

Byzantine versions, and probably adapted for Hebrew readers in the 1420s. This was composed in Crete or Rhodes. The success of the *Īlkhānic Tables*, therefore, is confined neither to Byzantium nor to Bessarion's collection, for they reached the isles of the eastern Mediterranean and Italy. The study of the transmission of the *Paradosis*<sup>88</sup> shows that the *Īlkhānic Tables* (with regard to the *Paradosis*) proliferated in Italian humanism: manuscripts providing the Byzantine version of the *Īlkhānic Tables* were in the hands of renowned figures, such as Pico della Mirandola, who borrowed the manuscript *Laurentianus graecus* 28.13.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the Biblioteca Marciana was built and opened to the public in the second half of the sixteenth century; hence it is unlikely that Paduan or Venetian scholars came into contact with the Byzantine Islamic tables through Bessarion manuscripts. It is therefore difficult to determine to what extent the widespread distribution of these tables in Europe is linked to Bessarion's estate. Nevertheless, some manuscripts of the *Paradosis* and the *Syntax* must have come into the hands of European humanists, and then of modern scholars. Notably, the fifteenth-century Venetian mathematician Francesco Barozzi<sup>90</sup> owned a copy of the *Paradosis* (manuscript *Baroccianus graecus* 58), the renowned French astronomer Ismael Bullialdus used the tables of Chrysokokkes for his *Astronomia philolaica* (Paris, 1645), and the German orientalist Jacob Christmann employed the *Paradosis* (from *Vaticanus palatinus graecus* 278) to compare calendar systems at the time, right after the chronological chaos generated by the Gregorian calendar reform in 1582.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Bardi, 'The Paradosis'.

<sup>89</sup> See Sebastiano Gentile, 'Pico e la biblioteca medicea privata' in Paolo Viti, *Pico, Poliziano e l'Umanesimo di fine Quattrocento* (Firenze: Olschki, 1994): 88–9.

<sup>90</sup> Paul Lawrence Rose, 'A Venetian Patron and Mathematician of the Sixteenth Century: Francesco Barozzi (1537–1604)', *Studi veneziani*, n.s.1 (1977): 119–78.

<sup>91</sup> Jacob Christmann, *Muhamedis Alfragani arabis, Chronologica et astronomica elementa et palatinae bibliothecae veteribus libris versa expleta et scholiis expolita* (Frankfurt: [heirs of A. Wechel] 1590).

## OF SAINTS, SHRINES, AND TRACTORS: UNTANGLING THE MEANING OF ISLAM IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

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### INTRODUCTION

The author of the following ethnographic account is Gleb Snesev (1910–1989), a prolific Soviet anthropologist who devoted most of his life to the study of Muslim communal life and religious rituals in post-WWII Khorezm, one of the biggest oases of Central Asia, traversed by the Amu-Darya and nestled within the territory of what is today Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan:<sup>1</sup>

23 August 1956. It is 4 in the morning. Together with G.S. Kurmutullaeva and a group of women I hit the road on a GAZ 69 to perform pilgrimage (*ziyarat*) at the shrine of Gulli Biy,<sup>2</sup> 7–8 km north of Khanqa [in the] direction [of] Urgench. Along the road [I notice] several imposing houses built in the old style where the descendants (*avlod*) of Gulli Biy live. Abutting upon these very houses are the premises of the shrine (*mazar*) of Gulli Biy, with cupolas. The car stops [close to the shrine]. The pilgrims proceed along a pathway, ambling [through the fields]

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<sup>1</sup> A biography of Gleb Snesev can be found in Sergei S. Alymov, 'G.P. Snesev i polevoe izuchenie "religiozno-bytovykh perezhitkov"', *Étnograficheskoe Obozrenie*, 6 (2013): 69–88, at 70–1.

<sup>2</sup> In post-1991 Uzbekistan ethnographers refer to this saint also as Gulli Bibi, see Archive of the Institute of Uzbek Language and Literature at the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, MS Tashkent, inv. no. 1831/II, daftar 11: *Vafo Éshon va Gulli Bibi haqida rivoyat*.