

The Scholarly Formation of E.V. Rtveladze And His Entry into The Historical Scholarship of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article examines the scholarly formation of E.V. Rtveladze and the early stages of his involvement in the study of the history and archaeology of Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to the factors that influenced the development of his academic interests, his university education, participation in archaeological fieldwork, and the beginning of his professional research career. The article also discusses the formation of Rtveladze's research methodology and his growing interest in the ancient history, archaeology, historical geography, and numismatics of Central Asia. His early scholarly activities are evaluated in the context of the development of historical and archaeological studies in Uzbekistan during the second half of the twentieth century.

Keywords: E.V. Rtveladze, Uzbekistan, Central Asia, archaeology, ancient history, scholarly formation, archaeological expeditions, historical geography, numismatics, historical research.

Introduction: The development of historical and archaeological studies in Uzbekistan during the second half of the twentieth century was closely connected with the activities of prominent scholars who contributed to the study of the ancient past of Central Asia. Among them, E. V. Rtveladze holds a significant place due to his extensive research in archaeology, ancient history, historical geography, numismatics, and epigraphy.

His scholarly formation was influenced by university education, participation in archaeological expeditions, and direct study of ancient sites and material remains. These experiences shaped his research interests and encouraged an interdisciplinary approach combining archaeological evidence with written, numismatic, and geographical sources. The purpose of this article is to examine the main stages of E.V.Rtveladze's scholarly formation, the beginning of his professional career in Uzbekistan, and the factors that shaped his subsequent contribution to the study of the ancient history and archaeology of Central Asia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly heritage of E. V. Rtveladze occupies an

important place in the historiography of the ancient history and archaeology of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. His numerous works cover a wide range of subjects, including the history of Bactria and Tokharistan, ancient urban culture, historical geography, numismatics, epigraphy, and the development of trade and communication routes in Central Asia.

An important group of sources for studying Rtveladze's scholarly formation consists of his own monographs, articles, archaeological reports, and publications devoted to the results of field investigations. These works make it possible to trace the gradual development of his academic interests from archaeological fieldwork to broader historical interpretations. His studies of southern Uzbekistan, particularly ancient Bactria and the Amu Darya region, played a significant role in shaping his scholarly approach. Particular attention should be given to Rtveladze's works on Kampyrtepa, ancient and medieval routes, numismatics, and the civilizations of Central Asia. These studies demonstrate his interdisciplinary approach, in which archaeological evidence was compared with written, numismatic, epigraphic, and historical-geographical sources.

Publications devoted to the scholar's life and academic activities also provide valuable information about his education, participation in archaeological expeditions, professional environment, and development as a historian and archaeologist.

Thus, the existing literature provides a substantial basis for examining E. V. Rtveladze's scholarly formation. At the same time, his early academic career and gradual integration into the historical scholarship of Uzbekistan require a comprehensive analysis as a distinct stage in the development of his scientific activity.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systematic analysis. Historical-comparative, chronological, and biographical methods were used to examine the main stages of E.V. Rtveladze's scholarly formation and the beginning of his professional activity in Uzbekistan.

The research draws on Rtveladze's scholarly publications, archaeological reports, biographical materials, and studies concerning the development of archaeology and historical scholarship in Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to his early fieldwork, academic environment, and the formation of his research interests. The chronological approach makes it possible to trace the gradual development of his scholarly activity, while source analysis is used to assess his contribution within the broader development of historical and archaeological research in Central Asia.

RESULTS

The scholarly formation of E. V. Rtveladze was closely connected with the general development of historical and archaeological studies in Uzbekistan during the second half of the twentieth century. His development as a historian and archaeologist took place in an academic environment in which systematic field investigations, the discovery of new archaeological sites, and the interdisciplinary interpretation of material evidence were becoming increasingly important. Rtveladze's early participation in archaeological research gradually determined the main directions of his subsequent academic career [1].

Edvard Vasilevich Rtveladze was born on 14 May 1942 in Borjomi, Georgia. His interest in history and archaeology developed at a relatively early stage of his life. After moving to Central Asia, he became directly acquainted with the rich historical and archaeological heritage of the region. This environment played an important role in shaping his interest in the ancient civilizations of Central Asia and eventually influenced his choice of archaeology and ancient history as his principal fields of research [2].

A particularly important stage in his scholarly formation was his education at Tashkent State University. He studied at the Faculty of History and specialized in history and archaeology, graduating in 1967. University education provided him with theoretical knowledge of ancient and medieval history, archaeology, historical geography, and related disciplines. At the same time, participation in field expeditions enabled him to combine academic training with practical archaeological experience [1; 3].

Archaeological expeditions played a decisive role in Rtveladze's formation as a professional scholar. Field investigations allowed him to acquire practical skills in archaeological reconnaissance, the identification and documentation of sites, excavation methods, classification of finds, and interpretation of material culture. His participation in archaeological work in different regions of Central Asia also enabled him to understand the importance of geographical environment, settlement patterns, communication routes, and cultural interaction in reconstructing historical processes [3]. Following his university studies, Rtveladze began his professional career at the Institute of Art Studies in Tashkent. This institution became one of the principal centers of his long-term scholarly activity. His work there created favorable conditions for combining archaeological field research with the study of ancient art, architecture, numismatics, epigraphy, and historical geography. Consequently, the range of his academic interests gradually expanded beyond conventional archaeological description toward the reconstruction of complex historical and cultural processes [4].

Southern Uzbekistan became one of the most important geographical areas in Rtveladze's research. The archaeological heritage of Surkhandarya, located within the historical regions of northern Bactria and later Tokharistan, provided extensive material for studying ancient settlements, urban centers, fortifications, trade routes, and cultural contacts. His participation in archaeological investigations in this region significantly influenced the formation of his scholarly specialization [5]. Rtveladze was also involved in the archaeological study of Dalverzintepa. Research at this major ancient settlement provided valuable material concerning the history of northern Bactria and the Kushan period. Archaeological finds from Dalverzintepa demonstrated the high level of urban culture, craftsmanship, religious life, and long-distance cultural relations that characterized southern Central Asia in antiquity. Work with such materials strengthened Rtveladze's interest in the political and cultural history of Bactria and the Kushan world [5; 6].

Another decisive stage in his archaeological career was

connected with the discovery and systematic investigation of Kampyrtepa, an important archaeological site situated on the Amu Darya in southern Uzbekistan. Rtveladze identified the site during archaeological reconnaissance in 1972. Subsequent investigations revealed a complex fortified settlement with defensive structures, residential quarters, streets, archaeological deposits, pottery, coins, and other categories of material culture [7].

The study of Kampyrtepa became one of the central directions of Rtveladze's later scholarly activity. Archaeological evidence from the site enabled researchers to examine the development of settlement and urban culture along the Amu Darya, as well as the importance of river crossings and communication routes connecting Bactria with neighboring regions. The materials discovered at Kampyrtepa also contributed to discussions concerning the political and economic history of the Hellenistic and Kushan periods [7; 8].

On the basis of archaeological, topographical, historical-geographical, and written evidence, Rtveladze later advanced the hypothesis that Kampyrtepa could be associated with Alexandria on the Oxus. This interpretation became one of the notable aspects of his research on ancient Bactria. Although the localization of Alexandria on the Oxus remains a subject of scholarly discussion, Rtveladze's hypothesis stimulated further consideration of the historical geography of the Amu Darya region and the routes associated with Alexander the Great's campaigns in Central Asia [8].

An important characteristic of Rtveladze's scholarly formation was his gradual transition from archaeological field research to interdisciplinary historical analysis. He did not limit his research to archaeological artifacts alone. Instead, he combined archaeological materials with information from ancient written sources, inscriptions, coins, geographical evidence, and historical maps. This approach enabled him to reconstruct political boundaries, ancient routes, settlement systems, economic relations, and cultural contacts more comprehensively [9]. Numismatics became another significant component of his scholarly interests. Ancient coins provide important information about political authority, dynastic changes, economic relations, iconography, religious concepts, and cultural interaction. Rtveladze used numismatic materials not merely as objects of classification but as historical sources capable of clarifying broader questions concerning the political and economic history of Central Asia [10].

Historical geography likewise occupied a central

position in his research. Rtveladze paid considerable attention to the localization of ancient settlements, the reconstruction of historical routes, river crossings, and the geographical context of political and cultural developments. His studies demonstrated that archaeological sites should be analyzed not in isolation but as elements of broader systems of settlement, communication, trade, and political organization [9; 11].

The history of the Great Silk Road also became an important direction of Rtveladze's research. He examined ancient and medieval communication routes across Central Asia and emphasized the role of the region as an important intermediary between different civilizations. Archaeological sites, coins, imported objects, and historical-geographical evidence were used to reconstruct the movement of people, commodities, technologies, religious ideas, and cultural traditions across the region [11].

A new stage in Rtveladze's archaeological activity began with the establishment of the Tokharistan Archaeological Expedition in 1999. Under his leadership, research in southern Uzbekistan acquired a more systematic character, and Kampyrtepa became one of the principal objects of investigation. These studies contributed to a deeper understanding of the historical development of northern Bactria and Tokharistan and strengthened cooperation between Uzbek archaeologists and foreign specialists [7; 12].

Rtveladze's scholarly development therefore cannot be separated from the institutional development of archaeology in Uzbekistan. His academic career demonstrates how university education, archaeological expeditions, research institutions, and cooperation with other specialists contributed to the formation of a professional historian and archaeologist. Field experience was particularly important because many of his later theoretical conclusions originated from the direct study of archaeological landscapes and material evidence.

Another distinctive feature of his scholarly work was the broad chronological and geographical scope of his research. Although ancient Bactria, Tokharistan, and southern Uzbekistan occupied a central place in his studies, he also addressed wider problems concerning the civilizations of Central Asia. This allowed him to examine the history of Uzbekistan not as an isolated historical process but as an integral part of the political, economic, and cultural development of Central Asia [13].

His works on the civilizations, states, and cultures of Central Asia represent the mature development of research interests that had emerged during the early

stages of his scholarly career. Archaeological fieldwork, the study of ancient settlements, numismatic evidence, historical geography, and written sources gradually formed a comprehensive approach to the reconstruction of the region's past [13]. Thus, the results of the present study demonstrate that E. V. Rtveladze's scholarly formation occurred through several interconnected stages: university education, early participation in archaeological expeditions, professional work at academic institutions, systematic research in southern Uzbekistan, and the gradual expansion of his interests toward historical geography, numismatics, epigraphy, and the study of ancient communication networks. These stages laid the foundation for his later contribution to the historical scholarship of Uzbekistan.

His entry into the historical and archaeological scholarship of Uzbekistan was therefore not a single event but a gradual process shaped by education, field experience, institutional activity, and continuous engagement with primary archaeological sources. In this respect, Rtveladze's academic biography also reflects broader tendencies in the development of Uzbek archaeology during the second half of the twentieth century, when archaeological research increasingly moved toward interdisciplinary analysis and the comprehensive reconstruction of the ancient history of Central Asia [1; 4; 13].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the scholarly formation of E. V. Rtveladze was closely connected with the development of historical and archaeological research in Uzbekistan during the second half of the twentieth century. His university education, participation in archaeological expeditions, and professional activity in academic institutions provided the foundation for his development as a prominent historian and archaeologist.

Field research, particularly in southern Uzbekistan, played a decisive role in shaping his academic interests. The study of ancient Bactria, Tokharistan, Dalverzintepa, Kampyrtepa, and the Amu Darya region gradually expanded his research from archaeology to historical geography, numismatics, epigraphy, ancient urbanization, and the history of communication and trade routes. His interdisciplinary use of archaeological, written, numismatic, and geographical evidence became one of the distinctive features of his scholarly approach.

Thus, Rtveladze's entry into the historical scholarship of Uzbekistan should be regarded as a gradual process shaped by academic education, extensive field experience, and systematic research. His early scholarly

activities laid the foundation for his later major contributions to the study of the ancient history and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. His scientific legacy remains significant for understanding both the ancient past of the region and the development of archaeological and historical scholarship in Uzbekistan.

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