

## Academician V.S. Myasnikov as Archaeologist and Ethnologist

Preparation and celebration of a great anniversary commemorated this year by the scholarly community—the 90th birthday of a recognized leader of Russian historical science Academician V.S. Myasnikov—fostered publication of a number of articles on various aspects of work done by this outstanding scholar. We would like to make our own contribution to the overview of his accomplishments, focusing on two areas that are close to us and that have not yet received sufficient attention in Russian historiography.

The title of this article may cause some surprise even among the readers well familiar with works of Vladimir Myasnikov, since he is primarily known for his source studies embodied in publication of many volumes of archival materials that created a reliable basis for the study of the Russian-Chinese and Russian-Mongolian relations in the 17th to 20th centuries. V.S. Myasnikov explored a number of important aspects of the Chinese civilization, primarily in the context of contacts with Russia, and gave a historical assessment of the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 and other important “treaty articles”. This research has become a new stage in historiography and turned out to be useful for the needs of practical diplomacy. The most important scholarly discoveries of the celebrant include the identification of stratagem thinking as an essential feature in the social consciousness of the Chinese, which was a notable contribution to global sinology and caused a surge of both scholarly and applied interest in this topic in the People’s Republic of China. His works on archival studies, history of diplomacy, various aspects of modern and recent history of China and the Asia-Pacific Region as a whole made up a multivolume collected works published in 2014 by the *Nauka* Publishing House under the common title “Kastalskiy Klyuch Kitaaveda” [The Castalian Spring of a Sinologist]. All this is true. But in his quest of researching the sources, in reverent attitude to documents, Vladimir Myasnikov could not but reach the frontiers of archaeology—the science, the main content of which is discovering, extracting, and processing sources for reconstructing material and spiritual culture of the past.

V.S. Myasnikov’s attention was primarily attracted by the materials of Russian academic expeditions to



Xinjiang. The main stages in organizing the study of Turkestan antiquities were established in a number of articles, including “Obraz Akademika S.F. Oldenburga v Dokumentakh ego Sovremennikov” [The Image of Academician S.F. Oldenburg in the Documents of His Contemporaries], “Issledovaniye Dunkhuanskogo Kompleksa Pamyatnikov: Proshloye, Nastoyashcheye, Nadezhdy na Budushcheye” [Study of the Dunhuang Complex of Sites: Past, Present, Hopes for the Future], “Obraz N.F. Petrovskogo v Angliyskom Zerkale” [The Image of N.F. Petrovsky in the English Mirror] (see all in (Kastalskiy Klyuch..., vol. 4), “O Roli Rossiyskoi Akademii Nauk v Issledovanii Vostochnogo Turkestana” [On the Role of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Studying Eastern Turkestan] (Kastalskiy Klyuch..., vol. 6). These antiquities were obtained by the expedition of V.I. Rorobovsky in 1893–1895; a special commission was established for analyzing the collections at the

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Department of Historical and Philological Sciences of the Academy of Sciences. In 1898, the first specialized archaeological expedition to the Turfan region took place under the leadership of D.A. Klements. The work of that Expedition marked the beginning of scientific archaeology in the territory of China (“Istoriya Arkheologicheskikh Issledovaniy v Kitae: Istoriograficheskiy Ocherk” [History of Archaeological Research in China: Historiographical Overview], V.I. Molodin, S.A. Komissarov (eds.), Moscow: Yurayt, 2020: 20–21). This was preceded by active work of N.F. Petrovsky, the Russian consul in Kashgar, who was elected a member of the Russian Archaeological Society. His “Turkestanskiye Pisma” [Turkistan Letters], a significant part of which contains reports on the conducted studies, were published under the editorship of V.S. Myasnikov in 2010.

High scholarly and civil reputation of Vladimir Myasnikov allowed him to give an objective assessment of one of important events in the study of the past of Xinjiang—the expedition of Baron C.G.E. Mannerheim (1867–1951). This figure is ambivalent, and the attitudes to his activities after 1917 were different in Russian society. Without going into endless disputes on this matter, V.S. Myasnikov wrote the article “Po Sledam Mannergeima” [In the Footsteps of Mannerheim] (Kastalskiy Klyuch..., vol. 6), where he showed that in the early 20th century, the Baron was undoubtedly one of the best Russian officers. An excellent cavalryman and competent general staff officer, he managed in 1906–1908 to make (mostly on the horseback) the way from Kashgar to Beijing, to brilliantly fulfill the task entrusted to him, and also to collect an extensive archaeological and ethnographic collection (several thousand Buddhist manuscripts and their fragments, 250 medieval coins, ancient pottery, jewelry, etc.). Currently, these materials, as well as diaries and photographs, are kept in several museums in Helsinki and are available to scholars (International Dunhuang Project; [http://idp.bl.uk/pages/collections\\_other.a4d#4](http://idp.bl.uk/pages/collections_other.a4d#4)).

Vladimir Myasnikov contributed to reprinting an important, but problematic for Russian historiography, book “Kitaitsy v Ussuriyskom Krae” [The Chinese in the Ussuri Region] by V.K. Arsenyev. In the preface to that edition, Myasnikov emphasized that Vladimir Arsenyev was the first scholar to conduct ethnological research in the zone of contact of two great civilizations—Russian and Oriental (Kastalskiy Klyuch..., vol. 5). Vladimir Myasnikov considered ethnic psychology to be a crucial aspect of “social culture of each nation”, which influences the interaction of civilizations. The term “ethnic psychology” was first proposed by the outstanding Russian philosopher G.G. Shpet. In order to give the readers better understanding of the Shpet’s methodology, V.S. Myasnikov contributed to publishing Shpet’s book “Istoriya kak Problema Logiki” [History as a Problem of Logic] in 2002, not only acting as its scientific editor, but also writing extensive introductory article (Kastalskiy Klyuch..., vol. 6). The proposed theoretical approach has been implemented in the practices of new studies. Myasnikov wrote in his article “Rol Etnopsikhologii v Mezhekulturnom Dialoge” [The Role of Ethnic Psychology in Intercultural Dialogue]: “We consider attractive such an issue, for example, as the influence of hieroglyphic writing or martial and military arts of the peoples of China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, which gave rise to stratagem thinking, on their ethnic psychology. It seems that many interesting discoveries await us on this path” (Kastalskiy Klyuch..., vol. 4: 79). Sic et simpliciter; we should only add that it was Academician V.S. Myasnikov who was a pioneer on this path. We wish him creative longevity and new scholarly publications, including those addressing such important topics as archaeology and ethnology!

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