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The book contains the analysis of 190 inscriptions in Arabic script, including Farsi, Persian/Tajik as well as a single Turkic text. Inscriptions belong to gravestone obituaries or emblematic sets of monumental funerary architecture, specifically the mausoleums of Uzgen and Shāh Fāzil.

The first chapter (19‒30) is of a historiographical nature. It presents the Russian scholars who studied Arabic inscriptions discovered in Kyrgyzstan during three significant periods: pre-revolution, the Soviet period and the contemporary period. From the second half of the 19th century, the members of the archaeological commission of St. Petersburg and the amateur circle of archaeologists from Turkestan were active in the regions of Osh, Uzgen, and Iangi Naukata, including monuments of Uzgen and Shāh Fāzil. These studies increased in the Soviet period under the Turkistan Committee, and are still active today. One can regret the absence of detailed information related to the author's fieldwork activities since the early 1980s, in particular about the teams and the nature of the work undertaken.

The second chapter (31‒120) presents the corpus of monumental inscriptions, mainly those of two well-known mausoleums in Uzgen and Safed-Bulan, both in Ferghana. Regarding Shāh Fāzil mausoleum (in Safed-Bulan), it presents three inner inscriptions in Persian and 10 medallions, details palaeographic and stylistic comparisons (49‒51) and then supports the attribution of this monument to the early Qarakhanid rulers in Ferghana (Muḥammad b. Naṣr, Malikān, and his son ʿAbbās), known since the 1990s. The author discusses their title in parallel with coins struck in Ahsikent and confirms the accepted chronology of the interior decoration (made between 1055 and 1060) (55). He questions the function of the building and refutes the hypothesis of a possible khanaqa (71‒77). He then brings together the portal inscriptions from the two Uzgen mausoleums, built in the 12th century, starting with the Northern Mausoleum (p.80). He quotes in extenso a previous reference article by A.J. Iakubovskij (1947) and his attribution to Tughril Qara Khaqan al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli. The main author’s contribution concerns the Southern Mausoleum (88‒103), composed of three inscriptions that mention an amir and commander in chief (Isfahsâlār), as well as a certain Kutlug Bilgan, but the general attribution remains uncertain. The author ends this second part with the so-called Gumbez Manas Mausoleum in the Zhetysu region, built in 1334 for the Chaghatayid princess, Kanizak Khatun. As written by the author “Having nothing substantial to add to [previous] printed works on the topic, I finished the chapter by quoting the texts of [...] early colleagues.”

The third chapter of the book presents the most important part of the corpus: epitaphs from gravestones (called kayrak in Central Asia) (21‒298). The author collects interesting materials...
previously scattered in many publications in Russian that are generally difficult to find or are on display within regional museum collections with rich yet difficult-to-access lapidary deposits (for instance, the Osh museum, 235–238).

The author divides the corpus by large regions (Ferghana and Zhetsu). Each epitaph text is given in Arabic, followed by its translation and comments. Each gravestone is identified by a code to facilitate comparisons in the body of the text or in the summary tables found in the fourth part. The illustrations that accompany each gravestone are irregular (pictures or drawings), sometimes missing without any explanation by the author. One wonders if this may be an old personal archive of poor-quality pictures compiled before the development of digital technology.

For the Ferghana region, the author presents the gravestones of Safed-Bulan (close to Mazhar Shāh Fazl), Uzgen, Osh, and others. The set of Iangi Naukata gravestones (225–234) brings together several Mazhar (Sahaba, Teshik Tash, Kisirgan ata, etc.) and is the most important, with 120 gravestones, yet no illustrations are presented (such as those in the Museum of Osh, in the following chapter). For the Zhetsu region, he presents a set from Balasagun (nowadays Burana, an important centre for the Qarakhanids) (244–295). The regional overview is completed by another dozen gravestones coming from the nearby Cu and Talas valleys (296–298).

From a formal point of view, the morphological aspects and measurements of these gravestones received insufficient attention from the author, except for some general lines given at the beginning of the chapter (121), despite the fact that the author carefully mentions parallels in previous publications. It is regrettable that there is no mention of the abundant archaeological investigations of the sites mentioned, at least the most important ones, such as Uzgen and Burana. The latter currently has active and dynamic Kyrgyz research teams. The location of the cemeteries in relation to the settlement areas open up interesting areas for reflection, and could be the subject of further study.

The fourth chapter (299–340) concerns discussion and comparative analysis. In five sub-chapters, the author deals in turn with the kunya (proper names) and the laqab (professional terms and different functions related to religion: shaikh, ‘ālim, muftī, muezzin, and so on, but also craftsman blacksmith, jeweller etc.). The author examines the titles of the Qarakhanid amirs mentioned in the previously presented inscriptions of Uzgen and Shāh Fāzil. He also discusses the documented nisbas (about 50) and some identified family groups, as the Naysābūrī shaikhs (most probably Karmat), the Burhānids from Uzgen as well as the descendants of the “Muftī of Kisirgan” from Iangi Naukata.

The inscribed dates (327–335) provide interesting insight into the complex issue of Turkish, Uygur, and Sino-Buddhist relations as well as the Islamic calendar and should have been allotted its own sub-chapter. It may be regretted that the revised and expanded edition of Louis Bazin’s thesis (misspelled Basin) was only partially considered. At least the palaeography of inscriptions and their dating are displayed in their own section (336–340), where the results are presented in the form of two tables.

A fifth and final chapter presents inscriptions on cliffs (341–382), including two important inscriptions of Baruh. The so-called Northern inscription in the name of the Qarakhanid Mu‘izz al-Dawla dates to 1041 and is well-known amongst Kyrgyz colleagues (since 1896), but generally remains unknown for English-speaking researchers. The so-called Southern inscription remains undeciphered (361), however, the author quotes in extenso parts of four reference arti-
cles dedicated to this inscription. He presents other inscriptions, in particular that of the river Liailliak, dated to 1155, which commemorates the construction of a wooden bridge (362-364) as well as one dated to 1657 that commemorates the construction of a canal within the gorge of the Tanga under the Ashtakhanid ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Khān (366–378).

As a numismatics enthusiast, the author makes good use of coins to identify the patrons of monumental inscriptions and mausoleums, and to discuss the building chronology. He quotes several times and in extenso the work of previous researchers, which is useful, but a little unusual. This monographic synthesis provides a fascinating historical documentation that brings together information from scattered published works by the author and other sources in Russian.