

The “Proceedings” of the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission as a Historical Source

Saule K. Uderbaeva

al-Farabi Kazakh National University – Almaty

Saule-uderbaeva@mail.ru

Abstract

In this article the author presents an analysis of the history of the “Proceedings” of the Orenburg Scientific Archive Commission (OSAC) as a historical source. In the course of the thirty years of its activities, the OSAC has done great work sorting out of archival files of the Orenburg Governor-General’s office and the archives of other institutions of the province, as well as of the archival institutions in other regions. From the beginning the OSAC’s members were engaged in active scientific-research work and publication of sources. By the efforts of the OSAC activists, 35 volumes of “Proceedings” have been published.

Keywords

Orenburg scientific archival commission – Orenburg – archive – “Proceedings” – archival documents – source study analysis – historical source

All historical sources were generated in a particular culture of the past. The appearance of a source is caused by certain specific historical conditions, reasons, goals and objectives of functioning in a certain socio-cultural system. It is therefore important to understand the historical reality in which this source appeared and functioned. Without this it is impossible to correctly understand and interpret its content, as it is strongly affected by the historical circumstances which generated the source. Of special role are the socio-cultural functions of the written monument in the past. These functions explain the

causes of the source origin and determine how it is influenced by the current conjuncture.¹

In the very complex and eventful period of modern history a comprehensive study of Kazakhstan was begun by a number of Russian agencies, academic and local lore societies, related to its inclusion in the orbit of the Russian Empire. As a result of their work, there an original source base was created, the various sections of which were filled with very diverse material on the Kazakhstan's history.

Scientific societies and cultural-educational institutions played a significant role in the development of culture and social thought in Kazakhstan in the second half of 19th century, especially in the post-reform period. Their progressive role lay in the promotion of advanced Russian culture and scientific knowledge, and in the collection, systematization and publication of samples of folklore, narrative materials and sources on the history and ethnography of the Kazakhs and on the economy of their region, through the compilation and publication of collections of articles and research results.² The various activities of these societies and their scientific heritage, in the form of multi-volume “Proceedings”, “Heralds” and journals being a separate subject of study, for a long time disappeared from the field of view of historians. At present, however, increasing attention is being paid to the study of the heritage of Russian scientific societies and institutions in the modern age.

Analyzing the development of Kazakhstan's historical scholarship in the period of independence, the academic M. K. Kozybaev wrote: “Collisions are such that the in-depth scientific researches on the history of Kazakhstan are closely related to the activity of the Russian Geographic Society, the Free Economic Society, the Society of Naturalists and a range of cultural, educational and scientific institutions of Tashkent, Omsk, and Orenburg”.³

A special place among the scientific and local lore societies operating in the territory of Kazakhstan belongs to the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission (hereinafter OSAC). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Orenburg was one of the major centres of scientific study of Kazakhstan. The Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission—one of the 39 Provincial Scientific Archival Commissions of Russia (hereinafter PSAC)—was founded by

1 Nikulin, P. F. *Teoriya i metodika istochnikovedeniya v otechestvennoi istorii X—nachala XX vv. Chast' I. Teoriya metodologiya istochnikovedeniya*. <http://www.humanities.edu.ru>.

2 *Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR. S drevneishih vremen do nashikh dnei*. T. 3. Alma-Ata, 1979, p. 326.

3 Kozibaev, M. K. “Vremya menyat vzglyadi”. *Mysl'* 2 (1996), p. 65-66.

a pressure group on the recommendation of the St. Petersburg Archaeological Institute in December 1887, by the Committee of Ministers' decree "On the Establishment of Scientific Archival Commissions and Historical Archives" approved on April 13, 1884.

This Commission operated until 1917 and it had its own printing forum in the form of the "Proceedings"; from 1889 to 1917 35 issues of these "Proceedings" were published. They represent an extremely interesting historical source that contains varied material on the history of Kazakhstan from the earliest times to the beginning of 20th century. They include a large number of research reports and articles on the history of not only Kazakhstan, but also of Bashkortostan, Central Asia, the Orenburg Region and the Orenburg Cossacks. There are also a number of inventories of the Commission archives, activity reports and minutes of the Commission's meetings.

It should be noted that the editions and publications of various scientific societies operating in the territory of Kazakhstan are almost unstudied as a specific form of written sources on the history of Kazakhstan in the modern age. In this regard we can say that the materials of "Proceedings" are virtually absent in Kazakhstani historiography. It should also be noted that the methodology of source-study analysis of the PSAC's materials has been equally poorly developed.

According to Yu. S. Zobov, a prominent researcher of Orenburg history, the provincial scientific archival commissions mark the beginning of national historical region-studies. They appeared in a number of provinces of Russia in the 1880s, when a rapidly developing capitalism created conditions for the deployment of historical, geographical, ethnographic and other researches, both in the centre of the country and at the local level.⁴

The main reason for the establishment of archival commissions lay in the uncontrolled destruction of old files in the archives of provincial and district agencies. The destruction of paperwork unnecessary for the current records management, without their proper examination, resulted in the disappearance of scientifically valuable documents. In the 1860s and 1870s, in the era of the "great reforms", when many of the earlier existing institutions were abolished and their materials overloaded the departmental archives, this phenomenon became widespread. The academic N. V. Kalachev, who had initiated and directly participated in the establishment of the archive commissions, wrote about the destination of projected institutions that: "scientific commissions are needed to put an end as far as possible to the vandalism of officials involved

4 Zobov, Yu. S. "Orenburgskaya UAK (Iz istorii stanovleniya istoricheskogo kraevedeniya na yuzhnom Urale)". In: *Vosmie Biryukovskie chteniya*. Chelyabinsk, 1988, p. 142.

in archive management; the columns and books are assigned to destruction by officials who are unable to read ancient manuscripts yet they are extremely interested in getting a quick reward for their tireless work".⁵

The main lines of activity of the "Regulations" Kalachev provided for archiving were as follows: analysis of old files of provincial and district agencies; identification of historical documents valuable from the historical point of view; their systematization and storage in specially created archives. Further, the responsibilities of the commissions included the drawing up of inventories and indexes for such files and documents.⁶

The conditions for the emergence of Kalachev's brainchildren were not too favourable: this was a period of political reaction, when the authorities looked askance at any public undertaking. Though the proposed staff of the commissions "being educated landowners and officials" should not have filled the government with apprehension, their activities were brought under strict control of the governors. Rather than deploy the scientific work on the base of the well-established archives, they had to create their own historical archives from scratch. The Decree did not provide them with any premises, facilities or certain rules, however. All they could hope for was unselfish service and "local donations for the benefit of science".⁷

According to N. Mitrofanov, the growth in the number of archival commissions, which continued until 1917, was directly associated with the popular idea of the establishment of local region-study societies, in the "academic" activities of which the provincial bureaucracy took part from the very beginning. These were mostly people who had no idea about the objectives of scientific activity, and only few of them could and wanted to spend part of their leisure time to the study of local antiquities. Among the members of the archival commissions there were some people who were really enthusiastic about the study of antiquities of the local area. In the eyes of some of them, the focus on regionalism was a kind of opposition to the centripetal efforts of the autocracy.⁸

5 Pisarkova, L. F. "Gubernskie uchenie arkhivnie komissii: organizatsiya, chislennost i usloviya deya tel'nosti". *Arkheologicheskii ezhegodnik za 1989 g.* Moscow, 1990, p. 189.

6 Shvedova, O. I. "Ukazatel' "Trudov" gubernskikh uchenikh arkhivnikov komissii i otdelnikh ikh izdaniy". In: *Arkheologicheskii ezhegodnik za 1957 g.* Moscow, 1958, p. 377.

7 Brzhostovskaya, N. V. "Voprosi arkhivnogo dela na arkheologicheskikh s'ezdakh v Rossii (1869-1911 gg.)". In: *Arkheologicheskii ezhegodnik za 1971 g.* Moscow, 1972, p. 98.

8 Mitrofanov, N. N. "V. G. Korolenko i Nizhegorodskaya Arkhivnaya Komissiya". In: *Trudi MGIAI.* Moscow, 1961, p. 284.

The writer V. G. Korolenko, who actively collaborated with the Nizhny Novgorod Archival Commission, noted that “the purpose of the commissions lies not in the pursuit of important historical discoveries, not in search of large, bright and fresh historical facts, the existence of which in the provincial archives (especially after the selection of the most valuable files and documents in favour of the archival institutions) would have been just a happy and a rare accident, but in a modest and hard work, in a massive and systematic summation of small, everyday domestic and corporate features, which, taken together, could restore the overall picture of a vanished life”.⁹

The arrangement of the provincial historical archives was the main task of the archival commissions. These archives were to be created through the sorting out of files and documents that were intended for destruction in provincial and district archives of various departments, in order to transfer to the historical archive those files and documents, which according to their importance and interest in scientific terms were eligible for “eternal storage”. Further, the responsibilities of the commissions included the drawing up of inventories and indexes for the aforesaid files and documents.¹⁰

It is particularly important that the commissions had their own organs, i.e. the serial publications issued progressively with the accumulation of materials and depending on the financial funds of the commission. They were mainly titled the “Proceedings” or “Heralds”. The “Proceedings” contained materials and documents that were at the disposal of commissions, as well as articles and studies, minutes of meetings and reports on the commissions’ activities. A number of commissions had no “Proceedings” at all.¹¹ Out of the 39 PSACs established before the year 1917, only 29 commissions issued “Proceedings” in the form of collections and individual publications. The minute-books and reports were issued periodically in small print runs.¹²

In order to supervise their activities, the commissions were subordinated, on the one hand, to the competence of the St. Petersburg Archaeological Institute, and on the other to the local governors, who acted as the trustees of these commissions. The commissions submitted reports on their activities to the Archaeological Institute. In its turn, the Archaeological Institute brought

9 Samoshenko, V. N. *Istoriya arkhivnogo dela v dorevolyutsionnoi Rossii*. Moscow, 1989, p. 377.

10 Shvedova. “Ukazatel’ “Trudov” gubernskikh uchenikh”. 377.

11 Ibidem.

12 Makarikhin, V. P. “Gubernskie Uchenie Arkhivnie Komissii i ikh rol v razvitii obshestvenno—istoricheskoi misli Rossii v kontse XIX—nachale XX vv”. *Istoriya SSSR* 1 (1989), p. 166.

to the notice of the Academy of Sciences the information on the work of the commissions in the form of a report on archiving over the past year.¹³

Analysing the historical experience of the region-study work of the PSACs, the researcher S. N. Romanova points out that each commission had its special destiny, and that the practical work of PSACs immediately came into conflict with the objectives set out for them by the Decree of 1884. The essence of these objectives was the creation of a source base for the study of local lore. And interest in local lore among the provincial intelligentsia and the bureaucracy was highly significant in the 1880s. Actually, the archival work of the commissions related to the collection of documents on local lore contributed to the fact that many of them rather quickly turned into historical and region-study societies, which took upon themselves the edition of the multi-volume "Proceedings", "Heralds" and "Journals".

Region-study materials published by PSACs were presented in the form of monographs, city-guides, collections and individual documents. If we look at these documents by subject area, they could be classified as follows:

1. History of regions, provinces, towns and villages
2. History of dioceses, monasteries and churches
3. Historical and architectural monuments
4. Genealogy and personalities
5. History of culture and art
6. Military History
7. Ethnography
8. Archaeology
9. History of institutions and enterprises¹⁴

At regular meetings the PSAC's activities were discussed by the full members and those persons invited to the meeting. They discussed current affairs, listened to scientific presentations and reports, and then the results of these meetings were published in print.

The PSACs, in their capacity as local historical societies in accordance with the original plan of N. V. Kalachev as well as their own views on their tasks, turned out to be a positive development in the cultural life of the provinces. There were no other opportunities for the lovers of antiquity and local specialists on region-studies for the consolidation and organization of their work

13 Shvedova. "Ukazatel' 'Trudov' gubernskikh uchenikh". 378.

14 Romanova, S. G. "Istoricheskii opit kraevedcheskoi raboty GUAK". In: *Kraevedenie Moskvi*. Moscow, 1990, p. 44.

outside the university centres. Archival commissions actively involved the representatives of the local intelligentsia who sought work in this area.

Although there were also shortcomings in the PSACs' activities, they left a significant legacy in the form of the collection and study of sources on local lore. Even a simple review of the published heritage of archival commissions leads to the conclusion that their contribution to the creation of the source base for local lore has been enormous.

All this certainly applies to the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission, the only institution of its kind in the territory of Kazakhstan. The competence of the OSAC included Orenburg, Ufa and Samara provinces, Turgay area, the whole Turkestan region and the West-Siberian General-Governorship.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Orenburg continued to be one of the major scientific study centres on the nature and population of the Kazakh steppe; the administrative offices of the Turgay region, which comprised the territories of today's Aktobe, Atyrau and Kostanay regions, were also established there. In addition there were, alongside OSAC, the Orenburg Department of the Russian Geographic Society (RGS), and the Turgay Regional Statistics Committee, and local students of region-studies were members of these societies.¹⁵

The Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission, which operated for three decades, united and directed the efforts of the local community for the study of regional antiquities; its archival-studies and archaeological and source reports, were reflected in 35 volumes (issues) of OSAC "Proceedings", as well as in solid historical monographs, publications of documentary sources, memoirs and archaeological reports, and dozens of articles and notes of a historical and region-study character. It should be emphasized that the scope and results of the regional studies of the OSAC were by no means inferior to those of other commissions, and in many ways they were ahead of activities of other similar commissions of the Ural and the Volga region. This was related, first of all, to the fact that the Orenburg region, being located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, i.e. in the area of commercial, political and cultural contacts between Russia and the peoples of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, had known many big historical events.¹⁶

Yet during the life of Governor-General of Orenburg, N. A. Kryzhanovsky, the a question arose of sorting out and putting in order his office's archive, which presented itself up to 1874-1875 as a heap of unsorted files and papers

15 Masanov, E. A. *Ocherk istorii etnograficheskogo izucheniya kazakhskogo naroda v SSSR*. Alma-Ata, 1966, p. 236.

16 Zobov. "Orenburgskaya UAK". 143.

piled up on the floor of the archival room. In 1873, the committee established by the Governor-General to order the archive, began its two-year work. The committee was staffed by the Governor-General's subordinates. Their work resulted in bringing the archive into bureaucratically-systematic form. The committee tried to describe files, but such a huge and special task was unbearable for the clerks who were burdened by the direct obligations of their actual job at the same time. However, recognizing the great importance of his office's archives in relation to the study of the past of the Orenburg region, the Governor-General was not happy merely to collect only archival materials, but he also tried to attract the best intellectual forces to a comprehensive study of the vast region.¹⁷

On December 19, 1880, during the famous Russian traveller N. M. Przewalski's stay in Orenburg, one important issue was resolved. In the hall of the city council, crowded with people, prior to the traveller's presentation Governor-General Kryzhanovsky addressed the audience with a beautiful speech in which he argued the urgent need for a detailed and comprehensive description of the vast region of Orenburg. The attending audience replied by expressing its desire to engage in collection of materials for such a description. Three special committees were then established:

1. A committee on geography under the chairmanship of Major-General O. M. Samotsvet
2. A committee on statistics under the chairmanship of General L. L. Meir
3. And a committee on the history of social wealth and on medical issues chaired by the Privy Councillor, Medical Doctor V. Lotin.

R. G. Ignatiev, a prominent researcher of the Orenburg region and a member of many scientific societies was invited by the Governor-General to suggest classifications for history, archaeology and ethnography of the region. The Governor-General, being concerned primarily about the examination of the archives of his own office, several times applied to the Ministry of the Interior for the allocation of credit of 6000 rubles, but the Ministry, because of difficult financial circumstances of that period, rejected these applications.¹⁸

These were the first steps of the OSAC's establishment.

17 Ivanov, N. G. "O zadachakh, deyatel'nosti i obshestvennom znachenii uchenikh arkhivnikov komissii voobshe i OUAK, v chastnosti". In: *Trudi Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. II*. Orenburg, 1897, p. 40.

18 Ibidem.

Later, on July 11, 1881 a telegram arrived from St. Petersburg stating that the position of the Orenburg Governor-General had been abolished and that Governor-General Kryzhanovsky was dismissed, retaining his position of a member of the Military Council. After the abolition of the governor-generalship and all the military-district offices, the commissions for the description of the Orenburg region also disintegrated, as many of their representatives were transferred elsewhere. But this did not stop the flow of the scientific activities, and the commission for examination of the archive of the former Governor-General office was soon re-organized. However, due to the lack of funds, a request to allocate 1,000 rubles was soon submitted to the Archaeological Institute.

In early September 1881, the Archaeological Institute sent its full member A. V. Gavrillov and the non-matriculating student A. N. Lvov to assess the application. They became familiar with the state of the archive, developed the draft rules for the storage of archival files and noted the indubitable importance of the archive for further scientific research. Later, in 1882, the academic N. V. Kalachev—the famous Russian archivist and the initiator of the creation of PSACs in Russia—arrived in Orenburg; he directly examined the state of the archive and the questions of its management. Kalachev agreed in principle with the draft by O. K. Girs, Privy Councillor and member of Ministry of the Interior board, about the re-establishment of a special commission for the scientific investigation of the archive. Royal officials, in order to get rid of the hassle, even offered to split the archive among other archival depositories. However, the local progressive community, consisting mainly of teachers, opposed this proposal.¹⁹

Under the leadership of Kalachev two preliminary meetings were held, which were attended by Privy Councillor Girs; an official of the Ministry of the Interior, named N. Galdinsky; the Vice-Governor of Orenburg, V. Lukoshkov; the Vice-Governor of the Turgay region, V. Ilyin; the Mayor of Orenburg, N. Sereda; the editor of the "Orenburg Leaflet", I. I. Efimovsky-Mirovitsky; the editor of the "Provincial Gazette", R. Ignatiev; a representative of the classical school Severny; and the archaeologists Gavrillov and Lvov. The meeting worked out the exact program of the commission activities, and in particular drew up instructions for its members on how to create inventories and indexes to the files and papers of the archive. During the second meeting the question arose of preserving this archive, after putting it to order, in Orenburg as a local central archive.²⁰

19 Masanov. *Ocherk istorii etnograficheskogo*. 236-237.

20 Ivanov. "O zadachakh, deyatelnosti". 42.

The local administration's promised support for the archival commission remained a dead letter. For four years the commission of six people sorted out the files, though not completely, and transported them from the Governor-General's Office to the former Governor-General's house. By the end of the fourth year only one person, P. N. Raspopov, remained active in the commission. Meanwhile, the director of the Archaeological Institute had decided that it was necessary to start the scientific examination of the archive, suggesting to the Governor that the Scientific Archival Commission be formed in Orenburg on the basis of existing laws and under the patronage of His Excellency. In the apartments of the Governor, N. A. Maslakovets, a meeting was held under his chairmanship attended by 27 local persons who accepted the invitation. Raspopov presented his report on the state of the project. The report indicated that the chronological inventories had not been done, as there was no one to draw them up, while the Archaeological Institute had demanded that all files to be destroyed be examined first, but despite the abundance of work there were no employees, not even volunteers, and all funds had been spent. The archival commission was then assigned two tasks:

1. The completion of arrangement of the Orenburg historical archive, which includes 21,194 files selected for storage.
2. The re-examination of all files selected for destruction, of which there were 72,599.²¹

On December 9, 1887, at the joint meeting of members of the commission for review of the archive of the former Governor-General office and those who expressed the desire to work with the newly established commission for archives, the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission was established pursuant to the Decree of April 13, 1884.²² It became the eighth of the PSACs established in Russia and the first in Ural region.²³

"The desire to study our native land, its nature, historical and contemporary state gives evidence to the rise of provincial life, the development of national consciousness. Preserving the memory of the past, feeling love for the native history is not without reason considered to be the first sign of culture. By

21 Ivanov. "O zadachakh, deyatelnosti". 42.

22 Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Orenburgskoy Oblasti (State Archive of Orenburg Province), henceafter GAO. F. 96, op. 2, d. 45, l. 8-8 rev.

23 Pirogova, E. P. "Dyatelnost' Orenburgskoy Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii (1887-1917)". In: *Istoriografiya obshchestvennoi misli dorevolutsionnogo Urala: sb. nauchnikh trudov*. Sverdlovsk, 1988, p. 71.

studying ourselves, our past, we learn to dearly love our homeland; and thus who selflessly loves his homeland is unwittingly imbued with a desire to improve himself, his life, his spiritual development, and strive for all good, light, seeking to benefit society by his knowledge and feasible labour”, wrote N. G. Ivanov, full member of the OSAC, in his article “On the Tasks, Activities and Social Significance of the Scientific Archival Commissions in General and the OSAC in Particular”, stressing and defining the goals and objectives of establishment of the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission.²⁴

The OSAC had as its direct objective the collection, preservation and development of written monuments of the past. “And the first special task was to put in order and to scientifically describe the vast archives of the former Governor-General office being under its competence. In these files, which number up to 100,000, is reflected the whole life of the vast region of Orenburg, and life is so full of events”, said the deputy chairman of the Commission, P. Tsypliyev, in his speech at the annual meeting of the OSAC on February 17, 1909, evaluating the outcomes of the 22 years of OSAC’s activity.²⁵

Although the OSAC was established in 1887, it actually launched its operations only in 1896. The Commission acted up to 1917. One of the most valuable factors was that the OSAC had its own organ, the “Proceedings”, while quite a number of Russian PSACs left no printed materials.

Highly extensive and important tasks were entrusted to the Provincial Scientific Archival Commissions, but there were no conditions for the implementation of these tasks. Commissions were virtually devoid of funding, both in terms of budget, premises and staff. The 8th paragraph of the Decree of 1884 stated that “the costs necessary for the maintenance and activities of archival commissions are to be covered by the funds available to the Archaeological Institute and by local donations for the benefit of science”.²⁶ But these sources did not pay for themselves. The commissions sought to provide themselves with income from their publications, membership fees, public lectures, subsidies from cities and *zemstvos* (a layer of local government). I. E. Andrievsky, one of the directors of the Archaeological Institute, called the archival commissions the cheapest establishments in Russia. The Decree also in no way determined and protected by law the rights and powers of the commissions in their relationship with the agencies which were subordinate to them. In fact, formally the commissions were entirely powerless, and depended in their

24 Ivanov. “O zadachakh, deyatelnosti”. 42.

25 Tsipliyev, P. I. “Dyatelnost’ Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii s 1887 po 1897gg”. In: *Trudi Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*. Vip. XXX. Orenburg, 1914, p. 318.

26 Shvedova. “Ukazatel’ ‘Trudov’ gubernskikh uchenikh”. 378.

activity on the favour or dislike of particular authorities, with whom they had to deal.²⁷

From the earliest days of the archival commissions their pecuniary insecurity was a major and a permanent obstacle in their work. The main sources of funds for commissions were subsidies from rural and urban authorities. However, this flow of income was not constant and varied depending on the general and local conditions, while membership fees and donations from local landowners, merchants and clergy did not cover the overhead costs of housing, staff salaries and the preparation of documentary editions. The revenue from the sale of published sources was small, as these publications were highly specialized and sold poorly.²⁸

Issues of "Proceedings" were usually sent out to the libraries of scientific societies and archival commissions in exchange for their publications, which was the principal way of stocking libraries. The membership fees in all commissions were set ranging from 1 to 5 rubles. With their negligible official budget, the contributions were an important source of income, although they were collected on an irregular basis. The commissions were also not exempted from postage costs, so they were forced to pay for the dispatch of files and inventories received from other provinces out of their meagre funds. Here is a selective example of sources of the OSAC budget for the years 1902, 1903, 1909 and 1910.²⁹

As the table shows, the Commission budget has been replenished largely by the membership fees and subsidies from *zemstvos* and cities.

In the first paragraphs of the reports on the Commission activities, which were published in the OSAC "Proceedings", there was information on its personnel. The trustee of the Commission, the governor of Orenburg, was listed, then all the honorary members, and further, as a rule, in tables was placed information about the full members, indicating their ranks, positions, residences and year of election to the OSAC members.

For example in 1902 Lieutenant General Jakov F. Barabash was the Governor of Orenburg and mandated ataman of the Orenburg Cossack Army. In that year, the position of Chairman of the Commission was vacant, while Doctor A. V. Popov acted as Vice-Chairman, educator I. S. Shukshintsev as a Chief of Affairs, and educator A. P. Gra as Treasurer. The Commission consisted of 13 honorary members and 107 full members.³⁰

27 Shvedova. "Ukazatel' 'Trudov' gubernskikh uchenikh". 378.

28 Samoshenko. *Istoriya arkhivnogo dela*. 169.

29 *Trudy Orenburgskoy Uchenoy Arkhivnyi Komissii. Vypuski II, XIV, XXIII, XXV*.

30 *Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. XIV*. Orenburg, 1905, p. 3.

TABLE 1 OSAC Budget Sources

Year	Membership Fees	Subsidies from zemstvos and cities	Sale of Publications	Private Donations	Residue from the Previous Year	Museum Fees	Annual Total
1902	158 rubles	400 rubles	5 rubles 95 kopeck	–	462 rubles 81 kopeck	49 rubles 75 kopeck	1,093 rubles
1903	257 rubles	400 rubles	14 rubles 25 kopeck	170 rubles	313 rubles 97 kopeck	44 rubles 55 kopeck	1,198 rubles
1909	155 rubles 31 kopeck	730 rubles	–	–	317 rubles 35 kopeck	25 rubles 22 kopeck	1,611 rubles
1910	312 rubles	550 rubles	11 rubles 30 kopeck	–	599 rubles 3 kopeck	–	1,517 rubles

In the list of honorary members we find the names of D. G. Anuchin, President of the Imperial Society of Natural Science, Anthropology and Ethnography Lovers in Moscow; Count A. A. Bobrinsky, Chairman of the Imperial Archaeological Commission in St. Petersburg; V. V. Vitevsky, professor of Kazan Teachers' Seminary; N. F. Dubrovin, permanent secretary to the Conference of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg; I. I. Efimovsky-Mirovitsky, the editor and publisher of the "Orenburg Leaflet" newspaper; V. O. Klyuchevsky, professor of the Imperial Moscow University; and N. V. Pokrovsky, director of the Archaeological Institute.³¹

The composition of the full members of OSAC was diverse. The list of full members of OSAC for the year 1903 included the following names: Vyacheslav Nikolayevich Amanatsky, priest; HamedzhanIzmailovich Aranov, goldmines' manager; Abdulgaliya Balgimbaevich Balgimbaev, chief of newspaper office at the Turgay Regional government; Major-General Baron Fyodor Fyodorovich Taube; Karl Karlovich Bezin, professor at Neptyuevsky Cadet School; Alexander Vasilyevich Vasilyev, Senior Adviser at the Turgay Regional government; Armand Petrovic Gra, professor at Neptyuevsky Cadet Corps; Muhametfatih Gilmanovich Karimov, head of the printing house; Joseph Antonovich Castagnier, instructorat the boys' gymnasium; Ahmet Giray Asfendiyarovich Muhametdiyarov, senior notary; Alexander Ivanovich Myakutin, *sotnik*

31 *Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. XIV. Orenburg, 1905, p. 44.*

(the military rank in the Cossack army equivalent to lieutenant); Alexander Rudolphovich Oberland, doctor of natural science; Suleiman Mohamed Shakirovich Rameev, goldmines' owner; Theophilus Matveevich Samotsvet, director of the Neplyuevsky Corps; Peter Nikolaevich Stolpyansky, Head of Department at the Town Council; Khojah Muhamediyar Mohammed Sherif, mufti; Alexei Mikhailovich von Kaufman, Vice-Governor of Orenburg; Nikolai Mikhailovich Chernavskii, professor at a religious school; Hermann Karlovich Shmorel, official; Alexander Gustavovich Erdman, ataman; and Michael Lvovich Yudin, army sergeant.³²

Not each full members participated in the OSAC regular meetings, and not every one of them worked with archival documents, but many participated in the activities of the Commission within their own powers, acting as trustees and sponsors, paying or collecting membership fees—one of the important components of the Archival Commission budget, printed Commission "Proceedings" in their own printing houses, which was a significant contribution to the activities of the OSAC.

The report on the status of the OSAC in 1903 describes the commission's structure for that year. First there was Lieutenant-General Jakov F. Barabash, Governor of Orenburg and mandated ataman of the Orenburg Cossack Army. Then the Chairman, Dr. A. V. Popov; the Vice-Chairman, A. V. Vasilyev, who was State Councillor and Senior Adviser at the Turgay Regional government. "Chief of Affairs" was I. S. Shukshintsev, instructor boys' gymnasium. The Treasurer was A. I. Myakutin, *sotnik* of the Orenburg Cossack Army. The Librarian, N. Ya. Lysov, was a cornet of the same Army. As honorary member His Imperial Highness, Grand Duke Georgy Mikhailovich was elected. The following full members were elected: A. B. Balgimbayev, the chief of newspaper office at the Turgay Regional government; K. K. Bezin, Professor of the Neplyuevsky Cadet Corps; I. V. Anichkov, full member of the Russian Imperial Archaeological Society, and others. Thus, by January 1, 1904 there were 12 honorary and 126 full members of the Commission.³³

Many regional ethnographers of Orenburg were members of the OSAC and the local department of the RGS (Russian Geographical Society), which closely engaged with each other in their research activities. Both institutions dealt with the examination of archival materials and the study of paleo-ethnography, archaeological and architectural monuments of the Kazakh steppe. Studies and documents on the history and ethnography of the Orenburg region were published in the "Proceedings" of the department and in the "Proceedings"

32 *Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. XIV.* Orenburg, 1905, p. 215-220.

33 *Ibidem.* 133-139.

of the Commission. In view of their common scientific interests, both institutions often held their meetings jointly. For example, in 1911, they held six joint meetings, most of which were devoted to the discussion of reports on the grave structures in the Kazakh steppe, Kazakh customs and rituals, and superstitions associated with burials. The authors of the report were all members of the OSAC: A. L. Anihovsky, I. V. Anichkov, J. A. Castagnier, A. Matov, Ya. Ya. Polferov, A. V. Popov, N. Sokolov, and I. S. Shukshintsev. They were advised by the Russian Orientalist V. V. Barthold, who had been full member and then became an honorary member of the OSAC since 1904.³⁴

Orenburg regional specialists had also had an interest in Kazakh customary law and the practices of biys' court. This was consistent with the policies of the colonial authorities, who sought to reform the Kazakh courts. Among the authors who published papers on the subject in the OSAC "Proceedings" were A. E. Alektorov, researcher of culture and everyday life of the Kazakh people, A. I. Dobrosmyslov, he was a member of both the OSAC and RGS, and I. I. Kraft. In 1896, the Orenburg Department of the RGS and the OSAC participated in the preparation and holding of the All-Russian Arts Industrial Exhibition in Nizhny Novgorod. The Exhibition Committee established by them did a great job of collecting the Kazakh exhibits. Among the committee members we find A. I. Dobrosmyslov, A. V. Vasilyev, and Ya. Ya. Polferov, all experts on the ethnography of the Kazakh people.³⁵

Being limited by the scopes of the liberal-bourgeois worldview, the leaders of OSAC nevertheless sought to approach the coverage of historical events with a certain degree of objectivity, and demonstrated interest in a variety of issues.

The OSAC was one of those "cultural nests" of the Southern Ural, which gradually accumulated in their midst the flower of Orenburg's enlightened society. It consisted of the trustees of the school district and inspectors of public schools, instructors of secular and religious schools and their principals, deans of the Orenburg diocese and the mufti of Jami mosque, heads of printing houses and editors of Orenburg newspapers, patrons and publishers. Each of them was to a greater or lesser extent attached to the study of the region, the preservation of its historical and cultural heritage. Care of the scientific-research and educational activities were perceived by these people as a highly moral matter, the performance of a kind of public duty. The prominent

34 GAOrO. F.96, op. 1, d. 93, l. 3.

35 Masanov. *Ocherk istorii etnograficheskogo*. 243.

representatives of the Tatar intelligentsia also played an important role in the fate of the Archival Commission.³⁶

N. V. Alekseenko, in his study on the activities of orientalists I. G. Andreev, A. K. Geins, Remezov, Spassky, Abramov, Yadrintsev, A. Tillo and others, concludes that these people, being different in social status, political views, and interpretation of certain historical events etc., had much in common: "First of all, an especially great interest in the life of the people with whom fate had brought them together, in this particular case with the Kazakhs, in their life and culture. At the same time, in the works of regional ethnographers there is a great measure of modernity. Often, in order to explain any current events, they turned to a retrospective study of various aspects of life of the Kazakh society. And for us, the testimony of contemporaries is the most important source".³⁷

All the regional ethnographers were also distinguished by their special respect for facts. They were selfless in search of new documents, trying to keep them in the best condition possible. In this sense, they were really the keepers of the region's collective memory. The scientific value of their labours lies in the accumulation of a rich factual corpus, which sometimes creates a wonderful sense of immediate presence. The facts collected and put in order by the pre-revolutionary regional ethnographers give the modern historian an opportunity to go deeply into the past and to better understand the present.³⁸

The personalities of the OSAC differed in their ranks and positions, i.e. in the activities of the Commission representatives of various social strata participated. The OSAC was not a closed elite academic institution, which can be attributed to the unconditionally positive aspect in the evaluation of the Commission activities. However, because of the lack of qualified specialists (archivists, historians) amateurs, not professionals were engaged in research activities, which was rather characteristic of provincial Russian science of the modern age. Another advantage and a special feature in the characterization of the composition of the OSAC personalities is the fact that it was diverse, which in turn has been determined by the poly-confessional and multi-ethnic character of the region of Orenburg.

The activities of the Scientific Archival Commission excelled in their multifaceted and comprehensive character. Having started out with the sorting of materials and the preparation of inventories of the rich archive of

36 Tugai, T. I. *Tatarskie metsenati i prosvetiteli v istorii Orenburgskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii*. www.lira.oren.ru.

37 Alekseenko, N. V. *Khraniteli pamyati*. Alma-Ata, 1988, p. 132.

38 Ibidem. 132.

the Orenburg Governor-General office, which had been abolished in 1881, the Commission activists inevitably soon moved to scientific-research on history, ethnography and archaeology. Considerable attention was paid to the protection of ancient monuments and the construction of the local lore museum. The OSAC representatives had to work under difficult conditions. After the elimination of the position of Governor-General, the archive of his former office was placed under the Treasury Chamber. There a half-lit little room was set aside for the members of the Commission. Then the archive was moved to the damp and cold stores of a shopping arcade, where a lot of valuable archival documents lay scattered, falling victim to mice and being affected by rainwater. After long searches and collection of funds the OSAC eventually purchased a small brick building on the waterfront of the Ural River and placed the archive there together with library and museum. The tedious, hard work of sorting out and describing of the Governor-General archive had lasted many years, as it contained about 150 thousand files. The OSAC members P. V. Zhukovsky, S. N. Sevastyanov, D. N. Sokolov, I. S. Shukshintsev, M. L. Yudin and others took an active participation in this work. In total, 22 inventories of cases of Civil, Cossack, Bashkir, Border and Secret Departments were produced.³⁹ Many of these inventories were periodically published in the OSAC "Proceedings".⁴⁰

The main types of the OSAC work included the review of inventories of the files; the analysis of archival affairs; meetings of the Commission members; archaeological research; museum and library management; and publication of the "Proceedings". Most materials they published were first included in the "Orenburg Leaflet" newspaper; later these materials were then reprinted in the "Proceedings". For example, in 1897, while sorting out the archival files, 10,986 cases from the Civil Department of the former Governor of Orenburg were reviewed. Among them, 2,556 were intended for storage and 8,430 files for destruction. For both categories inventories were drawn up regarding cases from 1860 to 1881 and from 1797 to 1805 respectively. In the same year, the inventories of the files of "other institutions" were also reviewed, including all the inventories from the Ufa Provincial government since 1766, the files of the Turgay Regional government, those of the Orenburg Provincial government for the years 1886-1896, nine inventories of district administrations of Orenburg province, etc. The report says: "Files that seemed worthy of attention, were recorded in a special statement so that they could be requested for the Commission's consideration". According to Resolution XI of the Archaeological Congress of 1899, the files were not supposed to be divided into

39 Tugai, T. I. *Tatarskie metsenati i prosvetiteli*.

40 Pirogova. *Dyatelnost' Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*. 72.

those for storage and for destruction; all were supposed to be recorded in one gross inventory.⁴¹

At the meeting of the Commission on November 25, 1902, the following "Rules for the Use of Files by the Commission Members" were developed and approved:

1. Give under record 3 to 5 heterogeneous and 8 to 10 homogeneous files, related to one subject or issue; in exceptional cases a slightly larger number of files may be given with the knowledge and permission of the Chairman and the Chief of Affairs of the Commission. (In a footnote to the paragraph it was noted that under the file is implied every single volume).
2. The period a loaned file may be kept is one month, after which the file should be returned; if necessary, a one-month extension can be applied for.
3. The most important files can only be issued at the discretion and with the permission of the Chairman of the Scientific Archive Commission.
4. At the request of the Commission, the files must be returned immediately.
5. Members, who fail to comply with these Rules, are denied the right to take the files home.⁴²

These Rules were developed to regularize the work with the archival documents. The Commission members understood that it was impossible not to take the files home, since they could not examine them at the archive or in the office. The fact that only one file was issued per person was inconvenient for those involved in the study of any certain issue, while if another researcher held on to a specific file for a long time, this sometimes caused trouble for others and sometimes even led some to stop their work.

The report of the Commission for 1904 states: "The sorting of files and drawing up of inventories continued with the assistance of hired help; this operation progresses so well that, hopefully, in 1905 it would be completed [...] The Chief of Affairs continued the compilation of the "Archive Files Description" of the Border Department for the 19th century (1802-1805)".⁴³

The Commission's educational activities were clearly reflected in the establishment and operation of the museum at the OSAC, organized by the Commission Chairman, P. P. Birk. The museum was founded in 1897, continuing the

⁴¹ *Trudi Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. VI.* Orenburg, 1900, p. 187.

⁴² *Trudi Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. VI.* Orenburg, 1900, p. 17.

⁴³ *Ibidem.* p. 78.

traditions of the Orenburg Museum founded in 1831 by V. I. Dahl. The materials of the OSAC fund included many files relating to the work of the OSAC museum, which reflected the correspondence on the creation of collections of antiques, coins, minerals, and archaeological findings for the museum.⁴⁴

The museum had Ornithological, Mineralogical and Ethnographic collections. Almost immediately the establishment of the museum was followed by donations for its arrangement: ancient manuscripts, memoirs, biographies of local personalities, entire family archives, cadastres, ancient legal acts, letters and autographs of famous politicians and public figures, antique utensils and tableware, ancient coins, ancient weapons, bibliographic manuscripts, statues, ancient crosses, folding and other icons, and works of art were donated. The Ethnographic department also received notes, old recordings, chronicles, memoirs, collections of songs, riddles, proverbs relating to the past of the region, sketches on life, and traditions and legends.

By 1910 the museum totalled more than 3,100 storage items.⁴⁵ The Orenburg museum has laid the foundations of museology in Kazakhstan. This museum, as well as the museum at the Orenburg Department of the RGS, was the largest scientific and educational institution in the region of that time, having a rich collection.

The OSAC library fund also increased through private donations and through the exchange of publications with scientific and public institutions.

In the issues of the "Proceedings", in which the Commission published the minutes of its meetings and reports for the previous year, also provided detailed information on the state of the archive, on the activities of the museum (the number of visitors in the year under review, new exhibits), and on the state of library fund. As a separate item, information was given on the Commission's resources and publications. The minutes of its meetings were also the primary source about OSAC activities. Information about the honorary and full members of the OSAC was invariably included too. In fact, all these documents have formed the very basis of the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission within the State Archive of Orenburg region.

During the thirty years of the Commission's existence many momentous changes in history occurred. The historical collisions of the early 20th century directly impacted the OSAC's activities. During the October Revolution and the Civil War the OSAC activists did not stop their work on the preservation of archival documents, despite the establishment of new power regimes, and continued their educational and archaeological activities.

44 GAO. F.96, op. 1, d. 20, l. 1-1 rev.

45 *Trudi Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii. Vip. XXIII*. Orenburg, 1911, p. 184.

The OSAC fund includes the Charter of the Union of Russian Archival Figures adopted by the General Assembly of the Union of Russian Archival Figures on April 8, 1917, a copy of which it obtained from State Archive of the Orenburg region. In its general provisions, the Charter mentions the objectives of the Union, such as: the integration of archival figures on the common principles and methods of work; caring for a correct formulation of archival activities in Russia; preservation of documents and other archival materials; protection of professional interests of archival figures; publication of the works on archival science and description of archives; and guides on arrangement and management of archives and all other sorts of compositions, consistent with the objectives of the Union. The management of the Union's affairs was based in Petrograd. Before the end of their activities, the members of the Commission followed the Charter provisions.⁴⁶

The Bolshevik regime also realized the importance of preservation of archival documents and highly appreciated the work of the Commission, as is evidenced by several archival documents the State Archive of Orenburg region. On the letterhead of the Orenburg Executive district committee of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants, Cossacks and Muslim Deputies dated April 17, 1917, is written the appeal to the Chairman of the Orenburg Archival Society, A. Popov, and to all workers in various sectors of the economy of the Orenburg province, to assist in the creation of the museum of visual exhibits with its special department of regional and local studies of the province, which would entirely reflect people's lives and the nature of the Orenburg region and province in whole.⁴⁷

The Journal of the Conference of the interdepartmental meeting chaired by the academic A. S. Lappo-Danilevsky on the current status of PSACS, in accordance with the decision of the extraordinary general meeting of the Russian Academy of Sciences on May 27, 1917, which is preserved in the fund of the Commission, clearly indicates that during the period of dual power the OSAC activists did not stop their work.⁴⁸

At the general meeting of the OSAC members on April 1, 1818, the Chairman of the Commission, A. V. Popov, reported that the Union of Russian Archival Figures under the chairmanship of the Ordinary Academic, A. S. Lappo-Danilevsky from the Russian Academy of Sciences, imposed upon the archival commissions by a revolutionary order the duty to take timely actions for the protection of the archives of institutions currently closed. This applied

46 GAO. F. 96, op. 1, d. 95, l. 74.

47 Ibidem. l. 81-81 rev.

48 Ibidem. l. 91, 91 rev., 92, 92 rev.

for the archives of the Provincial government, Provincial bureau, and the former Provincial Gendarmerie located in the city of Orenburg. Since all these institutions were closed or closing, their archives were left without any protection, despite being of great scientific importance.

The OSAC Chairman proposed the Archival Commission to adopt the mission of protecting the archives across the Orenburg region, and to present a petition to the Executive Committee on the publication over the entire province of Orenburg of orders that in case of transfer by any institution of its archive to the Central Historical Archives in the city of Orenburg, they must consult on all issues with the OSAC. He also asked to transfer to the Commission the archives of the Provincial government and the Provincial bureau with the staff and funds allocated for their maintenance for the current year. The meeting unanimously decided to accept the report of the Chairman. The OSAC Board sent a petition to the Orenburg Province Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Cossacks Deputies to this effect on April 2, 1918.⁴⁹

The October Revolution was a symbolic milestone in the activities of scientific societies in Orenburg, literally turning over the course of history and the destinies of people. When the bloody confrontation of the Civil War had ended, it was found that almost none of the previous researchers remained in the region. According to D. Safonov, this formed a rupture of the historiographical tradition, and the subsequent research institutions failed to achieve the level of pre-revolutionary historical scholarship.⁵⁰

In the last year of the OSAC's existence, Popov made a presentation on the objectives and activities of the OSAC under the Soviet regime.⁵¹ These plans were never implemented, however. The initiative to create the Society for the Study of the Kyrgyz region, which became the successor of the OSAC and the Orenburg Department of the RGS, belonged to the OSAC members. The Society for the Study of the Kyrgyz region was established on October 15, 1920, but was only registered on November 1, 1930 as the "Orenburg Society for the Study of the Kyrgyz region". According to its Charter, the Society declared itself the successor of two scientific societies of the Orenburg region, pending the resumption of their activities. The tasks of the society were in tune with the scientific objectives of its predecessors—the study and collection of the necessary data for the exploration of region with the purpose of its cultural formation and economic development.⁵²

49 GAO. F. 96, op. 1, d. 95, l. 54.

50 Safonov, D.A. *Ocherki istoriographii Orenburgskoi istorii*. Orenburg, 2005, p. 45-46.

51 GAO. F. 96, op. 1, d. 104, l. 25-28.

52 Safonov. *Ocherki istoriographii Orenburgskoi*. 318-319.

In the third edition of the "Proceedings" of the Orenburg Society for the Study of Kyrgyz region were published the memoirs of the OSAC Chairman A. V. Popov about the Honorary Member of the OSAC, A. P. Gra. It should be noted that this issue also contains a biographical sketch by M. Dulatov about A. Baitursynov and sketch by I. Omarov about the scientific activity of this prominent representative of the Kazakh democratic intelligentsia of the beginning of 20th century.⁵³ Thus, the Orenburg Society for the Study of Kyrgyz region became the successor of the OSAC's scientific activity.

The conclusion of the researcher A. S. Ilyasova that the activities of the West Siberian Department of Russian Geographical Society contributed to the rapprochement between the two peoples—the Russian and the Kazakh⁵⁴—is also valid for the activities of the Orenburg Scientific Archival Commission. It should be emphasized that in general the activities of the OSAC members appeared as a labour of love, based on a genuine interest of its leading personalities.

At the same time, one can only agree with E. I. Gherasimova that the basis of Russia's interest in geographical and ethnographical knowledge of the region and its people has been formed by the desire to establish closer trade and political relations with the Kazakhs and through the Kazakh steppe with other Eastern countries. These economic and political factors have largely determined the character and the main directions of study of Kazakhstan in Russia.⁵⁵

However, the OSAC went beyond these frameworks of activities that had been assigned for the PSACs of Russia in their creation. In our opinion, the figures behind the OSAC did not serve the interests of the successful management of colonized territory and the successful exploitation of natural wealth and resources of the Kazakh steppe, i.e. these goals was not leading in their activities, in contrast to the Orenburg Department of the RGS.

One can agree with the opinion of V. A. Berdinskikh, who believes that on whole, the scientific societies of various types, both central and provincial, have emerged in the foreground in Russia by the end of the 19th century (especially in the humanities fields). The central research institutions derived

53 Safonov. *Ocherki istoriographii Orenburgskoi*. 320.

54 Ilyasova, A. S. *Deyatel'nost' Zapadno-Sibirskogo otdela RGO po izucheniyu Severo-Vostochnogo Kazakhstana v pervoi polovine XIX—nachale XX vv.* Dis. kand. ist. nauk (PhD thesis). Almaty, 2006, p. 49.

55 Gherasimova, E. I. "Prosvetitel'skaya i nauchnaya deyatel'nost' russkikh uchenikh v Kazakhstane vo vtoroi polovine XIX stoletiya". *Izvestiya AN Kaz. SSR. Seriya obshestvennykh nauk* 5 (1981), p. 36.

their power from the province itself. This form of science in Russia was free from state pressure and the governmental control; as opposed to the public universities and the provincial statistical committees, the PSACs have created an original humanist scholarly infrastructure in the country.⁵⁶

Over thirty years of its activities, the OSAC has done great work sorting out the archival files of the Orenburg Governor-General's office and archives of other institutions of the province, as well as of the archival institutions in other regions, by drawing up inventories and compiling indexes and other reference books. From the first years of the OSAC existence, its members were engaged in active scientific-research work and publication of sources. Through the efforts of the OSAC activists, 35 volumes of "Proceedings" were published, rich Museum and Library collections were brought together, and historical, ethnographic and archaeological researches was conducted.

56 Berdinskikh, V. A. *Uezdnie istoriki. Russkaya provintsialnaya istoriografiya*. Moscow, 1997, p. 11.