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Archaeology of the Eurasian steppes in the historical concept of L.N. Gumilyov

The scientific heritage of the famous Turkologist, the author of the original concept of passionarity L.N. Gumilyova continues to be in the sphere of historiographical interest. However, not all methods of his research have received an adequate assessment. The author considers Gumilyov's attitude to archeology and its data in the study of the ethnic history of the Eurasian steppes. The method of consideration of this issue corresponds to the basic principles of historiographic research: the identification of the author's content position by analyzing his works, the characteristics of the source study base and methods of criticism of the sources used. L.N. Gumilyov is a brilliant expert on written sources on the history of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes of Chinese, Iranian, Arab origin and scientific literature on this issue. Archaeological data, often borrowed, are also actively involved in the reconstruction of the ethnic history of Eurasia. We tried to match the attention of L.N. Gumilyov to these two groups of sources, to determine his scientific predilections and how this influenced the final conclusions and his historical concept. L.N. Gumilyov prefers written historical sources, in working with them he feels confident, trusts them more. As long as they are. The use of archaeological data is complementary, auxiliary, fragmented. In the absence of written sources, the scientist demonstrates the quick adaptation and qualitative analysis of analysis of archeology data. Ultimately, he advocates a synthesis of history and archeology.

Keywords: L.N. Gumilyov, ethnic history, Eurasian steppes, Huns, Turks, archaeological data, written sources.

Introduction

The contribution of the famous Soviet scientist-Turkologist L.N. Gumilyov's study of the problems of the history and ethnology of Eurasia is very significant and undeniable in modern science [1; 15–18]. In the 1950–1990s, a whole series of his original works saw the light, the author's concept of ethno-historical development of the steppe expanses of Eurasia was formed [2–14]. The brilliance of scientific thought, the boldness of posing problems, the breadth of geographical horizons and the depth of chronological sections, the kaleidoscopic nature of changing historical characters and ethnic groups, the encyclopedic nature of the use of diverse factual material, the reverent attitude to the natural factor, the anthem to the heroism of passionarity, the fear of the dullness of dry academism, the attempt to «revive» relics that disappeared past, faith in the constructiveness of historical imagination and the inexorability of logic, an almost holy admiration for the historical text and a free play of interpretations, the excessive fragmentation of regional events and the eschatological global nature of the final conclusions — this is how we see the historical credo and methodological tools of Lev Gumilyov. The master of intrigue and the king of outrageous got along with the dull pedantry of a provincial bibliophile and «philologist», source-guided crocheting, quiet excitement of a pathfinder combined with the inexorable logic of an investigator, professionally trained, tenacious to details, intelligent, prone to quick and accurate decisions.

One could deny his historical concepts, criticize research methods, possible dilettantism in the analysis of spheres of non-historical content, but one could not but recognize his creative enthusiasm for the subject of research, real love for the endless feather-grass steppes that go under the horizon, the smoky blue of distant mountains, humanized ghosts of the long gone into the non-existence of small and large nations.

The beauty of Gumilev's historical reconstruction is striking: the accuracy of geographical lines, an almost medical characteristic of anthropological types, the chronic accuracy of the periodicity of wet and dry ages, the biological sophistication of the quality and efficiency of various soils, the photographic nature of the change of natural landscapes, steppe, forest-steppe and forest zones, foothills, river valleys, endless deserts. And all this comes to life under the exquisite feather of a talented master: dried up rivers are filled with pure mountain water, a dry steppe drooping under the incinerating rays of the merciless sun breaks through with green sprouts of new grass, soil fertility, and the availability of rich meadows. The steppes are

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filled with the sounds of wildlife, the clatter of the hooves of swift horses, the hum of fat herds of domestic animals, the loud and distinct voices of ancient inhabitants.

It remains only to put everything in its place: each nation has its own name, area of residence, type of economy and dwelling, household clothing and military armor, household equipment and military weapons, weddings and burials, pagan rituals and philosophy of great religions, good or evil neighbors, their heroes and traitors, the dates of great victories and crushing defeats, the routes of long-distance travel, the time and place of disappearances, and, possibly, new rebirths from the ethnographic chaos.

A quite reasonable question arises: how accurate is such an arrangement, is it not self-deception, what is taken as a basis, what reliability does the author rely on, does he draw the reader into invisible networks of scientific hypotheses and fantasies, conjecturing the unsaid, completing the destroyed, recreating the decayed.

Methods

What is the source study base of the historical and ethnological research of L.N. Gumilyov? How accurate was he in the analysis of written sources and data of archeology, toponymy, onomastics, numismatics, sphragistics, heraldry? We are probably not the first to ask questions, the formulation of which is obvious for any professional historical research.

We are primarily interested in the methods of historiography by L.N. Gumilyov, the role and place of archeological data in them. Is archeology for the study of the ethnic history of the Eurasian steppes of the ancient and Middle Ages a «queen» or a «servant»? Or L.N. Gumilyov put all the points in one phrase: «written sources... deserve more trust than a few archaeological finds» [4; 73]. Perhaps for him archaeological data is only a spare, auxiliary version, filling in the missing gaps and gaps in written sources [4; 66, 69].

Results and discussion

An analysis of the use of archeological data by Gumilev in the construction of his historical and ethnological concept convinces us that the answer is not as unambiguous as it might seem at first glance. Let's consider this situation in more detail.

First, the fetish of a written source (Chinese, Iranian, Arabic) is immediately striking, for L.N. Gumilev in any form is a guiding thread in wandering through the mysterious nooks of antiquity. In the spirit of the French positivists S. Langlois and S. Senobos, Gumilev, by his actions, actually recognizes the classical formula: «there is a source — there is history, there is no source — there is no history!». He has, in fact, a sacred awe before a written source, paper or stone: «the events of history are known to us from the moment when written sources began to present events coherently throughout the Oycumene» [5; 57], or «we know nothing... about the fate of... unwritten peoples» [10; 106], «archaeological sites... provide too little material» [10; 121].

Secondly, according to L.N. Gumilyov, archeology is not enough «to describe the processes of ancient ethnogenesis» [10; 74], «where open-mindedness is required... minor differences do not matter» [10; 75]. «To judge by the survivor, — believes Gumilyov, — ... means to fall into error» [10; 37]. Archeological data, according to L.N. Gumilyov, give «approximate and by no means exhaustive... results» [11; 38].

At the same time, Gumilyov demonstrates condescending carelessness in relation to written sources, stating that despite the amorphousness and confusion of the text, it is possible to extract «valuable instructions» from it [10; 208]. There is a conviction that in the presence of literary historical evidence, L.N. Gumilev clearly gives preference to them, and not to archeological data. But the fact is that the problems that the scientist is trying to solve are not always provided with an adequate source base. Only in this case archeology comes to his aid. «History is silent, and then the word archeology» [10; 66–67]. Gumilyov, like a drowning man, grabs at a straw in the hope of escape from the stormy stream of elusive knowledge.

And again, with desperate zeal, he begins to study a variety of archaeological material, in the overwhelming majority of cases, open, collected, analyzed and published by specialists-archaeologists. He is frightened by the «fear of emptiness», the lapses of historical memory, which for some reason did not record the course of events or were lost in the fire of change. L.N. Gumilyov refers to the «waste of the past», artifacts, remnants of former luxury: animal bones, fragments of ceramics and handicrafts, ruins of architectural complexes, stone sculptures — balbals, steles with ancient inscriptions, tombstones, fasteners, plaques, jewelry, figurines of warriors, wedges, military armor. The scientist is trying to establish «the

relationship between dead art and history», when art objects «crystallized in stone or metal» [10; 86]. At the same time, Gumilyov complains that the steppe culture, which had ancient traditions, deep roots, but is less known than the settled one, since «the remnants of their material culture (felt, leather, wood, fur) are preserved worse than stone» [4; 5; 10; 38].

Nevertheless, archeology and its data are widely represented in the works of L.N. Gumilyov, especially in the books «Ancient Turks», «A Millennium Around the Caspian Sea». With youthful enthusiasm, not without a share of ironic boasting, the scientist enthusiastically acquaints readers with his own experience of field archaeological searches and the results obtained: «The archaeological work carried out by me in Altai in 1948 also showed that the monuments left by the Türküts are grouped into separate meadows and river valleys in such a way, which excludes any system of land use, except for ail» [4; 70].

Archaeological work, believes L.N. Gumilyov, refute the opinion that nomads are «drones of humanity» [4; 5]. The scientist uses the data of A.P. Okladnikov to characterize the social structure of the tribes of the Baikal region of the Neolithic and Bronze Age [4; 55], notes with satisfaction that archaeological prospecting discovered monuments of the Turkut metallurgy of the VI-IXth centuries in Altai, Tuva, and Southern Siberia [4; 65–66], but regrets that «the mining operations of the nomads of the early Middle Ages have not yet been systematically studied» [4; 66].

In his hands are the clay figurines of the Turkut guards, the figures of the Turkut warriors in the rock carvings of Sulek (upper Yenisei), the image of a warrior on a bronze plaque found by S.V. Kiselyov in 1939 during excavations near the village of Kopeny [4; 68, 69].

The second most important group of sources for L.N. Gumilyov — Turkic gravestone inscriptions [4; 89]. The discovery of the Orkhon inscriptions at the beginning of the twentieth century increased, according to the scientist, scientific interest in Turkic studies [4; 95].

Archaeological data allowed L.N. Gumilev draw conclusions about the Mongoloid Turkic peoples («racial features... are confirmed by the type of Turkic stone statues and statuettes») and the Caucasianoidness of the Uyghur ethnic group («excavations of the Uyghur burials finally confirmed the Caucasianoidness of this ethnic group») [4; 181]. «Archeology establishes the connection of ancestors and descendants». Small people, L.N. Gumilyov would be lost for history if he had not left the monuments that survived it. Burial grounds of Turkuts, stone fences and statues (balbals) cover all the steppe slopes of the valleys of Eastern Altai [4; 260–261].

True, an apologetic tone is present in every line of the text of L.N. Gumilev. «Historical records... the Türks have not been preserved, and tombstones do not replace them» [4; 87]. Since we do not have historical information about the Türkuts of the VIIIth-Xth centuries, in the opinion of L.N. Gumilyov, present even the meager information that dumb stones can give [4; 261].

According to previously invisible grains, archaeological chips L.N. Gumilev patiently builds the ethnic history of the region. «In the Siberian taiga, fragments of tribes continued to exist, for 2000 years before which stood on the path of intensive development» [4; 263]. Here, a footnote is made to the work of A.P. Okladnikov «The Neolithic and the Bronze Age of the Baikal Region» (M. -L., 1955). «Archaeological work in Siberia made it possible to establish that the archaeological» Kurumchinskaya culture «corresponds to the distribution area of the Kurykans» [4; 264]. «In addition to the above information, the Orkhon inscription informs about the Kengeres people» [4; 266]. «One phrase from the inscription» Selenginsky stone «contains a clue to this... population growth» [4; 267].

Ethnic diversity with differences in economic systems and forms of material culture contributed, according to Gumilev, to the creation of original local cultures. Since ancient times, «in the entire steppe zone, various variants of intertribal archaeological cultures have recorded certain ethnic relationships» [11; 13].

In the historical concept of ethnogenesis of the ancient Turks L.N. Gumilyov actively and fruitfully uses the information gleaned from the texts of the Onginsky, Orkhon inscriptions: «this contradicts as the texts of the inscriptions...» [4; 269], «a similar understanding of the course of events contains the Onginsky monument...» [4; 270], «the inscription directly indicates that the Türks...», «the inscription clearly notes...» [4; 271], «A large Turkic inscription narrates...» [4; 272], «judging by the inscription, Kutlug made 47 campaigns...» [4; 281], «some explanations... we will find in the inscription compiled by Yoltyg-tegin...» [4; 282], «the inscription of Yoltyg-tegin indicates that...» [4; 283], «The whole seriousness of the situation is reflected in the Onga inscription...», «We find a deeper understanding of the issue in the Orkhon inscriptions...» [4; 311].

The inscriptions represent, according to L.N. Gumilyova, «double interest, being not only a historical document, but also a cultural monument» [4; 320]. The scientist gave a deep analysis of the Orkhon texts, the time of their compilation and publication, genre, composition, inscriptions as a source, based on the works of N.M. Yadrintseva, V.V. Radlov, Czech archaeologist L. Jisla [4; 328–336]. In Gumilyov's interpretation, all three inscriptions are appeals, inscriptions, agitation, and historical material is presented selectively in them [4; 331]. The inscriptions were made, according to L.N. Gumilev, by biased people and therefore the estimates can not be fair, the course of events is presented incompletely [4; 335].

But at the same time, on the basis of the inscriptions, considers L.N. Gumilyov, you can give an essay on the culture and ideology of the Turks. «Their religion, historical and geographical knowledge, their ideals, tastes... military tactics and organization systems are reflected in inscriptions with a complete superiority to Chinese information» [4; 335]. Despite the poor preservation, the inscription «Selenginsky stone», according to L. Gumilyov, «is a source of great importance» [4; 362]. The inscription, emanated by time, disfigured by enemies and defective, but in its fragmentary words, «like silhouettes through the steppe haze, riders appear everywhere from the horizon...» [4; 363].

According to L. Gumilyov, the Orkhon Chinese-language inscription «gives valuable information» on the adoption by the Uigur tribes of a new religion — Manichaeism, while the information of Chinese and Arab authors regrets Gumilyov, «too fragmentary» [4; 379]. Four lines on the Orkhon monument of 795 are, according to L.N. Gumileva, «the earliest text of the Uyghur alphabet, dating back» [4; 382].

Left without reliable literary sources, feeling the vulnerability of these lacunae, L.N. Gumilev collects the «scattered» stones, steles, gravestones through the fragments. The stele from Tuva, located in the Minusinsk Museum, is a tetrahedral sandstone pillar 3.4 meters high, on one of the wide sides of which there is a runic inscription in three vertical lines telling about past battles [4; 410–411], the Tibetan-Chinese peace treaty of 821, preserved on a stele in Lhasa [4; 416]. At the same time, the constitution of the Uyghur Khanate was formulated; the text of the inscription, according to L.N. Gumilyov, is extremely important, since it marked the limitation of the khan's power [4; 422]. The two-line gravestone inscription, known as the «Yenisei Monument», tells about the victory of the Kyrgyz over the Uighurs [4; 428].

L.N. Gumilev seems to be struggling with himself, the inner tension of creative search, a kind of research duality brings together through all his works. Which one to give preference to: a text, or an archaeological monument? «There is almost no information about Siberia in the IIIrd-Vth centuries in the Chinese geographical literature, writes L.N. Gumilyov, — and therefore it is necessary to restore its history according to archeological data» [11; 38. Highlighted by us — M.Sh.]. In another book, almost the same regret: «we have to limit ourselves to archeology» [10; 74. Highlighted by us — M.Sh.]. And almost immediately the recognition that the presence of the Xiongnu culture in Transbaikalia was established by archaeological excavations (burial ground in Ilmovaya pad, Derestuysky burial ground and Nizhne-Ivolginskoye settlement) [11; 38, 39].

For Gumilev, archeology is a codification of phenomena that lie on the surface, i.e. cultural monuments, which, moreover, are easily detected [10; 32]. Ethnic history, in the understanding of L. Gumilyov, the science of loss, «the history of culture — the codification of items that survived» [10; 36; 5, p.57]. The historian, according to L. Gumilyov, is tempted to replace the study of ethnic groups with a «description of monuments» [10; 32]. Sounds like something shameful, i.e. it turns out that an archaeologist is a historian, tempted by the ease of describing monuments «lying on the surface». But even this is not enough for Gumilyov! «An insignificant part of the legacy of past eras has come down to us. Judging by the survivor, not taking into account the missing, — concludes L.N. Gumilev — means to fall into a mistake!» [10; 37]. It is said beautifully and aphoristically, but at the wrong address. Judging by the missing person, not taking into account the survivor, means falling, in our opinion, into an even deeper mistake!

With enviable persistence, L. Gumilyov continues his attacks on archeology: «A simple study of material culture... leads to a distorted vision of the past», especially since, in his opinion, only «random hints of them» came from several large cultures of the Eurasian steppes [10, from. 38]. «The direct path of research leads to nowhere» [10; 66–67], the scientist is oppressing his line, especially since «any creation of human hands is doomed either to death or to deformation» [10; 38, 60].

Archaeological monuments appear to «provide too little material for judging the economy of the tribes» [10; 121]. To add the lack of weight and solidity to his archaeological conclusions, L. Gumilyov accentively and solemnly informs readers that «the author managed to visit one of the expeditions...» [10; 130]. But professional archaeologists spend most of their scientific life on such expeditions, in the field, where they clear historical eras buried in deep oblivion. To be fair, we note that Gumilyov took part in 13 archaeological

expeditions (1935 — Manych archaeological; 1936 — Sarkel archaeological; 1946–1947 — two seasons of the Yugo-Podolsk archaeological expedition; 1948 — Gorno-Altai archaeological; 1949 — Volgodonsk (Sarkel) archaeological; 1957 — Angara archaeological; 1959–1963 — five seasons of the Astrakhan archaeological expedition; 1967 — Caucasian ethno-archaeological).

The only reasonable explanation for these anti-archaeological passages of L. Gumilyov is the desire to actualize his occupation with the ethno-political history of the Eurasian steppes, which «was tense, but did not leave traces in the form of monuments» [10; 67], but the absence of information about the events does not mean the absence of the events themselves.

In this endeavor, L. Gumilyov reaches the grotesque: in the invented dialogue between the archaeologist and the author (in the Apocrypha, «The End and the Beginning Again»), the scientist puts words into the mouth of the archaeologist that he himself does not seem to believe, but who wants to hear — «yes, I have to admit that my science is not suitable for solving your problems. Your science is not humanitarian. It is rather the geography of the anthroposphere for the historical period» [5; 415].

However, scientific «jealousy» passes, the exaltation of the opposition of history (the science of events in their connection and sequence) and archeology (the science of monuments) cools and smoothes, and Gumilev makes the correct final conclusion that «the science that solves the described problem, will be not just history, ethnography or archeology, but a synthesis of these sciences with geography», and that the noted combination of history and archeology with paleogeography requires new approaches and methods of research [5; 442].

Conclusions

Thus, L.N. Gumilev prefers written historical sources, he feels confident in working with them, he trusts them more. As long as they are. The use of archaeological data is complementary, auxiliary, fragmented. In the absence of written sources, the scientist demonstrates rapid adaptation and qualitative analysis of archeological data. Ultimately, he advocates a synthesis of history and archeology.

More evidence of the assertion that many start out as radicals and end up as conservatives. Healthy conservatism in this case is the lesser of evils. Routine, seemingly mundane work of an archaeologist in the field and the same, in general, the work of a historian in an archive, library and at a writing desk — these are the components of classical historical knowledge, the time in which an extraordinary person and a restless scientist lived and worked with enthusiasm — Lev Nikolaevich Gumilyov. The time of scientific innovation, interdisciplinarity, quantitiveness will come quickly, new theories and concepts will appear, but troublemakers, in love with the subject of research, sometimes alone in their scientific rightness, «invincible heretics» will always, be appreciated!

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Л.Н. Гумилевтің тарихи тұжырымдамасындағы еуразия даласының археологиясы

Белгілі түркітанушы, пассионарлықтың түпнұсқа тұжырымдамасының авторы Л.Н. Гумилевтің ғылыми мұрасы тарихнамалық қызығушылық саласында жалғасуда. Алайда, оны зерттеудің барлық әдістері барабар баға алған жоқ. Автор Гумилевтің археологияға қатысын және оның еуразия даласының этникалық тарихын зерттеудегі деректерін қарастырған. Бұл мәселені қарастыру әдісі тарихнамалық зерттеудің негізгі принциптеріне сәйкес келеді: оның еңбектерін талдау арқылы авторлық мазмұнды ұстанымды анықтау, деректану базасының сипаттамасы және пайдаланылатын дереккөздерді сынау әдістемесі. Л.Н. Гумилев кытай, иран, арабтан шыққан Еуразия даласы халықтарының тарихы бойынша жазба дереккөздерінің және ғылыми әдебиеттің тамаша білгірі. Археологиялық деректерге Еуразияның этникалық тарихын қайта құру кезінде ғалымдар да белсенді түрде тартылды. Мақала авторы осы екі топтағы дереккөздердің Гумилевке сәйкестігін, оның ғылыми бейімділігін және қорытынды түйіндері оның тарихи тұжырымдамасына қалай әсер еткенін анықтауға тырысқан. Л.Н. Гумилев жазбаша тарихи дереккөздерге артықшылық береді, олармен жұмыста ол өзін сенімді сезінеді, оларға көп сенеді. Археологиялық деректерді пайдалану қосымша, қосалқы, фрагменттік сипатта ие, әрине әзірге дереккөздер бар. Жазбаша деректер болмаған жағдайда, ғалым археология деректеріне тез бейімделіп және сапалы талдауын көрсеткен. Ақыр соңында, ол тарих пен археология синтезін қолдайды.

Кілт сөздер: Л.Н. Гумилев, этникалық тарих, еуразиялық дала, хунналар, түркілер, археологиялық деректер, жазба деректер.

М.В. Шлюпиков

Археология евразийских степей в исторической концепции Л.Н. Гумилёва

Научное наследие известного тюрколога, автора оригинальной концепции пассионарности Л.Н. Гумилёва продолжает находиться в сфере историографического интереса. Однако не все методы его исследований получили адекватную оценку. Автор рассматривает отношение Гумилёва к археологии и её данным в изучении этнической истории евразийских степей. Метод рассмотрения данного вопроса соответствует основным принципам историографического исследования: выявление авторской содержательной позиции путём анализа его трудов, характеристика источниковедческой базы и методики критики используемых источников. Л.Н. Гумилёв — блестящий знаток письменных источников по истории народов евразийских степей китайского, иранского, арабского происхождения и научной литературы по данному вопросу. Археологические данные, чаще заимствованные, также активно привлекаются учёным при реконструкции этнической истории Евразии. Мы постарались привлечь внимание Л.Н. Гумилёва к этим двум группам источников, определить его научные пристрастия и как это повлияло на итоговые выводы и его историческую концепцию. Л.Н. Гумилёв отдаёт предпочтение письменным историческим источникам, в работе с ними он чувствует себя уверенно, больше им доверяет. До тех пор пока они есть, использование археологических данных носит дополняющий, вспомогательный, фрагментарный характер. В случае отсутствия письменных источников, учёный демонстрирует быструю адаптацию и качественный анализ данных археологии. В конечном итоге, он выступает за синтез истории и археологии.

Ключевые слова: Л.Н. Гумилёв, этническая история, евразийские степи, хунны, тюрки, археологические данные, письменные источники.

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