

IT ISN'T TRUE THAT FRIEND IS DIE

*When horses die, they breathe,
When grasses die, they wither,
When suns die, they go out,
When men die, they sing songs.*

(Velimir Khlebnikov)

IT IS VERY difficult to write memories of friends and colleagues who passed away almost the day after you left them. This is exactly what happened to me in early October 2019, when the famous Kazakhstani archaeologist Yerbulat Smagulov, who led the Turkestan Archaeological Expedition of the Margulan Institute of Archaeology for many years, died.

At that time in 2019, after a break, I returned to Turkestan. It was due to a change of residence. I moved from Ukraine to work at Pavlodar Pedagogical University. Therefore, taking advantage of the opportunity, I was happy to visit the Turkestan Archaeological Expedition, which I have considered my home since 2009.

There were plans.... There was admiration for the accumulation of material during my absence.... Inspired by this trip, on October 2nd, I left for Pavlodar. Bulat, who was driving for the first time following his illness, took me to the train station and put me on the train. I never thought it would be the last time I saw him. But, that's exactly what happened. A few days later I received a phone call with the terrible news of the death of a dear friend and colleague.

My communication with Bulat can be divided into several categories.

First, I would like to remember how we met. One day I received a letter from my old friend and colleague Sergei Yatsenko, who spoke enthusiastically about a conference where he met Kazakhstani colleagues (including Bulat Smagulov). Knowing my interest in Asian topics, he introduced us.

However, as is well known, it is very difficult for an archaeologist, with all her desire, to go somewhere beyond her own expeditions. At that time, I was actively working in Crimea, at Chersonesus, and the work required much effort; so it was difficult to find free time to travel. But, Bulat and I began a correspondence, and from the first moments of our communication we realized that we had much to talk about. That's how our friendship began. From that time until today, many of his emails are still stored in my inbox....

It so happened that in 2008 I came with a team to work at the citadel of Chersonesos, realizing that

the following year, most likely, I would not return there again. Therefore, I informed Bulat about my intention to come to Turkestan. He got very excited, answering that he would welcome me at any time.

I have a letter dated April 25, 2009, in which Sergei Yatsenko and I reflected with anticipation about the possibility of a meeting in Turkestan. It's always great to meet friends and colleagues. So, I boarded the Kharkiv-Tashkent train. I had a three-day journey to Turkestan. I am not a fan of traveling long distances by train, but at the time it was the best option to transport not only myself, but also my large amount of work gear.

My trip was exceptionally interesting. There were six customs and border control checks, and wonderful traveling companions.... After this long road, a warm meeting awaited me on the platform in Turkestan which I will remember for the rest of my life. Those bright and pure emotions still fill me today. It is possible that thanks to that meeting, Kazakhstan itself became a country of sunshine and joy for me!

Bulat was an open and sunny man, generous and hospitable. His energy fascinated me from the first day of my acquaintance with him and his inquisitive scientific mind completed the picture. Yerbulat Akizhakovich Smagulov was my mentor in matters of both Central Asian archeology, as well as Turkic and Asian Studies. This fact is very important and awe-inspiring for me.

I have always had an interest in the East. But it so happened that I became engaged in Greco-Roman antiquity when I was a student and participated in archeological research of ancient Greek polities in southern Ukraine. For many years I specialized in Ukraine's most famous monument, the Tauric Chersonesos (Sevastopol, Crimea). In no way do I belittle the importance of this field for me. Today the knowledge and experience I gained provides me the opportunity not only to orient myself wonderfully in the historical intricacies of the history of the Central Asian region but also to look at my own country's history in a new way.

Acquaintance with the unique historical and cultural heritage of Kazakhstan and Yerbulat's personal help in doing so, marked a completely new pe-



Ил. 1. В гурхане мавзолея Ходжа Ахмета Ясави с профессором Национального университета Узбекистана им. Мирзо Улугбека О. Лушпенко и Е. Смагуловым (2009 г.)



Ил. 2. Ербулат Смагулов в Гобустане, Азербайджан (2017 г.)

riod of my life.

Familiarity with the excavations of Sauran and Sidak, Turkestan and Otrar, Taraz and other sites in Kazakhstan allowed me to compare them with the history of Ukraine. After all, in the settlements and fortresses of Ukraine even today one can find Eastern artifacts. It is often difficult to correctly attribute such cultural material without knowledge of specific features from this historically rich region.

I gave my impressions on this to *Vokrug Sveta-Telegraf* in the article "The Place of Tamerlane's Death."¹ The first bridge between the history of southern Kazakhstan and my native *Slobozhanshchina*² was the story of the fortress construction on Mount Kremianets at Izyum in the Kharkiv region by a native of Taraz. My interest piqued in connection with it during my archeological field trips to Izyum and its region between 2006-2007 when I led

a small archeological expedition to this region.

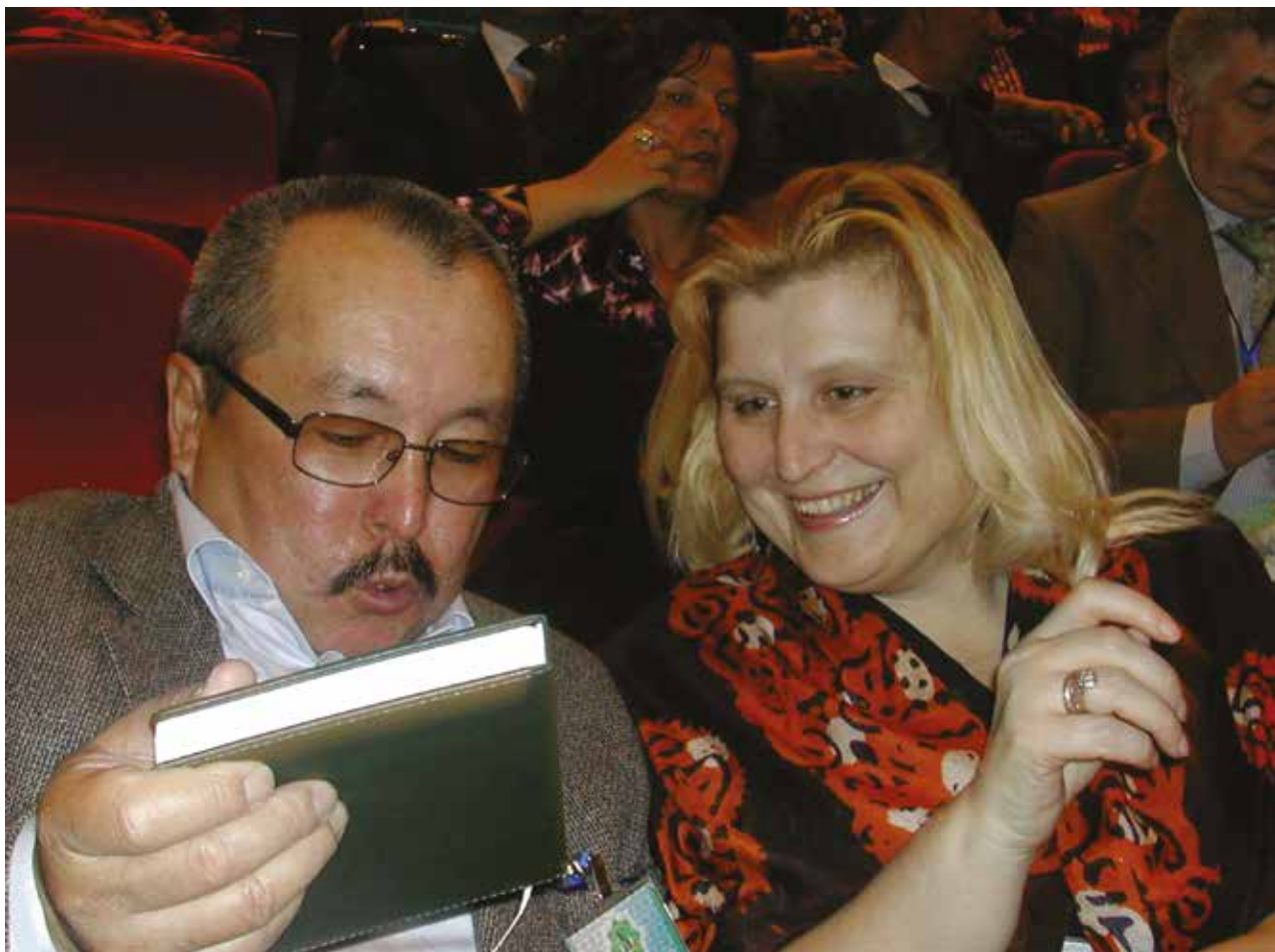
After working with the TAE in 2009-2010, I developed an understanding of the local regional history, which I expressed in my 2011 interview with Kazinform: "The roots of kinship go back centuries. According to the Ukrainian scholars a native of Taraz during the Golden Horde period built a fortress in the city of Izyum in the Kharkiv region."³ Years later, after living and working in Kazakhstan, these ideas (along with others related to this area), I eventually published in a number of scientific works.

A special memory includes the famous Turkestan mausoleum itself. Bulat provoked my interest in studying the old grave ledger of Yasawi. As a result, I managed to clarify the date the ledger was made from the tombstone of this great Sufi. In 2009, I even

¹ Krupa, T. The Place of Tamerlane's Death. URL: <http://birlik.org.ua/page/otrar>. Consulted on 21.12.2011.

² Author's note: Slobozhanshchina refers to Sloboda Ukraine, the historical term for the north and northeastern part of modern Ukraine with its center in Kharkiv).

³ Skripnik G. The Roots of Kinship go Back Centuries: A Native of Taraz Built a Fortress in the City of Izyum in the Kharkov Region during the Period of the Golden Horde according to Ukrainian Scientists. URL: https://www.inform.kz/ru/korni-rodstva-uhodyat-v-glub-vekov-vyhodec-iz-taraza-vo-vremena-zolotoy-ordy-postroil-krepost-v-gorode-izyum-na-har-kovschine-versiya-ukrainskih-uchenyh_a2350827. Consulted on 11.02.2011.



Ил. 3. С Ербулатом Смагуловым на научной конференции в Туркменистане (2011 г.)

managed to visit the *gurkhana* of the mausoleum.⁴ Smagulov studied the tombstone, and our small group was able to get a closer look at this artifact.

But the trip to the *gurkhana* also gave me food for thought. Its design raised the question of additional research into the grave ledger needed to discover the design features of its construction. This question is still unexplored.

I have named only a few deeply held scientific questions, which I would never have been involved in if Bulat had not been a colleague and friend in my life. The breadth of his scientific views and his special vision for solving complex scientific problems have always amazed me! Scientific discussions and consultations with this man were always a special pleasure for me! After all, the ease with which Bulat shared his knowledge could not fail to impress me. At that time, I was "raw clay" in these matters. Therefore, I absorbed his reflections and wed them to my own knowledge thus, discovering something new for myself.

⁴ **Ed. note:** A *gurkhana* is a burial chamber or crypt in the Central Asian context.

In 2013, together with Alexei Zlatogorsky, the head of the "Volyn Antiquities" State Company of the Archaeological Protection Service of Ukraine, (with whom I am also connected by years of excellent scientific cooperation and friendship), and with Makka Karazhanova, the head of the Kharkiv city national public association of Kazakhs known as "Birlik" (I am still a deputy chairman in this public organization); we managed to host our Kazakh colleagues, including Yerbulat Smagulov in Ukraine.

This scientific conference in Lutsk introduced the Kazakh delegation to one of the brightest regions of Ukraine, Volyn. The conference had a significant impact. Scientific communication between Ukrainian, Polish, and Kazakh researchers was quite useful.

Understanding the importance of interstate and interregional scientific cooperation while preparing to host our Kazakh colleagues; we began to design a creative research project called "TransEurasia," supported personally by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Z.K. Turisbekov. However, this project has not yet come to fruition due to the well-known political



Ил. 4. С Ербулатом Смагуловым в древнем Мерве (Туркменистан, 2011 г.)

problems in Ukraine that emerged in 2014.

My paths also crossed with Yerbulot Smagulov outside of Ukraine or Kazakhstan. These meetings were always warm and joyful, rich and constructive. There's much to say about Bulat Smagulov, because the scale of his personality was great. We all loved and appreciated him, and his passing was a great

loss for us. But if we remember and promote his ideas, he remains alive as a scientist. As long as we are able to remember, the man is alive! How not to recall the beautiful lines of the Russian poet Konstantin Simonov: "It isn't true that friend is die, // But next to you he cease to be".

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