

Barthold, whose disciple Minorsky was always proud to consider himself. Later in life, he continued the work begun by Barthold on the Tumansky manuscript of the *Hodud al-‘alam* (see below) and, in collaboration with his wife, made available to non-Russophones various works of Barthold in English translations (*Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, 3 vols., Leiden, 1956-62).

He had a year at Tashkent in Central Asia, and then from 1911 to 1914 was back in Persia and eventually served on the Four-Power (British, Russian, Turkish, and Persian) Commission to delimit the Turco-Persian border, from near Mount Ararat in the north to the head of the Persian Gulf at Moḥammera, the present-day Kōrramšahr (q.v.). This period was of formative importance for Minorsky, since he was able to familiarize himself with the topography and historical geography of this rugged, then little-known mountain region, and material from this storehouse of knowledge went into the work, *Materiali dlya izucheniya vostoka* (Materials for the Study of the East), published by the Imperial Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs (fasc. 2, St. Petersburg, 1915), of which Minorsky wrote the greater part. He also acquired a knowledge of Kurdish and of the Kurdish people, and the study of this people and their language were to be a major interest of his all through his life, culminating in the detailed sections he wrote on Kurdish history for the *Encyclopedia of Islam*. He was able subsequently to draw upon topographical, ethnological, and linguistic materials recorded at this time. Thus over forty years later, he was able to identify the fortress Paswē with the ancient Parsua, towards which the Assyrian King Sargon II states that he had “descended” (1957, p. 79). Likewise, the linguistic material he had gathered in northwestern Persia when he was attached to the Russian Legation in Tehran as First Secretary and then Chargé d’Affaires (1915-17) went, over two decades later, into his article on the dialect of the Khalaj. It was a pioneering study of this isolated archaic Turkish dialect that paved the way for the subsequent important linguistic studies on Khalaj language by Gerhard Doerfer. Accompanying him on this survey work was his wife, Tatiana Shebunina (d. 1987), the granddaughter of the Turkish scholar V. D. Smirnov; in later life Mrs. Minorsky was to be her husband’s helpmate in his academic work as collaborator, translator, proof reader, compiler of indexes and amanuensis, especially when, in his last years, his sight was failing.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 made it impossible for him to return to war-torn Russia, and in 1919 the Minorskys settled in Paris, where his expertise in Middle Eastern and Caucasian affairs was much in demand during the drawing-up of the Versailles and Trianon peace settlements. He produced a stream of articles on contemporary topics in the field of international affairs, while maintaining his strictly academic interests. These eventually led him in 1923 to take up teaching Persian and then Turkish and Middle East history at the École Nationale de Langues Orientales Vivantes, and this marks formally the transition from his career as a man of public affairs in Russia and France to that of the academic scholar in France and England. He now began producing a series of articles in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, many of considerable length and often embodying his on-the-spot topographical knowledge of Persia and the Caucasus; their authoritativeness has meant that many were reprinted, with minimal updating and modification in the second edition of that *Encyclopedia*.

Minorsky’s connection with Britain, where he was to spend the last, most productive thirty-four years of his life, began in 1930, when he was appointed Oriental Secretary to the International Persian Art Exhibition that was held in London in early 1931 under the patronage of the then ruler of Persia, Reżā Shah Pahlavi. As part of his duties, he enlarged his sphere of interest, lecturing and writing at this time on Persian art, since Persian art and book production and codicology, though never in the forefront of his interests and sphere of competence, were for him an integral part of the continuum of Persian culture, one closely connected, through manuscripts and book illustrations, with Persian history and literature. Later in his career, he produced a catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts and miniatures in the Chester Beatty Library (1958) and a