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The research of Henry Lansdell «Russian Central Asia» of 1885 as one of the primary source materials

The article analyses the scientific researches, which are related to the study of the role of Central Asia in the formation of the Tsarist Empire. The XIX century entered world history as a period and stage when the views of European political figures, scientific researchers, entrepreneurs and the military were riveted to previously unknown and inaccessible corners of Asia. Furthermore, the general worldviews of foreign and Russian scientists of the XIX century were also analyzed. Particular attention was paid to the study of natural conditions, history, ethnography, religion and culture of the peoples of Central Asia. The authors singled out and analyzed the scientific work of 1885 by the well-known researcher Henry Lansdell «Russian Central Asia» as one of the primary sources in a broad historical and socio-cultural context.

Keywords: historical sources, travelers, researchers, Henry Lansdell, Central Asia, the «Great Game», scientific researches, Russian Empire, British Empire, confrontation in the XIX century, «Russian Central Asia».

Introduction

The «Russian and English Issue in Central Asia» is a very relevant issue and, at the same time, a study that has already established itself as an indispensable guide to the historical, political and socio-economic relations with Central Asia since the time of the Russian and British Empires. In turn, this important issue has already been repeatedly investigated and analyzed by enough notable scientific researchers, travelers, merchants, and most importantly, the military, especially during the well-known cold confrontation between the spheres of influence of Moscow and London in the XIX century, under the name the «Great Game».

Any person who has traveled at least a dozen kilometers through unfamiliar terrain can consider himself as a traveler. He experiences almost the same sensations that fell to the lot of the first discoverers. And it does not matter what the tourist holds in his hands a topographic map, or a confused small-scale drawing with question marks.

The XIX century entered world history as a period and stage when the views of European political figures, scientific researchers, and entrepreneurs were riveted to previously unknown and inaccessible corners of Asia. For relevant reasons, of course, particular attention was paid to the study of natural conditions, history, ethnography, religion and culture of the peoples of Central Asia.

And among them, we can distinguish foreign and Russian researchers of that century, such as, Alexander Humboldt, Pierre-Simon Laplace, Georges Cuvier, Joseph Louis Gay-Lussac, Claude Louis Berthollet, Joseph Fourier, Jean-Francois Champollon, Arminius Vambery, Vasily Barthold, Henry Lansdell, Henry Rawlinson, Mikhail Terentyev, Ivan Mushketov, Grigory Potanin, Vasily Petrovsky and others. Not all of them were professionally engaged in geography, but the study of new territories and the development of those territories, they all considered as one of the priority tasks for their government.

Methodology and research methods

The article uses materials of theoretical and practical studies from scientific researches and stories of Henry Lansdell, as well as Russian and foreign scientists who conducted researches in a wide range of sciences about the history and culture of the peoples of Central Asia and about the geography of these lands.

In our scientific article, we analyzed historical and geopolitical knowledge, and then also used the principle of historicism. The principle of historicism is the main methodological principle of the study of history. Also according using the dialectical method, it was possible to study the principles and patterns of formation, change and development of knowledge of scientists and researchers of that century. The studied period is associated with colonial tendencies in the development of social self-consciousness. In this regard, an empirical research method was used, which can be traced on the example of a study by Henry Lansdell.

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Discussions

Imperial contradictions in the XIX century laid the foundation for many contemporary international problems in the expanses of the central part of Eurasia. First of all, the rivalry between Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia had a decisive influence on the formation of borders in the region. The expansion of the great European powers, which was rapidly growing since the middle of the XIX century, led not only to capture, but also to redistribution of colonial possessions. As a result, several knots of international contradictions ensued — in the Balkans, in the Middle and Far East, in Central Asia, in which Russia and Great Britain played the leading role, due to their power.

«The Russian threat to India seemed real enough at the time, whatever historians may say with hindsight today. The evidence, after all, was there for anyone who chose to look at the map. For four centuries the Russian Empire had been steadily expanding at the rate of some 55 square miles a day, or around 20, 000 square miles a year. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, more than 2,000 miles separated the British and Russian Empires in Asia» — wrote British journalist and historian Peter Hopkirk in his famous book «The Great Game: on secret service in High Asia» [1; 27]. And from these words we can find out a lot, for example, how was so realistic that Russian threat to the British, at least they thought so.

In the first half of the XIX century, geographical societies were created in a number of European countries. By this time, Russia had organized expeditions to explore Siberia, the Trans-Caspian Territory, and remote the eastern and the northern suburbs.

A very important moment was precisely the beginning of such a thirst for the seizure of the still completely damp and unexplored lands of the East, the point of a repulse can be designated by a creation of the Geographical Society of London in 1830 [2] for the development of geographical science under the auspices of King William IV (now the Royal Geographical Society). From the middle of the XIX century until the First World War, expeditions sponsored by the Royal Geographical Society often hit the covers of newspapers, and the opinions of its president and board members were highly quoted. Also, in August 1845, the supreme command of Emperor Nicholas I approved a submission of the Minister of the Internal Affairs of Russia, Count Lev Alekseevich Perovsky, on the establishment of the Russian Geographical Community in St. Petersburg, later referred to the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (now the Russian Geographical Society) [3].

Therefore, researchers and scientists also needed a permanent body, which, regardless of the requests of the maritime ministries and the vagaries of private dignitaries, would determine the strategy for searching for unknown lands and reservoirs. That is why, there were created Geographical Societies all over the world, however only in superior countries, of course.

The merits of Colonel Francis Chesney in the study of the Euphrates River were particularly noted, on which he unsuccessfully tried to create a special shipping company for communication between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf [4]. Henry Rawlinson, an expert in ancient cuneiform writing and modern ciphers was awarded for archaeological and other merits. Another military agent, Lieutenant John Wood, earned the recognition of British geographers for inspecting the upper Amu-Darya in the Pamirs. The medal was received by Lieutenant Symonds, who measured the difference between the levels of the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea.

M.A. Terentyev in his book «Russia and England in Central Asia» (1875) devoted considerable attention to the review and analysis of works by foreign authors, primarily the British orientalist Henry Rawlinson and the Hungarian scholar Arminius Vamberi. Henry Rawlinson (1810–1895) [5] wrote the book «England and Russia in the East,» published in 1875, and includes five Rawlinson's essays on issues related to Persia, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, three of which essays are articles reprinted from «Calcutta Review» and «Quarterly Review», and the other two were written specifically for the book [6]. Further, the famous book of the outstanding Hungarian scholar-orientalist, philologist and ethnographer Arminius (Herman) Vamberi (1832–1913) about his journey to Central Asia was published in almost all European languages [7]. The book by Arminius Vamberi, the first European traveler who traveled almost the whole of Central Asia, gives a vivid description of the natural conditions, the characteristics of the economic and social life of the peoples of Turkmenistan, the Khiva Khanate and the Bukhara Emirate. The most interesting are the sketches of nomads' households, and their original customs and morals.

And, as it has already mentioned, a lot of other works and studies were devoted to the research of an extraordinary land — as Central Asia, and as one of the first historical sources, I would like to pay special attention to the work of Henry Lansdell «Russian Central Asia» of 1885 [8].

But before the research «Russian Central Asia», Henry wrote the work «Through Siberia» (1883) [9].

The English missionary Henry Lansdell (1841–1919) was known in religious and scientific circles. Henry Lansdell was a nineteenth-century British priest in the Church of England. He was also a famous researcher and author. He was born in Tenterden and was the son of a school teacher and studied at home before studying at St. John's College in Highbury, in the north of London. Then he studied at the London College of Divinity and Theology until his ordination as deacon in 1868 and his assignment as a curate in Greenwich. Subsequently, he became secretary of missions of the Irish church (1869–79), as well as the founder and honorary secretary of the Homiletic Society (1874–86). Henry founded the Clergyman's Magazine in 1875, which he edited until 1883 [10].

Henry Lansdell is an English priest who developed the habit of traveling around Europe, handing out Bibles and religious tracts in prisons, hospitals, monasteries, and almost everywhere he could find recipients.

It was certain that he loved to travel, and it was a «kosher», if we can call it that way, way of combining his pleasures with his duties. Having been in the European part of Russia and realizing the possibility of spreading the Bible, he decided to expand his horizons and penetrate — «biblical», of course — into the depths of Siberia.

At the long last, but not in the first volume of his book «Through Siberia», he reached Vladivostok, moved to Japan and returned home, while traveling around the world. There are the most detailed records of his expedition to Siberia in 1879, in which he visited almost all the prisons he could able to find. He was accompanied by a pair of carts with religious literature, which he handed out freely and free of charge, as well as a «translator,» whom we will never know, unfortunately. Surprisingly, tsarist officials provided him with access to all cities and villages, to every institution that he asked to visit of course up to a certain time. Perhaps they felt that, given the extremely low literacy rate among Russian citizens, not to mention prisoners, he could not do much damage. The Russian bureaucracy wrote numerous letters of recommendation to him and gave him privileged access to the postal horses and stage taverns.

Lansdell himself did not know the Russian language, but, as it turned out, he was a keen observer and attentive spectator. The book is full of landscapes, weather reports, industry and agriculture, population and prison statistics, animal and plant life, as well as customs, clothes and houses, both Russian and indigenous people of the places through which he walked and passed. And the burning of Irkutsk in an accidental fire, for which he singled out a whole chapter in his book «Through Siberia», entitled it as «A city that is on fire» [9; 253].

Henry Lansdell can be considered as a model of nineteenth-century England — he is interested in everything scientific, with a research, inquisitive mind, devoted to God, decisive in good deeds, patriotic and very self-confident.

He was an intelligent and honest man, although he seems to have profited by his numerous trips. This can be seen from the fact that the price of meat, fish, flour or potatoes in Irkutsk or Krasnoyarsk around 1879 arouses his contemporary interest — this is another question, especially since few of us know how much these things cost in England at about the same time.

Lansdell describes his visit to the gold mine, he writes about the organization of the Russian Orthodox Church and, perhaps, much more about Siberian prisons than we need. However, one of the best features is a large number of prints made from the author's photos, as well as several real photos and a good map.

In general, this Victorian travel book is full of fixed assumptions about the nature of man and what constitutes of a «right» life, avoiding anything lascivious, but unlike many such works, not critical for many. He generously praises everything he found, often opposing England to Russia. «Through Siberia» not only takes us to a remote place, but also into another century of our own civilization.

Henry began his long and often arduous journeys to little-known parts of Asia. He distributed multilingual religious treatises and bibles provided by London missionary societies, wherever he went, most notably in prisons and hospitals in Siberia and Central Asia [9]. Such activities sometimes aroused suspicion among the Russian authorities, and in one case he was arrested during a trip along the Perm Railway after it was believed that he was distributing revolutionary brochures [11].

He traveled from Lake Balkhash through Kashgar to Little Tibet (now known as Baltistan, a region in Northern Pakistan) on horses and yaks at altitudes up to 5500 m, crossing all the mountain systems of Central Asia [12]. Lansdell was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Royal Geographical Society (elected in 1876) and a lifetime member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and he worked in this committee [10].

Henry made two long and difficult journeys through the territory, which at that time was called Asian Russia in 1879 and 1882: one to Siberia, and the other to Russian Central Asia. His goal was to disseminate religious tracts and copies of the Bible in the places he visited, as well as to collect information of interest to both British specialists and the general reader.

Lunsdell's richly illustrated journey, one of many that appeared in Harper magazine from 1887 to 1891 [10], is a worthy expression of his intellectual curiosity and introduces us to Russia through stories and personalities that reflect the life of that time.

The book «Russian Central Asia» talks about the second journey of Lansdell, which lasted 179 days, from June to December 1882. Lansdell, in his own words, traveled a total of about 19,000 kilometers traveling by rail and water transport, riding a horse and a camel, and also on wheeled carts. He visited Semipalatsk (in the territory of modern Kazakhstan); Gulju (China); Tashkent, Kokand, Samarkand, Karshi, Bukhara and Khiva (in the territory of modern Uzbekistan); Merv (in the territory of modern Turkmenistan) and other places.

Lansdell supplemented his own observations with thorough research and expert opinions. As previously noted, the Bible was another area of interest for Lansdell: his book contains numerous references to how, in the author's opinion, the customs and traditions observed in Central Asia are reflected in the Bible and, in particular, in the Old Testament. Critics praised this two-volume book for detailed descriptions and exploration of places that were not well known in the English world at that time, but sharply condemned the author, who in a pink light presented the situation in Russian prisons in Central Asia and justified Russia's expansionary foreign policy and, in particular, the recent annexation of Merv.

The book contains a folding map and illustrations (Figure 1). At the end of the second volume, there are three long appendices presented: lists of the fauna and flora of Russian Central Asia, as well as a bibliographic index, which includes 702 authoritative works on this region, in English, French, German and Russian.

The map by Lansdell was presented to King Edward VII in 1885, but he was still to the then Prince of Wales [13].

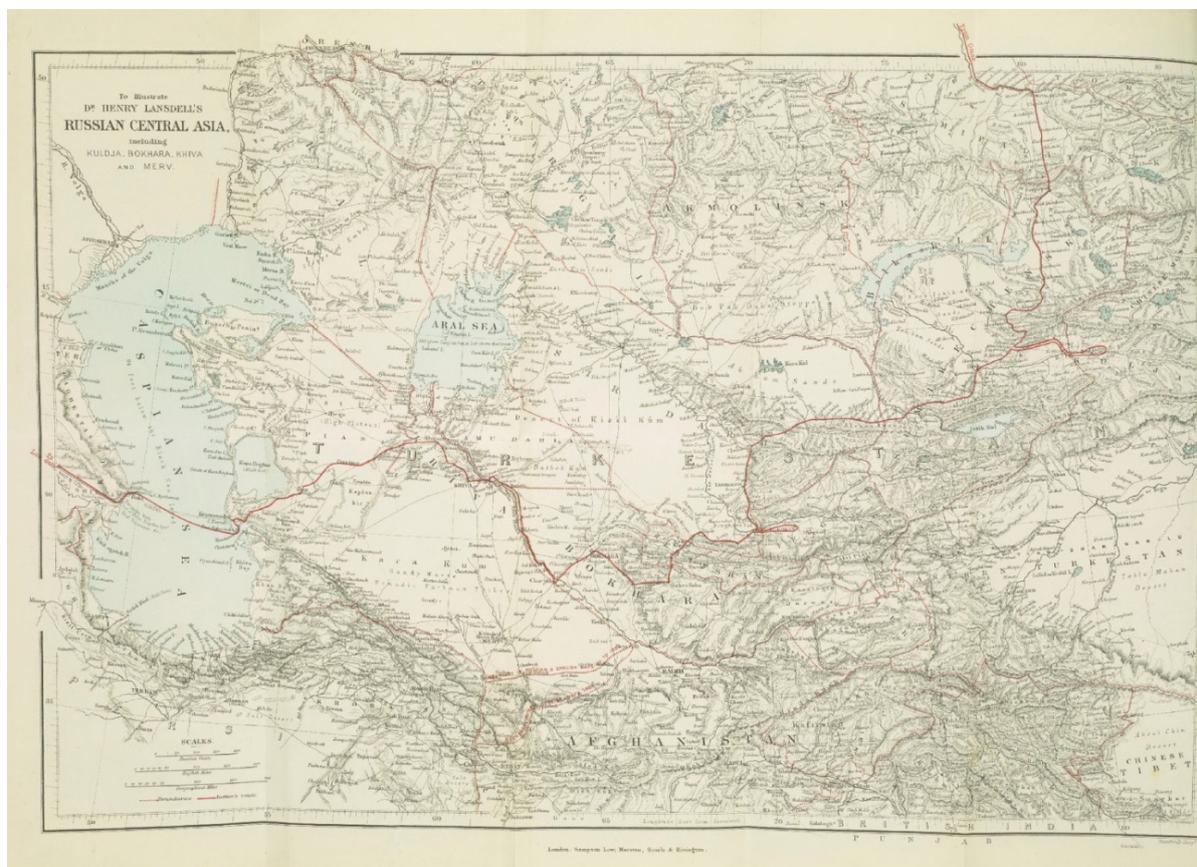


Figure 1. Henry Lansdell's map of Russian Central Asia, including Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva and Merv

Henry describes the beautiful places, culture and life of the Russian and indigenous people, shows his feelings about small details, for example, how he tried «prostokvashino». But the most important thing is how he was surprised at the scale of the territory of the Tsarist Empire, in almost every chapter he writes how many kilometers he traveled. Especially when he describes the Asian part of Russia, Lansdell counts every kilometer separately. He wrote: «By «Russian Central Asia» is meant the Tsar's dominions lying between the Oxys and the Irtish, and between Omsk and Samarkand». He further explained: «This territory measures from west to east 1, 250 miles, or a distance from London to Petersburg, and from north to south 1,100 miles, or the distance from Petersburg to Crimea» [14; 42]. He explained all these distances that this territory has are all taken together as England, France, Prussia and Spain, for example. We would like to draw attention to precisely those chapters in which Lansdell describes the territories of modern Kazakhstan. The general government of vice-royalty of the Steppe is divided into governments or provinces of Akmolinsk, Semipolatinsk, Semirechia, and Turkestan of which the surface consists mainly of mountains, deserts, and steppes. For the most part the territory is poorly wooded. He also noted that in his first work «Through Siberia», he added that Western Siberia is divided into 4 provinces — namely, Tobolsk, Tomsk, Akmolinsk, and Semipolatinsk. But he admitted that maybe it was true at that time, but now the time and territorial frameworks have changed, Siberia has been distant far to the East and these two provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk were cut off in 1882, and together with Semirechia belonged to the governor general of the Steppe.

Despite the linguistic difficulties of the indigenous people, on weather and everyday conditions, nothing prevented Henry from traveling around almost all of Russian Central Asia. This thirst for adventures and wanderings of new and unprecedented lands, as well as the approval of his King, was so strong that to lose a few years in the golden Steppe meant nothing.

Conclusion

The British did not yet realize that the thoughts of the Tsarist Empire extended much further than military successes in Asia. As Hopkirk wrote, the Russian Empire and the British Empire in Asia were separated by only some 2,000 miles. And it was necessary to warn the British about the Russian threat as soon as possible. Thanks to this, massive «hidden» expeditions of historians, scientists, geographers, researchers began to distant, unknown corners of the Earth, as Central Asia.

The foreign historiography of the Anglo-Russian rivalry and the general life of the Asian part of Russia were considered in the writings of Henry Lansdell, as well as other Russian and foreign historians, researchers in relation to the history of Kazakhstan. Generally, conquering and colonial aspects stood out.

The novelty of this article lies in the fact that the authors first attempted a comprehensive review of the foreign historiography of Central Asia during the Russian protectorate. The material can help in studying the history of the Central Asian Khanates, historiography of the second half of the XIX century, when Russia conquered Central Asia.

Assessing the contribution of Western historical science to the study of the issue of Anglo-Russian rivalry before the establishment of a protectorate of Russia over Central Asia, it is necessary to note the eccentricity of its approaches compared to Russian historiography, a deep theoretical analysis of the processes, the formulation of clear conceptual principles in assessing the nature of relations between the imperial space and the annexed territories.

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Ж.М. Жангабулова, Ж.Ж. Оразаева

Генри Ланселлдің «Орыс Орталық Азиясы» атты 1885 жылғы зерттеуі ең бастапқы дереккөздердің бірі ретінде

Мақалада Патшалық империяның құрылуындағы Орта Азияның рөлін қарастыруымен байланысты ғылыми зерттеулерге талдау жүргізілген. XIX ғасыр әлемдік тарихқа еуропалық саяси қайраткерлердің, ғылыми зерттеушілердің, кәсіпкерлер мен әскери қызметкерлердің көзқарастары Азияның бұрын-соңды белгісіз және қолжетімді емес бұрыштарына ауытқыған кезең ретінде кірді. Сонымен қатар, XIX ғасырдағы шетелдік және ресейлік ғалымдардың жалпы дүниетанымдық ұстанымдары талданды. Орталық Азия халықтарының табиғи жағдайларын, тарихын, этнографиясын, діні мен мәдениетін зерттеуге ерекше назар аударылған. Авторлар әйгілі зерттеуші Генри Ланселлдің 1885 жылғы «Орыс Орталық Азиясы» атты ғылыми еңбегін кең тарихи және әлеуметтік-мәдени тұрғыдан ең бастапқы дереккөздердің бірі ретінде қарастырып талдаған.

Кілт сөздер: тарихи дереккөздер, саяхатшылар, зерттеушілер, Генри Ланселл, Орталық Азия, «Үлкен ойын», ғылыми зерттеулер, Ресей империясы, Британ империясы, XIX ғасырдағы қақтығыс, Орыс Орталық Азиясы.

Ж.М. Жангабулова, Ж.Ж. Оразаева

Исследование Генри Ланселла «Русская Центральная Азия» 1885 года как один из первоисточников

В статье проведен анализ научных исследований, связанных с изучением роли Центральной Азии в формировании Царской империи. XIX век вошел в мировую историю как период, когда взгляды европейских политических деятелей, научных исследователей, предпринимателей и военных были прикованы к неведомым ранее и малодоступным уголкам Азии. Также проанализированы общие мировоззренческие позиции зарубежных и российских ученых XIX века. Особое внимание уделено изучению природных условий, истории, этнографии, религии и культуры народов Центральной Азии. Авторами выделена и проанализирована научная работа 1885 года известного исследователя Генри Ланселла «Русская Центральная Азия» как один из первоисточников в широком историческом и социокультурном контексте.

Ключевые слова: исторические источники, путешественники, исследователи, Генри Ланселл, Центральная Азия, «Большая игра», научные исследования, Российская империя, Британская империя, противостояние в XIX веке, Русская Центральная Азия.

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