УДК 94(47).093

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-1-23-35

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Expeditionary Journals of Major General G. N. Karaev, Leader of the Combined Expedition to Establish the Exact Location of the Battle on the Ice: The Second Half of the 1950s — Early 1960s

Abstract

Recent studies of the Battle of the Ice (1242) in many respects derive from the late 1950s–early 1960s expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR to the region of Lake Peipsi that was to determine the battle location. The reliability of the results it obtained is now evaluated differently, especially by those zealously searching for evidence of state commission. Materials collected and research carried out and published as early as 1962 is now used in disputes; however the authors contend that that they are not sufficient for making balanced and objective conclusions. Handwritten diaries of the expedition leader G. N. Karaev should shed a new light on the history of the project: its preparation, field work progress, and applied methods. The diaries covering the period of 1956-1960 are stored in the fonds of the Archive of the Pskov

State United Historical, Architectural, and Fine Arts Museum-Reserve. The text refers directly to the time of the described events (to a day). The diaries expound the research process (including submarine studies) and the general mood of the expedition. They show that the initiative came from the local historians, some of those amateurs. However, support of the leading scholars (particularly, academician M.N. Tikhomirov) and of the USSR Academy of Sciences gave the project its scientific force. The documents attached to the diaries confirm that G. N. Karayev founded his conclusions on the changes in level and depths of the lake, its bottom relief, and reasons for the absence of finds that definitely dated from the 13thcentury on the data obtained by experts in the natural and exact sciences. The authors conclude that the expedition journals of G. N. Karaev confirm the reliability of its results.

Keywords

Personal provenance source, archive, Battle of the Ice of 1242, Alexander Nevsky, G. N. Karaev, combined expedition to locate the site of the Battle on the Ice, Pskov State United Historical, Architectural, and Fine Arts Museum-Reserve, Drevlekhranilishche.

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Grant information

The research has been funded by the Russian Science Foundation grant (project no. 17-18-01168) “Modifications of the socio-political teachings of the Bible in history and religious foundations of political and legal doctrines of the Russian Empire.”

Submitted 26.04.2019, published (for citation):

KRIVOSHEEV, Yu. V., SOKOLOV, R. A. Ekspeditsionnye dnevniki general-maiora G. N. Karaeva – rukovoditelya Kompleksnoi ekspeditsii po utochneniyu mesta Ledovogo poboishcha. Vtoraya polovina 1950-kh — nachalo 1960-kh gg. [Expeditionary Journals of Major General G. N. Karaev, Leader of the Combined Expedition to Establish the Exact Location of the Battle on the Ice: The Second Half of the 1950s — Early 1960s. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2020, no. 1, pp. 23-35. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-1-23-35

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Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки здесь .