and compilation of the rules of Avar orthography."[524] Over the course of the 1930s, he published dozens of textbooks for schools on the Avar language and grammar and an Avar literature reader. Some of these textbooks for national schools, which were essentially the only ones available in Daghestan at the time, went through multiple reprints.[525] Saidov also went on to compile and publish Russian-Avar[526] and Avar-Russian[527] dictionaries.

Between the mid-1920s and the mid-1930s, Saidov's work was directly linked to the Avar language. He went on to work as a teacher and then as a transcriber at the lithography section aimed at publishing Avar Soviet newspapers in Arabic characters. Subsequently, he worked sequentially as a proofreader at a state printing house, the executive editor of the Avar-language newspaper *Sotsializmaialul bairakh* (*Banner of Socialism*), and the head of the Pedagogy Sector of the State Publishing House (*Pedagogicheskii Sektor Gosudarstvennogo izdatel'stva*), where he was in charge of all books and newspapers published in the Avar and Kumyk languages. According to his family and colleagues, Saidov was fully proficient in Kumyk, a language he had learned as a child and young man during his studies at various Daghestani madrasas. Thus, for instance, Gasan Orazaev (1947–2024), who worked in the same office as Saidov for a period of time, recalled:

> Saidov's knowledge of the Kumyk language was so accomplished that he would often use Kumyk idioms and proverbs in conversation with

524 *Avtobiografiia M.-S. Saidova* [*Autobiographical accounts of Muḥammad-Said Saidov*]*, (1957).* Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 42.

525 See Saidov's published works in the Appendix.

526 M.S. Saidov, *Russko-avarskii slovar'* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1951).

527 M.S. Saidov, *Avarsko-russkii slovar'* (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsyklopediia, 1967).

> me. And he used such beautiful turns of phrase that I, a native Kumyk, a professional Turkologist and linguist, had never heard of! His Kumyk was brilliant, rich in synonyms and idioms, and reminded me of the best examples of Kumyk poetry and prose from the early 20th century.[528]

Saidov continued working in the area of public education and journalism until 1937, when mass repressions began in Daghestan. Saidov never mentions these persecutions in his official autobiographical accounts, even though many of his friends, teachers, and other people close to him were executed or exiled to the *Gulag*.[529] For instance, the above-mentioned Abū Sufyān Akaev and Yūsuf Gasanaev (al-Jungūtī, 1869–1929), whom Saidov knew personally and whose manuscripts he had in his collection, as well as the *jadīd* Muḥammad-qāḍī Dibirov (1875–1929), who, like Saidov himself, was preparing textbooks for Soviet schools, were accused of forming an anti-Soviet organisation, *Dīnī Komitet*, and were prosecuted.[530] Akaev was exiled to Kotlass Gulag camps in 1929 and later died there, while Gasanaev and Dibirov were executed the same year. In 1933, one of Saidov's close friends and teachers, Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī, was arrested and exiled to the Magadan region, where he died in 1941. In the same year, Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī, who was another of Saidov's close friends, was arrested and also subsequently died in exile. Another Saidov's close friend, Abdullatif Shamkhalov (1900 – after 1933), who had been his madrasa classmate, was also arrested and executed in the camps. In 1937, Saidov's close friend Bakhadur Malachikhanov (1882–1941),[531] an engineer, poet, and translator, was also arrested; he

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528 Interview with Gasan Orazaev (Makhachkala, October 12, 2017).

529 *Glavnoe Upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh Lagerei (Gulag)* is a Soviet network of forced labour camps where prisoners were sent.

530 Khadzhimurad Donogo, Dakhdugadzhi Dakhduev, *Mukhammad-Kadi Dibirov (Karakhskii). Na izlome vekov* (Makhachkala: Epokha, 2015).

531 Bakhadur Malachikhanov (1882–1941) was born in the village of Ashilta. After graduating from the Moscow Higher Technical School (now known as the Technical University after N. Bauman) in 1910 as a technical engineer, he taught mathematics at the gymnasiums of Port-Petrovsk (Makhachkala) and worked as an engineer for the railway district in Tiflis (Tbilisi). From 1920 to 1930, he served as deputy minister of education of the Daghestan Soviet Republic and headed the

was executed in 1941. ʻAlī Kaiaev, who had also taught Saidov, was arrested twice. In 1927, he was exiled to the Cheliabinsk region but later released after Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Jalaluddin Korkmasov (1877–1937) interceded on his behalf; in 1939, however, he was arrested again and exiled to the Semipalatinsk region, where he perished in 1943.[532] In 1943, *NKVD* officers arrested the entire family of Manṣūr Gaidarbekov, a close relative of Saidov, and exiled them to Central Asia. Subsequently, after his return from exile, Gaidarbekov worked for a while at the Department of Oriental Studies headed by Saidov. Eventually, Saidov himself was arrested too. Rabiyat said that Saidov never told her anything about this episode of his life. She found out about it from her mother Ḥabiyat, with whom Saidov had shared everything, including the story of his arrest and release.

Rabiyat's account of what happened is as follows. On the night Bakhadur Malachikhanov was arrested, his wife Sara-bike ran to Saidov's house in tears and told them that Malachikhanov had been detained by *NKVD* officers. Saidov and his wife tried to comfort her as best they could by telling her that it must have been a mistake, that the Soviet authorities would realise their error by morning and that Bakhadur would surely be released because he was blameless. After Sara-bike left, Saidov told his wife: "Get me a change of clothes. If they have taken Bakhadur, they will come for me soon." A few days after Malachikhanov was arrested, a car pulled up next to their house at night, and Saidov was arrested. He was kept in a detention facility for around two months and he was accused of taking part in a bourgeois-nationalist, Islamic anti-Soviet organisa-

Energy Sector at the Daghestan Research Institute. Bahadur Malachikhanov authored several scientific articles on the history of Daghestan and translated numerous Avar epic and lyrical poems into Russian. Saidov maintained a close friendship with Malachikhanov and provided assistance with these translations. In 1937, Malachikhanov was accused of involvement in a counter-revolutionary nationalist organization, and was executed by the *NKVD* in 1941. He was posthumously exonerated in 1958, and it was decreed that he had been falsely accused. In 1964, Saidov, under the authorship of Malachikhanov, published his article featuring a brief biography of Malachikhanov in the introduction.

532 Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, A.R. Navruzov, *Iz istorii zhizni i tvorchestva Ali Kaiaeva i Saifulla-kadi Bashlarova: dokumenty i materialy*, 45–47.

tion. At one of his interrogations, the *NKVD* officer once again began to ask standard questions about his background, his familiarity with Islamic subjects, his acquaintances, his connections, and his participation in counter-revolutionary organisations. An *NKVD* officer who had been dispatched from Moscow was present but did not take part in the interrogation. Saidov realised that he would never be released but was facing execution or, at best, a *Gulag* sentence. After the investigator accused him of knowing Arabic and Islamic subjects, Saidov told the investigator:

> You are accusing me of knowing Arabic and Islamic subjects. We studied in Arabic because this was the only option open to the poor highlanders who could not afford to study at Russian schools. Yes, I know the Arabic language, and the knowledge I have was only available in Arabic. Instead of destroying our Islamic intelligentsia, the only one that we could have had here in Daghestan, you should give us an opportunity to change. My friends and I completed our madrasa education and studied with various scholars. But we are all active supporters of Soviet power, we have taken part in the advancement of culture, we have been working at schools and educating the people. The Soviet authorities stand for eradication of illiteracy, for promoting culture, science, education. Those of us who studied in Arabic have also always campaigned for the development of the sciences and education. Now the times have changed, and the Russian language has arrived. Please give us an opportunity of learning and re-learning at Soviet institutes. When we graduate, we could be of help to the Soviet state, which we sincerely supported during the revolutionary years! We are not going to study Arabic or Islamic subjects. But after we have studied at Soviet institutes, we can be of great service to the Soviet state and help to develop culture, science, education.

As Rabiyat recalled, her father realised that this was probably his last interrogation and he was likely to be exiled to the camps or executed. So, his speech was that of a desperate man who only had a tiny grain of hope that his words would bring the *NKVD* officers who interrogated him to their senses. Soon thereafter, Saidov was indeed released. Rabiyat said

that her father believed that this miraculous release was brought about by the visiting *NKVD* officer, who had listened to his words.[533]

It is unclear why Saidov was not exiled or executed by Soviets. It is not very likely, of course, that *NKVD* officers would be so impressed by Saidov's speech that they completely reversed their decision concerning the repressions. Nor, of course, can we reliably confirm whether Saidov's speech actually took place, at least in the manner recounted. In any case, however, we can see that Saidov was released and immediately left Daghestan for Piatigorsk, where he studied at the North Caucasus Highland History and Linguistics Institute. After this Institute was shut down in September 1937, he immediately left for Moscow, where he became a graduate student at the Institute of Language and Writing of the Peoples of the USSR.

When he applied for a graduate place, Saidov took an exam in Arabic before the Soviet orientalist Ignatii Krachkovskii. His colleagues recalled that the exam turned into an academic discussion of Arabic literature between two scholars, which went on for several days.[534] After studying at the graduate department for three years, Saidov defended his candidate's dissertation on language and literature at the N.Ya. Marr Institute of Language and Thought in Leningrad.[535] After the defence of his dissertation, Saidov was then given a job at the Institute of History, Language and Literature at the Daghestani branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, where he continued to work until his death in 1985.

While completing his graduate studies in Moscow, Saidov was often invited by the People's Commissariat of Daghestan to assist with the design of a new Cyrillic-based alphabet and to a take part in methodological work to assess the teaching of the Avar language in Daghestani vil-

533 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, August 4, 2015).

534 Rasul Magomedov, "Slovo o moem brate," *Dagestanskaia Pravda* 2:121 (23 January 2003).

535 [*Certificate and copy of certificate of award of the degree of Candidate of Philology to Muḥammad-Said Saidov*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 25.

lage schools.[536] At the same time, both during his graduate course and after the completion of his dissertation, Saidov taught Arabic at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies.[537] As directed by the Institute of Oriental Studies and with a reference by Krachkovskii, Saidov was also assigned to work as assistant professor at the Department of Arabic at the Azerbaijan State University of Baku, which he later headed.[538] He combined this job with his main position as senior research fellow at the Institute of History, Language and Literature at the Daghestani branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Despite the fact that Saidov closely worked with Arabic over this period, we have been unable to find a number of manuscripts, sources, and documents in his archive that were written and copied by Saidov between the mid-1930s and mid-1950s – which is to say, during the period when Stalin was still alive. This was a time when Saidov worked a lot with the Avar language in his capacity as a teacher, graduate student, and scholar, writing textbooks and articles and compiling dictionaries of the Avar language. The list of his works over this period does not contain a single entry outside the field of Avar language and literature.[539] His first publication on the history of Islam,[540] as well as his first reminiscences written in Arabic, were produced only after the death of Joseph Stalin, during the Khrushchev Thaw. Similarly, it was not until

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536 [*Travel permit issued to Muḥammad-Said Saidov by the Institute of Language and Writing of the Peoples of the USSR on 17 January 1938. Moscow*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 343.

537 [*Certificate issued by Kh.K. Baranov, Dean of the Near East Faculty, to Muḥammad-Said Saidov confirming that he was a tutor in Arabic at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, from 2 November 1946*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 34b.

538 [*Order by A.I. Karaev, Rector of Azerbaijani State University, dated 17 September 1946, appointing Muḥammad-Said Saidov assistant professor of the Department of Arabic*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 34c; [*Order by A.I. Karaev, Rector of Azerbaijani State University, dated 26 June 1947, appointing Muḥammad-Said Saidov Head of the Department of Arabic*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 34d.

539 [*List of Muḥammad-Said Saidov's academic publications*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 155.

540 M.S. Saidov, "O rasprostranenii Abumuslimom islama v Dagestane," 42–51.

after Stalin died in 1953 that Saidov embarked on the inventory of manuscripts and started building up the Collection of Oriental Manuscripts at the Institute of History. Over the following years, Saidov combined the study of manuscripts, the history of Islam, and the Arabic-language written tradition with his research into Avar language and literature.

The fact that Saidov did not publish on Arabic literature during Stalin's rule does not, of course, mean that he did not collect any manuscripts during this period. He was clearly interested in manuscripts and Arabic-language documents and did his best to collect them, including examples of Daghestani poetry in Arabic. But during this period he did not allow himself to write in Arabic except when addressing Soviet orientalists, such as Krachkovskii and Klavdiia Ode-Vasilieva,[541] and very occasionally when writing down something for his own use. Almost all of Saidov's Arabic-language works, including poetry, historical studies, and other evidence from his archive, were written or copied either before the 1930s or after the mid-1950s. In response to my question as to why Saidov exclusively worked in the field of philology rather than Oriental or Arabic studies during these middle decades, his daughter Rabiyat said:

> Nobody would have allowed him to engage in Arabic studies, and it was dangerous during that period. This was a time when a group of scholars that he belonged to was engaged in producing dictionaries in such na-

[541] Klavdiia Ode-Vasilieva (1892–1965) was an orientalist, and professor. She was born in 1892 in Nazareth, now part of modern-day Israel. In 1908, she graduated from the seminary in Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, and subsequently taught at the Nazareth Teachers' Seminary of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. In 1914, she moved to Russia, where she served as a nurse in the Russian army during the First World War. In 1924, she was appointed lecturer in Arabic at the Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies, and from 1928, she taught at Leningrad State University. She published a number of instructional materials for the study of modern Arabic. In March 1938, she was arrested, detained for several months, and released in 1939. After relocating to Moscow, she worked at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (1943–56), the Higher Diplomatic School of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (from 1943), and Moscow State University. She passed away in Moscow in 1965. Saidov maintained a close correspondence with her, exchanging Arabic poetry and books. Notably, he wrote all his letters, addressing her by her Arabic name – Kulthūm ʿAwda.

> tional languages as Avar, Kumyk, Dargin, and Lak. He began to study manuscripts later, after the Stalin's death.[542]

Amri Shikhsaidov also recalled:

> The peculiar feature of the work of elder-generation Arabists such as Saidov and Nurmagomedov, who had received an Islamic education, was that they worked 'for the desk'. This means that they published little. This was probably because they had survived the Stalin-era repressions, but the fear was still there, so they were wary of publishing any Arabic literary works while Stalin was still in power.[543]

It is clear that, although he had survived the purges, Saidov was still nervous about attracting the attention of the *NKVD* and tried to restrict his Arabic-language creative work as much as he could, especially since he continued to be the subject of anonymous reports denouncing him as an 'Islamist', '*mullā*', and 'clergyman' in 1937.[544] Self-preservation required that every such denunciation be met with a detailed refutation. For instance, in response to the anonymous denunciation published in the *Ma'arul bolshevik* newspaper, Saidov wrote a statement for the Daghestani Regional Committee of AUCP(b) in which he rejected all the allegations made against him and assured the party bodies of his loyalty to the Soviet authorities. In particular, Saidov wrote in Russian:

> The Avar-language newspaper *Highland Bolshevik* (*Ma'arul bolshevik*) dated 10 November this year has published a libellous article that accuses me of being a bourgeois nationalist… I am a young specialist who has given all his efforts and energy to the case of linguistic studies, who has taken a practical part in language building, and I have been educated at Soviet educational establishments, starting from a vocational college and

542 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, August 4, 2015).

543 Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov during our field trip (Kurakh, Daghestan, July 8, 2009).

544 "Burzhuaziial milliatchahazul qalbal tso ṭechogo zhan rakhe [Eradicate to the end the roots of bourgeois nationalists]," 2.

> into graduate studies, which I am pursuing at the moment. A clear testimony to my work is provided by the textbooks for Avar schools, which I have been writing for a number of years. These textbooks have been reviewed several times, including a textbook of the Avar language (morphology) for Year 5, which has been reviewed by the Rostov North Caucasus Research Institute, which believes it to be a great step forward for Avar grammar. I believe that this slander and other defamatory reports directed against me are not criticism but slander of a young and growing Soviet specialist, an attempt to slow down the process of educating young professionals. In this regard, I am asking you to undertake a thorough review of this case and allow me to persevere in my language-building efforts. Graduate student at the Central Research Institute of Language and Writing of the Peoples of the USSR, Saidov M.[545]

In this statement, Saidov presents himself as a promising young professional who has been and continues to be useful for the Soviet state in the area of culture building. He stresses the fact that he studied at Soviet educational establishments but omits reference to his Islamic education, even though it was this latter which allowed him to build a successful research career in the area of linguistics. Clearly, his exceptional knowledge of Arabic poetry, grammar, and stylistics, which was especially well regarded in the Daghestani Islamic educational tradition, allowed him to work very successfully in the field of comparative philology and wider literary studies. However, when both the denunciation and Saidov's self-rebuttal were composed in 1937, during the height of mass repressions in Daghestan, Saidov, who had narrowly evaded persecution, harboured concerns that his educational achievements might be regarded with suspicion by the Soviet authorities. Lending force to these concerns was the fact that Saidov himself had witnessed similar instances of persecution, and lost all of his close friends to the repressions in the span of

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545 [*Statement by Muḥammad-Said Saidov to the Schools Department of the Daghestani Regional Committee of the All Union Comunist Parti of Bol'sheviks]*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 167, fols. 9a–9b.

a few years. Subsequently, as Rabiyat recalled, Saidov was not allowed to travel abroad. On the rare occasion that an opportunity to travel arose, even to countries friendly towards the Soviet Union, he was never given permission to do so.[546] For instance, in 1957, Saidov had a chance to travel to Syria. He drew up a full prospectus detailing his proposed research trip, which would include a six-week stay in Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs, naming the libraries where he intended to work and the scholars he wanted to meet. In his statement, Saidov highlighted that he was "fluent in written and spoken Arabic, with in-depth knowledge of Arabic literature and history, capable of translating from Russian into Arabic and vice versa."[547] All the documents were prepared, signed, and submitted to the Foreign Office of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow, which rejected without explanation Saidov's request to travel.

Saidov's colleagues also confirmed that he had been banned from travelling abroad. In one of our conversations, Amri Shikhsaidov recalled an academic conference being planned in the mid-1960s against the background of the Russo-Indian academic and cultural relationship. It was envisaged that various Daghestani scholars, including Saidov, would participate at the event. However, Saidov's candidacy was not even submitted to Moscow for approval, because "Muḥammad-Said was banned from travelling anywhere outside the USSR."[548] It is clear that, in the eyes of Soviet civil servants and *KGB* officers, Saidov was still considered 'untrustworthy'.

Saidov's career continued to make glittering progress, even though the political authorities evidently remained somewhat suspicious of him. In 1963, Saidov initiated the unveiling of the Oriental Studies Sector at the Institute of History in Makhachkala, which he headed until 1974. In 1968, the leadership of the Presidium of the Daghestani Branch of the

546 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

547 [*Programme of Muḥammad-Said Saidov's research trip to Syria*]. In the same item there is also a document issued by the Foreign Office of the USSR Academy of Sciences, similarly prohibiting Saidov from travel. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 165, fols. 3a–5a.

548 Amri Shikhsaidov told me this during our field trip (Khuchni, Daghestan, August 3, 2006).

USSR Academy of Sciences and Daghestani State University approached the Supreme Attestation Commission in Moscow, requesting that Saidov, based on his published body of work, be awarded the habilitation degree of Doctor of Philology (*Doktor filologicheskikh nauk*) without a dissertation defence.[549] But the Moscow functionaries rejected this request.

Between the late 1950s and the 1970s, Saidov worked increasingly in the areas of history and source study. In the mid-1960s, Saidov began to spend less and less time on purely linguistic studies, although he never quite abandoned his research in this area. During this time, he paid more attention to studies in the history of Daghestan. He began to analyse, read, and prepare for the publication of the above-mentioned text *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by Abū Bakr al-Darbandī. In the area of source studies, Saidov translated a number of works from Arabic to Russian, including the *Kitāb al-tadhkira* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ghāzīghumuqī and a number of manuscript texts that represent evidence of common law as practised by the peoples of Daghestan; he also studied various Arabic-language historical sources such as the *Derbend-nāme*, *Waṣiyya ʿAndunik* and *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān*, and compiled a genealogy of Daghestani rulers. He continued to remain active even into his later decades, until his death on 24 November 1985.

From our exploration of some Saidov's Arabic-language ego-documents and the testimonies of his colleagues and loved ones, we thus see a picture of Saidov that is very different from that presented in his terse and dry Russian-language autobiographical accounts. It is furthermore, I suggest, a picture that is substantially closer to how Saidov actually envisaged himself and his scholarly persona.

Family Matters

Muḥammad-Said Saidov had two younger sisters, Patimat and Sakinat. After his father's death, he had to shoulder the responsibility of looking

549 [*Personal files for Muḥammad-Said Saidov*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, not inventored.

after his family. He ensured that both his sisters got married, while he himself remained a bachelor for a long time. In 1931, when he was 29 years old and was employed as proofreader at a printing house in Buinaksk, he met his future wife Ḥabiyat [fig. 12], who was widowed at the time and had three children from her previous marriage: an elder son called Anvar, a daughter called Ummuhaibat, and a younger son called Magomed.



Figure 12. Ḥabiyat Saidova (1900–75), wife of Muḥammad-Said Saidov. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova.

Ḥabiyat's first husband was named Abidin Akhmedkhanov, and he had been quite a wealthy man before the revolution. He owned gardens, extensive lands, and even a small conserve factory in his native village. After the revolution, the family's property was seized, and Abidin himself died early in the Soviet period. His wife Ḥabiyat had to move to the

city of Buinaksk in search of work; she earned some money by making bespoke clothes. This was where she met Saidov and soon married him.

According to Rabiyat, Saidov's family was adamantly against his marriage to Ḥabiyat. Saidov was the only bearer of the family name and had never been married before; his marriage to a woman two years older than him, a widow with three children – and herself furthermore a Kumyk whereas he was an Avar – was thus met with protests by his mother and sisters. And indeed, in contracting the marriage Saidov was acting well outside established Daghestani tradition. Nevertheless, he insisted, and, in 1934, he had a daughter called Rabiyat from his marriage to Ḥabiyat. Subsequently, Ḥabiyat learned the Avar language until she became perfectly fluent in it and – in Rabiyat's telling – she won over her husband's relatives with her kindness, hospitality, wisdom, housekeeping skills, and her care of him.[550]

Saidov was well aware of the importance of retaining a family name, which symbolised the place of a family within the Daghestani tradition. For this reason, he allowed Ḥabiyat's two sons from her previous marriage to retain the surname Akhmedkhanov in memory of their father Abidin. As for his daughters, Ummuhaibat, Ḥabiyat's daughter from her first marriage, and their daughter in common, Rabiyat, Saidov gave them his own surname. When Rabiyat married, she retained her father's surname in turn.[551]

Rabiyat recalled:

> My mother was not just my father's wife but his closest friend. I never heard my father raise his voice in her presence. He did not find it easy to trust people, but he shared everything with her. Even we children would learn certain things about him not directly but by accident, by overhear-

[550] Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

[551] In the Soviet era, it was customary for girls to adopt their husband's surname upon marriage. However, Rabiyat expressed her desire to retain her own surname, as Saidov had no male descendants. The elder adopted son adopted the surname Akhmedkhanov, the younger adopted son, who was also Akhmedkhanov and was not married, tragically lost his life during the Second World War, and the adopted daughter Ummuhaibat, upon her marriage, assumed her husband's surname.

> ing his conversations with mother. He would always consult her about everything and often took the decisions that she suggested; he would always accommodate her wishes. One incident is rather telling. After he had defended his dissertation, Krachkovskii invited him to move to Leningrad to teach Arabic at the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad State University. My father consulted my mother on this choice, but she did not agree to moving to a new city where she had no family or friends, and she wanted to stay in Makhachkala. "I don't want to live among Russians in a strange city," Ḥabiyat told him. Respecting her wishes, father politely declined the job offer. I heard him discussing this matter with my mother. Eventually, my mother came to regret her decision and believed that, by her refusal to move, she prevented my father from having a more successful career.[552]

Ḥabiyat's children from her first marriage were still little when their mother married Saidov, so they quickly became attached to him. But he did not teach Arabic to any of his children. Anvar, the elder son, trained as an engineer, participated in the Second World War, was discharged after being wounded and, until his retirement, built roads and bridges in Daghestan. Magomed, the other son, was conscripted into the Red Army and tragically lost his life in battle in the Smolensk district in 1944. Rabiyat recalled that her father had been very upset by this.[553]

Saidov had an idiosyncratic relationship with his children. He was a strict father, but he always supported his children in their hobbies, career choices, and aspirations. A letter from Saidov to Ḥabiyat illustrates this tendency. According to the context of the letter, Anvar was keen for his sister, Saidov's eldest daughter Ummuhaibat, to marry someone. But Ummahaibat herself was not keen to get married. There was an unpleasant conversation between her and Anvar, and Anvar rebuked his sister. Saidov learned of this, and in a letter to his wife he wrote: "Let all our rel-

552 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, August 4, 2015).
553 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

atives know: we will never do anything against Ummahaibat's will!" by which he meant that he was always going to support her own choices.[554]

Rabiyat herself followed in her father's professional footsteps [fig. 13]. She graduated from the Daghestan State University as a philologist and got a job at the same Institute of History, where she made Avar linguistics her field of study until her retirement.

When she was a child, her father insisted that she learned music, and she was a keen student at a music school, where she practised the piano. Rabiyat recalled:

> My father would always encourage me to practise my music, so after consulting with my father, my mother bought me a grand piano… We often had people from artistic and cultural circles at our house, and my father would happily converse with them. My music teacher, a Jew named Khizgil Mikhailovich,[555] was a frequent guest in our house. My father admired him for his skills and intelligence. Khizgil Mikhailovich spoke fluently to my parents in Kumyk, a language he knew very well. Once, he suggested to my mother that, after I graduated from music school, I should be sent to the Conservatoire in Leningrad, where he had worked for a while. But my mother did not agree. I was convinced at the time that my father would have allowed me to go.[556]

In fact, in one of his letters to his wife, Saidov asked: "How are Rabiyat's studies? Is she a worry for you? Tell her that she definitely has to continue with her music lessons and be diligent in this!"[557] Rabiyat recalled:

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554 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to his wife Ḥabiyat, 24 December 1945*] (in Kumyk). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 174. Saidov wrote all his letters to Ḥabiyat in Arabic-script Kumyk despite the fact that the Cyrillic alphabet had long been used for Daghestani languages.

555 Khizgil M. Khanukaev (1898–1970), a Caucasian highlander Jew, was a respected figure in Daghestani artistic circles, a violinist and musical theorist, the art director of the Ensemble of Song and Dance of the Peoples of Daghestan (1937–45), and the author of over 30 songs.

556 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

557 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to his wife Ḥabiyat*].



Figure 13. Rabiyat Saidova (1934–2024). Photograph by the author, August 2021.

> He generally brought me up to love literature, music, and art. But my father never taught me Islam, never made me wear a headscarf, and I did not know a single prayer. I was growing up as a Soviet person, far removed from religion and busy with my career, and my father supported me in all of this. That was even in spite of him being a religious man and performing his prayers.[558]

Jamal, Rabiyat's only son and Saidov's grandson, became a haematologist. As he recalls:

> My grandfather had no part in my choice of career. Once in my childhood, I decided to learn Arabic, and he taught me from Segal's textbook.[559] But soon I lost interest and gave up on our studies. He never rebuked me for this. Subsequently, I began to enjoy biology and decided to make it my profession. When I entered the Medical Institute, he supported me in this.[560]

Saidov's great-grandson, named after him, also became a doctor, specialising as an ophthalmologist.

Saidov's close and personal relationship with his family and his loving care for his wife emerge clearly from the letters he sent to her. For instance, in one letter he writes that he misses his family a lot while in Moscow and is worried because he is not allowed to go home but has to teach at the university. Because he is writing at a cold time of year, Saidov asks his wife whether she has enough firewood to heat the house. He shows great anxiety because he is far from home and worries that his family might be suffering from the cold. In another letter, he inquires repeatedly after her health. He regrets that the government is not taking sufficient care of them and writes in conclusion: "If we stay alive, we need to wean ourselves from the care of this state,[561] and we'll find a

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558 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

559 V.S. Segal', *Nachal'nyi kurs arabskogo iazyka* (Moscow: IMO, 1962).

560 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

561 Literally, 'to be weaned from the breast of this state', (in Kumyk: '*bu hukumatny emcheginden qutulup yashamagha*').

way to earn our own living."[562] This final phrase alludes to private economic activity, or what the Soviet authorities regarded disapprovingly as 'unearned income'. It seems that the post-war living conditions were so harsh that Saidov, in his concern to provide for his family, went as far as to sell some of his manuscripts. Thus, in 1961, Saidov sold to the Manuscript Collection of the Azerbaijan SSR Academy of Sciences (now the Mukhammad Fizuli Institute of Manuscripts at the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan) a manuscript of *Tāj al-lugha wa ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya* by Ismā'īl al-Jawharī (d. 1003) for 4,500 roubles. The notebook in which Saidov occasionally recorded current events contains a note by Saidov: "Today, on April 10, 1961, I sent them a reminder to expedite the transfer of funds."[563]

In 1975, Ḥabiyat died. His wife had long been the person closest to him, and Saidov was hard hit by the loss. He never forgot her during her lifetime and took great care of her grave, despite his religious convictions, which regarded visiting cemeteries and tending to graves as a futile – if not outright sinful – practice. [fig. 14].

After the death of his wife, Saidov invited his sister Patimat, the person who after his wife was closest to him and who was by that time a childless widow, to come and live with him. She was happy to oblige and moved to his house from Genichutl and continued to take care of him for the rest of his life. After his death in 1985, Patimat would often visit her brother's grave and read prayers on the graves of him and Ḥabiyat, who had been her close friend, while tending the graves and removing the weeds. Three years after the death of Muḥammad-Said, Patimat passed away as well and was buried next to her brother. Saidov died on 24 November 1985 from a heart attack and was buried in the cemetery of the village of Tarki, next to his wife Ḥabiyat's grave [fig. 15].

562 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to his wife Ḥabiyat*].

563 [*Some notes by Muḥammad-Said Saidov*]. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 177.



Figure 14. Muḥammad-Said Saidov (left, in the background) with his relatives tending the grave of his wife Ḥabiyat. Photograph by Jamal Rizvanov, 1984.



Figure 15. The graves (from left to right) of Patimat, Muḥammad-Said, and Ḥabiyat. Photograph by the author. Tarki, August 2015.

Reminiscences

There is a very considerable difference between the characteristics of Saidov's personality as seen by other people and what I would characterise as 'the inner Saidov' based on his literary works. For most people who knew him, Saidov was a person who was often little prone to emotions, cold-blooded, and taciturn and hard to surprise, please, delight, or frighten. Nevertheless, what we can glean from his various reminiscences presented in different literary genres is a completely different, and in many ways surprisingly normal, person, who is subject to the same emotions as everyone else. His written works expose a clear-cut contrast between his public persona and his inner 'self'.

A number of scholars have observed that the problem with taking literary texts as a source for the study of emotions is that, far from being sincere reflections of an author's emotions and outlook, such works are often highly artificial constructed designed to exercise emotional influence on their readers or listeners – and, as such, are reflective more of a particular culture's prevailing norms than of the author's own particular worldview.[564] In the case of Saidov's writings, the question of his authorial sincerity is a complex one. On the one hand, the official autobiographical accounts that he composed for the institute are clearly rhetorical constructs shaped by the prevailing norms of the moment. But many of Saidov's other writings, including much of his poetry and his Arabic-language reminiscences, give little sign of having been composed for an external readership. Rather, he used these works to convey the things he was careful to conceal from others, notable among these various emotions that people around him could have taken as weaknesses: fear, grief, and impotent pain. Away from his public persona, he used literature or poetry as an outlet that allowed him to speak to himself without fear of consequence or retribution. He found in literature and poetry a niche that allowed him to express his various emotions.

564 See for example discussion in Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 29.

To get a sense of the 'internal' Saidov, we need to realize just how much of his life he spent in fear. This was not, I should emphasise, because he was in any way a coward, but rather because, like millions of his contemporaries throughout the Soviet Union, he lived through highly traumatic times. The 1921 events in Genichutl, the repressions of the 1930s, the loss of his relatives and friends as a result of these repressions, and the many years spent in expectation of arrest all had a profound emotional and psychological impact on Saidov's personality. Saidov continued to experience a fear of repressions for the whole duration of Stalin's rule. His daughter Rabiyat said that, after he was released from arrest, her mother would always have a suitcase in the house in which she put some clean undergarments for Saidov as well as some dried bread crusts that she would replace from time to time. "This was a small black suitcase, I remember it well, it was always in plain sight. My mother would replace and air the clothes and the dried bread that were kept there and only removed it after Stalin died," Rabiyat recalled. She also told me of the habits her father formed during that time:

> My father had a habit of waking up at 2 a.m. exactly and staying awake for two hours, listening to the radio or reading. At 4 a.m., he would go back to sleep. At the time, I could not understand the reason for such a routine. It was not until later, after Stalin had died, that my mother explained to me that the *NKVD* officers would usually come to arrest people in the night, between 2 and 4 a.m. It turns out that my father had been expecting all this time, about fifteen years, that the *NKVD* would come for him and arrest him, so he wanted to be ready, dressed, and awake so he could meet them. Psychologically, he was prepared for his potential arrest and exile or execution, and the fear of arrest accompanied him all these years, despite the fact that he was hoping to escape the repressions. At 4 a.m., he would go back to sleep satisfied, knowing that he had spent one more day at home with his family. On the day Stalin died, I was at university. When I heard the news, I rushed home in tears. My father asked me: "What is the matter, why are you crying?" I exclaimed through my tears: "Why?! The father of the people, our Sta-

> lin is dead!" My father chuckled and said in a low voice: "But now we can sleep peacefully through the night!"[565]

Rabiyat also recalled that she once asked her father why he had never taught her Arabic. Saidov's reply was: "I did not want to live in Siberia", which implied that, had he taught Arabic to his daughter, the security services would have become aware of it and he would inevitably have been exiled.[566] Saidov was perhaps here being more cautious than he strictly needed to be: after all, even under Stalin it was legally possible to receive an Orientalist education in the USSR. Nevertheless, the fear of Soviet repression evidently remained embedded in his mind.

Saidov's cautious, wary character is well described by various family members, colleagues, and close friends. Rabiyat recalled:

> As far as I remember, my father was always a man of few words, austere and introverted, who rarely smiled, and I hardly ever heard him laugh. He never told anything to anyone. He was 'a thing in himself'. Sometimes, I thought that he was wearing the mask of a harsh highlander man, concealing his thoughts, desires, and emotions behind it. He was very demanding of himself and other people and did not forgive people such weaknesses as flattery, servility, treachery, malicious gossip behind someone's back, or slander. But he was even harsher towards himself. He would never forgive himself for the things he would forgive us, his daughters or his wife, for. He read a lot and loved retelling the things he read to my sister, my mother, and myself. He would only transform and express some emotions after he had read some book! Fiction and poetry, whether it was written in Arabic, Russian, or Avar, would always make a strong impression on him. In these moments, he would express his emotions openly and generously: his admiration, surprise, joy, for instance after reading an Arabic poem that resonated deeply with his soul. Or he would react negatively, sometimes with abrasive sarcasm, talking of the time he had wasted if the novel, story, or poem was very weak in

565 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, August 4, 2015).
566 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

> his opinion. This was remarkable! I realised that it was only in his own world of books and manuscripts that he became himself, taking off the mask of a strict, harsh, and taciturn man and allowing the emotions he had inside him to gush out. He was not diplomatic when it came to the people around him. His direct manner often placed me in an awkward situation. Sometimes, he would tell a person directly things they did not want to hear, without a care for their emotions. In his interaction with other people, my father would never tiptoe around them, regardless of whether it was a civil servant, a manager, or a student. He would treat everyone in the same way: he was direct and strict when he did not approve of the actions of these people or, very sparingly, complimentary, both about people he did not know well and about his relatives. He also cared deeply for his family, my mother and us children, and his sisters. It is possible that his somewhat harsh manner when it came to us was a way for him to show his love and care for us all.[567]

His grandson Jamal also recalled that Saidov was quite a strict grandfather, taciturn and very critical of himself and other people.

> I would often help my grandfather to bind and copy Arabic books and, during his last years, I would visit him nearly every day. He would explain everything to me in great detail and show how to sew the manuscripts together and how to bind them. He did not like talking about himself or his past. Getting any word out of him was like pulling teeth. He would never discuss politics but liked to talk about Arabic literature and history. Despite his outwardly severe appearance and his private personality, he could not be called a gloomy or grim person. He had a habit of taking some sweets with him as he went out into the yard and offering them to children, whom he liked. It would often happen that, as he was walking around the yard or sitting on a bench in front of the door, his neighbours or acquaintances would sit down next to him and listen with pleasure to his stories from history. He was an engaging storyteller and he was very knowledgeable. Some people disliked him be-

[567] Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).

> cause of his uncompromising manner. He did not shy away from speaking his mind to people he did not like. The drunks who liked to gather in our yard would usually be given a piece of his mind. He disliked drunks and cussed them so much that they tried to steer clear of him. He would often have visitors, colleagues, friends, relatives. His friends were usually those who knew Arabic as well. At the same time, he disliked idleness. It often happened that his relatives would come to our place and spend the entire time from morning till night in idle gossip. In this case, he would tell them directly to go back home. This is why some people thought that he was not a hospitable person. But this was not true. He loved having guests around, but he disliked it when people spent time in idle talk without any purpose. As for his hospitality, when he was home over the weekend, he would often be visited by his friends, relatives, work colleagues, and he was very pleased to see them.[568]

Despite Saidov's outward severity, he nevertheless had a very warm relationship with his wife. Indeed, Saidov's tender feelings towards his wife are illustrated by various documents from his archive, including one of his letters to her. Since Ḥabiyat did not know the Russian language and the Cyrillic alphabet very well, Saidov wrote to her in Arabic-script Kumyk. He begins one of his letters, in which he speaks to her with longing of their separation and love, with Kumyk rhyming prose:

> We all went our separate ways,
> And I am writing to my darling Ḥabiyat, who has stayed at home,
> From me, who misses you and loves you,
> Greetings![569]

The passionate tone of this letter is particularly striking since Saidov was 43 at the time of writing, while his wife was 45. The couple had already passed the stage of youthful infatuation that marked the first years of their life together. By this point Saidov was now a mature man and had

568 Interview with Jamal Rizvanov (Makhachkala, December 31, 2019).
569 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to his wife Ḥabiyat*].

been married to Ḥabiyat for nearly 20 years. Nevertheless, the letter indicates that he continued to dearly love and care for his wife, and that he did not hesitate to communicate these feelings to her. This emotional relationship, the exposure of his sincere feelings, is in stark contrast with the testimony even of people who knew him quite well.

On the whole, judging by this text and by the reminiscences of his daughter and grandson, Muḥammad-Said and Ḥabiyat were bound by close emotional ties, mutual love, and deep respect, which they retained over the course of their entire life together. Saidov took his wife's death very hard, and the years after Ḥabiyat's death he became even more taciturn and withdrawn.

Other ego-documents in Saidov's archive, as well as the reminiscences of his family, confirm the impression that, under his gruff exterior, he was an emotional and sensitive man. His daughter recalled once coming to visit him and seeing tears stream down his cheeks. She was alarmed that something serious had happened because she had never seen her father weeping like this. It turned out that Saidov had just learned of the death of the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, and was worried for the future of Egypt and the Egyptians. As a determined proponent of pan-Arabism, who regularly listened to Arabic radio programmes and took a keen interest in the political situation in Egypt, Said had strongly supported Nasser's campaign to restore the Arab national movement and the independence of Egypt. In Saidov's eyes, Nasser's charismatic personality, his attempts to secure the unification of Egypt and Syria, and his promotion of Arab patriotism together rendered him an exemplary head of state: and he bitterly grieved Nasser's passing.

Regarding this, I was told a remarkable story by Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov when I was working with him on a glossary of Arabic Sufi terms. According to Osmanov, who was Saidov's friend and met him often, the latter was so shocked and saddened by the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser that he wrote a *marthiyya* dedicated to his passing away.[570] Muḥam-

[570] Unfortunately, I have been unable to find this *qaṣīda* either in Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection at the Institute of History in Makhachkala or in Rabiyat's private archive.

mad-Nūrī Osmanov recounted that he himself had read this work, and recalled that it was written in imitation of the afore-mentioned *Mu'allaqa* genre of *Jāhilī* Arabic poetry and was close in style to a poem by the Arabic poet Labīd b. Rabī'a al-'Āmirī (d. 661). In the poem, Saidov praised Gamal Abdel Nasser by way of allusions to tribal wars and incursions into neighbouring lands, which were widely represented in *Jāhilī* poetry. He compared Nasser to an ancient Arab warrior and a defender of his tribe's honour, and concluded with a lament for Nasser's early death by drawing parallels with a poem by Labīd in which the latter mourns the death of his brother Arbad. He sent this *marthiyya* to Egypt, from where it was forwarded to Murād Ghālib, the Egyptian ambassador in the USSR,[571] who was so impressed by the work that he invited Saidov to the Egyptian Embassy in Moscow. "I remember this story well because I read this *marthiyya* and, when he came to Moscow to meet the ambassador, he stayed in my flat," Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov recalled.[572]

In one of his letters addressed to 'Abd al-Mālik Khalīl, a journalist with the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahrām*, Saidov reminds him of his request for a book containing a biography of Gamal Abdel Nasser, authored by Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Haykal.[573] Saidov further writes in his letter:

> I was deeply saddened by the news of the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser and concerned for the future development of Egypt and the Egyptians… I would like to let you know that, to show my respect for the leader of the Arab movement, my dearly beloved Gamal Abdel Nasser, I called

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571 Muḥammad Murād Ghālib (1922–2007): ambassador of Egypt in the USSR (1961–71) and Egyptian minister of foreign affairs (1971–72).

572 Interview with Muḥammad-Nūrī Osmanov (Makhachkala, February 15, 2011).

573 Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Haykal (1923–2016): a well-known Egyptian journalist, one of the ideologists behind Egypt's policies of 1950–2000, a close associate of Gamal Abdel Nasser who shared his ideas of Arab nationalism, editor-in-chief of the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahrām*, and the author and editor of a number of publications on history and politics of Egypt. It is likely that, in this letter, Saidov also asked 'Abd al-Mālik Khalīl to send him the book entitled *'Abd al-Nāṣir wa-l-'alam*, which discusses the life and political career of Gamal Abdel Nasser. See: Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Haykal, *'Abd al-Nāṣir wa-l-'alam* (Cairo: Dār al-nahār li-l-nashr, 1972).

> my grandson, my daughter's son, Jamal in his honour.[574] I was an admirer of his life and deeds and his political agenda, which was very meaningful for Arabs.[575]

Saidov's colleagues also described him as an austere personality. This is how Amri Shikhsaidov characterised him:

> I worked for a long time under Saidov's supervision. I was his graduate student, often went on field trips with him, and knew him well as a person. He was a well-bred and intelligent man, with a strong sense of dignity, direct and principled. He would never engage in banter with his colleagues; he did not understand humour, and did not tolerate any idleness at work. Although he was profoundly knowledgeable and had a long experience of working at the institute, he was always easy to approach. He did not like being addressed by his name and patronymic and he would tell all of us at the department: "I am not Magomed-Said Jamalutdinovich for you! Call me Muḥammad-Said, by my name, regardless of how old you are and how old I am!" This is how we all called him. But, at the same time, he did not tolerate over-familiarity and never allowed anyone to talk down to him. But nobody would do that. Even the former director of our institute, Gadzhiali Daniialov, who had a very short temper and would often be rude to his employees, would always try to be polite around Saidov. Saidov's personality is well illustrated by two incidents involving Daniialov. Once, Daniialov asked Saidov to come and see him about some work-related matter. After a while, Daniialov himself forgot about it and was busy with some work in his office. Muḥammad-Said found out that Daniialov had asked for him and went to his office. Gadzhiali, who had forgotten that he himself had asked Muḥammad-Said to come, lost his temper and shouted: "Why do people come in without knocking when I am busy!" Muḥammad-Said turned around

574 i.e., Jamal Rizvanov, son of Rabiyat and grandson of Saidov.

575 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to 'Abd al-Mālik Khalīl, 14 May 1972*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 243.

silently and went towards the door. Gadzhiali realised that he was in the wrong and tried to stop Muḥammad-Said. He did not turn back but said to the director over his shoulder: "When you have calmed down, come and see me in my office! You are younger than me!" Another incident involving Daniialov, who managed the Institute in quite an authoritarian manner and never allowed any employee to say no to him, is also an indication of how principled Muḥammad-Said was. Daniialov once asked Muḥammad-Said to write a paper for him on the history of Arabic literature in Daghestan so that he could present it at a conference in Delhi. He said: "You see, Muḥammad-Said, you are banned from travelling abroad anyway, so you can write the paper and I will read it for you." Muḥammad-Said looked at Daniialov intently and asked: "Do you really need this paper so badly?" Daniialov thought the matter was settled and said: "Yes, Muḥammad-Said, I need it badly!" to which Saidov retorted: "If you need it so badly, write it yourself and present it yourself! I am not writing anything for you or anyone!" For Saidov, authority were not the people who held high ranks but those who had deep knowledge. He treated me very well, and when he decided to step down from his position as head of the Department of Oriental Studies, he recommended me to the director as a candidate for the position, saying: "Amri is a knowledgeable man, he knows manuscripts, the history of Islam, a solid person, polite, and a good scholar. I do not see any other candidates for the position!" He had a heightened sense of truth and justice. He never criticised anyone behind their back. But he could also criticise those close to him, his colleagues, and even the few friends he had to their faces – sometimes in a very hard manner. There was once an incident when Saidov and his colleague Magomed Nurmagomedov both participated in the same conference. Nurmagomedov delivered his presentation in Arabic. Those in attendance were greatly impressed by his eloquent Arabic speech and rewarded him with a hearty round of applause. Emboldened by the positive response, Nurmagomedov returned to his seat with a smile. However, as he passed by Saidov, last murmled for Nurmagomedov's ears alone: "You've read the paper very badly, with errors!" All of Nurmagomedov's enthusiasm vanished, and he fell into a state of despondency, remaining silent for the duration of the conference. Saidov looked

> quite stern, and he looked mistrustful of others, so he gave the impression of a gloomy and grim man. That said, he was always polite with people, and we knew that, despite him being quite inscrutable, any person could always go to him for advice or consult him. He would never claim he was busy; he would set aside his work and spend a lot of time explaining things. He liked telling stories and greatly liked people who sought knowledge and was very open to them.[576]

The picture that emerges from these testimonies is of a morally serious, intellectually committed man, but one who is also reserved and taciturn. His external defences, which shut out the surrounding world, and his taciturn manner can be explained by the fear that came from nearly 20 years of expecting to be persecuted. Amri Shikhsaidov characterises Saidov and the people of his generation as a common community that survived the Imperial period, the Civil War, and the subsequent repressions – when the world they knew broke down around them – and had to integrate into a new Soviet reality. The members of this generational community were profoundly affected by the loss of their closest friends and like-minded associates. Despite miraculously escaping repression, they were unable to fully shake off the residual fear of persecution throughout their lives.

Saidov's reserved nature does not mean, however, that he was lacking in emotion or feeling. Indeed, his archives attest to a profound depth of emotion, even if he tried to discipline and control it. While it might initially appear that he and his contemporaries disavowed or denied their emotions, in fact they carefully channelled them. Instead of expressing their various emotions in publicly audible and visible speech and behaviour, they did so instead in writing, in the form of poetry, reminiscences, letters, and other types of ego-documents. Saidov preferred to do this exclusively in Arabic. Arabic seems to have been the most comfortable and acceptable vehicle for him, one that better enabled him to express his emotions than was possible in Russian. In fact, all the papers

[576] Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov during a field trip (Akhty, Daghestan, August 9, 2010).

in his archive that are written in Russian are mostly related to his professional activities. These are his work reports, statements, official letters, declarations, and other bureaucratic or professional evidence. We find nothing in Saidov's archive written in Russian that reflects his emotions in any way. The most intimate writings that recall his fears, hopes, love, pain of loss, and admiration were produced solely in Arabic, either as verses or as short notes. In Saidov's understanding, only the Arabic language, with its rich gamut of synonyms and styles, would serve to fully and subtly express his reflections over current events. Moreover, his short reminiscences also indicate that it was Arabic he turned to in order to externalise his feelings and his nostalgia for the past. He did not expect anyone to ever read his short memories of the past or learn about his admiration for a song or a poem he had read.

In opting to spell out his intimate thoughts on paper without sharing them with anyone, Saidov seems to have been motivated by a range of considerations. His reluctance to share his secrets with his nearest and dearest was probably a mark of his own affectionate concern for their welfare, lest he again fall foul of the authorities and inadvertently get his loved ones into trouble. If he were to share his thoughts with colleagues and workmates, meanwhile, there was always the danger that a confidant might pass information on to the relevant authorities, with dangerous repercussions for himself and his family. But his caution is probably reflective also of his own inner personality – a reticence and reluctance to expose or discuss his emotions in public, whether they be joy, displeasure, grief, nostalgia, or worry. This reticence meant that Saidov shared his innermost secrets only with the very paper that he wrote on – and even then only when he felt it was safe to do so. The evidence from Saidov's archive indicates that he recorded his emotions most freely during the early Soviet period, before the repressions had started, and during the Khrushchev Thaw, when the likelihood of him being persecuted by the authorities was minimal.

During periods of relative safety, – which is to say, the early Soviet period and the 1950s–1970s – Saidov wrote about his subjective feelings at some length. One of the earliest known such compositions, written when Saidov was 19, is a *marthiyya* dedicated to his ancestral vil-

lage of Genichutl and his memories of the tragic events relating to the Red Army's punitive operations in February 1921,[577] as described above. Like his afore-mentioned elegy for President Nasser, it is written in the *Mu'allaqa* genre of *Jāhilī* Arabic poetry, which is characterised by an extreme outpouring of emotions.

This *marthiyya* articulates Saidov's profound emotional response to the disaster that occurred. The poem begins with an outpouring of grief and weeping, and, in his narrative, Saidov often harks back to the past, noting the merits and virtues of the people he had lost and expressing his love and pride for his village. Saidov personifies his village, endowing it with various admirable qualities such as bravery, justice, reason, kindness, and respect for God. And, like grief for a dead person, whose departure means that their positive qualities die with them, Saidov describes the disappearance of all these personified virtues brought about by the demise of the village.

Saidov recounts how he went into the mosque and saw Islamic books scattered and ripped apart on the floor, and describes how upset he was at this sight. Throughout his life Saidov felt awe and respect for literature as a whole, and, in his conviction as to literature's intrinsic moral value, he laments such vandalism. For him, the destruction of books, which were for him a source of spiritual and intellectual progress in society, is a bewildering notion. He is appalled by this violence done to innocent objects that have nothing to do with the political. In portraying these books as victims, he shows how he regards them as more than mere inanimate objects; indeed, he compares his own heart to them, and describes how, just as these books were torn to shreds, so too his own heart was torn to shreds at the sight of what has occurred.

He goes on to deplore the absence of a *mu'adhdhin* or *qāḍī*. For him, listening to the call to prayer repeated five times and performing his Friday prayer is part of the familiar and comfortable world that he grew up in and that had surrounded him since childhood. Now, Saidov realises

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577 Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī, *Marthiyya*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 720. See the translation of this poem into English in the Appendix.

that his familiar world is collapsing, and he is shaken by the realization that henceforth nothing will ever be the same. Knowing that there can be no return to the old and familiar world, he writes: "and the illusion dies."

He then mourns for his two teachers, evidently killed by the Red Army soldiers.[578] Following the traditions of Arabic poetry, he praises their inner qualities and recounts their various virtues, amongst which he particularly emphasises their profound learning. In Saidov's opinion, knowledge and learning are one of the main virtues a person could have, and he highlights them for that reason. Like practitioners of the afore-mentioned genre of Arabic *marthiyya*, Saidov describes his teachers as the departed, whose positive qualities, like the qualities of the village he personifies, are now a thing of the past. Here, he is not just mourning the death of specific individuals whom he knew and loved and whom he would never see again, but also the loss of the virtues that these individuals once possessed. At the same time, however, he emphasises that he is glad that they have completed their earthly journey, through the travails of enmity and hate, and moved on to the next world, where these social vices are unknown. And since they perished as martyrs for their faith (*shahīd*), Saidov expresses the belief that they will be raised to an exalted position in the next world – something to which every Muslim aspires.

Following the Islamic tradition, which implies a negative view of this world as a mere temporary obstacle before transition to the next world of eternity, Saidov also regretfully recounts the imperfections of this world, which is full of evils and disasters, and where virtue has been left in the past and injustice has triumphed. He notes that injustice still remains on this earth and that innocent people suffer because of disasters inflicted upon them by others. Despite his grief and bitterness about the injustice inflicted on the people of his village, Saidov does not transgress the boundaries of the Islamic notion of good and evil, the relationship between the two in the context of human free will (*ikhtiyār*) and predestination (*qadar*). We find a tacit articulation of the *Ash'arī* view according to which God tolerates the existence in the human world of evil as

578 It is clear that both these scholars were killed during the punitive operation because Saidov calls them 'martyrs' for their faith (*shahīd*).

well as good and injustice as well as justice, and which holds that the suffering experienced by people in this life is a test sent by God in order to try their patience, and that the best Muslim is one who shows humility and patience with regard to the misfortunes and suffering that befall him.[579] In deference to this line of thought, Saidov mentions the patience shown by Muslims with regard to the injustice against them. But he also states that there is a limit to everything and that if such calamities continue to befall innocent people, the patience of Muslims may come to an end. Acknowledging his powerlessness in the face of the injustice that has come to pass, he leaves everything to the judgment of God, noting that those who do evil in this world will be held accountable for their actions before God after their death and that the retribution for the evils caused is inevitable.

The dating of this poem, written down at the end of the text and copied on the reverse, is itself worthy of comment. Saidov dated this text to 8 *Rabīʿ al-thānī*, AH 1339, which corresponds to 18 December 1920, while the Genichutl tragedy occurred in February 1921. This might on the face of it seem to be a mistake, but I suggest that it indicates a deliberate authorial strategy. The events mentioned by Saidov in his poem, such as the violent death of his teachers, the destruction of Islamic literature in the mosque, and the absence of a *muʾadhdhin* or *qāḍī*, could in fact have occurred much later, for instance during the repressions of the 1930s. However, Saidov's dating of the poem indicates that he is referring to the aftermath of a specific punitive action by the Red Army. And this tallies with what we know more generally: in 1920–21 Daghestan at large still had functioning mosques, madrasas, *sharīʿa* courts, and a well-oiled system of Islamic learning, education, and jurisdiction,[580] with manuscripts still being copied and Islamic literature still freely

579 Alī al-Kabīr al-Ghumuqī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 6.

580 I.Kh. Sulaev, *Gosudarstvo i musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo v Dagestane: istoriia vzaimootnoshenii (1917–1991 gg.)* (Makhachkala: no publisher, 2009), 253–365; V.O. Bobrovnikov, "Musulmanskaia shkola v rannem Sovetskom Dagestane (1918–1927)," *Pax Islamica* 1:2 (2009), 126–144; idem, "Shariatskie sudy na Severnom Kavkaze," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 5:13 (2003), 65–69.

published,[581] and *mu'adhdhin*s or *qāḍī*s in almost every village. When Saidov describes the destruction of books in a mosque and the absence of a *mu'adhdhin* or *qāḍī*, as well as the violent death of his two teachers, he can thus only mean one thing: all of this was a result of a single punitive action by the Soviet authorities who were trying to crush the Muslim insurgency by Gotsinskii. Clearly, Saidov deliberately fudged the precise date of the poem so that if it were seized by the Soviet authorities, they would have no grounds to suspect him of sympathy towards the enemies of the Soviet regime – which was how the Genichutl villagers were seen by the Bolsheviks, – or of a critical attitude towards the actions of the Red Army in Genichutl. Saidov was also unable to use a later dating for this poem because the events in Genichutl were hushed up for the whole duration of the Soviet regime, even though the Genichutl residents were considered enemies of the Soviet state. Dating the poem to an earlier year meant that Saidov, should events take a hostile turn, would be able to claim that he had written the poem before the events in Genichutl, and that it had nothing to do with these events, which after all occurred only several months after the purported date of composition.

In the example of this poem dedicated to his native village, one can observe how Saidov expressed his emotions in response to the feelings he experienced in those very moments. But within his archive we also encounter various ego-documents that instead articulate his attitudes and feelings towards the events of the past. Notable among these items are the reminiscences that he wrote in Arabic in 1965. In these reminiscences, he touches upon three events that occurred to him in the period between 1919 and 1925, which are not related to one another in any straightforward logical way.[582] The sole binding thread that brings them together is Saidov's emotional response to the events in question [fig. 16].

On the title page to this work (fol. 1a), Saidov wrote: "Some poems and verses, written by Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī[583] in

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581 A.A. Isaev. *Katalog arabograficheskikh pechatnykh knig na darginskom i kumykskom iazykakh. 1919–1930 gg.* (Mahachkala: IIAE DNTs RAN, 2012).

582 For the English translation of this manuscript from Arabic, see the Appendix.

583 Arabic *nisba* of his native village of Genichutl.

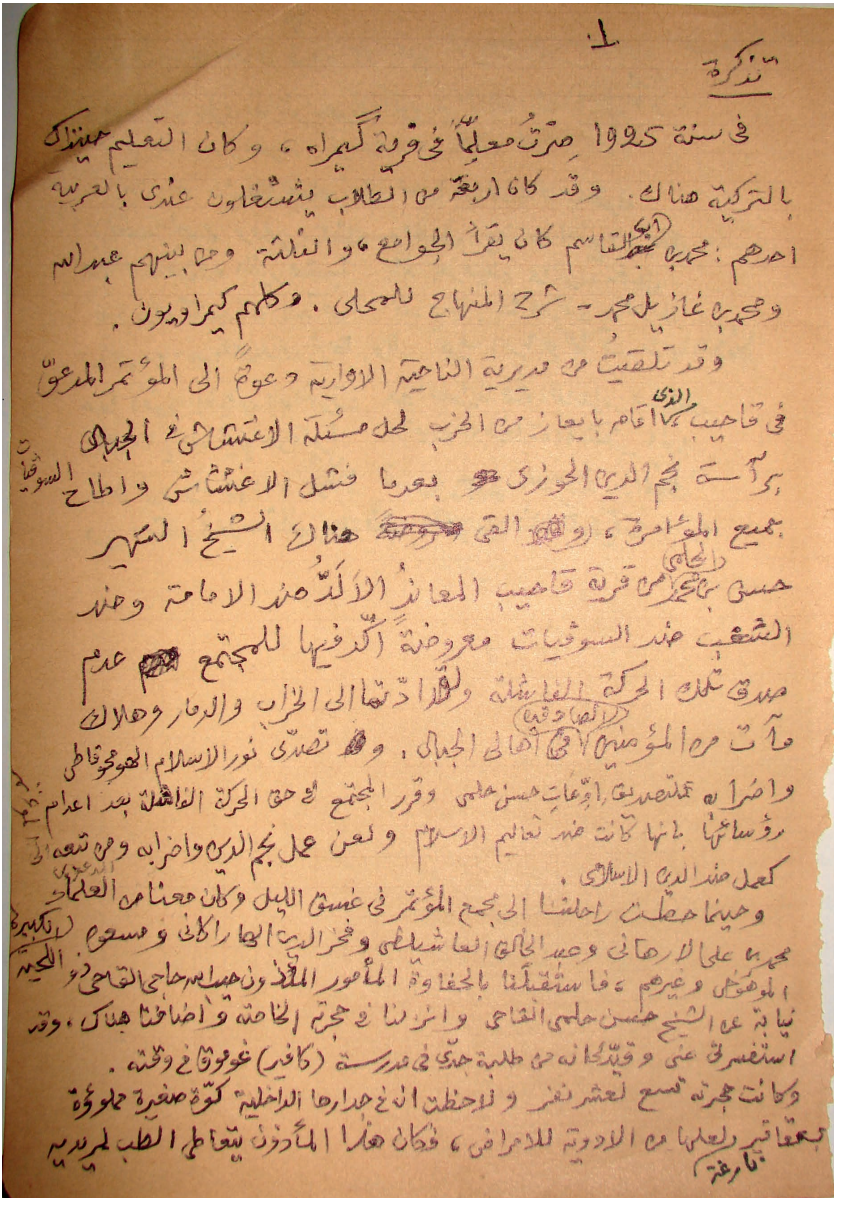


Figure 16. Muḥammad-Said Saidov's reminiscences. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no. 73.

Arabic. He[584] who is writing [this] confesses to his mediocre abilities in this area.[585] But he has recorded in this notebook what he was capable of as reminiscences for himself and for those who will be after him."[586]

The work itself comprises three distinct sections. In the initial part (fols. 2a–2b), Saidov copies the poems that he composed and sent to his friend and teacher Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī in 1924. Since I have already analysed his poems to Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī above, I shall provide below the brief content of his "Reminiscences".

The author begins by describing his role as a teacher in the village of Gimry in 1925, where he taught the Turkic language at the local Soviet school and provided instruction in Islamic law to four pupils in the village mosque. This episode underscores the persistence of traditional Islamic education amidst the growing influence of Soviet institutions.

The narrative then shifts to a congress held in the village of Kakhib in 1923, convened by the Soviet authorities in response to the failed insurgency led by Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī (Gotsinskii). The event featured speeches by local religious leaders, most notably shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, who publicly condemned the rebellion as contrary to Islamic teachings. The author's participation in this congress, alongside other notable scholars, positions him as a witness to – and perhaps a tacit supporter of – the Soviet-backed campaign to delegitimise religiously framed opposition.

A particularly evocative passage details the author's stay with Ḥabībullāh al-Qaḥī, a Sufi shaykh and healer who hosted the delegates. In response to his observations during this visit, the author offers a poetic lament criticising the moral and intellectual decline he perceived among certain Sufi circles. His verses, replete with metaphors of emptiness, falsehood, and estrangement from divine illumination, articulate a pointed critique of Sufism, suggesting broader scepticism toward its contemporary manifestations.[587]

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584 Here, Saidov refers to himself in the third person, which was a widespread phenomenon in the Islamic written tradition.

585 I.e., in poetry.

586 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 1a.

587 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār*, fol. 3b.

The second part of the memoir recounts the author's travels in 1919, undertaken in pursuit of advanced Arabic studies. His journey led him through several villages in the Gunib district, where he sought instruction from various *qāḍī*s. However, he encountered significant obstacles, including the limited scholarly credentials of some officials and the broader instability of the region in the wake of revolutionary upheaval. This section offers a vivid portrayal of rural Daghestan, highlighting the enduring significance of mosques, marketplaces, and scholarly networks as nodes of cultural and religious life.

Central to this narrative is the figure of ʻAlī Kaiaev, a distinguished scholar based in Kumukh, who is described in exalted terms as a "pearl placed at an unreachable height." Kaiaev's erudition and his connections to educational institutions in Egypt illustrate the transnational character of Islamic learning in the North Caucasus. However, the author's initial inability to secure Kaiaev's patronage, due to financial constraints, also reflects the material hardships that frequently beset those aspiring to religious knowledge. Eventually, he receives support in the nearby village of Ḥūrī under the guidance of Rāfiʻ al-Shamghudī, another scholar who also practised traditional healing, thus illustrating the multifaceted roles played by religious figures in Daghestani society. During this period, the author resided in Ḥūrī but traveled daily to Kumukh to continue his lessons with Kaiaev.

Saidov fondly recollects his teacher, revering Kaiaev as a morning star on the horizon because he was a Daghestani who had graduated from Al-Azhar university. Saidov clearly regarded Al-Azhar as highly prestigious, and it is evidently a point of pride for him that his teacher studied there.

Of particular significance is the Saidov's study of *Kanz al-ʻulūm wal-lugha,* a treatise by the Egyptian reformist Muḥammad Farīd al-Wajdī. This detail reflects the enduring influence of Arabic reformist intellectual traditions within Daghestan and indicates the author's alignment with a rationalist and revivalist ethos. Nevertheless, his eventual return home, which was delayed by ongoing insurgent activity and compounded by personal tragedy – specifically, the death of his father, reportedly

at the hands of the Red Army – highlights the profound personal costs of this turbulent historical period.[588]

Saidov's reminiscences stand as a unique source where the author directly reveals his own experiences. Despite the fragmented nature of these reminiscences, they unmistakably encapsulate Saidov's self-representation, which, in this instance, bears resemblances to his scholarly persona.

Evidently, Saidov initiated the text with verses dedicated to Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī. However, when recalling the circumstances surrounding the creation of these verses, Saidov incorporates them in prose form within the preface, as we have discussed at length in Chapter 2.

Subsequently, Saidov's reminiscences unfold. The commencement of the reminiscences from 1925 hinges not on a chronological sequence of events but rather on thematic concurrence with his poetry. While his poems dedicated to al-Muhūkhī carry criticisms of Sufism, in his recollections associated with the 'Congress of the Red Shaykhs,'[589] he conveys his unfavourable stance towards Sufism. Here, he likens shaykh Ḥabībullāh's fervour for Sufism to empty vessels: just as the jars that stand on the shelf in Ḥabībullāh's house contain no medicine and are thus of no benefit to the ailing, so too, he suggests, the practice of Sufism is a futile pursuit within Islam.

Given that the 'Congress of the Red Shaykhs' was convened in response to the uprising led by Gotsinskii, as discussed above, Saidov uses the occasion to voice his dissatisfaction with Sufism – and, by extension, with shaykhs Ḥabībullāh and Ḥasan – on spiritual and doctrinal grounds. However, his participation in the Congress also reflects a clear political alignment with these figures in their opposition to Gotsinskii's actions.

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588 See the appendix for the full translation of this work into English.

589 In the Soviet tradition, communists and Bolsheviks were commonly referred to as 'Reds' ('*Krasnye*'). This term derives from the use of the red color to symbolise Communist and Bolshevik ideals, associated with the proletariat's struggle and socialist revolution. Red flags and banners served as prominent symbols. 'Reds' served as a synonym for members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and their allies, symbolising the spirit of the Socialist Revolution and the Communism. The congress discussed by Saidov was termed the 'Congress of the Red Shaykhs' due to its leadership by two Naqshbandi shaykhs, Ḥabībullāh and Ḥasan of Kakhib, who supported the Bolshevik cause.

In this sense, while he distances himself from their religious outlook, he aligns himself with their political stance, positioning himself as a supporter of Soviet authority.

As previously noted, Saidov harboured no admiration for Stalin, and long feared potential arrest during Stalin's rule. He maintained a non-partisan stance, not aligning with the Communist Party's ideology. Nevertheless, the principles of justice and social equality enshrined in the socialist agenda resonated deeply with him. He did not stand in opposition to Soviet authority, viewing the extensive repressions of the 1930s as a product of individual caprice rather than state policy.[590] Composing these reminiscences in 1965, a juncture at which he had already ascended to the status of a respected scholar, he was acutely aware that his elevated social standing and recognition in Daghestan as a prominent scholar were wholly attributable to Soviet rule.

Why did he write these reminiscences 40 years after the events he described? During that time, he was deeply engrossed in gathering and studying the Arabic-language legacy of Muslim scholars in Daghestan. He remembered all the people whose materials he collected and wrote about. The people named in his reminiscences were not abstract individuals whom he merely heard or read about. Saidov was personally acquainted with all the people he mentions in his reminiscences; he was a friend of some, a student of others, and in some cases their critic. The individuals in question include the afore-mentioned anti-Soviet rebel Gotsinskii, a kinsman in whose library he had worked; his close friends Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī and Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī, with whom he corresponded intensely and whose poems he included in several of his collections; his teachers 'Alī Kaiaev, from whom he learned, and Rāfi'-hājjī al-Shamghudī, who gave him a place to stay for the duration of his studies; the

590 In particular, Saidov perceived the repressions against his friends as the result of the the arbitrariness of local Soviet authorities. The denunciations against him in 1937 were written by certain people, and the Soviet authorities would be responding to these denunciations. Despite acknowledging human weaknesses and, perhaps, their moral lapses, he still believed in the validity and fairness of socialist ideals, akin to the perspective of early Soviet-era Muslim scholars who endorsed the Soviet regime.

Sufi shaykhs Ḥabībullāh, who once hosted Saidov, and Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlarov, whose autograph on medicine was included in his collection and for whose library he had made a list (*fihris*);[591] and even Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, whom Saidov criticised for some of his Sufi practices, as was noted in Chapter 2. In 1965, when he was writing his reminiscences, none of these individuals were any longer alive. Some of them, including Bashlarov and Ḥabībullāh of Kakhib, had died of natural causes. Others, such as ʻAlī Kaiaev, Rāfiʻ of Shangoda, Masʻūd al-Muhūkhī, and Muḥammad ʻUmarī, had died in Soviet prisons or in exile. Others still, including Gotsinskii and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, had been executed by the Soviet authorities. As he read their works, Saidov clearly recalled his friends and acquaintances and his conversations and friendships with them and felt nostalgic for bygone days. The study of Saidov's reminiscences reveals not only insights into his life and cultural legacy but also a glimpse into his inner world and emotional depth. Although outwardly a reserved individual, he discovered an outlet for his emotions through the Arabic literary tradition that had been integral to his life.

In this chapter, we have explored the multi-layered personality of Muḥammad-Said Saidov, a figure situated at the confluence of two cultural and epistemological paradigms: Islamic tradition and Soviet modernity. Rather than viewing these modes of being as contradictory or mutually exclusive, Saidov's life and self-representation suggest a far more intricate model of synthesis and negotiation. The autobiographical fragments, reminiscences, and ego-documents examined herein illuminate how Saidov drew upon both the literary resources of classical Islamic scholarship and the bureaucratic conventions of Soviet institutional life to articulate a nuanced intellectual identity. In doing so, he did not merely inhabit both spheres; he wove them into a coherent vision of what it meant to be a Muslim intellectual in the twentieth century.

What emerges with particular clarity is that Saidov's personality cannot be properly apprehended through his official autobiographical ac-

[591] Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Fihris al-kutub li Sayfullāh-qāḍī Bashlārūf*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 198.

counts alone. These documents, often shaped by the demands of Stalinist bureaucracy or post-war institutional formalism, represent only one layer of his complex self. They reflect not so much a man as a mask – a cautious projection of compliance, a portrait painted with restraint and calculation. In contrast, Saidov's Arabic-language reminiscences, personal letters, marginalia, and poetic fragments disclose a radically different dimension: a deeply reflective and emotionally expressive self, marked by loss, fear, resilience, and hope. This bifurcation in his autobiographical production is itself a profound commentary on the political pressures of the Soviet milieu and the psychological strategies required to navigate it.

The juxtaposition of these sources allows us to trace how Saidov selectively curated his life story depending on context and anticipated readership. In official documents, he minimised or entirely omitted references to his Islamic education, his ties to anti-Soviet figures, and the personal tragedies caused by Soviet policies. Conversely, in more private and culturally insulated writings, he was forthright about his religious commitments, his admiration for Islamic scholars and poets, and the profound emotional scars left by the destruction of his ancestral village and the death of his father. These expressions, often cloaked in the metaphorical idioms of Arabic poetry or allusive phrasing, serve as a quiet yet powerful counter-narrative to the official historiographies of the Soviet state.

Moreover, Saidov's self-presentation oscillated between the paradigms of submission and authorship. On one hand, he demonstrated compliance with Soviet expectations by documenting his contributions to education, linguistics, and cultural development within the Daghestani context. On the other hand, he quietly authored a parallel history – one in which his Islamic intellectual heritage, suppressed in formal accounts, stands as the foundation of his philological and literary expertise. Through his editorial decisions, translation practices, and manuscript preservation, Saidov built a bridge between classical Islamic knowledge systems and Soviet modes of academic inquiry. His entire oeuvre, read with appropriate attention to nuance, stands as an archive of intellectual resilience and cultural translation.

This conclusion calls for a reconsideration of how Soviet Muslim intellectuals are read and historicised. Saidov's case demonstrates that conventional binaries – such as religion and secularism, compliance and resistance, Islam and Communism – are insufficient to capture the dynamic processes of intellectual self-fashioning in this context. Instead, we observe a spectrum of accommodation, silence, critique, and affirmation, each adopted with strategic acumen and deep personal reflection. Saidov did not merely survive the Soviet system; he discovered within its interstices the space to articulate a vision of knowledge rooted in Islamic moral philosophy, linguistic precision, and historical memory.

Additionally, Saidov's engagement with textual traditions – both in preserving manuscripts and composing his own reflections – reveals a scholar deeply attuned to the ethics of knowledge transmission. His commitment to safeguarding Daghestani Arabic heritage, even when it entailed significant personal risk, positions him not only as a collector or curator but also as a custodian of collective memory. The poignancy of his actions, such as binding Arabic manuscripts within the covers of Lenin's collected works, serves as a symbolic and subversive testament to the enduring power of the written word. It also highlights his layered authorship, which communicates not only through what is written but also through what is concealed, repurposed, or metaphorically encoded.

At the same time, Saidov's role within his family and community further complicates and enriches our understanding of his persona. The memories of his daughter Rabiyat and other relatives portray a man of considerable emotional depth, tenderness, and ethical consistency. His decision to raise stepchildren as his own, his encouragement of his daughter's education and musical aspirations, and his emotional vulnerability in the face of personal loss all paint a picture of an individual who, while intellectually rigorous, was also deeply human. His letters home, filled with concern for his family's well-being, serve as another archive – a domestic, affective one – that complements his scholarly output.

That Saidov was able to maintain a coherent and meaningful intellectual project over several decades of intense political surveillance, shifting ideological expectations, and institutional upheaval speaks volumes about his strategic dexterity and personal conviction. He emerges as a

man who neither fully conformed nor overtly rebelled, but who charted a path of intellectual integrity, cultural continuity, and adaptive scholarship. His life thus offers a vital case study of how Islamic intellectual traditions could survive, evolve, and even flourish within the strictures of Soviet modernity.

In this light, the significance of Saidov's autobiographical fragments lies not merely in what they reveal but in the ways in which they reveal it. They are not transparent windows onto a stable self; rather, they are opaque, polyphonic texts that must be read with sensitivity to voice, genre, and context. The rhetorical and linguistic strategies employed by Saidov – his alternation between Russian and Arabic, between poetic and bureaucratic forms, and between revelation and reticence – constitute a grammar of survival and expression. Through these strategies, we access not only a personal history but also a repertoire of intellectual techniques forged in the crucible of empire, revolution, and reform.

CHAPTER 7

Academic Writing between Islam and Soviet Scholarship

A key dimension of Saidov's intellectual activity that reflects his self-perception as both an Islamic and an academic scholar is his corpus of scholarly writings. With a deep understanding of the epistemology of the Islamic literary tradition, emerging from within an Islamic intellectual milieu, and demonstrating a masterful command of the language of Islamic discourse, Saidov also benefited from a rigorous Soviet academic education. As a result, he was uniquely positioned to navigate both Islamic scholarship and Soviet academic science with equal fluency.

Crucially, he did not regard Islam and its literary heritage merely as objects of historical or philological study; rather, he engaged with them as living intellectual models. This approach informed his academic work, where Islamic concepts, ethical concerns, and textual practices were integrated not as external artefacts, but as internally coherent modes of thought. At the same time, Saidov was deeply attuned to the prevailing currents of Soviet historical scholarship and sought to enrich the Islamic literary tradition with the methodological insights and historiographical tools of the Soviet academy. In doing so, he effectively translated his academic background into the idioms and frameworks of Islamic intellectual history.

This hybrid intellectual subjectivity – rooted simultaneously in Islamic and Soviet traditions – was a defining feature of Saidov's scholarly persona. In this present chapter, we will explore how his academic works were enriched by Islamic literary traditions and, conversely, how he contributed to Islamic historiographical discourse through the integration of Soviet academic approaches.

One of the more theoretically significant aspects of Saidov's intellectual legacy is his critique of Oriental studies as a colonial epistemology. Although his contemporaries frequently referred to him as an orientalist – positioning him within the very scholarly tradition he sought to interrogate – Saidov himself rejected this designation. He did not identify with the Orientalist paradigm, which he viewed as complicit in the structures of imperial domination and epistemic violence. In this regard, Saidov's writings strikingly anticipate the arguments later formulated by Edward Said in *Orientalism,* particularly the critique of how knowledge about the "East" has historically been produced through the asymme-

tries of power inherent in colonial discourse.[592] Long before such views became canonical within postcolonial theory, Saidov exposed the ideological function of Orientalism as a means of representing and managing colonised peoples. His position thus challenges contemporary characterisations of him as an orientalist and demands a re-evaluation of his place within the genealogy of anti-colonial thought.

In fact, one of the genres that Saidov was inspired by was Islamic historiography, which was represented by both chronicles and biographical literature. The contents of his archive indicate that he became fond of Arabic-language historical and biographical literature long before he embarked on his professional career as a Soviet academic scholar. Saidov's description of the biographies of a number of Daghestani scholars – and his simultaneous decision to ignore others – and his interpretation of and focus on specific facts of their lives give us a notion of how he saw an ideal scholarly persona. Such a selective approach to the biographical descriptions is a clear marker used by Saidov to describe himself. Saidov's works on history and biography demonstrate that he had an expert knowledge of some rather rare works by Daghestani authors, and on occasion borrowed from them. Some of these works, currently extant in a single copy, can be found in Saidov's archive.[593] He was also evidently familiar with a range of other manuscripts, also seen in single autographs little known in his time, because he referred to these texts in his own writings.[594] His works in the genre of biography are highly diverse in terms of approaches, methods, and style. In some of his works, he continued the Islamic tradition of writing historical biographies. In other cases, he used his sound knowledge of Daghestani Islamic biographical literature and integrated it into his own scholarly output. Islamic biographical lit-

592 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books 1978).

593 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*.

594 Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*. During Saidov's lifetime, this work was never published and was known only from a single autograph manuscript. Nevertheless, in one of his academic publications from 1963, Saidov referred to this manuscript, indicating that despite the absence of other copies, he had access to the autograph.

erature was a source of inspiration for him that he could lean on when producing his works within two epistemes, Islamic and academic Soviet. As early as the 1920s, he began to make notes on Daghestani theologians.[595] During the Soviet post-war years, Saidov embarked also on a focused study of history and biography. Aside from a number of individual biographies of Daghestani scholars, we can mention four major works by Saidov in this genre.

A Conference Paper on Arabic Literature in Daghestan

One of Saidov's major works was his paper *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara* (*The Daghestan Arabic Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*), which he presented in Arabic at the 1960 International Congress of orientalists in Moscow.[596] It is regarded to this day as probably his most important work,[597] and according to Saidov it was the condensed result of several years' study.[598]

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595 Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, nos. 66, 83, 392, 744, 509.

596 For more details on this congress, see: Michael Kemper, "Propaganda for the East, Scholarship for the West: Soviet Strategies at the 1960 International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow," *Reassessing Orientalism: Interlocking Orientologies during the Cold War*, ed. by M. Kemper and A.M. Kalinovsky (London & New York: Routledge, 2015), 170–210.

597 Michael Kemper, "*Ijtihad* into philosophy: Islam as cultural heritage in post-Stalinist Daghestan," 391–392; A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Arabic historical studies in twentieth-century Dagestan," 203–216; G.G. Gamzatov, A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Magomed-Said prodolzhaetsia (k 15-letiiu so dnia konchiny vydaiushhegosia uchenogo-dagestanoveda, arabista i vostokoveda)," 163–169; A-G.S. Gadzhiev, *Magomed-Said Dzhamaludinovich Saidov – krupnyi uchenyi arabist, iazykoved, literaturoved*, 7–8.

598 [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Muḥammad Munīr Mursī, 15 September 1962*] (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no 660b, fol. 1a.

At present, there exist multiple versions of this work: an Arabic manuscript, which represents Saidov's autograph with his personal redaction;[599] a draft translation of this work into Russian, featuring editorial modifications by an individual other than Saidov;[600] a published translation of the Arabic text into Russian;[601] and a published text available in both English[602] and Arabic[603] as separate brochures. Evidently, the latter versions were translated from the Russian rendition into English and Arabic.

Thus, I have divided these texts into two groups: the original manuscript written in Arabic by Saidov with his own minor corrections [fig. 17], and the rest, which constitute edited versions of this paper in various languages, evidently produced by some Soviet orientalist or orientalists. Since the Russian text was edited by somebody else, it is much less revealing of Saidov's own personality and worldview than the Arabic text is. Therefore, In the following discussion of this work, I will consider Saidov's autograph manuscript as a piece that authentically embodies Saidov's style, vocabulary, expressions, and phrases – essentially, what Saidov intended to convey. I will then proceed to compare Saidov's original text with the edited published version in Russian, elucidating how the original Arabic text was translated into Russian and edited, detailing the modifications introduced by the editors into the initial Arabic text and providing the explanation behind these changes.

Having prefaced his study with an expression of regret that for various historical reasons a considerable number of Daghestani literary texts in

599 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 660a, fols. 1a–6b.

600 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 878, fols 1a–7a.

601 M.-S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," 118–123.

602 M.-S. Saidov, *The Daghestan Arabic Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Moscow: Oriental literature publishing house, 1960). Saidov wrote about the translation of his presentation into English in one of his letters to Arab orientalist Muḥammad Munīr Mursī (1933–90). See: [*Letter from Muḥammad-Said Saidov to Muḥammad Munīr Mursī, 15 September 1962*], fol. 1b.

603 Muḥammad Sayyid b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī al-Sayyidī, "Ta'rīkh al-adāb al-'arabiyya fī Dāghistān," 1–14.

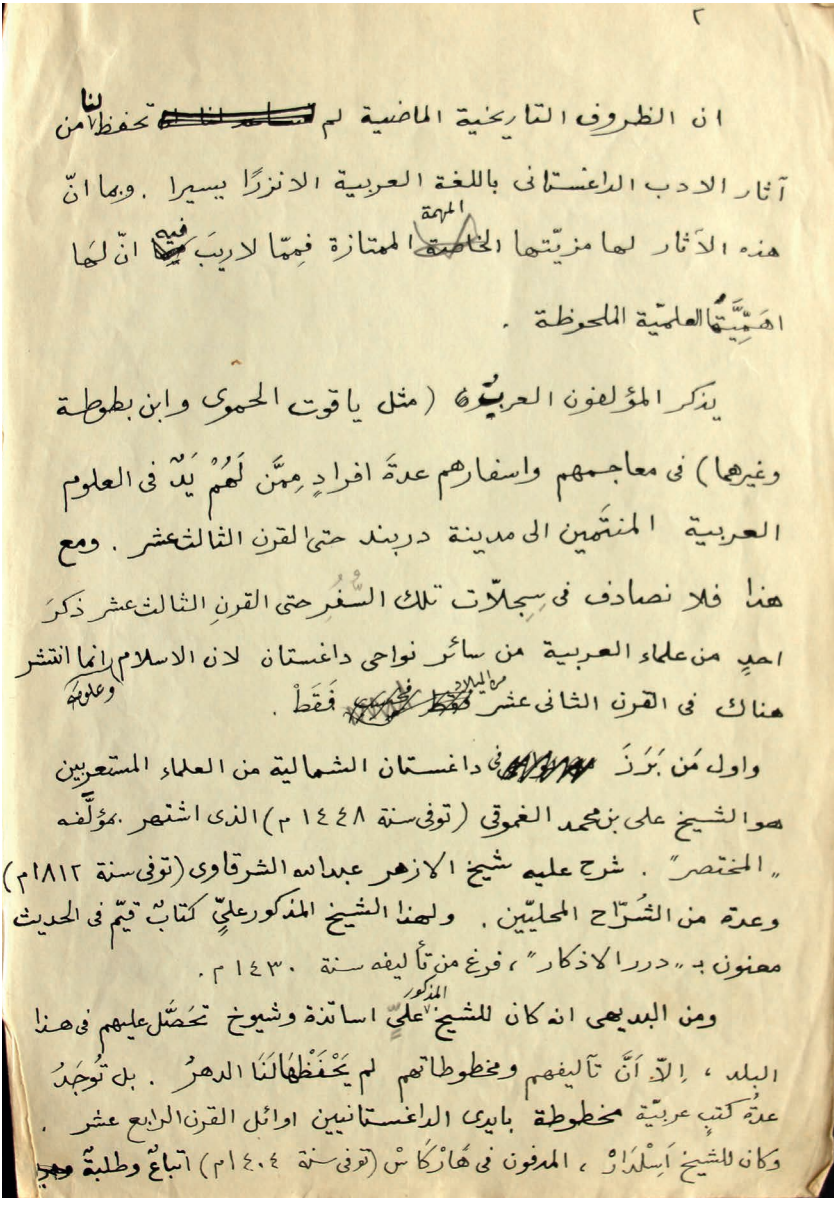


Figure 17. Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no. 660.

Arabic have not survived, Saidov proceeds to structure his text according to what we might call the thematic principle. That is to say, he arranges his discussion by focusing sequentially on a range of various literary and scholarly genres, in each case citing the names of the most prominent Daghestani scholars who left behind works in the field in question. The definition of the subjects in the Arabic version of Saidov's paper is entirely consistent with a similar classification that exists in the local Islamic tradition. He thus distinguishes between the following subjects: Sufism, Islamic law, logic, philosophy, dialectics, dogmatics, speculative theology, arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, various branches of astronomy, medicine, history, lexicography, morphology and syntax, and fiction, including poetry and prose.

The internal structure of the text also has its own peculiarities. For instance, Saidov begins his classification of subjects with a discussion of Sufism. Here, he writes that the history of Sufism in Daghestan began in the 11th century, and notes the work *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by Abū Bakr al-Darbandī.[604] Amongst Sufi authors and their works, Saidov quotes *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya* by Shu'ayb al-Bāginī as well as *Sirāj al-sa'ādāt*, in fact ascribing the latter text to Shu'ayb al-Bāginī as well. Several details are worthy of note here. First of all, the fact that he mentions both these works, the former of which exists only as an autograph and the latter in just a few manuscript copies,[605] attests to Saidov's exhaustive archaeographic expertise. The second interesting detail is Saidov's suggestion that Shu'ayb al-Bāginī was the author of *Sirāj al-sa'ādāt*. In fact, as noted above, this work is for the most part an abbreviated summary made by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī of *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*. The fact that Saidov ascribes this work to Shu'ayb al-Bāginī indicates that he was not only aware of the existence of *Ṭabaqāt*

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604 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara*, fol. 2a.

605 One manuscript is kept in the madrasa of the village of Akhalchi, Daghestan (this copy was found during the author's expedition in the Khunzakh district in the period 3–15 July 2006); another copy is in the private possession of Magomed Shekhmagomedov, Machada. Both Shu'ayb al-Bāginī's and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī's texts were published in Arabic only in the post-Soviet period.

al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya and *Sirāj al-sa'ādāt*, but he had read both, which allowed him to realise that the second work was a reworking of the first one, thus prompting him to identify Shu'ayb al-Bāginī as the author of both. Saidov classified both these hagiographies as belonging to the subject of Sufism rather than to biography. Presumably, this can be attributed to the paucity of precise factual information regarding the biographies of Daghestani scholars in both of these works. The works are more concerned with describing the various miracles attributed to the shaykhs – a topic that was of little interest to Saidov.

In his description of the genres of the Islamic sciences, Saidov provides only a short summary for several of these (e.g. Sufism, law, medicine, lexicography, grammar), simply enumerating the various Daghestani scholars who left works in this field. He accords a very different treatment, by contrast, to other genres such as philosophy, logic, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, which he describes in considerably greater detail. Saidov's focus on some genres and his disregard of others is particularly striking given that it in no way correlates with the actual range and number of original Daghestani studies in these areas. As we already pointed out in Chapter 4, most of the original works by Daghestani scholars were written, respectively, in the areas of Arabic grammar, law, logic, and poetry. Daghestani authors were considerably less likely, by contrast, to write about philosophy, medicine, history, mathematics, or astronomy. In view of all this, one might have expected Saidov in his article to dwell more on those genres that were most popular in Daghestan, such as grammar and law. Instead, however, he focuses his attention on completely different genres, such as philosophy, the natural sciences, and poetry.[606] Saidov's own preferences evidently play an important part in his decision as to which genres to discuss in detail: indeed, the focus of his discussion is reflective of his own subjective opinions as to which genres he believed to be important and interesting. In the contours of his analysis, we get a glimpse of Saidov's notions of what true Islam should be.

606 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara*, fols. 2b–4a.

This partiality of focus is replicated also in Saidov's varying treatment of the individual Daghestani scholars who worked within each particular genre: some individuals are discussed at length, while others who produced no fewer studies in the same area are mentioned merely in passing. Thus, for instance, most Daghestani legal scholars are listed simply by name and with reference to their various works, whereas by contrast Saidov devotes extensive attention to the personality of the above-mentioned Muḥammad al-Quduqī.[607] Here is what Saidov has to say about him:

> He distinguished himself among his contemporaries by his deep analytical mindset, the breadth of his outlook, the purity of his thoughts, and his independence in approaching matters of Islamic law. Although he did not, like his teacher Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī, claim that he had attained the level of *ijtihād*, he still left a number of legal statements that contradict the Shāfiʿī legal system.[608]

Although both here and elsewhere in his writings Saidov shows little concern for matters of Islamic law, which was considered an important genre in the local Islamic tradition, it is clear that, having completed a traditional Daghestani course of Islamic education, he was nevertheless proficient in the subject. In this context, his praise of Muḥammad al-Quduqī for his 'analytical mindset' and his independent judgments indicate that rationalism in the legal sphere played an important part in Saidov's world view. It is clear that, although Saidov was not involved in the study of Islamic law himself, he nevertheless shared the opinion of his *jadīd* friends, who saw the development of the Islamic society exclusively as a full or partial refusal to follow the Shāfiʿī legal tradition that was predominant in Daghestan.[609]

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607 For more on this figure, see discussion of the 'legal subject' model in Chapter 1.

608 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-ʿarabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-ʿaṣr al-thāmina ʿashara wa-l-tāsiʿa ʿashara*, fol. 2a.

609 For more on *taqlīd* and *ijtihād* in the Daghestani legal tradition, see: Shamil Shikhaliev, "*Taqlīd* and *Ijtihād* over the Centuries: The Debates on Islamic Legal Theory in Daghestan, 1700s – 1920s," 239–280.

In Chapter 2, we noted several of Saidov's statements that underscore the significance of rationalism in his portrayal of Islam. In Chapter 4, an analysis of Saidov's library further revealed the prominence of rationalism within his worldview. Saidov's article *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya* demonstrates that in Saidov's perception of Islam and Islamic traditions, rationalism is an important quality. His rationalist convictions may explain why in this work he chooses to give a detailed account of the history of the natural sciences in Daghestan. In addition to simply listing scholars, Saidov writes at some length about the history of this intellectual tradition, highlighting the role in its development played by scholars from Shirvan and Azerbaijan.[610] He also offers a detailed discussion of those Daghestani scholars who had made a great contribution to the study of mathematics, logic, and astronomy, including those who developed the astrolabe and wrote treatises on its use.[611]

One field of study that receives curiously little attention in the article is historical writing. Despite his work at the Institute of History where he was continually engaged with matters of history and historiography, Saidov allocates very little space to historical studies by Daghestani scholars. He mentions only those works on history that were written by Daghestani scholars between the second half of the 19th century and the first third of the 20th century, such as *Nuzhat al-adhhān* by Nadhīr al-Durgilī and 'Alī Kaiaev's *Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān* (which Saidov calls *Ṭabaqāt al-tarājim*). Meanwhile, he fails to mention such historical works as *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān*, which is attributed to the 14th-century Daghestani scholar Muḥammad Rafī', or the *Derbend-nāme* by Muḥammad Awābī Aqtāshī (second half of the 16th century to the first half of the 17th century) – even despite the fact that Saidov possessed several copies of these two works in his personal manuscript collection. Saidov likely allocated limited attention to historical topics for several reasons. Firstly, these afore-mentioned historical works, several of which had been published by Saidov himself in the 1950s, were already familiar to orientalists.

610 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara*, fol. 2b.

611 Ibid., fols. 3a–4b.

Additionally, given that Saidov's work was originally intended as a conference presentation, and given the limited time he would have had to speak, it is plausible that he chose to prioritise those items that were of more particular significance to him. His presentation included the classification of Daghestani Arabic-language literature, highlighting the contributions of prominent local scholars who had authored works across various branches of Islamic science. This latter topic was relatively unknown to the academic audience attending his presentation.

If history is neglected in the article, however, poetry is given pride of place, with nearly a quarter of the whole study dedicated to it. Saidov traces the origins of Daghestani literature, including poetry, to the late 16th and early 17th century, when – according to his account – poetry was already on the decline in the Arab world. He notes that, despite its late bloom, Daghestani Arabic poetry is a worthy bearer of the Arabic literary tradition, distinguished as it is by a variety of forms, an inner harmony and beauty of style, and clarity of meaning. Indeed, he suggests, Daghestani literature revisits the best examples of Arabic poetry from its heyday in the past.[612]

Saidov proceeds to offer a classification of Daghestani poetry of the 18th and 19th centuries, arranging it into two trends (*tawjīhāni*) that he suggests together developed in parallel. One of these trends is represented by poetry in praise of God and the Prophet Muḥammad. While praising this poetry as possessing a significant emotional resonance, Saidov nevertheless offers critical commentary regarding certain poets within this literary movement. He writes that some representatives of this trend wrote poetry that often contained repetitions of phrases (*takrār al-alfāẓ*), expressions that did not make sense, and vocabulary used in the wrong context. The second tendency, meanwhile, is verse that reflects the realities of its time. The poets who followed this tendency produced verses about certain historical events that they witnessed or took part in. This latter trend, Saidov suggests, is characterised by a more consistent style and phrasing than the first trend, and is closer to the finest examples of

612 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara*, fol. 5b.

Arabic poetry; it is represented by a number of movements typical for classical Arabic verse.

Finally, Saidov highlights the new stage of the development of Daghestani Arabic literature which falls in the early 20th century. During this period, Saidov writes,

> New contacts between Daghestanis and other peoples of Imperial Russia, especially Tatars, whose literature was progressing during this period, had a considerable impact on Daghestani literature. Equally, the local Arabic literature was also influenced by such Arabic countries as Syria and Egypt. One of the outcomes of this new boost to the development of Daghestani poetry was its reflection on human individuality (*al-shakhṣiyya*) and the place and role of a person in society as well as individual self-perception. [The poets'] intellectual range expanded as a result of being introduced to new ideas from the East and West. This influence and renewal contributed to development, growth, and progress in literature.[613]

Here, Saidov draws clear-cut parallels between the *jadīd* movement in the Russian Empire and the wider Islamic reform movement – parallels that were widely known in the early 20th century. In his opinion, the progress in the development of Daghestani poetry was caused by the influence of the ideas of Jadidism in Russia and Islamic reformism in Syria and Egypt, which focused on the ideas of anthropocentrism, personal reason, and an individual's place and role in history. Saidov suggests that one of the most prominent representatives of this stage was Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī, whom he mentions repeatedly in his works, including in the item presently under discussion.

The Russian translation of Saidov's article is quite different from the Arabic original, both in terms of its style and formulae and its general thrust. The following example, which showcases Saidov's Arabic original alongside its edited Russian publication, serves as a clear illustration of how the editor, in the process of publishing the Russian version, im-

613 Ibid., 6b.

bued Saidov's text with a 'Sovietized' character, thereby departing from its original Islamic structure and content which were written by Saidov.

Arabic text by Saidov:

> In Daghestani Arabic literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, two primary directions become evident. The first of these encompasses poetry devoted to the exaltation of God and the Prophet. These splendid verses, inspired by the poetry of the Arabs, were written by Daghestani poets in an emotional fashion. This poetry is characterised by its flexible syntactic structures, adept linguistic craftsmanship, and the use of elaborate, ornate rhymed expressions. The second direction finds its expression in the works of authors who turned their attention to the contemporaneous events of their era and subsequently reflected upon them within their poetry. Many of these authors actively engaged in the very events they depicted, imparting a unique and unequivocally articulated literary style. These writers navigated a diverse array of literary genres, encompassing epic poetry, kinship-based verse, panegyric poetry, and satirical works. New contacts between Daghestanis and other peoples of Imperial Russia, especially Tatars, whose literature was progressing during this period, had a considerable impact on Daghestani literature. Equally, the local Arabic literature was also influenced by such Arabic countries as Syria and Egypt.[614]

Russian edited text:

> In Daghestani Arabic literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, two primary directions become evident. The first of these can be classified as religious-clerical, profoundly shaped by the influence of religious Arabic literary traditions. Practitioners of this genre explore established themes and motifs, interpreting them through the lens of mystical movements. Simultaneously, alongside the religious-clerical orientation, another literary movement begins to take shape and evolve in symbiosis with it.

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614 Muḥammad Sayyid Sayyidūf, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya fī ghuḍūn al-'aṣr al-thāmina 'ashara wa-l-tāsi'a 'ashara*, fol. 5b.

> This is exemplified in the work of poets whose compositions resonate with real historical events, and who ardently endeavour to address contemporary socio-political problems. This form of literature conspicuously reflects the attributes of national identity. The dawn of a new era in Arabic-language literature in Daghestan commenced in the early 20th century, coinciding with the profound influence of grandiose historical transformations. In this context, the year 1905 stands as a pivotal juncture, marking the inception of a fresh chapter in Arabic literature within the region.[615]

While generally preserving the content of the Arabic original, the Russian edited version nevertheless introduces certain emendations that somewhat alter the force of Saidov's more nuanced original. Whereas, for instance, the original Arabic-language text acknowleges the rich emotional content of Daghestani devotional poetry, the Russian translation omits any reference to its emotional force, and instead merely categorises such poetry as 'religious-clerical' – terminology which in the Soviet period carried connotations of cultural backwardness and regression. The editor's evident suspicion of such verse presumably explains the omission in the Russian-language translation of Saidov's observation that the poetry produced in this vein is "characterised by its flexible syntactic structures, adept linguistic craftsmanship, and the use of elaborate, ornate rhymed expressions". Instead, the Russian translation is replete with programmatic references to 'socio-economic problems' and 'national identity.' Given that Soviet humanities, notably historical studies, were fundamentally shaped by focus on the class struggle as the determining factor in socio-economic transformation, aligned with the principles of Marx and Engels, and the national paradigm, the Russian translation thus takes on a distinctly 'Soviet' ideological complexion – something that is entirely missing from the original Arabic text.

While Saidov associates the new stage in the development of local poetry with the influence of the ideas of Tatar Jadidism and Muslim reformism in Egypt and Syria, the editor of the Russian version ignores

615 M.-S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," 122.

this. In the Russian version, 1905 is identified as the commencing point for a new phase of Arabic-language literary development, tied to a period of turbulent political and economic events in Daghestan[616] – an idea that is again nowhere to be found in Saidov's original Arabic manuscript. In Soviet historiographical inquiries concerning the 20th century, the revolutions of 1905–07 and 1917 assume a prominent position, serving as pivotal moments for the inception of profound social, political, and economic metamorphoses within Russia. During the Soviet era, it became *de rigueur* to invoke the scholarly oeuvres of Marx, Engels, and Lenin and to underscore the 1905 revolution as 'a grandiose historical event', demonstrating of the burgeoning political involvement of both the peasantry and the proletariat. It becomes apparent that the editor of Saidov's Russian text introduced this specific date and accompanying text with the express purpose of aligning Saidov's work with the exigencies of Soviet academic scholarship, to bridge the gap between the Islamic literary tradition and the Soviet discourse. By contrast, the social and political events of 1905–07 were of little significance within the the history of the Daghestan Arabic written tradition: Saidov thus had no reason even to mention the year 1905 in his Arabic text.

The Russian text also contains some phrases and idioms that are absent in the Arabic version, and which again clearly reflect the Soviet ideological context.[617] For instance, the Russian translation includes such phrases as 'encyclopaedist', 'secular subjects', 'dialectic', and 'religious-clerical trend in poetry'[618] – all of these latter being terms that feature prominently in the Soviet humanities but not in Arabic literature, and which are thus absent from the Arabic original of this paper.

From the above observations, therefore, it clearly transpires that Saidov himself did not edit the Russian translation of his paper. This is further confirmed by the fact that the draft Russian translation contains corrections made in someone else's handwriting [fig. 18]. Evidently, therefore,

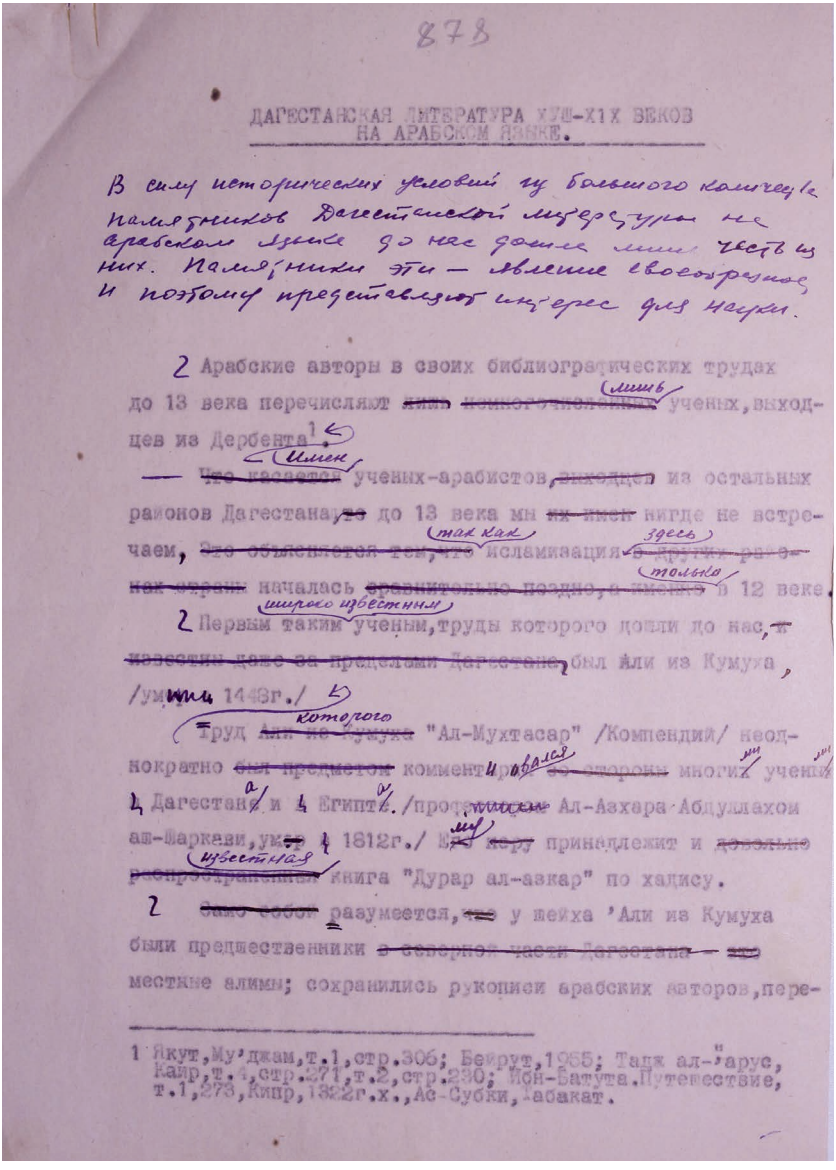
616 Ibid., 122–123.

617 For a comparative analysis of the Arabic text by Saidov and its Russian translation, see: Michael Kemper, "*Ijtihad* into philosophy: Islam as cultural heritage in post-Stalinist Daghestan," 393–396.

618 M.-S. Saidov, "Dagestanskaia literatura 18–19 vv. na arabskom iazyke," 119, 122.

some unidentified orientalist translated Saidov's Arabic text into Russian, and then the same translator (or another editor but not Saidov himself) edited the Russian text.

On the whole, the style, vocabulary, and form of this Arabic-language paper by Saidov hardly differs from the style of Islamic literature popular in Daghestan. In the paper Saidov views and describes the Islamic sciences not in his capacity as a Soviet orientalist but from his perspective as an Islamic scholar, making use of the style, vocabulary, and idioms of the Islamic literature that had shaped him. A similar approach is evident in the biographical works of by Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʻAlī Kaiaev, as previously discussed. In terms of phraseology, style, and vocabulary employed, Saidov's paper exhibits no substantial deviation from the works authored by the afore-mentioned scholars. The primary distinction lies in the structural approach: whereas al-Durgilī and Kaiaev adopted a chronological framework encompassing the period between the 11th and the 19th centuries, Saidov opted for a thematic organisation, narrowing his focus to the 18th and 19th centuries. It is evident that Saidov drew inspiration from the works of these scholars, with which, as we have seen, he was already well-acquainted. Furthermore, an analysis of the content, structure, and stylistic treatment of al-Quduqī's biography within the works of Saidov and Kaiaev reveals a remarkable congruence. This alignment bolsters my suggestion that Saidov's work heavily echoes the content of Kaiaev's *Tarājim.* In effect, therefore, Saidov in his capacity as a Soviet scholar produced a work conforming to the Muslim biographical genre of *ṭabaqāt*. The role of the Soviet authorities in the promotion of local literature is hardly mentioned in Saidov's paper, whereas emphasis on this idea would have been necessary in order to legitimise his paper in the eyes of the Soviet academic establishment. Thanks to the efforts of an editor, this work acquired the semblance of a Soviet academic article, corresponding to Soviet academic standards.



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ДАГЕСТАНСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА XVII–XIX ВЕКОВ НА АРАБСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ.

В силу исторических условий ту большого количества памятников Дагестанской литературы на арабском языке до нас дошла лишь часть из них. Памятники эти — явление своеобразное, и поэтому представляют интерес для науки.

2 Арабские авторы в своих библиографических трудах до 13 века перечисляют ~~имен~~ ~~многочисленных~~ лишь ученых, выходцев из Дербента.[1]

— ~~Что касается~~ Имен ученых-арабистов, ~~выходцев~~ из остальных районов Дагестана ~~до~~ до 13 века мы ~~их имен~~ нигде не встречаем, ~~Это объясняется тем, что~~ так как исламизация ~~в других районах~~ здесь только ~~начала~~ началась ~~сравнительно~~ поздно, ~~а именно~~ в 12 веке.

2 Первым таким ученым, труды которого дошли до нас, ~~и известны даже за пределами Дагестана~~, был ~~Али~~ широко известный Али из Кумуха, /умер в 1443г./

Труд ~~Али из Кумуха~~ которого "Ал-Мухтасар" /Компендий/ неоднократно ~~был предметом~~ комментировался ~~с~~ и ~~стороны~~ многих ученых Дагестана и Египта. /проф. ~~Ал-Азхара~~ Ал-Азхара Абдуллахом ас-Шаркави, умер в 1812г./ ~~Ему~~ ему принадлежит и ~~довольно~~ широко известная ~~распространенная~~ книга "Дурар ал-азкар" по хадису.

2 ~~Само собой~~ разумеется, ~~что~~ у шейха 'Али из Кумуха были предшественники ~~в северной части Дагестана~~ — ~~также~~ местные алимы; сохранились рукописи арабских авторов, пере-

1 Якут, Му'джам, т.1, стр.306; Бейрут, 1965; Тадж ал-'арус, Каир, т.1, стр.271, т.2, стр.230; Ибн-Батута, Путешествие, т.1, 273, Каир, 1322г.х., Ас-Субки, Табакат.

Figure 18. Edited copy of the Russian translation of M.-S. Saidov's Arabic paper. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no. 878.

Imagining the History of Daghestani Poets and Scholars

The second of the three works that we shall discuss by Saidov on the biographies of Daghestani scholar was written in Russian [fig. 19]. It is a short plan for a collected bio-bibliographical dictionary to be compiled by a team of academics at the Institute of History under the supervision of Saidov himself.[619]

The list consists of the names and short biographical resumés of Daghestani scholars from the 15th to the 20th century who produced works in various fields of scholarship. All in all, the list names 134 Daghestani scholars, poets, and writers, including contemporaries of Saidov. The list itself is not dated, but various clues allow us tentatively to date it to the period between 1945 and 1950. For instance, Saidov lists the name of the highlander Jewish writer Khizgil Dadashev, noting that he died in 1944,[620] thus indicating a *terminus ante quem* for this work. Next to the name of the Daghestani national poet Gamzat Tsadasa, meanwhile, Saidov writes that "a collection of his works is currently being prepared in Russian", but he does not mention that Gamzat Tsadasa is no longer alive.[621] It is known that the collected poems by Gamzat Tsadasa were published in Russian in 1950,[622] while he himself died in 1951, which indicates that the collection is unlikely to have been compiled after 1950. The dating of this collection is extremely important because Saidov considered it necessary to list even those Daghestani scholars who were the victims of Soviet repressions and had not yet been rehabilitated. For instance, he lists the names of the afore-mentioned Abū Sufyān Akaev

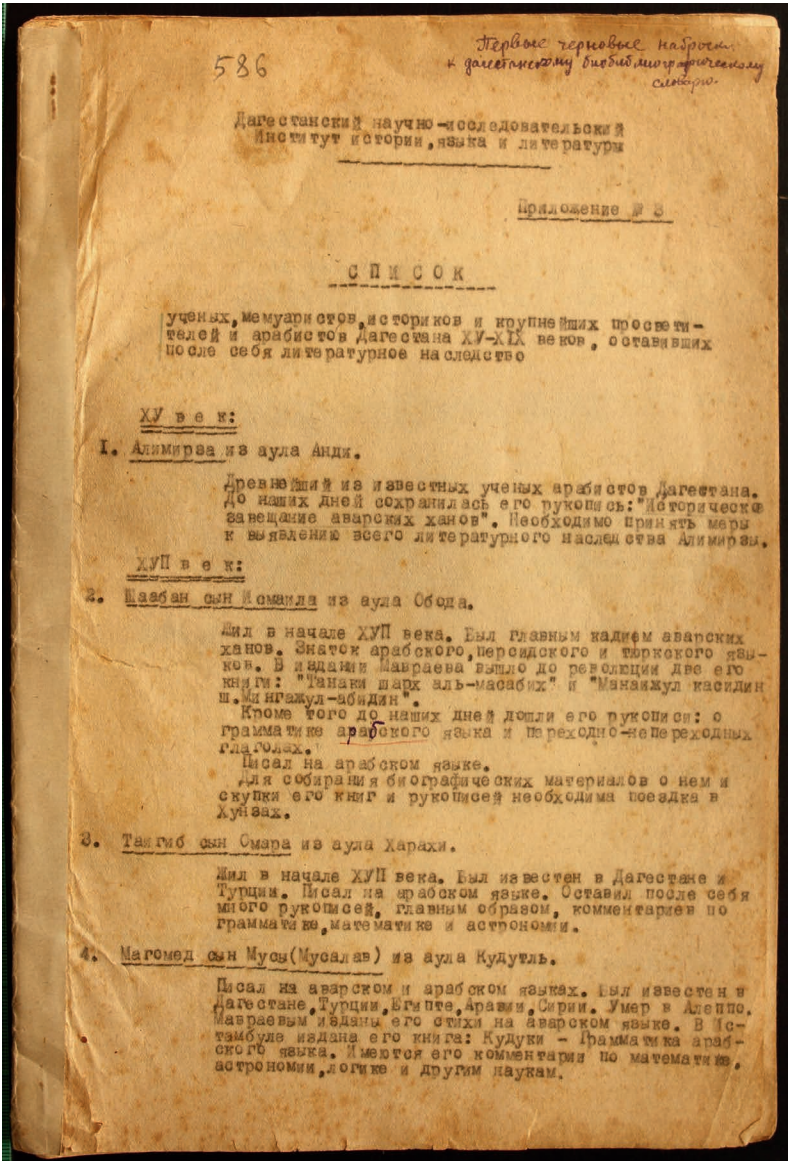
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619 Muḥammad Said Saidov, *Spisok uchennykh, memuaristov, istorikov i krupneishykh prosvetitelei i arabistov Dagestana 15–19 vekov, ostavivshykh posle sebia literaturnoe nasledie* [*List of Daghestani scholars, memoir writers, historians, and major educators and Arabic scholars from the 15th-19th centuries whose literary works are still extant*]. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 586, fols. 1a–9b.

620 Muḥammad Said Saidov, *Spisok uchennykh, memuaristov, istorikov i krupneishykh prosvetitelei i arabistov Dagestana 15–19 vekov, ostavivshykh posle sebia literaturnoe nasledie*, fol. 9b.

621 Ibid., fol. 9a.

622 Gamzat Tsadasa, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1950).



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Первые черновые наброски к дагестанскому библиографическому словарю.

Дагестанский научно-исследовательский
Институт истории, языка и литературы

Приложение № 8

СПИСОК

ученых, мемуаристов, историков и крупнейших просветителей и арабистов Дагестана XV-XIX веков, оставивших после себя литературное наследство

XV в е к:

1. Алимираз из аула Анди.

Древнейший из известных ученых арабистов Дагестана. До наших дней сохранилась его рукопись: "Историческое завещание аварских ханов". Необходимо принять меры к выявлению всего литературного наследства Алимираза.

XVI в е к:

2. Шабан сын Исмаила из аула Обода.

Жил в начале XVI века. Был главным кадием аварских ханов. Знаток арабского, персидского и тюркского языков. В издании Мавраева вышло до революции две его книги: "Танаки шарх аль-масабих" и "Манаижул касидин ш. Мингажул-абидин".

Кроме того до наших дней дошли его рукописи: о грамматике арабского языка и переходно-непереходных глаголах.

Писал на арабском языке.

Для собирания биографических материалов о нем и скупки его книг и рукописей необходима поездка в Хунзах.

3. Тажгиб сын Омара из аула Харахи.

Жил в начале XVI века. Был известен в Дагестане и Турции. Писал на арабском языке. Оставил после себя много рукописей, главным образом, комментарии по грамматике, математике и астрономии.

4. Магомед сын Мусы(Мусалав) из аула Кудутль.

Писал на аварском и арабском языках. Был известен в Дагестане, Турции, Египте, Аравии, Сирии. Умер в Алеппо. Мавраевым изданы его стихи на аварском языке. В Истамбуле издана его книга: Кудуки - Грамматика арабского языка. Имеются его комментарии по математике, астрономии, логике и другим наукам.

Figure 19. *List of Daghestani scholars, memoir writers, historians, and major educators and Arabic scholars from the 15th to the 19th century.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no. 586.

(who died in the Kotlass Gulag camps in 1931), Bakhadur Malachikhanov (executed by the Soviets in 1941), shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī (executed by the Soviets in 1937), and Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī (executed by the Soviets in 1925). It is striking that Saidov, who himself only barely escaped repression and, as we have seen, remained haunted by his experience for much of the rest of his life, nevertheless was bold enough to include these scholars in his list while Stalin was still alive. The fact that he felt able to do so is an indication that an attempt to rehabilitate the Islamic cultural heritage, known in academic publications as 'Mirasism', had begun in Daghestan long before the Khrushchev Thaw.[623] It is clear that a number of Soviet orientalists thought highly of Daghestani Arabic literature, noting its 'encyclopaedic' character and stating that "Daghestani scholars of the time were already in possession of the full range of the Arabic heritage of their time."[624] However, these works focused more on Islamic literature as a whole than on specific personalities. As for the post-WWII Soviet tradition in Daghestan, Saidov was the first scholar to attempt to introduce the Islamic intellectual heritage into the contemporary academic discourse. Saidov mostly drew attention not to the works of Daghestani authors but to their personalities, simply noting in passing the titles of their works as evidence of the impact of these scholars on the local intellectual tradition. This focus on personalities is generally a distinguishing feature of the genre of Islamic biography, and Saidov followed this tradition carefully. It is clear, of course,

623 Stephane A. Dudoignon, "Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme," 13–40; Michael Kemper, "*Ijtihad* into philosophy: Islam as cultural heritage in post-Stalinist Daghestan," 390–404; Alfrid K. Bustanov, Michael Kemper, "From Mirasism to Euro-Islam: The Translation of Islamic Legal debates into Tatar Secular Cultural Heritage," *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language: Studies on Texts from European Russia, the North Caucasus and the West Siberia*, ed. by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Michael Kemper (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus, 2012), 29–53.

624 I.Yu. Krachkovskii, "Arabskaia literatura na Severnom Kavkaze," *Izbrannye sochineniia. Tom 6* (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1960), 615. For more details about the Arabic literature in Daghestan, see also: A.N. Genko, "Arabskii iazyk i kavkazovedenie," *Trudy vtoroi sessii assotsiatsii arabistov* (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941), 81–110; V.V. Bartol'd, "Dagestan," *Sochineniia. Raboty po istoricheskoi geografii. Tom 3* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1965), 408–418.

that in the political environment of the late 1940s or early 1950s the rehabilitation of the vast majority of scholars added by Saidov to this list was impossible, which explains why Saidov ultimately did not proceed any further with this particular project.

It is instructive to consider the range of scholars whom Saidov mentions in this draft work. He lists those theologians who wrote in Arabic, those who wrote in local Daghestani languages, and even those who were illiterate but were oral performers, as well as a number of non-Muslims. Saidov's wide-ranging view of which authors might merit discussion is indicative of his own broad interests, as well as his defiance of conventional Soviet-era scholarly norms. Soviet Daghestani scholarship long held the belief that local Arabic literature was scholastic and unoriginal, that the influence of Arabic culture on Daghestani spiritual life was reactionary, and that in the pre-Soviet period the vast majority of people in Daghestan were illiterate.[625] By thus minimising the vigour and energy of local Arabic literary culture, Soviet scholars were able to present a narrative whereby Soviet power alone gave true impetus to the development of local original national literature and the simultaneous extensive growth in literacy. Saidov, by contrast, opted for a deeper approach to the history of Daghestani literature. By acknowledging the contemporary Daghestani writers and poets, he demonstrated that the new Soviet national literature grew out of many centuries of experience of literature written in Arabic. Indeed, he suggested, Soviet literature was simply the latest logical stage in the development of Islamic literature as a whole.

Saidov's unconventional view of the Daghestani Arabic literary tradition was already discussed in the previous section, where it was noted how he identified several stages in the development of Arabic-language Daghestani poetry. In his draft list of Daghestani scholars, Saidov

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625 M.A. Abdullaev, S.M. Gadzhiev, *Pogovorim o musul'manskoi religii* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962); M.A. Abdullaev, M.V. Vagabov, *Aktual'nye problemy kritiki i preodoleniia islama*; On the critique of Islam by the Soviet orientalists, see: Michael Kemper, "Ljucian Klimovič: der ideologische Bluthund der sowjetischen Islamkunde und Zentralasienliteratur," *Asiatische Studien* 63:1 (2009), 93–133; idem, "The Soviet Discourse on the Origin and Class Character of Islam, 1923–1933," *Die Welt des Islams* 49 (2009), 1–48.

took this idea further by tracing a continuity between local Islamic writers and Soviet poets. He thus presents a single chronological timeline of Daghestani literature between the 15th century and Saidov's contemporaries. This is an indication that Saidov saw no conflict between Arabic and Soviet literature, despite the ideological bias of the latter against the former. Saidov was able to accommodate both Islamic and Soviet literature within his account of the dynamic development of Daghestani culture, in which he believed the written tradition to be of primary importance. Saidov did not believe in a conflict between the Islamic and the Soviet with regard to Daghestani literature and written tradition; one was the logical continuation of the other and organically fitted in with Saidov's understanding of literature as a whole. That said, given that Islamic literature had of course spanned a longer period in its development than Soviet literature had, Saidov allocated much more space in his list to Daghestani Islamic scholars than to Soviet ones. His biographical sketches of Islamic scholars are also much more detailed than those of Soviet ones. It is clear that Saidov had a marked preference for the Islamic written tradition over the Soviet one, since he understood that it was the Islamic literary tradition that formed the foundation for the subsequent development of the local literary tradition, including the contemporary Soviet one.

In compiling his draft list of Daghestani scholars, Saidov draws upon certain conventions that are characteristic of the genre of *ṭabaqāt*. For one thing, the list is regional in nature: Saidov does not include any scholars who lived outside the contemporary borders of Daghestan. Thus, for instance, he makes no mention of any of the Daghestani scholars who were born or lived in Shirvan, because, in Saidov's lifetime, contemporary geographical borders placed historical Shirvan within the territory of Azerbaijan. If Saidov is thus deferring to the Soviet practice of studying the history of territorialized national units,[626] he is deferring also to the local principle of *ṭabaqāt*-writing as advanced by the Yemeni schol-

626 Alfrid Bustanov, *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations*, 1–77.

ar Muḥammad al-Shawkānī.[627] Saidov echoes al-Shawkānī also by his inclusion of all scholars who lived in a certain territory and left behind some scholarly works. In the case of al-Shawkānī, we see that he included in his work all Yemeni scholars, regardless of their allegiance to this or that movement. In al-Shawkānī's *Ṭabaqāt*, we see the biographies of the Zaydi Shī'a alongside Yemeni Shāfi'ī scholars.[628] Saidov adopts a similarly capacious approach, incorporating both Muslims and Jews into his *Ṭabaqāt*. Geographical proximity and the concept of a scholarly persona held greater significance for Saidov than strictly adhering to religious denominations, much like how, two centuries prior, the geographical criterion had been prioritised by al-Shawkānī over intra-confessional distinctions.

A further feature of the draft plan for the bio-bibliographical dictionary that situates Saidov closely within a wider Islamic tradition and distinguishes him from most Soviet writings is his particular understanding of who constitutes a scholar. In the Islamic classification, a 'scholar' (*'ālim*) is an educated man who leaves behind a body of work, regardless of the area of study. In the Islamic episteme, poetry, prose, and fiction are a science just like astronomy, Islamic law, or mathematics. This means that Islamic poets who wrote poetry or fiction belonged to the category of 'scholars', as we see from the entries accorded to them in Islamic biographical dictionaries. The Soviet episteme, by contrast, made a clear distinction between 'scholars/scientists' on the one hand, and 'poets' and 'writers' on the other. The former category included those who left behind some works in an area of study, be it mathematics, astronomy, physics, or chemistry. As for the latter two, i.e., poets and writers, they were not classified as 'scholars/scientists' by definition but were

627 Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-ṭāli' bi maḥāsin man ba'd al-qarn al-sābi'*.

628 We can observe similar principles in the work of Nadhīr al-Durgilī, who stressed that, although he was a Sunni, he had decided to cite the biographies of some Shī'a scholars from Daghestan in his work as well. See: Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*, fols 6b–8b.

defined as 'cultural figures' (*deiateli kul'tury*).[629] Saidov's approach to the classification of 'scholars' was clearly based on the Islamic episteme. His Russian-language list of Daghestani scholars contains those who left behind mathematical, logical, or astronomical studies as well as Soviet poets. In his understanding, poets and writers were also 'scholars', in line with the Islamic episteme.

Much like numerous Islamic authors of biographical dictionaries who, through their descriptive biographies, asserted their own chosen scholarly persona, Saidov articulated his own vision of scholarly personhood in compiling this list. Like many scholars on the list, Saidov wrote academic studies on history and philology but also wrote poetry. His scholarly personhood consisted of an organic and complementary combination of the Soviet and Islamic epistemes.

The true significance of this draft bio-bibliographical dictionary lies less in its descriptive content and more in its methodological, epistemological, and historiographical implications. Saidov's list emerges as a multi-layered intervention into Soviet academic norms, the Islamic biographical tradition, and the construction of national literary identity.

At its core, Saidov's work is an act of intellectual resistance. Compiled at a time when Soviet ideological orthodoxy marginalized Islamic cultural heritage and dismissed Arabic literary production as scholastic and retrograde, this document boldly reasserts the richness, continuity, and epistemic legitimacy of the Islamic tradition in Daghestan. Rather than adhering to the narrowly sanctioned narratives of Soviet progress, Saidov constructs a counter-history – one in which the Islamic intellectual tradition serves not only as an antecedent but also as the foundation of modern Daghestani literary culture.

This intervention also reveals Saidov's nuanced approach to temporality and historical continuity. By tracing a single literary arc from 15th-century Islamic scholars to his Soviet contemporaries, he rejects the

629 We know of a number of natural scientists who also wrote poetry and prose. However, they were taken to be 'scholars' not because they wrote poetry but because they made a contribution to the theoretical branches of certain sciences. One clear such example is the Russian scholar Mikhail Vasilievich Lomonosov (1711–1765).

binary opposition often posited between the Islamic past and the Soviet present. Instead, he presents a genealogy that integrates both, portraying Soviet literature as a natural continuation – rather than a rupture – of the Islamic literary tradition.

Moreover, Saidov's method reflects a conscious alignment with the Islamic tradition of *Ṭabaqāt* writing. His regional scope, inclusivity of figures across religious and linguistic boundaries, and emphasis on scholarly output over ideological conformity resonate with the approach of classical Islamic scholars. In this respect, Saidov not only revives an Islamic epistemic model but also adapts it for the modern, Sovietised context of academic production. The result is a layered text that performs two functions simultaneously: it aligns itself with Islamic modes of scholarly legitimacy while also challenging the exclusions and limitations of Soviet disciplinary categorisations.

One of the most intellectually provocative aspects of Saidov's approach is his redefinition of who qualifies as a 'scholar.' Saidov creates a space where the poet, the jurist, the historian, and the astronomer all inhabit the same scholarly continuum. This inclusive model of scholarship not only elevates literary figures previously marginalised in Soviet classifications but also reinforces the idea that knowledge itself is a multifaceted and holistic pursuit.

Finally, the list serves as a mirror reflecting Saidov's own intellectual identity. Through his selection criteria, thematic focus, and subtle interweaving of Soviet and Islamic frameworks, Saidov presents himself as a scholar who transcends imposed dichotomies. His personal synthesis of Islamic and Soviet epistemes is emblematic of a broader cultural negotiation – one that seeks to reclaim suppressed traditions while engaging with the ideological and institutional constraints of his time.

In sum, the document is more than just a draft plan for a catalogue of biographies; it is a carefully constructed argument about intellectual heritage, cultural continuity, and the politics of memory. In bridging two ostensibly antagonistic worlds, Saidov not only preserves a literary tradition but redefines the very parameters of scholarly discourse in mid-20th-century Daghestan.

Writing Soviet in Islamic Treatises

The third of Saidov's works that we shall discuss, *Fawā'id al-munajjima*, is written in Arabic and is a multi-genre collection partly compiled and reworked by Saidov on the basis of a study by the Daghestani scholar *al-ḥājj* ʿAlī al-Salṭī (1861–1946). This collection included the biographies of various Daghestani scholars from the 15th to the 19th century with short summaries of their work, correspondence, and poetry, as well as descriptions of certain historical events that occurred in Daghestan [fig. 20].[630]

Unfortunately, the text itself has not been preserved in Saidov's archive. All we have is a short summary (*fihris*) of the work. However, it is clear that, since the contents indicate the pagination of the text, this essay did at one time exist as a complete artefact. Despite the fact that we do not have the full text, the list of subject headings compiled by Saidov nevertheless enables us to analyse what was important to Saidov based on what he decided to include in his work, and to consider how the subject matter of the content of this work correlated with his interests as a Muslim scholar and Soviet orientalist. Below, I will reconstruct the content of the work based on the fihris and various documentary materials preserved in the collection. Various items of palaeographical evidence (a student's textbook in which the text was written, handwriting features) allow us to date this document to the period 1960–70.

Fawā'id al-munajjima is evidently a substantial work, some 220 pages in length. Structurally, it consists of two parts. The first part is Saidov's reworked compilation of the Arabic text *Ta'rīkh al-waṭan* by the afore-mentioned *al-ḥājj* ʿAlī al-Salṭī. In the *fihris*, in the section 'The Origin of the Scholars of Salṭa' and pointing to page 101, Saidov states directly: "It is completed what I have copied from the work *Ta'rīkh al-waṭan*",[631] and he repeatedly acknowledges that *Ta'rīkh al-waṭan* is the

630 Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī, *Al-Fawā'id al-munajjima*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 531, fols. 1a–5b.

631 Ibid., fol. 4b.

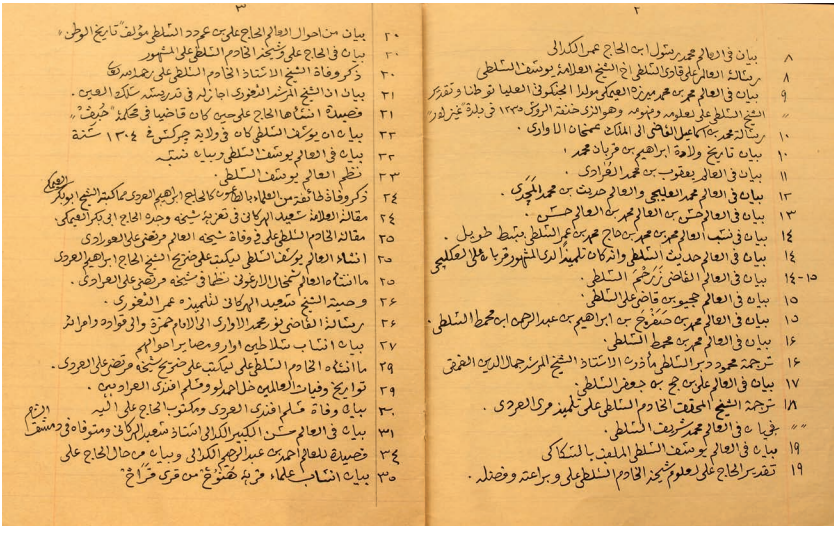


Figure 20. *Fihris al-Fawā'id al-munajjima* by Muḥammad-Said Saidov. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no. 531.

work compiled by *al-ḥājj* ʻAlī al-Salṭī.[632] At the same time, it is clear that Saidov did not simply copy this text but updated it somewhat by shortening the main part and augmenting it with his own materials – thus adding, for instance, his own short biography of ʻAlī al-Salṭī.

The second part of this work, starting from page 104, is evidently original, authored without doubt by Saidov himself, and structurally very different from the first one.[633] In this part, Saidov hardly ever quotes from scholarly biographies. Instead, he quotes from the personal correspondence between Daghestani scholars and from their poetry, provides some historical background, and cites sources of common law. Into this section he thus assembles virtually everything that falls into the scope of his interests and about which he writes elsewhere in his work. In deciding what information to include here, Saidov was evidently pursuing his own subjective choices. In order to consider what we can glean from

632 Ibid., fol. 2a.

633 Ibid., fols. 3b–5b.

these choices, I below provide a translation of the sections that Saidov includes in his narrative, and then proceed to discuss why these themes, genres, or individuals were of such importance to Saidov that he decided to include them in his study. Since many of these sections are thematically interlinked, I have opted to group them together by identifying three major themes: reformism/Jadidism, which includes such matters as printing, philosophy, law, and journalism; poetry; and history, which includes some historical documents and biographies.

A) The Reformist Movement

A letter from shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī written in response to a letter from Sha'banilaw al-Ṣughūrī

Muḥammad b. Sha'bān (Sha'banilaw) al-Ṣughūrī (d. 1970s) was a contemporary and friend of Saidov and a student of 'Alī Kaiaev. Like the latter's other pupils, he retrained as a teacher in the mid-1920s, taking a course organised by the Soviet government, and went on to work as a teacher in his native village of Sogratl. Like other people around Saidov, Muḥammad Sha'banilaw was interested in history, collected manuscripts, and made historical notes on different books. Later Daghestani historians who were in close communication with him referred to some of his notes.[634] Muḥammad Sha'banilaw also belonged to the circle of Daghestani reformers who criticised Sufism and Sufi practices. Accord-

[634] Thus, the Daghestani historian Aleksandr E. Krishtopa writes in one of his works: "A famous admirer of the old days, M. Shakhbanilav of Sogratl (now deceased) once reported that he had seen the same gloss in two manuscript books…" (A.E. Krishtopa, *Dagestan v 13 – nachale 15 vv. Ocherk politicheskoi istorii* (Moscow: Taus, 2007), 197). Another Daghestani historian, Timur Aitberov, writes as follows: "In Sogratl', in the papers of the prominent local Arabist Shabanilaw, it was possible to copy the following commemorative inscription that reports highlander losses that occurred in the autumn of 1741" (T.M. Aitberov, *Nadir-shakh Afshar i dagestantsy v 1741 godu* (Makhachkala: Vashe delo, 2011), 115.) He also mentions a historical manuscript, *The Genealogy of Avar Khans*, which was copied from Muḥammad Sha'banilaw. (T.M. Aitberov, "Istochniki po istorii Avarii 16–17 vv.,"

ing to extant reminiscences of Islamic scholars who knew him personally, his views on the matter were so extreme that he was believed to be a 'Wahhabi' by Daghestani theologians.[635] The afore-mentioned letter from Ḥasan al-Qaḥī to Muḥammad Sha'banilaw that Saidov includes in his book is al-Qaḥī's response, as a Naqshbandi shaykh, to Muḥammad Sha'banilaw's criticism of Sufi practices – criticism which led some to regard Sha'banilaw as a 'Wahhabi'. It is possible that the controversy over Sufi practices between shaykh Ḥasan al-Qaḥī and Muḥammad Sha'banilaw was so important to Saidov that, even when he was working in academia in the 1960s and 1970s, Saidov decided to include part of this discussion in his work.

An article by Muḥammad 'Ākif-efendī copied from the Al-Manār journal that describes two teachers: Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh

The inclusion of this article about Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh by the famous Turkish poet and religious and political figure Mehmet Akif Ersoy (his name rendered in the article as Muḥammad

Razvitie feodal'nykh otnoshenii v Dagestane, ed. by V.G. Gadzhiev (Makhachkala: Dagfilial AN SSSR, 1980), 181–182).

635 In this respect, one event relating to the publication of my book on 'Alī Kaiaev is quite remarkable. Among 'Alī Kaiaev's other students, I made reference to Muḥammad Sha'banilaw and included his photograph. However, a reviewer raised concerns, stating that, "Muḥammad Sha'banilaw, well known among Muslim scholars, was regarded within the Daghestani religious community as one of the active Wahhabis of the past. The inclusion of his name in this book, not to mention the reproduction of his photograph, was considered highly inappropriate and likely to stir controversy within the Daghestani Islamic community. Moreover, there is the potential risk of legal complications, given the current laws in Daghestan, such as the 'Prohibition of Wahhabi and other Extremist Activities on the Territory of the Republic of Daghestan' enacted in September 1999 following the Wahhabi rebellion." As a result of these concerns, I found it necessary to omit any mention of Muḥammad Sha'banilaw and his photograph from the book, despite the fact that the allegation of him being a Wahhabi stemmed solely from his outspoken criticisms of Sufism.

ʿĀkif-efendī)[636] reflects Saidov's interest in the reformist movement as a whole. The subject seems to have been so important to Saidov that he decided to include this article in a text that had nothing to do either with Egypt or the reformist movement. The incorporation of biographies of these scholars in the text can likely be attributed to Saidov's awareness of the influence that the ideas of al-Afghānī and ʿAbduh exerted on the intellectual history of Daghestan in the early decades of the 20th century. In particular, his own library contained articles copied by Daghestani scholars from the *Al-Manār* journal, and manuscript works of al-Afghānī and ʿAbduh, also copied by Daghestani Islamic reformers.

A letter from the scholar and calligrapher Ismāʿīl al-Shulānī to the scholar Shaykh ʿAlī al-Ṣughūrī; a letter from Ismāʿīl al-Shulānī to Muḥammad Mirzā Mavraev

The afore-mentioned Ismāʿīl al-Shulānī (1863–1912) and Muḥammad Mirzā Mavraev (1878–1964) were two notable pioneers of Daghestani Islamic printing. Both of them, as well as Abū Sufyān Akaev, had studied the printing business in Bakhchisarai at the printing house of Ismāʿīl Gasprinskii, founder of the Jadidism movement in Russia, and later purchased their own equipment and opened the first Islamic printing house in the North Caucasus.[637] Until his death, Ismāʿīl al-Shulānī worked as a copyist at this printing house and published a number of books.[638] There is a manuscript in Saidov's collection that includes several letters, poems, and historical essays on events in Daghestan written by Ismāʿīl al-Shulānī and copied by Saidov himself.[639] After this printing house was

636 For more information about this individual, see: Ahmet Şeyhun. *Islamist Thinkers in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 19–26.

637 A.A. Isaev, *Magomedmirza Mavraev – pervopechatnik i prosvetitel' Dagestana*, 15–16.

638 P.M. Alibekova, "Biblioteka dagestanskogo uchenogo i prosvetitelia Ismaildibira iz Shulani (1863–1912)," *Istoriia, arkheologiia i etnografiia Kavkaza* 15:4 (2019), 602–628.

639 Ismāʿīl b. Abakar al-Shulānī. *Majmūʿ al-ashʿār wa-l-makātīb*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 8.

later nationalised by the Soviet authorities, Saidov was also employed there as a copyist and proofreader of Avar-language newspapers between 1926 and 1931, which included the period prior to 1929 when Muḥammad Mirzā Mavraev was still a manager of the printing house. It is clear that Saidov, who was directly involved in the publication of books and journals at this printing house, considered anything to do with the evolution of printing in Daghestan very important.

A question of whether it is permitted to shave off one's moustache and Sha'banilaw's answer to this question. A question on divorce and Sha'banilaw's answer to this question

These two legal questions are noteworthy because they exemplify some of the various discussions that unfolded between Daghestani reformers and their conservative opponents. This polemic was widely reported in reformer press, such as *Jarīdat Dāghistān* (1913–18) and *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* (1925–28), as well as in the manuscript tradition.[640]

The eighth article on Gog and Magog copied from the book Niẓām al-'alam wa-l-'ulūm by Shaykh al-Ṭanṭāwī

Shaykh al-Ṭanṭāwī al-Jawharī (1862–1940) was known as a prominent scholar and reformer. The Arabic press of the time heralded him as 'a great philosopher' since his works were dedicated to the idea of an Arab Utopia; he wrote a commentary on the Qur'ān modeled on the one by Muḥammad 'Abduh and attempted to revive Islamic learning in Cairo based on the European model. Like the above-mentioned Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Shaykh al-Ṭanṭāwī was furthermore a harsh critic of British im-

640 See: Shamil Shikhaliev, "Muslim Reformism in Dagestan (1900–1930)," 35–63; Shamil Shikhaliev, "Islamic Press in the early Soviet Dagestan and the Journal "Muslims of the Soviet Orient", *Islamology* 7:2 (2017), 74–100; A.R. Navruzov, "'Baian al-Khakaik' (1925 - 1928) – dukhovnyi zhurnal uchenykh arabistov Dagestana," 147–174; idem, *"Dzharidat Dagistan" – araboiazychnaia gazeta kavkazskikh dzhadidov*.

perialism.[641] Saidov was evidently drawn to Shaykh al-Ṭanṭāwī's persona due to their shared interest in reformist ideas and approach to critiquing European colonialism. Regarding Gog and Magog, a clear parallel can be drawn with Saidov's academic endeavours, which focused on the works of afore-mentioned Ḥasan al-Alqadārī. During the late 1960s to early 1970s, Saidov delved into two primary compositions by al-Alqadārī, namely, his *Jirāb al-Mamnūn* and *Dīwān al-Mamnūn*.[642] Ḥasan al-Alqadārī's in the *Jirāb* discussed in detail the location of Gog and Magog, as well as the Wall of Iskandār.[643] Evidently, while engaging with al-Alqadārī's legacy in the academic tradition, and being well-acquainted with al-Alqadārī's exploration of the Gog and Magog topic, Saidov concurrently interwove a comparable theme into his Arabic-language work.

A letter from the prominent scholar Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī to Yūsuf al-Jungūtī; a letter from the prominent scholar Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī to two students, Sayyid al-Qulatsmī and a certain Muḥammad, when these were studying under 'Alī al-Ghumuqī

These two sections are noteworthy for several reasons. We already noted in Chapter 2 how Saidov in his writings frequently presents Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī as a scholarly persona whom he seeks to emulate and associate himself with; mention of him once again here, therefore, is unlikely to be merely coincidental. Yūsuf al-Jungūtī, the addressee in al-Harakānī's letter, was a strict adherent of the *taqlīd* and debated the impossibility of *ijtihād* with the above-mentioned Nadhīr al-Durgilī.[644] In view of this polemic, as well as the ideas of Muḥam-

641 Majid Daneshgar, "Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, General Editor: Johanna Pink, University of Freiburg. Consulted online on 21 February 2023 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875–3922_q3_EQCOM_050574>

642 M.-S. Saidov, *Dagestanskaia literatura na arabskom iazyke: Khasan iz Alkadar, ego tvorchestvo i nauchnaia deiatel'nost'*.

643 Ḥasan-efendī al-Alqadārī, *Jirāb al-Mamnūn,* 34–43.

644 For more details about the polemic between Nadhīr al-Durgilī and Yūsuf al-Jungūtī, see: Shamil Shikhaliev, "Polemika mezhdu Nazirom ad-Durgili i Yusufom al-Dzhunguti," 186–226.

mad ʻAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī about the permissibility of *ijtihād*, it is clear that the addressee also touched upon these matters in this letter. Moreover, since they were contemporaries and the discussion took place in 1928, it is evident that Saidov knew all three personally: Yūsuf, who was a fellow villager of his wife Ḥabiyat; al-Durgilī, part of whose collection Saidov acquired for himself; and Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd, with whom he was in close correspondence. Thirdly, Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Rashīd is mentioned with two Kaiaev's students. The latter's personality was also of great interest to Saidov since he had studied with ʻAlī Kaiaev, as was mentioned above. All these individuals, who supported the reform of Islamic education and law and criticised Sufism or Sufis, had close ties with one another and with Saidov. We can see their close bond in Saidov's archive: in their letters, in their works, or even in the manuscripts they copied. Saidov collected in his archive everything relating to the Islamic reformist movement and the individuals who supported it.

Article 'The Woman in Islam'

This theme was widely discussed by Islamic reformists. Some articles were published in the Daghestani Arabic newspaper *Jarīdat Dāghistān* edited by ʻAlī Kaiaev, in which he raised the question of whether women should have the right to education.[645] This matter was also discussed

645 ʻAlī al-Ghumuqī, "Amthāl al-turk fī haqq al-nisā'", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 3 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1913), 4; idem, "Ijtimāʻ al-nisā' al-ʻuthmāniyyīn", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 6 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1913), 3–4; idem, "'Alam al-nisā'", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 17 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1913), 4; idem, "Taraqqa al-nisā'", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 23 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1913), 4; idem, "'Ādāt al-muslimīn", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 32 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1913), 3–4; idem, "Tawliyyat al-nisā' waẓā'if al-dawla", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 13 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1914), 4; idem, "'Ādāt al-mughālā fī l-muhūr", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 23 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1914), 4; idem, "Shujāʻa Bint ʻAfīfa", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 25 (Temīr-khān Shūra,1914), 4; idem, "Maṭālib al-nisā'", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 26 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1914), 4; idem, "Taʻallum al-nisā' wa kitābatuhunna", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 6 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1916), 4; idem, "Taʻlim al-nisā' wa tarbiyatuhunna", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 17 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 3–4; idem, "Masā'il al-nisā'", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 20 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 3–4; idem, "Jaysh al-nisā'", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 22 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 4; idem, "Maḥkamat al-sharʻiyya al-qirīmiyya wa tamaddud al-azwāj", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 24 (Temīr-

both by the Tatar *jadīds* and by the Egyptian reformers. For instance, one of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement, Qāsim Amīn (1865–1908), wrote a separate work, *Taḥrīr al-mar'a* (Woman's liberation), in which he discussed in detail the important social role of Muslim women and criticised the male oppression of women, suggesting that this was a contingent reflection of regional and national customs rather than a true reflection of Islamic teaching.[646] It is likely that this article, which Saidov quotes in his study, was copied from an Egyptian newspaper. In referring to the article, he was evidently giving expression to his interest in Muslim reformism.

B) Poetry

A qaṣīda by Hājj 'Alī al-Ḥutsatlī for his friend Ḥamza al-Tsādī, in which he mocks their friend Dāwudil Muḥammad al-Khunzākhī; a letter from the poet Ḥamza al-Tsādī and his qaṣīda, in which he describes the essence of Dāwudil Muḥammad al-Khunzākhī

Ḥamza al-Tsādī is another name for Gamzat Tsadasa (1877–1951). As we discussed in Chapter 5, Gamzat Tsadasa was a famous Daghestani Soviet poet and holder of the Stalin Award. He was actively promoted by the Soviet authorities for his poems, which criticised the old traditional norms and representatives of the clerical elite and supported the highlanders. In his reminiscences of 1967, Saidov recounts that he studied an Arabic grammar book, *Fawā'id al-ḍiyā'iyya sharḥ al-kāfiyya fī l-naḥw* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī (d. 1492), under Gamzat Tsadasa, in whose house he lived in 1917. After that, according to Saidov, they re-

khān Shūra, 1917), 4; idem, "Fatā qāmat bi khidma jalīla", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 25 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 4; idem, "Nuqsān al-nisā' 'uqūlan wa madārikan", *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 2 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1918), 3–4.

646 Qāsim Amīn, *Taḥrīr al-mar'a wa-l-tamaddun al-islāmī* (Beirut-Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1988). For more details about this individual, see: Hoda A. Yousef, "The Other Legacy of Qasim Amin: The View from 1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 54 (2022), 505–523.

mained on good terms for a long time and exchanged Arabic books.[647] Saidov served as his translator when Gamzat Tsadasa was invited to visit the Moscow Kremlin in 1939 to be awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour [fig. 21].[648]



Figure 21. Gamzat Tsadasa and Muḥammad-Said Saidov. Moscow, 1939. Photograph from Rabiyat Saidova's private collection.

Saidov's daughter Rabiyat recalled that, at her father's instructions, she often took various translations of poems and drafts to Gamzat Tsadasa and back.[649] In the 1930s and 1940s, Saidov compiled and edited a collection of Gamzat Tsadasa's poems, and in 1940 he wrote an essay on his life and work.[650] Saidov also translated Gamzat Tsadasa's autobiographical work from Avar into Russian, as was mentioned in Chapter 5, and

647 Magomed-Said Saidov. "Mutalim ob uchitele," 123–128.
648 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, July 17, 2020).
649 Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).
650 M.-S. Saidov, *Gamzat Tsadasa i ego literaturnoe tvorchestvo* (Makhachkala: Dagiz, 1944).

wrote a short article in Arabic dedicated to the centenary of the poet's birth.[651] Saidov's personal perspective concerning the verses pertaining to Dāwudil Muḥammad al-Khunzākhī remains elusive. However, the inclusion of these verses in the *Fawā'id al-munajjima* can be elucidated by Saidov's profound admiration for the literary contributions of Tsadasa, who was known for his acutely satirical poetry, characterised by vivid and rich metaphorical language. Furthermore, the afore-mentioned figure Dāwudil Muḥammad al-Khunzākhī, who likely lived contemporaneously with the authors of the verses, was presumably familiar to Saidov. In any event, Saidov systematically compiled the poetry of his fellow Daghestani Muslim scholars, encompassing both satirical and polemical pieces, and, as in this instance, made a deliberate choice to incorporate some of these works into his work *Fawā'id al-munajjima*.

An elegy by Abū-l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī on the death of his mother

Saidov was keenly interested in classical pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry. In his correspondence with the Russian-born naturalized British orientalist Vladimir Minorskii, who was impressed by Saidov's fluency in Arabic and asked him where he had learned it, Saidov responded: "I have been learning Arabic here in Daghestan for about 15–17 years. I was mostly interested in Arabic poetry, for what reason I do not know. I studied *al-Ḥamāsa*, *al-Mu'allaqāt*, and various collections (*dīwān*). I even copied three volumes of the *Dīwān al-Abīwardī*."[652] It is clear that Saidov was aware of al-Ma'arrī's *dīwān*. This is demonstrated by his comments in the margins of an edition of al-Ma'arrī's poems that he had in his personal library, as well as by a manuscript copied in 1927 that was also extant in Saidov's collection.[653]

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651 Muḥammad-Sayyid b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Awārī. *Murūr mi'at 'āmm min al-mīlād Ḥamza b. Muḥammad al-Tsādī*, fols 1a–3a.

652 A.R. Shikhsaidov, Kh.A. Omarov, *Katalog arabskikh rukopisei (Kollektsiia M.-S. Saidova)*, 17.

653 Abū al-'Alā al-Ma'arrī, *Dīwān.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 66g.

A poem written by Najm al-Dīn [al-Ḥūtsī]to Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī; a poem in which Najm al-Dīn mocks Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī; a poem in which Najm al-Dīn addresses Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī

Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī (d. 1921) was a major theologian, an author of a number of poems, and an ideological opponent of the above-mentioned Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī. Saidov's archive contains several poems by Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī.[654] It is likely that the poems included in this narrative are a verse polemic between these two scholars, a copy of which is also present in Saidov's archive [fig. 22].[655]

Saidov thought highly of Najm al-Dīn's poetry and, as mentioned above, he carefully collected everything to do with his letters, writings, and poems, as well as those of Najm al-Dīn's older brother, ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥūtsī.[656] Indeed, I know of no other manuscript collection in Daghestan that has as many letters, poems, and documents to do with Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī. The collection of poems by Muḥammad al-Abīwardī (d. 1113) that Saidov mentioned in his correspondence with Vladimir Minorskii was evidently the one copied by Saidov in the library of Najm al-Dīn, who had inherited this manuscript from his brother ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥūtsī, to whose collection it used to belong.[657]

A qaṣīda by the scholar and poet Muḥammad Hājjī, son of the Sufi shaykh ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣughūrī

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654 *Al-ash'ār li Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, nos. 41, 106, 407.

655 *Al-Mubāḥatha bayna Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī wa Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 406.

656 [*Poetry and letters by Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī*]. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 66i, fols. 84b–102a; no. 92, fols. 4a–5a, 62b, 66b–68b, 104a, 129b–181a; nos. 37, 41, 193, 194, 294, 401, 405, 406. [*Poetry and letters by ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥūtsī*]. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, nos. 19a, 33, 64; *opis'* 5, nos. 66, 106, 308, 440, 508, 509.

657 Khadzhimurad Donogo, "Abdullatip Gotsinskii," *Akhulgo* 3 (1999), 40; Mansur Gaidarbekov, *Biografiia i trudy Abdullatifa iz Gotso.* Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3*, opis'* 1, no. 179, fol. 125b.

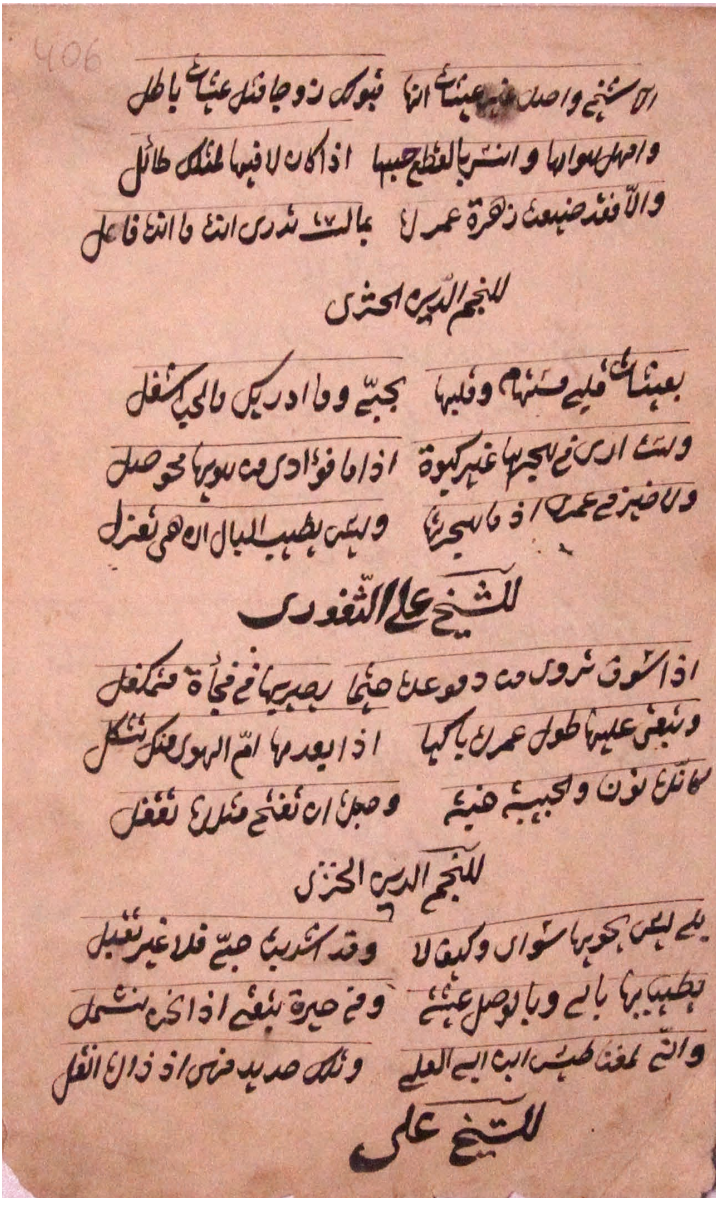


Figure 22. *A verse polemic between Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī and Shaykh ʻAlī al-Ṣughūrī.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no 406.

The *qaṣīda* by Muḥammad Hājjī that Saidov here included was Muḥammad Hājjī's most famous work, dedicated to three Daghestani *imām*s: Ghāzī Muḥammad, Ḥamzat-bek, and Shamil. The poem can be found in many private and state collections in Daghestan, including Saidov's archive.[658] It was translated into Russian by Alexandr M. Barabanov, to one of whose works Saidov had written a critical review,[659] and published in 1941.[660]

A qaṣīda by Muḥammad 'Umarī al-Uḥlī dedicated to his teacher 'Alī al-Ghumuqī; an elegy in Arabic commemorating the death of the prominent scholar Ḥaydarbek al-Kinichuqī

Ḥaydarbek al-Kinichuqī (1829–83) was originally from Genichutl, the same village as Saidov, and was his distant relative. He produced an essay on historical events in the North Caucasus.[661] Saidov was a close friend of al-Kinichuqī's great-nephew Manṣūr Gaidarbekov (1907–87), who was his cousin. Saidov petitioned for Gaidarbekov to be employed by the Institute of History, where Manṣūr spent several years writing, both in Arabic and Russian, a 14-volume *Chronology of the History of Daghestan*[662] and a two-volume *Anthology of Daghestani Poetry*.[663]

A qaṣīda by Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī in which he mocks Imām Ḥamza

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658 *Qaṣīdat Muḥammad Hājjī al-Ṣughūrī*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 315a.

659 [*Letter from Ignatii Krachkovskii to Saidov, 24 August 1944*] (in Russian). Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 98. In this letter, Ignatii Krachkovskii agreed with Saidov's well-founded criticism of Barabanov's work.

660 *Khronika Mukhammeda Takhira al-Karakhi o dagestanskikh voinakh v period Shamilia*, 260–72.

661 Khaidarbek Genichutlinskii, *Istoriko-biograficheskie i istoricheskie ocherki, perevod s arabskogo T.M. Aitberova.* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii nauchnyi tsentr RAN, 1992).

662 Mansur Gaidarbekov, *Khronologiia istorii Dagestana,* Vols. 1–14. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3*, opis'* 1, no. 236.

663 Mansur Gaidarbekov, *Antologiia dagestanskoi poezii na arabskom iazyke*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 3*, opis'* 1, no. 129.

Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī (1795–1871) was a major Daghestani theologian who served at the imperial administration in the Caucasus. During the Imamate of Shamil, he criticised Shamil's rule, and made him the subject of several satirical verses.[664] His criticism provoked a reaction from Daghestani scholars, who criticised him in turn and wrote poems in refutation of his views. For instance, the above-mentioned Muḥammad Hājjī al-Ṣughūrī and Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī spoke out against Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī.[665] In Saidov's archive, there are some poems by Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī criticising Imām Shamil. There is also a response by Muḥammad Hājjī al-Ṣughūrī to Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī's attacks on Shamil, in which he berates al-Yaḥsāwī himself and lists the accomplishments of Imām Shamil.[666] Here, we observe that al-Yaḥsāwī composed critical poems directed not only at Shamil but also at Imām Ḥamza, a friend and a predecessor of Imām Shamil. This *qasīda* against Imām Ḥamzat-bek is little known in Daghestan. It is likely that these were the poems he included in in the now-lost *Fawā'id al-munajjima*.

C) History and Biography

In this section, Saidov included those sources that are directly linked to specific historical events in Daghestan and recounted the biographies of several scholars.

Dates of death for several scholars from the village of Sogratl

664 Michael Kemper, "The Daghestani legal discourse on the Imamate," *Central Asian Survey* 21:3 (2002), 265–278.

665 Michael Kemper, Amri Shikhsaidov, Alfrid Bustanov, *Nazir ad-Durgeli, Uslada umov v biografiiakh dagestanskikh uchenykh*, 92; Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*, fol. 88b.

666 Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī, *Qaṣīda*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 315b. Another copy of poetry by Yūsuf al-Yaḥsāwī and Muḥammad Hājjī al-Ṣughūrī is also kept in Saidov's archive. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, no. 98, fols. 10b–13a.

What is noteworthy here is that Saidov did not identify the time frames of certain scholars (that is, the date of their birth and death as was typical for the Soviet academic tradition) but instead referred solely to the dates of their deaths, in accordance with the Islamic tradition. It is common for many authors of biographical essays to ignore the date of birth but to mention the date of death. This focus solely on the date of death can be explained by the Islamic tradition, according to which life in this world is given to people in order to prepare for the next life, so that they may do good deeds and strictly follow *sharī'a* in order to hope for a reward in heaven. The date of death means the end of the preparatory stage and the start of a new eternal life in the next world.

Historical events in Daghestan

It is clear that Saidov collected short and concise notes on some historical events occurring in Daghestan that he came across when studying manuscripts. Such notes are often added to manuscripts as separate marginal glosses or written at the very end of manuscripts, often on the flyleaf. These notes frequently relate to the Islamisation of certain unions of Daghestani rural communities, the building of mosques, hostilities between Daghestanis and Iranian troops, outbreaks of plague and cholera in Daghestan, or the capture of certain Shirvan settlements by Daghestanis.[667]

Historical events related to Nādir Shāh al-Qājārī; fighting between troops of Ṭahmāsb II [1723–32] and the residents of Andalal and Sogratl

The expansive campaigns of Safavid Iran and Nādir Shāh are widely reflected in the local Arabic written tradition and are represented both in

667 T.M. Aitberov, "Pamiatnye zapisi iz sbornika 531," *Pis'mennye pamiatniki Dagestana 18–19 vekov. Sbornik statei*, ed. by A.R. Shikhsaidov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1989), 132–141; K. Barkuev, M.-K. Akhmedov, A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Istoricheskie svedeniia o Dagestane iz arabskikh rukopisei," *Uchenye zapiski Instituta istorii, iazyka i literatury Dagestanskogo filiala AN SSSR. Tom 11.* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1963), 173–186.

manuscripts[668] and in epigraphic evidence.[669] Soviet scholars paid close attention to Daghestan's defence against foreign invaders, including Nādir Shāh's campaigns in Daghestan, which took place between 1738 and 1745, with numerous studies published on this topic.[670] In such works, we can see that the concise notes on the incursions of Iranian troops into Daghestan that occur in manuscripts and epigraphic evidence have already become an important source for the histories of these campaigns written by Soviet historians. Many of these scholars did not know any Arabic and were forced to ask their colleagues from the institute for help. Saidov worked closely with these historians and translated some relevant texts from Arabic into Russian for them. It is likely that Saidov included some of the information concerning Ṭahmāsb's and Nādir Shāh's incursions into Daghestan that he had come across in manuscripts in this section. Saidov also published a study of the struggle against Nādir Shāh in Daghestan.[671] Saidov continued both the Islamic tradition of record-

668 A.R. Shikhsaidov, "O bor'be dagestantsev protiv iranskikh zavoevatelei," A.R. Shikhsaidov, T.M. Aitberov, G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Dagestanskie istoricheskie sochineniia* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1993), 190–201.

669 Z.Sh. Zakariiaev, "Iranskie shakhi v arabskoi epigrafike Dagestana (po materialam novykh nakhodok nadpisei 17 - 18 vekov)," *Vestnik Saratovskogo gosudarstvennogo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo universiteta* 3:32 (2010), 151–153; Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev, I.A. Chmilevskaya, "O voinakh Timura i pervykh musul'manakh seleniia Kishcha: analiz epigrafiki kladbishcha Abu Bakar-sheikha," *Istoriia, arkheologiia i etnografiia Kavkaza* 16:4 (2020), 864–887.

670 A.I. Tamai, "K voprosu o provale dagestanskoi kampanii shakha Nadira (1741–1743)," *Uchenye zapiski Instituta istorii, iazyka i literatury Dagestanskogo filiala AN SSSR. Tom 5*. (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1958), 108–131; A.N. Kozlova, "Namei-i alamarai-i Nadiri Mukhammad Kazima o pervom etape pokhoda Nadir-shakha na Tabasaran," *Osvoboditel'naia bor'ba narodov Dagestana v epokhu srednevekov'ia*, ed. by T.M. Aitberov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1986), 71–82; B.G. Aliev, *Bor'ba narodov Dagestana protiv inozemnykh zavoevatelei* (Makhachkala: IIAE DNTs RAN, 2002); M.-S.K. Umakhanov, "Bor'ba narodov Dagestana protiv polchishch Nadir-shakha v 30–40-kh godakh 18 veka v dagestanskoi istoricheskoi literature," *Vestnik Instituta istorii, arkheologii i etnografii* 3:7 (2006), 27–36; N.A. Sotavov, *Krakh "Grozy Vselennoi" v Dagestane* (Makhachkala: Epokha, 2013); T.M. Aitberov, *Nadir-shakh Afshar i Dagestantsy v 1741 godu*.

671 M.-S. Saidov, *Avarskii epos o razgrome Nadyrshakha v gorakh Dagestana* (Makhachkala: Daggiz, 1942).

ing memorable events and the Soviet one whereby scholars made use of these commemorative notes in order to write a Russian-language history of relations with Iran.

A list of settlements in Andalal ruled by al-qāḍī Muḥammad al-Ṣughūrī; a list of tribute [levied] by the Shamkhals from Daghestani settlements

The list of tribute from one Daghestani region, the Shamkhalate, is not often found in the Islamic written tradition, and seems to have been known only to those Islamic scholars who were particularly interested in history. This tribute list is included in the Arabic historical treatise *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān* by Muḥammad Rafī', which was closely studied by Soviet historians. There are several copies of this work in Saidov's archive.[672] The collection of Saidov's teacher, 'Alī Kaiaev, contains one of the oldest lists of tribute belonging to the Shamkhals in a 17th-century copy, which, in turn, was copied from an even earlier exemplar dated to the second half of the 14th century (1359).[673] It is clear that Saidov, who knew *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān* and was familiar with 'Alī Kaiaev's collection before latter was exiled in 1939, was drawing upon this material in his own text.

The origins of the rulers of Ghāzīghumuq

The *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān* by Muḥammad Rafī' attributes the origin of the Shamkhals, who were rulers of the Kazikumukh Khanate, to the Arab Quraysh family, which was related to the Prophet Muḥammad.[674] In the

672 Muḥammad Rafī', *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, nos. 27g, 47c, 71, 72b, 75, 76, 77, 79a, 79c, 80a.

673 T.M. Aitberov, I.A. Kaiaev, "Dokumenty 14–18 vv. po istorii Lakii (epokha shamkhalov i khanov Kazikumukha)," *Vestnik Instituta istorii, arkheologii i etnografii* 3:39 (2014), 25–37.

674 A.R. Shikhsaidov ""Tarikh Dagestan" Mukhammadrafi. Vvedenie, perevod i kommentarii," A.R. Shikhsaidov, T.M. Aitberov, G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Dagestanskie istoricheskie sochineniia*, 85–108; idem, "Dagestanskaia istoricheskaia khronika "Tarikh Dagestan" Mukhammada Rafi (k voprosu ob izuchenii)," *Pis'mennye*

early 20th century, the Daghestani *jadīds* questioned the Arabic origin of these rulers. ʿAlī Kaiaev was the first scholar who asserted that the ancestral origins of Daghestani rulers, including the Shamkhals, had nothing to do with the family of the Prophet Muḥammad. He identified two distinct Shamkhal dynasties and claimed that the former one was related to Gāzī-Qalandar, who arrived in Daghestan in the early 12th century with the Turkic Seljuk *ghāzīs* and established his power over Kumukh.[675] But ʿAlī Kaiaev believed that this dynasty was subsequently destroyed. He wrote: "In AH 634 [1239–40], the Mongols captured Kumukh and destroyed the ruling dynasty, installing instead their own ruler descended from Genghiz Khan, who was given the title of Shamkhal. From this time onwards, the power of Turkic Shamkhals was established in Daghestan."[676] As for the Soviet academic tradition, the first scholar to cast doubt on the theory that the Shamkhals were descended from the Prophet Muḥammad was Saidov. After analysing Arabic historical texts, including *Ta'rīkh Dāghistān*, *Derbend-nāme*, and other historical and geographical works by Arabic scholars, Saidov came to the conclusion that the term 'Shamkhal', like the origin of the rulers of Kazikumukh, was not Arabic in origin.[677] It is clear that Saidov had evidently learned about the 'Turkic' hypothesis for the origins of the Shamkhals from his teacher ʿAlī Kaiaev as well as from the texts of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī[678] and Nadhīr al-Durgilī, which he had in his collection. Subsequent Soviet historians referred to the works of Saidov when they wrote about the inadequacy of the Arab hypothesis of the origin of the Shamkhal dynas-

pamiatniki Vostoka. Istoriko-filologicheskie issledovaniia. Ezhegodnik (Moscow: Vostochmaia literatura, 1977), 90–119.

675 Ali Kaiaev, "Istoricheskie ocherki. Shamkhaly," *Sovetskii Dagestan* 3–4 (1990), 20–26.

676 ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Majmūʿ al-multaqiṭāt fi-l-ta'rikh*. (Genealogy of the Shamkhals; Safavid dynasty of Iran, dynasty of Shirvan's ruler). Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 17, fols. 3b–4a.

677 M.S. Saidov, "O rasprostranenii Abumuslimom islama v Dagestane," 42–51.

678 G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Istoriia Kavkaza i seleniia Karabudakhkent Dzhamaluddina-khadzhi Karabudakhkentskogo*, 52–54.

ty.[679] It is likely that Saidov included in his text either the opinion concerning the Arab descent of the Shamkhals or, which is more likely, the opinion that this version was inadequate.

The customary law of Andalal settlements

Among Saidov's numerous scholarly interests was the customary law (*rusūm*) observed by certain Daghestani rural confederations. This topic was not popular in the local Islamic tradition. In state and private collections, we only see a few copies of the body of customary law, many of which were compiled at the request of the imperial administration in Daghestan.[680] Imperial civil servants and Soviet historians were keenly interested in these collections of customary law texts. In the context of his research conducted at the Institute of History, Saidov collected and translated these sources. His private archive also contains manuscripts of customary law for various unions of rural communities.[681] Moreover, Saidov translated a number of these legal sources from Arabic to Russian, which were eventually published by the Soviet historian Khadzhi Murad Khashaev.[682] In his study of the customary law of the peoples of Daghestan, Saidov combined a distinctively Soviet academic tradition

679 G.M.-R. Orazaev, *Istoriia Kavkaza i seleniia Karabudakhkent Dzhamaluddina-khadzhi Karabudakhkentskogo*, 85–86. For further discussion see: A.Dzh. Kurbanov, *Gosudarstvennye obrazovaniia lakov v srednevekov'e* (Makhachkala: IPTs DGU, 2006), 91–148.

680 Michael Kemper, *Herrschaft, Recht und Islam in Daghestan. Von den Khanaten und Gemeindebünden zum ǧihād-Staat* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005), 317–403.

681 *Iz adatov seleniia Akusha, perepisannye M.-S. Saidovym.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 84; *'Ādāt qaryat Gharabudāghkent ['Customary law of Karabudakhkent village']*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 128; *Maktūb fī mas'alat nadhr*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 436; *Nafaḥāt azāhīr karā fī 'araṣāt 'ādāt al-qurā. Kodeks postanofleniia avarskogo nutsala Umakhana Sparavedlivogo*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 525.

682 Kh.-M.O. Khashaev, *Pamiatniki obychnogo prava Dagestana 17–19 vekov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965).

with his own remarkable mastery of Islamic source material and integrated his Soviet academic interest into the Islamic context.

Excerpts from the [dictionary] Qāmūs al-amkina wa-l-biqā' concerning [the provinces] al-Lan and Derbend

The Daghestani Islamic tradition was, as a rule, not interested in historical geography. Islamic scholars paid more attention to biographies, as observed above. Both Nadhīr al-Durgilī and 'Alī Kaiaev situated their biographical accounts of Daghestani scholars against a wider historical background while nevertheless paying little attention to geography. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharabudāghī was the first Muslim scholar who linked history and geography. He wrote a major historical treatise in Arabic known as *Ta'rīkh al-Qawqāz wa qaryat Gharabudāghkent* (*The History of the Caucasus and the Settlement of Karabudahkent*).[683] Subsequently, matters relating to the historical geography of Daghestan became the focus of study by Soviet historians and archaeologists from the 1950s onwards. Since then, extensive specialised research has focused on the localisation of certain towns and the delineation of political domains and states and their borders in various different historical periods.[684] It is clear that Saidov also included the Soviet historical tradition of historical geography into the Islamic context.

Biographies of Aḥmad al-Yamanī and 'Alī-hājjī al-Ghumuqī

683 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Gharābudāghī. *Ta'rīkh al-Qawqāz wa qaryat Gharabudāghkent*, fol. 2a. idem, *Iz istorii Dagestana i shamkhalov kumykskikh. Archive of the Institute of History*, Makhachkala, *fond* 1*, opis'* 1, no. 414, 1b.

684 V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons LTD, 1958); Kh.Kh. Ramazanov, A.R. Shikhsaidov, *Ocherki istorii Iuzhnogo Dagestana (Materialy k istorii narodov Dagestana s drevneishikh vremen do nachala 20 veka)* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial AN SSSR, 1964); A.R. Shikhsaidov, "K voprosu o lokalizatsii Filana," *Onomastika Kavkaza*. (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo Dagkomizdat, 1976), 78–87.

The biographies of these two scholars had already been the subject of the above-mentioned works by ʻAlī Kaiaev and Nadhīr al-Durgilī. ʻAlī Kaiaev's collection contains several manuscripts copied by Aḥmad al-Yamanī (d. 1450) in 1433 and 1434, including one which includes a short autobiographical summary that notes the dates and places of the births of his children.[685] As for Saidov himself, he also included the biographies of these two scholars in his above-mentioned Arabic studies "A Conference Paper on Arabic Literature in Daghestan" and "Imagining the History of Daghestani Poets and Scholars." Besides, in one of his academic articles, Saidov provided the first academic description of the tomb stela of Aḥmad al-Yamanī with a full translation of his epitaph into Russian.[686]

Thus, the work *Fawā'id al-munajjima* by Muḥammad-Said Saidov can be reconstructed as a uniquely revealing case study in the creative and ideologically fraught space of intellectual synthesis in mid-20th-century Daghestan. While it appears, on the surface, to conform to the normative conventions of Islamic biographical and historiographical literature, this text subtly yet unmistakably reflects the influence of its Soviet scholarly environment. This integration of modern academic sensibilities into an Islamic framework represents not a passive assimilation but an active process of negotiation, adaptation, and transformation. It is precisely through this negotiation that we can understand the text as both a continuation of Islamic epistemic traditions and a reflection of the Soviet intellectual milieu in which Saidov lived and worked.

From the examination of the contents of *Fawā'id al-munajjima*, we can trace a connection between Saidov's engagement with both the Islamic approach and the academic tradition, which informs his subjective choices of tradition and methodology. From our reconstruction of the *Fawā'id al-munajjima*, we can see how Saidov seamlessly integrates Soviet academic discourse into the Islamic epistemic framework. This discourse deviated from traditional Islamic conventions but garnered fa-

685 Ismāʻīl b. Ḥammād al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha wa ṣiḥāḥ al-ʻarabī*. Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, no. 11, fols. 319b–320a.

686 M.S. Saidov, "O nekotorykh pamiatnikakh material'noi kul'tury v lakskikh raionakh DASSR," 122–123.

vour among Daghestani Soviet historians during the 1960s and 1970s. This is evident in various of the work's contents and themes, such as the biography of Aḥmad al-Yamanī, customary law in the Andalal villages, the genealogical origins of the Kazikumukh rulers, historical episodes involving Nādir Shāh, and the skirmishes between Ṭahmāsb's forces and the inhabitants of Andalal and Sogratl. Although these themes have been relatively unaddressed by Muslim scholars, they resonate significantly within the realm of academic discourse.

This analytical framework becomes most evident when we assess the twofold structure of *Fawā'id al-munajjima*. The first part, largely a redacted and supplemented version of al-Ṣalṭī's *Ta'rīkh al-waṭan*, retains classical Islamic forms such as biographical notices and juridical fragments. However, in trimming and supplementing the original, Saidov applies criteria aligned with historical critique and thematic selection, in keeping with the Soviet academic standards of source curation. This method indicates his attempt to preserve an Islamic intellectual genealogy while subtly introducing historiographic rationalism and source-critical priorities developed in the Soviet scholarly environment. By inserting biographical details, such as epitaphs, geographical annotations, and clarifying interpolations, Saidov adopts a position that is both preservative and reformulative.

The second section of the work further illustrates this intellectual synthesis. It moves away from rigid biography and shifts toward a thematic exploration of issues related to Islamic reformism, historiography, and literary culture. Topics such as the critique of Sufism, the permissibility of *ijtihād,* the legacy of Daghestani printing, and even gender reform reflect concerns that, while rooted in pre-Soviet *jadīd* discourse, were reactivated and reframed under Soviet ideological constraints. Saidov's interest in the reformist movement is not incidental but central to his intellectual persona. His inclusion of polemics on Sufi practice and his reverence for reformers like Muḥammad ʻAbduh and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī illustrate how Saidov reclaimed the Islamic reformist legacy as an acceptable and, crucially, politically non-subversive model of Islamic modernity, compatible with Soviet paradigms of progress, rationality, and critique of traditionalism.

In this way, *Fawā'id al-munajjima* becomes a textual palimpsest where Saidov overlays Islamic forms with Soviet-era intellectual concerns. His sustained attention to manuscript heritage, customary law, historical geography, and linguistic purism reveals a scholar straddling two epistemes. The methodical treatment of Arabic poetic materials, along with Saidov's reverential inclusion of correspondence and verse exchanges between reformist scholars, demonstrates not merely an antiquarian interest but a scholarly project aimed at rehabilitating Islamic authority through cultural continuity. The decision to include letters and poetry from figures such as al-Harakānī, al-Ḥūtsī, and Tsadasa is emblematic of a deeper effort to create a lineage of learned piety within which Saidov situated himself.

Crucially, we must interpret *Fawā'id al-munajjima* not as an inert repository of Islamic memory but as an instrument through which Saidov curated both his past and his scholarly identity. His preference for recording death dates according to Islamic rather than Soviet conventions exemplifies the enduring theological significance he attributed to the eschatological dimension of knowledge. Simultaneously, his method of annotating sources and selecting themes reflects the inescapable influence of Soviet archival culture, particularly its emphasis on authentication, critical apparatus, and ideological coherence.

What emerges, therefore, is a complex picture of Saidov not as a passive transmitter of Islamic knowledge but as a reformist archivist negotiating new cultural scripts. His work underscores how the Islamic scholarly tradition in Soviet Daghestan was not annihilated but reconfigured through hybridity, selectivity, and adaptation. In *Fawā'id al-munajjima*, Saidov affirms the legitimacy of Islamic categories while simultaneously re-inscribing them with meanings and methods drawn from Soviet academic models.

In sum, *Fawā'id al-munajjima* is not only a hybrid literary work but also a microcosm of broader processes in which Islamic intellectual life was actively recontextualised within Soviet institutional and ideological frameworks. It offers a compelling case of how a Muslim scholar, rather than retreating into orthodoxy or capitulating to atheistic Marxism,

sought to mediate between tradition and modernity by embedding secular epistemologies within the enduring logics of the Islamic textual tradition.

Saidov against Orientalism

Saidov's multifaceted personality and his engagement with various models, from Islamic reformism to Soviet cultural transformations, seems to have informed not just his scholarly output but also his political views. We see this, for instance, in his attitude to colonialism.

Among the contemporary writers whose works Saidov particularly admired were the Egyptian reformers who offered a critique of Western colonialism.[687] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, for instance, presented European colonialism as an evil that need to be overthrown, and formulated two main tasks that Muslims had to achieve in order successfully to oppose it. The first task, he wrote, is the 'freedom of the mind' (*al-taḥarrur al-fikrī*), which implies a hermeneutic engagement with the main Islamic sources, the Qur'ān and Sunna, through the practice of *ijtihād* and a refusal to follow later authorities (*taqlīd*). Moreover, this task implied the use of a rational method to reanimate Islam, revive philosophical theology, and achieve a spiritual (*fikriyya*) revolution, which would help to 'sift through' and recover the lost heritage of early Islam and early Muslims (*al-awwalīn*). The second task that al-Afghānī identified was the es-

687 Numerous scholarly works have extensively addressed the perspectives of Muslim reformers concerning the issue of colonialism. See, for instance: Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt. A study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muhammad Abduh* (New York: Rassel, 1963); Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1983); Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism. Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn "al-Afghānī"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968); Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought. A critical historical analysis.* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006). Consequently, within this section, my focus will be directed exclusively towards the critiques articulated by Daghestani reformers and Saidov himself in regard to colonialism and Orientalism. These scholars firmly held the belief that Orientalism, as a discipline, furnished Western colonialists with the analytical instruments essential for comprehending and governing their colonial dominions.

tablishment of 'political freedom' (*al-taḥarrur al-siyāsī*), which meant liberation from Western colonialism and the establishment of a constitution based on the Islamic system; at the same time, al-Afghānī noted, the Islamic constitution and its laws had to limit the power of the state and its institutions.[688] Al-Afghānī's followers Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā shared these ideas, and similarly wrote works criticising European colonialism.

Saidov evidently shared these anti-colonial ideas. This is evident from his library, which includes the manuscript works of the afore-mentioned Egyptian reformists, as well as those of Rūḥī Bek al-Khālidī (1864–1913), Muḥammad Farīd al-Wajdī (1875–1954), 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī (1855–1902), and other Muslim reformers. Moreover, he personally copied some of these works while others contain his comments in the margins of manuscripts.[689]

Saidov's sympathy for the anti-colonial ideas proposed by the Egyptian reformers reflects in part his own intellectual background. Egyptian anti-colonial ideas were fully shared by Daghestani *jadīd*s, as we see from multiple notes and articles published in the local Daghestani Muslim press. In turn, these *jadīds'* critique of Western colonialism, as evident in their works, displayed a striking alignment with the rhetoric employed by the Soviet authorities throughout their existence.[690] With his experience of study at Soviet institutions, Saidov, who was already aware of the ideas of Egyptian reformers with regard to the West, was also aware of the Soviet critique of Western colonialism.

When discussing the anti-colonial narrative in the USSR, scholars note different stages of its evolution. Thus, in the early Soviet period, the Marxist criticism of colonialism was widely represented in the local political and academic agenda. This rhetoric was aimed at criticising the Russian imperial past, and served to show that the Soviet state was able

688 Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Al-A'māl al-kāmila. Al-Kitābāt al-siyāsiyya.* (Beirut: Dār al-shurūq, 1993).

689 Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 1, nos. 90a, 90b, 90l, 90m; *opis'* 5, nos. 13, 97, 292, 404.

690 Shamil Shikhaliev, "Islamic Press in the early Soviet Dagestan and the Journal "Muslims of the Soviet Orient", 74–100.

to free itself from its imperial colonial past. However, starting from the 1950s, this narrative began to undergo reassessment, as did the narrative of the Russian Empire's eastwards expansion. The absorption of the Caucasus and Turkestan was now seen by the local academic community as a progressive move bringing enlightenment and political development to what had previously been backward Islamic lands.[691] Critiques of colonialism did not stop, but thenceforth they focused exclusively on the iniquities of Western capitalist society. Soviet historians no longer considered the USSR to be a colonial empire, and the conquest of the territorial margins of the Russian Empire was presented in a positive light, as the fruit of a mission to bring culture, civilisation, and enlightenment to the local population.[692]

This is clearly evidenced by the historiography of the Caucasian War and Shamil's uprising (1834–59). During the period from the 1920s to the 1940s, not only Shamil's movement but the entirety of history itself was examined through the lens of the Marxist model of socio-economic formations. The Marxist critique of colonialism played its part in presenting Shamil's movement as one that was progressive, aimed at national liberation, and class-motivated in its essence, seeking to fight against

691 Mark von Hagen, "Istoriia Rossii kak istoriia imperii: perspektivy federalistskogo podkhoda," *Rossiiskaia imperiia v zarubezhnoi istoriografii. Raboty poslednikh let: Antologiia*, ed. by P. Vert, P.S. Kabytov, A.I. Miller. (Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2005), 22–24.

692 Sergey Abashin. "Byl li rossiiskii etnograf v Srednei Azii kolonizatorom? [Was a Russian Ethnographer in Central Asia a Colonizer?]," *Anthropologies*, 1 (2022), 5–12; Eli Weinerman, "The Polemics between Moscow and Central Asians on the Decline of Central Asia and Tsarist Russia's Role in the History of the Region," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 71:3 (1993), 428–481. The question of whether the USSR was a colonial empire or whether it distanced itself by opposing itself to the West is still a subject of debate. See: Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *Laboratory of Socialist Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan*; Adeeb Khalid, "The Soviet Union as an imperial formation: a view from Central Asia," *Imperial Formations*, ed. by Ann Stoler, Carole McGranahan and Peter Perdue (Santa Fe, NM: School of Advanced Research Press, 2007), 123–151, idem, "Introduction: Locating the (post-) colonial in Soviet history," *Central Asian Survey* 26:4 (2007), 465–473; Martin Aust, "Writing the Empire: Russia and the Soviet Union in Twentieth-Century Historiography", *European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire* 10:2, (2003), 375–391.

the colonial policies of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus.[693] Several works were published in this period on this topic, including a number of sources on Shamil's movement.[694]

In the second half of the 1940s, Shamil's movement was subjected to radical historiographical revisionism – a process in which an important role was played by party functionaries far removed from academic history. In 1950, a report was signed by S.I. Vavilov, president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and A.V. Topchiev, chief academic secretary to the Praesidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and addressed to G.M. Malenkov, secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), entitled *On the Anti-Marxist Assessment of the Movement of Muridism and Shamil in the Works of Academic Fellows of the USSR Academy of Sciences*. This report declared that Shamil's movement was in fact politically reactionary and directed against Russia's progressive policy, and proclaimed that earlier studies of the subject by Soviet historians were in fact erroneous and contrary to the ideas of Marxism.[695] This laid the foundations for a wide-ranging re-evaluation of the established historiography relating to Shamil's movement. The Caucasus was now considered a backward place of barbarity, ignorance, and destitution, and the Caucasian highlanders were perceived to be well-organised only when it came to pillaging raids into the more

693 M.N. Pokrovskii, *Diplomatiia i voiny tsarskoi Rossii v 19 stoletii.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo nov', 1923); N.I. Pokrovskii, "Kratkii obzor imamata vremen Kavkazskoi voiny," *Revoliutsiia i gorets* 6–7 (1933), 105–115; B.V. Skitskii, *Klassovyi kharakter miuridizma v poru imamata Shamilia*. (Vladikavkaz: no publisher, 1930); S.K. Bushuev, *Bor'ba gortsev za nezavisimost' pod rukovodstvom Shamilia*. (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akadenii Nauk SSSR, 1939).

694 I.Y. Krachkovskii, "Neizdannye pis'ma Shamilia." *Zapiski instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* 2 (1933), 1–7; A.I. Genko, "Arabskaia karta Chechni epokhi Shamilia," *Zapiski instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* 2 (1939), 21–36; *Khronika Mukhammeda Takhira al-Karakhi o dagestanskikh voinakh v period Shamilia*.

695 O.V. Khlevniuk, "Zapiska Prezidenta Akademii nauk SSSR S. I. Vavilova i glavnogo uchenogo sekretaria Prezidiuma Akademii nauk SSSR A. V. Topchieva sekretariu TsK VKP(b) G. M. Malenkovu 'Ob antimarksistskoi otsenke dvizheniia miuridizma i Shamilia v trudakh nauchnykh sotrudnikov Akademii nauk SSSR'," *Sovetskaia natsional'naia politika: ideologiia i praktiki. 1945–1953. (Dokumenty sovetskoi istorii)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2013), 215–221.

culturally advanced Georgian lands. As for the incursion of the Russian Empire and Russian culture to the Caucasus, including the absorption of Daghestan and Chechnya in the Russian Empire, as well as the development of close ties with the more 'civilised' nations of Georgia and Armenia, these latter processes were now proclaimed to be progressive and conducive to the promotion of culture and education in the Caucasus.

Also in 1950, M.D. Bagirov, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, published an article that contained harsh criticism of the 'anti-Marxist concept of the progressive and liberating nature of Shamil's movement'. He proclaimed Shamil to be an agent of Turkish invaders and British colonisers, and a prophet of a militant, fanatical, and clerical teaching of *muridism*. In his opinion, Shamil stood in the way of the progressive move towards merging the Caucasian highlands with Russia.[696] Subsequently, this gave rise to a series of academic works that similarly presented Shamil's movement as anti-Marxist and Shamil himself as an agent of the West's colonialist agenda.[697] Scholars of that period, who had formerly spoken of the progressive role played by Shamil's movement, were now under enormous ideological pressure to revise their earlier opinions.[698]

The narrative emphasising Russia's progressive role in the history of Daghestan persisted throughout the entire Soviet period.[699] Post-Soviet historians, meanwhile, still generally cling to the narrative that describes the absorption of Daghestan by Russia in progressive terms and

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696 D.M. Bagirov, "K voprosu o kharaktere dvizheniia miuridizma i Shamilia," *Bol'shevik* 13 (1950), 21–37.

697 N.A. Smirnov, "Sheikh Mansur i ego turetskie vdokhnoviteli," *Voprosy istorii* 10 (1950), 19–39; A.V. Fadeev, "Miuridizm kak orudie agressivnoi politiki Turtsii i Anglii na Severnom Kavkaze v 19 stoletii," *Voprosy istorii* 9 (1951), 76–96; Sh.V. Tsagareishvili, *Shamil' – stavlennik sultanskoi Turtsii i angliiskikh kolonizatorov* (Tbilisi: Gosizdat Gruzinskoi SSR, 1953).

698 See: A.B. Zaks, "Kak ia zashchishchala dissertatsiiu i pytalas' ee opublikovat'," *Voprosy istorii* 6 (1989), 164–167.

699 For more details about the historiography of the Caucasian resistance against imperial Russia in the 19th century, see: Michael Kemper, *Herrschaft, Recht und Islam in Daghestan. Von den Khanaten und Gemeindebünden zum ğihād-Staat*, 13–22.

affirms the positive role of Russian scholars, linguists, and ethnographers in promoting culture and education in Daghestan.[700] Right down to the present day, the history of Russian rule in the Caucasus is a politically contentious topic, and one where few scholars are willing to step out of line. Against this intellectual background, then, Saidov's own view of the matter is remarkable for how it stands somewhat at odds with the Soviet narrative of the progressive role of imperial scholars in enlightening the peoples of Daghestan.

Saidov's archive contains a fragment of his Russian-language notes about the Caucasian War and Shamil's movement. In this passage, Saidov quotes the following statement from the work of a certain unidentified historian: "The Caucasian War that lasted many years, in which the solidified canons of Islam fought against the colonial policies of tsarist Russia, led to a confrontation between an old feudal world and the nascent bourgeoisie." The unattributed text in question was evidently written by a Soviet scholar, in obedient conformity with Soviet Marxist theory. In response to this statement, and in particular to the scholar's use of the word 'confrontation', Saidov wrote as follows:

> This is a radically imperialist term, purely based on Russian chauvinism. An aggressor, an invader, a flunky to Western European despotism, the Russian bear is pushing into territories, into lands that are far from Russia, and stakes a claim to them. And [the author] is calling this popular resistance a confrontation, which means that [the author] agrees with the Russian imperialist historians. When Uslar[701] came to the Caucasus,

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700 V.G. Gadzhiev, *Rol' Rossii v istorii Dagestana* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965); A.-G.S. Gadzhiev, *Progress kul'tury i dukhovnoi zhizni narodov Dagestana v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vekov* (Makhachkala: Iupiter, 1996); E.M. Dalgat, *Gorod i gorodskaia zhizn' v Dagestane vo vtoroi polovine 19 – nachale 20 veka* (Makhachkala: Mavraev, 2015); G.Sh. Kaimarazov, *Prosveshchenie v dorevoliutsionnom Dagestane* (Makhachkala: Daguchpedgiz, 1989); *Istoriia mnogovekovykh vzaimootnoshenii i edineniia narodov Dagestana s Rossiei. K 150-letiiu okonchatel'nogo vkhozhdeniia Dagestana v sostav Rossii*, ed. by A.I. Osmanov (Makhachkala: IIAE DNTs RAN, 2009).

701 Peter Karlovich Uslar (Peter von Uslar, 1816–75), researcher of Caucasian languages, general of the Russian Army, member of the Caucasian Department of the

> he came not as a scholar or a linguist but as a colonialist, as a conduit for the Russification policies enforced on the outskirts of Russia among the native population.[702]

This fragment composed by Saidov is interesting in several respects. First of all, while Saidov indicates that he agrees with the Soviet description of the colonialist policy pursued by the Russian Empire, he nevertheless rejects the contemporary Soviet narrative of the progressive impact of the absorption of Daghestan by Russia. This is particularly striking given that palaeographical features of the text suggest that Saidov wrote this review in the late 1960s–1970, at a time when Soviet historiography had fully embraced the idea of the Russian Empire playing a progressive role in bringing enlightenment to the Caucasian highlanders. For Saidov, however, the Russian language and the Cyrillic script were not markers of a superior culture. He held a very different view – namely that the diverse world of Muslim literature, which he felt affinity with and engaged with, was in no way inferior to Russian literature. As for the promotion of Russian culture, including Peter Uslar's attempts to use the Cyrillic script for local languages, he saw this solely as an attempt to Russify the Daghestanis, as a bid by the imperial authorities to tear the local peoples away from the rich tradition of the local Arabic-language culture – a move that he wholeheartedly rejected.

In expressing such views, Saidov was echoing the *jadīd* critique of the Russification policy pursued in Daghestan by the imperial civil service. For example, in August and September 1917, the afore-mentioned Daghestani reformist Abū Sufyān Akaev published an article in Kumyk

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Russian Geographical Society. While in imperial service in the Caucasus, Peter Uslar studied a number of vernacular languages, created an alphabet for the Caucasian languages based on the Cyrillic alphabet, and he sought to replace the use of Arabic script in local vernacular languages with Cyrillic script. For further details, see: A.G. Giul'magomedov, G.A. Giul'magomedov, "Trudy P. K. Uslara po dagestanskim iazykam i sovremennaia lingvistika," *Vestnik Dagestanskogo nauchnogo tsentra* 32 (2008), 70–73.

702 *Zapisi i zametki M.-S. Saidova*. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 77.

on linguistic matters in four issues of the Arabic-script *Musāwāt* newspaper. In it, he wrote the following:

> Even three or four months ago, in the times of the Russian state,[703] we were unable to raise the question of our language. Moreover, if the Russians had had such an opportunity, they would have forced us to forget our own language, replacing it with Russian. They did not allow us to teach such important subjects as geography or history in the madrasas, unless it was done in Russian. This was a policy aimed at Russification; they were striving to tear us away from our roots. If any nation forgets its language and replaces its national clothing it will also lose its religion. If you borrow a language and a national dress from someone, you will end up preaching their religion as well… Now, the Russian government[704] has given each nation religious freedom. We can now choose any language we want. If we make a wrong choice, the consequences will be deplorable. When the matter of choosing a language is raised, it is clear that we can never choose Russian. Despite the fact that many scholarly books are written in Russian and it is a rich language, it is neither our own language nor the language of our religion, and even our writing system is different…[705]

Writing in several issues of the Arabic-language newspaper *Jarīda Dāghistān*, Saidov's teacher ʻAlī Kaiaev also poured harsh criticism on the Russification policy pursued by the Russian Empire in Daghestan. In particular, he wrote:

> The imperialist government opened primary and secondary schools in large Daghestani villages. Those who finished such schools got good positions in government institutions. They naturally became backers of Russian culture, for which the authorities, in turn, gave them benefits. They gradually drifted away from their own culture and absorbed Rus-

703 I.e., the Russian Empire before the February Revolution of 1917.
704 I.e., Russian Provisional Government *(Vremennoe Pravitel'stvo)*.
705 Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, "Til masalasy," *Musāwāt* (10 August 1917).

> sian culture. Huge amounts of money were invested in the introduction of Russian culture in this region, and the need for such expenditure was presented as the government's care for the promotion of culture and public education. The tsarist administration was calling on the Daghestanis to attend these schools in order to rise out of ignorance. Many highlanders heeded this call as they genuinely believed this appeal. They did not notice the hidden deadly poison, which strips a man of his national background and culture, behind the honey-drenched words.[706]

In another article, ʿAlī Kaiaev also offered harsh criticism of the above-mentioned Peter Uslar and his efforts to Russify the Daghestani peoples:

> Before the great Russian Revolution, we had been hibernating and saw no dangers in relation to ourselves and our religion. We had been careless when it came to the policy of Russifying us that was pursued by imperial officials… The imperial government saw that the Arabic script that we have used for 1200 years was a link that connects us to our Muslim brothers. They wanted to break those sacred bonds by banning us from using the Arabic script and by replacing it with the Russian alphabet. The imperial authorities told Professor Uslar to come up with a new alphabet, which would be something between the Arabic and the Russian one, so that the Daghestanis could be weaned off the Arabic script, which would sever our close ties to other Muslims. And after we moved away from it, forgetting the Arabic script, the Russian government would introduce the Russian script instead… Uslar's alphabet, which he created for Daghestanis [707] in order to divide our Muslim nations, was nothing

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706 ʿAlī al-Ghumuqī, "Mas'alat al-lugha," *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 27 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 3–4; idem, "Siyāsatāni mukhtalifatāni," *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 23–24 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 3–4; idem, "Islām wa dasā'is al-ḥukūma al-Rūsiyā," *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 29 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 4; For more details about this, see: A.R. Navruzov, *"Dzharidat Dagistan" – araboiazychnaia gazeta kavkazskikh dzhadidov*, 57–67.

707 Uslar developed Cyrillic-based alphabets for several Daghestani languages – including Avar, Lezgian, Dargwa, and others – with the aim of fostering the development of Daghestani national literatures using the Cyrillic script. However, during the imperial period, this project remained unrealised despite Uslar's efforts. It was

> other than one of the many methods of Christianisation and Russification of the Daghestanis.[708]

Saidov, who knew both Abū Sufyān Akaev and ʻAlī Kaiaev personally, was evidently very familiar with this reformist rhetoric, echoing it in his own review as he opposed the established Soviet narrative of the positive role of imperial civil servants in the case of educating the Caucasian Muslims. Thus, in the 1960s, Saidov was still faithfully reproducing the *jadīd* narrative while he rejected the Soviet one.

Another detail in the review that merits attention is Saidov's phrase: "When Uslar came to the Caucasus, he did not come here as a scholar or a linguist but as a colonialist…" This reveals Saidov's clearly binary view of Russian cultural and scholarly activities in the Caucasus, as construed through the prism of 'friend vs foe'. The Russian Empire and Uslar as a conduit of the Russification policy, as an embodiment of Russian culture, represent the 'foe' or 'other' in his understanding. The locative adverb 'here' used by Saidov clearly demonstrates that this 'other', represented by the Christian Russian world embodied by Uslar, is juxtaposed against 'here', the close and familiar world of the Islamic cultural tradition. The other, 'alien' country, represented by Christianity, the Cyrillic script, and the Russian language, clashes with the 'here', the close and familiar works of Arabic Islamic literature.

Even as he presents himself as an opponent of Russian imperialism, however, Saidov nevertheless shows that he himself bears the hegemonic imprint of the Russian imperialist legacy, in his use of the term 'native' (*tuzemnyi*) to refer to Daghestani peoples. This term was widely used in Russian colonial literature, with the late 19th century witnessing the publication of dozens of studies by colonialist historians, ethnographers, and linguists on the culture, everyday life, history, and languages

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only during the Soviet period that the transition to Cyrillic and the systematic development of local vernaculars based on it were effectively implemented.

708 ʻAlī al-Ghumuqī, "Naḥnu wa khuddāmunā wa-l-ḥurūf al-Uslariyyīn," *Jarīdat Dāghistān* 28 (Temīr-khān Shūra, 1917), 4.

of the 'native' Caucasian peoples.[709] Saidov was aware of these studies, and seems unconsciously to have reproduced a term used by the imperial authorities to refer to the indigenous population.

In this brief fragmentary review, we see Saidov simultaneously drawing on elements from a range of different models: the imperialist one, as reflected in his afore-mentioned use of terminology; the Soviet one, as reflected in his criticism of the colonialist policies of the imperial authorities; and, most crucially, the Muslim reformist one, as reflected in his critique of the policy of the Christianisation and Russification of the Daghestanis. Such a layered use of elements belonging to different models was broadly typical for Saidov. Indeed, it is the combination of different models within a single narrative that gives Saidov his own distinctive authorial voice.

For a similar example of such variegated borrowings, it may be useful to consider another review [fig. 23] by Saidov, this time in Arabic. He wrote the review in 1967, in response to two Arabic-language works, both by Catholic priests: *Al-Munjid* by Lūis Ma'lūf (Louis Malouf, 1867–1946)[710] and *Al-Munjid fī l-adāb wa-l-'ulūm* by Ferdīnānd Tautil (Taoutel, 1877–1977).[711]

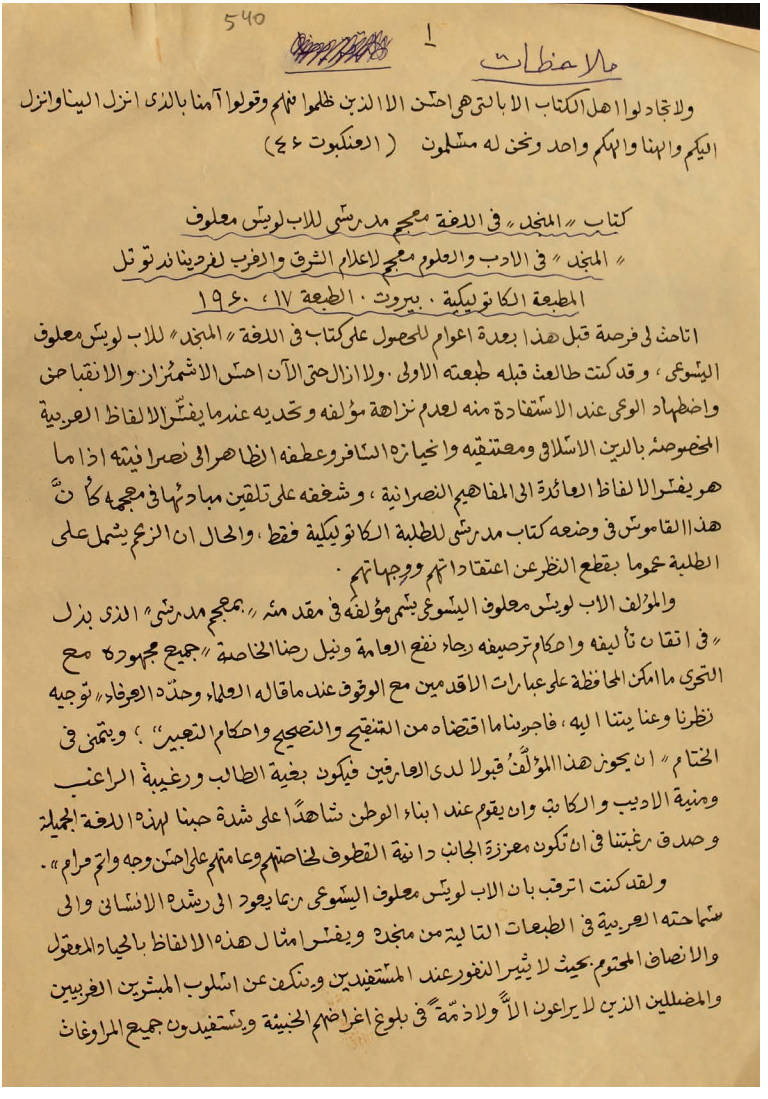
In his critical examination, Muḥammad-Said Saidov presents a forceful critique of Orientalism, conceptualising it not as a neutral scholarly endeavour but as a colonial epistemology deeply embedded in the ideological apparatus of Western hegemony. He situates these works within a wider genealogy of knowledge production that served the theological, cultural, and strategic needs of colonial and missionary enterprises. In Saidov's depiction, Orientalism does not merely describe Islam: rather,

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709 *Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnostei i plemen Kavkaza*. Vypusk 1–39 (Tiflis: Tipografiia Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1881–1908); *Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh*. Vypusk 1–10 (Tiflis: Tipografiia Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1868–1876); *Akty sobrannye Kavkazskoiu Arkheograficheskoiu Komissieiu*, pod redaktsiei A.P. Berzhe. Tom 1–12 (Tiflis: Tipografiia Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1866–1904).

710 Lūis Ma'lūf, *Al-Munjid mu'jam madrasī li-l-lugha al-'arabiyya*. (Beirūt: Maṭba'at al-Kāthūlīkīyya, 1951).

711 Ferdinand Taoutel, *Al-Munjid fī l-lugha wa-l-adāb wa-l-'ulūm* (Beirūt: Maṭba'at al-Kāthūlīkīyya, 1960).


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ملاحظات

ولا تجادلوا اهل الكتاب الا بالتي هي احسن الا الذين ظلموا منهم وقولوا آمنا بالذي انزل الينا وانزل اليكم والهنا والهكم واحد ونحن له مسلمون (العنكبوت ٤٦)

كتاب «المنجد» في اللغة معجم مدرسي للاب لويس معلوف

«المنجد» في الادب والعلوم معجم لاعلام الشرق والغرب لفردينان توتل

المطبعة الكاثوليكية · بيروت · الطبعة ١٧، ١٩٦٠

اتاحت لي فرصة قبل هذا بعدة اعوام للحصول على كتاب في اللغة «المنجد» للاب لويس معلوف اليسوعي، وقد كنت طالعت قبله طبعته الاولى. ولا ازال حتى الآن احس الاشمئزاز والانقباض واضطهاد الوعي عند الاستفادة منه لعدم نزاهة مؤلفه وتحديه عندما يفسّر الالفاظ العربية المخصوصة بالدين الاسلامي ومعتنقيه وانحيازه السافر وعطفه الظاهر الى نصرانيته اذا ما هو يفسّر الالفاظ العائدة الى المفاهيم النصرانية، وشغفه على تلقين مبادئها في معجمه كأنّ هذا القاموس في وضعه كتاب مدرسي للطلبة الكاثوليكية فقط، والحال ان الرجم يشمل على الطلبة محمومًا بقطع النظر عن اعتقاداتهم ووجهاتهم.

والمؤلف الاب لويس معلوف اليسوعي يتمم مؤلفه في مقدمته «بمعجم مدرسي» الذي بذل «في اتقان تأليفه واحكام ترصيفه رجاء نفع العامة ونيل رضا الخاصة «جميع مجهوده مع التحري ما امكن المحافظة على عبارات الاقدمين مع الوقوف عند ما قاله العلماء وحدّده العرفاء» توجيه نظرنا وعنايتنا اليه، فاجرينا ما اقتضاه من التنقيح والتصحيح واحكام التعبير"؛ ويتمنى في الختام «ان يحوز هذا المؤلَّف قبولا لدى العارفين فيكون بغية الطالب ورغيبة الراغب ومنية الاديب والكاتب وان يقوم عند ابناء الوطن شاهدًا على شدة حبنا لهذه اللغة الجميلة وصدق رغبتنا في ان تكون معززة الجانب دانية القطوف لخاصتهم وعامتهم على احسن وجه واتم مرام».

ولقد كنت اترقب بان الاب لويس معلوف اليسوعي ربما يعود الى رشده الانساني والى سماحته العربية في الطبعات التالية من منجده ويفسّر امثال هذه الالفاظ بالحياد المعقول والانصاف المحتوم بحيث لا يثير النفور عند المستفيدين ويتكف عن اسلوب المبشرين الغربيين والمضللين الذين لا يراعون الاّ ولا ذمّة في بلوغ اغراضهم الخبيثة ويستفيدون جميع المراوغات

Figure 23. Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī, *Mulāḥaẓa.* Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, opis' 5, no. 540.

it reconfigures Islamic knowledge from within a framework that privileges Christian dogma, distorts core Islamic concepts, and positions the Muslim as an object of study rather than a subject of thought.

The review opens with a verse from the Qur'ān that urges respectful dialogue with the People of the Book,[712] positioning Saidov's critique within an Islamic ethical register. This rhetorical move is significant: while asserting his Muslim identity, Saidov simultaneously invokes a principle of scholarly fairness and theological restraint. However, he argues that this ethic of fairness has been systematically breached by European orientalists and their Arab-Christian collaborators, who exploit their linguistic and cultural proximity to Islam to lend credibility to profoundly biased, polemical representations.

Saidov's principal argument is that Orientalism, far from being a dispassionate or disinterested science, originated as a confessional project during the Crusades, and continues up to the present day to function as such. He sees it as a theological-political discourse in which missionary objectives and colonial power intersect. Even after its institutionalisation within European universities, he suggests, Orientalism retained its ideological approach. What masquerades as objective philology, lexicography, or historical analysis is, for Saidov, a continuation of earlier modes of domination – now refined, systematised, and disseminated through modern educational channels.

He contends that the texts of the two dictionaries do not simply contain factual errors; more significantly, they are epistemologically structured to marginalise Islamic knowledge and centre Christian perspectives. They function not as neutral academic instruments but as catechetical tools, reinforcing Catholic theological positions while presenting themselves as general reference works. In Saidov's analysis, this dual function is not accidental but intrinsic to the missionary strategy: Arab-Christian authors write in Arabic, adopt scholarly registers familiar to Muslim

712 "Argue not with the People of the Scripture except in the fairest manner, unless it be those of them who are utterly unjust. Say to them: We believe in what has been revealed to us [i.e., the Qur'ān] and what has been revealed to you [i.e., the Bible]. Our God is one and the same as your God; and we are those who submit ourselves to Him". Qur'ān; 29:46.

audiences, and disseminate Christian apologetics – all the while operating beneath a secular, academic veneer.

Saidov offers numerous examples to support his claim. He observes, for instance, how the authors classify the Qur'ān as a book of "Stories", a category that implicitly reduces it to a literary artefact. By contrast, he notes, the Gospels are described as divinely revealed, unproblematic truths, thus reflecting an asymmetrical evaluation of scriptural authority. Similarly, the entry for Islam is stripped of theological nuance and presented in politically flattened terms, while Christianity is depicted with doctrinal depth and reverence. Saidov sees in this disparity a clear attempt to present Christianity as superior, both intellectually and morally, while portraying Islam as a derivative or underdeveloped tradition.

Historiography, too, is subject to what Saidov calls a "deliberate rhetorical strategy." He notes the selective presentation of historical events, particularly regarding the Crusades. Christian victories are celebrated in elaborate language, while Muslim successes – such as the Battle of Alarcos (*ma'rakat al-Arak*)[713] – are entirely omitted. Saidov interprets this not as oversight but as intentional narrative construction, designed to reinforce Christian triumphalism and to diminish the historical agency of Muslims. This pattern of erasure and emphasis, he argues, constitutes a form of narrative violence that serves broader ideological purposes.

Equally significant is Saidov's critique of how theological categories are manipulated. The classification of *jihād* as a "pillar" of Islam is particularly telling. Saidov construes this as part of a broader Orientalist strategy to conflate Islam with violence, an approach that not only misrepresents doctrine but perpetuates a colonial narrative in which the Muslim is always potentially militant, always subject to surveillance and control. Similarly, the portrayal of Salafism as a sect grounded in "harmful innovation (*bid'a*)," acknowledgement of its basis in the *Sunna* and in the example of the righteous ancestors (*salaf al-ṣāliḥīn*), exemplifies a recurrent Orientalist strategy: the pathologisation of Islam-

713 The Battle of 'Alarcos', which took place on 18 July 1195 between the troops of the Castilian king Alfonso VIII and the Muslim troops of the Almohads, in which the Castilian troops were defeated.

ic authenticity under the pretext of objective classification. For Saidov, these distortions are not neutral misreadings but rather calculated interventions that seek to delegitimise Muslim attempts to return to foundational sources of authority.

Despite the fact that many former Western colonies have gained independence, Saidov argues that Orientalism remains a pernicious and dangerous epistemic tool of Western domination, and he notes that "most orientalists have yet to break free of the poison left behind by their predecessors." Consequently, his critique extends to both the historical highpoint of Orientalism, when, in his view, research was subjugated to the interests of Western colonial policies, and the contemporary era, in which orientalists persist in their research from a Eurocentric standpoint. He argues that Muslims should play a prominent role in the study of Islamic cultural heritage, and writes that Arab scholars bear the duty to create educational materials and literature that are "free of Western influence and without their ideas being filled with the poison of hatred towards Islam and Muslims".

He is thus particularly grieved at the role that Arab Christians play in the ongoing Orientalist project, describing these authors as a "fifth column (*ṭābūr khāmis*)" – cultural actors who advance Western ideological interests under the guise of internal critique. Their familiarity with Islamic culture, language, and tradition lends their interventions a dangerous legitimacy. Yet Saidov is not merely concerned with the content of their texts; he sees their authority as structurally embedded in postcolonial systems of knowledge, where former imperial powers continue to shape Arab intellectual production through publishing networks, educational institutions, and translation regimes.

Against this background, Saidov calls for a fundamental reorientation. He appeals to Arab and Muslim scholars – including secular intellectuals – to reclaim epistemic authorship over the study of their own history, religion, and civilisation. The task, as he sees it, is not to mimic Western forms of scholarship, but to produce works grounded in intellectual sincerity, historical fairness, and theological integrity. He insists that Muslims must be at the centre of interpreting Islamic civilisation,

not merely as subjects of inquiry but as authors, theorists, and critics in their own right.[714]

This review is a clear indicator of Saidov's self-representation as a Soviet Muslim whose Muslim identity remains essential to him, even as he works within the Soviet academic realm. This appeal is not isolationist. Saidov draws explicitly on the legacy of reformist thinkers such as al-Afghānī and Rashīd Riḍā, whose work sought to reconcile Islamic thought with the demands of modernity while maintaining theological sovereignty. He also engages – at times implicitly – with Soviet intellectual traditions, particularly in his structural critique of Western knowledge systems. Saidov's work is thus located at the intersection of Islamic reformism, Soviet Marxist critique, and anti-colonial epistemology. He selectively appropriates these frameworks to construct a complex and layered response to Orientalism.

As someone who was well aware of the approaches and concepts relating to the study of Islam in Russia and the history of Russian Orientalism, he realised that Orientalism is essentially of Western origin. Saidov saw the same Western colonialist models in the way 'non-Christians' ('*inorodtsy*') were viewed by Russian imperialist orientalists, including in the missionary school of Oriental studies. That is why he strongly censured the actions of Peter Uslar in the Caucasus, whom he believed to be an instrument of imperial policy in the region.

Saidov's analysis ultimately issues a call for the decolonisation of knowledge – not merely through critique, but through the active reconstruction of intellectual tools, frameworks, and vocabularies. His concern is not with the West per se, but with the epistemic hierarchies that persist in postcolonial academic structures. He urges scholars to remain vigilant against the internalisation of these hierarchies and to develop new forms of scholarship rooted in the ethical and intellectual traditions of their own communities.

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714 Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī, *Mulāḥaẓa*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 540, 1–17. For the English translation of part of this work from Arabic, see the Appendix.

In sum, Saidov's intervention is not reducible to apologetics or cultural defence. It is a historically grounded, theologically informed, and politically astute project of epistemic liberation. His critique of Orientalism is not simply a rejection of its content, but a challenge to its authority to define, categorise, and evaluate Islam. Through careful textual analysis, historical contextualisation, and polemical clarity, Saidov models a form of intellectual resistance that remains deeply relevant to contemporary debates about knowledge, power, and representation.

From our discussion of his various works, we see how Muḥammad-Said Saidov's intellectual legacy is characterised by his extraordinary ability to navigate and reconcile two seemingly incompatible epistemic realms: the classical Islamic scholarly tradition and the Soviet academic paradigm. His oeuvre represents a sustained and deliberate effort to negotiate these frameworks, not by subsuming one into the other, but by integrating them in a way that preserves the core assumptions of each while making them mutually intelligible. Throughout his Arabic and Russian works – from his presentation at the 1960 International Congress of Orientalists to his later biographical and literary compilations – Saidov constructs a scholarly identity grounded in continuity, negotiation, and intellectual hybridity.

Saidov's seminal work, *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya*, composed in Arabic and presented at a forum largely dominated by Soviet and international orientalists, serves as a paradigmatic example of intellectual synthesis. While the text adheres to the conventions of Islamic scholarship in its vocabulary, classification of knowledge, and argumentative structure, it is simultaneously reframed – through editorial intervention and translation – within the discursive and ideological framework of Soviet academia. The original Arabic manuscript evidences a strong adherence to Islamic epistemological categories and literary forms, whereas the edited Russian version reflects the priorities and rhetorical norms of Soviet historiography. The contrast between these two versions underscores Saidov's dual intellectual position: as a Muslim scholar rooted in the Islamic textual tradition and as a Soviet academic navigating the constraints of a state-regulated scholarly environment.

The complexity of Saidov's intellectual project is further deepened in his biographical work on Daghestani scholars, where he presents a chronological continuum that seamlessly connects pre-Soviet Islamic intellectuals with their Soviet contemporaries. Rather than reinforcing the rupture between Islamic and Soviet epochs – a common trope in Soviet historiography – Saidov constructs a genealogical narrative in which Soviet literature emerges as the organic continuation of a centuries-old Arabic literary tradition. In doing so, he challenges the dominant Soviet narrative that portrayed Islamic culture as reactionary and incompatible with modernity, affirming the epistemic legitimacy of Islamic scholarship and asserting its relevance within contemporary academic discourse.

His use of the Islamic genre of *ṭabaqāt* – a biographical tradition structured around scholarly lineage – highlights his methodological alignment with Islamic epistemology. Notably, his selection of subjects, thematic emphases, and criteria for inclusion mirror the conventions of classical Islamic biographical dictionaries: a focus on authorship rather than formal education, the centrality of poetry and prose alongside jurisprudence and theology, and a broad definition of scholarly identity that encompasses both literati and scientists. At the same time, Saidov adapts this form to meet Soviet classificatory expectations, as evidenced by the inclusion of poets, regionalists, and even non-Muslim intellectuals in his biographical corpus. This flexibility reflects a conscious attempt to reconcile the inclusivity of the Islamic tradition with the territorial and ideological constraints of Soviet academic production.

Equally significant is Saidov's engagement with reformist Islamic thought. His writings consistently reflect admiration for figures such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad ʻAbduh, whose ideas he incorporates even into historical or literary projects. The inclusion of their biographies and works in his *Fawā'id al-munajjima*, a multi-genre Arabic compendium, indicates that Saidov viewed Islamic reformism as a legitimate – and indeed necessary – response to both internal stagnation and external colonial threats. By aligning himself with this intellectual lineage rather than with more traditionalist currents, Saidov reveals a further layer of his ideological positioning: one that critiques Sufism,

embraces rational inquiry, and is grounded in a belief in the moral and epistemological reform of Islamic society.

At the same time, Saidov's critical stance toward Orientalism demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the colonial dimensions of knowledge production. In his review of *Al-Munjid*, he challenges the anti-Islamic biases of Christian missionary scholars, situating himself within a broader tradition of Muslim critique of Orientalist discourse. Long before Edward Said's *Orientalism* articulated and theorized this critique, Saidov had already recognised and opposed the instrumentalisation of Islamic texts for colonial purposes. Strikingly, unlike Said, Saidov's critique is not purely external or adversarial; rather, it is intricately woven into the scholarly practices of translation, annotation, and manuscript collection. His rejection of the label "orientalist" is not merely semantic; it signifies a refusal to be co-opted into a framework that he regarded as both epistemically and morally compromised.

Throughout all of this, poetry remains a constant thread in Saidov's work. His reverence for Arabic verse – both classical and contemporary, devotional and satirical – reveals not only his aesthetic sensibilities but also his understanding of poetry as a vehicle for intellectual and emotional expression. In his biographical sketches, anthologies, and personal correspondence, poetry is not merely a marginal pursuit but a central aspect of his scholarly identity. This poetic sensibility informs his broader worldview, where rational inquiry and emotional depth are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing.

Ultimately, Saidov's corpus serves not just as a repository of texts but as a sustained intervention in the politics of knowledge. His works illustrate that the Islamic scholarly tradition in Daghestan was not extinguished by Soviet modernity; rather, it was transformed – selectively and strategically. Situated at the intersection of two epistemes, his scholarship provides a rare example of intellectual continuity amid profound political and ideological rupture. By embracing both Islamic and Soviet forms of legitimacy, Saidov did not dilute either tradition; instead, he enriched both, presenting a model of hybrid scholarship that remains deeply relevant today.

EPILOGUE

When Saidov died in 1985, he left an intellectual legacy that continues to shape Islamic and Orientalist scholarship in Daghestan down to the present day. At the same time, his various writings, both published and unpublished, testify to his unique character – one that reflected an entire range of intellectual models and practices which are often assumed to be mutually irreconcilable. In this book we have explored the rich complexity of Muḥammad-Said Saidov's scholarly subjectivity, which, as we see, combines a variety of ostensibly conflicting stances – that of a Muslim scholar and a secular historian, and of both an Orientalist and a critic of Orientalism. Saidov's multifaceted nature was shaped by the influence of various behavioural models, movements, and schools, ranging from traditional Islamic learning and the ideas of Muslim reformism with focus on rationalism, to Soviet academic scholarship. How, then, can we conceptualise his personality within the cultural landscape that surrounded him? In the following few pages, I want to offer a few conclusions, and to consider how our discussion of Saidov's life and work may be useful for a wider understanding of Daghestani Islamic intellectual and literary tradition of the 20th century.

Saidov's subjectivity

The Islamic cultural and intellectual landscape in Daghestan encompassed a range of behavioural models that each articulated an image of the ideal Muslim. As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, from among these models Saidov aligned himself overwhelmingly with that of the 'reformist subject'. If it were not for the political and social transformations in Daghestan during the Soviet period, it might have been expected that Saidov, like many of his contemporaries who similarly followed this model, would have pursued a path as a *qāḍī*, an *imām* in a mosque, or a teacher in a madrasa. However, the establishment of Soviet rule profoundly altered Saidov's future life trajectory. As a result of Saidov's exposure to and interaction with Soviet institutional and intellectual practices, he increasingly juxtaposed and intertwined the 'reformist subject' model with an ostensibly secular Soviet worldview.

Drawing on this model, Saidov constructed a distinct scholarly persona – one that we find attested both in the contents of his library and in his personal writings. The library that Saidov assembled and interacted with throughout his life reflects his personal conception of what skills and competencies a scholarly persona should possess. As we saw in Chapter 4, Saidov's collection highlights the scholarly persona of a *jadīd* scholar-poet and a Soviet historian.

At the same time, we see how Saidov, like other Daghestani scholars, was profoundly influenced by the abstract image of a scholarly persona, as variously embodied in the figure of a Sufi shaykh, *qāḍī*, or teacher. For Saidov, the image of a *jadīd* scholar-poet equipped with rational knowledge found its ideal embodiment in the persona of Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī, a scholarly persona that Saidov aspired to emulate and and be identified with. The representation of al-Harakānī's persona played a significant role throughout Saidov's life, both during al-Harakānī's lifetime, as evident from their correspondence, and after his death in 1927. Saidov frequently recalls him in his reminiscences, echoing al-Harakānī's style and range of interests in his most significant works from the 1950s until shortly before his own death in the early 1980s. This demonstrates the enduring significance of al-Harakānī as a point of reference for Saidov's construction of his own scholarly persona.

Having constructed an imagined persona of al-Harakānī that he aspired to emulate, Saidov did not, however, consistently conform to this image. Unlike al-Harakānī, Saidov was profoundly shaped also by Soviet intellectual models, resulting in a fluid evolution of Saidov's self throughout his life. Upon completing his education, Saidov initially adopted the persona of a Muslim scholar, much like many of his classmates. Over time, however, Soviet socialist ideas concerning the eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of national autonomy in Daghestan increasingly chimed with Saidov, as they echoed many of the *jadīd* narratives with which he was already familiar. This point of common interest facilitated his involvement in the Soviet cultural programme undertaken during the early years of the USSR: he contributed to the eradication of illiteracy, developed a new Cyrillic alphabet, and published literature in the Avar language. Subsequently, Since 1950s, the phase in the evolu-

tion of his subjectivity is linked to his academic career. Saidov devoted himself exclusively to academic pursuits.

Over time, we observe a complex shift of various facets of his subjectivity that dynamically evolve and transform. In each specific case we see a complex interweaving of his self, which dynamically develops, not rejecting the previous form of his self, but rather enriching, complementing, and reformulating it. His creative output illustrates that, at times, his Islamic self predominates, while at other times, his Soviet academic self takes the forefront, while in yet other instances a hybrid balance is evident. Saidov masterfully navigated these seemingly opposite traditions, by integrating his rich Islamic intellectual background into the Soviet academic tradition. Even as a prominent Soviet scholar, he continued to retain his Islamic identity, as can be seen in the texts that we explored in Chapter 7. In balancing and negotiating these traditions, he thus immeasurably enriched the contemporary Islamic intellectual landscape with the academic research of his time.

Although he worked with a wide range of genres and areas, such as linguistics, literary criticism, history, and biography, Saidov had a particular fondness for Arabic poetry. He began to study the subject in his youth, and he continued to pay close attention to it for the rest of his life. For him, Arabic verse was not just a professional scholarly interest but also an object of aesthetic and emotional importance. During difficult moments of his life such as the loss of loved ones, relatives and friends, as well as in moments of nostalgia for times gone by, he repeatedly turned to the consolation of poetry.

His family occupied an important place in his life. Only in the circle of his family was Saidov willing or able to display his emotions. He had particularly warm feelings for his wife Ḥabiyat. He cared for her lovingly throughout his life and often put her wishes first, even at the expense of his career. The passing of his wife affected him deeply and, according to his daughter Rabiyat, Saidov found solace in books after her death. "Perhaps it was his way of drowning out the pain that tormented him after the loss of my mother," Rabiyat recalled.[715]

[715] Interview with Rabiyat Saidova (Makhachkala, November 3, 2019).

The Distorting *Jadīd* Lens

This book is not only about Saidov's subjectivity, but is also about the study of the intellectual history of pre-Soviet Daghestan, the approaches to which were developed in the early Soviet period by the *jadīd*s, including Saidov himself. As we have seen, the first historians at the academic institute of Daghestan were the *jadīd*s. These individuals contributed to the collection of Islamic sources and to the establishment of a collection of Islamic literature at the Institute of History in Makhachkala. While acknowledging the unavoidable presence of the *jadīd*s,[716] I permit myself a critical examination of the legacy they imparted to Daghestan, particularly within the realm of the study of Islamic intellectual history.

When delineating the various behavioural models, one can point out that the *jadīd*s, representing the models of 'reformist subject', held an insignificant position within the Muslim society of Daghestan and were considered marginal by Daghestani scholars.[717] According to 'Alī Kaiaev's memoirs, prior to the establishment of Soviet rule, the *jadīd*s, along with the socialists, had no noticeable influence in society. Furthermore, Daghestanis harbored deep suspicions towards those individuals who received education in Russian schools and spoke Russian.[718] Things changed, however, with the establishment of Soviet power in Daghestan – a process in which both socialists and *jadīd*s were closely involved. As we have seen, the *jadīd*s later actively participated in Soviet cultur-

716 I share the views of some researchers regarding the excessive focus on the study of *Jadidism* without an adequate critical approach to assessing its legacy. For more details about the critique of the Jadidocentric approach, see: Jeff Eden, Paolo Sartori, Devin DeWeese, "Moving Beyond Modernism: Rethinking Cultural Change in Muslim Eurasia (19th-20th Centuries)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59 (2016), 1–36; Devin DeWeese, "It Was a Dark and Stagnant Night ('Til the Jadids Brought the Lights): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of Central Asia," Ibid., 37–92.

717 Saidov's teacher himself, 'Alī Kaiaev, stated that Daghestani scholars treated him with great suspicion as a Muslim reformer who had close contacts with Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, so that in one of the *fatwā*s he was forced to hide his name, signing the name of his friend with his permission. 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Tadhkira*, fol. 4b.

718 Ibid., fols. 1b–2a.

al and scholarly initiatives, as exemplified by Saidov and his associates. In this regard, Adeeb Khalid's assertions that the *jadīds* played a crucial role in the socialists' cultural program, advocating for the nationalisation and Sovietisation of Muslims (*korenizatsiia*), are indeed accurate.[719]

As we have seen over the course of this book, the *jadīd*s clearly had a substantial impact on the development of education and historical studies in Soviet Daghestan. The conceptual framework surrounding the study of the intellectual history of pre-Soviet Daghestan, which was cultivated and solidified during the Soviet era and persists to this day, was predominantly shaped by the *jadīd*s, including Kaiaev and Saidov himself.[720] At the same time, however, the integration of the *jadīd*s into academic institutions resulted in a highly distorted portrayal of Daghestani intellectual history solely through the lens of the *jadīd* narrative.

The jadīdocentric approach to study Islam in Daghestan, emphasising rationalism, *ijtihād*, 'freedom of thought,' 'modernity,' and the critique of Sufism, effectively overlooked the centuries-old Daghestani literary tradition that predated the *jadīd* movement. In particular, the substantial cultural layer represented by the Persianate tradition in Daghestan was largely disregarded by the *jadīds*, who championed the dominance of the Arabic literary tradition. They had little interest in Persian literature, the development of specific genres such as logic, which spread to Daghestan through the Persianate world, or the influence of Persian on the vernacular languages of Daghestan.

A stark illustration of such neglect is the notable scarcity of Persian manuscripts in state repositories compared to their significant numbers in private collections. The *jadīds* who expanded the Institute's collection consciously overlooked Persian literature, favoring Arabic manuscripts. The small number of Persian manuscripts now held in the Institute's collection arrived primarily as part of larger collections acquired by the Institute. At the same time, neither Saidov nor the other *jadīds* paid them

719 Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 390–395.

720 Michael Kemper, "*Ijtihad* into philosophy: Islam as cultural heritage in post-Stalinist Daghestan," 390–404.

any attention, even though they had a command of Persian. Another instance vividly illustrates the *jadīds*' lukewarm attitude towards the Persian tradition. When meticulously studying the work *Rayḥān al-ḥaqā'iq* by al-Darbandī, Saidov completely disregarded the Persian texts found on the flyleaf and margins of the manuscript. This omission effectively isolated this source from the context of Persianate cultural influences on the compilation of the manuscript and even on its copying, as discussed in Chapter 2. Such bias can be discerned in Saidov's writings, encompassing both published and unpublished works. Saidov provided extensive coverage of individuals who, in subscribing to *jadīd* ideals, embodied the 'reformist' subject model that, in his opinion, represented 'true Islam.' Conversely, however, he either mentioned Sufis merely in passing or ignored them altogether, as seen in his conference paper *Al-adāb al-Dāghistāniyya bi-l-'arabiyya*.

As we draw our study of Saidov's life and work to a close, therefore, we should bear in mind that there exists an extensive alternative cultural and literary tradition predating Jadidism, which was only partially recognised by the *jadīd*s themselves, and only dimly glimpsed in Saidov's otherwise capacious oeuvre. For all his intellectual agility and vigour, Saidov remained constrained within the conceptual frameworks of both the *jadīd* and the Soviet analytical language with an emphasis on rationalism, and ignored another equally important layer of literature, for example on Sufism and occult practices, which neither Soviet orientalists nor *jadīds* considered science. There were limits to Saidov's intellectual personhood.

The Scale of Saidov's Achievement

Despite the clear limitations of Saidov's jadīdocentric approach, it is nevertheless worth highlighting his outstanding contributions and remarkable stature.

Saidov mustered the courage to criticise Oriental studies as a colonial science. In doing so, his critique extended beyond just Western orientalism and colonialism. He consistently opposed Russian colonialism

as well, viewing Russian officers-scholars in the Caucasus as agents of colonial policy. In this regard, he diverged from the prevailing stance of the majority of Soviet scholars, who ascribed a progressive role to Russian scholars in the cultural and civilising mission in Russia's Muslim peripheries.

Sharing the ideas of Islamic reformism and being acquainted with the anti-colonial rhetoric of Egyptian reformers, Muḥammad-Said Saidov was evidently also familiar with the Soviet critique of Western colonialism. However, his archive demonstrates that he did not precisely adhere to the Soviet position when it came to the critique of colonialism. In his review of the *Munjid* by the Catholic priests, we bear a more pronounced critique of Orientalism, which was characteristic of the Muslim tradition, rather than Soviet criticism of Western colonialism. This was Saidov's anti-colonial challenge, directed against both Western and Russian colonialism.

While he criticised Orientalism as a colonial science, he also challenged Soviet orientalists. The predominant trend among these latter was to focus on the classical Islamic legacy. Orientalists tended to select research subjects in alignment with their preconceived notions of 'the East' or the 'classical literature of the Orient' (*klassicheskaia literatura Vostoka*). In the eyes of scholars from Moscow or Leningrad, Daghestan – unlike the Near East, Turkey, or Iran – was not 'the Orient'. They had little interest in the Daghestani Islamic literary tradition, which they perceived as confined, provincial, and lacking in originality. Faced with the generally disdainful attitude towards Daghestani Islamic literature from most Soviet orientalists, Saidov offered an alternative vision, single-handedly challenging the predominant trend in Soviet Oriental studies. In opting not to focus on the study of classical works by Muslim authors – of which he incidentally had in-depth knowledge – he instead effectively created the foundations for the study of Daghestani Islamic literature.

This was a resolute move on Saidov's part, and one to which he adhered without compromise for the duration of his career. Even when writing his very last research paper, he ignored the Institute's politically-mandated demands and requirements. Instead of a work *The Development of Natural Scientific Thought in Soviet Daghestan: Historical*

and Philosophical Issue in Russian, assigned to him by the management of the Institute, he compiled an Arabic collection of poems by the afore-mentioned Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd al-Harakānī,[721] analogous to the work *Dīwān al-Mamnūn* by Muslim scholar Ḥasan al-Alkadārī. In his opinion, Arabic-language Islamic poetry deserved more attention than programmatic narratives of Soviet cultural enlightenment. Such was Saidov's status and reputation that no one at the Institute dared to point out to him such a gross deviation from the requirements.

As we have seen, Saidov felt equally confident both in the Soviet academic esteblishment, where prominent professors and academics respected his authoritative opinions, and in the Islamic scholarly community, where he mastered the language of Islamic discourse and was recognised as one of the most eminent Muslim scholars of his time.[722] Local Muslim scholars frequently disagreed with Saidov's reformist ideas and took issue with him on various matters related to Islamic law, Sufism, or dogmatics.[723] But none of these Muslim scholars felt able to disregard Saidov as some mere scholar orientalist lacking proficiency in the Islamic sciences. Saidov's authority held the same degree of esteem both within the academic community and among Muslim scholars.

Saidov was a part of the community and culture that he studied. Despite incorporating certain epistemological models influenced by the

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721 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Razvitie estestvenno-nauchnoi mysli v Sovetskom Dagestane: problemy istorii i filosofii (1917–1950), 1984, 480 pages*. Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *fond* 29*, opis'* 1, no. 37.

722 Muḥammad-Rasūl al-Sahādī (Gamzatov), one of the prominent contemporary Muslim scholars from Daghestan specialising in Arabic poetry, had recounted to me that, in the mid-1970s, he studied the theory of versification under Saidov for several years. He would visit the Institute where Saidov worked, and they would go to the repository where the manuscripts were stored, where he received lessons from Saidov. During their sessions, Saidov frequently retrieved manuscript poetic collections from the shelves, which served as educational materials. The two scholars maintained a close friendship, exchanging letters and poems and visiting each other until Saidov's death. In both Saidov's archive and Muḥammad-Rasūl al-Sahādī's possession, I found correspondence between these two scholars. Interview with Muḥammad-Rasūl al-Sahādī (1941–2023) (Mutsalaul, Daghestan, August 4, 2015).

723 Interview with Murtazali Yakubov (Chirkei, Daghestan, February 3, 2012)

European academic tradition – most particularly, a Soviet-inflected version of this latter – he applied these approaches to a field of study that this tradition had hitherto generally overlooked. When incorporating the achievements of the Orientalist academic tradition, Saidov seamlessly integrated them with his own conception of Daghestani manuscripts as a rich intellectual domain in its own right. Through his works, Saidov convincingly demonstrated that in its richness of repertoire, diversity of genre, and depth of subject matter the Daghestani Arabic literary tradition easily held its own alongside the more widely vaunted Near Eastern tradition. He firmly believed that local Daghestani literature was an integral part of the broader Islamicate written culture. Simultaneously, Saidov recognised the unique nature of the local intellectual tradition, acknowledging its autonomy and relevance within the broader context of Islamic cultural trends.

When building a collection of Islamic literature at the Institute of History, Saidov was conceptually guided by examples from the *waqf* libraries of mosques, with which he had been well acquainted since his youth. In his view, manuscripts were valuable not merely as physical objects but as a rich and independent intellectual space where he found a source of knowledge and inspiration. Saidov tried to ensure that access to the Institute's collection was not limited to only a narrow circle of professional orientalists. On the contrary, he made every effort to ensure that this collection functioned as an open and welcoming *waqf* library, and during his lifetime it served precisely this function: Muslim scholars came to the institute and interacted with this collection.[724] It was in the hope that the collection would remain accessible to all that Saidov bequeathed the transfer of his collection and archive to the Institute. Unfortunately, this was not to be: shortly after his death, access to the Institute's collection was restricted exclusively to the academic community.

Saidov's unshakeable authority as an expert on Islamic literary culture laid the ground for a field of study that was later developed by his followers. For instance, after Saidov's death, manuscript study was continued

[724] Interview with Muḥammad-Rasūl al-Sahādī, (Mutsalaul, Daghestan, August 4, 2015); Interview with Amri Shikhsaidov, (Makhachkala, 19 February 2019).

by Amri Shikhsaidov. He graduated from the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University. It was expected that, like his classmates, prominent Soviet orientalists Lev E. Kubbel (1929–88), Avraam G. Lundin (1929–94), Oleg G. Bolshakov (1929–2020), and Anas B. Khalidov (1929–2001), he would pursue a career as an orientalist and engage in the study of the 'classical literature of the Orient.' However, Shikhsaidov took a different path. He chose to focus exclusively on the exploration of the Daghestani literary tradition and, following Saidov's footsteps, he too confined himself to the study of local manuscripts, dedicating some seventy years of his life to this field – a worthy tribute to the example of his master.

It is often assumed that being Muslim and being Soviet were mutually irreconcilable. The remarkable life of Muḥammad-Said Saidov demonstrates that this was not the case.

APPENDIX

Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī [Saidov], *Ba‘ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash‘ār [Some Poems and Verses],* (in Arabic), 1965. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov’s collection, *opis’* 5, no. 73.

[Fol. 1a.] Some Versified Compositions and Poems, authored by Muḥammad Sayyid al-Awārī al-Kinichuqī. The author acknowledges the limitations of his expertise in this field; nonetheless, he has recorded in this notebook what his inspiration has produced, as a reminder to himself and to those who come after him.

[Fol. 2a.] I received a letter from Abū Muḥammad Mas‘ūd al-Muhūkhī al-Awārī, in which he asked for my opinion concerning Sufism and Sufis in Daghestan. Earlier in his career, he had criticised Sufis and Sufism and spoken out against them. However, he later came to see them as a good thing and lowered his gaze before their gaze. Then I believed it necessary to express my opinion concerning Sufism in order to explain to him [what Sufism is], and I have written these verses:

I complain to God about Sufism,
Which is bringing disarray to Islam in our lands.
[Sufis] are saying that this is instruction.
But they have no knowledge of it, apart from what they themselves say and write.
They are the most ignorant on Earth,
They act like shaykhs, the Sufis, believing themselves to be the Pole [of saints] (*quṭb*[725]).
From the depths of their ignorance
They do not see what guidance means!
And they commit sin with their unclear teaching.
Straying from the right path is their quality,
And deception is their essence!
Ignorance, absurd, and lies are their nature!

[725] “*Quṭb*”, pl. “*aqṭāb*” is one of the four representatives of the Sufi hierarchy of third-level saints.

The true religion is constantly crumbling,
And there comes Sufism,
But, impudent, it is insistent!
Its adepts are spreading lies among human.
And while we are stricken by sorrow,
They are saying that [their shaykh] is *ghawth*,[726]
And there is no-one but him [to lift the sorrow],
The shaykhs who have strayed from the true path,
They have taken up rebellion,[727]
But they are only interested in silver and gold!
So many times they have called with a lying call,
That high mountains nearly shook!
How many harmful innovations have they created,
How many people have they separated, dispersing them everywhere!
How many people have they led astray from the true path!
They associate with Satan, who supports them in their error![728]
They believe that their shaykh is near, when evil comes their way.
[Fol. 2b] They put on the clothes of poverty,
[Saying] that they shun rulers,
[Although in fact] they are friendly with them.
All the vices of men are in them!
And most of their gains are forbidden.
Mas'ūd! I have no other opinion,
Other than to consider them unbelievers (*kāfir*),
This is evident on the basis of clear texts which are beyond doubt[729].
Come, rise in rejection of heresy,

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726 "*Ghawth*", or "*Quṭb al-ghawth*" is a representative of the highest level in the Sufi hierarchy.

727 Here, the author has used the term 'rebellious' (*mārid*), with reference to the Qur'ān: '*And as protection against every rebellious Satan*' (Qur'ān 37:7), by comparing shaykhs to Satan.

728 Reference to the Qur'ān: '*Verily, those who are pious, when an evil thought comes to them from Satan, they remember (the God), and (indeed) they then see (aright). But (as for) their brothers (i.e., the devils) they plunge them deeper into error, and they never stop short*.' Qur'ān 7:201–202.

729 I.e., the Qur'ān and Sunna.

Which has been imposed upon us;
Let not vain hopes deceive us.
Let all mankind and *jinn* bear witness today:
They are indeed the worst of those who introduced [harmful] innovations
Into the religion or deviated from it.
They have ascribed partners to God – a faction
Most vile in their beliefs and in the crimes they have committed.
Their heresies have disfigured the face of the Book of God,
Until it cried out in complaint – so who among us shall rise to defend it?
When shall I behold the swords of India at work,
Striking at their throats, while wrath blazes forth?
When shall I see this dusty earth cleansed
Of all they have invented or brought into the religion?
When shall I see every renegade shaykh, accursed,
Laid upon the bier of humiliation, his dignity plundered?
When shall I see these so-called guides,
Destroyed for their extremism and lies?
When shall I see the Muslim world once more
Drinking from the springs of knowledge, with forgetfulness swept away?
When shall I see the face of Islam radiant again,
Its brilliance long tarnished by their idolatrous stains?
O my soul! Be patient – for verily, the time of *shirk*'s demise draws near;
Its days are numbered, and its followers are in retreat.
It is upon you to denounce the people of misguidance,
To sacrifice your soul for the rise of Islam, and to persevere.
This is the call to sound judgment and the straight truth.
So, O Mas'ūd, let them speak all the blame they wish.
1965

[Fol. 3a]
Pass the cup of crimson blood, for I

Have grown accustomed to the abodes of peril and death.
Let the fine Indian blade be my companion – and let comfort leave me –
For I march toward virtue and noble souls.
Leave me to hardships, for my concern
Lies far beyond the delights of supple forms.
And do not think to reproach me – for I
Find honour in the bowl of glory, a target for all blame.
I ride a noble steed, lean and swift,
That soars forward with the very winds of imagination.
I plunge through the dark, oppressive night,
Riding atop waves of resolve and the ridge of purpose.
I press on through daunting tasks, straight and unwavering,
With a firmness that distractions cannot unbind.
I have grown weary of lingering among vile, lowly cowards –
Faithless and devoid of peace.
Never shall I place my trust
In anything that might tarnish my dignity or stain my pride.
And if oppression should ever descend upon my homeland,
I shall resist it with resolve – and in fierce collision.
1965

[Fol. 3a.] Reminiscences (*Tadhkira*)

In 1925, I became a teacher in the village of Gimry, where I taught the Turkic language. Four of my pupils were learning Arabic with me. To one of them, Muḥammad, son of Abū-l-Qāsim, I read the *Jawāmi'*.[730] And to three, 'Abdullāh, Muḥammad, and Ghaziyal Muḥammad, [I read] *Sharḥ al-Minhāj* by al-Maḥallī.[731] All of them were from Gimry.

730 *Al-Badr al-ṭāli' fī sharḥ jam' al-jawāmi'*: a treatise on the theory of Islamic law by Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Maḥallī (1389–1459).

731 *Kanz al-rāghibīn sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*: a treatise on Islamic law by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī.

From the head of the Avar district, I received an invitation to take part in a congress that was to convene in the village of Kakhib.[732] This congress was initiated by the [Communist] party in order to solve the problem caused by the highland insurgency led by Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī. After this revolt failed, the Soviet authorities organised this conference. The well-known shaykh Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Ḥilmī al-Qaḥī from the village of Kakhib spoke out categorically against the *imām* [Najm al-Dīn], who was actively agitating people against the Soviet power. [Shaykh Ḥasan], in his speech, assured the delegates that this failed movement had harmful consequences, and that this movement had caused devastation, destruction, and deaths of hundreds of righteous believers in the mountains of Daghestan. After him, Nūr al-Islām al-Humchuqatī (from Unchukatl') took the floor and confirmed everything that Ḥasan al-Ḥilmī had said. The delegates decreed that this revolt was against the teaching of Islam. They cursed Najm al-Dīn's uprising, and [deeds] everyone who had followed [Najm al-Dīn], as actions that ran against Islam. The conference concluded in the dead of night. With me at this conference were the following scholars: Muḥammad b. ʻAlī al-Irhānī (from Irganai), ʻAbd al-Khāliq al-ʻAshilṭī (from Ashilta), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Harakānī,[733] Masʻūd al-Muhūkhī, and others. We were put up generously for the night by the successor (*ma'dhūn*) of Shaykh Ḥasan al-Ḥilmī al-Qaḥi, Ḥabībullāh al-Qaḥi,[734] who had a long beard. He settled us in a specially prepared room and fed us *khinkal*.[735] He questioned me about my life and told me that my grandfather[736] had once studied in the madrasa of the village of Kafyr-Kumukh.[737] This room was intended for 10

732 The congress in Kakhib village took place on 20 November 1923. According to the text, Saidov did not write down these reminiscences in chronological order.

733 See Chapter 2 for more on this figure.

734 Ḥabībullāh al-Qaḥī (from Kakhib, 1844–1924), a Naqshbandi shaykh, presided at this congress.

735 *Khinkal* is pieces of dough cooked in meat broth, served with boiled meat in the broth, and garnished with garlic sauce. It is important not to confuse *khinkal* with the Georgian '*khinkali*,' which is an entirely different type of dish in terms of appearance and ingredients

736 i.e., Maḥadada, the above-mentioned Saidov's grandfather.

737 Now the Kumyk village of the same name in the Buinaksk district of Daghestan.

people. In the internal wall of the house, I saw a small niche filled with medicines. These were probably remedies for various diseases. Our host was healing his pupils (*murīd*).

[Fol. 3b.] He provided medical help, following the example of his shaykh, Sayfullāh Bashlarov an-Nitsubkrī al-Ghumuqī. When I saw the flagons in the niche of the wall, I could not keep myself from composing the following verses:

There is nothing but empty flagons,
And nothing but a path away from knowledge.
God gave Satan a place to be,
Where his children and slaves dwell.
Falsehood is one of his qualities,
Injustice is his being,
Ignorance and greed are his religion.
An ignoramus thinks he is doing good,
That he is a vessel of fear of God,
And the sea of emanating divine light (*fayḍ*),
But after they are tested, their opinion changes,
And their hopes and false aspirations do not come true.
Not everyone who wears a turban and a fez is a shaykh,
The winds are not blowing the way we would desire.
Verily I say: they have deviated
From divine light (*fayḍ*)
And from the righteous way.
Not everyone who seeks a shaykh will earn respect,
Not everyone who has a lip is a camel.[738]
Everyone who wishes for a good name shall have it.
Set [aside] Sufism, protect yourself from it,
Or indeed you shall become timid and weak!

[Fol. 4a.] Reminiscences s (*Tadhkira*)

738 This must be a poetic trope in Arabic poetry.

In 1919, as I intended to continue my studies, I travelled to several villages in the Gunib district. Autumn was approaching, and I did not tell any of my relatives about my intentions. I had several Arabic books in my sack, and I went on foot. I stayed[739] at the village of Khotoch. In the square, next to the mosque, I came across the village *qāḍī* by chance. He was smoking tobacco and coughing. I hope that God delivers him from the abuse of tobacco. I disclosed my intentions and the purpose of my journey to him. He replied that he was unable to help me or teach me because he was serving as a *qāḍī* by necessity and he did not have the necessary knowledge to do as I requested.[740] He suggested that I should rest and spend the night at the mosque and travel the following day to the next village, where I might be able to find a scholar more knowledgeable in Arabic. The following day, I walked on towards the village of Chokh, which once was well known. Along the way, I was accompanied by an elegant and very handsome rider. He greeted me and we fell into conversation, so I told him about my intentions and he asked me about my level of education. He continued to question me and finally said that my journey to the *qāḍī* of Chokh would be wasted because he served as *qāḍī* by necessity and did not possess a profound knowledge of Arabic subjects. Eventually, I arrived in the settlement of Chokh, which is a major market centre with a great number of houses, herds of bullocks, flocks of sheep, and also a station for officers and civil servants who served the Russians. The [people of Chokh] waged wars of faith in regions of Avaristan for several centuries.

[Fol. 4b.] The feeble one who is writing [these lines] knew very well that the *qāḍī* of this settlement was Riḍwān, son of Muḥammad from the village of Shuginub.[741] But I was not fortunate enough to meet him. The following day, I journeyed to the village of Megeb, and thence to the

739 Literally: 'Took the skin off his female camel.' Saidov is clearly using a poetic turn of phrase here: in this case, a metaphor widely used in Arabic poetry.

740 It is clear that Saidov, who had studied for more than eight years previously and had completed certain stages in his education, decided to carry on with his education. The *qāḍī* he mentions probably did not have a sufficient level of education above the expertise possessed by Saidov.

741 A village in the Charodinskii district of Daghestan that no longer exists.

Kazikumukh village of Varay.[742] In the morning of the following day, a Sunday, I arrived in the settlement of Kazikumukh.[743] My friend, a shoemaker from the village of Varay, who accompanied me on my journey to the capital of the Kazikumukh district, showed me a cemetery on a hillside. Next to that cemetery, the *qāḍī* of the settlement, a prominent scholar, ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Kayaev, was working in his office. Every Sunday, he certified in his ledger all the trade deals that were done on that day in Kumukh.[744] His office was a small and simple room located next to the *ziyāra* of the Kumukh scholar ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, author of the Arabic work entitled *al-Mukhtaṣar*. In the front part of his office, I found a very comfortable place and began to wait for the teacher (*al-ustādh*),[745] who was like a morning star on the horizon, for he was a Daghestani who had graduated [from a university] in the lands of Egypt. He was a pearl placed at an unreachable height! Then, after two hours, a simple man of average height, modestly dressed, came in and sat down in his study. With him came two people who spoke a language that I did not understand. After a while, two more people came, and then more people who wanted to have their trade deals certified by this *qāḍī* and to obtain the required documents from him. After them, a great number of other visitors came to the office, and all this continued until the lunchtime prayer.

[Fol. 5a.] Then, when it was time for the lunchtime prayer, this scholar raised his head and noticed me sitting far from him, 10 metres away. He asked me in the Lak language who I was and why I had come to this

742 A village in the Lak district of Daghestan that no longer exists.

743 Gāzīghumūq (Gazikumukh, Kazikumukh, Kumukh, Ghumuq): the name of a political territory (Gāzīghumūq Shamkhalate, Khanate). At the time described by Saidov, Kumukh was a large settlement and centre of the Kazikumukh district (now, centre of the Lak district (*Lakskii raion*) of Daghestan).

744 On Sundays, there was usually a large market in Kumukh to which people from neighbouring regions brought their wares. According to the rules, many major deals were notarised by the *qāḍī* and recorded by him in his ledgers. Similar records of notarial deeds certified by ʿAlī Kaiaev, who is mentioned in the text, are kept in the private archive of his grandson Ilias Kaiaev. *Daftar al-maḥkama al-sharʿiyya li qariat al-Ghumuqī*. Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, nos. 5, 24.

745 I.e., ʿAlī al-Ghumuqī (Kaiaev).

place. I do not know the Lak language very well, but I responded to him in Lak: "I do not speak Lak" (*maz dakhkharu*). [ʿAlī Kaiaev] smiled, may God have mercy on him, and spoke to me in Avar; he stretched out his hand and I came to him. I began telling him about the purpose of my visit to that region and the reason for my journey. Our conversation lasted for about two hours. According to the tales of scholars in his region, he knew Avar scholars (*ʿulama' Awāristān*) very well, including my grandfather [Maḥadada] who had once taught the scholars ʿAbdullāh al-Kāʿī [from the village of Kaia[746]] and Muḥammad, son of Shaykh [Zaid] al-Kurklī [from the village of Kurkli[747]], as well as other compatriots of ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī. The above scholar [ʿAlī Kaiaev] said that his region had no funds to support students (*nafaqa*). And if I was able to rent a dwelling in Kumukh and pay the rent and study sciences with him, he would be happy. If not, there was no other opportunity. But in the village of Ḥūrī, which is not far from Kumukh, the mosque allocated some funds for the maintenance of students, as is customary in the villages of Awāristān. The *qāḍī* of that village was the Awār scholar Rāfiʿ b. Ismāʿīl al-Shamghudī.[748] I was able to reach out to him and ask for his help in the matter. On his behalf, Kaiaev was prepared to write a letter to that scholar. He wrote the letter and handed it to me, and I went to the place called Ḥūrī. The above-mentioned Rāfiʿ, may God have mercy on him, accepted graciously the contents of the letter. He granted me a place at the mosque, and the following morning, on Monday, under the tutelage of ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, I began to study a book by the Egyptian scholar [Muḥammad] Farīd al-Wajdī, *Kanz al-ʿulūm wa-l-lugha*. Praise be to God, the One!

I studied under the scholar Alī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī for one year. I went to see him every morning, and, in the evening, I went back to my dwelling at the mosque of Ḥūrī.

[Fol. 5b.] My life [in Ḥūrī] was rather good. The scholar, *qāḍī*, of that village [Rāfiʿ al-Shamghudī] combined his main duties with a heal-

746 Now a village of the same name in the Kulinskii district of Daghestan.
747 Now a village of the same name in the Lak district of Daghestan.
748 I have mentioned this individual and his library in Chapter 3.

er's profession. He was also quite skilled in Arabic literature. He told me that he had begun to compile a treatise on syntax consisting of excerpts from the work *Khizānat al-adāb wa lubb lubāb lisān al-ʿarab* by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Baghdādī.

Then, a year after I came to the village of Ḥūrī, I decided to go back home. But there was no post transport, because the events of this period were grim.[749] There was no way of getting to the villages of Awāristān, and the road between the villages of Maʿali and Gotsatl, which connects Khunzakh with the Gunib district, along which I could have returned home, was closed because of the insurgency.[750] For that reason, I was forced to stay in the village of Maʿali with a learned *qāḍī al-ḥājj*, Rajab al-Khunzākhī, for several months, waiting until the roads to my village opened. My father died, may God have mercy upon him,[751] and this shock brought a great grief to our family. For that reason, I had to stay home for a whole year and was engaged in agricultural work.

In 1919, Muḥammad ʿUmarī sent me a collection of poetry (*Dīwān*) by Fu'ād al-Khaṭīb,[752] so that I would be impressed by the author's description of the grievous tragedy related to the death of his father. I was so moved by the poetry collection that I asked for it to be copied for me.[753] I made this poetry collection available to those of my friends who loved the Arabic language. How true are the words of al-Khaṭīb:

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749 Saidov refers to the events related to the suppression of the revolt of Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī and his associate Kaitmaz Alikhanov from Khunzakh.

750 Saidov meant here al-Ḥūtsī's uprising.

751 Saidov here uses the Qur'ānic phrase *"qaḍā naḥbahu",* which means "fulfilled their destiny", i.e., died. In some Arabic dictionaries, this phrase is explained as 'became a martyr (*shahīd*)' or 'was killed in the way of God'. Obviously, here Saidov says that his father became a martyr, which indicates that his father became a victim of the punitive action of the Red Army in Genichutl.

752 Fu'ād b. Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb (1880–1956): a Lebanese poet, journalist, public figure, and politician active in the Near East in the first half of the 20th century.

753 Saidov's personal archive contains a manuscript of this poetry collection copied by Nadhīr al-Durgilī. He may have asked Nadhīr to copy this collection for him.

I am stripped of the opportunity of speaking about freedom,[754]
Even though I am reciting poetry.
Few poems stand the test of time.
I am just protecting my people in this way.
Every time a target appears,
I let fly a well-aimed arrow.[755]

Autobiography of Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī (1856–1912).

Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī. *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya* (Damascus: Dār al-nu'mān li-l-'ulūm, 1996), 434–440.

I was told by my renowned father, a brilliant scholar, Idrīs-efendī, the son of the learned 'Alī-efendī: "O my dearest son, the apple of my eye! When I came of age, after prayer, seeking an answer, I appealed to Almighty God with a plea to give me a son who would be a pious scholar who would be guided by his religious knowledge in his everyday life. Then when you, my son, were born, I forbade your mother Ḥabībat from giving you to any other woman to be breastfed, in order that your natural essence not be mixed with another. She did as I had bidden her and followed my decision. Then, when you were born, I sacrificed a ram and called you by the name of Shu'ayb in honour of the estimable, god-fearing, brilliant scholar, *al-qāḍī* Shu'ayb al-Nuqūshī. I had been to the village of Nukush, and I had the books of this *qāḍī* with me, and they were of great use to me. I said that if God were to grant me a pious boy, I would call him by the name of his scholar, *qāḍī* Shu'ayb." My mother Ḥabībat also told me: "I was the best mother for my child when I was pregnant and breastfeeding. I guarded you from touching any

754 Saidov is here hinting that he is unable to tell the whole truth about the death of his father: that he was killed by the Red Army.

755 Muḥammad-Said Saidov, *Ba'ḍ manẓūmāt wa-l-ash'ār* [*Some Poems and Verses*], fols 1a–5b.

dust and other things and did not allow any other woman to breastfeed you." Then, when I turned three years old, my grandfather ʻAlī-efendī became so fond of me that I was not allowed out of his sight other than for a short time. He would sit me down in his room and tell me: "O my grandson, I swear by God, you shall become a great scholar. And no other grandson but you shall inherit my knowledge." This was a good omen for me. Almighty God allowed this to come to pass, and there were no scholars among his grandchildren other than me. Then, when I turned seven years old, my father separated me from my mother and began to educate me and teach me the Qurʾān in the village of Khindakh in the region of Jār.[756] With the help of Almighty God, following *sūra ʻal-Ikhlāṣ'*, I continued to read the Qurʾān by myself, without a teacher. My father marvelled at my understanding and at my trying to get to the truth of what I was reading, so that my father would often exclaim: "You are not my son!" because he himself had found learning hard. He brought me up so well that I never went wherever there was feasting, partying, games and merry-making, so that my essence became akin to the life of scholars. Then he, may God take mercy on him, taught me the book *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣaghīr*,[757] and I quickly learned it by heart. I recited this book from memory to my father in our house between the evening and night prayers. The chapters that tell of dogma and the five pillars of Islam he made me read in a loud voice, and I was angry with him for that. Then my illustrious father, may God be pleased with him, read me the book *Taṣrīf al-Zanjānī*[758] and *Miʾat ʻāmil*[759] so that I learned by heart everything that I understood therein. Then he read to me *Unmūdhaj* by al-Zamakhsharī,[760]and I learned all the chapters by heart up to the chapter

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756 A region located in the Dzhar, Balakan, and Kakh districts in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

757 Treatise on the foundations of Islam by the Daghestani scholar ʻAlī al-Ghumuqī.

758 Treatise on Arabic morphology, otherwise known as *Taṣrīf al-ʻIzzī*, by ʻIzz al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb b. Ibrāhīm al-Zanjānī.

759 Treatise by Abū Bakr ʻAbd al-Qāhir b. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī on Arabic syntax.

760 *Al-Unmūdhaj fī l-naḥw* by Maḥmūd b. ʻUmar al-Zamakhsharī, treatise on Arabic grammar.

on verbs. Then from the book *Sharḥ al-Marāḥ*,[761] I learned by heart the main text (*matn*) up the chapter on weak verbs. Then in the books *Sharḥ al-Shāfiyya*,[762] *Fawā'id al-ḍiyā'iyya*,[763] and *Sharḥ al-sullam*,[764] I learned the main text by heart so that when I was asked questions, I with God's mercy answered from these books from memory. Then when I had completed my reading of the book *Ḥadā'iq al-daqā'iq*,[765] my father travelled from this transient world to the eternal world. I lamented his passing very greatly, such as no other son had lamented the death of his father either before or after me! Because of my utter desolation and grief that engulfed me, I forgot all the texts that I had known by heart. At that time, I could not read a single letter. At that moment, I was so detached from earthly things, and the next life so prevailed over my reason, that I could not look at any earthly thing. I ate whatever I could find, clothed myself in what I could accidentally stumble upon, and I knew no value of money so that I could not tell apart the Russian silver *rubl*es from *kopeck*s or *dirham*s. I would lie often on the ground and lament the passing of my father, unwittingly drawing people's pity so that people marvelled greatly at my grief and sorrow. Then, three months later, the learned Dāwud al-Khurūkhī summoned me to him so that I could continue my studies with him. He said: "Once your father taught me. Now I need to transfer this knowledge to you." My father was instructing me once and he said: "O Shu'ayb, if you stray from learning science, you will stand before me on the Day of Judgment with a black face!" And if it had not been for this instruction of my father's, I would not have been able to embark on my studies with Dāwud. I went to him, and I studied with him *Īsāghū-*

761 *Sharḥ Marāḥ al-arwāḥ*, a commentary by Aḥmad b. Dinqūzī al-Rūmī on the grammar work *Marāḥ al-arwāḥ* by Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Mas'ūd.

762 *Wāfiyya fī sharḥ al-Shāfiyya*, a commentary by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr on *al-Shāfiyya*, a work on Arabic morphology by Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. 'Umar b. Abī Bakr Ibn al-Ḥājib.

763 *Al-Fawā'id al-ḍiyā'iyya*, a commentary by the famous poet and Sufi scholar 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī on *al-Kāfiya*, a work on syntax by Ibn al-Ḥājib.

764 Treatise on logic by the Egyptian scholar Aḥmad al-Damanhūrī.

765 Commentary by Sa'd al-Dīn Sa'dullāh al-Bardā'ī on *al-Unmūdhaj fī l-naḥw*.

jī[766] and *Ḥāshiyat al-Nu'mān*.[767] Then I parted ways with him and went to the village of Gonokh to the scholar *al-ḥājj* Ibn Ḥajar-efendī. With him, I studied *al-Aḍūdiyya*,[768] *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id*,[769] *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj 'alā sharḥ al-Minhāj*.[770] Then I left him and in the year AH 1301 [1883–84], I went to the village of Irib to a shaykh, learned *al-ḥājj* Aḥmad-efendī al-Rīlī and read with him *Sharḥ jam' al-jawāmi'*,[771] learned dialectics (*'ilm al-munāẓara*), *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and three years later, I was entrusted with the position of *qāḍī* and asked to begin teaching others.

In AH 1307 [1889–90], I travelled to the village of Tsakhur, where I began to teach pupils. In the summer of the same year, three perfect shaykhs came together in the village of Tsakhur: *al-ḥājj* Jabrā'īl-efendī al-Tsakhūrī [d. 1889], who was the successor of the great shaykh Maḥmūd al-Almālī [d. 1877],[772] and *al-ḥājj* Qusay-efendī al-Jinīghī [d. 1896], who was the successor of shaykh Ismā'īl-efendī al-Siwaklī [d. 1884]. I spent one week with them, and they instructed me and turned me away from worldly things, so that I saw this world but as a shadow of the Sun. I became so attached to them that it was impossible to keep us apart. I wanted to be under the tutelage of shaykh Jabrā'īl-efendī, for my affection and sympathy for him were very great. And when I was already about to be under his tutelage, he, may God be pleased with him, left this world, which saddened me a great deal. Then I was appointed as a *qāḍī* in the village of Jinigh. And although I was appointed as a *qāḍī*, I regarded

766 Treatise on logic by Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī.

767 Work on logic by Nu'man b. Shaykh Sa'īd al-Shirwānī, comprising a commentary on *Sharḥ al-Īsāghūjī* by Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Kātī.

768 *Al-Risāla al-'Aḍūdiyya* (also known as *Adāb al-baḥth*), a work on dialectics by the 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī.

769 Commentary by Mas'ūd b. 'Umar al-Taftāzānī on *al-Aqā'id*, a work on dogmatics by Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafs 'Umar al-Nasafī.

770 Commentary by the Egyptian scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī on *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*, a work on Shāfi'ī law by Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī.

771 Commentary by the Egyptian scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī on *Jam' al-jawāmi'*, a work on the theory of Islamic law by Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī.

772 For this figure see Michael Kemper, "al-Almālī, Maḥmūd," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Third Edition, ed. by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Devin J. Stewart. Consulted online on 05 February 2023 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573–3912_ei3_COM_23672

the letters from rulers [to me] as a burning coal in my hands, for I had no desire for offices or being near to the authorities. Then in the winter of that year, I performed *istikhār*[773] for God asking him to send me to a perfect Sufi shaykh (*murshid*). And I was given the privilege of going to shaykh Aḥmad-efendī al-Talālī [d. 1903], may God have mercy on him. But despite my choice, it so befell that I became a pupil of *al-ḥājj* Qusay-efendī, who guided me in the rules of *ṭarīqa* and instructed me to be in *khalwa*[774] for nine months, whereupon he gave me permission to teach (*ijāza*). This befell in 1310 [1892–93], and in 1313 [1895–96], having attained all the levels of *murāqaba*,[775] Qusay-efendī passed away, may Almighty God have mercy on him. But I, having received the *ijāza*, told no man about it for fear of Almighty God and I was shy of people calling me 'Sufi shaykh'. Seven years of such secrecy passed until I went to study under shaykh *al-ḥājj* Aḥmad al-Ṭalālī.

Three years later, he too gave me the *ijāza*, putting it in writing, and instructed me to teach the *ṭarīqa* to anyone who came to me. Thus, I was forced openly to instruct people in the *ṭarīqa* against my will. And even now if someone comes to me to be taught the *dhikr* (*talqīn*), I begin to shake for fear of God and for embarrassment of people. Of the things that God blessed me with is that I edited the work *Silk al-'ain*.[776] After I had performed *istikhār* and received a clear permission from shaykhs al-Ṣafadī, I, God helping, embarked on this. This is a very challenging task even for learned Arabs from the Ottoman Empire, not to mention Daghestani shaykhs. This was a great wonder to scholars. I also composed a pentastich for *Silk al-'ain*, which no-one had done before in this area.[777]

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773 *Istikhār* is a prayer for help addressed to God asking to prefer one action, when there is doubt as to whether an action is advisable.

774 A Sufi ritual practice, which was widely implemented in the Khalwatiyya brotherhood and at initial stages of the Naqshbandiyya, which usually implied a retreat from people for forty days that have to be spent in fasting and prayer.

775 One of the methods of Sufi ritual practice, involving control over one's thoughts and actions so as not to do anything forbidden in the hope to earn the pleasure of God.

776 A Sufi poem by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ṣafadī.

777 Shu'ayb al-Bāginī appended an additional fifth line to rhyme with the quatrains of this work. See: Shu'ayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *al-Mukhammasa al-farīda* (Temir-khān

One of the things that God blessed me with is the fact that I wrote this book, from the biography of Ismā'īl al-Kurdamīrī, including all the following shaykhs in this transmission chain (*silsila*). And in this area of making shaykhs' biographies no-one had done it but me. This is what Almighty God has blessed me with. This, too, I do not say out of pride.

One of the things that God blessed me with is a feeling of bashfulness and modesty since my early childhood, more even than an unmarried girl. When I became a young man, I could not look men in the face without embarrassment, let alone women. When I was studying the sciences in various villages, I asked my fellow students not to send me to look for things outside the mosque, and I spent all my time in the mosque. Verily, modesty is a sign of faith. And even now, thanks be to God, due to my modesty, I am unable to look at any woman's face, including my sisters and those who are under my spiritual guidance. And I have not looked at any of them more than three times, and there are over a thousand of them, thanks be to God. This is a very rare occurrence among the shaykhs of this time. I do not say this out of pride.

One of the things that Almighty God blessed me with is the absence of hatred, enmity, or envy towards any of my contemporaries, except for those who trespass against the laws of Almighty God. If someone were to take my property by force, for instance, I would not show them enmity and would not cease from communicating with them, even though inside my soul Satan were goading me with a sinful temptation. With the help of the strength of Almighty God and His might, I am able to withstand this temptation. But many modern shaykhs do the opposite.

One of the things that Almighty God bestowed upon me in His mercy and generosity rather than through any of my abilities or efforts is knowledge, and the learning of the Qur'ān by heart.

When I was under the tutelage of shaykh Qusay-efendī al-Jinīghī, may his soul be blessed, and I progressed to the level of '*sulṭān al-dhikr*',[778]

Shūrā: al-Maṭba'a al-islāmiyya li Muḥammad Mirzā Mawrāyūf, 1908).

778 One of the stages in the practice of *dhikr* in the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood.

he looked at me with his inner gaze (*tawajjaha*)[779] and asked: "Is an army of *jinn*s coming to you? I fear lest they harm you!" I responded: "I swear, o teacher, this is not so". Then he looked at me for a second time with his inner gaze, and after a while he sighed and said: "There is nothing to wonder about in this, my son. For I swear by God that the whole of the Qur'ān is written on your heart and carved into your entire body, between flesh and blood. And a union of all these three degrees in one holy man is a very rare thing, with the exception of the four *Imām*s."[780] I do not say this out of pride. Many shaykhs of this age, including straying ones, are bereft of this and have no perfection in them.

One of the things that Almighty God bestowed upon me is my love of all saints and prophets on this earth, from the earliest times to our own days. And God has put a love of me in their hearts also. Each saint looks at me and loves me, just like I love them regardless of whether they are living or dead. I do not hold any enmity towards them, and neither do I reject them, nor the dervishes who have forsaken all earthly things for their Lord. I feel awed by them like the awe one feels before a lion. Once, when I was in the Enlightened City of Medina, I went to the Prophet's Mosque to perform afternoon prayer with my pilgrim friends from Daghestan. There we met an outstanding scholar, a shaykh of our time, Yāsīn al-Miṣrī al-Madanī. He took my hand in his blessed hand, stood a while in thought and said: "Rejoice. Verily, you have been recognised by a messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace." I nearly died from the feeling of great joy on this occasion. May Almighty God exalt him to seeing Him on the Day of Judgment and may He grant us a meeting with Him for the sake of this shaykh and all who are like him.

One of the things that Almighty God bestowed upon me is that my shaykhs are watching me, whether they are living or dead. Every shaykh is pleased with me, especially my shaykh Qusay-efendī and *al-ḥājj* Aḥmad

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779 In this context, "*tawajjuh*" means internal concentration of the shaykh's attention on his disciple's spiritual substance.

780 This is probably a reference to the founders of four legal schools (*madhhab*s): Abū Ḥanīfa (699–767), Mālik b. Anas (713–795), Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (767–820), and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (780–855).

al-Ṭalālī. The great *ghaws* and *quṭb*,[781] the honoured shaykh Maḥmūd-efendī al-Almālī took me in his hands being pleased with my inner state, even if I do not change them. The reason for this is that I am unwavering on following the path of the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa* and spreading it.

The shaykh being pleased with his *murīd* is a matter of great importance and a great honour that is beyond compare. I have received it, praise be to God, and it is a rare quality to be honoured by shaykhs. And I do not say this out of pride.

One of the things that Almighty God bestowed upon me is that my path towards God and my comprehension of Him is the way of the prophets. There are two reasons which cause me to follow the way of the prophecy. The first is the will of Almighty God, and this is the main reason. The second is my knowledge of the Qur'ān by heart. For he who keeps the word of the Qur'ān in his heart is alike to a prophet to whom no revelation was sent.[782]

I have written all this so that you, o reader, may instruct others, and not out of sanctimony or hypocrisy. My explanations aim to give guidance on the way, not to show arrogance or to provoke admiration. Understand this purpose and do not berate me.

Be aware, o shameless, ignorant scholar and shaykh who leads to perdition, think of what I have written here for you![783] Do you possess these perfect character traits so you may claim to instruct others? Even though I have received permission (*ijāza*) from two perfect tutors who have entrusted me with the task of instructing people in the *ṭarīqa*, I fear Almighty God and shun people. Whereas you, who have not been authorised to instruct people by a perfect shaykh, how can you have no fear of God and how can you not shun people! I swear by God, who is high-

781 "*Ghaws*" and "*Quṭb*" are ranks of the Sufi hierarchy. See: D.V. Macdonald, "Ghawth," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 5 February 2023 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573–3912_islam_SIM_8563

782 The author here means that he is close to the degree of a prophet, although a prophet is placed considerably higher, because a prophet has received a revelation.

783 The author here addresses directly those he refers to as "false shaykhs" (*mutashayyikh*).

est of all things, I am not pleased with my true essence! I see myself as nothing but a pig and a rabid dog, and I am not protected from the vices of evil and dissent, even for a moment! I am constantly perfecting myself; I have been a recluse for five months, and I have performed five-fold *khalwa* five times,[784] and yet I cannot achieve the desired goal in myself! And you who have not perfected yourself even once, what state are you in?! Think on this and do not be careless!

Do not hasten, o reader, to rebuke me for such a long-winded speech, for if this had not been a dire necessity, I would not have written about it at such length. And but for these explanations I have provided, people would not have forsaken oblivion and moved towards being. Know, o best scholars, that in the writing of this part [the autobiography], I have not been anticipated in Daghestan by a man or a *jinn*. I have written all this so that scholars may judge who is before them, so that they may draw the attention of those who err to this also. I hope that the things I have written will do good to them and not evil.

Autobiography of Gamzat Tsadasa (1877–1951).

***Avtobiografiia Gamzata Tsadasa,* translation from Arabic-script Avar into Russian by Muḥammad-Said Saidov. Makhachkala, private archive of Rabiyat Saidova, no. 44.**

I am a son of a wretched father from a poor house,
A hungry family, whose house was barred
With a large flat stone.
I am a son of Yusupil Magoma, who never covered himself with a blanket in his life.
He never saw an undershirt and died on a bed of straw.

[784] It follows from this text that Shu'ayb al-Bāginī first spent five months in seclusion (150 days) and then performed five five-fold *khalwa*. Since one *khalwa* is 40 days, five-fold *khalwa* corresponds to 200 days. Al-Bāginī performed such five-fold *khalwa* five times, i.e., for 1000 days. This means that in total he spent 1150 days in seclusion (150 + 5 x (5 x 40)).

I am a native of the Tsada village, from a house that has grown cold,
From a village that is part of the Khunzakh District,
From Daghestan Region, from a people who speak the Avar language.
From the new USSR, which has overturned the lack of culture.
I do not know the day or month of my birth.
If 20 years are taken out of these days,
The rest will fall under the Tsarist regime.
When I turned 7 years old,
Father bade farewell to a house that has no end.[785]
I was entrusted with the care of my helpless elderly mother,
Who had nobody left to help her.
I was the only one left to wear a hat.[786]
The house, wrecked by destitution, where an owl made its nest,
And which was full of orphans, went to the guardian.
Then my father's cousin,
As soon as I turned 10,
Sent me to learn Arabic in the nearby village.
There was no school like there is now,
Where the children of paupers would be called to study.
There was no help from the authorities back then,
To those unable to sustain themselves out of their own pocket.
Everyday life, literacy was very backward,
They were the opposite of culture.
The learning was dumb, with no curriculum,
No plan and no classes.
We lived near mosques and received one lesson a day.
This was a way of ignorance paved by the *qāḍī*s.
Life was poor, our food was boiled,
On a smouldering fire of straw bricks.[787]
There were oil lamps, we were kneeling on our rugs.

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785 Probably an Arabic calque of "*intaqala ilā dār al-baqā'* in Avar that was subsequently translated into Russian; this phrase i.e., "travelled to the world of eternity" means death.

786 I.e., the only man in the house. (Comment by Saidov).

787 A fire made with finely shredded straw.

Without missing a single Friday, we went to every house,
With a bag (*khurjīn*) on our shoulders, begging for flour.
We received once a month our measured lot,
To replenish what we were able to gather.
This was life mixed with the life of mice.
We poured the flour into the skin and made marks on *khinkal*s.
Down to garlic and flour, people helped us.
Everything that was done was beggarlike.
I spent ten years in this poor life, learning the sciences.
One of these years I spent with young people,
Taking part in timber rafting from the Tlyarata District.
For one more year, I was a labourer in Groznyi city.
There I caught malaria and was sick for four years.
Although much time passed, my knowledge diminished,
And I was a servant among the *muta'allim*s.[788]
Some faithless *mullā*s[789]
Selected them to give them a lesson, but passed me by.
But when they had some work that needed doing,
They began with [my] name of Gamzat.
Writing jobs related to serving the authorities,
Were entrusted to me alone.
Although many days passed in such torment,
I did not receive sufficient knowledge.
I did not learn the sweet taste of Arabic lessons,
Given by a *mullā* who had a poor command of that language.

The end of learning and the return home
When my father was late to come back from a journey,
Then my mother departed to enquire after him.[790]
Some died, some got married, all six sisters.
And a lonely house remained, with ravens wheeling above it.

788 Pupils of madrasas.
789 Here: Muslim servant of a mosque or madrasa who possesses Islamic knowledge.
790 That is, his mother died soon after the death of his father.

I received written word of my fields lying fallow,
Which had not seen a single sack of manure.[791]
A frozen life which had had no livestock for 20 years,
Called me to labour.
My peers were walking about, hand in hand with their children.
They said to me that I was still single, goading me in this manner.
Everyone who had studied with me now had a family.
They were rebuking me for being late [to marry].
I was not against having a household,
But I remained [in this condition], because
Happiness would not come my way.
For my part, I was keen to marry,
But in 3–4 families, they refused to give me [their daughters] in marriage.
First of all, I was poor, and secondly, my nose was too big.
Those learned in Arabic subjects did not stay single.
But a stain was upon me because I used to compose songs.
And finally, when they cast lots,
Khandulai[792] was the one I got first.
Two heads got thinking, four arms got working,
Until the derelict household was restored.
The block[793] was removed, and doors were made instead.[794]
And instead of the owl's nest on the balcony, there now was a white dove.
A new number was recorded in the village's house records,
And I became a peasant, among labourers.

How I served as a mullā.
At this time, I played the part of *mullā*,
It was hard to say no when people came begging.

791 That is, as fertiliser.
792 The name of Gamzat Tsadasa's wife.
793 I.e., the stone slab at the entrance to the house.
794 Cf. the start of the poem, where the author says that they had a flat stone to block the entrance to their house instead of a front door.

But I was a *mullā* who did not use others' labour,
And who had ties to peasants.
In legal cases, I helped people,
With the art of my pen.
There was no group of young people in the village
That I was not a part of,
When they pooled together to help a needy one,
I would roll up my sleeves and stick in always.
I did not do any useless work as a *mullā*,
I was doing it by responding to the pleas of people.
Tilling barren lands did not yield profit
Over what was spent on it.
In the year when I was a *mullā,*
I was also the village clerk.
When performing this office,
I guarded the Tsada people's plots like gold.
Once, in another case, when the community decided to appoint a herdsman,
I wanted to swap my *mullā*'s status for that of a herdsman,
Rather than ensnaring the people, to put on a green robe,
Girding myself with a textile belt.
I was not a slave to my stomach,
I did not deceive the people, combing my beard.
I did not write for them talismans in order to collect fees.
I did not mock the people with empty speeches,
Did not grab orphans' property when dividing the inheritance of the dead.[795]
I was unable to play my fiddle on serving my own appetite,

[795] According to the norms of customary law upheld by some Daghestani rural confederations, when a dead man's property was divided, a *qāḍī* had to receive part of the inheritance. See: *'Ādāt qaryat Gharabudāghkent* ('*Customary law of Karabudakhkent village*'). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 128, fols 1b–2a. See more in: *Obychai i zakon v pis'mennykh pamiatnikakh Dagestana 5 - nachala 20 vv*, ed. by V.O. Bobrovnikov (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Mardzhani, 2009).

The way the *mullā*s do, putting on a long Circassian coat.
I did not hold forth with empty speeches, with prayer beads in my hands,
Following their custom of soliciting presents from people.
I did not recognise the science of the wandering scholars,
Who believed sun and moon eclipses to be divine punishment.
I did not tie knots on a string and pray,
In order to bind the mouths of wolves who slay livestock in the steppe.[796]
In order to drive the demons away from a dark community,
I did not drag a sabre or a horse hide around the village.[797]
Nor did I help people by making a hole in the ground,
In order to protect the community from natural diseases.[798]
I did not sprinkle with a whisk and holy water,
From a cup, when they were ravaged by a great pestilence.[799]
I was not among the Sufis who led around the village,
A black ram in order to turn away a natural disaster,
Which threatened the crops.[800]
I did not leave my possessions unlocked,
Believing that a thief can be identified,
By writing down the names of suspects on paper.[801]

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796 According to Avar beliefs, prayers accompanied by tying knots on a string could save cattle from a wolf attack. (Comment by Saidov). In fact, this is a practice widespread in Islamic occult practices, which is described in many works on occult subjects. The name of the practice is literally "binding a wolf's mouth". See: Abū Sufyān b. Akāy al-Ghazānishī, *Du'ā' majmū'* (Temir-khān Shūrā: al-Maṭba'a al-islāmiyya li Muḥammad Mirzā Mawrāyūf, 1911), 46–48.

797 According to Avar beliefs, demons were driven away from the village by tracing a mark around the village with a sabre and dragging a horse hide along the mark (Comment by Saidov).

798 For protection from infectious diseases, the *mullā*s dragged people through a hole in the ground, which was accompanied by prayer. (Comment by Saidov).

799 When people were dying from an epidemic, it was neutralised by sprinkling with holy water. (Comment by Saidov).

800 Harvest was protected from natural disaster by leading a black ram around the field, which was then slaughtered and eaten. (Comment by Saidov).

801 Another occult practice.

I was against the work,
That ensnared the people in various cunning ways.
I beat up the *kulak*s,[802] berated the *mullā*s.
Denounced the authorities whose roots were rotten.[803]
My works, written in a living language,
Hit hard the old people who held power.
Take my song '*Worry*',
Or sing the song '*About a Tavern*'.
Thus, you will understand their meaning.
You, comrade, read the song about the cow,
The ground squirrel, and the *mullā*.
That way, you will see from your own perspective.

After the revolution.
The regime was sick with a rabid sickness,
Which had long lived by oppression.
Sparks of worry flared up in the souls of khans,
Who had been growing fat off the labours of their workers.
In a state built on khandom and slavery
A storm arose and shook its foundations.
The people became like a turbulent sea,
Crowds gathered and went this way and that.
In the 17th year of the 20th century
The banners of the October Festival were unfurled.[804]
These were the days when Daghestan had no support structure,
And because Daghestan had no single leader, it was quaking.
Leading the people along with empty talk,
Everything who wanted the khanate began their fight.

802 A Soviet term for those rich peasants whom the Soviet authorities exiled or executed during the Great Terror in the 1930s.
803 I.e., the Imperial authorities.
804 A reference to the October Revolution of 1917, when the *Bolshevik*s seized power.

Alikhanov,[805] supported by the fortress,[806]
Built up military might and made a fastness…

Verse Polemics between Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī and Mas‘ūd al-Muhūkhī.

Najm al-Dīn wa Mas‘ūd (in Arabic). Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 37.

Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī
Mas‘ūd had barely shut his filthy yap,
When a cock was rammed straight up his ass.
The mouth that sang of lies now smashed to bits,
His mother – trampled into dust before mankind.[807]
A runt of an ape, five spans at best,
Whose kin – the lowliest cowards ever born.
In cowardice and shame, he is the Hūd's men,[808]

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805 One of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary uprising in Daghestan. (Comment by Saidov). Kaitmaz Alikhanov (1858–1921) was an Imperial officer who took part in the Russo-Japanese War (1905) and the First World War (1914–17). He was awarded the Order of St. George 'For Bravery' and was one of the organisers of the anti-Soviet uprising of 1920–21. He was killed along with his three sons in a gun fight against the Red Army troops. On him, see: Khadzhimurad Donogo, *Nadzhmuddin Gotsinskii* (Makhachkala: DGPU, 2011), 299–386.

806 Not far from Khunzakh village, the Imperial forces built a fortress in an area known as *Arani*, where first Imperial troops and later the Red Army was quartered.

807 A cruel mockery directed at Mas‘ūd's mother: Najm al-Dīn implies that she had already been disgraced by promiscuous sexual relations even before the birth of others – including Mas‘ūd himself.

808 Hūd, in this context, is clearly an allusion to the Qurʾān (see 7:65–72; 11:50–60; 26:123–139; 46:21–26). The reference is not to the prophet himself, but to the descendants of the people of ʿĀd – a powerful tribe that lived after the flood of Noah's time and to whom the prophet Hūd was sent. Despite his persistent exhortations, the ʿĀdites mocked and ridiculed him, rejecting his message outright. As a consequence, God unleashed upon them a devastating windstorm that raged for seven nights and eight days, annihilating all save Hūd and those who followed him. In the poem, the expression "Hūd's men" thus functions as a symbolic refer-

[He was] born of booze,[809] sired by rot – a stump eaten from within.

Mas'ūd al-Muhūkhī

You've mastered filth – you measure shame with flair.
You're one of those who sold their ass, stripped of faith and care.
You were born beneath a sign of foul disgrace,
Spawn of a whore and pimp – a match made to debase.
Your sobbing sounds like some pathetic slave-girl's cry,[810]
Bent under cock, grunting for gold as it slid by.
Weren't you the one, when sodomites took stage,[811]
Who snorted, then howled in climax like a horny beast in a cage?[812]
Even the star recoiled when he aimed at your sin –
A noble hurled his spear and struck you square within.
No dog can heal the rot that festers in its flesh;[813]
You ran – your ass packed full[814] – a coward, reeking, fresh.

Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī [Saidov], *Marthiyya* [Elegy]. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 720.

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ence to cowardice, disgrace, and divine rejection. It denotes not the prophet himself, but the doomed people who scorned him and were destroyed as a result – rendered here as a metaphor for moral and social degeneration.

809 This phrase is to be understood literally as "of the very substance of wine." The author implies that the subject's origins are sinful – that he was conceived while his father was in a state of alcoholic intoxication.

810 The comparison to a "slave-girl" alludes to the eroticised image of *jāriya* in pre-modern Arabic literature, here weaponised as an insult. The notion of being "bent" and "grunting for gold" connotes not just sexual exploitation but willing degradation in pursuit of wealth, again suggesting prostitution.

811 The accusation implies that Najm al-Dīn not only condoned such acts but participated in them.

812 Zoomorphic language dehumanises Najm al-Dīn, portraying his sexual excitement as base and uncontrollable.

813 The metaphor likens the subject to a diseased dog, beyond redemption or healing.

814 This phrase may allude to the aftermath of sexual intercourse in which Najm al-Dīn assumed the passive role, implying that his anal cavity was filled with semen.

When misfortune, destruction, calamity and annihilation befell my
Blessed village of Genichutl,
I, having shown patience, wrote these verses in *ṭawīl*: [815]
Let justice, reason, kindness weep,
Let God-fearing, dignity, asceticism and knowledge weep (*ratha'*),[816]
The mosque is empty, no *mu'adhdhin* or *qāḍī* are left.
How many books, treasures of knowledge, have been torn to shreds!
And this tears my heart to shreds, and the illusion dies.[817]
[How many] venerable heroes, men were caught by injustice!
How many brave people lay down in their graves!
But they have gained success, happiness, honour and respect![818]
…[819]Among them is one who distinguished himself by greatness.[820]
He reached the pinnacles of studies so that no one could rival him,
But what happened happened,
So that even the senseless stone wept!
[His being][821] changed,[822]
And death became his end!

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815 *Ṭawīl* is a meter used in classical Arabic poetry. See: W. Stoetzer, "Ṭawīl," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 9 February 2023 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573–3912_islam_SIM_7455>

816 In this poem, Saidov personifies his native village and expresses extreme grief over the tragic events that happened in the village, when the honour, justice, and kindness possessed by the people of the village perished with them.

817 He probably means the illusion of spiritual well-being or happy life that he sees in knowledge. He compares the destruction of books in the mosque with the death of his dream of spiritual well-being.

818 Saidov here means that the residents of the village killed by the Red Army soldiers have found peace by becoming martyrs, finding happiness in the next world and gaining respect in this world and the next.

819 Here, the document is defective; a portion of the verses has been lost.

820 In the glosses, Saidov wrote down the name of 'Muḥammad, son of Biybulat', i.e., a resident of Genichutl whom he singles out among the slain heroes.

821 This text fragment is corrupt, so I have reconstructed some of the words from the context.

822 Extolling their past accomplishments, as the elegiac genre demands, Saidov states that they, who had so many virtues, are dead, while he, a survivor, is mourning their loss.

My elegy mourns him.
I used to envy his greatness, his merits!
He was not one to provoke others to wrath,
Not one to hide the truth,
And not one of little faith!
Likewise, the lion-cub, my lord, the teacher of time,[823]
The blissful martyr (*shahīd*),[824] my lord,
An ornament of knowledge.[825]
He was like a shooting star
That comes down on its enemies,
And he set the people on the righteous path,
How could it be otherwise, for he was like a star!
His path is a reward and an exalted position.[826]
And a denial of everything that is sinful!
I congratulate you both, o my two lords,
For you have found your place next to God,
Where there is no cunning nor malice, but there are the black-eyed [*houris*].
And the calamity that befell you
Indicates that there is no peace in this age.
How many people have tasted the oily food of misfortune!
They were close to being rich,
But their bodies became lean,[827]
And such deeds are still going on,
So that the innocent [people] are attacked.

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823 In the glosses, Saidov wrote: 'I mean Muḥammad, son of Ḥajiyaw Dibīr'. Since Saidov refers to him as 'my efendī', it is likely that this Muḥammad had once taught Saidov.

824 This individual was killed by the Red Army as well.

825 The epithet given by Saidov to his teacher, the above-mentioned Muḥammad, son of Ḥajiyaw Dibīr.

826 This is to say that the person named by Saidov was a virtuous man during his lifetime and would have a reward and a position of honour in the next world.

827 Saidov means that many villagers in Genichutl were prosperous, living in material and spiritual comfort, but they lost everything ('their body became lean') as a result of these tragic events, when they lost both their properties and their lives.

And the sinless [people] are assaulted![828]
Human patience smooths down the harm[829] caused by them,
But if the harm grows,
It will be impossible to smooth it down.[830]
Doubtless, anyone who performs any deeds
Will find his destiny with God,
We will all return to God, and obeying Him is mandatory!
Friday reminded me of the deeds that happened [here].
I have written down this story, and my eyes are streaming with tears,
And I salute you, those who have become martyrs.
The end.[831]

Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī [Saidov], *Mulāḥaẓa* [Review] (in Arabic) [1967]. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 540, 1–17.

"Argue not with the People of the Scripture except in the fairest manner, unless it be those of them who are utterly unjust. Say to them: We believe in what has been revealed to us [i.e., the Qur'ān] and what has been revealed to you [i.e., the Bible]. Our God is one and the same as your God; and we are those who submit ourselves to Him" [Qur'ān 29:46].[832]

Some years ago, I was able to study a dictionary entitled *Al-Munjid* by the Jesuit priest Lūis Ma'lūf. I am still in a state of perplexity and indignation after reading this book, in which the author is extremely biased in his interpretation of Arabic terms and expressions relating to Islam. At the same time, the author of the dictionary is very passionate about stating the main tenets of Christianity. The author states that this

828 Here, Saidov clearly blames the Red Army soldiers for the deed, noting that they massacred innocent people and are still doing so.

829 i.e., the injustice towards the people who suffered without any guilt.

830 I.e., the patience of the innocent sufferers may come to an end if even more evil is done to these people.

831 Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī, *Marthiyya*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, *opis'* 5, no. 720.

832 Saidov wrote this verse of the Qur'ān as an epigraph to the review.

dictionary is intended for students regardless of their religion. In fact, the author's bias tells us that it was in fact written for Catholic students…

I had expected that Lūis Ma'lūf would possibly find the right way and the bravery that the Arabs have for an unprejudiced interpretation of Islamic terms and concepts. However, he follows in the footsteps of the errant Western scholars who do not care for any propriety in order to achieve their heinous purposes and resort to all kinds of wiles in order to distort the truth…

The encyclopaedia clearly reflects the author's bias when he interprets the Christian terms and his prejudice against Islamic terms and concepts. A true scholar should be just, honest, and unbiased. When a person does not comply with such ethics, does not feel a moral responsibility before society, plunging deeper and deeper into the mire of his prejudice and obstinacy, there is nothing left for people to do but to reject the entire work of such a scholar, disregarding anything he may have written. Such scholars are more dangerous to the people than innumerable enemy forces. "And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people, and they will not be like you."[833] Below, I will quote some excerpts from the book by Lūis Ma'lūf that demonstrate the author's bias.

In his article on the Qur'ān, the author claims that Muslims are convinced that it was sent to their Prophet and classifies it as 'Stories'. In his article on *Injīl* [the Gospel], the author says that it was written through God's inspiration by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John concerning the life of our lord Jesus Christ. The author says that the word *Injīl* is of Greek origin and signifies the good news of humankind's deliverance. The author did not classify this text as 'Stories' as he did with the Qur'ān, so, in this case, he is acting as a Christian missionary. If, as the author proclaims, the Muslims are convinced that the Qur'ān was sent to their Prophet, he would have needed to provide a similar description of the Gospel, which is a sacred book of the Christians and not of humankind as a whole. As for the 'good news', this is not an attribute that belongs solely to the Gospel and it can also be applied to the Qur'ān.

833 Qur'ān 47:38.

In his article on 'Islām', the author writes that this word signifies submission to the order of a ruler and his prohibition, and that it is a well-known religion. This is what he limits himself to without giving any other meanings of this term by expanding and explaining it, as can be found in the works of other scholars. Meanwhile, in his entry for 'Christianity', the author provides an extensive interpretation of this term. Such a reductive explanation with regard to Islam reveals this author's hostility towards this religion, which is typical of those Europeans who are enemies of Islam.

In the article for 'Muḥammad', the author quotes the semantic meaning of the word as well as its derivatives, such as Aḥmad, Ḥamd, Maḥmūd, Ḥamīd. At the same time, Lūis Ma'lūf fails to mention that Muḥammad was a prophet, whom the author clearly believes to be heretical…

Now let us move on to the book *Al-Munjid fī l-adāb wa-l-'ulūm* by Ferdīnānd Tautil. In the preface, the author says that, during the writing of this encyclopaedia, he consulted the opinions of major scholars. He claims that he wrote the encyclopaedia based on the works of Eastern and Western scholars, including *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* compiled by major scholars. The author took on a great responsibility when claiming that he strove to write about every venerated shaykh and prominent scholar who was born in Arab countries and reached a position of high authority. However, when I checked the writings of Eastern and Western authors that the author had used as a source and compared them with what he wrote in his work *Al-Munjid*, I found that [these sources] contradicted what the author wrote in the introduction. This is not surprising given that the sources he refers to are encyclopaedias written by Western scholars and other highly dubious works. Among the works of Eastern authors, Ferdīnānd Tautil quotes such works as *The History of the Islamic Civilization* by Jurjī Zaidān[834] and *Majānī al-adab* by the Jesuit priest Shaikhu [Cheikho],[835] which have already become the subject of justi-

[834] For more details about this individual, see: Hartmut Fähndrich, "Review of Jurji Zaidan: Contributions to Modern Arab Thought and Literature by George C. Zaidan, Thomas Philipp," *Arabica* 62:2–3 (2015), 416–421.

[835] For more details about this individual, see: Nora K. Schmid, "Louis Cheikho and the Christianization of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Ascetic Poetry," *Philologi-*

fied criticism so that such a work should not be referring to them. The author of this dictionary, the Jesuit priest Ferdīnānd Tautil, did not consider it necessary to use the Arabic national literature written by Muslim authors who had scrupulously researched their ancestors' heritage and carefully analysed historical events, exposing the lies and slander of the orientalists in describing the history of the Arabs…

Oriental studies, as a discipline originated in Europe following the Crusades, developed as a religious movement, and was supported by the Christian clergy, just as it had been at the outset of the Crusades, when the Christian clergy sent its missionaries to the countries of the East as a fifth column (*ṭābūr khāmis*). It goes without saying that they are even now present in a number of Arab countries and acting in the interests of Western states. For instance, a cursory glance at Lebanon as an Arab capital allows us to argue that the Western states are exercising considerable influence over its economy, ideology, and politics. There are a large number of Western-leaning parties and groups that are prepared to serve the West at all times. Kamīl Nimr Sham'ūn[836] is a clear example of this. He is a proponent of the West who is unscrupulous enough to serve it in order to further his own interests and to betray his own motherland.

There is no doubt that Oriental studies, which were originally founded within the Christian religious movement, went on to become a separate academic branch. To this day, most orientalists have yet to break free of the poison left behind by their predecessors. We are being presented with Christian Arabic poetry and fiction, while what they believe to be 'a dark stain of Islam' is being ignored. In doing so, they juxtapose Christian and Muslim literature, starting from the earliest periods in the history of Arabs, by extolling one and belittling the other.

Ferdīnānd Tautil filled the section on 'Literature and Sciences' in his work with articles on monasteries and cells, listing the names of known and unknown abbots, priests, and all Christian monks and giving their

cal Encounters 6 (2021), 339–373.

836 Camille Nimr Chamoun (1900–87) was a Lebanese politician and president of Lebanon (1952–58).

portraits. He shows his bias towards anything that is somehow related to Christianity, without any historical analysis of sources.

For instance, in his entry for 'Abāqā', the author says: 'Mongol ruler (1265–82), son of Hūlāghū. He arrived in Iran and fought against the Egyptian Mamlūks, his troops laid waste to Syria and destroyed Aleppo. He was on good terms with Western Christians.' However, the author failed to write anything about the reasons for such good relations with the Western Christians headed by Pope Clement IV, Pope Gregory X, Pope John XXI, and Pope Nicholas III. The thing is that Abāqā was married to Maria, daughter of Michael Palaiologos. The popes always incited Mongol rulers to conquer Egypt and to drive the Muslim Mamlūks out of it…

It is not clear why the author has provided such detailed information on Christian saints. The encyclopaedia is not meant to be a description of the lives of Christian priests and apostles.

In his entry for 'Sylvester, Pope' (909–1003), the author says that he was educated in Barcelona. However, he suppresses the fact that this particular pope was taught by Muslim Andalusian Arabs.

In the entry for 'Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq', the author cites his biography. But he never mentions the fact that al-Shidyāq had converted to Islam.

In the entry for 'Aḥmad Shawqī', the author writes that he was a famous Egyptian poet and wrote verses dedicated to the birth of Jesus. While the author is delighted by the poet's recognition of Jesus's prophetic mission, he should have been aware of the fact that all Muslims, Shawqī included, recognise Jesus's prophetic mission, peace be with him! But Muslims do not consider him to be divine or a son of God. Christians, in turn, do not recognise the prophetic mission of Muḥammad. If they are forced to mention the latter, they divest themselves of their 'grandeur' and describe him only as 'the prophet of the Muslims'…

The author mentions all the ecumenical councils and synods and gives detailed accounts of all church-related events, including those that have little relevance for Arabs. There is no need to write about this at length in an encyclopaedia…

In the entry for ‘al-Shīshaklī’, the author mentions that he “left the presidential post.”[837] However, in actual fact, he did not voluntarily resign but was ousted by the local population as a traitor to his nation.

In the entry for ‘Zionism’, the author says that this is ‘a movement that strives to create a national motherland for the Jews of Palestine’. This is a blatant lie, since the events that followed the conquest of Palestine by the Jews have exposed to the whole world the barbarous, racist nature of Zionism.

In the entry for ‘Kubān’, the author writes that the population of this region consists of three million Turkic and Circassian Christians, who had converted to Christianity in the 6th century. The Turks and Circassians in Kubān are Muslims and have never been Christian. The Christians who live in Kubān are Russian and Ukrainian…

In the entry for ‘Noble Objects’, the author describes some of the relics of the Prophet Muḥammad, such as his hair, teeth, parts of his clothing, samples of his handwriting, some of his personal belongings, and footprints. The listing of these objects is an unfortunate attempt on the part of the author to draw parallels between Muslims and Christians, who worship Jesus as God and worship relics such as the cross. It is beyond any doubt that the Prophet Muḥammad was illiterate and never wrote anything down, so no samples of his handwriting could have existed.

In the entry for Imru’ al-Qays,[838] the author claims that he asked the Byzantine emperor Justinian for help against his enemies and was treated by him with respect and even received a province in Palestine as a gift. This latter phrase is a false allegation because, instead of that, the Byzantine emperor had him poisoned and caused him to be covered in sores and die in Ankara.

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837 Adib al-Shishakli (1909–64) was a Syrian military leader, prime minister, and president of Syria (1953–54).

838 Imruʾ al-Qays was an Arabic poet of the 6th century, author of *Mu‘allaqa*, one of the poems that are outstanding literary monuments of the pre-Islamic era. For more details about this individual, see: “Imruʾ al-Ḳais”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, First Edition (1913–1936), ed. by M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann. Consulted online on 23 February 2023 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214–871X_ei1_SIM_3179

In the entry for 'Evangelist Groups', the author gives a list of followers of Evangelist churches in the Near East, naming the number of parishes in every area. However, the author does not have a word to say about Muslims in Indonesia, because he is unable to be in peace with his conscience and to present information in a fair and unbiased fashion. This is why his encyclopaedia is in effect a textbook for Catholics.

The entry for 'Crusades'. The author's prejudice and clearly expressed sympathy for his Christians is outrageous when he describes the conquest of cities and castles by the Crusaders. He describes the events of ancient times as if they were taking place in our own time and as if he himself had been a witness of these events as an official representative of the Vatican. For instance, when Arabic troops captured some castles in Spain, he describes this with a feeling of extreme contempt. And he is in very high spirits when he talks about subsequent events, when Christians ousted Muslims from there. The author is faithful to his pledge not to omit a single battle in Andalusia in which Christians were victorious over Muslims. And he avoids to mention major battles that were won by Muslims. For instance, he is very enthusiastic when describing the Battle of de Las Navas de Tolosa (*waki'at al-'Ukkāb*).[839] But he omits to mention the Battle of Alarcos (*al-Arak*), where Christians were defeated. He also omits to mention the battle of *Faḥṣ al-jadīd*, which took place between troops of King Alfonso and Abū Yūsuf, because the result of this battle was not what the author would have liked.

In the entry for 'Islam', the author writes that its pillars are prayer, fasting, *zakāt*, pilgrimage, and *jihād*. I do not know how the author came by the idea that *jihād* is the fifth pillar of Islam! He must have read this nonsense in the works of the orientalists who look at all Muslims as a numerous army poised to fight, invade, conquer, and reclaim everything that the colonisers (*musta'mirūn*) had once seized by deception in Eastern countries. This is what the orientalists refer to as *jihād*, always in a

839 The Battle of 'de Las Navas de Tolosa', which took place on 16 July 1212 between the kingdoms of Christian Spain (Castilla, Portugal, Navarre, and Aragon) on the one hand, and the Muslim troops of the Almohads on the other, in which the Muslims suffered defeat.

negative sense. And this is how the author distorts the nature of Islam based on the works of his orientalist colleagues, seeking to poison the minds of Muslim students who will be reading his misleading dictionary.

In the entry for 'Salafiyya', the author says the following: This is a group of followers of harmful innovations (*bid'a*). They are known also as the followers of righteous ancestors (*salaf al-ṣāliḥīn*). They follow the Sunna and reject all innovation (*tajdīd*). The best-known of them is Ibn Taymiya. Among their followers are also the Wahhabis of the Arabian Peninsula. They are also known as 'followers of the Qur'ān', 'followers of the Sunna'. In actual fact, the Salafis are not at all those who introduce harmful innovations because they hold to the Sunna, as the author himself states. How can the followers of the righteous ancestors and Salafis be prone to innovations? They are the closest to the righteous way. And what the author has written is at odds with truth…

I am not a blind, fanatical follower of this or that group. However, if I see a person persisting in trying to prove that black is white and vice versa, I cannot remain patiently silent. I believe it to be shameful for Arab scholars, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, to shut their eyes in the face of such lack of objectivity. Arab scholars have to take on the responsibility before their noble people (*qawm*) to publish school textbooks and other literature free of Western influence and without their ideas being filled with the poison of hatred towards Islam and Muslims. In these books, the core ideas should be the efforts to achieve objective fairness, truthfulness, and absence of any guile. They should include the Arabs' reasonable strife and hopes for equality and their selfless drive to save their motherland and themselves from hostile clutches.

Muḥammad-Sayyid al-Awārī al-Dāghistānī.

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Muhammad-Said Saidov (1902–1985) was a prominent Daghestani scholar whose long career saw him a witness to, and participant in, many of the social and intellectual shifts that occurred over the turbulent course of the 20th century. He was also a defiantly independent-minded thinker, juggling and combining the roles of Muslim scholar and Soviet academician at a time when many assumed that such professional identities were mutually incompatible. In this book, the first detailed biography of this remarkable individual, Shamil Shikhaliev draws on Muhammad-Said Saidov's various writings, together with his personal archive and manuscript collection, to reconstruct the various overlapping dimensions of Saidov's life and thought.

The book offers a unique perspective on the modern Muslim experience in the Northern Caucasus, which will be of interest to historians, anthropologists and political scientists alike.

Shamil Shikhaliev (PhD, 2007) is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. He currently leads a project devoted to the study of Muslim intellectual biographies in Soviet-ruled Caucasus, funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

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