Establishment and Formation of the Archaeological Information System of the Samarkand Region in the Soviet Period and in the Years of Uzbekistan's Independence

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Abstract:

The article discusses issues related to the development of archeology in Central Asia and the Samarkand region from the middle of the twentieth century to the present. The author focuses on the methodology for conducting archaeological excavations, qualitative changes during joint international archaeological expeditions. The processes of creation and development of the archaeological information system of Central Asia are also shown. The author argues about the importance of creating an archaeological information system of Central Asia and the Samarkand region.

Keywords: archeology, archaeological expedition, history, international cooperation, stationary excavations, archaeological sites, exploration work, database, archaeological information system of Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION

After gaining independence in Uzbekistan, the attitude to its historical and cultural heritage has radically changed. A broad scope is open for studying the rich history of its people. During the years of independence, the archeology of Uzbekistan has risen to the international level. In particular, the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan has organized close cooperation with scientists from Europe and Japan to study archeological monuments in the middle part of the Zarafshan valley. An Uzbek-French expedition (MAFOUZ - Franco-Uzbek archaeological mission), an Uzbek-Italian and Uzbek-Japanese expedition (Kyoto University), worked in this region ***[6: p.3-15].***

All the noted archaeological expeditions conducted stationary excavations at four large archaeological sites ***[1: p.7-12]***. The leading position was occupied by the Uzbek-French expedition, which carried out archaeological excavations at two settlements - Afrasiab and Koktepa. An Uzbek-Italian expedition carried out archaeological excavations at the early medieval settlement of Kafyrkala near Samarkand. The Uzbek-Japanese expedition carried out excavations at the large settlement of Kalai Dabusia in the western part of Samarkand Sogd.

Together with the noted stationary archaeological work, these expeditions worked in close cooperation on creating an archaeological information system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Considering the degree of study of the topic, it is necessary first to dwell on the works of such authors as Buryakov Yu.F., Kasymov M.R., Rostovtsev O.M. **[2,3,4]**, in which the methods of archaeological excavations in the Tashkent oasis are presented, the material and urban culture of the ancient population of Chach and Ilak is revealed, the historical topography of the ancient cities of the Tashkent oasis is compiled, a detailed historical and archaeological sketch of Chach and Ilak is

given. The work of Berdimuradov A.E. and Pardaeva M.H. **[1]** shows significant changes in archeology and in the methods of conducting archaeological expeditions and information processing during the period of independence of Uzbekistan. Shirinov T.Sh., Berdimuradov A.E., Pardaeva, M.H. **[6]** highlights the processes of formation of archaeological science in Uzbekistan and its international level at the present stage. The work of Isamiddinov M.Kh. **[5]** contains data on archaeological research and compilation of a collection of archaeological sites in the Samarkand region during the period of joint international archaeological expeditions during the period of independence of Uzbekistan. Also, in the joint work of Rondelli B., Tosi M., Franceschini F., Isamiddinov M. **[7]** (in English), data on the Uzbek-Japanese archaeological expedition carried out jointly with archaeologists from the University of Kyoto (Japan) are summarized. informational material on the archeology of Samarkand as the center of the Zarafshan Valley.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology for writing this article is based on the principles of independence and a civilizational approach to the historical process. Also, speaking about the article's methodology, I want to emphasize that we used methods of selection and classification of material, comparative analysis of the facts, opinions, and conclusions, as well as the method of historicism and objectivity. The principle of historicism and objectivity made it possible to study the issue's historiography in its species diversity.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Among the Central Asian archaeologists who first dreamed of creating a database was B.A. Litvinsky. In the 50s of the twentieth century, the first large expeditions began to work, which yielded significant results, collected much information together, summarized the collected materials, and made historical and cultural conclusions, which in turn required enormous time and effort. Among these expeditions, the largest was the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition led by M.E. Masson; the Pamir-Alai expedition led by A.N. Berstam; the Zarafshan expedition (Late Penjikent) headed by A.Yu. Yakubovsky, A.M. Belenitsky, B.I. Marshak and the Mahandarya expedition led by Ya.G. Gulyamov.

In this regard, archaeological data began to grow sharply and accumulate on individual sites where archaeological excavations were carried out. A similar process began not only for individual sites but also for all major regions and oases of Central Asia. Indicative, for example, are archaeological work, where aviation was also used to carry out exploration work. As a result, detailed photographic data were obtained on many individual sites and the ancient irrigation system of the Khorezm oasis as a whole.

The compilation of a set and preparation of maps of the archaeological sites of Central Asia began. In particular, in the 70-80s of the twentieth century, exploration work was carried out to compile archaeological monuments in all regions of Uzbekistan, including the Fergana Valley. However, all these works were carried out by different authors at different technical and quality levels. Materials on the compilation of a collection of archaeological monuments were published only in the Tashkent region **[2]**, and generalizing works have been written on these monuments **[3,4]**. In contrast, the materials prepared for the rest of the regions of Uzbekistan have not been published.

In connection with the continued work of these large expeditions, the amount of information has grown so much that, without the creation of a database, it was impossible to work not only for historians and archaeologists but also for representatives of the protection of historical and archaeological monuments. Despite this, B.A. Litvinsky (now deceased) collected books, magazines, articles, abstracts of dissertations, and other library data on the history, archeology, and ethnography of Central Asia. At present, his library on these sciences is the best and most complete, even in

comparison with state libraries. However, at that time, to realize such a dream, i.e., to create the database, there was no technical capacity.

In the mid-80s of the twentieth century, the French researcher J.C. Garden, who worked in Afghanistan, understood the need to create an archaeological map of Central Asia and for the first time laid out the theoretical basis for this work in his numerous works on information systems and the development of technical means for distributing data through an information network. But at the same time, J.K. In those same years, Garden realized that the technical capabilities were beginning to appear, and the political situation, both in Afghanistan and Central Asia, was not reliable, and the necessary conditions for such work were lacking.

The technical capabilities of the 21st century make it possible to engage in such work. One of the first to deal with these issues was Italian archaeologists, in particular, Professor of the University of Bologna (Italy) M. Tosi and his students B. Rondelli, S. Mantelini in collaboration with S. Stride (University Barcelona, Spain), M. Isamiddinov, A. Berdimuradov (Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan) ***[7: p.9-18].***

S. Stridet did the same work in the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan. New, significant prospects for creating an archaeological information system in the middle part of the Zarafshan valley have opened up archaeologists. We emphasize that in the middle part of the Zarafshan valley, the history and culture of this region, together with archaeologists from France, have been studied for more than 20 years. Italian colleagues have joined archaeologists from Uzbekistan with their new ideas, technical capabilities, and most importantly, this group includes young, talented, and energetic people.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The significance of this system is so great that it will be possible to solve several historical and cultural issues facing our archaeologists in the process of collecting data in the future. Such work is also necessary for representatives of the protection and use of historical and cultural monuments. Here are the most important ones:

1. Thanks to such technical capabilities, it is possible to study irrigation issues from ancient times to the present. For example, the Dargom, Bulungur, Payaryk, Narpai, Eski Angora, Mirzaaryk, etc.
2. Modern technical capabilities, ancient space surveys, will provide many data for fixing already destroyed or destroyed monuments in the 70-80s of the twentieth century.
3. A volumetric study of the archaeological sites of Samarkand Sogd using old maps with a scale of 1: 10000 will give a very detailed picture of the stages of human development of the entire area under study. Working with such old maps will allow getting data even on destroyed monuments. For this, it is necessary to collect ceramic materials at the site of destroyed or demolished tepas (hills).
4. When creating a database, it is also possible to obtain detailed information about individual micro-oases with their hierarchically distinguished settlement structures. In ancient times, such micro-oases, in many cases, had their autonomous irrigation system.
5. It is possible to obtain additional data on the natural and climatic conditions of the Samarkand Sogd, starting from the Quaternary period and up to the era of antiquity. This will provide additional materials to scientists dealing with the ecology of Central Asia and the ecosystem as a whole.
6. In the work process, it is necessary to pay attention to the collection of survey data with the involvement of the most significant possible number of older adults since it will be necessary to

find out the name of the monument. This canal irrigated this monument, nearby villages, bridges, and various legends preserved in the memory of older people. Such information, together with historical sources, will provide accurate materials both on the historical topography and on the historic geography of the area. We give an example of the exploration work of 2006 on Miankal in the Samarkand region, carried out by M. Isamiddinov and Bernardo Rondelli **[5].**

7. During the collection of archaeological data, it is possible to collect materials on the ethnographic map of Uzbekistan. In the future, it is possible to draw up an ethnic map of the region under study in dynamic development from the ancient era to the present day.

The database needs no introduction. Its use by Central Asian archaeologists includes not only catalogs of monuments but also catalogs of coins, shards, figurines, and almost all other data.

At present, the work on the compilation of AISCA (archaeological information system of Central Asia) has been completed, three volumes of this extensive work have been prepared for publication. These volumes are dedicated to the Urgut, Taylyak, Samarkand regions, and the city of Samarkand. Intensive work is underway to collect data for the rest of the Samarkand region.

Thus, the advent of digital libraries has revolutionized research across all disciplines. At the initiative of Italian and French colleagues, all publications on the archeology of Central Asia are systematically scanned, making them publicly available in digital format. Each article will be automatically attached to the data included in the information system, i.e., each article dedicated to a particular monument.

If the AISCA of the Samarkand region is created, then the complete list and the most complete information about archeological monuments not only on the territory of Uzbekistan but throughout Central Asia as a whole will be received.

Currently, the creation of AISCA is planned for all regions of Uzbekistan, including the regions of the Fergana Valley. The significance of the creation of AISCA is excellent because even in the middle of the twentieth century, when the first archaeological work began on this territory, archaeologists noticed that many monuments were destroyed due to the density of villages and cities.

Based on the above examples, it can be argued that the creation of AISSA will help to reveal even traces of archaeological monuments that have long been demolished.

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