

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE TURKMENBASHY REGIME

Slavomir HORAK

Department of Russian and East European Studies
Institute of International Studies, Charles University, Prague

‘Unlike for people in the West the state is not ‘a night watchman’ for Turkmen. They consider it to be a universal institution. They see in it a paternalistic organ, which displays father-like care for them, transforms the population into a single nation. It also takes care of its unity, ensures its security, makes them happy and provides them with a free life. This is the reason, why the Turkmen people adore with devotion the state and its President, believe in it, support it and are willing to defend it even laying down their lives.’

(Saparmurat Turkmenbashy)¹

Political elites in the majority of states pursue their own ideology, which helps them explain the most important points of their internal and external policy. The influence and even need for propaganda is less important in so called democratic states with the constant threat of the elite changing in an election. There is little time to inculcate the appropriate ideology in the people. In such states propaganda usually relates to general issues with a wider consensus across the political spectrum. The idea of integration in many European states or the security threat in the USA and some other countries could serve as an example.

However, the need for propaganda is more obvious in systems without such a struggle for power in periodic elections. The consolidation and conservation of power in the hands of a single ruler or group are their key aim. Gradually such a regime needs more repression to contain the opposition groups within society and more ideology to justify itself. Consequently, we often find whole ideological complexes in totalitarian and authoritarian political systems. Ideology plays a significant role in newly established states searching for their national identity. All such features are completely applicable to the New Independent States of the former USSR, including Turkmenistan, which has become one of the most bizarre cases of ideological research.

The basic principles and characteristics of contemporary state ideology in Turkmenistan are analysed in this article. Emphasis is put mainly on history, nationalism and archaism, which demonstrate the very nature of the regime. Despite the fact that many of these points have already been used in other ideological doctrines, there are some specific aspects presented only in Turkmenistan. The peculiarity of local ideology mixes elements of modern Middle Eastern dictatorships, communist regimes and pseudo-archaic Oriental despotism.

‘Specific Turkmen model’

‘We have learned all forms of government in the context of their application to domestic conditions. We have implemented convenient and useful principles in our reality, adding them to those which were developed by our ancestors.’²

Many ideologies of authoritarian and totalitarian systems demonstrate their exclusivity, including reference to local uniqueness. From an ideological point of view this moment is absolutely true, because propaganda should bring some new ideas or, at least, old ones with a new approach.

Since a new regime usually comes to change a previous one, it is necessary to dismiss the old system to the outside as a minimum. Rejecting the previous communist ideology (in reality usually simply declaratively) and also other great ideological concepts opened the way for the nationalist model. From the very beginning of Turkmen independence the President rejected ideas of Islamism or Panturkism. In such cases Saparmurat Turkmenbashy evinced himself as a good pupil of the communist regime, which considered these two ideologies to be harmful. ‘The Turkmen model of development’ declared by president Niyazov from its beginning placed emphasis on the consecutive transformation of Turkmen society from the Soviet system to democracy. This aim was also mentioned in the first article of the Turkmen constitution. The state should be main guarantor of this process, which bears on the principle of statehood analysed below. The main principle of such democracy was ‘the protection of the overwhelming majority of the population in the current uneasy conditions and secure government aid not to sell anybody down the river.’³ On the basis of this idea grew the President’s theory of ‘a new type of national classless society, which has no analogy in the historical retrospective and contemporary world.

Such a system will be transformed into a fair and legal society of overall benefit, which should confirm the welfare and prosperity of human beings.’⁴

However, these ideas could be enjoyed exclusively by their author and maybe partly by his loyal entourage. The gradualism of the selected trend enabled them to put aside all so called democratic transformation for the period of Turkmenistan’s ‘Golden Age’. Niyazov’s next steps showed his own version of ‘democratisation’. The referendum in 1994 extended presidential authority until 2002. When this period little by little came to an end, the highest executive, a legislative body of the country - *Halk Maslahaty*, in December 1999 unanimously and ‘under pressure of Turkmen nation’ made the presidential term lifelong. Finally, in October 2004 the same organ refused President’s ‘proposal’ to organize presidential elections in 2008 insisting on the 1999 decision. This was a characteristic of ‘the specific Turkmen model’ on a purely authoritarian foundation.

Statehood and the personality cult of Saparmurat Niyazov

The gradual transformation of society should come into existence with the help of the state. According to Turkmen ideologists, no other institution could soften the negative consequences of necessary economic and social transformation. Free electricity, gas, water or salt became well-known symbols of state attention to the welfare of its citizens.⁵ These aspects were included in the state programme ‘10 years of Stability in Turkmenistan’ (introduced by a fake referendum in 1994) and following ‘21st Century – The Golden Century’.

The President (*Serdar* – the Leader) is the central figure of the contemporary political system during the transition period. This centralism just confirms the role of the state in establishing a new society. The Turkmen president is the core as well as the founder of Turkmen ideology or, rather, personality cult, which is in Turkmen reality synonymous with statehood.

Today nobody is surprised to see the face of cities in the country with frequent monuments, busts or billboards showing The Great Saparmurat Turkmenbashi. It is necessary to single out his golden sculpture in front of the Monument of Independence in the southern part of Ashgabat. The Leader stands here as the greatest figure of Turkmen history, surrounded by other famous historical persons. Another famous golden statue can be also found in Gypdzhak, the President’s native village. Here Turkmenbashi stands holding a book as a symbol of wisdom, which is brought by him to his nation. Nevertheless, the most popular monument with the people

of Ashgabat stands on the top of Neutrality Arch above the central Neutrality Square. The huge golden statue of Turkmenbashy there turns around, so his face always looks at sun. There are numerous expressions in Ashgabat folklore about it. Local people gave the nickname ‘Batman’ to this statue saying, ‘If you want to be rich, you must turn yourself around’ (in another sense ‘work hard’). From the middle of the ‘90s the personality cult has been extended also to the family of Turkmenbashy. Mother Gurbansoltan Eje became an example of the true Turkmen woman and his father Atamyrat is a symbol of the Turkmen patriot and hero. He was killed in the Second World War and, among others, the town formerly called Kerki in eastern Turkmenistan was named after him. Just these statues demonstrate the character of the regime and present its Leader, who evidently suffers some kind of psychological abnormality.

However, not only do architectural monuments reflect the *Serdar*’s role in this system. From 1992, when the personality cult was officially declared, he received several titles and decorations (see Table 1). The main motive of the changes in names and titles of the President during first years of independence was to strengthen his power. Gradually some caprices (new names of months, declaring of Prophet, Ruhnama as Prophet’s book) show Turkmenbashy’s abnormal psychological condition and good the PR work of his entourage, which created an Iron Curtain around him.

The impossibility of ‘dethronement’ in Turkmenistan became an example for other Central Asian presidents. This irreversibility also corresponds with the standards of several dictatorships around the world (Iraq, Libya, Uganda, Chile, Indonesia etc.). But no other Muslim regime pretended to see connections with Prophet Muhammad among president’s roots or declared him to be the Prophet of the nation with its new ‘religion’. So, the regime in Turkmenistan is based on pseudo-history and pseudo-traditions, made by the dictator himself and adapted to his mode of thinking. The new ‘religion’ is then expressed by the Prophet’s book Ruhnama (analysed later in this article).

Table No. 1

December 1991	Protection of honour and dignity of President Law;
April 1992	Declaration of the personality cult of the Turkmen President;
May 1992	The new Constitution with extraordinary authority of the President;
June 1992	Niyazov was elected President of Turkmenistan according to new Constitution;

October 1993	<i>Halk Maslahaty</i> gave Niyazov the honorary surname Turkmenbashy (in official translation ‘The Father of Turkmen’);
January 1994	A referendum extended the mandate of the Turkmen President to 2002 and abolished the presidential elections scheduled for 1997;
April 1994	Introduction of a daily Oath of adherence to Turkmenistan and personally to President;
1996-1999	Turkmen scientists were trying to find Prophet Muhammad and later Alexander of Macedonia among the ancestors of the President of Turkmenistan; The beginning of the cult of Turkmenbashy’s family;
December 1999	<i>Halk Maslahaty</i> declared a lifelong presidential term for president Turkmenbashy;
May 2001	The Humanitarian Association of Turkmen in the world proposed the award of the title <i>Beyik</i> (The Great) to President Turkmenbashy;
May 2001	President Kakamurat Ballyjev’s press secretary and journalist Osman Odeyev made the suggestion of pronouncing Turkmenbashy The Prophet of the Turkmen nation in relation to publishing <i>Ruhnama</i> - moral codex of Turkmen;
May 2001	Alleged remains of Atamyrat Niyazov (Turkmenbashy’s father) were buried together with Caucasian soil in a newly constructed tomb in the village Gypdzhak;
April 2002	Military ranks Law. The President received the highest rank of Marshal;
June 2002	New names of months: Turkmenbashy, Baydak (flag), Nouruz (New Year), Gurbansoltan (mother of the President), Makhtumkuli (poet), Oghuzz (founder of first Turkmen dynasty), Gorkut (one of the most important heroes in contemporary Turkmen history), Alp Arslan (Seldzhuk khan), <i>Ruhnama</i> , Garashsyzyk (Independence), Sandzhar (Seldzhuk khan), Bytaraplyk (Neutrality).
December 2003	A collection of Turkmenbashy’s poems was published;
December 2003	The first article about divine attributes in Turkmenbashy’s personality appeared in the Turkmen Press. The rejuvenation of the President (changing of his hair from white to black) served as a confirmation of this fact;

2004	Deeper research into the history of the Turkmens. Among others it was published, that the Turkmens gave names to Kiev and other old Russian cities;
October 2004	<i>Halk Maslahaty</i> graced Turkmenbashy with the sixth order Hero of Turkmenistan; A new mosque in Gypdzhak was inaugurated. The walls are ornamented not only with Qoranic inscriptions, but also with quotations from Ruhnama.

Historical factor in Turkmen Ideology

Almost every ideology relies more or less on historical traditions, which verify its place in the current world. Turkmenbashy also gave the only possible interpretation of Turkmen history, which was published in his Ruhnama.

Turkmenbashy put the establishment of Turkmen nation in the period 5000 years ago, when the first ancestor of the Turkmens, Oghuzz khan, appeared.

‘From the very beginning of history the face of Father and chief Oghuzz khan is observable, which sees its descendants just as the God of this land.’⁶

A major chapter of the book (pp. 86-114) is devoted to legends about this ruler. Although there is no argument confirming the thesis about Oghuzz khan as the ancestor of Turkmens, this dogma is unchallengeable.

The origin of the word Turkmen (*turk-men* - Turkic people) led him to a hypothesis that all Turkic dynasties should be considered to be Turkmen. The second chapter of Ruhnama analyses in detail all these ‘Turkmen’ dynasties from the Parthian (!!) state up to ‘Turkmen-Ottoman’ or ‘Turkmen-Qadzhar’.

Special attention is paid to the ‘Turkmen-Seldzhuk’ dynasty.⁷ Its sultans Alp Arslan and Sandzhar are regarded as the most glorious leaders of the Turkmens. During their period Turkmens enjoyed their first ‘Golden Age’. Just as in neighbouring Uzbekistan, where Amir Timur is considered the founder of the modern Uzbek state, for Turkmenistan Alp Arslan and the Seldzhuk rulers are creators of modern Turkmenistan.

After them Turkmen nation fell into a period of decline. The only exception was the era of the poet Makhtumkuli in the 18th century. The national renaissance of Turkmen is connected solely with him. According to official Turkmen historiography, in this era the Turkmen population survived under foreign cultural oppression, which rooted out all authentic Turkmen traditions and customs. The peak of the enthrallment of Turkmen came at the end of the 19th century, when the Russian yoke reached Turkmen tribes. The battle of Geok-Depe in 1881 was the greatest catastrophe for the Turkmen people, which could be compared in this sense with the fall of Kiev in Russian or Ukrainian history.

Nowadays, the new mosque of Saparmurat Hoja on the site of the former Geok-Depe fortress commemorates the event. This place was proclaimed the most sacred place of Turkmen, but the mosque is empty for most of year.

The Russian and Soviet period of Turkmen history was viewed very negatively. The Russian and Soviet authorities closed the way to the New Golden Age of Turkmenistan:

‘The dissolution of the Turkmen nation came to head in the Soviet epoch. It was made by the most vulnerable mode possible – they changed national statehood to authoritarian. The ruling Soviet state was not interested in the historical development of local and traditional nation in this land; on the contrary, they constantly suppressed it. The drifting apart of its material valuables came together with the destruction of spiritual values.’⁸

All the ‘exact’ facts of such a garbled history are incontestable. Turkmen are obliged to learn this version of history without much knowledge of the history of the surrounding world. So, this way produces the ground for another feature of Turkmen ideology – nationalism.

Nationalism and its interpretation in national history

Saparmurat Turkmenbashy put nationalism higher in his propaganda than other features and complemented it with his own personality cult. Nationalist ideology also helped to liquidate opposition parties in the first year of the regime in 1992. The rhetoric of these groups was usually also based on nationalism to improve the status of the titular nation within the Soviet Union. The Turkmen leader added a thesis about the exclusiveness of the Turkmen nation (*turkmenchilik*)

following the example of Turkey (*türkchülük*). This ‘turkmenization’ factor is met not only in Ruhnama, but also in everyday propaganda – the mass media, architecture etc. This process is connected with the weakening of other languages in daily life – especially Russian, but also Uzbek. Turkmenbashy does not hide his anti-Russian attitude, despite the fact that he uses Russian in many public speeches and also during government meetings. However, Russians in Turkmenistan or rusified Turkmens were gradually ousted from positions of power. This practice has caused problems in many spheres of life, where qualified staff is needed (education, health service). This vacuum was not fully filled by ‘properly turkmenized’ people. The forced introduction of the new Latin alphabet in the Turkmen language in effect led to illiteracy in many people. The policy of nationalism (in Turkmen conditions it is equal to the policy of *korenizatsiya* – ‘rootization’) has already led to irreversible changes in Turkmenistan society. Nationalism also determines the foundations of Turkmenistan’s internal and external policy. This policy is manifested in contemporary Turkmen ideology by three main pillars – Independence, Permanent Neutrality and Ruhnama.⁹

Independence (Garashsyzlyk)

From an ideological point of view the independent state was founded by rejecting the previous regime. A negative attitude towards the Soviet period is typical for many former USSR states. The Turkmen President was considered to be a symbol of Independence, its ‘Creator’ and ‘Keeper’. ‘Serdar brought us the unity of 24 grandsons of Oghuzz khan; he gave justice and agreement to the Nation and Country.’¹⁰ Independence is also part of the ‘Turkmen model’.

Permanent Neutrality (Baky Bytaraplyk)

The status of Neutral Turkmenistan was ratified in the UN General Assembly on 12 December 1995. Turkmenistan became the first state to obtain this status from the UN and this fact is appropriately used in Turkmen ideology as the main triumph of Turkmenbashy’s foreign policy.¹¹ The President declares that Neutrality demonstrates the respect of the world towards Turkmen. In this regard traditional Turkmen hospitality to the outside world is stressed as a response:

‘Today we have once again re-interpreted the historical relationships of our nation with other countries. Their nations did not know Turkmens, but today they know about their peaceful character. It is not just coincidence that our Neutrality was welcomed firstly by our neighbours and then by the rest of the world.’¹²

Despite the adoption of Neutrality in the UN, in practice practical implementation of Neutrality can only remain on paper. Re-evaluation of this status can be successfully used as a tool for pressure on the Turkmen totalitarian regime. In this case Turkmenbashy would lose one of main bases of his ideology, internal and external policy.¹³

Ruhnama

This monumental work by President Turkmenbashy was presented and approved in 2001 at the *Halk Maslahaty* assembly. Over the following years the book was presented in various languages, the most interesting of them are translations into Zulu, Czech and Belarussian. The theory of the *Ruhnama* is being introduced into everyday life little by little and has become the very corner stone of the educational process. As in the cases of, for example, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, Kadhdhafi’s *The Green Book* or Khomeini’s *Velayat-e Faqih* the book of the Turkmen President was intended to serve as a political pamphlet. But, in addition, *Ruhnama* is intended to be also a living guideline, moral and spiritual source for all Turkmen. If *Mein Kampf* and *Velayat-e Faqih* also challenged for external expansion, *Ruhnama*, similarly to *The Green Book*, is meant mainly for use with the country.

In fact, *Ruhnama* is an aggregation of disparate facts, which finds its inspiration in the Koran, communist brochures, Turkmen traditions (or pseudo-traditions) and the Turkmen interpretation of history. The text of *Ruhnama* is divided into five chapters, but it is very difficult to analyse the content of each of them. Information is given chaotically and without system or order. Especially in the first chapter, reflection on the Turkmen nation, its historical decline and revival under the Great *Serdar* are mixed with a biography of the President and his family or praise of the Turkmen landscape, traditions and people. The later chapters are more systematic

due to the interpretation of Turkmen history and contemporary state. The form of the text is similar to that of, for example, *The Green Book*, but in modern history such politically motivated books did not become a subject of adoration nor was the book held sacred as a basis for a new religion. Just this attribute is a key contribution to the problems of political ideologies.

According to Ruhnama, a combination of the three aspects (Independence, Neutrality and Ruhnama) will lead to the main aim of President Turkmenbashy's ideology. They open all possibilities and values to Turkmen after a long period under Russian repression. They serve as an instrument to achieve the Golden Age of Turkmen (*Turkmenyň Altyn Asyr*).¹⁴ This 'bright future' and culmination of 'the specific Turkmen model' should come in the 21st century. The ideology, thus, reminds one of some religious sects. As is usual in such cases, in reality only a small part of the President's circle has access to bliss. Even some ideologists were imprisoned or forced to emigrate.¹⁵ So, we can rename the concept 'The Golden Age of Turkmenbashy', which fits the reality of present day Turkmenistan better.

Ideology in the architecture of Ashgabat

Monumental architecture is one of most visible manifestations of many totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. The examples of Stalin's Moscow, Saddam Hussein's Baghdad, Atatürk's Ankara or Kim Ir Sen's Pyongyang are the most obvious ones. A new style of modern building has recently appeared in the great towns of the region (Ashgabat, Tashkent, Astana) as a specific New Central Asian Style. New buildings of presidential palaces, government houses or regional administrations usually combine features from modern Islamic architecture and local monuments from the Middle Ages. Monumentality, light blue and white colours and often colonnades are the most significant elements of the style. But only in Turkmenistan is architecture so closely connected with ideology. Ashgabat with its grandiose constructions has turned into a real textbook of Turkmen ideology.

There are two main centres of such 'ideological architecture'. Right in the centre of Ashgabat a new centrepiece was built in 1998 – The Arch of Neutrality, the symbol of Permanent Turkmen Neutrality. On the top, the above-mentioned statue of 'Batman' rotates. Under this tower was placed a monument dedicated to the victims of the earthquake in 1948, when most

parts of Ashgabat and its surroundings were destroyed. It became one of the best examples of Turkmenistan ideology. In the centre of the monument is a bull (the symbol of force and power), which carries the Earth on its horns. The globe is broken in one place and from it the figure of a woman rises up. A little golden boy sits on her hand, securely out of danger. The whole tableau officially represents the symbol of victims (the woman) and new life (the little boy). But real understanding of the monument is hidden in the biography of President Turkmenbashy. The mother symbolizes Gurbansoltan Eje, who died during the earthquake. It is not difficult to recognize Saparmurat Turkmenbashy in the little boy.¹⁶ In recent years, Saparmurat Turkmenbashy openly presents his parents, so their monuments were torn in centre of Ashgabat.¹⁷

Historical aspects of Turkmen ideology in architecture can be found in the southern part of the town. The high column of the Independence Monument looms over the surrounding park with fountains and great larger-than-life statues of Turkmen Prophets and other great figures of Turkmen history. As one might expect, the golden statue of The Great Saparmurat Turkmenbashy dominates them.

A vast number of sculptures, busts and billboards of President Turkmenbashy on the streets and parks in Ashgabat emphasises the personality cult and constantly commemorates the most important features of the regime's ideology. Such a thorough and precise ideological rebuilding of the city has also few analogies in the world.

Ideological archaism and unity

The stress on Turkmen traditions, life of ancestors, old Turkmen society is another typical feature of the 'specific Turkmen model'. Several structures of the Turkmen political system were based on past examples, including *Halk Maslahaty*, the assembly of all the administrative organs of the republic such as *Mejlis* (Parliament), President or Local Administration Chiefs.¹⁸ Part of *Halk Maslahaty* consists of members of 'pseudo-traditional' authority – the Senior Board. In the past these boards of the oldest men used to make key decisions in Turkmen tribes, arbitrate disputes within the tribe and negotiate with other tribes. The title of Turkmenbashy *Serdar* (Leader) also refers to a chief of a tribal army. Only the title 'Prophet' is an 'invention' of present ideology.

The suppression of any renaissance of traditional Turkmen tribes is another mark of archaization. President Turkmenbashy likes to present himself as staying above any tribal structure and in general he rejects any tribal identity within Turkmen society. The President should symbolize unity and non-fragmentation of Turkmen society. In fact, the process of declared dearchaization goes in completely the opposite direction. The very fact of suppression of tribes indicates that such a question exists. Since the integration of Turkmen tribes during the Russian/Soviet period traditionally the most powerful tribe was Akhal Tekke living around the capital, Ashgabat. And this situation has only culminated after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Not only the Presidential circle, but also opposition groups abroad are mostly based on people from the Akhal Tekke tribe. Consequently, all aspects of ideology are related to the Akhal Tekke tribe. The interpretation of the battle of Geok-Depe could serve as one of the most noticeable examples. On the Turkmen side mainly Akhal Tekke tribes took part in this conflict while others did not support their kinsmen. Hence, ideology also helps to strengthen the Akhal Tekke monopoly of power.¹⁹

Pseudo-traditionalism also comes out in some curious legal acts. The *Kalym* Act based upon the tradition of paying a ransom for a wife by the fiancé. In the Turkmenistan state *kalym* was introduced for foreigners, who have to give 50 000 USD to the state plus some other traditional presents for their spouses. Using Turkmen (and generally Asian) tradition the law in practise prohibits women escaping (and therefore the rest of the family) from ‘the golden country of Turkmenbashy’.

In conclusion, it is worth pointing out that all the most important characteristics of Turkmen ideology discussed in the article are ‘packed’ in the new Turkmen calendar. Its historical moments are presented in the months of *Oghuzz* (June), *Gorkut* (July), *Alp Arslan* (August), *Sandzhar* (November) and *Makhtumkuli* (May). The President together with his family is symbolized by the months of *Turkmenbashy* (January), *Baydak* (19 February is celebrated as ‘The Day of the State Flag’, in fact this was the day Turkmenbashy was born) and *Gurbansoltan* (April). And finally three pillars of modern Turkmen ideology are expressed in months of *Ruhnama* (September), *Garashsyzlyk* (Independence) and *Bytaraplyk* (December).

And another example of ideology in a nutshell is visible in the header of *Neytralnyj Turkmenistan* (Neutral Turkmenistan), the only Russian language paper published in the country. Here are the

main attributes of ideological applications – a photograph of the Creator/President of independent and neutral Turkmenistan, the Oath to the President and state, a commemoration of the ‘Golden Age’ and Neutrality of the country, the blazon of President, state flag and national emblem.

In general, Turkmen ideology has some characteristics that are not usual in other ideological concepts – mainly in its precise devotion to the Leader. However, it can be compared with other concepts apparent in other totalitarian regimes with a personality cult. Some aspects of Turkmen ideology seem very strange or even funny, but specialists in Turkmenistan have to take account of them. Despite their peculiarity, totalitarian ideologies usually show the direction of the regime. By analysing them we are able to recognize the possible threats of the regime. It was perfectly the case of *Mein Kampf* in Germany before WWII, in which all of Hitler’s future steps were determined, or *Velayat-e Faqih*, which predicted the character of Iran after the Islamic revolution in 1979. Concerning Turkmenistan, its nationalistic ideology has already influenced a mass emigration of the population. People who remained in one of the potential oil and gas superpowers were living on the poverty line.

The author is a PhD. student at The Institute of International Studies of Charles University in Prague. He focuses on the problems of internal development of Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

¹ T. Hallyev, ‘Konceptiya Saparmurata Turkmenbashy ob obshchestve perekhodnogo perioda’, *The Democracy and the Right (Journal of Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights of the President of Turkmenistan)*, No. 3 (2000), http://www.sibnet.tm/democracy/3-2000_halliev_ru.html [25.3.2002].

² ‘Ruhnama’, p. 248. Here and hereafter all quotations are taken from the official Russian translation: S. Turkmenbashy, ‘Rukhnama’, *Turkmenskaya gosudarstvennaya izdatelskaya sluzhba*, (Ashgabat, 2002).

³ S. Niyazov, ‘Mne izvesten marshrut v ‘zolotoy vek’ moyey strany’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 27. October 1999, p. 8.

⁴ S. Kamenev, ‘Sovremennoye socialno-politicheskoye polozheniye Turkmenistana’, *Central Asia and Caucasus*, No. 2(2002). <http://www.gundogar.org/ruspages/270.htm>. [30.5.2002].

⁵ Scarcity of water is a huge problem in some areas even in Ashgabat (water has to be supplied to numerous fountains in the city). Electricity is far from available everywhere, the same situation holds with gas, and there is not enough salt to survive.

⁶ ‘Ruhnama’, p. 86.

⁷ 'Ruhnama', pp. 114-121 and 221-229.

⁸ 'Ruhnama', p. 256.

⁹ 'Ruhnama', p. 244.

¹⁰ 'Ruhnama' on-line version <http://www.sibnet.tm/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=137>. [23. 4. 2002]

¹¹ 'Neytralitet Turkmenistana: Istorija, mirovozzreniye i gosudarstvennaya strategija', Speech of President Turkmenbashi at the Turkmen State University (1 December 2000).

¹² 'Ruhnama', p. 249. It is interesting to look for the reflection of these nations towards Turkmen. Iranians, Tajiks and other had a very different opinion about them than Turkmenbashi proclaims. See e. g. Sadridin Aini's book or James Morrier, 'Haji Baba Isfahani'.

¹³ Prof. Emmanuel Decaux, 'OSCE Rapporteur's report on Turkmenistan' *ODIHR.GAL/15/03* (12 March 2003).

¹⁴ 'Ruhnama', p. 248.

¹⁵ It is the case of T. Hallyjev, who is quoted at the beginning of this article.

¹⁶ K. Kuraeva, 'Monumentalnye pamyatniki Ashkhabada',

<http://www.tpress.gov.tm/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=118> [15.3.2003]

¹⁷ Examples of these monuments exist e.g. Gorbansoltan Eje League of Women or Veteran Union of Atamyrat Niyazov.

¹⁸ Y. Shir, 'Khalk Maslahaty v kontekste konstituciyonno-pravovogo razvitiya Turkmenistana', in *Political Science and State Power in Russian Federation and New Independent States*, Ural Department of Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Economy and Law, (Ekaterinburg, 2004), pp.

¹⁹ Problems of clan and tribal relations and Akhal Tekke regime in Turkmenistan were researched in S. Kadyrov, 'Natsiya plemen. Etnicheskiye istoki, transformatsiya, perspektivy gosudarstvennosti v Turkmenistane', *Center for Research of Civilizations and Regional Studies*. Russian Academy of Sciences, (Moscow, 2003), esp. pp. 160-206.