



Osip Kowalewski' Mongolian and Chinese Diaries (1828– 1833)

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the scientific heritage of Osip Kowalewski (1800-1878) – the Polish and Russian scientist. He got an education of an ancient historian at Vilnius University. Kowalewski participated in the Polish liberation movement and was banished to Kazan. He learned east languages, in 1828 - 1832 Kowalewski was sent to an expedition to Transbaikal and Mongolia and also spent seven months in Beijing. Besides a set of scientific works, including early studies of the Mongolian Buddhism and the three-volume Mongolian and Russian-French dictionary, Kowalewski left a large number of diary entries. The materials relating to a trip from Kyakhta to Beijing and back were published only in 2005. It is used biographic and source study methods in the article. The analysis of contents of diaries of O. Kowalewski demonstrates that as to the scientist were inherent in its independence, systematic character, realness, concreteness and criticality of thinking. Kowalewski does not fall into idealization and a mythologization of an image of Mongolia and China.

Keywords: Oriental Studies; Mongol Studies; Buddhism; Osip Kowalewski; Kazan University.

1. Introduction

Osip Mikhaylovich Kowalewski (Jozef Szczepan Kowalewski) (1800–1878) is the outstanding Russian and Polish orientalist who became at the head of the school of Mongolian study in Russia, the beautiful expert on culture, religion and history of Mongolian people, the organizer of the higher education and science, the rector of the Imperial Kazan University, the dean of historical and philological faculty of the Warsaw University.

The corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, the full member of Imperial society of history and antiquities Russian at the Moscow university, the Honorary member of Asian society in Paris, Royal Danish society northern antiquarian in Copenhagen, the Vilnius archeographic committee and the Kazan University, the winner of the Demidov Prize for scientists, O.M. Kowalewski was a philologist and the historian, antiquarian, orientalist and buddhologist, one of the founders of a scientific Mongolian study and Buddhology in Russia.

A considerable part of the hand-written heritage and also the hand-written books and wood-engravers who are brought together by it in Buryatia, Mongolia and China are concentrated in St. Petersburg (Valeev, Kulganek, & Tulisow, 2009; Valeev, Valeeva, & Polyanskaya, 2017). Vasily Pavlovich Vasilyev (Walravens, 2009) was the largest of Kowalewski's pupils.

1.1. Research Objective

Article dedicated to the scientific history of the Polish and Russian scientist Osip Kowalewski (1800-1878).



2. Material and Methods

The hand-written heritage of the scientist is stored in the library of Vilnius University (Lithuania), archives of Warsaw, Moscow, Irkutsk, Kazan, Ulan-Ude and also in scientific institutions and libraries of St. Petersburg: in Archive of orientalist of Institute of east manuscripts of RAS (IVR RAS) (Ф. 29), S. - the St. Petersburg branch of RAS archive (Ф. 2. Оп. 1. 1839. 12), Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA) (Ф. 733. Оп. 40. 318; Оп. 41. 86; Оп. 42. 5, 162; Оп. 43. 78), Department of rare books and manuscripts of Scientific Library of M. Gorky (ORKIR NB) St. Petersburg State University (No. 567, 568. Folders 1, 2), Department of manuscripts of National Library of Russia (RNB SHOUTING) (Post. 1927. No. 149). In Archive of orientalist of IVR RAS in the personal fund of O.M. Kowalewski, there are 29 cases. Generally, it is the materials connected with an initial stage of its activity, first of all — with trips in the 1820-1830th to Buryatia and China. Among them, there are reports, plans, notes, lists of the acquired ethnographic and cult objects.

The extensive collection of O.M. Kowalewski from 189 books in the Mongolian, Manchurian, Tibetan and Chinese languages is stored in the hand-written fund of the library of East faculty of the St. Petersburg University) (Alekseev, 2014; Polyanskaya, 2009; Valeev et al., 2009). In this collection, almost all books which were printed then in China for Mongols are collected. "The catalogue made by Kowalewski to Sanskrit, Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchurian and Chinese books and manuscripts ..." was included into the annals of world oriental studies.

Books, wood-engravers and the manuscripts of the people of Central Asia collected by O.M. Kowalewski and A.V. Popov and which are stored now mainly in St. Petersburg (the IVR RAS hand-written fund and library of East faculty of St.Petersburg State University, etc.), became important source base of the Russian oriental studies (Valeev et al., 2009).

3. Results and Discussion

Authors analyzed two diaries of O.M. Kowalewski relating at the right time his travel as a part of the Russian spiritual mission: he conducted the first on the way to China, the second — on the way back from Beijing to Kyakhta.

The first diary is in the Department of manuscripts of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (F.100. Op.2. Case 612). Its contents cover only a part of a way of the Mission, namely since that moment when it, having left Ugra, went to the south.

Several pages of the diary occupy translations of newspaper articles, retellings of conversations with members of the previous Mission about customs, customs, history, the culture of Chinese, stories about meetings with officials, dealers and commoners of Beijing, a record about observations on city streets.

O.M. Kowalewski strictly follows the instruction made by professors of the Kazan University V.Ya. Bulygin and F.I. Erdman, given it before sending to a trip. In the first part, it was indicated on the need to keep the most detailed diary of movements and occupations. It had to write down everything that was noticed "important or unimportant during the day"; and also "to treat tenderly local inhabitants, to penetrate attentively into dogmatic, ethical and abstract parts of the local religion, to get new knowledge of the relation of national character, national legends, concepts about the structure of the world".

In the diary, there are records about political and administrative system of Mongolia entering the Great Qing (1644-1911). They contain data on the quantity of the cattle, ways of a pasture, social and financial position of the population, education steps; there are interesting remarks on phonetic features of chahar, khalkha, ordos dialects. There are instructions on carrying out the survey; there are data on many household realities of life the Buryat, Mongols and Chinese of that time: asceticism, monastic education, caravan trade.

The records containing the data obtained from a talk with the local population or with the people who were in these parts are of undoubted interest. For example, he fixes that scrupulously "there are many books in Urge at the kumirjas, i.e. Tibetan and Mongolian, not only theological contents but also medical and narrative".

Careful descriptions of their own observations of Kowalewski of the life of people, in particular about education are most valuable.



The diary in detail describes places across which there passed the way of the Spiritual mission: parking, kumirjas, monasteries, the cities, fortresses, natural boundaries and also the description of visits of the Russian farmstead by several high-ranking Chinese persons, such as Minzhur gegen — the nephew of Khambo lama; return visits of missionaries; visit of the Catholic priest from Portugal.

Having lived in Beijing seven months, O.M. Kowalewski returned to Russia with previous, the tenth, structure of the Russian spiritual mission which way lay on the same Darkhansko-Argalinskaya Road. On the way back from Beijing to Kyakhta which proceeded from June 6 to September 3, 1831, it also kept the diary.

The second diary represents not a separate notebook and has an appearance of the thick volume entitled by O.M. Kowalewski in Polish: "Dziennik zatrudnien. 1830–1831" that means "The diary of occupations", and travelling notes enter a component there. Now it is stored in National archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (F.10, Op 5. Case 843). It is the autograph in the Polish, Russian, French, English, German and old Mongolian languages of 161 the leaf uniting diverse material.

Except travelling notes in the diary also its own scientific theories, guesses, reasons concerning various philological problems of Mongolian study and Tibetology, for example about "the Mongolian letters" are stated (l. 140–142 about.); about the Buddhist composition of "Manya Gambu" (l. 143); extracts from the Severnaya Pchela magazine for 1832 about the Kyakhta trade and across China — from the European compositions (l. 157–158 about.); notes about travellers (l. 144–148); words of the songs recorded by it in the possession Tsetsen-han on August 10, 1831, and in possession of Noyan on August 5, 1831, are cited (l. 155–155 about.).

The diary which was kept by O.M. Kowalewski on the way back, coming back home with the X Russian spiritual mission, differs in bigger brevity, than the first — on the way to Beijing. From Beijing to Kyakhta, as well as in diaries from Kyakhta to Beijing, we find the most various geographical, administrative, political, social, economic and historical and cultural data on China and Mongolia in diaries of a trip.

3.1. Discussion

In all travelling notes of the Russian travellers, since one of the first remained "paintings" about embassy to China of Ivan Petlin (1618) and to O.M. Kowalewski's diaries (1830-1831), the unity and continuity in approach to the material as to a scientific and educational source are traced. The Russian reader of that time found in similar works various, most interesting material with the description of ethnography, history and culture of the people of Central and East Asia. Unfortunately, the majority of domestic historical and cultural monuments such was published only in the European languages, Russian-speaking inquisitive public for a long time they became available in much later time (Andreeva, 2007; Dani, 2005; Rybakov, 1997). In modern historiography, O.M. Kowalewski's heritage becomes more and more demanded and sometimes is considered from very original positions (Tarling, 2015; Tsyrempilov, 2013).

4. Summary

Some letters and O.M. Kowalewski's reports concerning the initial stage of a way to China were regularly sent them to the trustee of the Kazan educational district M.N. Musin-Pushkin, were printed in "The Russian academic sheets". They contained impartial words to the Qing government: bribery, theft of officials, pressure upon the subordinated people, the keeping of the people in poverty, malevolence to all foreign. Also, data which could compromise the Mission, for example, about the carried-out survey during the movement of the Mission and being part of the Mission along with Cossacks of several scientists got to them. After the emergence of one of such reports, the director of Asian department K.K. Rodofinikin writes the letter to the minister of education K.A. Liven. Besides, it communicates from mails directors and the governor-general of Eastern Siberia that they took actions interfering penetration into Kyakhta of this number of "The Russian academic sheets" with O.M. Kowalewski's report for December 1830. The concern of the Asian department, the MFA of Russia was explained by fear of a negative resonance from the Chinese authorities on criticism in their address (Van der Oye, 2010).

During the travel, O.M. Kowalewski showed interest not only in history and the nature of Central Asia but also in the culture of the people inhabiting it. Before us records of the attentive and observant scientist and at the same time the sympathetic person. The independence, systematic character, realness, concreteness and criticality are the most



characteristic features of his diaries. Kowalewski does not fall into idealization and a mythologization of an image of Mongolia and China that took place in others, earlier and even later historiographic and source study materials of other researchers about the people and the cultures of these countries.

O.M. Kowalewski's diaries represent the bright example of the remarkable tradition of travelling notes in Mongolian study and Sinology of the 19th century which incorporated extensive experience of his predecessors — the travellers and researchers who left behind records, sketches, reports, notes, diaries and so-called "paintings" — reports on what was seen in the countries which they visited. All these materials light history of direct Russian-Chinese-Mongolian connections and are the evidence of continuous political, social and scientific knowledge by Russia heritage of China and Mongolia.

5. Conclusions

O.M. Kowalewski's diaries are the important document on geography, history and the culture of Mongolia and China of the first half of the 19th century and also an important source of domestic geographical, ethnographic, historical, linguistic and culturological information about the people of Central and East Asia. The publication of diaries undertaken in 2005 - 2006 (Valeev et al., 2009) allows to compare them to materials of other travellers and scientists who made trips across Mongolia and China at different times and with the different purposes.

The materials of diaries of O.M. Kowalewski containing valuable data on a social and political situation, a condition of culture and economy of Mongolia and China of the first half of the 19th century are of great interest not only the orientalist-historians, linguists, cultural studies of the people of Central Asia, but also the general reader to whom spiritual life of Russia of the last centuries and also the history of the Russian-Mongolian and Russian-Chinese relations is interesting.

5.1. Contribution

The study of Kowalewski's diary content shows that its freedom, systematic character, truth, concreteness and criticality of thought were intrinsic to the scientist. Kowalewski's image of Mongolia and China does not slip into idealization and mythologization.

Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University and RFBR project 17-01-00209 / 17 "The scientific heritage of Russian orientalists of the nineteenth century: O.M. Kowalewski and V.P. Vasilyev".

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