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ARCHAEOLOGISTS ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE REVOLUTION. E.R. VON STERN AND EXCAVATIONS ON THE ISLAND OF BEREZAN IN 1905-1906

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The article, based on written and archival sources, in particular epistolary, examines how the revolutionary events of 1905-1907 affected the life of one of the leading archaeologist of antiquity in the late XIX – early XX century – Ernest Romanovich von Stern.

Despite the difficult political and socio-economic situation in the country, he continued excavations on the island of Berezan, during which was discovered in 1905 the only one in the Northern Black Sea coast stone plate with a runic inscription.

But the revolutionary events and the governmental reaction that followed them, especially the rise of chauvinist sentiments in power and society, were one of the reasons why in 1911 E.R. von Stern emigrated to Germany forever.

Keywords: *History of archeology, E.R. von Stern, Berezan island, Revolution of 1905-1907*

Consideration of biographies of archaeologists against the background of historical upheavals has rarely been the subject of separate scientific publications. There are works dedicated to the fate of archaeologists during the revolutions of 1917[1], as well as their memories about the Great Patriotic War[2]. But the earlier events of 1905-1907, as a rule, remain almost out of the attention of researchers.

Incidentally, the social upheavals caused by the revolutionary events of 1905-1907 also affected all segments of the population. The archeological community was no exception. Regardless of the attitude of a researcher to this event, it was impossible to remain indifferent.

One of the most troubled cities during these events was Odesa. As a example, it is enough to recall the riots in the city during the uprising on the battleship «Prince Potemkin-Tavrichesky». Of course, the scientific community of Odesa had to experience the full force and chaos of the revolutionary upheavals.

A well-known archaeologist who lived in Odesa at this time was Ernst Walfried von Stern, an ordinary professor at Novorossiysk University and curator of the museum of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities (Ernest Romanovich von Stern in Russian-speaking circles).

A native of the Baltic German nobility, he lived in Odesa from 1884, teaching both at Novorossiysk University and at the Odesa Real School of St. Paul. Ten years later, he began to engage professionally in archeology and from the beginning of the XX century to

[1] 1917 год: российская археология на переломе эпох // Материалы Международной научной конференции. Москва: Институт археологии РАН, 2017. 92 с.; Кудрявцева Т.В. Е.Г. Кагаров: антиковед в революционное лихолетье // Метаморфозы истории. 2019. Вып. 13. С. 7-18.

[2] Матюшин Г.Н. (ред.). Археологи на войне (воспоминания ветеранов Великой Отечественной войны). Москва: РАН, 1990. 80 с.

lead excavations. He conducted the first archaeological exploration on the island of Berezan in 1902 as part of a group of the Odesa Archaeological Society[3], and in 1904 he began full-scale research on this island[4].

Subsequently, in 1905, he continued excavations on the island of Berezan, despite the fact that the political situation in the spring of this year in Odesa was tense. The research was conducted from May 31 to July 1. Until June 27, they were headed by E.R. von Stern together with his assistant E.G. Kagarov. After that date, E. R. von Stern was left, therefore E.G. Kagarov personally closed the expedition.

On June 21, 1905, in the field diary of the Berezan expedition, E.G. Kagarov made the following entry: «Communication with Odesa was cut off. The searchlights of the Ochakiv Fortress are functioning intensively, tracking down betrayed battleships. In Odesa – massacres and pogroms from the 17th. Nothing is known – we are cut off from the world»[5].

As noted E.R. von Stern at a meeting of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities on September 22, 1905, talking about the last field season: «The conditions of stay in Berezan this year were extremely difficult. In the first half of June the weather was not conducive to excavations, frequent rains and storms put us and the workers in a rather difficult situation, and from June 13 the events in Odesa and the so-called "Potemkin days" could not but affect the course of our peaceful work. It is enough that we have been deprived of any communication for a whole week to understand the full gravity of our situation. However, the results of the work can be satisfied»[6].

The excavations revealed half-dugouts, pits and foundations of ancient settlement buildings, as well as the famous runic stone with the inscription «Grani made this funeral hill (hvalf) in memory of Kal, his sworn brother». Previously, the name of the buried was interpreted as Carl[7], but in a 2010 study, Professor G. Williams, a specialist in Scandinavian languages, noted that the name or nickname Cal (Old Swedish cabbage) is more likely[8]. The inscription itself dates back to the XI century.

An interesting story of this discovery. The stone with the inscription was found during excavations of the mound, which had 48 inlet burials of different times at different depths. Some of the dead were buried carelessly, without any funeral equipment, others lay in wooden coffins or on boards. Some were placed in stone boxes made of orthostatically limestone flat slabs[9].

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[3] Штерн Э.Р. О пробных раскопках на острове Березани // Записки Одесского общества истории и древностей. 1904. Т. 25. Отдел 4. С. 97-100.

[4] Штерн Э.Р. Раскопки на острове Березани // Отчет Императорской Археологической Комиссии за 1904 год. Санкт-Петербург, 1907. С. 41-49.

[5] Кагаров Е.Г. Дневник раскопок на о. Березани 1905 г. Курган R // The Scientific Archive of the Odesa Archaeological Museum of NASU (SA OAM NASU). № 59189. С. 22-23; Березин С.Е. Биография Евгения Георгиевича Кагарова: архивные поиски на историографическую тему // Актуальні питання вірменознавства. Одеса, 2014. Вип. 2. С. 18.

[6] Штерн Э.Р. Отчет о раскопках ординарного профессора Э. фон-Штерна на о. Березани в 1905 году // Записки Одесского общества истории и древностей. 1907. Т. 27. Отдел 5. С. 68.

[7] Браун Ф.А. Шведская руническая надпись, найденная на о. Березани // Известия Археологической комиссии. 1907. Вып. 23. С. 71; Arne T. Den svenska runstenen från ön Berezan utanför Dnjeprmynningen // Fornvännen. 1914. Årg. 9. S. 47; Мельникова Е.А. Скандинавские рунические надписи: Новые находки и интерпретации. Тексты, перевод, комментарий. Москва: «Восточная литература» РАН, 2001. С. 201.

[8] Williams H. Mesku giristr: en from bön på Bräckstastenen (U 1039)? // Bo65: festskrift till Bo Ralph. Göteborg: Meijerbergs institut för svensk etymologisk forskning, 2010. P. 102-103.

[9] Браун Ф.А. Op. cit. С. 68.

On June 9, 1905, excavations in the eastern part of the mound at a depth of just over 0.50 m revealed 10 skeletons, one of which was in a stone box without a lid. His skull and upper body lay on a runic stone, laid sideways with the inscription down. Therefore, E.R. von Stern saw the inscription only at the moment when the worker picked up the stone to dump it in one pile with others. Since the runic stone was found in secondary use, it was probably originally located on one of the small mounds nearby. Most likely, stone did not stay there for very long, because the inscription did not fade[10].

Meanwhile, the situation in the country continued to worsen. In a personal letter to his German colleague, E. Meyer, dated October 24, 1905, E.R. von Stern wrote: «Personally, I can say little comforting. I dug for a month on Berezan in the summer – I was often worried about «Potemkin's affairs» and the events in Odesa, then I worked in Livonia for another month, with Browning on the table, in the open revolution; then a lot had to be done at the Ekaterinoslav Congress»[11]. The fact is that in Livonia there was an estate of von Stern's – Zeyershof, where one of his brothers and other relatives lived. During the revolutionary events of 1905-1906, the Forest Brothers, members of the guerrilla movement in the Baltics, operated in the region, attacking both administrative institutions and government officials and raiding the estates of landowners, often German.

In September 1905, E.R. von Stern was elected as a dean of the Faculty of History and Philology of Novorossiysk University[12]. The university itself opened at that time after a 10-month break. However, in this letter to E. Meyer, E.R. von Stern does not hide his pessimism: «But for how long? We live in complete anarchy. If I could shake the dust off my feet… emigrate, I'd like that more than I can. Unfortunately, there are no prospects for this»[13]. Indeed, the University soon almost ceased to function again due to the tense political situation.

E.G. Kagarov, a student of E.R. von Stern, was also worried. At the end of 1905 he was in Chisinau, explaining this by the fact that «my wife could not stay in Odesa, fearing a strike». E.G. Kagarov wrote to his teacher: «I myself, as far as I can, continue to study, but life and science are unsettled, and it's hard to work!»[14].

On January 21, 1906, Stern described to E. Meyer what was happening in Odesa in the following words: «There is still no end in sight, since murders and explosions still occur here every day, how to get out of this witch's coven unharmed… We doubt between the red revolution and the black reaction, and it is especially difficult for moderate liberal elements to enter this struggle and not be crushed. If the Duma meets under a roof in the spring, the situation may improve, however, I do not pin great hopes on it»[15].

Nevertheless, E.R. von Stern continued to prepare for the next field season on the island Berezan. This was aggravated by the fact that on March 6, 1906, one of the leaders of the Sevastopol uprising of 1905, P.P. Schmidt, was executed on the island together with three comrades.

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[10] Arne T. Op. cit. P. 45.

[11] Ungern-Sternberg J. von. Wissenschaft und Zeitgeschichte: Die Briefe Ernst von Sterns an Eduard Meyer (1894-1918) // Philologia Classica. 2016. Vol. 11. Fasc. 1. S. 118.

[12] Об избрании профессора Э.Р. фон-Штерна деканом историко-филологического факультета // The State Archive of Odesa region. Found 42. List 35. File 417. P. 22; Ізбаш Т.О., Новікова Л.В. Эрнст Романович фон Штерн // Професори Одеського (Новоросійського) університету: Біографічний словник. Одесса: ОНУ, 2005. Т. 4. С. 443.

[13] Ungern-Sternberg J. von. Op. cit. S. 118.

[14] Письмо Е.Г. Кагарова к Э.Р. фон Штерну от 08.12.1905 г. // Institute of Manuscript, Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine (IM VNLU). Found V. List 1. File 2340. P. 1; Березин С.Е. Op. cit. С. 18.

[15] Ungern-Sternberg J. von. Op. cit. S. 119-120.

Excavations were conducted from 2 to 30 June 1906. Field diaries were kept by E.R. von Stern and E.G. Kagarov[16]. As E.R. von Stern noted later: «The external conditions for carrying out excavations on Berezan remained very difficult as before. However, thanks to the educated courtesy of the commander of the troops of the Odesa district, Baron A.V. Kaulbars, the work question was resolved in a sense favorable to me and, since Imp. Arch. Commission was so kind as to put the trolleys and rails at my disposal, so that the work went on in general successfully and was able to excavate and completely clear a larger area than in previous years»[17].

The newspaper «Rada», published at the personal expense of E.Kh. Chykalenko, also wrote about the progress of this field season. We give this information in full: «The head of the Odesa Museum of Antiquity E.R. von Stern gave the Archaeological Society a report on the excavations he made on the island of Berezan in 1906. Excavations on the island, where the ancient city was found, have been underway for three years. The excavated city dates back to the 5th century BC and provides an opportunity to explore the life and culture of the ancient Greek city in its purest form. Excavations last year were conducted under the direction of Dr. von Stern from June 2 to June 30, and during that time it was possible to reveal all the outlines of the ancient buildings and streets of the ancient city, from which detailed photographs were taken. Many wells were discovered, and a large number of shards of ancient dishes were found in them – «Milesian» bowls (1624 fragments), ancient amphorae (up to 1600 fragments). There are many whole vessels between the items found. At the same time, terracotta figurines and a bronze head of a bull were also found. Specialists are working in the Odesa Museum to organize the finds. So far, the results of the excavations have led to the discovery of two construction periods in the excavated city. The first period includes the foundations of a circular building, a small wall and an adobe floor; The second – large walls and remains of ceramics of the 6th century BC. This year, Professor Stern will continue to excavate at the same place»[18].

Much later, in 1925, E.G. Kagarov, on the pages of the Kharkov newspaper «Vechernee Radio» (03/20/1925), spoke about the following interesting episode that occurred during these excavations: «In the summer of 1906, together with Professor E.R. Stern (now deceased), I carried out archaeological excavations on the island of Berezan, where the remains of an ancient Greek settlement of the 5th century BC were discovered with numerous walls, houses, graves, utensils, inscriptions, weapons, etc. In the midst of the work, the commandant of the Ochakiv fortress unexpectedly comes to us and, under the strictest confidence, informs that it is not allowed to excavate in a certain place on the island, since the body of the revolutionary Schmidt is buried there. Having indicated to us the location of the grave, the commandant left, and we hastened to mark the historical place on our map of Berezan, having determined exactly the latitude and longitude. I remember Professor Stern told me then: «The time will come, and pilgrimages will be made before this now abandoned and deserted island»[19].

Of course, it cannot be ruled out that this episode could have been created by E.G. Kagarov for the sake of time. It could be confirmed or refuted by the map of Berezan

[16] Штерн Э.Р. Кагаров Е.Г. Дневник раскопок на о. Березани. Июнь 1906 г. // SA OAM NASU. № 59191; Кагаров Е.Г. Журнал раскопок на о-ве Березани в 1906 г. // SA OAM NASU. № 59192.
[17] Штерн Э.Р. Отчет о раскопках на Березани летом 1906 года // Записки Одесского общества истории и древностей. 1907. Т. 28. Приложение. С. 47.
[18] З наукового, літературного та артистичного життя // Рада. 1907. № 56 (8 березня). С. 4.
[19] Кагаров Е. Могила П.П. Шмидта // Вечернее радио. 1925. № 63 (178) (20 марта). С. 3.

with the mark mentioned by the author of the note, if it has survived. Now on the island of Berezan there is no grave of P.P. Schmidt, since his body was reburied in 1917 in the Intercession Cathedral of Sevastopol, and then, in 1923, found rest in the Communards cemetery in the same city.

In the fall of 1906, the situation in Odesa continued to remain hectic, however, in other Black Sea cities, in particular in Yalta, it was no better. Here is how the vice-president of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities A.L. Berthier-Delagarde described the situation in a letter to E.R. von Stern: «In autumn I will definitely try to visit Odesa, but hardly earlier than November. I have enough time, but in Yalta it is extremely restless, they rob, shoot, throw bombs, and in my house there are only women and I am afraid to leave them alone. The end of all this is not foreseen, but you can get used to everything and get along with everything. Now the safety of housing and the very safety of life are already very little, by the winter all this will become even more cheaper and then it will already be possible to come»[20].

Subsequently, however, the protest mood began to decline. After the «Third June coup» of 1907, the revolution was replaced by government reaction and the growth of chauvinistic sentiments in the government and society.

This led to the fact that the ethnic German and also of the Lutheran religion, E.R. von Stern felt more and more insecure in this new reality. In a letter dated October 27, 1908 to E. Meyer, he complains about it: «Shameless agitation in the chauvinist press combined with robberies, threats and all sorts of inconveniences, and all because most of my colleagues wanted to elect me as rector; For «real Russians», a German and a non-Orthodox is a hindrance in this position. To avoid further developments, I withdrew my candidacy, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of students asked me not to do this… The only joy is my museum, it has become really beautiful»[21].

Thus, the revolutionary events and the subsequent government reaction negatively affected the life of E.R. von Stern, like many other scientists of that time. The last straw that decided his future fate was the death from illness in 1910 of his youngest son, sixteen-year-old Arist.

E.R. von Stern in 1911 resigned at a personal request from the Novorossiysk University and left for Germany, to the position of a teacher at Halle-Wittenberg University. E.R. von Stern was still destined to become rector shortly before his death (in 1921/1922 and 1923/1924), but already at this German university, where his merits were appreciated.

Later, E.G. Kagarov fondly recalled his Berezan field seasons with his teacher: «The memory of Ernest Romanovich will forever remain sacred to me, and I will never forget those summer evenings that I spent five years with him on the Berezan Island, carrying out archaeological excavations there and talking with him under the mysterious roar of the sea, about the secrets of past centuries and ancient peoples»[22].

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Археологи на тлі революції.
Е.Р. фон Штерн і розкопки на о. Березань у 1905-1906 рр.

Біографії археологів і проведення розкопок на тлі історичних потрясінь рідко ставали темою спеціальних досліджень. Проте, такі події впливали як на життя вчених, так і на хід проведення археологічних досліджень. Не були винятком і революційні події 1905-1907 рр. у Російській імперії.

Ернст Романович фон Штерн, прибалтійський німець, який проживав наприкінці XIX – початку XX ст. в Одесі, був археологом, фахівцем у галузі античних старожитностей. З 1902 р. він провів перші розвідувальні, а з 1904 р. повномасштабні археологічні розкопки на острові Березань, де виявив сліди найдавнішого у Північному Причорномор'ї античного поселення.

У наступному, 1905 р., проведенню розкопок істотно заважало погіршення

політичної та соціально-економічної ситуації в країні. Незважаючи на це, в ході досліджень було виявлено плиту з рунічним написом XI ст., яка на цей день є єдиною, зі знайдених у Північному Причорномор'ї.

У 1906 р., незважаючи на триваючі революційні події, розкопки на острові Березань були продовжені. Вони також дали хороші результати, зокрема, як писала тогочасна преса, було знайдено велику кількість уламків античної кераміки, а також теракотова статуетка та бронзова головка бика.

З особистого листування Е.Р. фон Штерна відомо, наскільки сильно пригнічував його революційний хаос і невизначеність. Незважаючи на це, він продовжував активно працювати, особливо багато часу приділяючи музею Одеського товариства історії та старожитностей, хранителем якого він був.

Після червня 1907 р. революція змінюється урядовою реакцією, для якої було характерним придушення інакомислення та зростання шовіністичних настроїв. Через це Е.Р. фон Штерн не зміг стати ректором Новоросійського університету, в якому викладав довгий час. Мабуть утиски за національною ознакою, так само як і особиста трагедія – смерть від хвороби молодшого сина, були причиною того, що Е.Р. фон Штерн назавжди залишає Одесу. Вчений їде до Німеччини, викладати у Галле-Віттенберзькому університеті, ректором якого він стане в кінці свого життя.

Ключові слова: історія археології, Е.Р. фон Штерн, о. Березань, Революція 1905-1907 рр.

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