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THE ROLE OF SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL STUDIES (KRAEVEDENIE) IN KARAKALPAKSTAN (1920S–1930S)

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the pivotal role of scientific expeditions during the 1920s and 1930s in the institutional emergence, methodology, and empirical consolidation of regional studies (kraevedenie) in Karakalpakstan. It systematically evaluates primary expeditionary trajectories across economic geography, historical ethnography, Turkic linguistics, folklore documentation, and archaeological survey. Based on extensive archival materials preserved in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (TsGA RK), published expedition reports, and foundational academic monographs, the paper traces how imperial-era exploratory legacies were transformed into state-directed Soviet research programs. The analysis reveals that while expeditionary activities dramatically broadened the factual source base concerning the material culture, oral epics, and social institutions of the Karakalpak people, their agenda was simultaneously governed by the practical imperatives of Soviet economic modernization—namely raw material extraction, irrigation planning, and fisheries management—as well as escalating political-ideological surveillance. Consequently, this study emphasizes the necessity of applying rigorous source-critical methodology to regional expeditionary documentation to distinguish authentic ethnographic-historical observations from contemporary ideological superstructures.

Keywords: Scientific expeditions, Kraevedenie, Regional studies, Karakalpakstan, 1920s–1930s, Lower Amu Darya, Ethnography, Turkic linguistics, Soviet economic planning, Historical source criticism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the establishment of Soviet power across Central Asia, state economic strategy toward peripheral regions largely maintained structural continuity with pre-revolutionary imperial policy: the vast borderlands were predominantly conceptualized as strategic raw-material bases for central industrial metropolises. This extractive paradigm became exceptionally prominent during the late 1920s and early 1930s as the Soviet state transitioned toward centralized planning, heavy industrialization, and forced modernization. Under the framework of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the initial Five-Year Plans, the rapid rehabilitation and expansion of manufacturing industries generated an insatiable demand for raw cotton, mineral deposits, leather stocks, animal raw materials, and other agro-industrial resources. In this geopolitical context, Moscow and republican authorities intensified the systematic scientific exploration of outlying territories by

dispatching specialized expeditions to evaluate territorial natural-resource reserves, productive capacities, and socio-demographic structures.

Within the Lower Amu Darya basin and the Aral Sea littoral—regions constituting the territory of modern Karakalpakstan—early scientific missions performed a dual utilitarian and academic mandate. Expeditionary teams simultaneously surveyed the productive forces of the Amu Darya river system, recorded the state of traditional irrigation canals, mapped transport networks, inspected nomadic and semi-nomadic animal husbandry, and explored commercial inland fisheries. A seminal milestone was reached in 1925 when an extensive limnological and biological expedition directed by the eminent geographer and ichthyologist Lev S. Berg conducted comprehensive fieldwork across the Aral Sea basin. Berg's researchers meticulously recorded traditional fishing technologies, cataloged local ichthyofaunal species, evaluated commercially exploitable fish stocks, and assessed navigational corridors and cargo logistics on the Aral Sea (Bekimbetov, 2006). Crucially, these economic investigations were inextricably intertwined with inquiries into the history, language, everyday life, and material culture of the autochthonous populations inhabiting the delta.

Simultaneously, the central Soviet apparatus began formulating a coherent, centralized state doctrine regarding kraevedenie (regional local studies). The institutional consolidation of this field began with the First All-Russian Conference of Scientific Societies for the Study of Local Regions, held in Moscow in December 1921. Historical analysis by contemporary scholars highlights this assembly as the initial organizational mechanism through which the Soviet state sought to build a structured, universally governed system of regional science (Smirnova, 2011). To oversee decentralized regional societies and render organizational and methodological support, the Central Bureau of Regional Studies (Tsentral'noe kraevedcheskoe biuro – TsKB) was established, with overall scientific supervision entrusted to the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN).

The scope of kraevedenie evolved further at the Second All-Union Conference of Regional Historians (Moscow, December 9–14, 1924), which formally designated socio-economic research and productive force analysis as top scholarly priorities. Shortly thereafter, the TsKB was structurally integrated into the Chief Administration of Scientific, Scientific-Artistic, and Museum Institutions (Glavnauka) under the People's Commissariat of Education (Narkompros). Glavnauka exercised comprehensive authority: it directed the expansion of scientific and museum institutions, fortified logistical bases, trained indigenous cadres, coordinated academic congresses, promoted popular scientific dissemination, organized expeditions, and administered the official registration, preservation, and restoration of historical, architectural, and artistic monuments.

In the eastern republics, regional societies emerged concurrently. On October 15, 1920, the Society for the Study of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Region was founded in Orenburg (Abylkhozhin et al., 2009). The geographical remit of this society extended substantially, continuing unabated following the national-state delimitation of Central Asia in 1924 and the establishment of the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast (KAO) within the Kazakh ASSR. As a result, the organizational methodologies and field traditions developed in Orenburg and Alma-Ata directly cross-fertilized the embryonic academic networks in Karakalpakstan. However, a comprehensive historiographical

assessment synthesizing how archival expeditions transformed into permanent regional scientific infrastructure remains essential. This article analyzes the primary stages, scientific outcomes, archival records, and systemic constraints of expeditionary kraevedenie in Karakalpakstan throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical foundation of this study is drawn from primary documentary evidence preserved in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Respubliki Karakalpakstan – TsGA RK), located in Nukus. Specific archival collections (fonds) were critically interrogated to reconstruct the administrative, financial, and logistical operations of regional expeditions:

• **TsGA RK, Fond R-551 (Executive Committee of the KAO):** Opis 1, Delo 88 contains comprehensive statistical reports, natural resource inventories, and economic appraisals compiled by local administrative leaders—most notably Allayar Dosnazarov's early 1926 memorandum detailing regional mining, geological, and agricultural potential.

• **TsGA RK, Fond 12 (Central Executive Committee of the KAO):** Opis 3, Dela 15 and 367 encompass official plenary resolutions, inter-republican correspondence with the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR (TsIK KazASSR), and official mandates granting scientific permissions, security clearances, and transport facilities to visiting researchers from Moscow and Leningrad.

• **TsGA RK, Fond 26 (Department of Public Education of the KAO):** Opis 1, Dela 205 and 245 preserve directives, ministerial appeals from Kazakhstan People's Commissar of Education Uraz Dzhandosov, internal programmatic guidelines for the Kraevedenie Society, and funding records for museum acquisitions and ethnographical exhibitions.

• **TsGA RK, Fond 322 (Planning and Scientific Coordination Commissions):** Opis 1, Delo 53 details inter-institutional research planning in the Lower Amu Darya basin, regional expedition itinerary approvals, and collaborative deliberations involving the Council for the Study of Productive Forces (SOPS) of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

To evaluate this documentary corpus, a rigorous historical-critical and comparative source-study methodology was employed. Methodologically, early Soviet expeditionary materials present a dual character: they embody highly valuable empirical observations of traditional socio-economic practices and cultural artifacts, while simultaneously reflecting the ideological tenets, political terminology, and pragmatic developmental agendas of early Soviet statehood. Consequently, external and internal source criticism was applied to every archival document and expedition report.

The analysis utilized the comparative-historical method to track the chronological evolution of expeditionary scopes, contrasting the initial, broadly descriptive ethnographic-economic inquiries of the mid-1920s with the specialized, linguistic-codification, archaeological, and industrial surveys of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Archival administrative records were systematically cross-referenced against published monographs, field diaries, linguistic dictionaries, and personal memoirs from expedition participants (including N. A. Baskakov, S. E. Malov, K. Aiymbetov, A. Yu. Yakubovsky, and S. P. Tolstov). This triangulation allowed the identification of discrepancies

between programmatic state directives and actual field results, verifying the authentic contribution of each expedition to the regional historiography of Karakalpakstan.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Economic Inventories and the Mobilization of Natural Resources (1924–1926)

Immediately following the formation of the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast in late 1924, regional executive authorities confronted the dual challenge of post-civil war economic rehabilitation and cultural development. A high priority was assigned to investigating the territory's raw-material assets. A seminal document illustrating this developmental stage is the comprehensive report prepared in early 1926 by Allayar Dosnazarov, First Secretary of the Karakalpak Regional Party Committee (TsGA RK, f. R-551, op. 1, d. 88). Dosnazarov's report provided a pioneering systematic inventory of the economic reserves of the KAO:

• **Petroleum Reserves:** Documented natural surface petroleum seepages and geological oil indicators in the northern Kungrad district, advocating for systematic industrial exploratory drilling.

• **Abrasives and Minerals:** Reported deposits of corundum (noted in early documents as industrial abrasive 'sand' utilized for stone-crushing and metallurgical grinding), emery, native sulfur, and turquoise veins extracted by local artisanal miners in the Sultan-Uvays and Karateran mountain ranges.

• **Mineral Pigments:** Identified widespread subterranean natural dye and ochre deposits actively utilized by local artisan communities for wool and leather processing.

• **Wild Fibrous Flora (Kendyr / 'Turki'):** Described vast alluvial thickets of wild bast-fiber flora—designated in documents as 'turki' (kendyr / Apocynum venetum)—noting that tensile testing showed its fibers to surpass European flax in structural durability, moisture resistance, and softness.

• **Domestic Handicrafts:** Documented the structure of manual rural industries, carpet-weaving, felt manufacture, and metallurgical blacksmithing, emphasizing their reliance on archaic manual equipment.

Dosnazarov's report served not merely as an economic ledger, but as political leverage to compel central authorities to commit institutional scientific resources to the region. The momentum accelerated with the February 24, 1926 decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR, which mandated an all-encompassing scientific survey of republican productive forces and cultural reconstruction. Aligning with this decree, the Second Plenum of the KAO Executive Committee (March 1926) formally resolved that comprehensive territorial exploration was an urgent necessity, petitioning higher administrative bodies in Alma-Ata and Moscow to organize academic expeditions (TsGA RK, f. 12, op. 3, d. 367).

3.2. Ethnographic, Sociological, and Folklore Fieldwork (1926–1929)

Given the acute deficit of regionally trained scientific cadres, the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR appealed directly to central academic institutions in Moscow. In the summer of 1926, the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography of Moscow State University (MGU) organized and dispatched a dedicated scientific expedition to Turtkul, then the administrative capital of the KAO. The research party comprised three promising scholars from the

Historical-Ethnological Faculty of MGU: Artashir Kh. Devlet, Alexey I. Ivanov, and Nikolay A. Baskakov (later an eminent Turkologist and academician).

The arrival of these scholars produced a notable impression on the local population and regional leadership. The Karakalpak writer and scholar Kalli Aiymbetov vividly described their arrival in his memoirs: 'In 1926, a group of people stood before the Chimbay District Executive Committee. They looked with profound respect upon three unfamiliar young men who had arrived from Moscow—honored guests dressed in elegant silk hats and modern suits of dignified appearance. Among the assembled local population, only one individual spoke fluent Russian: Mukhsin, the secretary of the district executive committee, a Tatar by nationality. Once the dialogue commenced through the interpreter, it became known that Baskakov, Ivanov, and the young Turkic scholar Devlet were students of the Ethnographic Faculty of Moscow State University' (Aiymbetov, 2008). Aiymbetov observed that while academic interest in Karakalpak folklore had precursors-such as Professor P. M. Melioransky's dispatch of his disciple Belyaev to collect oral poetry in 1903-the 1926 mission represented the first multi-district institutional field study.

Upon reaching Turtkul, Devlet, Ivanov, and Baskakov presented their research syllabus to the KAO Executive Committee. The administration approved their agenda, directing the expedition to conduct detailed fieldwork across the Chimbay and Kungrad districts, with specific instructions to examine rural economic life, pastoral animal husbandry, agricultural practices, and domestic artisanal production (TsGA RK, f. 12, op. 3, d. 15). Baskakov later recalled that their scientific itinerary covered the primary populated corridors of Karakalpakstan: Turtkul – Chimbay – Karauzyak – Kungrad – Khojeyli – Khiva – Turtkul (Baskakov, 1952). The expedition collected extensive ethnographic datasets, clan genealogies (shezhire), and oral folklore. These findings culminated in the landmark publication 'Scenes from the Life History of the Karakalpaks', which incorporated a concise grammatical description of the Karakalpak language and musical transcriptions of native epic and lyrical melodies.

Field initiatives proliferated steadily during 1927–1929. In 1927, Antonina S. Morozova, a graduate of the Oriental Faculty of Orenburg and Central Asian State University (SAGU) in Tashkent, undertook extensive solo and collaborative field investigations into the domestic lifestyle and decorative arts of Karakalpak women. Her fieldwork yielded two pioneering monographs: 'Ethnographic Images' and 'Materials on the Grammar of the Karakalpak Language'. Although these monographs remained unpublished in manuscript form (Baskakov, 1951), Morozova's data established vital baseline records for later Soviet ethnography.

Concurrently, between 1927 and 1929, G. K. Schultz, a researcher from the Leningrad Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences, conducted field inquiries within the Central Asian Ethnological Expedition led by I. I. Zarubin. Schultz collected rigorous demographic tallies, recorded village economic interactions, examined architectural styles of traditional mud-brick houses and portable felt yurts (kara-üy), and assembled rich physical collections of ethnographic artifacts that were later accessioned into the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) in Leningrad (Kurbanova, 2020).

In 1928, a major expedition was organized by the Society for the Study of Kazakhstan under the directorship of Alexander L. Melkov. The ethnographical division included notable scholars such as the musicologist-folklorist A. V. Zataevich and historian A. N. Chuloshnikov. Melkov's expedition focused primarily on rural craftsmanship, metalworking, woodcarving, and leather processing. Melkov employed an advanced ethnographic documentation methodology combining meticulous diary records with systematic photography and architectural drafting. The critical significance of this expedition was emphasized by the Kazakh ASSR Commissar of Public Education, Uraz Dzhandosov, who issued an urgent administrative dispatch to the Karakalpak Department of Public Education demanding that regional organs provide comprehensive logistical assistance, transport, and local guides, ensuring that research outcomes achieved maximum scientific and practical utility (TsGA RK, f. 26, op. 1, d. 205).

3.3. Linguistic Documentation and Alphabet Standardisation (1929–1930)

As field materials accumulated, it became evident that effective education, public administration, and economic management demanded the scientific codification of the Karakalpak language, which was then transitioning from the Arabic script to the Unified New Turkic Alphabet (Yanalif Latin script). Nikolay A. Baskakov, who served as a scientific officer within the KAO public education system, spearheaded this work. In 1929, Baskakov published the first comprehensive academic Russian-language scientific grammar of the Karakalpak language, laying the grammatical and phonetic foundation for pedagogical publishing.

This culminated in the dispatch of a high-level linguistic expedition headed by the prominent Russian Turkologist and Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Sergey E. Malov, which worked continuously in Karakalpakstan from June 15 to September 15, 1930 (Malov, 1966). The expedition integrated both central scholars and rising indigenous Karakalpak intellectuals, including T. S. Safiev, N. A. Baskakov, N. V. Torchinskaya, A. Kh. Devlet, K. Ubaydullaev, M. Daribaev, P. Seytmuratov, O. Ayteshev, A. Morozova, and T. Bekimbetov (Kosymbetov, 1976). Operating across the linguistic transition zones of Kegeyli, Chimbay, Karauzyak, and Kungrad, the Malov expedition compiled an extraordinary collection of dialectological and oral literary texts.

The direct scholarly deliverables produced by this expedition included four seminal manuscripts that shaped modern Karakalpak linguistics (Baskakov, 1932):

• **Notes on the Karakalpak Language:** Authored jointly by S. E. Malov and N. A. Baskakov, presenting an advanced phonetic and morphological analysis of northern and southern Karakalpak dialects.

• **Oral Folk Literature of Kegeyli and Chimbay:** Compiled by S. E. Malov and N. A. Baskakov, documenting dastan epic recitations, kosik folk poetry, and ritual songs directly transcribed from master jirau and baqsi performers.

• **Oral Folk Literature of Karauzyak and Kungrad:** Systematized by T. S. Safiev, capturing regional variations in folklore, agricultural proverbs, and lyrical poetry.

• **Project for Karakalpak Orthography:** Drafted by N. A. Baskakov and T. Bekimbetov, establishing standardized phonetic rules, spelling conventions, and morphological classifications for the new Latin-based writing system.

3.4. Archaeological Field Exploration and Monument Identification (1928–1937)

In parallel with ethnography and linguistics, the late 1920s witnessed the inception of systematic archaeological exploration in the Lower Amu Darya delta. In 1928–1929, the State Academy of the History of Material Culture (GAIMK) dispatched Alexander Yu. Yakubovsky to examine medieval monuments in Khorezm and Karakalpakstan. Yakubovsky carried out intensive architectural and epigraphic fieldwork at the necropolis of Mizdakhkan near Khojeyli, conducting structural analyses of the semi-subterranean fourteen-century Mazlumkhan-sulu mausoleum, the tomb of Shamun-nabi, and the ancient fortress walls of Gyaur-kala. Yakubovsky's architectural stratigraphy confirmed academician Vasily V. Barthold's prior hypothesis that the Gyaur-kala ruins represented the historical medieval urban center of Mizdakhkan, documented extensively in classical Arab-Persian geographical treatises (Yusupov, 1981).

During the same period, Alexander L. Melkov made crucial field discoveries while surveying the southern Aral Sea littoral. In 1929, Melkov discovered the extensive mud-brick ruins of Kuyuk-kala, an early medieval fortress settlement in the Amu Darya delta, and recorded monumental Zoroastrian ossuary burial structures on the Kuskanatau ridge. Melkov excavated exceptional ceramic fragments, ganch relief moldings, and ancient coins, depositing these assemblages in the State Russian Museum in Leningrad (Yusupov, 1981).

These early initiatives catalyzed the involvement of Sergey P. Tolstov, who conducted ethnographical reconnaissance near Old Urgench, Khojeyli, and the Karakalpak delta settlements in 1928–1929, followed by field assignments for the Museum of Peoples of the USSR between 1932 and 1934 (Zhdanko, 1981). Tolstov's early observations regarding the spatial distribution of ancient irrigation canals and abandoned fortress citadels (qalas) directly inspired his organization, in 1937, of the monumental Khorezm Archaeological-Ethnographic Expedition of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Tolstov's expedition grew into one of the most comprehensive archaeological operations in world history, establishing the prehistoric, ancient, and medieval chronological sequence of Central Asian civilization (Itina, 1981).

3.5. Institutional Consolidation and Local Scientific Infrastructure

The influx of external academic missions stimulated the formation of permanent local scientific societies in Karakalpakstan. In March 1928, local intellectuals, educators, and administrators founded the Regional Studies Society of the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast (TsGA RK, f. 26, op. 1, d. 245; Sabirov, 1984). The society's executive bureau was chaired by Solotsky, with Durishkin serving as executive secretary. Archival records indicate that within months of its establishment, the society inaugurated a dedicated museum department under the auspices of the Regional Department of Public Education, laying the direct institutional foundation for the State Museum of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (Sabirov, 1984).

Institutional capacity expanded further in September 1928 with the formal inauguration of the Karakalpak Department of the Society for the Study of Kazakhstan. Following the constitutional

transfer of the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast into the Russian SFSR on June 20, 1930, scientific coordination shifted toward national Soviet planning institutes. On December 27, 1931, the Presidium of the Council for the Study of Productive Forces (SOPS) of the USSR Academy of Sciences convened a historic special session attended by academic luminaries including Alexander E. Fersman, Sergey F. Oldenburg, Alexander Yu. Samoylovich, and Sergey I. Solntsev. Following a report by A. I. Chestov outlining five-year regional research programs in Central Asia, SOPS adopted a binding resolution mandating the long-term, comprehensive scientific exploration of the Lower Amu Darya water resources, soils, and mineralogy, officially elevating Karakalpak studies to all-union strategic importance (TsGA RK, f. 322, op. 1, d. 53).

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. The Dual Mandate: Academic Scholarship vs. Economic Modernization

The analysis of archival records and expedition deliverables demonstrates that the development of kraevedenie in Karakalpakstan during the 1920s and 1930s cannot be understood purely as an idealistic academic enterprise. Rather, it functioned as an integral component of early Soviet state-building and territorial economic integration. The expeditionary model embodied a functional duality: fundamental scholarly discovery operated in continuous symbiosis with utilitarian economic calculation. Scholars dispatched from Moscow and Leningrad were expected to decipher local dialectology, record folklore, and photograph yurt architecture while simultaneously cataloging navigable channels, industrial minerals, wild bast fibers, and fishing stock yields to supply central Soviet industries.

This utilitarian orientation aligned directly with the resolutions of the Third All-Russian Conference on Regional Studies (December 1927), which decreed that kraevedenie must break decisively with pre-revolutionary 'narrow antiquarianism' and subordinate its operational programs to the needs of socialist industrialization, agricultural collectivization, and Soviet state governance (Rezolyutsii, 1927). In Karakalpakstan, this state alignment enabled regional scientific institutions to secure crucial financial and logistical support from republican commissariats. However, it also constrained research agendas, forcing ethnographers and natural scientists to constantly justify their field inquiries through the prism of direct economic utility.

4.2. Methodological Biases and the Ideological Climate

A rigorous historiographical appraisal must account for the distinct epistemological and political constraints that conditioned interwar expeditionary science in the Lower Amu Darya basin:

Linguistic and Intercultural Mediation: Most visiting researchers from central institutes possessed little or no fluency in the Karakalpak language and lacked intimate familiarity with traditional steppe social etiquette. As illustrated in K. Aiymbetov's narrative of the 1926 MGU expedition, interactions were heavily mediated by translators (such as local district secretaries or Tatar intermediaries). This inevitable communicative barrier occasionally led researchers to oversimplify intricate kinship structures, clan genealogies (urugh), or religious syncretism.

Archival Confinement of Field Documentation: A substantial portion of the collected field observations remained unpublished in institutional archives or field notebooks—such as A. S. Morozova's valuable 1927 manuscripts on Karakalpak women's lifestyle and dialect grammar. This

restricted the timely dissemination of empirical findings within the broader academic community and slowed the development of regional historiography.

Escalating Ideological Supervision and Repression: Throughout the 1920s, scholars retained considerable latitude to apply empirical, descriptive ethnography. However, by the early 1930s, the intensification of Stalinist ideological orthodoxy mandated the application of rigid Marxist-Leninist socio-historical templates. Researchers were pressured to frame historical dynamics exclusively through the mechanisms of class struggle, feudal exploitation, and patriarchal oppression, often obscuring the nuanced reciprocal mechanisms of traditional Karakalpak nomadic-pastoral mutual aid. Tragically, key champions of regional kraevedenie—including indigenous political and intellectual leaders like Allayar Dosnazarov and Uraz Dzhandosov—fell victim to political purges in the late 1930s.

Consequently, modern researchers must approach early Soviet expeditionary literature with nuanced source-critical vigilance. Scholars must carefully disentangle primary empirical field data—accurate architectural measurements, faithful phonological transcriptions, verbatim epic recordings, and precise physical artifact descriptions—from the obligatory ideological rhetoric and sociopolitical conclusions superimposed upon the text by period publishers and censors.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The scientific expeditions conducted across Karakalpakstan during the 1920s and 1930s constituted the indispensable foundation for the institutionalization, empirical expansion, and methodology of regional studies (kraevedenie) in the Lower Amu Darya basin. Operating at the confluence of central academic curiosity, regional administrative ambition, and Soviet state economic planning, these multi-disciplinary initiatives generated several enduring contributions:

1. Empirical Source Base Accumulation: The expeditions systematically documented traditional Karakalpak life, folklore, musical heritage, and dialectology before the dramatic socio-cultural transformations wrought by collectivization and sedentarization. Foundational publications and field manuscripts by N. A. Baskakov, S. E. Malov, and A. L. Melkov permanently preserved rare oral traditions, epic poetry, and ethnographic materials of profound scholarly value.

2. Linguistic Standardization: Field linguistic missions provided the direct phonetic, grammatical, and dialectological materials essential for drafting official orthographies, educational textbooks, and lexicographical reference works during the crucial Latinization era.

3. Archaeological Frameworks: Reconnaissance surveys by A. Yu. Yakubovsky, A. L. Melkov, and S. P. Tolstov identified vital ancient and medieval settlement sites—such as Mizdakhkan, Gyaur-kala, and Kuyuk-kala—providing the empirical springboard for the creation of the internationally renowned Khorezm Archaeological-Ethnographic Expedition in 1937.

4. Infrastructure and Cadre Training: The interaction between visiting academic teams and local educators fostered the establishment of the Karakalpak Regional Studies Society, stimulated the founding of the regional museum network, and facilitated the professional emergence of the first generation of indigenous Karakalpak historians, linguists, and ethnographers.

Ultimately, the archival and published heritage of the 1920s–1930s expeditions remains an irreplaceable historical wellspring. When subjected to thorough source-critical decontamination

from early Soviet ideological overlays, these materials provide an extraordinary window into the cultural resilience, material ingenuity, and historical heritage of the Karakalpak people.

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