

Iskanderkul Expedition of 1870: Contribution of the Russian Orientalist A.L.Kuhn to the Preparation and Editing of the «Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition» by A.Mustajir

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870, organized with the aim of exploring little-known territories along the eastern border of the Zarafshan district and the southern border of the Syrdarya region. The main attention is paid to the role of the orientalist A.L.Kuhn in conducting the expedition and his contribution to the preparation of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” Mirza Mullah “Abd ar-Rahaman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. The article notes the strategic importance of this expedition for Tsarist Russia and emphasizes the role of A.L.Kuhn, who has deep knowledge of Eastern cultures and languages. He paid special attention to the language and culture of the Tajiks of the Zarafshan Valley. The article highlights the relevance of cooperation between Russian researchers and local authors for the study and preservation of the cultural heritage of Central Asia in the context of geopolitics, ethnography and language studies. The Iskanderkul expedition and A.Mustajir’s “Diary” are important sources for the study of history, ethnography, spiritual culture and socio-economic conditions of life in the upper reaches of Zarafshan in the second half of the 19th century. This study is relevant for understanding the historical and cultural context of Central Asia, especially the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

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Keywords: A.Kuhn, Iskanderkul Expedition of 1870, A.Mustajir, «Diary», Zarafshan District, linguistic studies, historical significance

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Introduction

During the period of hostilities associated with the annexation of the territories of Central Asia to the Russian Empire, systematic efforts were made to collect manuscripts and archives, as well as to form archaeological and ethnographic collections. Along with orientalists, a significant contribution to the study and documentation of ancient monuments was made by the Russian officers participating in the expedition, who were distinguished by a high level of education. A special, outstanding contribution to the study of Central Asia was made by the Russian scientist and orientalist Alexander Ludvigovich Kun¹.

In 1870, due to the lack of exploration of the territory of the upper reaches of the Zarafshan River, it was decided to organize a scientific study of this zone. For this purpose, a reconnaissance detachment was created, consisting of specialists and military personnel under the command of Major General A. K. Abramov². This detachment, called the “Iskanderkul” or “Iskander-Kul Scientific Expedition,” had military tasks, including the complete conquest of the upper Zarafshan valley.

Despite the primary military goals, the Iskanderkul expedition also included outstanding scientists and specialists. Their main goal was to conduct a comprehensive scientific study of the areas involved in the expedition. This multi-tasking underlines the complex nature of the research enterprise undertaken by the Russian administration in the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

The scientists and specialists who were part of the expedition were called upon not only to support the military effort, but also to evaluate and document the geographical, natural and ethnographic features of the region. Their participation in the expedition underscores the Russian administration’s desire for a systematic and comprehensive study of this previously little-known territory.

Among the expedition participants were geologist D. K. Myshenkov, who was responsible for geological research³ (1841–1906), A. L. Kuhn was an archaeologist and philologist responsible for the study of the region in these aspects. Captain A. D. Grebenkin⁴

¹ Way of writing the name A. L. Kun may vary in different historical sources, being represented as both “Kun” and “Kuhn”. However, when he himself used the Latin alphabet, he consistently preferred its German variant, “Kuhn”. In this article we adhere to the Russian form of his name, which A. L. Kuhn used when publishing his articles in Russian pre-revolutionary newspapers and magazines. His secretary, A. Mustajir, is mentioned in the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” and “Note on the Moscow Exhibition” as “Iskander-tyure”, and A. L. Kun himself used this nickname (pseudonym) in several of his publications in various issues of the *Turkestan Gazette* newspaper.

² Abramov Alexander Konstantinovich (August 28 [September 9] 1836 – October 21 [November 2] 1886) was a participant in the Central Asian campaigns, lieutenant-general of the Russian army.

³ Myshenkov Dmitry Konstantinovich (1841–1906) – Russian geologist, geographer and mining engineer. He also served as an official with special assignments for the mountainous part under the Turkestan Governor-General.

⁴ Grebyonkin Afanasy Davydovich (1840–1888) was an officer of the Russian Imperial Army, holding the position of colonel. He was also awarded the title of Knight of the Order of St. George, 4th degree.

(1840–1888) collected statistical and historical data. P. A. Aminov⁵ (1844–1899), who held the position of General Staff officer in the detachment, supervised research work and the collection of topographical and geographical data, L. N. Sobolev⁶ (1844–1913) was engaged in identifying places for astronomical research.

The expedition also included sapper E. Voronets and a resident of Samarkand, Tajik A. Mustajira, who acted as mirza (secretary) of the orientalist A. L. Kuhn. Subsequently, during the movement of the military team from the village of Obburdana, starting from June 2, 1870, A. P. Fedchenko⁷ (1849–1873) and his wife O. A. Fedchenko⁸ (1845–1921) joined them for naturalistic research. They were included in A. K. Abramov's team, also joined by A. M. Skassi, responsible for topographic data, and warrant officers of the II Turkestan battalion N. P. Startsev, assistant officer of the General Staff P. A. Aminov for collecting data on these regions, and others. Using the cover of military detachments, they collected extensive scientific data in the fields of geology, biology, archaeology, history, ethnography and philology.

Materials and methods

The research is based on two manuscripts from the archives of the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences: № D 133 (old code 609g) and № D 134 (old code 609h). Manuscript № D 133 is a diary kept by a Tajik resident of Samarkand, Mirza Mullah 'Abd ar-Ra'haman, ibn Muhammad Latif Mustajir⁹, in the period

⁵ Baron Aminov Johann-Friedrich-Gustav Aleksandrovich (1844-1899) was a lieutenant-general, an active participant in the Turkestan campaigns and the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. He also served as a governor during the Kuopio period of his career.

⁶ Sobolev Leonid Nikolaevich (June 9, 1844, Toropetsk district – October 13, 1913, Toropetsk district) was a Russian infantry general and participant in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. In addition to his military service, he also served as a Prime Minister of Bulgaria.

⁷ Fedchenko Alexey Pavlovich (7[19] February 1844, Irkutsk – 3 September 1873, Mont Blanc) was a Russian scientist, biologist, geographer and traveler specializing in the study of Central Asia, primarily the Pamirs. During his travels throughout Central Asia (1868-1871), he collected extensive material on the flora, fauna, geography and ethnography of the region. His main scientific works concerned parasitology and entomology. Fedchenko discovered the Trans-Alai Range and, unfortunately, died on Mont Blanc. In his honor, a glacier in the Republic of Tajikistan, discovered by an expedition led by V. F. Oshanin in 1878, was named the Fedchenko glacier.

⁸ Fedchenko Olga Aleksandrovna (1845-1921) – Russian botanist and corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences since 1906 (since 1917 – the Russian Academy of Sciences). The wife of Alexei Pavlovich Fedchenko, the daughter of Moscow University professor A. O. Armfeld and the mother of Boris Alekseevich Fedchenko.

⁹ Many researchers make mistakes in using A. Mustajir's name, probably due to the misspelling of his name as "Mirza Mulla" Abdurrahman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. The use of capital letters before the words "Mirza" and "Mulla" is considered inaccurate, since "Mirza" is a title that can mean 1) prince, emir-zode, and 2) writer, secretary. The word "Mulla" (or "Mullah"), also known as molla, comes from an Arabic word translated as lord, ruler. In Persian, this term is denoted as "malá", and also has synonyms: 1. literate, educated, learned, learned; 2. Mullah, clergyman, sheikh; 3. Educated, meaning uneducated. In the Islamic tradition, a mullah is a spiritual leader with knowledge of the Koran and religious rituals. In the Russian Empire, the term "mullahs" was widely used to refer to various Muslim spiritual leaders, including madrassa teachers and qualified scholars. In the Shia tradition, the mullah plays a key role in the religious community, serving as a theologian and expert in the interpretation of matters of faith and law, while in the Sunni tradition these functions are performed by the ulema. In this article we adhere to the form "Mirzo Mullah Abdurahman son of Mahmed Latif Mustajir", which was used by the orientalist A. L. Kuhn when writing the preface to the "Diary".

from April 25 to June 27, 1870, in the Samarkand Tajik dialect. Manuscript D 134 is similar to D 133 in content and design, but was not edited by A. L. Kuhn. The research is also based on materials from the archive of A. L. Kuhn at the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The method of textual criticism and the method of comparative analysis are used. These methods and materials provide a deeper understanding of A. L. Kuhn's contributions in the preparation and editing of the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" and his role in preserving and interpreting the historical records of this expedition.

Discussion

In the history of exploration of Central Asia, the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 occupies an important place, representing a significant event. Organized with the aim of exploring little-known territories along the eastern border of the Zarafshan district and to the southern border of the Syrdarya region, this expedition set itself a number of tasks.

This expedition was carried out with the aim of restoring order in the regions of Upper Zarafshan, which were in a state of conflict with the Bukhara Khanate. The expedition was sent to territories where there were tense relations between the local population and the Bukhara Khanate. The main task is to restore order in the region subordinated to Bukhara Bekstvos: Falgar, Matcha, Fan, Yagnob, Farab and Kishtud. The expedition provided Russia with the opportunity to expand its borders and integrate mountainous territories into the empire. Due to the uncertainty of relations with the Bekstvos of the Falgar Bekstvo, there was a possibility of attracting these territories to Russian citizenship. In addition to scientific research, the expedition had important political significance, given rumors about the natural wealth and strategic position of the region. Resolving conflicts and restoring order had a military component, emphasizing Russia's influence in the region. The expedition not only solved current problems, but also created the basis for future research. Geographical, geological, archaeological and historical research provided detailed information about the region, which laid the basis for further research and management of the territory. The expedition contributed to establishing Russian control over the region and maintaining political stability. The return of order and the establishment of friendly relations with the local population created the preconditions for strengthening Russia's influence in Central Asia.

Following the signing of a peace treaty with Bukhara in 1868, Russia accepted the emirate as its protectorate. However, mountain raids continued to disrupt stability in the region, and Russia took decisive action to stop these raids.

The Russian command developed a strategy for conducting an offensive campaign with the goal of establishing control over the rebel bekstvos south of the Fergana Valley. This would strengthen Russia's influence in Central Asia and secure the borders of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khanate of Kokand.

On April 25, 1870, the Iskanderkul campaign began, during which Russian troops under the command of Major General A. K. Abramov faced resistance from local residents

and mountain refugees. As a result of several limited military engagements, the Russian army achieved victory, demonstrating the effectiveness of its tactical actions and dispersing the enemy.

The losses of Tsarist Russia amounted to 5 killed and 32 wounded, while the enemy suffered significant losses – 16 prisoners and 1.5 thousand heads of livestock. Victory in the conflict created the conditions for the annexation of the territories of several mountain bekstvos, strengthening Russia's position in the border areas.

The Iskanderkul campaign became a key moment in the history of Central Asia, as a result of which Russia strengthened its influence and ensured stability in the border areas. This conflict also contributed to the establishment of control over the mountain bekstvos, helping to ensure the security of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khanate of Kokand.

Thanks to the materials of the Iskanderkul expedition, including research articles by A. L. Kuhn [6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18] and "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by A. Mustajir [1, 3, 4], the upper reaches of Zarafshan attracted attention scientists. These materials became available to a wide range of researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities who are interested in the history, ethnography, material and non-material culture of the population of the region, especially in the second half of the 19th century.

Among the scientists who made a significant contribution to the study of this region, were pre-revolutionary Russian scientists, including military ones, for example, P. A. Aminov, N. Maev, V. V. Stasov, as well as modern researchers such as B. V. Andrianov, associate professor N. D. Miklouho-Maclay, as well as A. D. Karimov, academician A. Mukhtorov, professors A. L. Khromov, B. V. Lunina, A. L. Khromova, Kh. Sh. Kamolova, S.N. Brezhnev, associate professors O. I. Smirnova, O. M. Yastrebova, M. Yu. Yuldasheva, M. S. Isakova, U. A. Sultonova, Sh. Yusufi, and N. Ikromova [2–5; 13, 16–20]. These scholars continue to expand our understanding of Central Asia and its history, especially in the context of this orientalist's contributions to the history of the region.

The works of the above-mentioned scientists and researchers not only enrich our knowledge about Central Asia, but also contribute to the preservation and transmission of the historical and cultural heritage of this region. They maintain interest in this important topic among researchers and the public today. It is important to note that when preparing this article, we consider it necessary to refer to the works of the above-mentioned authors, which allows us to dive deeper into the scientific work of A. L. Kuhn and his role in collecting information, describing and preparing the historical diary of A. Mustajir – "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition".

The result of the research of the participants of the Iskanderkul expedition was valuable information in various fields of knowledge, such as geography, history, ethnography, anthropology, philology, demography, zoology, botany and meteorology of Kuhistan. Throughout the expedition, a diary was kept, which became an important historical source and recorded many observations and data collected during the research [5, p. 133].

Moreover, scientific works based on the results of the Iskanderkul military expedition were published between 1870 and 1875 and were presented by authors such as A. L. Kuhn,

A. P. Fedchenko, A. D. Grebenkin, P. A. Aminov and others. These works became the first steps in the study of Kuhistan within the framework of Russian and European oriental science.

Especially A. L. Kuhn was a "field" Orientalist scholar at the end of the 19th century. He was of mixed origin: his mother was an Armenian from Tabriz, and his father was a Prussian from Memel¹⁰.

It is interesting to note that Alexander Ludvigovich Kuhn, in his research and expeditions, actively collaborated with local educated people, including A. Mustajir, who was from Samarkand and one of the first local researchers of ancient artifacts and history. Their joint activities bore fruit, including participation in expeditions and research in the region.

A. Mustajir took part in the famous Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 under the leadership of General A. K. Abramov, in which. also participated A. L. Kuhn. A. Mustajir served as a translator and collected valuable materials, including inscriptions on rocks, roadside stones, building walls and tombstone inscriptions. His diaries contained valuable information about ancient monuments and the life of the population in the regions of Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, and Khiva.

The collaboration between A. L. Kuhn and A. Mustajir produced valuable results and had an important impact on the study and understanding of the history and culture of Central Asia. From 1870 to 1875 A. L. Kuhn accompanied Russian troops on various military expeditions, collecting extensive information on folklore, linguistics and ethnography. The secretary, A. Mustajir, often helped him in this work, including in the study of "daftars" from the archives of the Khiva khans.

During the expedition, Kuhn's secretary, A. Mustajir, kept a diary in Tajik, including a chronicle of the detachment's movements, a description of the area and stories of local residents. This diary was compiled on the instructions of A. L. Kuhn and was personally corrected by him. Some stories recorded during the expedition remained in his archive, not included in the diary. For example, in the copy (№ D 134 (609h)) the original version of the "Diary" is recorded; the text written by A. Mustajir is sometimes crossed out with blue ink and a black pencil, and new words, phrases and sentences appear in its place. Most of the sentences and phrases written are literary and the changes made are local idioms and phrases of Samarkand or Kuhistan. However, it is difficult to say whether this edition is related to the author of the Diary, or whether it belongs to A. L. Kuhn. The second situation is really rare. This type of editing begins with [11. 4, 1b, 2a and 26] and appears on many pages. The copy belonged to A. L. Kuhn until his death, and only in 1890 it was transferred to the treasury of the Asian Museum RAS.

In the period from April 30 to June 29, 1870, Mustajir kept his diary, starting from the village of Yori [3, l. 1b] and ending in the city of Samarkand (fol. 304b). The last entry in the diary is dated 14 Rabi al-Akhir 1287 Hijri, which corresponds to July 14, 1870.

¹⁰ Klaipeda (Klaipėda; until 1923 and in 1939-1945 officially known as Memel; German Memel) is the third largest city in Lithuania after Vilnius and Kaunas. Located in the western part of the republic, it is where the Baltic Sea meets the Curonian Lagoon. It is the administrative center and the largest port in terms of cargo volume in the Baltic countries.

A. Mustajir's "Diary" is a valuable source of information about the geography, nature, ethnography and social structure of the region covered by the expedition in 1870.

Let us recall that A. L. Kuhn instructed mirza mullah Abd ar-Rahaman, the son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir, to keep a travel diary and provided a pre-compiled program in the Tajik language, close to the programs published by the Russian Geographical Society of that time. According to the daily records of Mustajir, A. L. Kuhn checked the names of places and added what was not noticed by the translator. A. Kuhn also kept his own notes. He collected ethnographic data personally in the presence of A. Mustajir, who recorded what he heard in the Tajik language.

It is noticeable how A. L. Kuhn strives for completeness and accuracy of the collected materials. He talks about the methods and techniques he used in his research process, such as Mirza's keeping a travel diary and his emphasis on pinpointing the names of places. This approach allows him to systematize data and collect the most detailed information possible.

From the "Preface" to the "Diary" of A. L. Kuhn, several conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, the author focuses on the discovered ancient inscriptions made on rocks and boulders. He makes a distinction between two types of inscriptions: the first, on chert rocks, are simple and ungrammatical records which, in his opinion, have no historical significance. The second ones, on boulders, are of greater interest, since they can be used to determine the time of settlement of villages. Kuhn draws attention to the linguistic diversity of the inscriptions, noting that most of them are written in Tajik, with some exceptions in Arabic.

Secondly, the author regrets the impossibility of collecting all the inscriptions due to the rapid movement of the detachment and lack of time. This highlights the difficulties and limitations that explorers faced during their expeditions.

The third important point is the note about the education of Mirza, who kept a diary. A. L. Kuhn emphasizes his specialization in calligraphy and notes that this kept his speech simple and close to everyday language, making the diary more understandable and authentic.

In general, the foreword by A. L. Kuhn's "Diary" conveys his deep interest in the horsemen of Zarafshan, its inhabitants and their culture. This introduction allows the reader to become immersed in the research, understand the methodology and challenges of the work, and appreciate the scientific and historical significance of the data collected.

Finally, A. L. Kuhn ends the passage with an expression of hope for the completion of the diary and for the preparation of notes and translation for the next year. This indicates his commitment to providing complete and interpreted material for future readers and researchers.

"The Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" is a valuable source for historians, ethnographers and philologists, providing information about the upper reaches of the Zarafshan that is not always available from other sources. The reliability of the Diary is ensured by the fact that it was compiled under the guidance of a specialist scientist who controlled the objectivity of the entries. However, despite the lack of translation, the Diary remains an important scientific document.

Despite extensive research regarding the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by A. Mustajir, the contribution of the orientalist A. L. Kuhn's contribution to the editing and preparation of this diary remains relevant for researchers, including historians, and retains its scientific significance to this day.

Conclusion

The Iskanderkul campaign of 1870 became an important stage in the history of Russia's relations with the region and emphasized the strategic importance for ensuring stability and influence in Central Asia.

The expedition to Iskanderkul in 1870 became a key event in the history of the study of Central Asia, in particular the upper reaches of Zarafshan. The results of this expedition and the "Diary" written by A. Mustajir with the assistance of the Russian orientalist A. L. Kuhn, have outstanding scientific and historical significance. This article focuses on the revival of interest in this expedition, its historical significance and contribution to the understanding of the culture of Zarafshan in the second half of the 19th century.

The materials of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by A. Mustajir are significant sources for the study of the history and culture of the Zarafshan region. Contribution of orientalist A. L. Kuhn's preparation of research work, his ability to understand and record the language and culture of the local population, distinguish him as a key participant in this direction.

The expedition and A. Mustajir's "Diary" highlight the importance of cooperation between Russian researchers and representatives of local cultures in the study and preservation of the cultural heritage of Central Asia, especially in the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

The Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 has outstanding historical and cultural significance. It took place at a time when the Russian Empire was actively expanding its possessions in Central Asia, representing one of the first attempts to systematically study the upper reaches of Zarafshan and the surrounding area of Lake Iskanderkul.

A. L. Kuhn, as a Russian orientalist, was specially appointed to collect extensive material about the language, culture, history and ethnography of local peoples. These materials were important both for scientific research and for the military-strategic policy of Tsarist Russia in the region.

"The Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" is a unique source containing extensive information about the life and customs of local residents, the geographical features of the region, as well as the political situation and relationships between various communities in this region. This provides researchers with valuable materials for studying the history and ethnography of Central Asia in the 19th century.

At the end of the study, several key conclusions can be identified. Firstly, the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 represents a strategically important event in the history of Tsarist Russia, being an attempt to explore little-known territories along the eastern border

of the Zarafshan district and to the southern border of the Syrdarya region. The expedition was made possible thanks to the participation of orientalist A. L. Kuhn, who has deep knowledge of Eastern cultures and languages.

The article emphasizes the role of A. L. Kuna in the preparation and editing of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” by Mirza Mullah 'Abd ar-Rahaman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. A. L. Kuhn becomes a key figure, paying special attention to the language and culture of the Tajiks of the Zarafshan Valley. This indicates not only the scientific significance of his work, but also the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of the region.

The study emphasizes the relevance of cooperation between Russian researchers and local cultures in the context of geopolitics, ethnography and language studies. This collaboration has fostered a deep understanding of the region's cultural diversity and is an important element in preserving this heritage.

In the course of the research devoted to the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the contribution of the orientalist A. L. Kuhn in the editing and preparation of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” by A. Mustajir, the key aspects that determine the significance of this historical event were highlighted.

One of the important conclusions is that the 1870 expedition led by A. K. Abramov became a significant stage in the history of studying the region of the upper Zarafshan in Iskanderkul. The influence of this event is due not only to scientific achievements, but also to the formation of traditions and research methodology that influenced subsequent oriental studies.

The work also revealed the contribution of A. L. Kun in editing the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition”. His professionalism and attention to detail have played a key role in preserving and transmitting reliable information about those times, emphasizing the importance of collective participation of scientists in the preservation of historical heritage.

In the future, for future research on this topic, attention should be paid to a more in-depth analysis of not only the scientific, but also the sociocultural aspects of the Iskanderkul expedition. The possibility of using modern methods and technologies to more fully recreate the context of events of that time should also be considered.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the study of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the contribution of A. L. Kuhn have not only historical, but also actual significance for the modern scientific community. This demonstrates the importance of preserving and studying cultural heritage for understanding history and shaping future scientific approaches.

Finally, a study of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the contribution of A. L. Kuhn's editing of A. Mustajir's “Diary” represents an important contribution to the study of the history of the upper reaches of Zarafshan and the role of orientalists in the preservation and transmission of the cultural heritage of this region. Analysis of these aspects allows us to more deeply understand not only the events of the past, but also the research methodology during that period, as well as the influence of one scientist on the formation of the historical narrative. This study becomes relevant in the context of

understanding the historical and cultural development of Central Asia, especially in the light of the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

Thus, the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870, in addition to its scientific significance, played a key role in establishing control by Tsarist Russia over the little-known territories around the upper Zarafshan. Its results predetermined subsequent steps in the integration of these regions into the Russian Empire, and also influenced the formation of the political map of Central Asia.

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