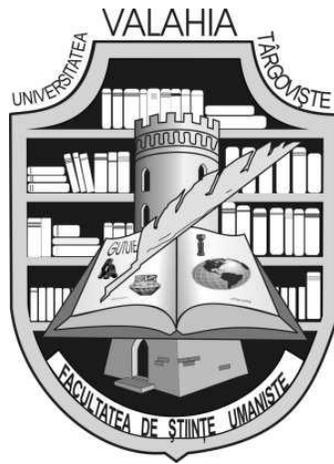


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## Bohai (Parhae) Studies in the Soviet Union at 1980s.

*Alexander Alexeevich Kim\**

\*Associate professor, Ph.D, independent scholar, Russian Federation; e-mail: [kimaa9@gmail.com](mailto:kimaa9@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The history of Bohai studies in Russia is more than 150 years old. But only at 1980s. Soviet specialists paid attention to different Bohai-related fields and developed research at many aspects. Russian scholars combine the use of written sources with the study of materials from archaeological sites, an approach which is evidently impossible for students in the Republic of Korea or in Japan until 2000s.

In spite of this, Soviet Bohai studies remain practically unknown in the Western academic world, largely because most Soviet scholars do not publish in English. The goal of this article is to trace the history of Bohai studies in Soviet Union at 1980s. show the specifics of the Russian approach to the issue.

**Keywords:** Bohai (Parhae), Far East, history, archaeology, East Asia.

The state of Bohai (in Russian: Бохай, in Korean: Parhae 발해, in Chinese: Bohai 渤海) existed in what is now the Russian Maritime Region (Primorskij kraj/ Приморский край), North Korea and Northeastern China from the late seventh to the early tenth century AD. According to Japanese annals “Ruiju-kokushi” (類聚国史), the Bohai state was founded in 698 AD. Korean specialists see Bohai exclusively as an heir to Koguryo culture, while Chinese archaeologists present it as a part of the Sinic world, a “provincial” power of the Tang Empire.

In 1970s. Soviet scholars actively studied Bohai – related fields, accumulated materials and in 1980s. they developed researches in different directions, started to excavate many sites and presented new theories and discoveries on Bohai. Therefore we can called time of 1980s. as period for most intensive research of Bohai subjects in Soviet Union.

Such effective research of Bohai in 1980s. in USSR had some reasons. At first, in 1980s. political pressure in USSR had decreased. The Soviet ideological system had crisis, population of Soviet Union did not believe to communism, it gave influence

to understanding of social system. Therefore Soviet scholars can reconsidered positions about social history, for example, on social system in Bohai.

At second, at 1970s. the Soviet specialists collected rich archaeological materials from Bohai sites, but for analysis of big number of artifacts they need time. At 1980s. Soviet archaeologists published results of excavation in 1970s, moreover, they can prepared the part of materials from 1980s. for publication.

At third, at 1950-1960s. the Soviet educational system cannot prepare specialists, only in 1953 A. P. Okladnikov started to research of archaeological sites in Far East. In the end of 1960s. the Soviet Universities started to prepared students for East Asian studies, but in very small number (for example, Far Eastern State University had limit for five students in Chinese studies, five students for Japanese studies in one year. For Korean studies University cannot established methodical educational base until 1980s.). Therefore USSR did not have research reserve. However, from 1970s. the Soviet educational system began prepared specialists in Oriental fields in a big number. At that time Institute of history, archaeology and ethnography

of USSR Academy conducted to prepare of young archaeologists. Certainly, in 1980s. the potential of research in Bohai studies had increased.

The young specialists can researched Bohai-related fields, which did not considered by old scholars. For example, they paid attention to osteological materials from Bohai sites, used new methods for looking for new archaeological sites and excavation etc. Moreover, young archaeologists established contacts with specialists from other fields, like geography, zoology, ethnography, and other. It was helpful for study osteological materials, geographical conditions of development of Bohai people in this region, specifics of Bohai ceramic in Primorye, and other.

The first works on osteological studies were published by Érnestina Vital'evna Alekseeva (Эрнестина Витальевна Алексеева), Vladislav Innokent'evich Boldin (Владислав Иннокентьевич Болдин) and Lyudmila Efimovna Semenichenko (Людмила Ефимовна Семениченко) in the 1980s. In these works Soviet scholars considered fragments of bones of animals which had been found in Konstantinovskoe, Nikolaevskoe-II and Novogordevskoe sites (É. Alekseeva and É. Shavkunov, 1983).

Boldin and Semenichenko studied archaeology, but the major area of study by Alekseeva was paleozoology.

The Novogordevskoe ancient settlement was discovered by Fëdor Fëdorovich Busse (Федор Федорович Буссе), chairman of Society for the study of the Amur region (Общество изучения Амурского края) in 1887. É. V. Shavkonov was the first archaeologist who excavated that site. He worked in Novogordevskoe in 1965 - 1966 and discovered that this site had several ancient and medieval cultural layers. During 1970 - 1973, L. E. Semenichenko excavated medieval layers of the Novogordevskoe site and collected many bones of animals (V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 86-87). In the period 1986 - 1987, V. I. Boldin continued his study of the Novogordevskoe site and excavated other osteological materials (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 80-81).

The ancient town of Novogordevskoe is situated close to a village which bears the same name. This is a multilayer site which includes two Bohai layers. The rural settlement of Novogordevskoe is situated near the Arsen'evka River. It has two layers. During excavations of these sites in the period 1972 - 1973 Soviet archaeologists collected a number of artifacts and

remains, including 5,500 animal bones or bone fragments (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 80).

In Bohai sites, Soviet specialists excavated bones of fox, bear, badger, forest pig, otter, sable, marten, weasel, elk, spotty deer, Manchurian hare, White hare, beaver, squirrel, raccoon dog et cetera and bones of household animals – dog, horse, pig, bull and fowl (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 82).

In Bohai settlements the Soviet scholars collected 318 fragments of bird bones (bausond goose, sea eagle white-tailed, pheasant, black grouse, duck et cetera) fish (including river fish, sazan fish, Amur catfish etc.) and shells of river mollusks. Moreover, Alekseeva found bones of the Far Eastern turtle (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 82-83).

However many bones had been broken by humans or partially destroyed by small animals. Alekseeva analyzed the collected materials and concluded that some bones could not be identified. For example, Soviet specialists found bones which belonged to dogs, bulls or bears, but could not identify what kind of animals these were. In Bohai, layers of the bones of wild animals consisted of 23, 2 - 26 % household animals and 74 - 76, 8 % from all collected osteological materials.

Soviet archaeologists found interesting materials among the bones of wild animals. For example, Alekseeva identified the horn of northern deer and bones of gopher (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 81, 83). As is known, northern deer live in Siberia and don't live in the south or central part of the Russian Far East and the closest region to Primorye where gophers live is Mongolia. Certainly, the Jurchen could have come to hunt in the Southern part of Siberia and returned with horns of northern deer, but they could not hunt gophers in Mongolia, because the gopher is too small objective for hunting expeditions and the Jurchen did not have any reason to come back to modern Primorye with bones of such small animals.

So we can conclude that in the medieval period of history of the Primorye region small animals like gophers could have migrated into Primorye from the Mongolian steppe. Usually gophers live on the steppe and recently these animals have not existed in the Russian Far East, but collected materials show that gophers can live in forest areas.

Another discovery in Novogordevskoe site was the bones of a tiger. This tiger had short paws (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 81), which is not usual for Amur tigers.

Soviet archaeologists excavated interesting bones (almost twenty), but could not identify them – we can clearly conclude that these animals were related to the dog and wolf, but had many differences from them. Alekseeva thought that these animals were a kind of household dog (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 83, 84). However, we must note that hunting played a big role in the life of Bohai people and they could not have decorative animals. So this animal could be either wild or a household hunting animal.

Soviet archaeologists paid much attention to a number of osteological materials in the Novogordevskoe ancient town and settlement. Alekseeva thought that the Bohai settlement and the town of Novogordevskoe sites could not have existed at same time, because the settlement was less than twice the size of the town, in the town the researchers founded 9 % of the number of all bones in Bohai sites, but in the settlement, 91 % (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 84). In the settlement Soviet scholars excavated osteological remains of 40 kinds of animals, but in town, only 11 kinds.

Therefore Alekseeva believed that the Bohai settlement existed in the period when there were forests and lakes in this district in which the Bohai population could fish or hunt many animals. But the Bohai town existed in a later period, when few animals could live around the site (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1989, p. 85). However, Boldin and Shavkunov did not agree with the opinion of Alekseeva. Boldin thought that the Bohai town was an industrial center; therefore Soviet archaeologists could not excavate many bones of animals. Shavkunov believed that the Bohai settlement was a Sogdian colony (people from Middle Asia). According to the opinion of this Soviet scholar, in the Novogordevskoe settlement the Sogdian people prepared fur of animals for trade in Middle Asia.

In spite of this discussion between Soviet specialists, we can conclude that the Novogordevskoe sites gave interesting information about the agriculture of Bohai people.

The bones of new kinds of animals (gopher, the animal-like dog, and unknown kind of tiger) from the Primorye region gave important information about fauna in the medieval period.

The Konstantinovskoe rural settlement is located in the southwestern part of the Primorye region near Razdol'noe River. The closest village – Konstantinovka (Oktiabr'skij district) – is situated two kilometers from the site.

The Konstantinovskoe site has several layers,

from the Neolithic period to the period of the Korean village, which existed in the 1930s. Russian archaeologists excavated part of this site (Bohai and Jurchen layers) in 1992-1993 and found close to 3,000 bones (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin, 1994, p. 38).

Russian specialists identified 85, 5 % of all osteological materials as bones of mammals; the other 14, 5 % belonged to birds, fish etc. Information about bones of household and wild animals differs greatly from other sites in the same period: 55, 3 % were bones of household animals and 44, 7 % were bones of wild animals. Russian scholars considered bones of many kinds by wild animals like weasels (*Mustela sibirica* Pall) and some kinds of marten (*Mustela vison* Briss, *Martes flavigula* Bodd), badger (*Meles meles*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), red wolf (*Cuon alpinus*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), black and brown bear (*Ursus thibetanus* G. Cuv. and *Ursus arctos*), snake (*Serpentinidae*), goat (*Caprinae*), some kinds of deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, *Cervus nippon* Temm, *Cervus elaphus*), wild pig (*Sus serofa*), roe (*Capreolus caprealus*), leopard (*Felis pardus*), some kinds of birds (Aves. Household kind, *Gallus householdus*, wild kinds – *Lirurus tetrax*, *Falci pennis* Hartl, *Phasianus colchicus*, *Anser fadalis*, *Circus melanoleucus* Penn, *Accipiter nisus*, *Otis tarda*, *Corvus macrorhynchos* Wagl), turtle (*Tryonix*), shells of three kinds of freshwater mollusks, sea mollusks etc.

The most interesting artifacts were the bones of *Pinnipedia*, which belonged to a rare animal in the Primorye region. We must note that the Konstantinovskoe site is located 200 kilometers from the sea coast and it was only at this site that Russian scholars found bones of *Pinnipedia*, but could not identify what kind of animal this was (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin, 1994, p. 40-42).

Certainly, Russian scholars analyzed household animals in the Konstantinovskoe rural settlement, for example, the bones of kinds of dog (*Canidae*), horse (*Equus caballus*), pig (*Suidae*) and bull (*Bovidae*). Moreover, for the first time at Primorye sites the archaeologists found bones of parasitic animals, like mice (*Microtus*) and rats (*Rattus*).

Alekseeva compared bones of household (pig, dog) and wild (fox, deer) animals and concluded that medieval animals differed greatly from modern animals in bone structure (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin, 1994, p. 45).

Results of excavation show the changes in agriculture in this region. For example, Russian specialists, on the base of their analysis of osteological

materials, stated that in the Konstantinovskoe rural settlement, in the earliest layer, dog meat played a big role, but in the late layer the situation was changed – medieval inhabitants became eaters of pig. So pig-breeding developed and Bohai people began to use dogs mainly as hunting and sentry animals. Certainly inhabitants of this site ate dogs, but not in large numbers like one or two centuries before.

We can see the same situation in horse-breeding. In the earliest period, Russian scholars found horse bones, which consisted of 14, 3 % of all osteological materials from this layer, but in the late layer the remains of horse comprised only 3,1 %. All bones belonged to adult animals. This information confirmed Chinese and Korean annals about the gastronomy of Bohai people – usually they did not use horse as food. All horses were of a small size. Therefore Alekseeva thought that these horses arrived from the Korean peninsula, because Koguryo had horses of a small size (R. S. Dzhar'lgasinova 1972, p. 112) and similar kinds existed in late period of Korean history (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin, 1994, p. 46).

However, Khitan tribes had horses of a small size (A. L. Ivliev 1985) in same period, therefore we believe that this information requires further evidence.

Nikolaevskoe II is a site with two layers; both belong to the Bohai period – the earlier layer belongs to the eighth and ninth centuries and the later layer the ninth and tenth century. Alekseeva collected 5,213 bones and fragments of bone, and identified 4,331 items (É. Alekseeva and V. I. Boldin 1986, p. 77). But she did not consider bones of fish.

Soviet specialists analyzed bones of wild animals, because information from these osteological materials could give a picture of the role of hunting in the life of Bohai people. Alekseeva noted that the kinds of wild animals from the layers are different. For example, in the earlier layer Soviet archaeologists found the remains of the *Cuon alpinus*, *Mogera robusta*, but in the later layer the bones of these animals were not excavated, instead, the Soviet scholars found other osteological materials (some kinds of marten, tiger etc).

In the later layer the Russian specialists found bones of wild animals more than in the earlier layer. Soviet archaeologists believe that the later Bohai population perfected hunting weapons, for example, they used iron arrowheads (É. Alekseeva, V. I. Boldin 1986, p. 78), but the inhabitants of the earlier settlement used bone arrowheads in hunting.

We must note that Soviet and Russian archaeologists found rich osteological materials in

Bohai sites located near the Ilistaia River. However, these sites are situated seven to ten kilometers from each other and hunters killed all animals near settlements very quickly. So the Bohai people could have obtained fur and meat of animals in hunting expeditions. Certainly, hunters did not come back to town with all the bones of killed animals because they ate wild animals on hunting expeditions.

Soviet scholars found bones of nearly 30 kinds of wild animals in Nikolaevskoe II (É. Alekseeva and V. I. Boldin 1986, p. 79). The new animals among the osteological materials were goral (*Naemorhedus goral*). In Mohe and earliest sites the Soviet specialists cannot find remains of this animal. So, we can conclude that goral arrived in Primorye region in medieval period. Bohai people usually hunted adult wild animals – 87, 7 % maybe they cared about preserving the stock of forest animals but they did not think on the same way about household animals – 46, 1 %.

Certainly, old scholars intensively excavated Bohai sites too. For example, E. V. Shavkunov often worked with young specialists in the archaeological expeditions and supported new ideas.

The Soviet scholars reconsidered positions on ethnic composition of Bohai state. For example, Érnst Vladimirovich Shavkunov who undertook most of the research on this problem, insists that the population of Bohai consisted not only of people from the neighboring tribes, but also included some ethnic groups from Central Asia (É. V. Shavkunov, 1990). He believes that evidences for this can be found at the archaeological materials from some Bohai sites in the Maritime Region (É. V. Shavkunov, 1985, p. 146-55; 1988, p. 100-105; 1995, p. 115-124).

According to É. V. Shavkunov, in the territory of Bohai there were large trade settlements of Sogdians, Toharistanians and other nations of Central Asia and this influenced the cultures of Bohai and Jurchens (É. V. Shavkunov, 1985, p. 146-155; 1988, p. 100-105; 1990; 1995; 2001, p. 11-16). Trade relations of Bohai with Middle Asia were conducted along a trade route which was described by Shavkunov as the “Sable Road” (É. V. Shavkunov, 1988, 1995). É. V. Shavkunov insists that across the Sable Road, traders could move sable fur, which was in high demand in China and Japan. Also, he thinks that the Sable Road was connected to the Silk Road so Sogdians and other people from Central Asia could move to the Maritime Region (É. V. Shavkunov, 1988, 1995). Sogdian trade, in the opinion of É. V. Shavkunov, had given many benefits to Bohai, therefore the Bohai government allowed Sogdians to

live in the Maritime Region. According to Shavkunov, after the rebellion of An Lushan in 763, the number of Sogdians, living in Bohai, increased. The reason for this opinion was in fact because An Lushan himself was a Sogdian by origin and his army included people of many ethnic groups (É. V. Shavkunov, 1988), so É. V. Shavkunov thinks that after the collapse of the An Lushan rebellion these people had no choice but to flee to Bohai. Therefore this Russian scholar believes that Sogdians played a big role in Bohai internal policy.

In the opinion of É. V. Shavkunov, among the Bohai population there were also ancient Ainu and Nivhs tribes, as well as the Turks. In the western areas of Bohai lived Khitan and Shibers tribes (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī). As a basis for such statements, he mentions that Bohai had borders with these nations and sometimes occupied territory of those states.

Among other tribes, who lived in Bohai, Shavkunov mentions Uyghur tribes. To prove this, he cites records that the second sovereign of Bohai Da Wuyi had titles of governor-general of the Nine Uyghur tribes and also the governor-general of Yan Jan, an area in what is now the northeastern part of Mongolia. Therefore É. V. Shavkunov insists that Uyghur tribes were a part of the Bohai population and surmises that many Uyghurs fled to Bohai after Uyghur Khaganat was destroyed by the Enisei Kirgizs (É. V. Shavkunov, 1988; 1995, p. 122). Considering the uneasy relations between China and Uyghur Khaganat, one can surmise that Bohai could also accommodate some Uyghurs, who fled from Enisei Kirgizs. But after the Uyghurs arrived, Bohai seldom sent ambassadors to the Tang Empire. For Professor Shavkunov, this is evidence of the big problems the Bohai government faced with Uyghurs, who failed to adapt quickly to Bohai society and caused social unrest.

Thus, in the opinion of É. V. Shavkunov, in addition to traditional participants – Koguryō remainders and Mohe – in Bohai there lived other ethnic groups as well.

Apart from E. V. Shavkunov, other Russian scholars don't discuss this theme. So, for example, in the collection of academic works "Russian Far East" one cannot find articles dealing with this problem. The reason for this is the obvious deficiency of information about ethnic groups in Bohai, with the sole exception of the post-Koguryō population and Mohe. At Bohai sites Russian archaeologists found some artifacts of foreign origin, including a few Turk-style arrowheads, Sogdians (Abbasidic) dragma and other isolated items, but there is no reliable evidence of a permanent

presence of these groups in Maritime Region, so these isolated artifacts could be received as presents, left during occasional visits, or as a items of trade with Central Asians in China. Besides, Bohai people could also receive these artifacts through the Tang Empire, which, as is well known, was very interested in Central Asia and conducted active policy in this area.

The Russian scholars reconsidered positions on social system of Bohai state too. N. N. Kradin wrote at some length about characteristics of Bohai society (N. N. Kradin, 1990; \*Gosudarstvo Bohai). He comes to the conclusion that Bohai was an "early class state", in which the leading form of exploitation was rent and tribute payments from commoners (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī). He says that the early state was formed in Bohai at the time of the first king Da Jinmao (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī, p. 48), although in 698 Da Zuorong had already proclaimed a new state. At this time, N. N. Kradin notes the dynamic social development of Bohai: originally Bohai society included only two main groups – leaders (seniors, including the king) and commoners, but from the eight century Bohai society acquired more hierarchic characteristics; it can be seen as consisting of the three major groups: king and his family, the bureaucracy and direct producers (including commoners and different categories of dependent population) (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī). Later, N. N. Kradin reconfirmed his earliest conclusions, and again characterized Bohai as an "early state", which developed in line with the model of "Eastern despotism" (N. N. Kradin, 1990, 2005).

Russian scholars note that social and economic development was not uniform. For example, southern Mohe tribes had borders with Koguryō and participated in the political collisions between this ancient Korean state and China. But it does not mean that Mohe were politically dependent and remained under control of their neighbors – Korean states and China. In the late fifth century Mohe conquered several districts of Koguryō (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī, p. 27, 28). At this time China began to look towards establishing friendly relations with Mohe. After Koguryō defeated a part of the Sumo tribes, Tudiji, a chief of several Mohe tribes, came to the Chinese side (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī, p. 28). The Tang emperor bestowed on him honorary titles and lands. Afterwards, Tudiji distinguished himself at a war between Tang and Koguryō and received more awards. Eventually, he was conferred the royal surname of Li and his son received an investiture as a perpetual governor general. But some of the Mohe tribes joined the Koguryō side (\*Gosudarstvo Bohaī, p. 28). Thus

Mohe people could observe state systems of Koguryō and China and could borrow more effective forms and institutions, which they considered good for positive development.

Returning to the opinions of Chinese scholars, one must note that Bohai students could sit the Tang exam for foreigners. The war between Tang and Bohai (732-733), Bohai's independent contacts with Japan, Turks, the investiture received from Silla in 700, also can be cited as facts which clearly demonstrate the political independence of the Bohai state.

Many Russian scholars pay attention to remnants of the Bohai population and study the relationship between Bohai people and other ethnic groups. After the collapse of the Bohai state many Bohai people went into the service of the Khitans and their state. Bohai people worked in the bureaucracy and army of Liao, including its capitals, and took an active part in the politics of the Khitan state.

The Liao government compulsorily moved the Bohai population to the inner area of the empire. But it was not able to stop rebellions by the former Bohai population. In 1029, as a reaction to an increase in taxation, the Bohai population of the Eastern Capital rebelled and it took some time to put down the rebels. In 1114, during a war between the Jurchens and Liao Empire, the post-Bohai population rebelled again. Its leader Gu Yu summoned some 30,000 soldiers, declared a new state and won two battles with the Khitan army. But afterwards Liao destroyed his state.

After the demise of this rebellion, those Bohai people, who lived in the central part of Liao, began a new rebellion in the Eastern Capital. The leader of the Bohai population Gao Yung-chang occupied the Eastern Capital of Liao and declared the state of Great Bohai which lasted for about a year. It was the last effort of the Bohai population to re-establish their state. In the next year, 1116, the Jurchen army destroyed the Great Bohai state.

But the history of the Bohai people was not finished. Bohai people played a big role in the Jurchen Empire Jin, holding high places in its bureaucracy. M. V. Vorob'ev wrote that Bohai people had a privileged place in the Jurchen state (M. V. Vorob'ev, 1975). Besides, some Bohai persons served in the Song Empire, while others took part in a war against China on the Jurchen side (S. T. Kozhanov 1980, p. 40-41), Sergeĭ Nikolaevich Goncharov (Сергей Николаевич Гончаров) finds information about the Bohai population, who had a big influence on Jurchen policy (S. N. Goncharov, 1986).

So, as we can see, Soviet and Russian scholars in 1980s. intensively studying Bohai history in several aspects. In Soviet period many specialists conducted research in social system of Bohai, but after collapse of Soviet Union, start to research other fields of Bohai, on example, ethnic fate of the remnant Bohai population, ethnic composition of the Bohai state etc. Russian scholars combine the use of written sources with excavation of archaeological sites and received interesting results, but did not pay much attention to Korean and Japanese materials. In spite of some Russian specialists consider opinions by Korean scholars on Bohai state, they did not deeply study of Korean materials and arguments.

However, economic crisis collapse of USSR (1991) and establishment of new state – Russian Federation – stopped research activity of Soviet scholars in all research fields. In 1990s. the Russian specialists cannot established a big number of archaeological expeditions for study of Bohai sites. In inertial movement, Russian scholars intensively excavated some medieval sites. Moreover, in these excavations took part North Korean scholars. But this research activity cannot existed a long time, because the many Russian specialists did not received supported by Russian government. Certainly, the some historians and archaeologists researched Bohai-related fields, but excavation in big scales can be existed with financial support from foreign organizations – Republic of Korea and Japan. So, from 1990s. was started new period for Bohai studies in the new state – Russian Federation<sup>2</sup>.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>In the Soviet Union scholars followed the Chinese usage in referring to the Bohai (Parhae) state. Therefore I will use Chinese names for Bohai rulers. Only beginning in the 2000s some Russian specialists in Korean studies began to use the name “Parhae.”

<sup>2</sup> We will consider these subjects in more detail in another article, “The Bohai studies in the Soviet Union in the 1990s.”

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