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# Saints and Sojourners: Towards an Economic History-From-Below of the Uyghur Homeland

**Speaker:** Dr. ERIC SCHLUESSEL (The George Washington University)

**Time & Date:** Thursday 12 August 2021 at 10 AM

**Venue:** The Fairbank Library of the Oriental Institute, Pod Vodárenskou věží 8, Prague 8

## Abstract:

The economy of the Uyghur homeland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century stood at the confluence of three expanding networks of commerce. These stretched across China, Russia, and British India, connecting ordinary bazaars far from any bank or railroad to factories and credit markets around the world. Scholarship has addressed the broader question of regional-level trade with Russia and India, and described socioeconomic change within the region in schematic terms, while neglecting the daily realities of the market and the region's diverse economic institutions, which do not fit easily into a priori theoretical categories.

This talk presents preliminary and ongoing research on the economy of Uyghur Xinjiang in the late Qing (1636/44-1912) and early Republic (1912-1949) through the institutions and practices that mattered on the local level. It will begin with newly uncovered detailed records concerning famine relief and official controls on market prices from a village-level administration in the oasis of Turpan. It considers the methodological problems of investigating land tenure and usage through Chinese- and Chaghatay-language sources. It discusses the transformations of Islamic pious endowments (*waqf*) under the pressure of expanding mercantile networks and the ecological consequences of those networks' collusions with officialdom. The account book of a Turpan cloth merchant will help illuminate potential directions for future research. Overall, the talk argues that an approach to local economic history centered around institutions and people--prior to international context--illuminates the agency of Turkic Muslims, not simply as victims of economic imperialism, but as participants and resisters.

*Registration for this event not necessary. For queries, please contact Ms Adriana Dolejší: [orient@orient.cas.cz](mailto:orient@orient.cas.cz)*