
LARISA LEVTEYEVA

LYUDMILA ZHUKOVA – COLLECTOR OF FACTS

This essay briefly sketches the life and work of Lyudmila Zhukova (1940-2018), a Tashkent historian and archaeologist. After graduating from the Tashkent State University (Department of Archaeology), she worked in the Voluntary Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments of Uzbekistan for many years. For decades she was one of the most eminent humanities scholars in Uzbekistan. Her work is reflected in hundreds of popular academic papers published in the media and scientific journals. She held correspondence with many people and personally met with them to learn about previously unknown events and personalities who left their mark in the history of Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

Key words: *Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, archaeology, local history, ethnic atlas, Mikhail Masson, Valentin Voino-Yasenetsky.*

Citation: Larisa Levteyeva (2021) Lyudmila Zhukova – Collector of Facts, Bulletin of IICAS. Issue 31, 160-164. DOI: 10.34920/1694-5794-2021.160-166

Article link: <https://doi.org/10.34920/1694-5794-2021.160-166>

THE YEAR 2020 marked the 80th birthday anniversary of Lyudmila Ivanovna Zhukova, a Tashkent historian and archaeologist, whose life was fully devoted to science. Alas, she did not live to see this date, passing quietly and modestly in 2018; but the image of this extremely beautiful woman with a noble, regal bearing, in all her appearance, embodied intelligence and kind attentiveness toward people. She will forever stay in the memory of everyone who knew her.

Lyudmila Ivanovna Zhukova was born in Leningrad on April 21, 1940. Her early childhood fell during the height of the Nazi siege of the city. Like all the survivors of the siege, she experienced both the hunger and cold during that harsh time. This adversity had consequences as St. Petersburg's damp and unstable climate affected Zhukova's health. Therefore, following the recommendation of doctors, upon graduating from high school she went to Central Asia, specifically to sunny Tashkent, and entered the university's history department. She dreamed of becoming an archaeologist discovering yet unknown layers of history. It was a life-defining choice. Zhukova spent her whole life in Tashkent, and it became her second homeland.

The Department of Archaeology, which in those years was headed by Mikhail Yevgenievich Masson, conducted intensive archaeological research in the historical provinces of Kesh and Nakhshab (Kash-

kadarya region) as well as at the site of Old Merv in Margiana, one of the most ancient historical and cultural regions of Central Asia. Students, under the guidance of experienced mentors, participated in excavations and gained experience there. Among Zhukova's teachers, in addition to Masson, were such outstanding researchers as Svetlana Borisovna Lunina, Zamira Ismailovna Usmanova, and Nadezhda Iosifovna Krasheninnikova; who developed the domestic method for archaeological study of the monuments of Central Asia. Zhukova's scientific worldview was shaped during the expeditions in which she mastered the skills of field research. Thanks to the Department of Archaeology, which regularly held academic meetings of the Student Scientific Archaeological Circle (SSAC) she encountered many domestic and foreign scholars.

Lyudmila Zhukova maintained a friendship with Mikhail Yevgenievich Masson and his wife, Galina Anatolyevna Pugachenkova, until the end of their days. She often visited them, listened to their advice, cared about them, and helped them when they entered their senior years. The home of these two great scientists always hosted both novice and seasoned academics. Discussions often involved heated scientific disputes, talk of expeditions and new discoveries, as well as plans for the future. All this contributed to Zhukova's professional growth and developed her logical thinking and ability to delve into the essential topics.

Yet, she was not destined to become a field archaeologist. A leg illness she suffered during childhood affected her and she had to permanently abandon long expeditions. After graduating from the university in 1963, she gained an assignment at the Republican Society for the Protection of Monuments serving as a member of the general committee until her retirement. She was actively involved in the preservation of historical and cultural monuments. She did her job wholeheartedly. She often went to the sites, recorded the condition of monuments, and provided support to local branches of the Society. She took an active part in solving organizational issues related to the work of the Society's plenary sessions and congresses.

Zhukova initiated and actively participated in "Masson's Readings," a project dedicated to the memory of Masson. Prominent scholars took part in this project aimed at raising and solving the issues surrounding research in the historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan as well as all of Central Asia. She gained a reputation as a reliable comrade, a conscientious and responsible worker, and a wonderful person. She enjoyed the full support of the Society's employees along with a wide range of people who were not indifferent to the issues of preserving monuments. An especially fruitful period of the Society's work occurred during the chairmanship of Lieutenant-General Fayzulla Khojayevich Narkhojayev (1911-1983), the former deputy commander of the Turkestan military district. Thanks to his indisputable authority and support from the official government entities, many issues related to the preservation of monuments and their restoration were resolved. Over her years of activity in this public organization, Zhukova gained significant experience and made invaluable records from her observations.

Zhukova was a true patriot of her homeland and took pride in her work for the region. She was, perhaps, one of the most eminent humanities scholars in Uzbekistan. Her activities are reflected in her more than 300 popular academic papers published in newspapers and magazines. She maintained correspondence with many people and personally met with them to learn about previously unknown events and personalities who left their mark in the Uzbekistan's history. She wrote several articles concerning Mikhail Nikolayevich Chernyshevsky (1858-1924) and his sojourn in Central Asia. He was the son of the classical author of 19th century Russian literature, Nikolay Chernyshevsky. The son wrote several articles such as "Meeting with the Hellenes in the Hungry Steppe," "On the History of the Native Jewish Museum in Samarkand," "Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Bukhara and Khiva Khanates," and many other articles revealing unknown pages of national history. Zhukova actively collaborated with local television



**During her student years.
Photo from the family archive**

and the republic's radio stations and widely promoted the achievements of archaeological and historical science in Uzbekistan.

Zhukova's sincerity and inspiration helped her to reveal new facets of her creativity. She had an amazing ability to listen and empathize; she was philanthropic and emotionally sensitive. Zhukova was a very lively and sociable person and she made a good impression on people regardless of age and profession. Her warmth and kindness were reciprocated from those who encountered her. These traits helped her, among other things, in obtaining the necessary information for the development of a particular topic or in the preparation of popular and scientific publications. Another important feature of her personality was adherence to principle, uncompromisingly defending her beliefs.

Zhukova's great organizational skills were demonstrated during the preparation of several major publications. Her efforts also yielded of two study collections: *Concerning the History of Ancient Cults of Central Asia: Christianity* (1994) and *Concerning the History of Christianity in Central Asia (19th-20th centuries)* (1998). With these publications she acted both as a compiler and author of articles uniting a team of scientists, ethnographers, journalists, and theologians. These books were funded by the Roman Catholic parish in Tashkent, whose head priest, Father Krzysztof Kukulka, Lyudmila Zhukova had a trusting relationship.

Zhukova's creative life-story also included preparing the published collection *The Ethnic Atlas of Uzbekistan* (Tashkent 2002, 452 p.), serving as deputy editor-in-chief and author. The collection comprises her articles on nationality and ethnic groups as well as ethnic minorities inhabiting modern Uzbekistan



With Prof. Mikhail Masson and colleagues – graduates of the Department of Archaeology, Tashkent State University. 1982

describing their ethnogenesis, history of settlement, and location of habitation. The work contains data on ethnocultural centers, ethnic cemeteries, burials, etc. The articles have individual stories. Valuable maps and statistics of ethnic settlement are included. The book is illustrated with rare photographs. The work on *The Atlas* included the participation of historians and ethnographers from the Institute of History, the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, the Department of History at the Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, and the Expert Center for Social Research. Out her collection of 84 articles prepared for the atlas, 59 were published, 17 of which were co-authored with Y. F. Buryakov, E. G. Nekrasova, and R. N. Shigabdinov.

Also of note was Zhukova's long and painstaking collation of study materials about the life and work of Russian Orthodox Archbishop Luke, who was an outstanding professor of surgery known as Valentin Feliksovich Voino-Yasenetsky (1877-1961). Her research focused specifically upon his Tashkent period from March 1917 to March 1940 that was fraught with difficulty. Her long-term work entitled *In Order to Take Off, a Bird Must be Proud* was printed in three editions (Tashkent 2012, 352 p.; Tashkent 2014, 436

p.). The third edition, revised and supplemented, was published in 2017 (Tashkent 520 p.) which marked the 140th anniversary of Voino-Yasenetsky's birth and the 100th anniversary of his arrival in Tashkent. The book consists of more than 250 archival documents and memoirs, most of which were unpublished. The range of archival documents is quite extensive. They were extracted from of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan (CSA RUz); the Central State Archive of Scientific, Technical, and Medical Documentation of the Republic of Uzbekistan (CSA STMD RUz); the State Archive of Tashkent; the archive of the St. Petersburg Diocese (ASPbE); the archives of Avedov family; local historian A. A. Nyukhalova; N. P. Gomolitsky; architect N. N. Zimin; and others.

The documents contain information concerning V. F. Voino-Yasenetsky including his autobiography, written in 1936, with an attached list of academic papers. It also includes questionnaires with his written answers to stated questions; letters from the periphery of the Turkestan and Tashkent dioceses addressed to Archbishop Luke; minutes of the meeting of the Higher Qualification Commission under the People's Commissariat for Health of the UzSSR dated Feb-



With Galina Pugachenkova in Mary,
Turkmenistan, 1990

ruary 13, 1936. The latter document discusses the awarding of Voino-Yasenetsky his academic degree, Doctor of Medical Sciences.

Zhukova examined all the preserved local newspapers between 1917-1937 in Tashkent's libraries (*Svobodny Turkestan*, *Turkestanskije vedomosti*, *Nasha Gazeta*, *Turkestanskoye Slovo*, *Komsomolets Vostoka*, and *Izvestiya*), in which she discovered dozens of messages, articles, and satirical articles mentioning Voino-Yasenetsky. All these, together with those already known, helped her to reconstruct the difficult, yet also unusually fruitful time, of Archbishop Luke's life in Tashkent.

Her work with the archival documents allowed Zhukova to restore another very important aspect in the study this cleric's Tashkent period: "He remained a reliable general doctor for the ministers of the local diocese." The publication touches upon some aspects of human, moral, and ethical standards. The authenticity and accuracy of her submitted documents and other sources are undeniable. The book is illustrated with rare lifetime photographs taken from the archives of the Zairov Museum for the History of Healthcare of Uzbekistan (Tashkent); the Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine (Riga);

the personal archives of deacon Vladimir Maksudov, Tashkent; regional historian B. A. Golender; and other sources. The photograph collection includes group and individual photographs of V. F. Voino-Yasenetsky taken at various times and one of them contains his autograph on the back.

Zhukova usually visited Masson and Pugachenkova in their apartment at the famous Tashkent House of Specialists located on 9th of January Street (now Beshagach). She also became friends with their housemate Olga Alekseyevna Grekova, the daughter of an outstanding Russian and Soviet microbiologist, Aleksey Dmitriyevich Grekov, who with others founded Tashkent University. Zhukova prepared and published selected chapters from his still unpublished memoir *Fifty Years of a Doctor in Central Asia* in various scientific collections in 2001 and 2018. These memoirs are not only an interesting historical source, but also provide many reliable details about some aspects of the life of Russian settlers on the colonial outskirts of the Russian Empire and in the remote province of Persia at the end of the Qajar period. His memoir is a living human document written in simple and understandable language. "Behind this easily readable text," wrote Zhukova, "is a personality of a



With Ruslan Muradov visiting Dr. Vera Bulatova-Levina on the eve of her 95th birthday. Tashkent, 2009. Photo: Vladimir Artemiev

real Russian intellectual; one of many who devoted their lives to the Turkestan region and found a second home here. When the “Europeanization” era of Central Asia fades further into the past, the value of such frank and expressive testimonies by contemporaries becomes more evident.”

Numerous publications by Zhukova, no matter what she wrote about, solidify and deepen our knowledge, broaden our horizons, and contribute to the understanding of the worldviews from a wide range of people. Always calm and hardworking, Lyudmila Zhukova never shifted her problems onto others. She

was modest in everyday life and treated her children and grandchildren (both generations of whom, in fact, she raised) with warmth and tenderness. Her unexpected death on May 1, 2018 was a significant loss for everyone who knew her. Zhukova used the words of an 18th century French naturalist, Georges Buffon, as an epigraph to her book about Voino-Yasenetsky: “Collect the facts – the thought will be born from them.” She was a tireless, enthusiastic, and thoughtful collector of facts from which her articles and books emerged. Who knows how many thoughts they will awaken in those who have yet to turn to them.