

Vladimir Minorsky

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Vladimir Fedorovich Minorsky (Russian: Владимир Фёдорович Минорский; February 5, 1877 – March 25, 1966) was a Russian Orientalist best known for his contributions to Kurdish and Persian history, geography, literature, and culture.

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Life and career

Minorsky was born in Korcheva, Tver, northwest of Moscow on the upper Volga River, a town now submerged beneath the Ivankovo Reservoir. There he was a gold medallist of the Fourth Grammar School. In 1896 he entered Moscow University to study law, graduating in 1900, then entered the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages where he spent 3 years preparing for a diplomatic career. He made his first trip to Iran in 1902, where he collected material on the Ahl-e Haqq.

In 1903 he entered the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serving 1904-1908 in Persia (now Iran), first in the Tabriz Consulate-General and then the Tehran Legation, and 1908-1912 in Saint Petersburg and Tashkent. In 1911, jointly the Four-Power (British, Russian, Turkish, and Persian) Commission, he carried out a mission in North-Western Persia to delimit the Turko-Persian border, and also published a monograph on the Ahl-i Haqq religion for which he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Ethnography Section of the Imperial Society of Natural Sciences in Moscow.

One of the most important Kurdish manuscripts he obtained during this period was *The Forqan ol-Akhbar*, by Hajj Nematollah, which he later wrote about in "Etudes sur les Ahl-I Haqq, I.", *Revue de L'Histoire des Religions*, tome XCVII, No. 1, Janvier 1928, pp. 90–105. His surveys in Iran also provided invaluable material for his 1915 work, *Materiali dlya izucheniya vostoka* (Materials for the Study of the East), published by the Imperial Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, St. Petersburg.

From 1915-17 he served as Chargé d'affaires in the Russian Legation at Tehran. As the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 made problematic his return to Russia, in 1919 he moved to Paris where he worked at the Russian Embassy. There his expertise in Middle Eastern and Caucasian affairs was useful during the Versailles and Trianon peace settlements.

In 1923 he began to lecture on Persian literature at the École nationale des langues orientales vivantes, where he