

# Aleksei P. Okladnikov: The Great Explorer of the Past

Volume I

A biography of a Soviet archaeologist  
(1900s - 1950s)

A. K. Konopatskii

Translated from the Russian by

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A. P. Okladnikov near the campfire.

Back cover background: View near the Teshik Tash Grotto (photo by A. I. Krivoschapkin)

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## The Great Explorer of the Past (Academician A. P. Okladnikov: Pages of Biography)

A. K. Konopatski

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The Great Explorer of the Past  
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A. K. Konopatski



## Foreword

### The course of a explorer of history

The book of Aleksander Konopatskii is the first and at present the most complete biography of the distinguished scholar Aleksei Pavlovich Okladnikov—an archaeologist, historian, and ethnographer. Even the name of this thorough work is well chosen—*A Great Explorer of the Past*. Similarly, the author himself tests his ability in the fascinating role of pioneer historian, and not unsuccessfully.

From the pages of the book rises an image of a significant figure of modern culture. The biography of such an individual supposes profound acceptance by the biographer of the creative legacy of the selected personage, and careful study of the sources. Works in which personal encounters with the hero are described, as well as the impressions of all his friends and acquaintances, are characterised by a special force of reliability. All this is true of Konopatskii's work. The opinion of the narrator does not always coincide with the ideas of other witnesses and eyewitnesses. The discussion of various points of view substantially expands the perceived and edifying significance of the book.

There is occasion to turn away from the negative understanding of the compilational approach toward exposition of the material. Indeed, not one scientific work passes without compilational analysis. In fact, the scrupulous citation and selection and arrangement in correspondence with the intention of extraction from the texts of others, commented upon from the point of view of the biographer, do not discredit his work. On the contrary, they promote the understanding of the motives, psychological mechanisms, and external circumstances of the whole complex of elements determining the fate of the individual.

It is by these rather high standards, as will be seen, that A. Konopatskii followed when he wrote the book about Academician Okladnikov.

To some the extensive excursions into the family records of Okladnikov's ancestors and other relatives may seem superfluous. Also, mention of expeditions, discoveries, and finds of the Academician are undoubtedly reduced to a minimum. References to Okladnikov's compositions in this case leave the feeling of a gap in the substantial text.

Almost half the book reflects dramatic events that occurred in Soviet archaeological science during the 1930s and later. At that time, many careers were destroyed, productive research was interrupted, and many notable scholars were repressed and exterminated, while the energy of others was directed into the channel of mercantile squabbles and quarrels. Okladnikov—of course, against his will—was drawn into an ugly litigation, moreover, mortally dangerous in these times. It was undertaken by the Moscow archaeological school against the Leningrad school, to which Okladnikov belonged. Wild, despicable ways of life were being introduced, slander was running the course, demagogic accusations, and denunciations. And it was still necessary to work...

Aleksei Pavlovich Okladnikov stood on the verge of defeat not just once or twice. It was possible to perish—not just during far away difficult travels, but also in Stalinist torture chambers. He did not yield. He resisted, and in final account went out as conqueror, keeping himself a respectable person... Monstrous episodes of this past history are saturated with authentic pain, and not always intelligible to present-day young people. And if some periods of Okladnikov's scientific activity proper, some features of the character of an outstanding personality are reflected in the interesting essays of V. Vinogradov, Z. Ibragimova, V. Larichev, and G. Paderin, then the situation with the ideological struggle in archaeology is recreated and studied here for the first time.

Konopatskii conscientiously investigated archival documents, tooth-splitting newspaper opuses, and compared all this with stories of surviving victims, and in the end drew an impressive picture similar to those that are known, for example, from memoirs about the debacle of Soviet genetics.

Konopatskii does not tire of emphasising that Academician Okladnikov is a true Siberian nugget. When he was a youth fellow villagers were puzzled: 'The son of the Okladnikovs ... will evidently be a fool. He runs all about the mountains carrying rocks.'

This is a graphic example, an illustration of who he was and where he 'came from.' How can one not recall popular expressions of the recent past about how someone 'came from the people,' or was 'advanced by the people.' No one

was 'advanced,' the people 'advanced' themselves'—in spite of stereotypes of thought and indolence—through personal perseverance and persistence.

This assertion is only partially correct. Because Academician Okladnikov—and the biographer also shows this convincingly—was follower and continuer of that unique democratic tradition, which at all times distinguished the selfless toilers from the Siberian intelligentsia, frequently forced to work for a long time in outposts in distant territories, cut off from the world. Their devotion to the issue of human enlightenment frequently ended in total selflessness. Of course, not everyone was undertaken by such an impulse, but the sparkle never faded...

Okladnikov perhaps felt such a jolt in early childhood. Arriving one day in the book store of Makushin and Posokhin in Irkutsk, he saw a book on excavations in the south of Russia and was not able to tear himself away. It would seem that nothing was special, a book is just a book. There would be different places for the youth to run into interesting reading... But the whole point is that in Siberia nothing happens unintentionally.

Petr Ivanovich Makushin was justly considered as an enlightener of Siberia. It is difficult to imagine, but this was true; he opened a book-selling outlet in literally every Siberian city and many villages, in addition to which he stimulated the creation of schools and colleges. By his initiative and with his active participation societies for the care of primary education were established, popular lectures and exhibitions were organised, newspapers were published with a progressive orientation. Thus, his slogan 'Not one illiterate!' was not an empty phrase. Maybe a book on archaeology would fall by good fortune into the hands of the teenager Aleksei Okladnikov. But the selection of literature that was widespread throughout the inexpensive Makushin book outlet was thoroughly reasoned out and embraced the basic branches of knowledge. New books from Makushin were impatiently awaited in the most-out-of-the-way corners of the huge Siberian region.

This is only one example. There are others. We will dwell on that fragment of Konopatskii's book where the report about Aleksei Pavlovich's father is mentioned, a modest school teacher who perished during the Civil War at the hands of bandits. He was warmly characterised by a well respected man of the Siberian regional movement, I. I. Serebrennikov, cabinet minister of the supreme leader of Russia, Admiral A. V. Kolchak. A statistician by specialty, through the will of circumstances lifted on the crest of a political wave, Serebrennikov, having emigrated, taught a course in 'Siberian Studies,' and published in Tien Tsiên (China) memoirs of the formidable times of the Civil War.

The ex-minister found kind words about the ‘good man and outstanding teacher’ P. S. Okladnikov (who was ‘very cheerful, of modest habits, not acquainted with wine and smoking’).

One more very important moment. Evidently Aleksei Pavlovich would not have been able to succeed in carrying out everything in his life if a true friend had not been beside him, an irreplaceable helper, his loving wife Vera Dmitrievna Zaporozhskaya. Konopatskii devotes no little attention to their remarkable union.

Biographies of well-known people are written in different ways. In this vast library can be encountered novels and essays, meticulous articles, and sparkling short stories. The distinctive work of A. Konopatskii will not get lost in the common stream, but will fall in its proper place and will be demanded by the reader.

B. Tuchin

*He was the greatest of the peasants  
and the first of the explorers.*

Professor Kyuzo Kato  
(Japan)

## Introduction

The primary source of information about the life of A. P. Okladnikov, in particular his childhood and young years, were stories by his mother—Anna Aver'yarovna Okladnikova—who retained a clear mind and outstanding memory into quite old age. Even Aleksei Pavlovich himself repeatedly returned to this subject in his talks, conversations, interviews, and public lectures. I was fortunate enough to have a long interview with Zoya Pavlovna Okladnikova (sister of Aleksei Pavlovich),<sup>1</sup> who shared many interesting and little-known facts, as well as her personal memories and stories of Anna Aver'yarovna. From the indicated interview and earlier conversations, which occurred at various times, only information that is beyond doubt is used in the present book. Unclear places are omitted, and contradictions are especially indicated. I have tried maximally to precisely deliver the exact words of all the informants. Separate isolated utterances, dedicated to one theme, are reduced into integral stories in chronological and thematic sequence. In the text there are no 'enhancements' or 'embellishments' of facts, no fictitious events or episodes. The greatest freedom is found in the usage of synonyms in order to avoid tautology, explanation, and disclosing the idea of some of the brief utterances (without distortion or change of their content). Citations are made to available published materials, reports, stories, observations, and remarks of specific individuals.

Many ideas, factual information, theoretical positions, remarks, and conclusions set forth in the text I recorded in draft notes, outlines, and isolated paragraphs before 1990. In 1995, I discovered similar thoughts and observations that agree almost literally with my own in a book by L. S. Klejn, *The Phenomenon of Soviet Archaeology* (St. Petersburg, 1994). Noting this similarity, I decided not to make any substantial changes in the final version of the text. I understood that the very reality of Russian history, the fate of science and the individual personality of a specific epoch have brought us—independent of each other—to similar conclusions.

For convenience, the book is broken up into small chapters. The names of these chapters should be helpful to the reader in selecting interesting places, if

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<sup>1</sup>A transcript of this interview (13 manuscript pages) was made in Irkutsk on 21–22 February 1992 and is preserved in the author's personal archive. Substantial additions and specifications were made by Zoya Pavlovna on 20–21 October 1996. At that time she placed early photographs of the parents and child's pictures of Aleksei Pavlovich at the author's disposal and pointed out the places in Irkutsk where he lived and worked in the 1930s.



for any reason a 'complete' reading is undesirable. In the chapters are set forth the final, formulated statements about this or that inference and various events and incidents are recounted. I have tried as much as possible not to repeat generally known episodes and events of A. P. Okladnikov's biography, episodes repeatedly described by other researchers. Instead, I have concentrated attention on facts that are little or entirely unknown to a broad readership. Many events mentioned in the text are practically nowhere reflected by the documents, though they in fact took place and represent in their way 'another reality' in the life and destiny of A. P. Okladnikov. Wishing to be entirely objective, I tried to be as precise as possible in describing events, to many of which I was a witness or a participant. When information was communicated by someone else, references to the source are given directly in the text.

I offer my deepest thanks and gratitude to all who helped on this book. I especially want to note the assistance of Zoya Pavlovna Okladnikova, Mark Davidovich Brilliant, and Nonna Aleksandrovna Khrustova.

### A brief survey of the literature

As a joke A. P. Okladnikov named Konstantin Badigin as his first 'biographer.' Badigin was a writer and former sailor, a captain on long voyages who, in his novel *On the Cold Seas*, created a certain villainous merchant from Novgorod by the name Okladnikov. This was peculiar vengeance for Aleksei Pavlovich's refusal to support his, Badigin's, idea that it was the Russians who discovered Franz Josef Land.<sup>2</sup> Aleksei Pavlovich related:

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<sup>2</sup> K. S. Badigin was captain of the icebreaker *Georgii Sedov*, which in 1937–1940 drifted for 27 months in the Arctic ice and was carried to the Greenland Sea. He was author of the books *Vo L'dakh Arktiki* [In Arctic Ice] (Moscow-Leningrad, 1951) and *Po Studenym Moryam* [Through Icy Seas] (Moscow, 1956). The preface 'From the Publisher' to the latter book contains interesting remarks. On the one hand, the hypothetical and incomplete nature of some ideas maintained by the author are noted, and on the other, the renowned author is credited with personal experience and knowledge, and the hope is expressed that some of his opinions will be corroborated in the future. Inasmuch as this book, in spite of the significant circulation at the time (20,000 copies), will not be easy for the modern reader to find, we will quote two brief fragments of the preface 'From the Publisher': 'It is entirely understandable that K. S. Badigin, because of lack of historical documents, has frequently drawn his own conclusions from indirect evidence—on the investigation of physical-geographic conditions, the analysis of the general historical development of Russia, and has often relied on ingenious supposition. Such approach is entirely proper, but inevitably makes the picture drawn more or less hypothetical. Naturally, many of the author's conclusions, not without some basis, may create controversy.' And further: 'How correct the author is in his suppositions, the future will tell. We know a number of cases when remarkable documents were discovered in the archives, shedding light on events hidden in the fog of the past, or when archaeological finds have permitted writing whole chapters of early history.'

How could I support him? Indeed, it is a historical fact that the Russians were not there first. Concerning Spitsbergen, he is absolutely right there, and I agree with him. There is historical evidence that Russian sailors discovered it, there is nothing to object to. But that about Franz Josef Land there are no such data.<sup>3</sup> He very much wanted initial discoveries to go to the Russian. And he very much wanted me to support him. I then wrote the book *Russian Polar Seafarers on the Shores of the Taymyr*, published by Glavsevmorput'. He sought out people who thought the same; naturally, very much counting on me and was strongly offended by the rejection. And before long his novel came out. In it figured a person with my family name.

The second 'biographical' work, also literary, came from the pen of the Leningrad writer Gennadii Gor. In this novel Okladnikov turned out to be the prototype of the main character. This is a small book, almost of a pocket format in hard cover: Gor, G. *The Error of Professor Orochev*. Leningrad, 1955.

Based on the reminiscences of Vera Dmitrievna Zaporozhskaya, wife of A. P. Okladnikov, Gennadii Gor visited Aleksei Pavlovich a few times in his Leningrad apartment, conversed with him, 'and then this book was published.'

It created contradictory feelings in Aleksei Pavlovich. When in good spirits he spoke willingly and with pleasure of how pleasant his surprise was at the appearance of this book after such a brief contact. Sometimes he explained that this novel was in a way a fictional description of the history of conflict with his graduate student N. N. Dikov. Of course, it was not a documentarily precise reproduction of the situation of the conflict—it served only as the basis,

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These quotations, in fact, correspond almost literally with words spoken by A. P. Okladnikov. K. S. Badigin's great desire to prove the priority of Russian sailors in geographical discoveries of the Arctic was not always supported by historical facts. Okladnikov's refusal to back such an idea was therefore fully substantiated, and served as the cause of this amusing incident.

In addition, K. S. Badigin is the author of the book *Put' na Grumant. Pomorskaya Byl'* [Trip to Grumant. A Coastal True Story] (Moscow, 1953). There is no biographical information about K. S. Badigin in the second or third editions of *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* [Great Soviet Encyclopedia] (BSE). There is only a very brief entry on the icebreaker *Georgii Sedov*, written by him. At the end of this note it says that all 15 members of the crew of the icebreaker were honoured with the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union (BSE, 3rd ed., Moscow, 1971, vol. 6: 319). There is also no information about him in the *Spravochnik Sovetskikh Pisatelei* [Directory of Soviet Writers].

<sup>3</sup> According to an entry in the BSE, the archipelago of Franz Josef Land was discovered in 1873 by the Austro-Hungarian expedition of J. von Payer and K. Weyprecht and named in honour of the then-ruling Austrian emperor (BSE, 3rd ed., vol. 28: 9). Spitsbergen (a.k.a. Svalbard) was discovered by Russian sailors in the fifteenth century. A second discovery of Spitsbergen was made by W. Barents in 1592.

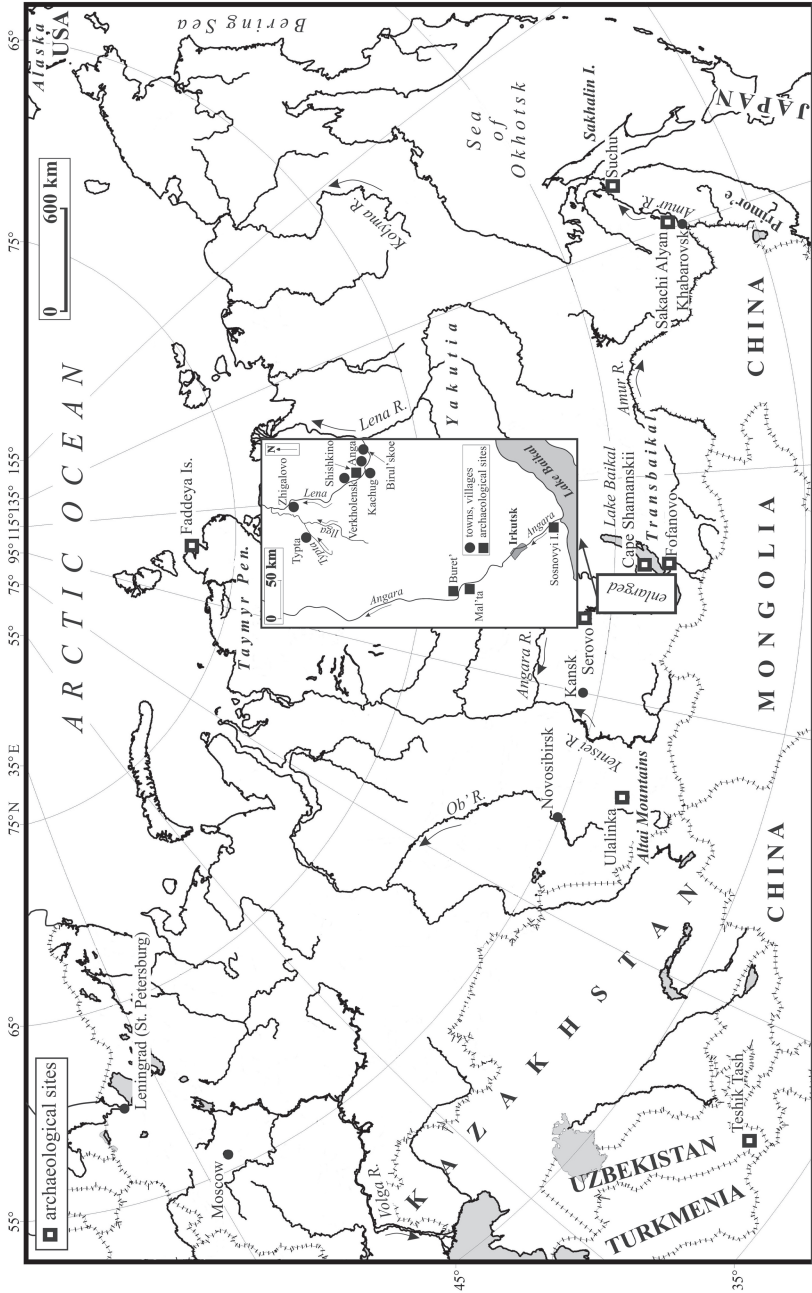


Figure 1. The map of some of A. P. Okladnikov's travel and excavations; the upper Lena River region is enlarged.

the 'skeleton' for the subject, while the details, in Aleksei Pavlovich's opinion, could be entirely fictitious in the novel because this was a literary work and not historical biographical research.<sup>4</sup> He valued Gor as a master of words, a talented writer, and in general spoke of him with great respect. Judging by everything, Aleksei Pavlovich was flatteringly rendered as the prototype of the main character in an interestingly written book. When not in good spirits (infrequent, but such occurred) he expressed a certain almost silent protest, morose disagreement. Such a state came upon him when someone wanted to specify the degree of correspondence of validity of this or that detail of work. The fact is that from the psychological portrait of the book's main character, some features of his personality are given rather precisely, and it was clear who served as the prototype. The plot of the book was this: a certain Professor Orochev writes a scientific work for his untalented student, setting out his own personal ideas (talent and lack of talent in science, interrelations of teacher and student is the leitmotif, the central theme of the novel). During the graduate student's dissertation defense the professor praises the student's work. But soon the student 'forgets' who the true author of the dissertation is and publishes it under his own name. Later he even rejects the basic premises of the book during a discussion in which he finally unintentionally reveals the true authorship, completely discrediting himself in the eyes of colleagues.

To a direct question, whether such an episode in reality took place (the writing of a work for a student), Aleksei Pavlovich answered somewhat unwillingly, as if justifying himself: 'Well, it was ... I had a foreign graduate student. He had to write a dissertation. I gave him all the literature, the materials. The time arrived,

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<sup>4</sup> The author expresses his deep gratitude to N. A. Khrustova who sent him a xerox copy of this book.

Aleksei Pavlovich himself described this conflict in the following way: 'Soon after the defense of the Candidate's Dissertation (equivalent to Ph.D.), Kolya Dikov comes to me and says: 'The two of us will now be a crowd in Siberia. Let's agree on a division of the territory. Your territory will be to the Urals—all that beyond the Urals to the Pacific Ocean will be mine.' I asked him: 'Kolya, did you think it over well?' He answered: 'Yes. I made up my mind.' Well, think it over another week.' He came to me after a week. I asked him what he had decided, if he had changed his mind. He answered that he hadn't, and insisted on having his way. Thus, we parted ways. I bore him no grudge. It was he who decided to divide it.'

Okladnikov thought Dikov's mother, who had great influence on her son, played an important role in this conflict. The features of his character also possibly had some effect. Witnesses to these events condemned Okladnikov for his break with Dikov, who did not immediately find a job, and as a result there was sympathy for him. Who was right is now impossible to decide. Nevertheless, it is significant that Dikov defended his Doctoral Dissertation in Novosibirsk for an Science Council presided over by Okladnikov. If unresolvable conflicts had existed between them, he could have selected Moscow for his defense (where Okladnikov was always treated rather oppositionally) or Leningrad, where Dikov was known and remembered. But he selected Novosibirsk.

but he had done nothing. Other instructors' students wrote their theses. Mine was no worse. So I wrote the main part of the work for him. For me this was simpler than explaining how and what was necessary to be done! And time was running out. There wasn't time to discuss it.'

Judging by everything, his authorship did not remain unnoted—it was very difficult to confuse his style with someone else's. This was clearly recognizable, but the main thing, the fact that Gor had uncovered his creative 'process,' irritated Aleksei Pavlovich most of all. Though it is possible that what annoyed him more was the desire of a stranger to dig into his past.

Gor's book even now is impressive. It is notable in that there are amazingly few time markers in it: only twice, and just in passing, is the Party Committee mentioned and once the Regional Party Committee, and Stalin's name is encountered (more precisely, it concerns the Stalin Prize, which Professor Orochev's student dreams of obtaining).

Another temporal reference point, but a very relative one, can be seen in the following rather non-specific phrases of the book: 'Orochev was disturbed by all the same feelings as the progressive people of his time. The country lived an intense, creative, amazing life. For the first time in all his history man stood spiritually erect, became an independent creator. An impassioned irreconcilable dispute with secular stagnation, superstitions, and religious prejudices was occurring' (pp. 25–26). But such characterisations were used in the 1930s (most often) and also after the Second World War (more rarely). It is also possible to suppose that this concerned the 1960s, with the successes of that time in opening up 'virgin lands' and the cosmos, extraordinary development connected with the Khrushchev 'thaw,' but this time was in fact still ahead. At least a decade remained before it. Thus, this indication of time of action, with all its vividness, is also comparatively non-specific.

The main theme of the book is the scientific life and creative strivings of the characters, their discourses about the origin of ancient art. There is practically no hint about the continuing course of the dispute with Marrism, and the complicated situation among the faculty of the university is only casually mentioned. In all, certain incompleteness is felt—also in its way a reflection of the period. The primary task the author evidently set for the novel was to morally support the chief character in his struggle for scientific truth and to push toward writing his summary work on aboriginal art. In the last pages of the book we see Professor Orochev with new, dedicated students who have decided to devote their lives to the service of science. He reads to them the chapters of his new book, existing meanwhile only in manuscript.

(The question of the conformity of Gor's book to historical reality of this time will be examined separately.) In this sense the novel, it can be said, bears a prophetic character. The author, setting forth the old dreams and intentions of his protagonist, as if he anticipates the creation by A. P. Okladnikov of a book, which will be published only in 1967 (that is, 12 years after publication of Gor's work!) under the name *The Dawn of Art*.

The author of the first true biography of A. P. Okladnikov, as well as a bibliography of his works (the publications were coordinated with the scholar's 50th birthday) is V. E. Larichev.<sup>5</sup> For a long time he worked with Okladnikov, both in the USSR and abroad. In 1961, Larichev went with Okladnikov from Leningrad to Novosibirsk for the organisation of a Division of Humanities, which later became the Institute of History, Philology, and Philosophy of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences. Even after almost 40 years this sketch continued to be significant. Professionally written in detail, with knowledge of the subject, it contains much factual information and many episodes characterising the early period of Okladnikov's life: the sharpest impressions of childhood, a description of the spiritual atmosphere in Irkutsk, the cultural centre of eastern Siberia, and the beginning of a scientific career at the Academy of History of Material Culture in Leningrad. On the whole, the author adheres to the following principle: 'The very essence of the researcher's scientific activity is the focal point—the results of his numerous expeditions, his ideas and concepts' (Larichev, V. E. *A. P. Okladnikov—Investigator of the Early Cultures of Asia*. P. 7).

Because of the specific character of the political situation at this time, one can only guess about some things in the sketch, reading between the lines. Thus, it speaks of the Department of Archaeology and Ethnography at Irkutsk University and about the students' group in it, but the name of the founder of the department and students' group Professor B. E. Petri is not given. Evidently, he was not rehabilitated at this time (the protective agencies in the provinces were always distinguished by great stagnation, conservatism, and ferocity in

<sup>5</sup> Only the most important publications are mentioned in this selection. Articles written for birthdays in the periodical press are omitted. A complete list of them, as well as reviews and notes about A. P. Okladnikov's works, are cited in the last (chronologically) bibliography; Okladnikov, A. P. *Materialy k Biobibliografii Uchenykh SSSR. Seriya Istorii* [Materials for a Bio-Bibliography of Scholars of the USSR. A Historical Series], (issue 13: 35–57, Moscow, 1981); Larichev, V. E. *A. P. Okladnikov—Issledovatel' Drevnikh Kul'tur Azii: K 50-Letiyu so Dnya Rozhdeniya* [A. P. Okladnikov—Investigator of the Early Cultures of Asia: On His 50th Birthday] (Irkutsk, 1958). (The series *Nashi Zemlyaki* [Our Fellow Countryman]; issue 1, *Bibliografiya: Spisok Pechatnykh Nauchnykh Rabot A. P. Okladnikova po Arkheologii i Istorii* [Bibliography: List of Printed Scientific Works of A. P. Okladnikov on Archaeology and History], 211 titles).

comparison with the major cities). Meanwhile, by 1955 Okladnikov himself referred to the work of a teacher, indicating his family name in the third part of his primary research volume, *The Bronze Age of Pribaikal'ye*, published in Leningrad. (In 1950, with the publication of the first and second parts of this book there was reference to the work, but the family name of the author was not indicated—this was rather dangerous.)

In Larichev's sketch there are other innuendoes and failures of mention, evidently brought on by censorship considerations. On the whole, some places in this sketch were later repeatedly cited by other researchers of Okladnikov's works, biographers and interviewers. Some variant versions will be noted in the relevant sections of this book.

The map of the routes of Okladnikov's expeditions and the locations of his work, published at the end of the sketch, is of great value. To Larichev's pen belongs another book, which describes two seasons of fieldwork in Mongolia in 1960-1961—*Remote and Mysterious Asia*.<sup>6</sup> There is much interesting historical information in it about various periods and sites, a description of scenes of life and customs of the Mongols, stories about expeditionary work days, and unexpected encounters. There are also recollections in it of a biographical nature

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<sup>6</sup> Larichev, V. E. *Aziya Dalekaya i Tainstvennaya* [Remote and Mysterious Asia] (Novosibirsk, 1968). Judging from the publication data, the book took almost two years to get printed. Being in print usually occupied from a few months to half a year. It was sent to press on 1 September 1965, was signed into the press on 21 June 1967, but on the title page there is 1968! It is thought that the printing of even such a comparatively large circulation (15,000 copies) could not occupy more than half a year. Evidently to overcome some bureaucratic obstacles that arose during preparation of the publication, an in-depth and favourable Preface by the leading Soviet scholar of Mongolian studies of that time, N. P. Shastina, premised the book. The author's Introduction also reports the interested attention to the joint works of First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Mongolian Peoples Republican Party and the Council of Ministers of the Mongolian Peoples' Republic, Yu. Tsedenbal. These observations of the author received further support. Based on verbal communication with Larichev, such delay in issuing the publication, which was nearly concluded by destruction of the text set in type, was brought on by petty intrigues of the Moscow scientists. At that time they had monopolistic right in the review of liberal arts literature and used it in full measure. There were several motives: personal ambitions were involved here as well as the consequences of the old conflict between Kiselev and Okladnikov concerning a discussion in 1950 (more precisely, hostility inherited by Kiselev's students toward Okladnikov and his students). Speculative motives that began through complications between the USSR and China were also used. For this reason some parts of the text were removed. One of the reviewers demanded categorically the book have a preface by N. P. Shastina. She herself did not see the need for this, though she wrote the Preface.

Finally, the existing resistance at the end was successfully overcome only with the support of M. M. Gerasimov and after a direct appeal to the Director of the Institute of Asian Countries (later, the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences, USSR) B. G. Gafurov. G. M. Bongard-Levin helped Larichev find a contact. The author expresses his sincere gratitude to V. E. Larichev for placing this information at his disposal.

that belong to Okladnikov. The book is richly illustrated with photographs, as well as with drawings and caricatures by V. Zhalkovskii.

A logical sequence to Larichev's first book, based on the development of ideas stated in it, was the book *Forty Years Among Siberian Antiquities* (timed to coincide with Okladnikov's 60th year).<sup>7</sup> And it has not lost its significance either. Along with the biographical outline and an annotated bibliography of all of A. P. Okladnikov's scientific publications published by that time, it contains a thematic summary of the primary directions of the scholar's works, as well as unique photographs.

It is interesting to note that in both the first and the second cases a distinctive stratagem, in a way a military tactic, was employed for the publication of materials. The publication was announced as the first issue of the following series: in the first case, 'Our Fellow Countrymen' (published in Irkutsk), in the second—'Siberian Scholars' (Materials for the Biobibliography)—published in Novosibirsk. In neither of these series was the sequence followed. Not because there was no one else to write about, but rather because there was no one to write it. The fate of the book was unusual: the fact is, it did not appear in available sale. According to Larichev, when the output circulation was an already resolved question, the secretary of the Sovietskii County Committee of the KPSS R. G. Yanovskii (under whose supervision the Novosibirsk Akademgorodok fell) called him and said: 'What is this personality cult you create here once again?' This was evidently an echo of the 'cult of personality' of Stalin that was dying away, but the struggle with it had not yet completely disappeared, and had taken on such unusual forms.

All explanations that this book initiated a series of publications dedicated to Siberian scholars, that most of it consisted of bibliography, and that the biographic sketch was purely informative, very brief, and did not contain anything remotely reminiscent of a 'cult of personality,' were ignored.

And then Aleksei Pavlovich made an untypical decision. He purchased the whole production in the printer's packaging and put it on shelves in the veranda of his cottage on Zolotodolinskaya Street of Akademgorodok. As he explained, smiling: 'In order not to create a new personality cult,' literally repeating the wording that had come from the Party's County Committee.

<sup>7</sup> Larichev, V. E. *Sorok Let Sredi Sibirskikh Drevnostei: Materialy k Biografii Akademika A. P. Okladnikova. Annotirovannaya Bibliografiya* [Forty Years among Siberian Antiquities: Materials toward a Biography of Academician A. P. Okladnikov. An Annotated Bibliography] (Novosibirsk, 1970). (*Ychenye—Sibiryaki. Materialy k Biobibliografii* [Siberian Scholars. Materials for the a Bio-Bibliography], issue 1).



Not one copy of the book appeared on the counters of book stores. Aleksei Pavlovich gave it to his relatives and friends, and sent copies to his colleagues. Sometimes he did this upon request as a sign of a special favour. But the primary method of distributing it was as follows: Okladnikov set aside a corresponding number of books for encouraging members of the annual All-Union student conference, which was held at Novosibirsk State University. He thought that students were the most grateful reading audience, being interested in everything and able to appreciate such a gift.

Unfortunately, Larichev did not continue his work as biographer and chronicler of Okladnikov's life and works. This is all the more troublesome when it is considered that Larichev was witness to and participant in many interesting and important events in the life of the scholar, was a member of the group at the Institute of History, Philology, and Philosophy of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences, led by Okladnikov, and worked on many expeditions with Okladnikov—all this most interesting data does not appear in the books Larichev published.

The continuation of Larichev's works was an annotated bibliography of Okladnikov's works that embraced a five-year period, prepared by R. S. Vasil'evskii and N. G. Voroshilova.<sup>8</sup>

The year 1978 was marked by the publication in the journal *Sibirskie Ogni* of a sketch by the writer G. N. Paderin 'Filled by Space and Time,' dedicated to Okladnikov's 70th year. In this original production factual data, observations of the author, and fragments of Okladnikov's reminiscences were used. Later the essay was reissued in a collection of works by the author, dedicated to scholars of Siberia.<sup>9</sup>

In 1978, a documentary narrative by A. P. Derevyanko, 'In Search of the Deer with the Golden Antlers,' was published in an abbreviated version in the journal *Oktyabr*, and then as a separate volume.<sup>10</sup> The book is valuable

<sup>8</sup> *An Annotated Bibliography of the Scientific Works of Academician A. P. Okladnikov (1968-1973)*. Compiled by R. S. Vasil'evskii and N. G. Voroshilova. Ulan Ude, 1974.

<sup>9</sup> Paderin, G. N. Prostranstvom i Vremenem Polnyi: K 70-letiyu A. P. Okladnikova [Full of Space and Time: On A. P. Okladnikov's 70th Year]. In *Sibirskie Ogni* [Siberian Lights] 11:71-98, 1978; Paderin, G. N. V Zone Neizvedannykh Glubin [In the Zone of Unknown Depths]. In *V Zone Neizvedannykh Glubin*: 5-55. Novosibirsk, 1980; Paderin, G. N. *Vverkh po Reke Vremeni* [Up the River of Time]: 345-392. Novosibirsk, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> Derevyanko, A. P. *V Poiskakh Olenya Zoloty Roga: Dokumental'naya Povest'* [In Search of the Deer with the Golden Antlers: A Documentary Narrative]. In *Oktyabr* 8:122-170; 12:154-201; Derevyanko, A. P. *V Poiskakh Olenya Zoloty Roga* [About A. P. Okladnikov's archaeological expeditions and discoveries]. Blagoveshchensk, 1978; Derevyanko, A. P. *V Poiskakh Olenya Zoloty Roga* [About A. P. Okladnikov's archaeological expeditions and discoveries]. Moscow, 1980 (People of Soviet Russia).

and unique in the fact that it reflects many episodes in the life and activities of A. P. Okladnikov that had been left out of previous publications. The form of the work permitted releasing that which earlier for some reason had not been published, though was well known. It describes in substantial detail Okladnikov's expeditions through Yakutia, Central Asia, Mongolia, and the Far East. Personal oral reminiscences of Aleksei Pavlovich were widely used, as were the personal observations of the author. Some parts of Derevyanko's book are quoted in the present work, but I recommend that the reader become acquainted with the entire book as a whole. This was no doubt a large step forward in elucidating the work route of the outstanding scholar. One version of the book (part of the Moscow circulation of 1980) was illustrated with colour and black and white illustrations, the second (Khabarovsk issue of 1978) with black and white photographs.

In 1981, literally on the eve of his death, Okladnikov's bio-bibliography was published in the series *Bio-Bibliographies of Scholars of the USSR*, compiled by G. N. Finashina and N. G. Voroshilova, under the editorship of and with a brief biographical sketch by R. S. Vasil'evskii.<sup>11</sup>

Soon after Okladnikov's death the scholar's family made an attempt to prepare a collection of reminiscences about him. Many witnesses of the early period of his working activity were still alive. However, publication of the collection did not happen at this time and traces of it were later lost.

The essential drawback in all the biographical publications (through no fault of the authors) was the absence there of any information or in general any mention of the most dramatic period in Okladnikov's life, when he was head of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture. It was at this time that the infamous Stalinist discussion about questions of linguistics study was going on, which received the unofficial name 'the pogrom of Marrism.' The beginning of Okladnikov's leadership of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture is well known, but almost nowhere is the termination mentioned. And this is not just because the scholar did not especially like mentioning that time. With the beginning of the Khrushchev 'thaw' they generally preferred to forget about this period because of the rehabilitation of the Party-oriented Oriental scholar N. Ya. Marr, which never took place and according to some information N. S. Khrushchev wanted to carry out (but never found time for it). A period of suppression emerged.

<sup>11</sup> Aleksei Pavlovich Okladnikov. Compiled by G. N. Finashina and N. G. Voroshilova. Introductory article by R. S. Vasil'evskii. (*Bibibliografiya Uchenykh SSSR; Ser. Istorii* [Bio-Bibliography of Scholars of the USSR; A Historical Series]; issue 13).

The victims were silent, the persecutors were silent as well. Those who were shrewd pretended to have nothing to do with it. Thanks to someone, rumours of A. P. Okladnikov's hypocrisy: as if he both praised and exposed N. Ya. Marr with the same mastery. The situation in the country and in the scientific sphere of this time is completely ignored. Indeed, everything was not so simple. The only archaeologist who wrote memoirs in his declining years (unfortunately, unfinished—written only up to 1956), Academician B. B. Piotrovskii, rather softly, again with the delicate reservations concerning the still living participants in those events, very clearly showed all the drama of the situation in Leningrad Branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture.<sup>12</sup> I made an effort to elucidate specifically this period of A. P. Okladnikov's life.

In other publications and memoirs it was primarily a matter of particular episodes, of chance encounters. Judging by everything, the authors of the memoirs wanted to show the broad circle of their acquaintances and working contacts. Among them V. A. Semenov's publication deserves special mention.<sup>13</sup> It is a distinctive description of one of Okladnikov's expeditions to the Far East, the lower courses of the Amur River, in which the author took part. The atmosphere of the expedition is shown well, as are the conditions of the time, true adventures that remained clear and unforgettable in the author's memory.

The opinions and observations of G. I. Marchuk in his book are interesting, though incidentally having a touch of mysticism and mythology.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, fragments of the interesting and talented memoirs of D. L. Brodyanskii are scattered in various publications.<sup>15</sup> Other pieces of them were not recorded and exist only in oral form. These reminiscences should be published completely, especially since when compared with other sources their great factual preciseness and historical reliability and dependability are evident. They could have shed additional light on the destiny of A. P. Okladnikov

<sup>12</sup> Piotrovskii, B. B. *Stranitsy Moei Zhizni* [The Pages of My Life]: 259–276. St. Petersburg, 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Semenov, V. A. *Ekspeditsiya Ukhodit k Okeanu* [An Expedition Goes to Ocean]. In *Dal'nevostochnye Puteshestviya i Prikl'yucheniya* [Far Eastern Voyages and Adventures], issue 11: 340–381. Khabarovsk, 1984.

A small inaccuracy crept into the publication: the ancestors of the native residents of the lower Amur River, the Nanai, were called their descendants. Neither the author nor the people at the Publishing House noted this clear disparity. (See p. 348: 'In gray antiquity in the Amur land lived such beautiful women, now continue to live their ancestors.' On p. 351: 'I read somewhere that the modern Nanai are the distant ancestors of the Jurchen.' In meaning and essence it should be exactly the opposite!)

<sup>14</sup> Marchuk, G. I. *Molodym o Nauke* [For a Youth about Science]. Moscow, 1980:28–31.

<sup>15</sup> Brodyanskii, D. L. *Vospominaniya ob Uchitele* [Recollections about the Teacher]. *Priroda* 8:89–93, 1983.

as well as some episodes of his biography and the motivation of his actions and deeds in various situations.

The reminiscences of the Novosibirsk journalist Z. M. Ibragimova about her work on a film about A. P. Okladnikov are quite valuable. The shorthand notes of one of the last TV interviews with Aleksei Pavlovich that she published are unique.<sup>16</sup> In the words of Ibragimova, this was a conversation without a specific theme, 'about everything.' Aleksei Pavlovich, as if tallying the results of his life, talked about what he had succeeded in doing and what he still had wanted to do. His evaluations, deep, brief, carefully thought out, are of definite interest, and will be introduced in the present work. The interview obtained was so successful because it was conducted by a master of his art, the excellent professional journalist Z. M. Ibragimova, who had worked for many years with scholars of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences, a competent specialist, excellently delving into many questions.

The professional and expeditionary folklore stands as a special part. It is at times difficult to separate the truth from invention in it, even for knowledgeable people.

Of the last publications three of them are notable, especially the book by L. S. Klejn *The Phenomenon of Soviet Archaeology*.<sup>17</sup> Little attention is devoted to Okladnikov's personality proper there, but very interesting are the author's general observations about the fate of science in the Stalinist period and about the skill of scholars at that time to polemise and to cite scientific works, not specifically naming the authors, who were subjected to reprisals, since this was rather dangerous.

It was probably only because of Klein's special love of typology of different occurrences in science and due to his distinct humor that Okladnikov turned out ranked among the archaeologists called doctrinaire unitarians. A reference to one of his published works is not persuasive in this (there is nothing supporting this definition). But the main thing is the impossibility of forcing into the narrow framework of the human standard a man who is a rare exception of all known types (the typology itself also appears artificial: A. V. Artsikhovskii fell into three types simultaneously!).

In contrast to L. S. Klein, A. A. Formozov turned his book, *Russian Archaeologists Before and After the Revolution*, into a clearly expressed anti-

<sup>16</sup> Ibragimova, Z. M. *Uchenyi i Vremya* [A Scholar and Time]. Novosibirsk, 1986:180–200.

<sup>17</sup> Klein, L. S. *Fenomen Sovetskoi Arkheologii* [The Phenomenon of Soviet Archaeology]. St. Petersburg, 1994.

Okladnikov pamphlet.<sup>18</sup> He derives a new type of scholarly functionary, 'who serves political slogans, cast from high platforms.' M. V. Lomonosov stands as the first in a series of such scholars with his historically significant activities and opposition to German scholars, while his direct descendant and successor is A. P. Okladnikov, who acquired the traits of the universal miscreant. It is not enough that direct succession cannot be traced because there are no intermediate connecting links (not to mention an almost two century temporal break), A. A. Formozov also treats many publications and facts of historical reality very freely. It seems at times that he is actually juggling the facts. He ascribes to some books and articles a meaning directly opposite the intention of the author. The reason for such an 'unmasking' is revealed in one of the last chapters. A. P. Okladnikov acquired the features of the 'universal miscreant,' according to A. A. Formozov, for a prosaically simple reason: the scholar betrayed the interests of the closed caste sphere of specialists, violating the metropolitan monopoly on archaeological science by going to Siberia and creating there a new research centre. Formozov might have forgiven him much, but not this. The monopoly of metropolitan science was irreparably violated. In spite of the fact that in distinction from India, Russia did not have a classic division into castes, in a closed scientific community, as Formozov would like to have seen it, such 'treachery' was the most serious crime possible. And it is precisely closedness (in spite of all that, Formozov himself —quite inconsistently—reveals in the same place rather caustically the shortcomings and defects and the narrowmindedness of the scope of the 'caste specialists') and 'closeness' in archaeology that are two of the primary points of his grudge against A. P. Okladnikov. And one more important feature. Formozov either excuses the Moscow scholars and their teachers of practically all faults or looks on them very indulgently, at times even passing over them. The inadequacies of others are not only made absolute and hypertrophic, but acquire an almost apocalyptic scope. This is evidently done in order to whitewash some researchers and to smear others in the eyes of the reader, using a double standard.

An interesting attempt to comprehend the historical course of Siberian archaeology was undertaken by V. I. Matyushchenko in an educational textbook, published in Omsk.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, it correctly casts blame directed at the

<sup>18</sup> Formozov, A. A. *Russkie Arkheologi do i posle Revolyutsii* [Russian Archaeologists before and after the Revolution]. Moscow, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Matyushchenko, V. I. *Istoriya Arkheologicheskikh Issledovaniy Sibiri (do Kontsa 1930-x Godov)*. Uchebnoe Posobie [The History of Archaeological Investigation of Siberia (Up to the End of the 1930s)]. A

Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy, created by Okladnikov: no book has been written about the scholar since his death. On the other hand, with every wish to be objective, Matyushchenko freely or not freely at times follows in Formozov's steps, in the same vein as Tomsk mythology of the 'miscreant Okladnikov,' who undermined the monopoly of Siberian 'liberal arts Athens' (Tomsk) and who created a competing centre in Novosibirsk. This was evidently the second tragedy for the city; after the one that occurred when earlier, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Trans-Siberian Railway bypassed it. Not all of Matyushchenko's opinions about Okladnikov are corroborated by facts, often not even corresponding to reality, in spite of the fact that the author widely uses personal observations. Thus, the alleged disavowal of the teacher is supported or proven by nothing, as are the duplicity in the evaluation of N. Ya. Marr (this is also one of A. A. Formozov's chief accusations) and 'villainy' (absolutely unproved) toward V. E. Larichev in connection with problems of early art. The final conclusion that Okladnikov is more a tragic figure than a heroic one in Russian history is an assertion more literary polemical than historically real.<sup>20</sup>

The author set before himself the task of elucidating the little known sides of the biography of A. P. Okladnikov, some pages of his life, of showing his creative, scientific, organisational activity in real diversity and complexity, of making understandable the impelling motives of his various opinions and acts, and with this by no means claiming final assessment or resolution of all the questions and problems. An attempt to accomplish the task has called for the present book.

## **Grandfather and father**

Funeral rites were carried out for Aleksei Pavlovich Okladnikov on November 20th, 1981, in Moscow in the History Department of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, on the fourth floor of the conference hall at 19 Dm. Ul'yanov Street. When the word was given to Academician B. A. Rybakov, Director of the Institute of Archaeology, he began by entirely unexpectedly turning his back to everyone, going to a raised area by the wall of the conference hall, on which the tables of the presidium had been set, and by an abrupt authoritative movement

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Textbook.]. Omsk, 1992; Matyushchenko, V. I. *Sibirskaya Arkheologiya v 1940–1950-e Gody* [Siberian Archaeology in the 1940s–1950s]. Omsk, 1994; Matyushchenko, V. I. *Arkheologiya Sibiri 1960–Nachala 1990-x gg. Protsessy Razvitiya* [The Archaeology of Siberia 1960–Beginning of the 1990s. Processes of Development]. Omsk, 1995; Matyushchenko, V. I. *Arkheologiya Sibiri 1960–Nachala 1990-x gg. Problematika* [The Archaeology of Siberia 1960–Beginning of the 1990s. Problems]. Omsk, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> Matyushchenko, V. I. *Sibirskaya Arkheologiya v 1940–1950-e Gody* [Siberian Archaeology in the 1940s–1950s]. Omsk, 1994: 49.

unplugging the light cord used by a photographer for taking pictures. He appeared to be in a rage, wanting to demolish all equipment in his way. Only after this did he turned to the group of Academicians and began his address. It was strange, more like an anniversary greeting or a festive toast. Two primary things that he said are memorable. First: 'We here in Moscow called him a great Siberian military governor' (knowing how many the first Siberian military governors, villains, and oppressors of the people ended their career, such an analogy would have been possible only to horrify). This tirade had a peculiar second underlying theme, a certain implication. It consisted of the fact that behind his back Rybakov was called 'Tsar Boris' (besides Boris Godunov there was also a Bulgarian Tsar Boris, so that conferring such 'title' to the first President of Russia was in essence nothing new).<sup>21</sup> Did he know about this or not—it is not exactly known, but even then, in the requiem, he did not miss a chance to very transparently emphasise his 'sovereign power' in archaeology and his metropolitan superiority.

And the second memorable phrase from Rybakov's speech: 'There is in the Ural region—on the route from Novgorod Velikii to Siberia—the old 'Okladnikov village.' Didn't the ancestors of the Academician move by this route to the distant Siberian forests, where in the Irkutsk Province in 1908 a future scholar was born?' (Later this fine thought was repeated by Rybakov in the preface to the posthumous publication of a report by Okladnikov on Ermak's campaign in Siberia).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The best-known are the following rulers who bore the name 'Boris': Boris I, Prince of Bulgaria, who ruled in 852–899 (died 907); Boris III, Tsar of Bulgaria (1918–1943) (there is no information in the 3rd edition of the BSE about who Boris II was, when he lived, or where he ruled); Boris Aleksandrovich, Grand Duke of Tver (died 1461); Boris Godunov, Russian tsar, reigned 1598–1605. Foreign contemporaries and many historians noted the political wisdom of Boris Godunov and his administrative talent. But during the years of his reign natural cataclysms and unpredictable distress occurred, which ended with the beginning of the Time of Troubles. His mythical 'villainy' is attributed to a literary tradition begun by N. M. Karamzin and developed and condensed by A. S. Pushkin (just as the villainy of Salieri with regard to Mozart).

<sup>22</sup> Okladnikov, A. P. *Ekspeditsiya Ermaka. Mify i Real'nost'* [Ermak's Expedition. Myths and Reality]. In *Nauka v SSSR* [Science in the USSR] 2:29, 1982.

In this judgement, B. A. Rybakov was not as original as he might have appeared to the participants of a funeral ceremony in Moscow. Long before this Aleksei Pavlovich himself expressed the idea of a north Russian origin for the ancestors of the Okladnikovs. Larichev, describing an encounter with O. Lattimor in Ulan Ude cites such words: 'Yes, my father was a village teacher, and we lived on the upper Lena, at first in Biryul'skoe village, and then in Anga. There are many Okladnikovs in Siberia. They arrived in Siberia 300 years ago out of some northern Novgorod region.' (See Larichev, V. E. *Aziya Dalekaya i Tainstvennaya*. P. 119.) We also remember the ironical play on his family name in K. S. Badigin's work. Whether Aleksei Pavlovich himself expressed this idea to B. A. Rybakov or whether such association was a personal invention of B. A. Rybakov is unknown.

The author was present in 1977 when Anna Aver'yanovna gave an account to Aleksei Pavlovich

If Okladnikov had heard these words he would certainly have taken them as a complement. He himself loved the unexpected vivid images and on Rybakov's 70th birthday compared him with the Nestor chronicler and Pushkin's Pimen (also chronicler), but not an indifferent one, rather with the passionate spirit of a champion.

In fact, even now many people with the name Okladnikov live in Kansk, the town from which Aleksei Pavlovich's grandfather departed with his young son to go to Irkutsk. Their ancestors possibly went by the same route that Rybakov spoke about, and even from this same village. But, as often happens, reality is far richer, more varied, and more complex than the finest legends and tempting hypotheses... The real family name of Aleksei Pavlovich's father, Pavel Stepanovich, was something else—Korostylev. Pavel Stepanovich obtained the name Okladnikov from his foster father. In the Korostylev family were six children. The father died early, the family became very poor, and the mother gave up two children to other people. The youngest, Pavel Stepanovich, the future father of Aleksei Pavlovich, became the foster son of a childless Kansk merchant Stepan Okladnikov. Pavel Stepanovich was then six years old. Such adoption was evidently a frequent occurrence in those times. But the happiness of the boy and the foster parents did not last long. A misfortune occurred: the loving wife died. Stepan Okladnikov began to drink from grief and soon spent his entire fortune on drink. Being left practically in poverty, he gathered the rest of his money, sewed it in belts,<sup>23</sup> and together with his foster

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about the true genealogy of his father. But because of fatigue or inattentiveness due to expedition business A. P. Okladnikov listened to her somewhat distractedly, inattentively and did not react at all, though in the course of the story he asked her leading questions garnered from impressions of the trip to the homeland (where Aleksei Pavlovich's great-grandfather and his godfather, priest Viktor Berdnikov, were buried).

Later, in the 1980s, Z. P. Okladnikova reported this same information to the author in a letter. The information is also corroborated in the reminiscences of A. Lobanov, cited in the Appendices to this book. But all this information most likely goes back to the stories of Anna Aver'yanovna Okladnikova. Concerning B. A. Rybakov and his utterances, it should be noted that he did not even speak kindly and complementarily of his deceased colleagues. Thus, someone from Moscow told A. P. Okladnikov that in 1976, in a requiem for A. L. Mongait, B. A. Rybakov said only that the deceased was a not bad populariser of archaeology. A. A. Formozov reports in his book that after Mongait's death there was no one to write the obituary, and he took it upon himself (see Formozov, A. A. *Russkie Arkheologi do i posle Revolyutsii*, pp. 84–85). Rather interesting 'pictures of the disposition' of the times of 'Tsar Boris.'

<sup>23</sup> The custom of keeping money and jewelry in a belt was from of old widespread in the Russian population of Siberia since olden times and is even reflected in a story by P. P. Ershov, '*Konek-Gorbunok*' [The Horse Hump]:

Two brothers meanwhile  
Coin of the realm obtained,  
In a belt they put it,  
Tapped a flagon  
And set off home.



son went to Irkutsk, to the monastery—to pray for forgiveness for his sins. Aleksei Pavlovich's mother, Anna Aver'yanovna, often told him this story. It is possible that he could have heard this story directly from his father, Pavel Stepanovich, and therefore there was such precision in the details. He cited the following interesting episode: On a hot day (it was evidently summer) along the road the travelers wanted to bathe. They undressed and took a dip in a lake. But when, having bathed, they went on shore, they couldn't find their belts with the money. They had to travel the rest of the way to the monastery asking alms for the love of Christ, nourishing themselves with what compassionate peasants gave them. With this, Aleksei Pavlovich concluded with pride: 'Grandfather was a literate man. In the monastery he served in the rank of hieromonk!'<sup>24</sup>

Pavel lived with his foster father in a monastic cell for 10 years and finished school at the monastery. He then received advice to remain no longer within the monastery walls, where there was nothing more for him to do, but to go into the world and become a teacher. And that it was certainly better to go to a village and marry a peasant's daughter. Thus, he set out, becoming a teacher of the parochial school in one of the villages on the upper course of the Lena River (the village of Monastyrshchina).

Anna Aver'yanovna told Aleksei Pavlovich that soon after the wedding the newlyweds (she and her husband Pavel Stepanovich) visited the foster father in the monastic cell at the Znamenskii Monastery in Irkutsk. On the table beside him lay an unfinished letter, addressed to one of his friends or acquaintances, in which he wrote that his son was not so by birth, but rather a foster son. Thus, this fact was evidently not a secret to anyone. Stepan Okladnikov spent the rest of his days in the monastery and died before the revolution, that is, before 1917.

## **Ancestors of the maternal line: ancestral miscreant**

In the biography by A. P. Derevyanko, dedicated to A. P. Okladnikov, there is interesting information about Aleksei Pavlovich's birth place: 'According to

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(Citation based on: Ershov: P. *Suzche* [Suzche]. Irkutsk, 1984. Pp. 21–22.) It would be interesting to know what size these belts were and how many the brothers needed in order to sew in all the 'twice five hats of silver' received in trade for horses? Or how big these 'tsar's hats' were, if all the money went into the belts?

Prospectors coming back from the gold mines sewed up the gold in the belt, and it was for these prospectors that 'experienced' people hunted. Thus, the misfortune that overtook travelers was generally a common occurrence.

<sup>24</sup> Hieromonk—a monk in the rank of a priest. See *Slovar' Sovremennogo Russkogo Yazyka* [Dictionary of the Modern Russian Language], vol. 5: 80. Moscow, 1956.

legend, the village in which Aleksei Pavlovich was born was troublesome. In the past it was on a busy trade route. Often merchants with their simple wares disappeared without a trace. Rumour wrote it all off to the terrible rapids and devil's rocks on the upper reaches of the Lena River. But there was evidently no lack of daring people there. So it was no wonder that almost every family had its brigands who lay in wait along the Lena's swift crossings for small trading caravans or on mountain passes for exiles, occupied with gold digging.<sup>25</sup>

In the 1970s, Aleksei Pavlovich once, in good spirits, told a small group about one of his distant relatives in the maternal line who lived long ago on the Lena. He lived in a hut in the deep woods. He didn't do peasant work or hunt fur-bearing animals, but rather he robbed and killed prospectors who came from gold fields and stopped to spend the night with him.

It must be supposed that his occupation was not secret to those who associated with him, because in answer to the proposal to occupy himself with furs or some other business, he stated his point of view: 'What can you take from squirrels? Only their skin. But here several at once!' emphasising the large profit of his dubious affair. And it continued until several men called upon him at the hut in order to investigate. These were possibly prospectors or their relatives. It began according to the custom of this time, which Aleksei Pavlovich characterised with the following saying: 'First we will drink tea, then we will begin to talk.' Hosts called for the kettle to be placed on the fire, and sat in a circle. When the tea-kettle boiled, the host of the hut, evidently already having figured out what was to happen next, seized it and quickly splashed boiling water into the eyes of the unexpected guests, and then rushed outside, propped the door shut, and set fire to the hut on the outside. It burned up completely together with the people who had stayed inside. But, according to Aleksei Pavlovich, his ancestor did not return to such occupation, evidently considering that he should tempt fate no further. Zoya Pavlovna (sister of Aleksei Pavlovich) also heard about this villainous ancestor, but she was not certain whether he was their direct ancestor.

This story is impossible to conceive as something extraordinary or exceptional. Rather the event was typical, precisely characteristic for that time. In fact, the Siberian philologist Professor E. I. Shastina writes in the Preface to the book *Russian Stories of Eastern Siberia*:

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<sup>25</sup> Derevyanko, A. P. *V Poiskakh Olenya Zoloty Rogo*: 21–22. Moscow, 1980.

The term ‘Siberian type,’ which appeared at the time from their light hand (some contemporaries who put forth this term of A. P. Shchapov and carried the definition to the absurd—A. K.), began by supposing savagery and rudeness, arising allegedly from long sitting in the forest, and a passion for profit and cruelty. Incidentally, some real aspects of the old Siberian way of life, for example, the so-called ‘humpback hunters,’ also induced such conclusions. This was spread in some eastern Siberian villages, in particular in the Lena River area, at the end of the last century. The hunting of ‘humpbacks’ did not emerge by itself, but rather was initiated by local authorities.

A ‘humpback’ was a man with a sack on his back, a traveler. Such travelers or ‘strangers,’ as the peasants called them, from the middle to the end of the last century appeared in the Lena area in great multitude. These were fugitives, political or criminal, or simply those who were lucky in the gold fields and now hurried to their native home in Russia. The single reference point and road was the Lena River. In summer people floated along it in rafts and boats; in winter they ‘drove coaches.’ Fugitives made their way along it. Unable to control all this mass, the local leadership set a certain reward for each vagrant caught or killed. Therefore, some peasants turned hunting people into a special form of seasonal work, making it one of the means of subsistence.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Shastina, E. I. U Chistykh Rodnikov [At the Clear Springs]. In *Russkie Skazki Vostochnoi Sibiri. Seriya ‘Literaturnye Pamyatniki Sibiri’* [Russian Stories of Eastern Siberia. Literary Monuments of Siberia series]: 6. Irkutsk, 1985.

Interesting information was reported to the author in 1997 by Zinaida Nikitichna Fedoruk, who in 1949–1951 worked as a forester in the Mazanovo County of the Amur Province. There, as in eastern Siberia, at the end of the nineteenth century—first decades of the twentieth century (and even after the end of the Civil War) such a criminal business was widespread and had a well-worked ‘technology’ and distinctive ‘specialisation.’ Subject to these businesses on the upper Zeya River and its tributaries were not only Russian prospectors, but also Chinese ones. Those returning from the mines were robbed in accordance with a ‘technique’ coordinated by the residents of the villages along the banks of the Lena: they let the first one pass through the upper villages, then the ‘lower’ villagers prevailed over him; the second one was overcome by residents of the middle village, and the third by residents of the upper village. Inasmuch as the prospectors (and they were recognised immediately) stopped to rest before the long trip, they were invited to a celebration (a cause for this could be found without fail—there were many children), and after that, all was a matter of technique. They buried the murdered in an unmarked grave and took the goods. In the best case, only the boat was left (if he came down the river). As a rule, no one looked for the missing. They didn’t even kill the Chinese prospectors. Inasmuch as they wore braids, they tied them by the braid to a tree in the forest after robbing them. The forest animals and insects did the rest. Nor did anyone search for these missing, and traces of the crime quickly disappeared. Both the Russians and Chinese carried their precious goods in belts, so that this attribute of dress was the chief object of the ‘hunt.’ The author expresses

And Shastina further notes: ‘This dreadful custom in due course so much struck the imagination of some exiled writers and scholars that it eclipsed all good that was in the Siberian peasant and brought on several unjust and extremely exaggerated generalisations.’<sup>27</sup>

But successful prospectors did not always become victims of such hunting. Sometimes neighbours and fellow villagers emerged in the peculiar role of criminal. S. P. Mkrtchyan (native of the Omsk Region) brought to the author the story of the loss of her grandfather.<sup>28</sup> Having a large family, he set off to a mine not long before the revolution. After some time he wrote to his wife that he would soon return and they could live well: ‘Sufficient for both the children and grandchildren.’ Evidently, the contents of the letter became known to someone in the neighbourhood. Shortly two neighbours, brothers, went off somewhere. When they returned, they had a new large house built, with luxury unknown in that place. While grandfather (at this time a young man in the prime of life) disappeared as if into thin air. His wife went to the new building, looked at it, and said that something was not right. Evidently they, the neighbours, in some way had a hand in the fate of her husband. But she naturally could not do anything or prove their participation in it. And the result of all this was many years of toil and hard life for the woman, who had been left with young children and tragic misfortune.

Concerning the Siberian prospectors, dissolute people, not burdened with families, Aleksei Pavlovich described pictorially and with great feeling how some of them returned from the mines (those who escaped the fate of the ‘humpbacks’):

The prospectors return—they meet them with honour, and are ready to spread carpets on the ground before them. And the prospectors also are happy—they pay for everything with gold dust: Live it up! It is natural that they are surrounded by friends, who are always ready to drink for free. They enjoy themselves, carouse, spend everything on drink, even clothing, to the last thread. Nothing is left. And—naturally—no friends either. They throw the unlucky into the street almost nude. And then they take a bag, fill it with straw, shove a quite nude prospector into this, tie it, only the head

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deep gratitude Z. N. Fedoruk for this interesting information.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*: 7.

<sup>28</sup> The author expresses his sincere gratitude to S. P. Mkrtchyan for information, resourceful assistance, and professional recommendations. This account is cited in a brief statement in the hope that in time it will be published in full, with all the details and features of life, and the mode of living at that time.

sticking out, so that he not freeze, throw him onto a cart and set off again to the fields to mine for gold. And then, all over again. Such were the customs.

### **Great grandfather and grandfather**

Anna Aver'yanovna's grandfather (whose name is unfortunately unknown) was a manager for a wealthy merchant who lived in Monastyrshchina Village. The merchant moved to the city, and the manager bought all his estate and became occupied with trade himself.

He built a wooden church in the village (it was still standing in the 1970s, had a good appearance, but was with rundown cupola and was used as a storehouse), as well as a school. Before this the children had been taught in the peasants' homes. The teachers were primarily political exiles. The peasants in whose houses the children had lessons gave the children tea to drink at recess. This practice was in the spirit of the good traditions of peasant living and way of life, and was widespread in Siberia and the Far East.

Anna Aver'yanovna's grandfather was not buried in the cemetery, but rather in the churchyard. Aver'yan Larionov, her father, was a foster son. In the estate, which he had inherited, Aver'yan carved out a plot in order to build a new house. The previous landowner, a merchant's wife, learning of this said that no good would come of it to the new owners. She regretted very much that the garden was cut down. She cried since many of the trees had been received from abroad. Her prediction, in essence, later came true. Aver'yan Larionov had a herd of horses, many Kholmogorsk cattle, and a store with rich wares, carpets, and many other goods. Aver'yan then evidently took a liking to spirits and began to lead a rather dissolute way of life, giving away and selling for a song the goods he had acquired. According to family legend, Aver'yan's mother, Efim'ya, said to her good-for-nothing child: 'What are you doing, Aver'yasha? When you die you won't even have boots to put on for your burial!' 'No matter,' he answered, 'You can bury me without them! When I die they will admit me in the other world even without boots!'

Being boozed up, he sold many goods for very little, and at times simply gave them away. Upon admonition from relatives he answered: 'I'm the master here! I'll do whatever I want!' Once he brought some Jew with him and gave him the Kholmogorsk cattle. The Jew drove them all away. The family had time to secretly hide only one cow on a neighbour's farm. When Aver'yan had squandered almost everything, one more misfortune happened to crown it all: a fire in which the house and store burned. Having to leap out in their shirts,

they were unable to save anything. When construction of a new home started in the place of the burned one, Aver'yan began to drink with the contractors, as they said. The last eight years of life he drank, 'never drying out.' Finally, he fell into poverty. One day he was returning home drunk during very cold weather and fell out of the sleigh into the snow. The horse arrived home but the master didn't. Everyone gathered and followed the track in search (but it was a dark night). They found him already half frozen. Inasmuch as there was no effective means of treatment for pneumonia then he soon died.

He had four children: a son Vasilii and three daughters: Anna (future mother of Aleksei Pavlovich), Domna, and Dar'ya. Vasilii had nine children. But of the once great wealth of his father that fell to his share in the inheritance was a crumb. In addition, he had a very quarrelsome wife, who appropriated the whole household and who offended the aged mother-in-law, a good and gentle woman. That is why Anna Aver'yanovna, marrying, received such a small dowry—one cow. She didn't even have a good coat.

### The mother

Anna Aver'yanovna Larionova was born in 1887 in the village of Monastyrshchina,<sup>29</sup> which stood on the bank of Typta Creek, a left-bank tributary of the Ilga River, which in turn falls from the left into the Lena River below the modern village of Zhigalovo. She finished three classes of parish school in her home village. She was pious, but rarely went to church since it was difficult for her to withstand the long service. In the 1970s, telling Aleksei Pavlovich about her youth, about her life before marriage, she recalled the summer village work, how much had to be done during the day. At dawn she went to mow grass for hay. In the heat she remained home and checked the large pots set in the stream under snags to catch burbot. She determined time by the sun and in the evening went to rake hay. And still she managed to take care of the home, to milk the cows, and to do many other jobs. Interestingly, she tells of a special small wooden box that contained 'thunder shafts,' which was in their home in Monastyrshchina during her childhood years. Judging by the description, these were ancient stone axes collected by some one of the relatives during farm work. They kept them as talismans, believing in their protective qualities,

<sup>29</sup> When the first part of the manuscript had already been finished, the author was fortunate enough to find a notebook containing entries '1977.' According to Anna Aver'yanovna, she was born in the village of Fedorovshchina. Her grandfather obtained the estate of a murdered merchant. In one of the barns with windows was a merchant summer house. She was born in this summer house.

and in the fact that they might help with illnesses of both people and livestock.

There is another story that happened during the first Russian revolution (in 1905). Anna Aver'yanovna recounted this event lightly, with humor, kindly, though at that time it wasn't funny. Rumours began to occur in the village that workers were striking in the cities and capital, going along the streets with flags, and even smashed things there. The peasants were evidently hearing this for the first time and didn't know what the word 'strike' meant. It is natural that revolutionary events gave rise to fear and bewilderment among the peasants, who were accustomed to a stable, measured life. One resident of their village, under the influence of these rumours, and who drank strongly on a holiday, armed himself with a wooden stick or shaft, went into the street and with the cry: 'I'm on strike! I'm on strike!'—

began to brandish his 'weapon,' striking and smashing the glass in windows of the home of neighbours, who were nearly frightened to death and did not dare to show their faces at the sight of such fierce rage and incomprehensible clamour. When on the following day he woke up and learned what he had done in a drunken state (he evidently remembered nothing himself), he felt very bad and long repented and apologised to the neighbours, and at the same time tried to compensate for the damage caused and to make amends for his guilt in every way.

The life of Anna Aver'yanovna in youth cannot be called easy. And not just because the peasants always worked by the sweat of their brow. There were other circumstances: Anna Aver'yanovna's sister-in-law, the wife of her brother Vasili,



Figure 2. Anna Aver'yanovna Okladnikova, 1904

was a very spiteful woman. When Anna Aver'yanovna and her sisters went with her to reap, the sister-in-law left them at one end of the field, while she herself went to the other. If she wanted to eat, she prepared food herself at the fire, and having eaten she even raked the ashes aside so that nothing was left for her sisters-in-law. She did not miss a chance to complain about them to her husband, especially after the death of the father-in-law. She also offended the mother-in-law.

### **School teacher and master of all trades**

Pavel Stepanovich's foster father advised him to marry without fail a village girl, not a city one, saying that village girls are more unpretentious, better adapted to life, and that it would be easier for him to live with such a wife. Pavel Stepanovich married Anna Aver'yanovna when she was 17 years old. In the words of fellow villagers, Anna Aver'yanovna was the most beautiful girl in the village. P. S. Okladnikov at that time taught the primary classes at school. The young couple lived at the school. They didn't have a horse, but kept a cow (the only thing Anna Aver'yanovna got for her dowry). They also had a garden. Pavel Stepanovich was a good hunter. He also fished and collected berries. He got up very early, before the beginning of his job, went to a grouse mating area, and shot game, there being so much that his wife became tired plucking (cleaning) it. He had a good foreign gun, one of the barrels of which was designed to shoot rifle bullets (with threaded barrel). He had to have a special permit to have such a gun.

Pavel Stepanovich was six years older than Anna Aver'yanovna. They were married in 1904, when the Russo-Japanese War began. This same year Pavel Stepanovich was called into the army. His photograph in military uniform with a rifle at his shoulder belongs to this time. But the war was soon over—Russia suffered defeat—and he didn't even reach the front. Soon he returned home, to his family, to his work as a teacher at the village school.

Throughout 15 years of married life Anna Aver'yanovna bore seven children. The first child, a daughter, died at birth, four children didn't live a year, only two remained alive: Aleksei (the second child, born in 1908) and Zoya (the seventh child, born in 1917).

In Monastyrshchina Village Pavel Stepanovich was connected with political exiles and clashed with the local priest. The latter wrote a report to his bishop in Irkutsk, in which he stated that the teacher is associated with unreliable people. The bishop was kind to the young teacher. He summoned Pavel Stepanovich to him and said that he would transfer him to another place,





Figure 3. P. S. Okladnikov as ensign, June 1917, Petrograd/St. Petersburg

‘otherwise this priest will put you in jail.’ Three places were proposed, including the Kachug Rural District. The Okladnikovs moved to the village of Biryul’skoe, where there were even more exiles.

The teacher at the Biryul’skoe school before Pavel Stepanovich’s arrival was one who didn’t take his job seriously, didn’t maintain discipline in the class, and, it was said, ‘played knucklebones with the elderly women’ on the premises. When Pavel Stepanovich arrived at the school, the first thing that struck his eye was the fact that all the plaster had fallen off of the classroom wall from playing knucklebones. Therefore, work at the school had to begin with its repair.

Pavel Stepanovich was a sociable person, a merry fellow who played several musical instruments (guitar, violin, piano). In addition, he was a master cabinetmaker and gave lessons in that work in Biryul’skoe. Getting 30 rubles a month salary, he ordered at his own expense visual aids and school supplies. In particular, he ordered a unique lathe and a set of accessories for it from England. He himself made furniture, was able also

to repair winnowing machines, and threshing machines, build a house and put on the roof. He knew how to repair gramophones, which rich residents of the village brought to him. He would quickly repair the instrument and listen to records on it, and say to the owners, ‘I haven’t fixed it yet.’ He could repair any watch and tune pianos. He sang very well and had a beautiful voice. His favourite song was ‘Evening Bells.’ In the words of Anna Aver’yanovna, he was a strong man and did not pardon anyone an offense.

At this time (especially at the beginning of the First World War) male teachers were often summoned to military training, and Pavel Stepanovich sometimes had to go for a half year or more to Irkutsk with his family. His mother, Korostyleva, visited him there. Being an officer of the reserves, he held the rank of ensign.

A family tradition from the Biryul'skoe period in the life of the Okladnikov family preserves the following episode. Pavel Stepanovich had in class a student, a certain Zhabin, who, when the teacher was writing something on the board, sat at his desk with his back to the teacher. Pavel Stepanovich asked him to turn around—once, twice—but the boy didn't turn around. Then Pavel Stepanovich boxed his ears such that the boy fell from his desk to the floor. From then on he didn't pull such pranks. Usually Pavel Stepanovich treated his students well, though many teachers even beat the pupils.

### Where was he born?

Several times, when answering this question, Aleksei Pavlovich said that his native village had three names. He would curl the fingers of his hand and count: Typta, Konstantinovshchina, and Monastyrshchina. Sometimes for brevity Aleksei Pavlovich named only Typta. In the first biographical sketch, which came from the pen of V. E. Larichev, Okladnikov's birthplace is given as Typta,<sup>30</sup> in the second sketch, Konstantinovshchina.<sup>31</sup> In other reference publications, Konstantinovshchina, of the Znamenskii Rural District of the modern Zhigalovo County of the Irkutsk Province, is named.<sup>32</sup>

In the second half of the 1970s (in 1976 or 1977) Okladnikov even undertook, during an expedition, a trip to those places, desiring to learn more about his family's past. He himself acknowledged that in his declining years he was drawn to his homeland. But there were neither close nor distant relatives there, not even acquaintances. By an early age Aleksei Pavlovich had moved with his

<sup>30</sup> Larichev, V. E. A. P. *Okladnikov—Issledovatel' Drevnikh Kul'tur Azii: K 50-Letiyu so Dnya Rozhdeniya*: 9. In the same place it is noted that the village stood on the Ilga River. The village of Typta stood on the Typta River, a left bank tributary of the Ilga.

<sup>31</sup> Larichev, V. E. *Sorok Let sredi Sibirskikh Drevnostei*: 9.

<sup>32</sup> *BSE*, 3rd ed., vol. 18: 349. Moscow, 1974.

In the publications written for the 60th birthday of A. P. Okladnikov in *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* (SA 4:157, 1964): I. Boriskovskii identifies the place of Aleksei Pavlovich's birth as the village of Typta on the Ilga River, but in the obituary in this same journal (SA 3:291, 1982) as the village of Konstantinovshchina on the Ilga River, a tributary of the Lena. But Konstantinovshchina also stood on the Typta River, being the last on the lower course, before the river entered the Ilga.