

A. Yu. Yakubovsky's Contribution to The Study of The Zarafshan Valley

F. Sh. Shamukaramova

Doctor of Historical Sciences

Leading Research Fellow

Institute of History, Academy of Sciences
of the Republic of Uzbekistan

E-mail: shferuza@yandex.ru

Abstract. This article provides a detailed examination and historiographical analysis of the systematic archaeological reconnaissance expeditions conducted in the Zarafshan Valley in 1934 and 1939 under the leadership of A. Yu. Yakubovsky. The expeditions were organized by the State Hermitage Museum jointly with the State Academy for the History of Material Culture and Uzkomstaris. They yielded a substantial body of archaeological material that laid the foundation for many years of systematic research in the Zarafshan Valley. These results also enabled A. Yu. Yakubovsky to develop theoretical works devoted to the principal stages in the evolution of Central Asian cities. The article is based on publications by the expedition leader, V. A. Shishkin and other participants, as well as archival materials preserved in the archives of the Institute for the History of Material Culture in St Petersburg.

Keywords: Zarafshan Valley, Central Asia, Bukhara, State Hermitage Museum, Kampyr-Duval, Khazara, Arbinjan, Tavavis, Dabusiya, A. Yu. Yakubovsky, V. A. Shishkin, V. L. Vyatkin, Turdy Mirgiyazov.

The Zarafshan Valley is one of the archaeologically richest regions of Uzbekistan. Research in this field began here in the mid-1930s, in connection with the growing interest of central academic institutions in the archaeological study of Central Asia. At the plenary session of the State Academy for the History of Material Culture, held in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) in February 1936, specific problems of the ancient history of Central Asia requiring investigation were identified [11]. At that session, specialists in Central Asian studies, including M. E. Masson, S. P. Tolstov and A. Yu. Yakubovsky, reviewed the results already achieved and formulated tasks for future work. Among these tasks was the continuation of archaeological research in the Zarafshan Valley, which had begun in 1934 and had previously been subject to a preliminary survey in 1915 [4]. It should also be noted that V. V. Barthold had earlier emphasized the need for archaeological investigation of the Zarafshan Valley [1].

Compared with the Tashkent and Samarkand regions, Bukhara and its environs were not investigated as intensively from an archaeological perspective. Nevertheless, by the 1960s this field had already developed its own research history. A historiographical analysis of the archaeological study of the region from the first half of the nineteenth century to the 1960s was presented by the prominent Uzbek archaeologist V. A. Shishkin in his fundamental monograph [18, pp. 13-18]. This work began with joint expeditions undertaken in the 1920s by central institutions (GAIMK-IIMK) and local scholarly bodies (Uzkomstaris). These expeditions were systematically planned and combined the emerging local methodology with the experience of the Leningrad school of archaeology. This cooperation contributed to raising both archaeology and historical scholarship in Uzbekistan to a new level.

The present article focuses on the first systematic archaeological investigations of the Zarafshan Valley, organized by the State Hermitage Museum jointly with GAIMK and Uzkomstaris under the leadership of A. Yu. Yakubovsky, and assesses his contribution to the study of the history of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan.

As a pupil of V. V. Barthold, A. Yu. Yakubovsky devoted his entire scholarly career to the study of medieval Central Asian history [9; 10]. Many of his studies became foundational works and have retained their scholarly importance to this day. This is especially true of his research on Central Asia during the Mongol conquest [28] and on the reign of Amir Timur and the Timurids [25; 26; 27].

Drawing skilfully on written sources, Yakubovsky consistently supplemented them with archaeological evidence, thereby reconstructing a more comprehensive picture of the medieval history of individual regions of Central Asia. At the same time, as head of the Central Asian Sector of GAIMK and a scholar deeply interested in archaeology, he also carried out historiographical research in this field [20; 21; 23]. In addition, he personally organized and led archaeological expeditions in the Central Asian republics, one of which was the Zarafshan Expedition.

Archaeological reconnaissance in the Zarafshan Valley began in 1934 under the direction of A. Yu. Yakubovsky [9, p. 297; 19]. It was initially initiated by the Department of the East of the State Hermitage Museum jointly with Uzkomstaris [6, p. 27; 7, p. 20; 18, p. 15]. Uzkomstaris was represented in the expedition by V. A. Shishkin, Ya. G. Gulyamov, T. M. Mirgiyazov, V. N. Kesaev and V. I. Kazimirov [7, pp. 20-21].

The expedition aimed to conduct a detailed reconnaissance survey of Kampyr-Duval, the defensive wall that had protected the Bukhara oasis from nomadic incursions in antiquity, and to investigate fortified settlements situated along the caravan route from Bukhara to Samarkand between the railway stations of Kyzyl-Tepe and Katta-Kurgan [18, p. 15; 19, p. 113; 21, p. 21].

The expedition was primarily reconnaissance- and survey-oriented and, judging from Yakubovsky's published report [19] and Shishkin's account [2], lasted from 18 May to 17 June 1934. These works make it possible to reconstruct almost every day of the expedition's activities.

The expedition produced a substantial body of surface and other archaeological material illuminating the history of Kampyr-Duval up to the tenth century, when it ceased to function as a defensive wall. It also generated descriptions of the sites of Kyzyl-Tepe, Tavavis, Khazara, Dabusiya, Arbinjan and other smaller settlements located at intervals of approximately 1.5-3 km along the left bank of the Zarafshan River. At Kyzyl-Tepe, in particular, a complete survey of the archaeological site was undertaken [2, p. 32], corrections were introduced to L. A. Zimin's 1914 measurements [4], a site plan was prepared, and surface finds of glazed and unglazed pottery were collected. On the basis of fabric quality and ornamentation, Yakubovsky dated this pottery from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries [19, pp. 116-117].

The expedition also substantiated the important conclusion that Kyzyl-Tepe had served as a point of interaction and commodity exchange between the sedentary and nomadic populations of the region [19, pp. 117-118].

Already during the first days of the expedition, the researchers concluded that the numerous tepe along Kampyr-Duval, encountered 'every 1½, 2 or 3 kilometres, and sometimes even more frequently,' were invariably associated with villages over which they dominated and may themselves have represented the remains of fortified settlements [19, pp. 118-119].

The expedition also made a major discovery. Yakubovsky wrote: 'Among the other monuments, the expedition discovered a remarkable columned structure, the earliest mosque in Central Asia, at [the site of] Khazara, dating no later than the beginning of the tenth century and, in all probability, to the ninth or even the late eighth century' [21, p. 22].

The mosque discovered at Khazara immediately attracted scholarly attention. It is worth noting that the Uzkomstaris employee Turdy Mirgiyazov, a member of the expedition, was the first to enter the mosque and report that it was an outstanding ancient monument [2, p. 44]. The expedition leader offered the following general description of the preserved building: 'A single glance was sufficient to understand that before us stood a monument whose clarity and harmony of architectural form would inevitably attract the attention of all those concerned with Central Asian and, more broadly, Eastern architecture' [19, p. 133].

Regarding its date, a view supported by other expedition members, Yakubovsky concluded: 'We have archaeologically discovered a type of building previously unknown in Central Asia, whose antiquity may cautiously be assigned to the pre-Qarakhanid period. In our firm conviction, this magnificent structure is an architectural monument no younger than the mausoleum of Ismail Samani, and it may even be older' [19, p. 138], since the associated pottery was dated no later than the tenth century [19, p. 141].

Detailed reconnaissance, in which V. A. Shishkin participated directly, showed that Khazara, like a typical medieval city, consisted of a kuhendiz, shahristan and rabad, as indicated by the archaeological material found there [2, pp. 44-45]. Summarizing the 1934 reconnaissance at Khazara, the expedition leader formulated a number of questions for future study: 'What settlement is this? What was it called in antiquity? Can the name

Khazara be regarded as having existed at the time when its remarkable mosque was built? These are all complex questions, and I do not yet venture to answer them' [19, p. 141].

After Khazara, the expedition conducted reconnaissance and measurement work at a number of sites along Kampyr-Duval, including Ganch-Tepe, Din-Gak, Kermine, Dabusiya and Arbinjan. At each site, the researchers collected a larger quantity of surface material than expected, particularly glazed and unglazed pottery ranging in date from the pre-Islamic period to the seventeenth century, with the majority belonging to the ninth-twelfth centuries.

Yakubovsky drew the following conclusions regarding Kampyr-Duval and the sites within its perimeter: (1) Kampyr-Duval, separating the agricultural zone from the nomadic steppe, had been built, at least in some sections, long before the Arab conquest of Central Asia; (2) most of the fortifications were rabats, especially those situated in frontier areas, and later developed into fortified market-type caravanserais whose functions included not only protection against nomadic attack but also peaceful trade with nomads; (3) the distribution map and names of settlements situated parallel to Kampyr-Duval indicated that such frontier rabats were numerous; and (4) the ceramic material confirmed Narshakhi's report that under Ismail Samani this defensive system was considered impractical and too costly and was therefore left unguarded [19, pp. 147-148].

As a specialist in the history of medieval Central Asian cities, Yakubovsky was deeply impressed by the sites of the Zarafshan Valley. He drew attention, for example, to the remains of the 'once magnificent eleventh-century rabad' and the sardoba at Rabat-i Malik, which had somehow escaped the attention of earlier researchers [19, p. 149], as well as to Arbinjan, which the expedition visited after Dabusiya. Describing Dabusiya, he wrote: 'At present Dabusiya is completely deserted; even the last inhabitants, who still lived here a few years ago, have left, although water is available at the site. It is remarkable that the total depopulation of this place has not eliminated its once-famous bazaar. Once a week, on Fridays, people from neighbouring collective and state farms gather in the square of the dead city and open a large and lively market, which our expedition witnessed. Neither in Kermine nor elsewhere did we see such a concentration of people as among the ruins of Dabusiya' [19, p. 151].

At Dabusiya, as at other sites, large quantities of ninth- and tenth-century pottery of considerable artistic quality were found both on the surface and in a number of excavated badrab-khana, or latrines. These also yielded a considerable amount of glass, including several complete glass vessels [19, p. 152].

The final site investigated by the expedition was Arbinjan, which V. L. Vyatkin had examined several years earlier. Yakubovsky recorded his first impressions as follows: 'I spent the whole day walking around the site and, as far as possible, tried to understand the topographical structure of Arbinjan. The settlement is not as simple as it may seem at first sight. Its location is extremely favourable for a city: on one side is an excellent, water-rich canal, one of the most abundant and ancient in Central Asia [the Narpay Canal - F. Sh.], and on the other is an advantageous position on the main caravan route, with Bukhara to the west and Samarkand to the east as the nearest major cities' [19, pp. 157-158].

As at other sites, Arbinjan yielded abundant surface pottery, mainly of the ninth and tenth centuries. Yakubovsky therefore emphasized that the city's cultural florescence fell within the Samanid period [19, p. 160].

With regard to Vyatkin's earlier investigations at Arbinjan, Yakubovsky correctly observed that Vyatkin 'unfortunately published nothing about this journey.' Yakubovsky had only heard from M. E. Masson, V. A. Shishkin and Turdy Mir-Giyazov that Vyatkin had been highly satisfied with the trip and had brought back a series of important observations and rich surface material [19, p. 157]. Yakubovsky was probably familiar with the Uzkomstaris report for 1928-1929 sent to GAIMK, which described Vyatkin's work at Arbinjan. The report noted that a systematic survey and trial excavations had been conducted; stamped ornamental bricks, fragments of Samanid-period pottery and coins of the same period were collected. In the newer part of the site, Vyatkin also found walls of a large building, tentatively identified as a madrasa, from which the stamped bricks originated. He further inspected the ruins of Zerabulak, Kafyr-Kala and Kard-Zan and concluded that more systematic archaeological study of Rabinjan and its environs was desirable [13, fols. 25-26].

Thus, the 1934 Zarafshan Expedition completed its work with major scholarly results and several new discoveries. In his publication, Yakubovsky simultaneously outlined new tasks for future detailed excavations at all sites along Kampyr-Duval, since the 1934 expedition had been limited to reconnaissance and measurement work at settlements of the so-called 'Muslim period.'

In 1936-1938, the Zarafshan Expedition was continued by G. V. Grigoryev, a senior research fellow at IIMK, and I. A. Sukharev, a senior research fellow at the Samarkand Museum, with funding and on the instructions of the museum. They worked at Tali-Barzu. Within the same broader expedition programme, V. A. Shishkin continued investigations of Kampyr-Duval and the well-known site of Varakhsha in 1934-1935 and 1938-1939 [18, p. 16].

The IIMK archive preserves a telegram dated 26 December 1937 and sent to Tashkent concerning expedition financing: 'The Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences agrees to a joint archaeological Zarafshan Expedition with Uzkomstaris in April-May 1938 and allocates twenty thousand roubles and three staff members under Professor Yakubovsky. Details by letter. Deputy Director of IIMK Artamonov' [12, fol. 5].

In 1939, the Zarafshan Expedition resumed its work in two detachments under Yakubovsky's overall direction. The first detachment worked at Paykend and included A. Yu. Yakubovsky (IIMK), V. A. Shishkin (Uzkomstaris), M. M. Dyakonov, N. P. Kiparisov (the Hermitage and IIMK), and the photographer S. I. Ustinov. The second detachment worked at Tali-Barzu and Kafir-Kala and included G. V. Grigoryev (detachment leader), A. Ya. Borisov (the Hermitage), F. A. Kondratyeva, A. M. Belenitsky (IIMK), G. P. Savelyev (a fourth-year history student at the Central Asian State University), V. A. Ilyinskaya (a second-year history student at Leningrad State University), and the photographer S. I. Ustinov [24, pp. 51, 64]. The second detachment's activities were recorded in Grigoryev's field diary [15], accompanied by excavation drawings, sketches of finds, including figurines, pottery fragments and terracottas, and measurement tables [14; 15; 16; 35].

The tasks of the 1939 expedition were: (1) to continue archaeological work at Tali-Barzu, 6 km south of Samarkand, begun by Grigoryev in 1936-1938; (2) to continue studying the stratigraphy of Kafir-Kala, 4 km south of Tali-Barzu and 10 km south of Samarkand; and (3) to undertake new archaeological reconnaissance at Paykend in preparation for excavations planned for 1940 [24, p. 51].

Grigoryev also discussed financing in his field diary: 'The investigation of Tali-Barzu has been conducted under my direction since 1936. Excavations were carried out each spring in 1936, 1937 and 1938, and the expeditions were equipped at the expense of the Samarkand Regional Museum of Local History, which until 1939 had been the Central Historical Museum of Uzbekistan' [15, fol. 1]. The expedition was most likely financed jointly by the State Hermitage Museum, IIMK, Uzkomstaris and the Samarkand Regional Museum, with each institution contributing according to its means.

A distinctive feature of the 1939 work was its concentration on specific archaeological sites. Paykend occupied a special place in this respect. Founded in the fourth-third centuries BCE, the city existed until the twelfth century, with the ninth and tenth centuries generally regarded as the peak of its development. According to Narshakhi, Paykend was a residence of the rulers of Bukhara and part of the private possessions of the Samanid dynasty [8, p. 232]. Although systematic long-term excavations were conducted there later, the reconnaissance carried out by the Zarafshan Expedition, including the identification of the upper Samanid and Qarakhanid cultural layers, was of great importance for understanding the development of this city on a major trade route.

The Paykend detachment was tasked with opening test trenches to determine the cultural sequence, preparing a plan of the site, and collecting surface material. It is noteworthy that Yakubovsky, as expedition leader, explicitly acknowledged the contributions of each participant [24].

The main results of the initial reconnaissance were as follows: Shishkin and Dyakonov prepared a plan of Paykend, while Shishkin mapped the surrounding area; the remains of a ninth-tenth-century pottery kiln containing numerous ceramic sherds were identified; animal figurines, lamps, coins ranging from the Kushan period to nineteenth-century Bukhara, predominantly Samanid issues, a tandir oven, and the residential complex of a craftsman were found. The citadel, shahristan and rabad were identified, and the extent of the city's defensive walls was established.

Yakubovsky repeatedly emphasized Shishkin's research contribution, which enabled important conclusions to be drawn: 'V. A. Shishkin carried out the historical-topographical interpretation of the immediate surroundings of the site exceptionally well. Careful examination of his plan of the area finally confirms that the rabad of Paykend, at least by the tenth century, occupied a large area and played a significant role in the life of the city' [24, pp. 60, 62].

On the basis of the archaeological finds at Paykend, including glazed and unglazed pottery of the eighth-tenth centuries [3], and particularly the large number of Samanid coins, Yakubovsky concluded that life in Paykend was 'most vigorous in the tenth century' [24, p. 64].

In 1940, fieldwork at Paykend continued within the framework of the Zarafshan Expedition under V. N. Kesaev (R. Kesati), an employee of the Hermitage, with N. P. Kiparisova of the Hermitage and S. K. Kabanov of Bukhkomstaris. They worked in the central part of the site, where the detachment leader expected to locate a pre-Islamic temple, although their principal attention was directed towards ninth-eleventh-century remains. The surroundings of the site were described, and the ceramic and numismatic material was classified [5].

The organization of fieldwork at Tali-Barzu, Kafir-Kala and Paykend was complicated by difficulties in hiring labourers. Since collective farmers were occupied in the fields, labour was recruited among former prisoners. Grigoryev wrote in his 1939 field diary: '8 May. We travelled by lorry in a group consisting of: 1) A. Yu. Yakubovsky, 2) G. V. Grigoryev, 3) M. M. Dyakonov, 4) A. Ya. Borisov, 5) F. A. Kondratyeva, 6) N. P. Kiparisova, 7) G. P. Savelyev, 8) V. A. Ilyinsky, and the photographer S. I. Ustinov. The four workers hired were accommodated in an empty building provided by the 8 March collective farm. All four workers, hired at the bazaar, had served sentences for criminal offences in various camps. We agreed to pay ten roubles' [15, fols. 15-16]. Work began at 7 a.m. and continued until noon, followed by a break of several hours and then resumed from 4 to 7 p.m. [15, fol. 19]. As overall expedition leader, Yakubovsky had to supervise all areas of work and periodically travelled from Paykend to Tali-Barzu and Kafir-Kala.

According to Yakubovsky, the second detachment had four main tasks: (1) to verify the stratigraphic conclusions previously reached by Grigoryev at Tali-Barzu by opening a series of test trenches in the most deeply stratified parts of the settlement in order to obtain secure dates for the material culture of pre-Islamic Sogdiana; (2) to investigate the Sasanian layer on the central mound of Tali-Barzu as fully as possible; (3) to clear the remains of one tower in a location suitable for examining its structure; and (4) to undertake several excavations to investigate the Sasanian layer at Kafir-Kala [24, p. 66]. The first task received the greatest attention [15, fols. 9-10].

As indicated both in Yakubovsky's article and in Grigoryev's diary, the second detachment completed its assigned tasks. The expedition ended on 4 July 1939 and yielded a large archaeological assemblage, including coins of the Kushan period of considerable scholarly value for studying the development of the city in the pre-Islamic era.

All archaeological finds from the Zarafshan Expedition, particularly those from Tali-Barzu and Kafir-Kala, were transferred to the State Hermitage Museum under formal acts of acceptance and transfer. The assemblage comprised more than 250 archaeological objects [16].

The Zarafshan Expedition led by Yakubovsky between 1934 and 1940 produced extensive material evidence concerning the culture of Central Asia during the so-called 'Muslim Renaissance,' including a number of discoveries. It confirmed information contained in written sources and laid the groundwork for subsequent long-term, systematic and planned archaeological investigations of the Zarafshan Valley.

With regard to publication, Yakubovsky presented the 1934 work in diary form, whereas the process and principal results of the 1939 work were published as a concise field report. The latter was divided into two parts: the first provided a detailed and well-illustrated account of the research at Paykend; the second, based largely on Grigoryev's diary, described the investigations at Tali-Barzu and Kafir-Kala.

Some time later, in an article devoted to the principal problems in the study of the historical development of Central Asian cities, Yakubovsky advanced the following thesis: 'The general regularities governing the development of Central Asian cities are one matter, while the concrete history of each individual city is another. I should add that I am concerned primarily with the territory of Mawarannahr and, to some extent, Khorezm, that is, the lands of present-day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan' [22].

By directing the Zarafshan Expedition, Yakubovsky acquired substantial experience in organizing and conducting fieldwork. His major achievement lay in comparing the accounts of medieval historians and using them to reconstruct the development of the cities of the region, including those of the Zarafshan Valley in the pre-Mongol period, while also addressing aspects of the population's social life.

The study of Yakubovsky's Zarafshan expeditions of 1934 and 1939 therefore demonstrates that the discovery of new archaeological monuments, including settlements and cities with surviving architectural and household remains, broadened understanding of the region's historical development from antiquity to the High

Middle Ages, as well as its economic and social life, cultural level, and the development of crafts such as pottery and metalworking. The analysis of written sources and their comparison with archaeological evidence also made it possible to identify trade and caravan routes more precisely. These scholarly results significantly expanded knowledge of the rise and decline of medieval cities and defined the prospects for future systematic archaeological research in the Zarafshan Valley. They also demonstrated the need for increased financing to ensure more productive expedition organization and confirmed the importance of joint research by scholars from central academic institutions and local specialists. The materials further show that representatives of the Leningrad school of archaeology worked effectively with Uzbek researchers. A negative aspect, however, was that, despite prior agreements, the archaeological material was removed from Uzbekistan.

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