

In Memoriam



Yuri Bregel

November 13, 1925 – August 7, 2016

Yuri Bregel, an emeritus professor in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies and a renowned and admired scholar, passed away on Sunday, August 7, 2016, in his home in Massachusetts. Yuri is buried next to his wife, Liusia Bregel, at the same cemetery in Waltham, MA.

Yuri (b. 1925), one of the world's most prominent figures in the study of Islamic Central Asia's history and historiography, was a faculty member at Indiana University's Department of Central Eurasian Studies for two decades, and also had served as Director of IU's Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies (1986-1997) and as Director of its Title VI Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (1989-1997). He was always committed to the service and advancement of academic inquiry by publishing – in addition to his many books and essays on political, economic and ethnic history – also essential text editions and translations of primary materials in Turkic languages; bibliographies and bio-bibliographical surveys of Persian-language sources; as well as a historical atlas of Central Asia, and the initiation and editorship of distinctive journals in the field. Yuri paved the way for numerous scholars and students all over the world. He will be sorely missed.

The following text is from the 2015-2016 commemoration of our 50th year as a program/department. Yuri and Liusia were important contributors to our department and will be remembered with admiration and affection.

Born in Moscow in 1925, Yuri Bregel's family relocated to Fergana when he was 16. In 1943 he joined the Soviet Soviet Army, was assigned to an anti-tank artillery unit, and fought in the Crimea, Belorussia, Poland and Germany, was injured and twice decorated. After the war he enrolled at Moscow University where he studied Middle Eastern, Central Asian and Islamic history. He was arrested in 1949 and imprisoned on charges of 'anti-Soviet activity.' He spent five years in a hard labor camp in the northern Urals. Upon release, he resumed his studies and earned a doctorate in History at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow in 1961.

In 1955 he married Liusia who later accompanied him to Bloomington where she served as librarian for our Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies.

Yuri's scholarship gained considerable reputation, having worked on the 10-volume collection and republication of Vasily Bartol'd's works, on the production of the famed *Literary Monuments of the East* series and the Russian translation and significant expansion of Charles Storey's indispensable, multi-volume *Persian Literature*. To these endeavors, Yuri added original scholarship on political, economic and ethnic history of 19th-century Khiva.

After many efforts on his behalf by international colleagues, Bregel and his family were finally allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union in 1974, going to Israel where he joined the faculty of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and became an endowed Chair and Professor of the History of the Muslim Peoples.

He came to the IU Uralic and Altaic Studies Department in 1981, augmenting the department's research profile and course offerings in Central Asian history and historiography and in the study of Chagatai and Persian manuscripts while also enhancing the Library's holdings of rare primary and secondary Russian sources.

Bregel served as Director of the IU Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies from 1986 to 1997, and as Director of the IU Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center from 1989 to 1997. He served as consulting editor for the Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, senior editor for the Oriental Literature Public House in Moscow, a research fellow in the Institute for Oriental Studies Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union and a member of the Association for the Advancement of Central Asian Research and the Association for Central Asian Studies. He authored numerous publications on the medieval and early modern history of Central Asia, including the 3-volume *Bibliography of Islamic Central Asia* (1995), the edition and translation of the important Khivan chronicle *Firdaws al-iqbal* (1988 and 1999) and *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (2003) in addition to serving as editor-in-chief of *Papers on Inner Asia* and many other publications.

The IU Bregel Lecture Series was created to honor Yuri Bregel for his many contributions to the study of Central and Inner Asian and Persian and Turkic historiography.



*In loving memory of Liliya (Lusia) Bregel
11-26-1924 to 11-29-2009*