

PERSONALIA

Aleksandr Ivanovich Solovyev: In Honor of his 65th Birthday

Aleksandr Ivanovich Solovyev, Doctor of History, a prominent Russian archaeologist, was born in Novosibirsk on the 31st of August 1955. His parents played a huge role in making up his personality; therefore, it appears appropriate to say at least a few words about them. Ivan Petrovich Solovyev was a front-line soldier, who went through the Great Patriotic War as an artillery reconnaissance officer, holder of many orders and medals. After the victory, he received a higher legal education, and throughout his life held high positions in the legal structures of the Novosibirsk Region. Ekaterina Ivanovna Solovyeva was a scholar of history. She worked at the Novosibirsk State Pedagogical Institute, went through all the stages from a teacher to the rector of the institute. She defended her candidate and then doctoral dissertations on the issues relating to the history of a Siberian village in the 19th century. For almost all the authors of this essay, Ekaterina Solovyeva was a teacher and mentor, and we are immensely grateful to her.

Aleksandr Solovyev received an excellent education, having graduated from one of the best schools in Novosibirsk (School No. 10, with in-depth study of the English language) and the Humanities Department of the Novosibirsk State University (in 1977). He was interested in many historical disciplines, which contributed to the formation of a well-educated personality with a broad outlook. This feature has always favorably distinguished A.I. Solovyev.

Apparently, everything changed after the archaeological practice in the team that explored the Ilimsky Ostrog. The Spartan conditions, in which the young researchers had to live and work, formed not only Aleksandr's character, but also genuine feelings of collectivism and friendship. The unique object of research could not leave him indifferent. So, the choice was made in favor of archaeology, with all its harsh romance; and since that time, Aleksandr spent every summer on expeditions.

Of course, a huge role in his choosing a profession was played by the charm of such individuals as Academician A.P. Okladnikov and Professor M.P. Gryaznov. A. Solovyev was fortunate enough to study under them at the university and on the expedition to the Minusinsk Basin. The West Siberian team of the North Asian Joint Expedition became truly dear to him. Even having



become a Doctor of Sciences, Aleksandr did not stop working as a part of this team.

From the very beginning of his archaeological career, A. Solovyev was attracted by the issues relating to weapon studies. Apparently, this topic has become one of the most important in his creative life. Weapons were the subject of his Ph.D. thesis, defended in 1984. The work provides a scrupulous analysis of medieval weapons of the West Siberian indigenous populations. Subsequently, the dissertation was published as a monograph entitled "Military Affairs of the Indigenous Population of Western Siberia: The Epoch of the Middle Ages" (Novosibirsk, 1987), which is widely popular among experts in weapon studies even today.

A significant event in the archaeology of Western Siberia was the doctoral dissertation by Aleksandr Solovyev, entitled "Burial Monuments of the Pre-Taiga Population of the Ob-Irtysh Region in the Middle Ages (Rite, Myth, Society)", brilliantly defended by him in 2006. This work reveals the specificity of numerous burial complexes in Western Siberia, relating to the ethnicity of the deceased. On the basis of ethnographic data, he made interesting reconstructions associated with the spiritual life of the southern Khanty, Samoyeds, Baraba Tatars, and other ethnic groups that once lived in the region. Excellent knowledge of ethnographic and historical sources allowed

the author to carry out a unique research, actually at the intersection of disciplines. This approach became typical of the scientific work of A.I. Solovyev. He published a number of monographic works (including in co-authorship with professional ethnologists), which attract the readers by the depth of analysis and non-standard vision of issues. Noteworthy is the remarkable book of the scholar, entitled “Arms and Armor: Siberian Weapons: From the Stone Age to the Middle Ages” (Novosibirsk, 2003). This work reflects the researcher’s favorite topics—weapon studies and the spiritual life of Siberian aborigines. The book contains magnificent graphic reconstructions made by the author himself. He paints beautifully, quite professionally, which skill is extremely important for an archaeologist. This is another of the many talents of A.I. Solovyev. Alexandr has a unique memory. Nature has also endowed him with a gift of storytelling. Any fairy-tale performed by A.I. Solovyev appears to be an event that happened quite recently!

In the last decade, the work of Alexandr Solovyev has been associated with the archaeology of China, Japan, Korea, where the scientist managed not only to travel, but also to actively work with collections and on expeditions. As a result, he carried out a number of original scientific studies, distinguished by a non-standard view on the available data.

A.I. Solovyev has always taken part in landmark projects of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography SB RAS. In the 1990s, he took an active part in the implementation of the international program “Pazyryk” on the Ukok plateau, where he led the excavations of a number of archaeological sites of various epochs. Alexandr Solovyev played a great role in writing the first collective monograph “Ancient Cultures of the Bertek Valley (the Altai Mountains, Ukok Plateau)” (Novosibirsk, 1994) based on the materials collected there. A.I. Solovyev is the Executive Secretary of the Editorial Board of Volume II of the fundamental publication entitled “History of Siberia”. He has done a tremendous amount of work on the preparation and editing of texts; he is also the author of certain chapters in this book.

Alexandr is an extremely talented science communicator for the public; he writes about complex

things in a bright, interesting, and comprehensible way. Among his creative achievements is a textbook on the history of the Novosibirsk Region, for the creation of which A.I. Solovyev, together with a team of authors, was awarded the State Prize of the Novosibirsk Region in 2018.

In total, over the years of creative activity, the scientist has published about ten author and collective monographs and more than 130 articles issued in Russia and other countries. Alexandr Solovyev is a lecturer at the Novosibirsk State University and the Novosibirsk Stage Pedagogical University. It must be said that he enjoys not only great authority and respect, but also a true love of his colleagues and students. For many years, A.I. Solovyev has collaborated with the Russian Foundation for Basic Research in organizing and conducting regional competitions. He himself also participates in the implementation of a number of scientific projects as a leader and a performer.

Alexandr Solovyev inherited remarkable human qualities from his parents. A sense of duty is sacred for him; suffice it to say that after graduating from the university he served in the Soviet army and never considered this time wasted for himself. Alexandr is very kind and sympathetic, tolerant in communication with colleagues; at the same time, he is strict when it comes to scientific creativity. He met his future wife Elena on an expedition to Ukok. And the fact that Elena Anatolyevna has become a specialist in the archaeology of Japan is largely due to Alexandr Ivanovich. They raised a wonderful daughter, who will never let her wonderful parents down.

A lot has been done, but there are still many years of creativity, victories, and achievements ahead. We believe that Alexandr Ivanovich will more than once please us with new books, articles, and discoveries both in the field and at the writing desk!

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