

# THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE AMUDARYA AND ARAL-CASPIAN EXPEDITIONS IN THE GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH OF CENTRAL ASIA

**Mulladjanova Khosiyat Yazdonkulovna**

Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service  
Lecturer of the Department of Social Disciplines

**Annotation.** This article presents the results of research of the Amudarya and Aral-Caspian expeditions, the creation of topographic, geographical maps based on information about the areas of Central Asia.

**Key words:** Central Asia, Tsarist Russia, Amudarya expedition, topographical, geological, Amudarya, Aral Sea, leveling.

# ВКЛАД АМУДАРЬИНСКОЙ И АРАЛО-КАСПИЙСКОЙ ЭКСПЕДИЦИЙ В ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ СРЕДНЕЙ АЗИИ

**Мулладжанова Хосият Яздонкуловна**

Самаркандский институт экономики и сервиса  
преподаватель кафедры социальных дисциплин

**Аннотация.** В данной статье представлены результаты исследований Амударьинской и Арало-Каспийской экспедиций, создания топографических, географических карт на основе сведений о районах Средней Азии.

**Ключевые слова:** Средняя Азия, царская Россия, Амударьинская экспедиция, топографическая, геологическая, Амударья, Аральское море, выравнивание.

**Introduction.** Central Asia has always been an arena for the enrichment of foreign invaders. With their rich nature, diverse flora and fauna, the most valuable natural resources, they did not leave Tsarist Russia indifferent. The

first attempts to establish themselves in this region by Peter I were unsuccessful. In the middle of the nineteenth century. Internal strife and civil strife of the khanates undermined the power of the states of Central Asia, which contributed to the conquest of Tsarist Russia.

The tsarist autocracy was interested in further colonization of the region, the purpose of colonization was to create a raw material base and strengthen the positions of the Russian Empire in Central Asia. And only for these purposes did they provide some material support for geographical and natural-historical research in Central Asia. After the conquest of Central Asia by Tsarist Russia, in addition to the introduction of political and economic changes, scientists of various specialties were gradually involved in the study of the region. During this period of time, when the conquest process of Tsarist Russia continued, the main method of studying the region remained expeditionary, although the nature of the expedition has changed somewhat, first of all, the expeditions have acquired the character of complexity and unification in composition.

Expeditions of scientists of different specialties ensured the simultaneous conduct of broad and detailed studies for a thorough study of this territory.

**Analysis of the literature on the topic.** Recently, in our republic, much attention has been paid to the problem of the Aral Sea and the ecology of our republic, and many issues have been studied in accordance with this issue. This article presents the works of great researchers who have valuable information on the study of the Amu Darya and the Aral Sea. Of greatest interest on this topic are the works of such Russian researchers as M.N.Masalsky, L.S.Berg, N.V.Khanykov, M.N.Chernyshevsky, N.N.Karamzin, A.E.Rossikova, A.I.Glukhovsky. As well as the works of our domestic scientists H.M.Abdullaev, K.Z.Zakirov, Kh.Kh.Khasanov, M.K.Kariev, N.D.Dolimov.

**Research methods:** In the process of research, general scientific methods of cognition were used, in particular, methods of a systematic approach, a historical approach, the unity of logical analysis.

**Analysis and results of the study.** One of the first expeditions that was scheduled during the Khiva campaign in 1873 was the Amudarya expedition, led by Colonel N. G. Stoletov. This marked the beginning of further comprehensive and systematic study of the region. The Amu Darya expedition was formed as part of 5 departments with the direct participation of members of the Turkestan department of the Russian Geographical Society:

1. Geodesic-topographic,
2. Meteorological
3. Hydrological and hydrogeographic
4. Natural history
5. Ethnographic and statistical.

Each department received large, well thought out goals from the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Thanks to this, each department carried out a precisely established range of tasks, according to this expedition.

All departments of the expedition successfully solved the tasks assigned to them and achieved great results.

Maps were drawn up – geographical, topographic and geological. A meteorological observatory was organized in Nukus and a meteorological station in Petro-Aleksandrovka. This helped to obtain the necessary information regarding the climate of that region and marked the beginning of the hydrometeorological study of the region. The Amudarya expedition was also engaged in topographic surveys and geological exploration. As a result of careful, lengthy research, detailed maps of the area were made and copper ores and coal basins were discovered in the mountains.

The description and study of the state of the water regime of the Amu Darya and its tributaries, the physical state of the atmosphere and atmospheric phenomena was systematically carried out, which still retains its importance in the comparative study of climate. The Amu Darya was well navigable and there was no passage to the sea, and the task of the expedition was to open an exit to

the sea along the Amu Darya, so that it would be beneficial for military operations, and the main task of the scientific expedition was to determine the amount of water and the degree of navigation of the Amu Darya, to find conditions for the drying up of steppe reservoirs, leveling, as well as tasks such as giving accurate information about localities and routes of communication, which later had enormous significance for subsequent research. In addition, a lot of useful materials about the economy of the region, its population, historical monuments, settlements, etc. were collected.

In addition to the most valuable collections of natural-historical and ethnographic and various maps, the participants of this expedition delivered to the Imperial Russian Geographical Society many articles and reports published in the Society's periodicals. Being engaged mainly in geographical, geological and ethnographic information, zoological and botanical collections were made along the way. In addition to the Amu Darya expedition, one can also consider the Aral-Caspian expedition, which was organized simultaneously with the Amu Darya expedition, it was devoted to the study of the fauna of the Aral and Caspian seas. During the expedition, 220 names of settlements located in the coastal regions of the Aral Sea were compiled, indicating the ethnic composition of the inhabitants, information about industrial production, and the features of the language of the population were studied. Well-known scientists N. A. Severtsev and M.N.Bogdanov compiled rich collections and resolved scientific issues in geography, plants and their botany. In order to study the fishery of the Aral Sea in 1885, the zoologist A.M.Nikolsky and surveying fishing farms along the way. He wrote a book called «On Fishing in the Waters of the Aral Basin in 1887». Significant of the studies was the Aral-Caspian leveling carried out by the geographer and surveyor A.A.Tillo. He also made astronomical observations on the shores of the Aral Sea and the lower reaches of the Syr Darya. Several levelings of the dry channels of the Amu Darya were made, both in the Khiva Khanate from Kunya-Urgench to Sary-Kamysh lakes, and from the Caspian Sea

to Sary-Kamysh and the Sary-Kamysh lakes themselves, so after the expedition the entire path of the old channel of the Amu Darya was traced in detail. As a result of all these surveys and leveling, maps of the Turkestan region and individual parts of the region were compiled.

**Conclusions and suggestions:** Thus, the flexibility of the organized structure, the consistency in solving the goals and objectives of the expedition, a wide range of scientific interests, the gradual coverage of a variety of issues, combined with the depth of research, gave an invaluable result and later became an indispensable valuable source for scientists – researchers. The works of expedition researchers made a huge contribution to the study of the Turkestan region, in particular the Aral Sea. After studying the works of the above researchers:

Firstly, it is possible to determine the existing problems regarding changes in the Aral Sea, use the data of researchers in the study of climatic conditions, topographic changes in the region.

Secondly: to use as a scientific material for textbooks of higher and secondary education, which are relevant at the present time.

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