

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS AND RESEARCH OF THE SOUTH ARAL REGION IN THE 19TH CENTURY: THE CONTRIBUTION OF RUSSIAN SCHOLARS AND TRAVELERS

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Abstract

The article focuses on the contributions of Russian scholars and travelers to the study of the history of the peoples of the Southern Aral Sea region, both in political and socio-economic terms. Members of the 1873 and 1874 scientific expeditions left a rich historical and ethnographic material about the population of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, which opens new pages in the history of the native land.

Keywords: Expedition, Khiva campaign, Southern Aral Sea region, A.Kun, M.Bogdanov, N. Karazin, economy.

Introduction

Currently, the study of the history of Uzbekistan as a whole and the history of the peoples of the Southern Aral Sea region, in particular, based on the information of eyewitnesses - scholars, travelers, military and state figures of the 18th-19th centuries, is a pressing task. After all, the stories of eyewitnesses can be a very valuable source and a basis for serious historical research. In Russian and European historiography, the main problem of scientific research on the history of the Southern Aral Sea region has emerged. The authors, in most cases, tried to investigate and analyze the events and facts independently, as witnesses to the events that occurred. The works of Russian-speaking authors are important for researching the history of the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of the peoples of the Southern Aral Sea region.

The works of Russian travelers, scholars, and various officials of the Tsarist government acquaint us with the political and administrative structure, economic and political conditions of Central Asia as a whole and its individual regions, in particular.

More detailed work on the study of Central Asia in general and, in particular, the issue of the annexation of Central Asia to Russia was carried out by representatives of the Russian Orientalist historical school. Among the general conceptual views reflected in the Russian pre-revolutionary historiography of Central Asia during its annexation to Russia is the emphasis on the stagnation of Eastern societies under the influence of religion and despotic state power.

The works of Russian scholars comprehensively study the nature, history, and cultural achievements of the Central Asian peoples.



The political and socio-economic changes that took place in the region were accompanied by changes in the cultural life of the people.

During this period, the main method of studying the region remained expeditionary, although the nature of the expeditions changed somewhat.

First of all, expeditions acquire a complex character. The unification of scientists with different specializations within expeditions provided an opportunity to conduct extensive and detailed research from different perspectives simultaneously.

Sometimes, several expeditions led by different specialists follow one another to study the given territory more thoroughly.

An example of the first method of sending expeditions is the expeditionary research conducted during the 1873 Khiva campaign, as well as the organization of the Amu Darya expedition. A striking example of the second is the Pomir expeditions of Severtsov, Oshanin, and Mushketov. Participants of the 1873 Khiva campaign, particularly the Turkestan detachment, left a large amount of information about the peoples of the Southern Aral Sea region.

One of them, the renowned orientalist and local historian A.L. Kuhn, graduated from the Petersburg University in 1865 with a degree in Oriental Studies. In 1868, he was appointed at the disposal of the Turkestan Governor-General for ethnographic and statistical research of the region and for drawing up a draft of the structure of educational affairs in the Turkestan region. One of his most important tasks was the search for the remains of the famous library of Timur. In 1870, he participated in the Iskanderkul expedition, in 1873 in the Khiva campaign, and in 1876 in the Kokand campaign. In the early 1870s, he compiled the "Turkestan Album" of photographs on geography, ethnography, history, and archaeology. During campaigns, he collected various monuments, documents, and books, which were sent to museums and libraries in Russia. While working in Turkestan, he traveled extensively and wrote several articles. He was elected a corresponding member of the Institute of Living Oriental Languages.

He made a great contribution to the study of the history and culture of Turkestan, including the Southern Aral Sea region. In particular, he made notes here, such as "Kungrad Rulings," "The Legend of Kungrad," and others. A number of his articles published in the press in 1873-1874 contain very valuable information about the crafts, tax system, cities, and population of the Khiva Khanate [1].

A member of this expedition, Modest Nikolaevich Bogdanov, graduated from the Simbirsk gymnasium in 1859, and in 1864 from the natural science department of the Physics and Mathematics Faculty of Kazan University. In 1871, after receiving a master's degree in zoology from Petersburg University, he was elected its full-time associate professor, and in 1872 - keeper of the zoological museum of the Academy of Sciences. In 1873, he participated in the Khiva expedition, and in 1874, he participated in the Aral-Caspian expedition, where he collected zoological collections and conducted research. In 1876-1878, he was sent abroad and worked in museums in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, especially on the study of bird collections. In his work "Essays on the Nature of the Khiva Khanate and the Kyzylkum Desert," he asserts that "the abundance of animals and birds contributed to the development of hunting, which, however, had an auxiliary commercial significance among the main population of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya. They were engaged in it, mainly in autumn and winter, i.e., in their free time from



agricultural work. The main population hunted, mainly, small game - pheasants, hares, waterfowl, etc. Large game - tigers, wild boars, wolves - were not usually hunted, but were pursued and trapped only to ensure the safety of their fields and herds, to which these animals caused enormous damage" [2].

Another participant of the 1873 Khiva campaign, Alexander Vasilyevich Kaulbars, explored the delta and old channels of the Amu Darya, successfully finding a navigable route from the Aral Sea to the river, through which the steamship "Perovsky" was conducted. Having completed this work, Kaulbars engaged in the study of the dry river of the Syr Darya. The results of these works are presented by him in the works "Lower Amu Darya" (with atlas) and "Ancient Channels of the Amu Darya"; the author's main conclusions - the Amu Darya previously flowed into the Caspian Sea, and later began to carry its waters to the Aral Sea, between these two periods the river flowed into the Sary-Kamysh Lake, from where the excess water flowed into the Krasnovodsk Bay along the channel called Uzboy [3].

The military campaign to the Khiva Khanate in 1873 and the joint expedition with it once again awakened the Russian Empire's attention to the Aral-Caspian lowlands. It was decided to organize an expedition to study the terrain in detail.

In 1874, the Russian Geographical Society organized a Commission to discuss all issues related to the study of the Aral-Caspian Lowland and the departure of an expedition there. Members of the commission were A.I. Glukovskoy, M.N. Bogdanov, Riza Kuli Mirza, P.I. Lerkh, A.L. Kun, L.P. Sobolev, V.V. Grigoriev, and others.

This Commission compiled the "Program for Research," which became the basis for the work of the 1874 Amu Darya expedition.

This expedition consisted of geodetic-topographic, meteorological, hydrological and hydrographic, natural-historical, and ethnographic-statistical departments.

The participants of this expedition provided information about meteorological observations made by observatories in Nukus and Petro-Alexandrovsk: pressure, temperature, air humidity, water vapor elasticity, wind speed and direction, cloud cover and cloud movement direction, and especially careful study of water evaporation, as well as hydrometric studies of the Amu Darya. At the same time, geographical and geological descriptions of the areas from Kashkana-tau to Chimbay, and from there to Petro-Alexandrovsk were conducted.

The description of the artist N. Karazin's journey in 1874, when the author participated in the Amu Darya expedition and traveled with others and its members along the Syr Darya from Kazalinsk through Kosaral Island, along the Aral Sea to the Amu Darya delta (along the branches of the Small Darya, Ulkandarya, to Chimbay along the Kegeyli stream, Kuvansh-jarma to Nukus and further to Petro-Alexandrovsk), is of great interest. Many ethnographic observations have been made [4].

During this expedition, N. Karazin made several sketches, which were later published in scientific journals. Along with his drawings of the nature and historical and cultural monuments of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, N.N. Karazin also provides their detailed description. For example, the description of the madrasah at the Shylpyk monument is interesting: "At the foot of Chalpyk, the Khoja Niyaz madrasah took shelter. It was a building made of fired brick, with a Buddhist-style facade and hemispherical domes. It was far from any other dwelling, and here, on



the edge of the dead desert, stretching to the left of the road, it was a convenient shelter for solitude and contemplation. The building was built at the end of the last century by a single mullah Khoja-Niyaz" [5].

Another painting depicts the entrance from the sea to the Ulkun-Darya branch. Completely flat shores, almost bare, favorite dwellings of sea birds: gulls, fishermen, and coastal partridges - occupy all the first and distant shots of the painting. Another painting depicts a fishing camp in the lakes of Sarakul. "In the foreground, there's an original marker for marking the passage; it's just a bundle of bundled reeds - both cheap and simple, visible from afar. Fishermen's boats are tied to the canopy, and the fishermen themselves are busy with their work in the shack - and there, further away, hang the results of their fishing: a fish hanging to be dried in the sun. Behind these reeds - the mountain strip of Kuskon Tau is barely visible" [6].

N.N. Karazin's artistic system is not derived only from concrete reality, but it is also incomprehensible without clarifying the realities of life and environment that influenced the solution of his creative tasks, those vital impulses that stimulated the work of the writer and artist.

Thanks to the drawings of N.N. Karazin, a vast amount of material was collected on the characteristics of the natural conditions of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya. Thus, the study of the nature of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya went from the collection of scattered materials to the systematic study by scientific institutions. Thanks to the drawings of N.N. Karazin, Russian and world science received extensive and reliable geographical and visual information about the Aral-Caspian basin and the lower reaches of the Amu Darya.

Thus, these works, containing important information about the population of the Khiva Khanate, its cities and occupations, communication routes, and trade and economic relations, are of great importance for studying the history and ethnography of the native land.

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