

priest murdered in 1984, and their symbolic exploitation by opposition members and Western politicians, into the context of the discourse of human rights. Intertextual references, cross-linking between different cultures and literatures, and the debates over a global history of literature are discussed by Gesine Drews-Sylla, who presents Eduard Limonov's novel *Eto ia – Edychka* as a text referring to different concepts of identity and portraying both the United States and the Soviet Union from the perspective of an refugee/immigrant in negative terms, especially concerning the question of human rights.

The comments and annotations on the conference offer a glance from the outside of the discipline. Both Katja Naumann and Birgit Schäbler confirm the introductory statements of the editors, Julia Obertreis and Martin Aust, regarding the marginalization of East European history within the framework of global history. Criticism of global history, especially the often stated lack of special knowledge or regional languages, can be countered by scholars willing to collaborate more closely with area studies (like East European history). Katja Naumann points out that the attempt to avoid any sort of centrism, and therefore an ideologically coded master narrative, simply produces a new intellectual centrism that rates multipolar historiographical models higher than the older models being criticized. Practices of abstraction also lead to a homogenization of "Western civilization" that fails to match the heterogeneity of Europe's historical structures, patterns, and phenomena when the eastern part of the continent is taken into account. One can easily conclude from this inspiring collection that researchers specializing in global history would be well advised to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of area-studies specialists in general, and to collaborate more closely with historians of Eastern Europe in particular, in order to differentiate the "West" from "Europe."

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Gorshenina, Svetlana. *L'invention de l'Asie centrale: Histoire du concept de la Tartarie à l'Eurasie*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2014. 702 pp. €59.00 (paper). ISBN 978-2-600-01788-6.

In this serious, ambitious piece of scholarship that falls somewhere between cultural history and cultural geography, Svetlana Gorshenina explores the imaginary geography of what is now called "Central Asia" from antiquity to the present in Western Europe and Russia. In her thorough epistemological genealogy of the different designations for this space between Russian, Chinese, Iranian, and Indian borderlands, she compellingly argues that geography is a product of external historical, political, and religious concepts of space and time. The different appellations reveal more about the way Europeans viewed Russia or the way Russians viewed themselves vis-à-vis Europe than about the region itself and its self-identification. The first maps were purely imaginary, based on biblical and Greco-Roman texts. Up to the thirteenth century, Central Asia was mainly associated with Alexander the Great and the Apocalypse, an image not proper to the West, since Arab and Persian sources also tied nomadic Turks and Mongols to Gog and Magog. Concomitantly, popular medieval lore also placed the gate to paradise in Central Asia. After the Mongol conquest, new shifts occurred: thanks to the Pax Tartarica, Europeans traveled through the steppes, and very slowly, thanks to Jesuit scholars who had access to Russian, Arab, Persian, and Chinese sources, local Turkic toponyms were added to maps of these regions without entirely displacing older representations of these lands. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Central Asia was no more a place of *mirabilia*. Viewed as peripheral, Central Asia became the object of imperial rivalry between Russia, British India, and China. Only in the nineteenth century did the term "Central Asia" gained prevalence in Russia. Viewing themselves as neither European nor Asian, some Russian elites aspired to see their empire at the center of an imaginary geography, and as the ultimate savior of both Europe and Asia. In this new mental map, Europe became peripheral, Eurasia emerged as the "third continent" surpassing Europe and Asia, and Russia arose to be the harbinger of civilization to the center of Asia, the original cradle of Russian civilization. While Europeans regarded Central

Asia as a much larger space encompassing Iran, Afghanistan, China, north of India, Tibet, and Asian Russia, Russians came to view Central Asia as their own conquered territory.

Gorshenina successfully compares the different perceptions of Central Asia in the West and in Russia in the context of their struggle for political and imperial hegemony. The ever-changing appellations of this region reflected different views of the world and the politics of the Great Game. The author integrates the study of Russian Orientalism into the study of European Orientalism, complementing the work of Robert Geraci in this area. Her use of cartographic sources is unique and enriches the source base for any future study of colonialism in the Russian context. Contrary to prevailing historiography, she shows that the topographical data contained in Arab and Persian sources reached Europe well before the seventeenth century.

The book is a mine of resources for any scholar interested in this part of the world, but it still bears the marks of its origin as a doctoral dissertation—the author even confesses that she kept the cumbersome thematic bibliography to satisfy a member of her committee. The best parts of the book are the author's conclusions, which move the author's thesis forward and help the reader comprehend and synthesize the main points of the book's argument. Without these conclusions, the reader could easily lose the thread of the argument. More information on the identity of the cartographers and the travelers who informed them would have added life to the narrative. Nevertheless, this book offers a fascinating analysis of little-known sources, complementing and enriching the work of previous scholars who explored Russian Orientalism in the imperial and Soviet periods solely on the basis of texts, and not maps or iconography. Scholars can turn to this valuable work to clarify their definitions of Central Asia before they embark on any study of that mysterious region.

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Meyer, James H. *Turks across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914*. Oxford Studies in Modern European History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. xii + 211 pp. \$99.00. ISBN 978-0-19-872514-5.

This thoroughly researched monograph offers a noteworthy caveat to the infatuation with “identity” that for almost two decades characterized the post-Soviet scholarship on the non-Russian peoples of the Russian and Soviet empires. James H. Meyer points out that in the second half of the long nineteenth century, discourses on identity reflected instrumental choices in particular political and institutional contexts rather than enduring commitments to presumably perennial communities. Especially for Russia's Turkic Muslim activists, the unsettling transformations and revolutions of the Russian and Ottoman empires and the possibility of repeatedly crossing boundaries and situating oneself in the emerging publics of either empire created an environment of flux and opportunities. In this inter-imperial context, these activists were able “to articulate political conflict in terms of civilizational difference.” They were able to market “politicized identities” such as “Shiite Persian,” “Russian Muslim,” or eventually “pan-Turk” to specific audiences, such as the tsarist bureaucrats and Muslim peasants, in order to achieve concrete and temporal interests. The recognition of the instrumentality of identity in this manner, Meyer concludes, should also provide a correction to the misinformed interpretations of the “invocations of civilizational identity ... in the age of post-Cold War cultural politics.”

The book's analysis revolves around the careers of three well-known Russian Turkic activists: Yusuf Akçura (1876–1935), Ýsmail Gasprinskii (1851–1914), and Ahmet Ağaoğlu (1869–1939). Meyer suggests that his primary protagonists and their like became pan-Turkists when, in 1907, the Stolypin government started to reverse the political liberalization of the Revolution of 1905 in Russia and the Young Turk coup of 1908 opened up alternative opportunities in the Ottoman Empire. The choice of pan-Turkism at this delicate juncture, as an identity claim that connected Turkic speakers across the Ottoman and Russian empires, provides the evidence for the book's primary argument about the instrumentality of identity claims.