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The Pamir Archive: A world of information

My love for the high mountain country Tajikistan, my interest in the history of Central Asia together with my profession as cartographer prompted me to start building up The Pamir Archive 20 years ago. The result is not only a very large book collection of over 7,000 books in many languages dealing with Central Asia, but - with special emphasis on Tajikistan and the Pamir Region (ethnography, culture, history, archaeology, cartography, geology, glaciers, mountains, flora, fauna) - also a collection of very important maps showing the progress of knowledge about Russian Turkestan and adjoining areas from the eighteenth century up to recent times.

Especially valuable are the many maps from Russian origin, either not available in libraries outside Russia and the CIS countries, or folded away and hidden in books. There is also a dangerous lack of awareness of the historical value of maps in libraries and archives throughout Central Asia. The digitisation of these maps is a possibility not only to preserve the maps but also to present them on the internet all over the world. Three examples show the quality of the scans:

- <http://tinyurl.com/ht9tq3z>
- <http://tinyurl.com/zlnvypc>
- <http://tinyurl.com/byjq6nt>

A collection of over 1600 postcards from the beginning of the twentieth century up to the 1930s complements the physical collection. The digitisation of these postcards creates new potential for research. The quality of the scans can be seen here:

<http://tinyurl.com/jdgn74h>

The digitisation of ten thousands of articles and books dealing with all aspects of Central Asian matters and the following Optical Character Recognition (OCR) gives the possibility of machine translation in many languages and the text-to-speech option allows handicapped people to hear these texts either in the original or in any translated language. These prints and photographs were also digitised with high resolution. One example can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/juncoh6>

The cartographical output over the many years travelling in Tajikistan resulted in the three sheet tourist maps of Tajikistan 'North Tajikistan', 'South Tajikistan' and 'The Pamirs' sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) available in Tajikistan at different selling points and online from the Swiss distributor Geckomaps.com. Out of these mapping data a 'School Map of Tajikistan' was produced, printed in 50,000 copies

and distributed to all schools of Tajikistan. Many smaller mapping projects (i.e. for the Odyssey Guide Book ‘Tajikistan and the High Pamirs’) complete my work and there is still a lot to do to improve the tourism in Tajikistan with high-end cartographical outputs.



The Pamirs
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