

PROCEEDINGS ARTICLE

Studying the Traditional Architecture of Ingushetia in the Late 19th to First Decades of the 20th Century: Aspects of Historiography

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a historiographic review of the first stages of studying the traditional architecture of the Ingush. It is shown that, in the late 19th – early 20th century, some research basis for understanding the problems was laid and significant factual material was accumulated. The conclusions drawn from the expeditions led by L.P. Semenov remain relevant to the present day. They form the foundation for all research in the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries. According to the author, materials of field surveys and fixation of objects (numerous already in ruins) were of special importance, as well as a detailed development of the typology of the towers and castle complexes of Ingushetia.

ARTICLE DATA

Article History

Received 23 January 2022

Revised 28 January 2022

Accepted 25 November 2022

Keywords

Architecture of the Ingush

Fortified settlements

Expedition of L.P. Semenov

Expedition of W. Miller

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Russian domestic historiography of the medieval and early modern Caucasian architecture, the stage of the late 19th and first decades of the 20th centuries is of particular importance. Large-scale research carried out by some expeditions, which included archaeologists, ethnographers, and architects, covered the vast territories of the Caucasus. That process was caused by the desire of the Russian Empire to establish itself in the region; it gets new stimuli after the well-known Archaeological Congress in Tiflis in 1881. In the first decades of the existence of the Soviet Union, this activity was continued with no less intensity. The processes of studying the region were initiated at the all-Russian level by researchers, artists, and architects; they were organized in some cases within the frameworks of activity of the Moscow Archaeological Society and expeditions of the Imperial Archaeological Commission. In the first decades of the Soviet Union, that activity was continued with no less intensity.

We have already written on the significance of those decades for the history of the architecture of the Caucasus, when significant factual materials that did not lose their relevance were accumulated and their research understanding began; we discussed studying of Armenian and Georgian architecture as an example [1]. The architecture of Ingushetia, the history of which is at the center of the current article, was no exception to this powerful research movement that has unfolded in the country. The process of studying the architecture of Ingushetia proceeded with the increasing intensification of the fixation of objects, including descriptions, photographs and measurements of architectural monuments. Based on such material, architectural historians of the second half of the 20th century created their monographic studies, built theories and put forward hypotheses [2]. References to the works of the first researchers and an indication of their significant contribution to the study of the architecture of Ingushetia can be found in all publications devoted to this issue. However, there was no historiographic study of research works,

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published in the last decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The purpose of the current study is to identify various points of view on the typology of structures, their functional purpose, and possible dating, shaping and spatio-temporal features of the fortified settlements of Ingushetia.

2. THE BEGINNING OF RESEARCH EVALUATION OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF INGUSHETIA (LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES)

The domestic historiography of the 19th century attributed the beginning of studying the architecture of the Caucasus to works by Dubois (Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux), following the results of his travels (1831–1834), a six-volume work *"Journey around the Caucasus among the Circassians and Abkhazians, in Colchis, Georgia, Armenia and the Crimea"* was published (the III series dedicated to architecture).

The work by L. Steder is of particular interest; in 1782, he compiled a map and supplied it with sketches of buildings. It presents temples, towers and a dwelling: a courtyard with buildings and a tower. These materials are stored in the RGVIA funds and partially published [3]. The first Russian explorers of the region were D.Z. Bakradze and G.D. Filimonov.

The first serious research and fixation of architectural objects of Ingushetia were started in the 1880s, when an expedition led by W. Miller was sent to the North Caucasus. Its results were published in 1888 in *Materials on the Archeology of the Caucasus*, a periodical of the Imperial Moscow Archaeological Society [4].

Noteworthy that a specific of that initial stage in the study of the architectural monuments of the North Caucasus was the focus on the searches for the "ancient traces of Christianity in the Caucasus", which was thought of as one of the ways to learn the history of the Christian church and Byzantine art. The main purpose of the expedition of W. Miller was "collecting information about the monumental remains of ancient Christianity"; besides it, the main areas that were surveyed by the expedition are located within Chechnya. At the same time, the result of that expedition was significant research conclusions:

- The main types of buildings were identified, which with some clarifications remain relevant to this day: a) Christian churches; b) towers; c) burial grounds (of various types); d) memorial pillars;

- Two types of towers were distinguished: with a flat roof and with a pyramidal roof;
- Measurements and sketches of some monuments (Thaba-Yerdy, burial grounds, memorial pillars, some measurements of the buildings of the settlements of Tsori and Nui) were made;
- Information and legends about the construction and history of the towers was collected.

Miller concluded that medieval churches, as well as towers, were built under the influence of Georgia, and the very first towers perhaps directly by Georgian masters. He did not distinguish between Chechen and Ingush buildings, and described all the territories visited during the expedition as Chechen. Nevertheless, his expedition laid the foundation for the actual research fixation and studies of monuments of the North Caucasus and Ingushetia, including those the researchers relied on in the future [5], and his main conclusions were further developed in the works of later scholars [6].

3. NEW DATA, SYSTEMATIZATION AND GENERALIZATION OF FACTUAL MATERIALS IN THE 1920s – 1930s

In the 1920s, a number of expeditions was organized by the Ingush Research Institute of Local Lore, under the leadership of L.P. Semenov. The work of those expeditions, according to the results and conclusions obtained, can be divided into several stages: 1925–1927, 1928–1929, 1930s.

In the course of research of the first stage, a large amount of material was collected, architectural objects were taken into account, photographed, and measured, detailed descriptions of the masonry and facing of towers of various types were given, sketches and measurements of some of them were got [7]. One more task of those expeditions was to collect ethnographic materials, from which local legends and oral narrations related to the construction of towers are of particular interest for our study. Rituals were described, as well as some rules for choosing a place for building towers, reported by local residents.

Researchers divided all architectural monuments of Ingushetia into three large groups: a) monuments of a defensive nature: towers, castles; b) monuments of religious nature: pillar-shaped sanctuaries, churches and sanctuaries; c) funerary monuments. Towers were divided into fortifications and residential ones, which in turn were also divided into several types. The types of fortification towers include: 1) with a flat roof with a barrier; 2) with a flat roof with battlements at the corners, sometimes crowned with

cone-shaped stones (for example, Tsori); 3) pyramidal stepped, with a cone-shaped keystone (Dzherakh, Lezhg, Erzi, Salgui, Khani, Leylag, Pui, Targuim); it was noted that the usual number of roof steps was thirteen, in contrast to similar towers common for Chechnya. Types of residential towers include square and rectangular elongated ones. Their main differences from fortified ones were shown: they were lower in height, had another number of floors (usually three), their entrance was located on the ground floor, and there was no vaulted ceiling.

An uneven distribution of defensive structures in the flat and mountainous areas of Ingushetia was noted. In the first case, the researchers found only one tower, while various types of buildings were recorded in the mountainous area, including fortification and residential towers, and castles. I.P. Shcheblykin, a member of one of the expeditions, believed that there had not been any watchtowers in the full sense of the word on the territory of Ingushetia [7].

Those expeditions also resulted in the first detailed description of fortified settlements [8]. L.P. Semenov cites evidence that the foundation of a fortified settlement typically started with the construction of a residential tower, after a while, a fortified tower was built, and all towers were connected with a protective wall. When the walls of the fortified tower are adjacent to the walls of the residential tower, fortified settlements of the so-called random value appear. Another type of castle settlements identified by the researcher included construction of buildings according to a 'pre-considered plan'. It is shown that there are buildings of a strictly castle type in the villages of Metskhal and Targim. He singled out the following types of castle settlements: a) with only residential towers connected (for example, the village of Khamyshki), b) one or several residential tower(s) connected with one fortified tower (for example, the village of Falkhan); c) connections of residential towers with one or several fortified (for example, the castle in Metskhale).

I.P. Shcheblykin measured the foundations of various types of residential and fortified towers. An analysis of those data from field surveys led him to the conclusion that during the construction of towers with a pyramidal roof, they tried to make them as a regular square in plan. In towers with flat roofs, that principle may be violated. Measurements of residential towers indicate the absence of any strict rules [7]. The author also notes that monuments of various functional purposes have the same architectural details that determine the specifics of local architecture. So, for example, he notes the stepped crypts were built in the same way as the

towers as their reduced copies, and the images of the cross found in the churches coincide with the images of the cross on the towers.

At the second stage of research conducted in the mountainous regions of Ingushetia in 1928–1929 [8], new information about towers and fortified settlements was obtained. L.P. Semenov published new descriptions of residential and fortified towers, specified their typology and spatial organization of the fortified mountain settlements of the Ingush, revealed the features of some towers, and described the images found on their walls.

The assumption of L.P. Semenov that the most ancient are residential towers can be considered as the most important conclusions of this stage of research, made on the grounds that they were more primitive than fortified towers in terms of masonry and general composition. He believed that towers with a stepped roof were erected not earlier than the 15th century: it was the highest rise of local architecture, the decline of which began after the 16th century. Despite the fact that these conclusions were later put under questions by researchers, they deserve attention because they were one of the first attempts of reasonable dating based on research [9].

The results of the expeditions of the 1930s included a description and photographic fixation of the Evloev castle in the village of Pyaling. Then, the typological features of fortified settlements (castles) of various types were clarified: with a fortified tower at the corner or in the middle of the fortress wall; with a fortified tower inside the general fortifications. L.P. Semenov noted that the number of towers, the arrangement of passages between them, and the courtyards were very diverse. They were created in connection with the conditions of the terrain (slopes, ledges of rocks, etc.). Dwellings were described (saklya), which, according to L.P. Semenov, were built in the late era compared to residential towers [10].

Until the early 1930s, almost all researchers believed that towers were erected under the influence of Georgia, close ties with which were confirmed by local residents who declared that many families came from there. L.P. Semenov conducted a comparative analysis of the Ingush towers with the Georgian ones. He analyzed towers of the villages of Pansheti, the Koishauri Valleys, Sioni, and the Ananur castle, where a tower with a pyramidal stepped roof was found. He concluded that despite the similarity of Georgian and Ingush constructions, there are many differences between them: the Georgian fortified towers are lower in their height; they have no machicolations on the upper tier. The crosses he discovered in Georgian

buildings are common in the towers of Ingushetia, he considered them similar. In parallel with it, N.A. Karaulov put forward an assumption about the influence of Arabia and the East on the culture of the Ingush. He collected various legends of the Ingush about their origin from the Arabs [11].

4. CONCLUSION

The historiographic analysis of studies of the late 19th to first decades of the 20th century, on the architecture of Ingushetia, allows us to say that during those years significant data from field studies were accumulated, and their historical and theoretical understanding was laid out. For the first time, a comparative analysis of towers of the Ingush and other peoples of the North Caucasus and Georgia was carried out; their common features and differences were defined.

The main types of towers were identified and described, the main distribution areas of those types were determined; castle settlements and their types of towers were studied. The earliest residential towers known to specialists were dated to the 12th century; it was believed that in the 13th century, some towers were specially fortified for defense purposes and got a kind of transitional type, but real defensive fortified towers appeared in the 15th century.

Besides, the relationship between the location of the towers and the natural environment was shown. It has been established that the Assinskaya Valley is the most saturated with monuments; many researchers considered it the cradle of the Ingush ancient culture. The largest number of towers with a stepped pyramidal roof and castle buildings are concentrated here. An analysis of those data led to the conclusion that Assinskaya Valley was the place from which the Ingush settled to the west, and later to the east and partly to the south of it. The cultural ties of the Ingush with neighboring peoples were indicated, towers in Georgia were identified, which can be considered as analogues of Ingush buildings. At the same time, many important questions were only raised at this stage: about the dating of settlements, about the influence on the architecture of countries that were outside the Caucasus (the ancient world, Arabs, Persians).

It is necessary to recognize the accumulated extensive material of natural research, collected by expeditions in the decades under study as an important achievement. Many monuments were recorded that have either been lost or survived with serious losses.

Only an insignificant part of those materials was published; now, they are held in the funds of museums and institutes. Subsequently, research and

archaeological excavations were continued by Semenov's students, for example, E.I. Krupnov, who made an important input to the archeology of the North Caucasus.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was funded within the Program of Fundamental Research of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Construction Sciences and the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation, 2022, topic 1.1.1.6.

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