
FAMOUS ORIENTALISTS: LIFE AND ASSESSMENTS

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THE KHADAG OF RADLOFF (THE UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL FROM THE PERSONAL ARCHIVES OF THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ACADEMICIAN RADLOFF ON THE HISTORY OF “THE MUSEUM OF UNIVERSAL CULTURE”)

January 5, 2012 is the 175th anniversary of Friedrich Wilhelm (in Russia Vasilii Vasil'evich) Radloff (*fig. 1*). It is undisputable that the modern Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in St. Petersburg seems to owe its very existence to — apart from Peter the Great — him, a Turkologist of world renown and a distinguished organizer of science. After his promotion to the office of Museum director in 1894 and after critical assessment of the status the Museum had been in for many years, Radloff made an urgent decision. It had to do with not just reanimating the most ancient museum in Russia, but also with creating a scientific and museum centre, which will become a worthy rival to the leading scientific centres in Europe: *the museum of universal culture*, if you will, or *the combined museum of anthropology, ethnography and archaeology*.

There is a great number of works that speak of the scientific accomplishments of Radloff and those, who were establishing the new Museum in a step-by-step fashion, the Museum that would conform to the leading European standards of that time (*fig. 2*) [1]. The very idea of the formation of the museum of universal culture could be felt in

the air, and today it becomes clear that at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries it was an all-European trend. The realization of this idea became Radloff's life-long work: collections were being replenished at great speed and expeditions were being carried out. The latter were mostly carried out thanks to Radloff's “team”, who were just as fanatically devoted to the museum business as was Radloff himself. And if he, remaining a prominent Turkologist, often functioned as the organizer of the whole museum process, then one of the leading Russian ethnographers Lev Sternberg, for instance, was his right hand and a rather notable organizer of science. Thanks to him the Museum not only obtained a number of first-class collections, but also complete ethnographic sections in their entirety. Interestingly, the very idea of establishing *the museum of universal culture*, as it was referred to by its creators, or *the museum of human evolution and human culture*, apparently was never formulated in detail by anybody, but in marginal variations these phrases became the so-called banner of the new era in the life of the Museum and are now easily stumbled upon practically in all documents, reflecting various aspects of the MAE activity.

In May of 2011 I set out on a short term business trip to Kazan with the purpose of detecting and publishing the materials from the personal archives of the descendants of Turkologist Radloff. My main task was to meet and interview Professor William Barabanov, Doctor of Chemistry, the great grandson of academician Radloff. As a result of this trip I acquired very treasured materials, which were courteously handed to the Museum by Professor Barabanov and his blood sister Ariadna, obviously the great granddaughter of Radloff. Among the treasures acquired, apart from photographs and a two-hour interview, there was the draft of the text of the inaugural address, which was delivered by the colleagues of Radloff on May 14, 1909, the day of the 50th anniversary of his scientific activity in

Russia. That text was of peculiar interest to me. But unfortunately neither Professor Barabanov nor his sister knew much about the authorship of the text and the hand that wrote it. Evidently there are three different handwritings. It is still unclear who the two handwritings belong to. When it comes to the third and the largest portion of the text, however, the detailed study of the personal correspondence of Lev Sternberg as part of the Fund No. 282 of the St. Petersburg branch of the archive of the RAS (The Fund of Sternberg) gives us enough grounds to assume that the text was written by him. Curiously, the formulation, relating to *the museum of universal culture*, is found in the first portion of the text, given to me by the descendants of Radloff and for the first time ever is published in this piece.