

But even in the years of fratricidal national catastrophe Oldenburg did not lose his faith in the spiritual and moral potential of Russian culture. This is evidenced by his memorial essay “Tolstoy—a teacher of life”, published in the midst of the Civil War.

The book *Sketches of Men of Science* ends with an autobiographical essay “Thoughts on Scholarly Creativity” published one year before the scholar’s death. This work shows the internal logic and correlation of various aspects of Oldenburg’s activities—studies of Buddhist written monuments, archaeology and science coordination.

In concluding the review of this admirably compiled book, it is worth mentioning one rather strange passage in the introduction dealing with the characterization of Sergei Oldenburg’s personal contribution to scholarship (p. 19–21).

Vigasin quotes something the scholar said when he was a student—“I have no great talent, only the wit of a scientist”—and meaningfully adds his own judgment: “This harsh self-appraisal probably accords with reality”. This is followed by a list of works based on the results of his expedition to Central Asia which the scholar failed to publish. As a matter of fact, Oldenburg’s contribution to scholarship supposedly boils down to “short notes, with a significant portion of publishing works” and a brochure presented as a thesis (p. 20). The reader will be puzzled—for what merits, then, was Sergei Oldenburg elected to the Russian Academy of Sciences? Unfortunately, the absurd reasoning about the perceived insignificance of Oldenburg’s personal contribution to Oriental Studies, which stems from a misunderstanding of its course of development, has been quite common in a succession of scientific publications over two last decades. In this respect, it is only for the better that in the informative and beautifully worded introduction to the *Sketches of Men of Science* there is not much space for such an argument.

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“Novye zakony” tangutskogo gosudarstva (pervaia chetvert’ XIII veka). Izdanie teksta i perevod s tangutskogo, vvedenie i kommentarij E.I. Kychanova [“New Laws” of the Tangut State (the first half of the 13th century). Publication of the text and translation from the Tangut language, introduction and commentary by E.I. Kychanov]. Moskva: Nauka—Vostochnaya literatura, 2013, 501 pp. (Pamiatniki pis’mennosti Vostoka [Written monuments of the Orient], CXL)

Half a year after E.I. Kychanov’s passing away, the publication of his brilliant work *“Novye zakony” tangutskogo gosudarstva* (“New Laws” of the Tangut State) reminded me to think of the gentle voice and amiable appearance of this great Orientalist, as if he is still with us.

Nearly all the manuscripts of *New Laws* (*xinfa* 新法) were first published by the Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House in the ninth volume of *Ecang Heishu-icheng Wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文獻 in 1999, but some scattered fragments in the publication evidently were not identified, even the order of folios in the same manuscript was not arranged correctly. Although some scholars in China intended to explore this valuable material, they had to work from individual chapters or paragraphs but were unable to access the complete text because the basic research was not carried out properly. An important contribution of Kychanov's work is that the author carefully selected and combined the facsimiles into an almost complete text. From now on, the "*New Laws*" of the *Tangut State*, instead of the Shanghai publication, will become a fundamental reference for studying the jurisprudence of Xixia.

The Russian translation and detailed commentaries on *New Laws* show the enviable erudition and mature judgment of an outstanding scholar. By contrast, Chinese Tangutologists, including myself, often express their dubious understanding of Tangut statements through rough translations without any commentaries. Kychanov's "*New Laws*" of the *Tangut State* set forward a new standard for researchers. I was told that professor Liang Songtao 梁松濤 in the Hebei University was working on translating the entire text of *New Laws* into Chinese, so I am sure that she will find a great help in Kychanov's research and some new objectives will be reached in the future.

One of the remaining significant problems bearing on the translation of Tangut codes is how to deal with the nomenclature of Xixia official ranks. Kychanov used to translate all of them semantically as he did for dozens of years, such as *privod-yashchij v pokornost'* (bringing to obedience) for *jar-w₂* 報蓐 and *protivostoyashchij zlu* (resisting evil) for *kha-dow* 駭禰 (*New Laws*, p. 26), which led Chinese scholars to translate the former as *tiaofu* 調伏 (bringing to obedience) and the latter as *juxie* 拒邪 (resisting evil) in their relevant works. Such translations, in my opinion, are beyond understanding because they do not reveal any meanings etymologically. Having found no traces of similar ranks in Xixia's neighbors such as China, Tibet, Qidan and Jurchen, we suspect that the titles might have originated from a native Tangut administrative system and became obsolete immediately after the fall of the Xixia Kingdom.

It is noticeable that in vol. 486 of *Songshi* 宋史 there is a sentence indicating certain parallelism between the title of a Chinese post and a Tangut rank, which reads: "Those over *tuanlianshi* 團練使 are provided one curtain, one bow and five hundred arrows." This fact is well in accordance with the Tangut record in vol. 5 (1.6b) of *Tiansheng Lüling* 天盛律令, which reads: "Those over *wejr-be* 發蔽 (flourish-searching) are provided five hundred arrows without exception." Accordingly, we know that the Tangut rank *wejr-be* corresponds to the Chinese post *tuanlianshi*, i.e., commander of local corps. Of course it is unreasonable to translate Tangut *wejr-be* directly into Chinese *tuanlianshi*, but I suppose that it will be better for us to follow the phonetic transcription practice during the Xia-Yuan times.

In a 12th century colophon attached to inv. No. 598 preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS, we find Tangut rank titles *nowr-lhə* 𐰽𐰺𐰍 (wholly abundant), *nej-dzjo* 𐰽𐰺𐰍 (peaceful ceremony) and *wo-'jij* 𐰽𐰺𐰍 (righteous and even) corresponding respectively to the Chinese transcriptions *wole* 臥勒, *naijiang* 乃將 and *woying* 臥英 in the colophon of the *Sheng Shenghui Daobi'an Gongdebao Jiji* 聖勝慧到彼岸功德寶集偈 kept in the Yunju Temple, Fangshan District, Beijing. On an epitaph of the year 1278, recently unearthed in the Daming County, Hebei Province, China, there is a Tangut post *gia-bju* 𐰽𐰺𐰍 (commander) being transcribed into Chinese *qianbu* 鈐部. These facts tell us that people of that time preferred phonetic transcription to semantic translation of Tangut nomenclature of official posts and ranks, just as they used *daluhuachi* 達魯花赤 for “general governor” and *aolu* 奧魯 for “logistic governor.” Although it will be difficult for scholars to choose the available Chinese characters for transcribing every Tangut syllable, I believe that the best method is to borrow Hwang-cherng Gong’s Tangut phonetic reconstruction forms directly in our future studies, e.g., use *jar-wə* and *kha-dow* for 𐰽𐰺 and 𐰽𐰺 instead of “bringing to obedience” and “resisting evil” respectively.

Twenty-five years ago, Kychanov accomplished his *Izmenennyj i zanovo ut-verzhdennyj kodeks deviza tsarstvovaniya nebesnoe protsvetanie 1149–1169* (Modified and Newly Approved Code of the *Tiansheng* Reign 1149–1169), by which he opened up a vast realm for Tangutologists all over the world. Based on this monumental work, there emerged hundreds of papers on Tangut politics, economy, science and culture. It is reasonable to predict that his “*New Laws*” of the *Tangut State* will continue the existing academic trend and lead us along the path of endless exploration.

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