**Aziz:** I am very pleased to introduce another participant of our Oral history project, the head of the department of the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, a well-known archaeologist, Doctor of Art History, Jangar Ilyasov.

A few words about the purpose of our project. We are collecting testimonies of people who have a stake in the important processes of intellectual, cultural life of our time, of our region. And I believe that we will be able to collect a palette of different life stories, life circumstances that will allow people in the future to try to reconstruct our time through oral histories that help to reveal people's attitudes to the time in which they live. We did not invite you here by chance. We are interested in you, you are a creative person, but it would be very interesting to talk about your father. He played a colossal role in choosing your profession. I can say that 3 of our interlocutors, 3 very important world-class historians, mentioned your father as an important motivation in choosing their profession.

And I can say about myself that in my childhood Jan and your father were the writers who influenced me and my choice of my profession. I even remember the first book of your father's I read, The Black Widow. A wonderful novel. In my childhood, your father's books were widely published, I saw amazing book covers on the bookshelves. I was impressed by the cover of the book "The Golden Istukan". They were wonderfully designed. What role did your father play in your life? And how do you rate him as a writer? As a man who did so much to promote history, particularly the history of Central Asia.

**Dzhangar:** First of all, thank you for the invitation. It is a great honour for me. I will be very pleased to talk about my father, about his work. Indeed, he did a lot to illuminate the most ancient layers of our country's history. He was one of the few who immersed himself in history, perhaps because it was an escape from reality, when you didn't want to write about the collective farm movement or the triumph of socialism.

**Aziz:** was he already working in the press at that time?

**Dzhangar:** in his youth he worked as a correspondent Komosomolets Uzbekistan, Tashkentskaya Pravda.

**Aziz:** did he start out as a journalist?

**Dzhangar:** he worked at the magazine Zvezda Vostoka, head of the department. But all this was before he started publishing his books. This gave him the opportunity to leave the service and concentrate on his creative work. On the one hand, it was difficult, because books took a long time to write, it was hard financially, but he had translations, he translated poetry.

**Aziz:** I didn't know that one.

**Dzhangar:** it was an opportunity to earn something. And to do creative work. How is he different from other writers? Because he's self-taught. A self-made man. He has seven grades of education. He didn't graduate from any school or institute. He grew up in Akkurgan district, in a state farm. During the war, the library of some history department was evacuated there. And there was a huge number of books on history and geography. He read these books and educated himself. Then he developed an interest in history and geography. He began to compose poetry, and such a talent emerged.

Aziz: I want to draw attention to what you said. I understand that true writers have intuition, imagination, which allows them to create realistic artistic images. He wasn't just writing a novel, he was writing a historical novel. I think "Path of Wrath" is about the uprising in Margilan.

**Dzhangar:** yes, it is mentioned in the beginning of the book.

**Aziz:** we historians know what a deep antiquity this is. This is what kind of knowledge and courage one must have. He reproduces the era so realistically . when I read it, I was absolutely sure that the man owns the scientific material.

**Jangar:** yes, this library gave him that impetus. He started reading, he started getting interested in scientific publications. He read these dry facts and had the ability to bring these facts to life. To see the person behind the fact. His imagination allowed him to vividly present and present in a way that would interest the reader. A lot of people who read his books say it's like he saw it all himself. I say, that's his imagination, that's his talent, that's the spark of God.

In doing so, of course, he relied on facts that he took from the scientific literature. Scientists debate on some issue for years and they don't always agree on certain problems. He took the theory that lay on his soul and put it in an artistic form, bringing these characters, these events to life. This is the talent of a writer.

**Aziz:** absolutely. Unlike many historical writers, of which there are a lot nowadays, who have a lot of fantasies about history, and his books have a scientific foundation.

**Dzhangar:** he tried to stick to it, but not without fantasy either. Scientists themselves do not always know how it was. These are long ago events, and we can only guess about many things.

**Aziz:** do you yourself have a preference for your father's work?

**Dzhangar**: I won't be original if I say that I like everything. I like the first edition of my father's books. It's written in a wonderful language. He was a good stylist. He had a rich Russian language. He was good at constructing phrases. A Tatar boy who grew up in a state farm and it was all at the expense of literature that came to him. In 1957 his first book Path of Wrath was published. In 1956 the story was published in the issues of the magazine Zvezda Vostoka and this is his first book. It is wonderfully designed by the artist Kaidalov. Beautifully, lovingly made book. I like it not only by contemplation but also by design. This is his second book Sogdiana. It's a novel. He said that I was going to write a novel, but it's more of a novella.

**Aziz:** great edition!

**Dzhangar:** this book also has illustrations by Kaidalov. And it too was done with a great deal of love. In 1958, there was a decade of Uzbek literature, culture and art in Moscow. Our artists, painters and writers went there. My father's first book was presented there. It was a success there. It was the time when Stalin had been gone for four years. The thaw had not yet come. And suddenly there is a novella that talks about events 2,500 years ago, unusual names.

**Aziz:** it was a mesmerising world!

**Dzhangar:** on the wave of this success he was accepted into the Writers' Union. I also like this story. It has an interesting plot. Tomiris is a popular female character.

Aziz: very much in demand right now.

**Dzhangar:** this story was published in 1964. And it's dedicated to me. I like it very much.

**Aziz:** how old were you then?

**Dzhangar**: 3 years old. This is one of my favourite books.

**Aziz:** I can understand that.

**Dzhangar**: I like all his works. He has books from antiquity to the medieval period. There is about Omar Khayyam.

**Aziz:** the tower of silence?

**Dzhangar:** No, The Serpent Charming. And Tower of Silence was a sequel that he didn't have time to finish. But we managed to prepare it somehow and one edition was released together.

**Aziz:** it's a remarkable evolution, from antiquity and to thinkers like Omar Khayyam.

**Jangar:** yes, he wanted to show different periods.

**Aziz:** what else I wanted to ask. He was a very prolific writer and he was a recognised writer, his books were published in large editions. I still remember to this day these bookshops where they were sold. They were national publications. But there was always a vibe that he wasn't recognised. That he was a dissident. For all his popularity. I never saw him on TV, there was never a single interview in the newspapers, not a single creative meeting.

**Dzhangar:** I want to say that he had a complicated life. He was not an easy man, with a complex character. He had his own shortcomings, inherent in creative personalities. And therefore, he did not fit into the image of a favourable Soviet writer. Officially, he was not particularly well-liked. But he was a little guilty of that himself. This is a book by my sister, Elona Ilyasova. We wrote this book with her, where we tried to tell about him very honestly. It tells about all the vicissitudes of life, the difficulties and why he was not officially recognised. Readers loved him, knew him, letters came to him from all over the Union. They wrote: We love you so much. Please send us a book. He didn't have these books.

After he left, there were 300,000 copies of his books. Nowadays, only popular books are published in such print runs. And that's not in Russia. Dontsova, Ulitskaya.

**Aziz**: but it's a different kind of literature.

**Dzhangar:** it was published in such circulation at that time. In 1985 Mehnat Publishing House opened here. And the first thing they did, they published 300,000 copies of his novels Tropoyu Angry, Sogdiana and Black Widow in one book. The publishing house made a lot of money.

**Aziz:** Did all-union publishing houses publish it?

**Dzhangar:** Sogdiana was supposed to be published in Moscow, but it did not work out. There was no edition in his lifetime. During his lifetime, the Spotted Death was translated into Lithuanian. Shortly before his death, in Slovakia they decided to publish The Snake Charmer. But he didn't get to see it. After his death, there were several editions in Moscow.

**Aziz:** what is the current situation with the publication of his books? In Uzbekistan?

**Dzhangar:** it has not been reprinted in Russian for a long time. There is an Uzbek translation. Sogdiana has been reprinted twice. The Serpent Charming. And The Spotted Death. This is also a good trend, because if young people read books, someone will read them. And now the publisher is preparing to release Path of Wrath in Uzbek. But it is delayed, I don't know why. There is such a talented person, Fatkhulin, who was in the first Yalla ensemble and then started making films. He has both feature films and documentaries. He made such a documentary film about my father. In 2016.

**Aziz:** beautifully done.

**Dzhangar:** in the form of an interview. Me, my sister, my family talk about my father, what we remember. This is also something new.

**Aziz:** as a reader, I would really like to have a collection of essays. There are no plans for such a thing?

**Dzhangar**: there were plans, but book publishing is not very good at the moment. Someone must be interested in it. On a three-volume book it is possible to put his work. But it must be an order. At the end of this book I inserted such a phrase that next year my father would be 90 years old. I don't know how the state will treat it, but my sister and I prepared our own gift. I gave the book to Akmal Saidov. He was hiding, and the last phrase apparently caught him, and on his initiative, in 2019 we celebrated his 90th birthday in the Union of Writers of Uzbekistan. We held a meeting, remembered him, and he prepared this book. We are very grateful to him. He undertook such a great labour to organise all this. When he was alive, there was nothing like this, no prizes, nothing.

**Aziz:** most importantly, a writer's life is in the readers. That is the greatest reward.

**Dzhangar:** I saw his stories on the internet. Somebody got lazy. Typed the text of his books. There are reviews. This shows that his work was interesting.

**Aziz:** I would recommend that his work be included in the school curriculum. So that children can learn their history from childhood through such wonderful artistic images.

**Dzhangar**: in the 90s there were textbooks, where the recommended literature included the work of my father.

**Aziz:** in the original they are written in Russian. It is necessary to publish both in Russian and Uzbek.

**Dzhangar**: yes, the fact that there is a translation is good. Someone can read it in Uzbek and get some knowledge.

**Aziz:** apart from Slovakia, are there any foreign publications?

**Djangar:** in Slovenia, Lithuania and all.

**Aziz:** I don't even doubt that these books have a great future. Especially if they are already in the internet space. That means the time will come. This is great literature. You and I are professionally engaged in history and we know better that this is serious literature.

**Dzhangar:** yes, it is fascinating. You mentioned colleagues who became archaeologists thanks to your books. Tigran came to Tashkent for this book.

**Dzhangar:** Rustam Suleymanov also told me that in his youth he read these books and decided to become an archaeologist. This is very gratifying.

**Aziz:** Dzhangar, you probably had no choice to become an archaeologist? Influenced by my father.

**Dzhangar:** I remember my childhood, my father, how he worked, I was still young. Then my parents divorced. But I guess my genes had something to do with it. I have been interested in history since childhood, but the main material for a historian is archives, books, manuscripts, chronicles. I was into travelling. I wanted to combine all that. Archaeology, where there's an element of romance. So I'm not just a historian, but an archaeologist historian. My father approved. He recalled that Brusov's brother was an archaeologist. Yes, I guess I had no other choice.

**Aziz:** in what year did you join the Faculty of History?

**Dzhangar:** in 1978.

**Aziz:** and what is your impression of your time as a student?

**Dzhangar:** wonderful. This is youth, these are good years. Archaeologists from the 1st year started going on expeditions and we were something special. Everyone was cramming, and we went on expeditions. It was interesting because you could feel history with your own hands. Romance. You don't get into archaeology without it. At the initial stage you have to feel it. On the 1st year there were 15 people and Nadezhda Krashenninikova gave a lecture. She knew the subject very well, but she told it all so monotonously. After 1-2 lectures almost everyone left because not everyone could stand it. Apart from romance, it's a lot of labour. It's blisters and sun and dust. And only four people stayed on the course. And it was like that every time. At first there were a lot of people who wanted to go, then they dropped out. Mostly we went to Cascadaria. The founder of our department, Mikhail Masson, he dealt with the eastern part of Kashkadarya and of course Turkmenistan. A huge ancient settlement. Old Merv, where our students had to go, it had been organised since the 40s. And there were these huge ruins of a huge city that was known throughout the East. And there, too, we were immersed in this environment.

 We started to master all this from the first year. Archaeology is theoretically impossible to master. You have to take an instrument in your hands and try to feel it, and that's why I remember this time with pleasure.

**Aziz:** Sultan-Sanjar Mausoleum.

**Dzhangar**: there are 5 settlements there, and one of them is Sultan-Sanzhar.

**Aziz:** which teachers have influenced you the most? Let's give you the names of these people. They deserve it.

**Dzhangar**: my supervisor was Svetlana Lunina. She is a wonderful teacher and her lectures I listened to with pleasure. She was intelligent, friendly. She is now in Moscow and we still communicate with her sometimes. Zamira Usmanova was the head of the department. She is also alive. We communicate with her too. She is a peculiar teacher, emotional, charismatic.

She took us to Merv for practical training. The first teacher who taught me archaeology was Anatloy Sagdullayevich. He is now an academician. He has educated a lot of personnel. I treat him with a sense of gratitude. Nadezhda Krashennikova, whom I've already mentioned. She gave a lot of knowledge. Nina Stolyarova. During expeditions she taught us how to dig, what tools to use. All of them influenced us.

**Aziz:** after university, where did you go to work?

**Dzhangar:** I was lucky. I ended up at the Institute of Art History, it was subordinate to the Ministry of Culture. But it was a research institute. I was hired by Galina Pugachenkova. She was the head of the History of Art and Architecture sector at that time. I came to her, we talked and she hired me. Ratviladze worked there. Bakhodyr Turgunov. It was already a team famous for discoveries in Surkhandarya region. The culture of art of the Kushan Empire.

**Aziz:** these are world-class discoveries.

**Dzhangar**: in 1959, Galina Anatolievna set up an Uzbek art history expedition. She was in charge of archaeology. It was such a cunning move. Usually, when archaeologists find something, it takes time for them to publish it, then only art historians get access and can interpret it in some way. And she said, we won't wait, we'll dig and study it ourselves. Ratviladze, Turgunov, Khakimov, they were all archaeologists, they went there and under archaeology they did art history and made wonderful discoveries.

**Aziz**: Was there competition with the Institute of Archaeology?

**Джангар**: конечно. Jangar: of course.

**Азиз:** они, наверное, ревностно относились к такому мощному конкуренту.

Aziz: they must have been jealous of such a powerful competitor.

**Jangar**: healthy competition is always a good thing.

**Aziz:** When a country has two such powerful centres with such a concentration of intellectual forces, it is great.

**Dzhangar:** in our Museum of History of the Peoples of the East, now the National Museum of History, we had our own group there. Lazer Albaum, a famous archaeologist, made remarkable discoveries, he had his own expedition.

**Aziz:** Restoration Institute? Weren't there a lot of archaeologists there too?

**Dzhangar:** in museums, in institutes, the Department of Archaeology, in the university in Samarkand, there were several such centres. in Karakalpakstan as well. All this allowed us to work widely throughout the republic, and as a result we had very serious discoveries and a broad picture of the development of history.

**Aziz**: was there still an independent Tashkent unit?

**Dzhangar:** not independent. Tashkent detachment of the Institute of Archaeology. They were subordinated to Samarkand. Now on the basis of the Tashkent detachment the Centre of Archaeology has been created. This is a new institution under the Academy of Sciences. The Institute of Archaeology remained in Samarkand. But they have a different departmental subordination, not the Academy. Everyone is trying to do science. And this is only for the good. The only problem is financing. There was a period when there was no money at all. It was the beginning of the 90s. The Republic became independent and there were more important tasks. But gradually everything got better. There are joint expeditions.

**Aziz:** to what extent do foreign expeditions fill this gap? And how do you assess their work?

**Dzhangar:** after the collapse of the Soviet Union, everything collapsed dramatically. There was no time for archaeology. And thanks to local expeditions it was somehow revived and preserved. The cadres were preserved. Thanks to the fact that there were partners from abroad, who were always interested in our region. They wanted to co-operate with us. It became possible. There used to be an iron curtain. Then there was a wider flow and it had a positive impact on the work to continue. Many people left science, but thanks to joint expeditions, we survived.

**Aziz:** which countries can you highlight?

**Dzhangar:** For example, co-operation with Japan. Active, French, Germans, Italians

**Aziz:** now the Chinese.

**Dzhangar:** yes, now the Chinese. China has strengthened in every way and now they can do excavations as well. Poland, Czech Republic, many countries.

**Aziz:** and Russia?

**Dzhangar**: The Russians are also actively co-operating with our expedition, the Museum of Oriental Art and the Hermitage, they have an expedition in the Bukhara region. We have always had the strongest ties with the Russians. They too have had periods of political instability. But co-operation continues. The Institute of Archaeology is also carrying out work. Foreign colleagues only work together. And this is a very good decision. They cannot come and work on their own. There must always be some institute, museum or organisation. A contract is concluded. The work is carried out jointly. All the materials remain with us. You can study them, publish them, but you can't take anything out.

**Aziz:** and the result is co-publications?

**Aziz:** and then discuss it?

**Dzhangar**: once published, any colleague can express his opinion. The material is introduced into science.

**Aziz:** at the Institute of Art History, what area of scientific research did you define and under whose supervision did you write your PhD?

**Dzhangar:** you could study what you like. Kushan towns. I was interested in the pre-Islamic period. Nomadic burial mounds of the Samarkand region. I wanted to study that. I went to Dalverzintepa, the Orlad burial ground in the Samarkand region. It so happened that I was directed to another medieval settlement. I was not keen on it, but I went. But when I started working there, I realised that it was also very fascinating. In 1987, my colleague Dmitry Rusanov and I found a hoard of bronze items, the largest in Central Asia. It's from the 11th century. Someone must have collected it then for remelting, but didn't have time and it was hidden. I wrote my PhD thesis on this hoard. Life makes its corrections. I still have a hobby - it is medieval ceramics. I have many different interests. Maybe that's not a good thing. It's better to concentrate on one thing, but I'm interested. And that's what counts. As a friend of mine said, We satisfy our curiosity at public expense.

**Aziz:** it's happiness, I guess.

**Jangar:** we do what we're interested in, and we get paid for it.

**Aziz:** preferably more. A personal question. You're lucky to have a wife. I am referring to your general profession.

**Dzhangar:** Yes, it is. It's that rare occasion when you're doing one thing. We have a lot to talk about. Not only about everyday life, but also about high matters. And as a result, the subject of my wife's thesis, Saida Ilyasova, she dealt with the ceramics of Tashkent and Fergana. This book is about Tashkent ceramics, which is simply outstanding, we were helped by co-authors. It turned out to be of very high quality, and the publication itself, illustrations, paper, but it is also a full-fledged study, a monograph. It is not just an album with pictures. Before that there were studies by Bursenko. The quality of Tashkent ceramics is superior to that of Samarkand. The ceramics of Samarkand, Afrosiab, Nishapur was a city in Iran, the ceramics is known there. Everything in the world science revolved around it. There is a great interest in ceramics. There are museums, collectors who collect it all. Our ceramics of the 9th-10th centuries is an important part of Islamic art. Tashkent ceramics is very good. And was unknown.

**Aziz:** this is definitely a breakthrough.

**Dzhangar**: it would be good to publish it in English, but it is not possible yet.

**Aziz**: and this? In German.

**Dzhangar:** this is the catalogue of the exhibition. There is an exhibition going to Berlin. Archaeological Treasures of Uzbekistan. From Alexander the Great to the Kushan Empire. The exhibition from the beginning of May to January 2024. This is the result of the work of all archaeologists of our country. For the first time Uzbekistan is represented so widely. This is very important to emphasise. The Fund for Support of Culture and Art has recently appeared. But it has already made big projects. This is an exhibition in the Louvre.

**Aziz**: I'll tell you how I learnt about this exhibition. I learnt about it from the Germans. The Germans told me about this amazing exhibition.

**Dzhangar**: in the preparation of this exhibition, we were on the scientific council, participated in the organisation and as a result, this catalogue is not only in French, but also in Uzbek. The catalogue of the German exhibition is also in Uzbek. This is the first time such large-scale projects, huge exhibitions with a large number of exhibits, and wonderfully published catalogues.

**Aziz:** excellent. In Russian, in German, in Uzbek. Here here are your father's books, books of which you are the author. Wonderfully complementary things. It's a great continuity. Let us hope it will continue.

**Jangar:** let's hope so.

**Aziz:** one last question. What are you doing now? What are you interested in now?

**Dzhangar:** I have been working in the Dalverzin tepa settlement since 2021. I was not there for a quarter of a century. And since 2021 I have started to manage the works. The settlement is huge, 40 hectares. Wonderful discoveries, gold treasure and sculptures. It was a capital city and there is a lot to be done there. As long as my strength and health will last, we will continue.

**Aziz:** I have the impression that Dalverzin is as inexhaustible as an atom. So many publications.

**Dzhangar:** exhibitions in both the Louvre and Berlin include material from Dalverzin

**Aziz:** Do you feel that responsibility?

**Dzhangar**: yes, it is a responsibility. The main thing is not to find something outstanding, but to study the history of the city, which will become a brick in the history of the country, the history of the region and the world.

**Aziz:** You are working on world-class monuments and I would like to be sure that you will continue these wonderful traditions, which your father laid in your family and wish you and your wife success for the benefit of our national science. That you continue to promote the literary heritage of your father, which is of lasting importance and value for the future. Thank you for the conversation.

**Jangar**: thank you for the invitation.