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## Academic Mongolian Studies in Russia

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Ramil M. Valeev<sup>1</sup>, Roza Z. Valeeva<sup>2</sup>, Oksana N. Polyanskaya<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:**

*The relevance of the problem under study is conditioned by the coverage of Russian Mongolian studies, including Buddhism study phenomenon formation and development during the late 18th - early 19th centuries.*

*The article is aimed at the study of Mongolian and Buddhism study origins at the St. Petersburg Academy and Kazan Imperial University, the fate of orientalists, the main stages in the formation and the development of educational and scientific disciplines and trends devoted to the history and culture of Mongolian-speaking peoples.*

*The leading methods of this problem study are the basic principles of modern historical science - historicism, problem-chronological, structural-functional, retrospective, anthropological method, etc.*

*The main results of the article include a variety of materials devoted to the historical and scientific study of Russian Mongolian study formation and development, the evaluation of the scientific heritage concerning the founders of Mongolian studies at the Academy, the University of Kazan and other educational centers of Russia.*

*The main materials of the article can be useful for further study of Russian and European Mongolian study history, the development and the reading of university courses on the history of the East, the history of Oriental studies in Russia and Europe.*

**Keywords:** *Russia, East, Mongolia, Mongolian-Speaking Peoples of Russia, Mongolian Studies.*

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<sup>1</sup>*Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan Federal University, Russia, [valeev200655@mail.ru](mailto:valeev200655@mail.ru), [ram.valeev2016@yandex.ru](mailto:ram.valeev2016@yandex.ru)*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Intercultural Communication and Linguistics, Kazan State Institute of Culture, Russia, [lilgalim@bk.ru](mailto:lilgalim@bk.ru)*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Universal and National History, Buryat state University, Russia, [univer@bsu.ru](mailto:univer@bsu.ru)*

## 1. Introduction

During the first half of the nineteenth century Mongolian studies and Buddhism study at the Kazan University are formed and developed based on the Mongolian, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese language study and the scientific trends of South, Central and East Asia civilization history and culture study. The basis of university Mongolian and Buddhist studies in Russia at the Kazan University during 1833-1854 were represented the Mongolian (1833), the Chinese (1837), the Sanskrit (1842), and the Kalmyk (1846) departments. During 1833-1846 the developed Mongolian, Chinese, Sanskrit and Kalmyk departments played a significant role in the development of Central Asian disciplines at Kazan University and in general Russian oriental studies of the nineteenth century. The formation of Mongolian and Buddhism studies in Russia is closely connected with European and Russian ideas, the principles and the features of academic and university discipline development during the nineteenth and early XXth centuries (Kovalevsky, 1837; Kim and Shastitko, 1990; Vigasin *et al.*, 1997; Kotwicz, 1948; Polyanskaya, 2010; Bawden, 1985; Dugat, 1868; 1870).

## 2. Methodology

The methodology of this article is based on the basic principles of modern historical science: historicism, problem-chronological, structural-functional, retrospective, anthropological methods, etc. These methods allow us to highlight the development of university and academic Mongol studies in Russia and Europe at a certain historical, scientific and chronological stage of development; to study the internal laws and the factors of scientific Mongol studies in Russia; to reconstruct educational, research and enlightenment events, relying on a complex array of published and unknown historical sources; to clarify the contribution of Russian orientologists to the development of scientific Mongolian studies.

## 3. Results

Oriental studies in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth developed the institutional and the scientific basis. Mongol studies in Russia were represented by the works from I.Ya. Schmidt (1779-1847) - one of the first Russian and German scholars who introduced Mongolian philology and history into the number of academic and university scientific disciplines (Kim and Shastitko, 1990; Polyanskaya, 2014; Kulikova, 1994). In 1829, he translated the chronicle of the 17th century "Erdenin Tovchi" by the Mongolian author Sagan Se-cen from Mongolian into German. An important event in the history of Mongolian studies was the grammar of the Mongolian language published by I.Ya. Schmidt (in 1831 in German, and in 1832 in Russian) and the "Mongolian-German-Russian" dictionary in 1835 (Kulganek, 2014; Polyanskaya, 2015).

The issue of the Mongolian language department establishment at the Kazan University was actively discussed since the middle of 1827. Russia had only the translators from Mongolian language, but they did not have a professional education. The Academic Council of Kazan University, headed by Rector N.I. Lobachevsky and the trustee of the Kazan academic district, M.N. Musin-Pushkin decided to train their own staff at the creation of the university eastern rank.

To train the experts in the Mongolian language, a university scientific trip to Irkutsk was organized, to the translator A.V. Igumnov (Puchkovsky, 1960; Khokhlov, 1992). The choice of the University administration fell on O. Kovalevsky (1800-1878) (Kotwicz, 1948) and the student A. Popov (1808-1865) deported from Vilnius to Kazan in 1826 (Valeev *et al.*, 2004). A comprehensive university instruction was compiled for them and a sum was allocated for the purchase of Oriental books (National Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan).

In 1833, the Department of Mongolian Literature was established at the Kazan University (Kovalevsky, 1837). The opening of the Mongolian language department marked the beginning of the European university study of Mongolia, the history and the culture of Mongolian-speaking peoples.

O.M. Kovalevsky published "A Brief Grammar of the Mongolian Book Language" in 1835 which became the first Russian grammar of the old-written Mongolian language. His second teaching aid was the "Mongolian Reader" in two volumes, known in Russia and Europe (1836; 1837). Kovalevsky's mentor in Irkutsk, A.V. Igumnov highly appreciated his knowledge of the Mongolian language (O. Kovalevsky's Archives).

O.M. Kovalevsky continued his academic studies of the language, history and culture of the Mongolian peoples. Due to the works of the first Mongol study experts of Russia and Europe, the research base was created not only for the teaching of the Mongolian language, but also for the study of Mongol history and culture. I.Ya. Schmidt and O.M. Kovalevsky's approach assumed the development of a comprehensive scientific knowledge on the spiritual heritage of Mongolia and Mongolian peoples (Kulganek, 2014; Polyanskaya, 2015).

The origins of academic and university Mongol studies development are also associated with A.V. Popov (1808-1865). His scientific activity is connected with the leading oriental centers of Russia: Kazan and St. Petersburg universities. The result of his scientific trips to Eastern Siberia, Irkutsk, to the Buryat nomads, and then to the Kalmyks in the Astrakhan steppes were the works on the philology of the Mongolian peoples. This is the "Mongolian Reader for Beginners" (Ch. I and Ch. II. Kazan, 1836), "Arithmetic in Mongolian" (Kazan, 1837) and "The grammar of

Kalmyk language" (Kazan, 1848). In 1855, A.V. Popov headed the department of Mongolian and Kalmyk languages at St. Petersburg University. The eastern rank of Kazan University was transferred in this university center, along with teachers, the richest eastern library and manuscripts and the cabinet of rarities. Teaching activities by A.V. Popov in the walls of Kazan and St. Petersburg universities contributed to the training of professional Mongolian study experts and strengthened the positions of these universities as the authoritative centers of Oriental studies and Mongolian studies in Russia and Europe.

An important role in A.V. Popov's preparation as a Mongolian expert was played by Paul (Pavel Lvovich) Shilling-Kanstadt (1785-1837), the Acting State Counselor, Baron, the Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Sinologist, the creator of eastern lithography, a famous collector of oriental manuscripts (Kulikova, 1994; Polyanskaya, 2015).

In general I.Ya. Schmidt, O.M. Kovalevsky and A.V. Popov with his studies laid the foundations of the scientific school of Mongol studies in Russia. The formation and the development of the discipline in the first half of the XIXth century became possible due to the accumulated experience in the preparation of translators at schools in border regions, due to the activities of teachers who prepared the first teaching aids, the dictionaries on the Mongolian language and collected the collections of oriental manuscripts and books.

Irkutsk was one of the first cities of the Russian Empire, where in the beginning of the XVIIIth century the study of oriental languages - Mongolian, Manchu, Chinese, Buryat - began. Here, with the suggestion by Archimandrite A. Platkovsky, the first Russian school of the Mongolian language was founded. It was opened on August 11, 1725 at the Ascension Monastery. The teachers of the Mongolian language there were Buryat lamas L.I. Nerunov (Lapsan) and N. Shcholkunov. They founded the national traditions of Mongolian language and literature study.

In the Irkutsk National School (1791), Mongolian was taught simultaneously with Chinese, Manchu and Japanese. The teachers were F. Sanzhikhaev (Mongolian) and A. Paryshev (Chinese, Manchu). A famous connoisseur of the Mongolian language and translator A.V. Igumnov (1761-1834) lived and worked in Irkutsk. A.V. Igumnov is not only a translator, but also the collector of folklore and the compiler of dictionaries. In 1813, he opened the Russian-Mongolian school, where he was the Mongolian language teacher. He collected the materials on ethnography, history, law and religion of the Mongolian peoples. He wrote several works about the Buddhist clergy, its influence on the Mongol and Buryat people. He was the compiler of the first large Mongolian-Russian dictionary in Russia ("The Mongolian Dictionary, located according to the alphabet with the Russian translation").

In the 30 - 40-ies of the XIXth century Kazan University becomes the leading center in Europe for oriental studies and Mongolian studies. The study of the Mongolian language, literature, history and the monuments of Mongolian writing is a priority trend of the university center of Russia. O.M. Kovalevsky and A. V. Popova created a university school, prepared students who continued the study of Mongolian peoples started by their teacher, and made an important contribution to the study of Mongolian peoples: Alexander Alekseevich Bobrovnikov, Galsan Gomboev, Dorji Banzarov, Vasily Pavlovich Vasiliev, Vladislav Ludvigovich Kotovich and others.

An important place in O.M. Kovalevsky's activity is occupied by his enlightenment mission. The humanistic approach in the study of history and spiritual culture of the peoples at the peripheries of the Russian Empire is most characteristic of O.M. Kovalevsky's heritage (Kovalevsky, 1837; Bareya-Stazynska, 2002; O. Kovalevsky's archive). It is important to emphasize that O.M. Kovalevsky's activity in the Transbaikal was not limited to his stay and communication with the Buryat population of the region. M. Kovalevsky attracted young Buryat men to study at Kazan Gymnasium and University. The arrival of a group of young Buryats from the far Trans-Baikal region for the training at the Kazan Gymnasium, and then at the University meant a significant step in the development of European education by the indigenous peoples of Siberia. Buryat Dorji Banzarov graduated from Kazan University and presented the work "Black faith", or shamanism among the Mongols", which became a significant contribution to the world of Mongolian studies. The preparation of Dorzhi Banzarov, a Buryat scientist, is a humanistic contribution by the scientist-educator O.M. Kovalevsky.

One of his outstanding students was the Russian orientalist, Professor V.P. Vasilieva, the Head of the Department of Chinese-Manchu Literature (1851-1855) at Kazan University, Professor (since 1855), the Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg University (1878-1893) and the Academician of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (1886, a corresponding member since 1866).

During his studies at the Kazan University in 1834-1839 V.P. Vasiliev was engaged in the study of the Mongolian language and Buddhist philosophy. During his ten-year stay in Beijing as the part of the Twelfth Russian Spiritual Mission (1840-1850), he studied Tibetan, Chinese and Manchu languages and assembled a rich collection of books in several Eastern languages. During the period of his activity at the Oriental faculty of St. Petersburg University, the works by V.P. Vasiliev constituted the epoch in the history of Russian and European oriental studies, for Chinese and Mongol study (Radnaev, 2012)

V.P. Vasiliev made a tremendous influence on the research of his students and colleagues - S.M. Georgievsky, A.O. Ivanovsky, D.A. Peshchurov, P.S. Popov,

D.M. Pozdneev, A.I. Ivanov, S.F. Oldenburg, F.I. Shcherbatsky, etc. In his works he studied the history, languages, literature, religion, folklore and ethnography of the peoples from East and Central Asia (Oldenburg, 1900; The centenary since the birth of the Academician Vasily Pavlovich Vasilyev, 1931; Gorbacheva *et al.*, 1956; Vasiliev, 1974; Skachkov, 1977).

The eastern category of Kazan University existed until 1854. On October 22, 1854, the Senate issued the decree stopping the teaching of Oriental languages at Kazan University and at the First Kazan Gymnasium. The leading professors and the teachers of the eastern departments of the Kazan University were transferred to St. Petersburg University. Simultaneously, manuscripts and Oriental books of the Kazan University library, the eastern department of numismatics were handed over to the University of St. Petersburg, and Sanskrit, Tibetan and Mongolian fonts were exported to St. Petersburg (Ulymzhiev, 1994).

August 28, 1855, the opening of the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University took place. Among the eastern departments the department of Mongolian-Kalmyk literature was opened. The foundation of the Mongolian language department at the University of St. Petersburg would have been impossible without the teachers who had been trained at the Kazan University. Professor A.V. Popov was appointed as the first teacher of the Mongolian language and the head of the department at the University of Petersburg. The teachers of the Mongol-Kalmyk department in different years were G. Gomboev, K.F. Golstunsky, D.D. Kutuzov, A.A. Badmaev, A.M. Pozdneev, V.L. Kotovich, A.D. Rudnev, B.Ya. Vladimirtsov - the outstanding experts in Mongol study who laid a solid foundation in the study of the historical and cultural heritage of the Mongolian peoples during the second half of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

#### **4. Discussion**

It should be said that the historical and scientific literature covering the history of scientific Mongol studies development in Russia and Europe is sufficient, but this is only at first glance. In general, Mongol study is considered in the context of the history of oriental study different trends, without the dwelling in detail on any facts showing the whole complex process of the scientific school of Mongol study development in Russia. The biographies and the scientific heritage of leading, widely known, recognized throughout the world Mongol study experts is presented poorly, not to mention the work and research activities of individual translators, the officials of various departments and diplomats, the missionaries of the Orthodox Church and military personnel. They greatly expanded the notion about the Mongolian people, their culture and their way of life, therefore, without studying their heritage, the historical picture of Russian and European Mongol studies cannot be comprehensive and systemic. In this publication we touch upon some key

positions of the of academic and university Mongol studies in Russia related to the scientific heritage by I.Ya. Schmidt, O.M. Kovalevsky and A.V. Popov. At the present stage, the further study of the unpublished heritage of Russian and European Mongolian study scholars of the 19th - 20th centuries seem promising.

## **5. Conclusions**

I.Ya. Schmidt, O.M. Kovalevsky, A.V. Popov and other orientalist and their studies became fundamental in Mongolian study, laid the traditions of continuity, characteristic of the Russian and European schools of Mongolian studies. Based on a vast research experience, the materials collected by practitioners, translators, the teachers of schools teaching the Mongolian language, they created fundamental textbooks and dictionaries of the Mongolian language, formulated promising tasks of Mongolian studies. All this contributed to the dynamic development of academic and university Mongolian studies in Russia, Mongolia and Europe.

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