

## ИСТОРИЯ, АРХЕОЛОГИЯ И КУЛЬТУРА

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### TRENDS IN THE HISTORYOGRAPHY OF JAPAN FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO THE EARLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

(Japanese History manuals, reference books  
and monographs — editions in Russian and English)

This article deals with an analysis of changes in Russian and English historiography on the history of Japan. The range of publications taken into account is restricted to the scholarship considering the history of Japan throughout its entire length — from Ancient times to the present days. The review covers the period from the middle of the XIX century (the revolution in Japan) to the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. In general, trends of changing in the nature of publications both in Russian and in English are often very similar. The second half of the XIX century provided the appearance of purely author's writings, in contrast to compilative works that prevailed earlier. At the turn of the XIX-XX centuries, there was a transition to professional works written by the true students of Japan, who had an experience of staying in the country (V. Kostylev 1888, F. Brinkley 1912, J. Murdoch 1903–1926). The dawn of the XX century in Russia had made it clear that there was a lot of lacks and omits in the Japanese studies and brought the understanding that the common weakness should be overcome. Soon, the next stage developed into a transition to Soviet power which led to compelled desperate attempts to find the ways to present scholarly results in a manner compliant with the new ideology (E. Zhukov 1939). In the second half of the XX century, a problem-oriented approach in the studies of Japanese history became an innovation, which looked similar enough both in Russian and English language publications (Kh. Eidus 1968, E. Reischauer 1958–1965, G. Sansom 1958–1963). At the end of the XX century, there was a trend to creation multi-volume collective monographs, in contrast to previous individual author's efforts on monographs writing (Cambridge History of Japan 1989–1999 in 6 volumes; History of Japan 1998 in 2 volumes, IOS RAS = IVRAN, Moscow). The early XXI century was marked by the beginning of collaborative research conducted by authors from multiple scientific institutes. Some similarity of changes in the nature of publications written by scholars from different countries during the XX century may be interesting for readers who are fond of Japanese history.

**Keywords:** Edwin Reischauer, Evgeny Zhukov, Frank Brinkley, George Sansom, Historiography on Japan, History of Japan as a whole, James Murdoch, Japanese History reference books and monographs, Khaim Eidus, Vassily Kostylev.

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**ТЕНДЕНЦИИ В РАЗВИТИИ ИСТОРИОГРАФИИ ЯПОНИИ  
В СЕРЕДИНЕ XIX – НАЧАЛЕ XXI ВЕКА**  
(учебники и обзорные монографии на русском и английском языках)

Данная статья посвящена анализу изменений в историографии по истории Японии на русском и английском языках. В расчёт принимались издания, где история Японии излагалась на всём её протяжении — от древности до наших дней. Рассматривается время с середины XIX в. (буржуазная революция в Японии) до рубежа XX–XXI вв. В целом тенденции изменений в изданиях на русском и английском языках имеют много общих черт. Для второй половины XIX в. характерно появление чисто авторских публикаций в отличие от трудов компилятивного характера, преобладавших ранее. На рубеже XIX–XX веков произошел переход к профессиональным работам, написанным настоящими исследователями в области японоведения, имевшими опыт пребывания в Японии (В.Костылев 1888, Ф.Бринкли 1912, Дж.Мёрдок 1903–1926). На заре XX века в России стало ясно, что в японских исследованиях было много недостатков и упущений, общую слабость следует преодолеть. Вскоре следующий этап перерос в переход к советской власти, что привело к вынужденным попыткам найти способы представления научных результатов соответственно новой идеологии (Е. Жуков, 1939). Во второй половине XX в. новшеством стал проблемный подход в изложении истории Японии, нашедший схожие формы проявления в трудах и на русском, и на английском языках (Х.Эйдус 1968, Э.Рэйшаэр 1958–1965, Дж.Сэнсом 1958–1963). В конце XX века наметилась тенденция к созданию многотомных коллективных монографий, в отличие от прежних усилий отдельных авторов по написанию таковых (Кембриджская история Японии 1989–1999 годов в 6 томах; История Японии 1998 года в 2 томах, ИВ РАН). Начало XXI века ознаменовалось появлением совместных исследований авторов нескольких научных учреждений и центров. Некоторое сходство изменений в характере публикаций, написанных учёными разных стран в течение XX века, может оказаться интересным для читателей, увлекающихся японской историей.

**Ключевые слова:** В.Я. Костылев, Дж. Мёрдок, Дж. Сэнсом, Е.М. Жуков, историография по Японии, история Японии в целом, учебники и обзорные монографии по истории Японии, Ф. Бринкли, Х. Т. Эйдус, Э. Рэйшаэр.

The scholarly field of area studies on Japan has quite a long history in Russia. However, this essay suggests to mainly leave apart the very early stage of compilative publications on Japan in Russian (despite of their highly recognized value). First handwritten materials of the kind appeared in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and included Cosmographies (world descriptions with rather vast maps set attached) or partly copied parts of them to be used by the representatives of Russian elite and aristocracy as reading for amusement, etc. This phase was followed by the appearance of the first printed editions that described Japan. This kind of books had been printed from 1734 to 1854 with the intention of creating a reliable image of the Land of Japan, almost unknown to Europeans that time. Probably, the assumed readers could be only upper society members or scholarly persons due the several reasons, like limited number of copies, their high price and relatively low literacy rate among the general population. The book of 1734 in three volumes was produced by the two generously talented translators from Academy of Sciences, who had compiled the book not only as translation, but as a result of involvement and revaluation of some available materials. The book creators, Stephan Korovin

Sinbirenin and Ivan Gorlitsky, entitled their edition Depiction or Relation of Japan (...), or *Opisanie o Yapone* [in Russian]. It is highly probable that the main source for the above mentioned book was the travel notes of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, 1679. The compilation of such treatises in Russia, and in Europe as well, was a process full of creativity, pursuing new data, to probe trail to the abroad lands unknown and mysterious. In writings of this kind an author sometimes could have a motivation to give free rein to imagination and at the same time to use materials rarely accessible or imprecise (heard from somebody or mentioned someway somewhere). Those days, in the books it was not common (different from nowadays) to give exact indications for the source where data were taken from. Definitely, the work of a compiler, editor or translator was extremely laborious and responsible. The appearance of a publication (means, certain country-studies) on history, culture and geography sometimes determined the readers' perception of Japan for decades ahead (in some cases, for hundreds years).

First of all, the purpose of the essay is to analyze the changes in literature that led to the "true discovery of Japan" (means, someway understanding) for foreigners in the mid-XIX century. The next point is to trace the followed new scientific and methodological transformations in the genre of publications at the dawn of the XX century and later (the steady advance and genre changes were evident hereafter in the middle and in the late of the XX century). For detailed consideration of the problem, a need for restriction is obvious, so, the proposed review includes only books or monographs on Japanese history (even, just the works presenting and covering its entire history). Both the cases of books in English or in Russian, the "trends of change" turned out to be rather similar. Foremost, at the dawn of the XX century and even earlier, quite different to the old writings on Japanese studies, there was a transition to the coming of "unique and original authorship" works, and actually widely relying on author's personal "life-in-Japan experience". The first scholarly publications of those years abound with data on personalities, on the deeds of notorious historical figures. Among the English-written books on Japanese history, there are impressive one-volume opus of Frank Brinkley (publ. 1912) and the even more grandiose three-volume edition by James Murdoch (published in 1903–1926). As for the Russian scholarly works, the fundamental '*An Essay on the history of Japan*' was prepared by Vassily Kostylev in 1888 on the base of original Japanese documents and materials. Each of the three above mentioned authors had a significant practical experience of staying in Japan for a long time (due to diplomatic, journalistic or some other activities of an author). The above facts are quite enough to assess the depth and significance of these first scholarly publications on the history of Japan (Fig. 1).

The shifts in political history and global changes often proved to be a powerful push-factor for the emergence of new publications about Japan. For Russia, one of such a reasoning incentive was the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–1905. Another serious reasons for the speedy rise of the "publication activity" in Russia were the Japanese Siberian Intervention in 1918–1922 and, afterwards in the 1930s, — Japan's aggressive plans against China and Manchuria (including the Soviet-Japanese border conflicts on the lake Khasan 1938 aka the Changkufeng Incident, and on the river Khalkhin Gol aka the Nomonhan Incident 1939). The threads on Japan has become topical and had led to the emergence of a massive flow of publications, often politically and ideologically biased, but at the same time they were distinguished by an extremely lively speech and an approach to the raising of questions. However, in general the period specifics can be characterized as a variety of small forms and genres (from propaganda posters, cartoons, leaflets — and up to scientific publications, of course, fully accordant to ideology and the spirit of the times). In the frames of the theme discussed, it can be hard to draw any parallels somehow regarding the publications exactly on the history of Japan as a whole. However, it should be noted that for the U.S., that time turned out to be an extremely significant period of the very creation of such a scientific discipline as Japanese studies — thanks to the endeavours of Edwin Reischauer and Serge Eliseeff (an American born in Tokyo, and a Russian emigrant graduated from Tokyo Imperial University). For the Japanology in Soviet Union (despite the



*Fig. 1.* Vassily KOSTYLEV, 1888 [in Russian]. Frank BRINKLEY, 1912.  
James MURDOCH, vols. I-III, 1903, 1910, 1926

incredible losses of qualified specialists on Oriental studies due to Stalin's repressions 1937–1938) it was the time when the Japanese studies in Soviet Russia (especially the vision and the treatment for the History of Japan) started acquiring its specifically Marxist peculiarities. Moreover, on the reason of ideologically compliant "decisions of the Communist Party and Soviet Government" in 1929 (about the purposes of Oriental studies) and 1934 (on the teaching of History), all the relevant subjects like History and Oriental studies as well, and, for sure, the History of Japan had been allocated as an independent fields of scholarly research and particular disciplines in science. Such circumstances formed the background for publishing of '*A History of Japan, a brief essay*' by Evgeny Zhukov, 1939. Being the first consistent description of Japanese history done accordingly the perception principles of Marxist methodology, the book had gained the position of a fundamental manual and basic reference book on the history of Japan for many generations of Russian historians (at least until the end of the 1960s) (Fig. 2).

The second half of the XX century (1940s — 1980s) had brought a remarkable change — there was a transition to the problem-oriented historical approach in monographs. Among the Russian books that fully outline of Japanese history, there was such a big event as the publication of '*A History of Japan from Ancient Times to Nowadays*' by Khaim Eidus, 1968. Perhaps, it is worth to make a special emphasis that this book was rather compact in volume, but impressively easy to read being very intelligible in terms. The problem-oriented historical approach combined with a focus on regional studies (in accordance with the spirit of time) was also embodied in the outstanding two-volume monograph by E.Reischauer (with co-authors). The two-volume '*East Asia*' was published in English at the turn of 1950–1960 (U.S.); the volumes were named quite in line with the spirit of the "modernization theory" by E.Reischauer. The first volume was published under the title '*The Great Tradition*' (1958), and the second one — '*The Modern Transformation*' (1965). The problem-oriented approach is also evident in remarkable three-volumes '*History of Japan*' by George Sansom (published in the U.S., 1958, 1961, 1963) (Fig. 3).

In the 1980s — 1990s, the tendency to produce fundamental publications or monographs prepared by a group of authors from one or another particular scientific institution, had started to prevail. The most ambitious project of this kind in English was the '*Cambridge History of Japan*' in 6 volumes published in 1989–1999 in the United Kingdom of Great Britain (it took a dozen years to complete the project). Almost the same time, in Russian, '*A History of Japan*' in 2 volumes was published by the Institute of Oriental Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences) and the Association of Japanologists, 1998 (Fig. 4). In addition, well-known for humanitarians, reference books and manuals on the history of Asian and African countries (ISAA, if to be abbreviated in Russian) published by Moscow and Leningrad Universities, as well as other institutions of higher learning had a lot of common with



Fig. 2. Evgeny ZHUKOV, 1939 [in Russian]. Khaim Eidus, 1968 [in Russian]



Fig. 3. Edwin REISCHAUER, vols. 1-2, 1958, 1965. George SANSOM, vols. 1-3, 1958, 1961, 1963 [in English]

these works (though not covering all periods of Japanese history, but with clear periodization division in middle ages, pre-modern, modern times, etc.).

The dawn of the XXI century in Russia revealed a new tendency in compiling collective monographs written by authors from several different scientific institutions. For example, among such works there is a number of books edited by Alexander Mescheryakov; '*A History of Japan*' edited by Dmitry Streletsov, 2015, etc. A sort of an addition to this book could have been another important publication under his editorship — '*Japan in the Epoch of Great Transformations*', 2020 (Fig. 5). Although this book does not set out the history of Japan throughout its entire length, it profoundly and convincingly presents a number of facets in the evolution of Japan over the last century and



*Fig. 4. History of Japan 1998 in 2 volumes, IOS RAS = IVRAN, Moscow [in Russian]. Cambridge History of Japan 1989-1999 in 6 volumes [in English]*



*Fig. 5. [edited by Dmitry Streletsov] A History of Japan, 2015; Japan in the Epoch of Great Transformations, 2020, etc. [in Russian]*

a half. Concluding this brief review of historiography on Japan (in Russian and in English publications), we should note that through the XX century scholarly approaches to the general review works on the history of Japan as a whole have changed significantly, showing the new trends hardly expected before.

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