



Historical Significance Of Research Conducted At The Department Of Central Asian Archaeology

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the important research conducted at the Department of Central Asian Archaeology and their historical significance. The article examines how these studies shed new light on the history of Central Asia and contributed to the development of international archaeological science. It also assesses the place of archaeological monuments discovered and studied by the department in regional and global history. The information about cultural connections and historical processes identified as a result of the research reveals the versatility and depth of the history of Central Asia.

Keywords:

Central Asia, archaeology, historical research, archaeological monuments, cultural ties, historical processes, international archaeology.

Introduction. Until the beginning of the 20th century, the work carried out on the development and practical support of archaeology in the regions of Central Asia was accompanied by certain limitations and difficulties. The expeditions and field studies carried out during this period took place under the colonial rule of the Russian Empire, which affected the wide-ranging and in-depth study of scientific activity.

During the reign of the Russian Empire, the first initiatives to study the cultural monuments of Central Asia began as a result of the activities of the Imperial Archaeological Commission, established by decree of Emperor Alexander II on February 2, 1859. The Commission served as the main structure for financing and conducting archaeological research not only within Russia, but also in colonial territories.

The main part. In 1867, the first special scientific expedition was organized under the leadership of P.I. Lerkh. Its main goal was to study historical monuments located on the banks of the Syrdarya region. P.I. Lerkh's studies covered such places of interest as Turkestan, Shymkent, Tashkent, Khujand and Uratapa during 1867-1870. During these expeditions,

many historical sites were discovered, including ancient fortresses and cemeteries, religious and cultural monuments.

The next important scientific expedition aimed at in-depth study of historical sites of the Turkestan region was led by V.V. Radlov in 1868–1869. This expedition conducted research on historical monuments along the Chu and Ili rivers, as well as in the southern Tashkent and Zarafshan oasis regions. As a result of these studies, new information was collected about the cultural and historical wealth of these regions.

Another scientific expedition, led by orientalist A.L. Kun in 1867–1882, ended with the preparation of the “Turkestan Album”. This album was aimed at a wider introduction to the historical monuments of Central Asia and consisted of archaeological, ethnographic, industrial and historical sections. The album was compiled to collect information about the Central Asian region and provide a general understanding.

Literature analysis. In 1883, the writer-colonel V.V. Krestovskiy conducted stratigraphic excavations in the lower cultural layers located in the southern part of Afrasiab. His excavations

were carried out 42 meters long and to a maximum depth of 8 meters, during which he managed to identify cultural layers belonging to different periods. These works were of great importance in the comprehensive study of the cultural layers of the region.

The next expeditions (1890-1900) devoted to the study of the monuments of the ancient and unique city of Samarkand in Turkestan were carried out under the leadership of N.I. Veselovsky. The research conducted by N.I. Veselovsky in Turkestan, unlike previous expeditions, is distinguished by the fact that it included a special professional group. That is, the structure of this expedition included the architect P.P. Pokryshkin, N.I. Shcherbina-Kramarenko, A.V. Shusev, the famous artist S.M. Dudin, and the photographer I.F. Chistyakov. These expeditions occupy a particularly important place in the history of the study of the monuments of the era of Amir Temur and the Timurids. They were specially involved in the study of the most famous and majestic architectural monuments of Samarkand - the Guri Amir Mausoleum and the Bibi Khanum Mosque.

During the expedition, the photographer I.F. Chistyakov created a collection of the first photographs of the monuments of Samarkand. These photographs were later included in the "Turkestan Album". The Turkestan Museum compiled a general list of the monuments registered by the archeology department. The most valuable part of the cultural treasures collected under the leadership of N.I. Veselovsky was taken to the center to replenish the funds of the Imperial Hermitage. The knowledge and experience of local people were widely used in determining the age and value of the material sources collected during the Turkestan expedition.[1]

In order to study the history of Central Asia from an archaeological perspective, on October 19, 1895, the Turkestan Archaeological Amateurs' Circle (TAHT) was established in Tashkent, uniting enterprising people interested in studying the history of the region. Until 1917, members of the circle conducted archaeological searches and excavations in the region, collected various historical objects, and studied

ancient monuments in the region. Amateur local historians, interested in the monuments of the past of their homeland, collected antiques and artifacts. However, due to the fact that archaeological monuments had not yet been comprehensively and widely studied and the finds were not well identified, at that time the ancient and later periods were not fully covered.

Results. In some cases, members of the Turkestan Archaeological Amateurs' Circle have conducted observational research on their own initiative, as well as individual members of the circle. Studies show that the fact that the TAT did not conduct field research in Central Asia based on a well-developed research plan, and that practically no scientifically based archaeological excavations were conducted, indicates that there are no real archaeological experts among the circle members[1].

Analysis shows that during the excavations, there were no specific archaeological and methodological manuals, no lists of archaeological finds were recorded, no graphic drawings of a specific excavation site were made, and no daily reports were written[6]. One of the main reasons for the fact that in the archaeological study of the Turkestan region, more extensive archaeological excavations were carried out in the Samarkand region than in other regions of the country was the establishment of an archaeological museum in Samarkand in 1874. Soon, the museum collected more than 5 thousand archaeological, numismatic objects and manuscripts. As a result, the busiest antique market in Central Asia operated there. Over the years, the largest private collections of ancient artifacts were formed in the hands of V.L. Vyatkin, B.N. Kastalsky, M.V. Stolyarov.

In 1889, a government decree stipulated that any person or organization planning archaeological and historical research in the territories of the Russian Empire must obtain permission from this commission. It was also required that the material and spiritual resources collected as a result of scientific research and expeditions be transferred to the Imperial Archaeological Commission. Particular attention was paid to the fact that the restoration and repair of the architectural

monuments under study were also carried out under the permission and supervision of this commission and the Imperial Academy of Arts. The historical documents studied show that the study of the material and spiritual culture of the indigenous peoples of Central Asia was extremely indifferent and biased.

In particular, it can be seen that during this period the cultural heritage of the peoples of Central Asia was viewed with a disdainful eye. That is, cases of deviation from objective considerations prevailed in their study. The collection of manuscript sources on the history of the peoples of Central Asia, collected by researchers, was transferred to the Asian Museum (now the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences), the collection of coins of the Bukhara Khans was transferred to the Hermitage and the Russian Archaeological Society. The collection of photographs depicting the historical monuments of Central Asia, the lifestyle of the local population, traditional occupations, clothing culture, etc., created with great interest by the authors, was transferred to representatives of the imperial family.

In the archaeological research conducted after the 20th century, V. V. Bartold, V. L. Vyatkin, N. I. Veselovsky made a great contribution. In 1904, V. V. Bartold conducted archaeological excavations in the Shakhristan part of the Afrasiyab historical settlement, and later V. L. Vyatkin. It can be said that the science of archaeology in Uzbekistan was formed in the 20s-30s. V. L. Vyatkin excavated the ruins of Afrosiyab (1925; 1929-30), B. P. Denike excavated ancient Termez (1926-27), M. E. Masson excavated the Akhangaron valley (1925-28), and the ruins of Ayritom (1932-33). Archaeological research conducted in Turkestan was the first step in the study of ancient material and cultural monuments of the peoples of Central Asia.

The architectural monuments of the Turkestan region were extensively studied during the Russian Empire, with the active participation of organizations such as the Imperial Archaeological Commission and the Turkestan Amateur Archaeology Club. These organizations paid special attention in their charters to the in-

depth study of the material and spiritual heritage of the indigenous peoples of Central Asia. These studies were carried out by scholars who, despite the colonial policy, respected local culture and sought to preserve it.

Despite the policy of the colonial administration, especially regarding the plunder of historical and cultural monuments, a number of orientalist and archaeologists worked who put forward the idea of studying the material and spiritual heritage of the indigenous peoples of the Turkestan region from an objective scientific point of view and preserving it. Among them, such names as V.L. Vyatkin, V.V. Bartold and M.E. Masson should be noted. These scientists made a significant contribution to the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of the Turkestan region, including architectural monuments, and to preventing their destruction.

Problems and alternative approaches. The need for an objective and in-depth study of history, research into the most ancient periods of humanity, the preservation of material heritage and its presentation to the general public, as well as the development of scientific thinking by passing these treasures on to future generations, is growing. Such needs are strengthening the need to establish specialized scientific schools in archaeology among specialists, researchers, and students in educational institutions.

To conduct research more effectively, it is necessary to abandon primitive methods used in archaeological excavations, identify problem areas encountered during the research process, and improve observational methods used in recording archaeological sources and materials. All of this requires systematic and methodologically well-thought-out research.

As a result of extensive archaeological research conducted in various regions of Central Asia, the first specialized school of archaeology for Central Asia was founded by M.E. Masson. M.E. Masson's approaches to archaeology were widely recognized by the archaeological scientific community. He emphasized that an archaeologist should not collect objects for personal gain at the object of his research. Instead, all archaeological materials found

should serve the scientific purposes of the research and be included in the collections of appropriate museums or scientific institutions. These views of Masson are one of the important principles that determine the ethical standards in the field of archaeology. In his opinion, all archaeological finds, regardless of how they were found, should enter the collections of public museums or scientific archives. This approach, in turn, is supported by the scientific community in order to ensure the correct and fair management of archaeological materials. In accordance with these ideas of Masson, archaeological work and finds should be managed in a specific way, preserving our historical treasures and creating the opportunity for future generations to use them as educational and scientific resources.

Among the archaeologists trained under M.E. Masson, there are those who participated in various field studies and expeditions and made significant contributions to the field. In particular, I.A. Sukharev, who actively participated in the first Sumbar archaeological expedition in Turkmenistan in 1929 and the Termez Archaeological Complex Expedition (TAKE) in Uzbekistan in 1936 and 1937; N.N. Wundsettel, who participated in the Toytepa expedition with Masson in 1928; T. Mirgiyozov, who participated in a number of expeditions; and V.D. Zhukov, who defended his candidate dissertation at the Department of Central Asian Archaeology with Masson's guidance and support and participated in expeditions conducted in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan between 1934 and 1947, are among the leading researchers in this field.

These scholars have played a significant role in the field of archaeological research and the preservation of spiritual heritage. Their work, in addition to continuing Masson's scientific direction, is of great importance for the development of Central Asian archaeology. They have also demonstrated the importance of studying and preserving historical and cultural treasures for future generations, and have earned great respect within and outside the field.

A number of important events and activities played a special role in the establishment and

development of the archaeological school under the leadership of M.E. Masson. In particular, archaeological observations carried out in connection with the beginning of the construction of the "Great Fergana Canal" in 1939 were of particular importance in this process. Since the ancient monuments located in the Fergana Valley were under threat during this construction process, special archaeological expeditions were organized under the leadership of Masson.

A total of 33 people participated in this expedition, divided into three archaeological groups (Group 1 - on the construction of the northern channel led by T.G. Obolduyeva, Group 2 - on the construction of the southern channel led by V.D. Zhukov, Group 3 - a group led by Y. Gulyamov) and one architectural group. These groups carried out work on recording, studying and protecting archaeological materials found during construction work.

Archaeological observations carried out within the framework of the construction of the "Great Fergana Canal" radically changed the existing understanding of the history of the Fergana Valley. Until now, the history of Fergana was based mainly on sources written down by Chinese historians. The results of this expedition provided new historical information based on local and ancient sources, which made it possible to study the history of Fergana more deeply and objectively.

After the completion of the archaeological observation expeditions, M.E. Masson was invited to teach special courses in archaeology at the Central Asian State University. These courses were conducted within the framework of the Department of Central Asian Archaeology, which was established on April 1, 1940. The department was initially organized in a small structure, and its main task was to conduct an in-depth study of the history, lifestyle, material culture, crafts, ceramics, architecture, art and other areas of the population of Central Asia and adjacent territories.

With the outbreak of World War II, the department was temporarily suspended, but was legally restored in 1942 and from February 1, 1943 had a full associate professorship. At that time, the department was headed by

candidate of architectural sciences G.A. Pugachenkova. Under her guidance, three young researchers were being trained: assistant Y.A. Davidovich, graduate student V.A. Levina and graduate student B.A. Litvinsky. During this period, the department's activities were focused not only on educational, but also on scientific research, playing an important role in the study of historical and cultural heritage.

Conclusion. World-class archaeological practices and approaches should be studied, and the programs and methods of national archaeological schools should be updated, enriched with modern scientific methods and technologies. These updates will maintain Uzbekistan's leading position in the field of archaeology and expand its opportunities to contribute to the global scientific community. These activities will also be an important step in preserving the historical and cultural heritage and ensuring its sustainable development for future generations.

Such reforms will create a deep foundation of knowledge and skills for young professionals, making them internationally competitive. At the same time, they will increase the country's potential for cultural diplomacy and promoting its historical heritage on a global scale.

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