

ISCKMC 2022**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****"HISTORY OF BORDERLANDS" AND QING-OIRAT RELATIONS**

Dordzhi Gennadievich Kukeev (a)*, Rakhat Sansyzbaevich Beisebaev (b),
Elmira Bolotbekovna Turdumatova (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Pushkin str., Elista, Russia, kukeevd@list.ru

(b) Bishkek Humanities University named after K. Karasaev, Ch. Aitmatov Ave., 27, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan,
rbeisebaev@bhu.kg

(c) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Pushkin atr., Elista, Russia, elmira4@yandex.ru

Abstract

The article discusses some features in the study of the history of the Oirats. Oirats in the historical science of China constitute an important component in studies focused on the "history of the border regions." Currently, world oriental studies are actively researching the history of the formation of the borderlands of Central Asia, which includes the territories of China, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and other areas. The authors have researched the trends in Chinese historiography on the topic of the report. The authors also present a report on modern studies of the 21st century in foreign historiography, whose adherents refer to the concept known as the "New Qing History". In this scientific field, the emphasis is on the fact that the Manchu origin of the Qing power directly influenced the multi-ethnic essence of the Qing Empire, which most of all focused on the border regions of the empire. Non-Chinese ethnic groups were located on the border territories of the empire, including the Oirat ethnopolitical formations. The Manchu elites adopted a more flexible approach due to their non-Han origins. The Manchu elites developed institutions and frontier policies that were different from those of the previous proper Chinese dynasties.

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1. Introduction

The 18th century in the history of both the Far East and Central Asia was marked by intense Qing-Oirat relations, which were recorded in many Manchu and Chinese materials (Kukeev, 2021, p. 259). The huge mass of these materials allows modern researchers to search, select and study historical evidence more actively in specialized scientific institutions formed in China, engaged in studying the borders of China. One of the central places in these studies belongs to the history of the Oirats. Thus, the Center for the Study of the Geography and History of the Formation of China's Borders under the Academy of Social Sciences of the People's Republic of China 中国社会科学院中国边疆史地研究中心, Research Center for the History and Geography of the Border Regions and Nationalities of China at the Central University of Nationalities 中央民族大学中国边疆民族地区历史与地理研究中心 and the School of Classics of People's University 中国人民大学国学院 in their research pay a lot of attention to the study of the history of the Oirats as part of the history of the border of China, in which lies the historical concept (历史概念) of looking at the borderlands. Among the journals published by the above-described Chinese academic institutions, it should be noted as “Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu” 中国边疆史地研究, “Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikang” 西域历史语言研究集嗶, “Ming Qingshi” 明清史, “Xiyu yanjiu” 西域研究, “Zhongyang minzu daxue xuebao” 中央民族大学学报, “Xibei minzu yanjiu” 西北民族研究, “Xibu menggu luntan” 西部蒙古论坛. Researchers of the Academy of Social Sciences of the People's Republic of China in 1988 published a monograph “The Frontier Policy of the Qing Era” 清代边疆政策, edited by Ma Dazheng 马大正 and Ma Zhuheng 马汝珩 (Qingdaidy, 1988) and make a survey of the written sources, analyze the activities of “Lifanyuan” and “Libu”, the structure of the banners, and describe the official vision of the borderland policy of the Qing court in the historical science of China. The central idea in their research is the principle of “Great Unity” 大一统 as an eternal union of various ethnic groups living in China within the modern borders.

2. Problem Statement

As noted above, there is a noticeable focus on the study of the history of the border regions in the historiography of China, and it make growing the number of publications in a periodicals and collections of materials in Chinese. In addition, we can see a new trend in the study of the history of the formation of the Qing borders and relations with the Oirat khanates, which characterized the introduction of Manchu sources to scientific circulation and their study. The most concentrated and streamlined part of the documents in the Manchu language is found in the First State Historical Archive in Beijing which counts 2 million units and in the archive of the Museum of the Imperial Palace in Taipei in its composition of 387 thousand units (Wu, 2007, p. 56). Despite the quantitative predominance of materials in Beijing, the First Historical Archive of China did not become a "pioneer" in introducing Manchu materials on the history of the Oirats into scientific circulation. A Manchu scholar from Taiwan, Zhuang Jifa in 1977 published Manchu decrees and reports of military dignitaries addressed to Emperor Kangxi on the course of military campaigns against the Zungar leader Galdan (Zhuang, 1977), and in 1987, a monograph by

Chen Jiexiang was published with Manchu documents on the Qing-Zungar confrontation during Galdan reign (Chen, 1987).

3. Research Questions

Disclosure of the description of the subject of the article is based on the activities of the specialists of Asian researches representing various institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Thanks to the joint activity of domestic orientalists in 2001, came out the collective work “Chinese Borders: History of Formation”. This work presented for the first time a long historical process of formation of the territory of the Chinese state (Myasnikov & Stepanov, 2001). In 1997 was published Kychanov’s “The Nomadic States from the Huns to the Manchus”, which was republished in 2010 under the title “The History of the Ancient and Medieval States Bordering China (from the Huns to the Manchus)” (2010). In 2018, a monograph by Volobuev (2018) “Map of the Zungarian state in 1738 by Renat as a Historical and Geographical Source” is dedicated to the historical map of Zungaria, made by the Swedish officer Renat, during his stay in the Zungar Khanate. Here we would like to point out important distinguishing features that reflect the growing trend that is taking place in foreign Oirat studies, which is being influenced by changes in research on Qing history. First, it should be emphasized the importance of using Manchu-language sources in the study of the history of the Qing Empire, which now makes it possible to acquire more complete information about historical events and personalities that are not available in Chinese sources. Secondly, it would be useful to remind that historical research based on Manchu-language sources gave birth to a new scientific direction known as the “New Qing history”. This direction recognizes that the Qing was an empire that ruled not only the Chinese but also many other ethnic groups (Crossley, 1999; Dmitriev & Kuz'min, 2014; Elliott, 2014; New Qing, 2004). The special attention of the New Qing history focuses on the multi-ethnic character of the empire, which served as a powerful stimulus that gave birth to a new sub-theme, where the border regions of the Qing with non-Chinese ethnic groups in spotlight (Elliott, 2014; Millward, 1998; Newby, 2005).

4. Purpose of the Study

One of the goals of this article is to reveal the prerequisites for existing trends in foreign historiography on the subject under study. Thus, Western orientalists were not alien to the study of the history of the border areas of China and Central Asia. It is impossible to begin here without mentioning Owen Lattimore (1962), who is considered the first Sinologist to take an approach to frontier studies that transcends national history. Joseph Fletcher is very well known, who made a certain contribution to the volumes of the “Cambridge History of China” and laid the foundation for all subsequent work related to the Qing frontier. At least this statement is true for the north and west. The history of China's border relations with nomads is the focus of Thomas Barfield's research (Barfield, 2009). In the late 1990s, a new direction appeared, referred to as the "New Qing History". This highlights the fact that the Qing was founded and ruled by non-Han people with strong ties to Central Asia. The New Qing History calls into question one of the central principles of Chinese historiography in the 20th century. Namely, it is doubtful that the "secret" of the Qing dynastic success was the almost complete absorption (or "sinization") of the

Manchus. Evelyn Rousky (Rawski, 1996), James Millward (1998), Mark Elliott (2014), Joan Elverskog (2006), Peter Perdue (2005), and other researchers represent this direction.

5. Research Methods

This scientific research is based on the use of information from the works of modern domestic and foreign historiography, methods of interpretation of traditional texts and formal-logical tools, a systematic analysis of scientific works of representatives of the hypotheses under study, the methods used.

6. Findings

In the Far East recently, new trends have appeared in the study of the history of the Qing empire, and the history of the Oirats, which is reflected in the history of the Qing Oirat relations. These studies would not have been possible without the opening of the funds of the First Historical Archive in Beijing, the publication of its materials, as well as publications of various kinds of Collections, periodicals, and monographic studies. This process began as a process of scientific discovery that continues to this day and has given historians first-hand knowledge of the contents of the many millions of archival materials stored there, most of which date back to the Qing period (1644–1911). Research on these relations is of great interest both in China and beyond. The reason is that these documents are the primary sources, access to which had only a limited circle of people. The circle of persons was limited by the Emperor himself and the members of the Great Council, the number of which did not exceed ten people. The scientific novelty for domestic oriental studies lies in the fact that the application of the above concept when studying the borderlands of the Qing Empire in Central Asia is a more comprehensive approach compared to the traditional "Sinocentric" view of the history of the Manchu Qing. Thus, a comprehensive analysis of the patterns in the formation of phenomena and features that take place in the border areas inherited by the Qing Empire from the Oirats, by studying the geographical area "Xiyu" 西域 as part of the Qing Empire and shortly before that related to the Zungar Khanate, seems to be a very relevant field of study.

7. Conclusion

One of the results of the authors of the studies described above is the recognition of the existence of a special historical identity and orientation towards the frontier under the Qing. This particular identity was, if not completely free, then at least partially freed from the assumptions inherent in the Chinese ideas of "barbarian" and the whole worldview, summarized in the phrase "Hua-yi zhi bian" 華夷之辨 (Differences between Chinese and non-Chinese). The Manchu elites adopted a more flexible approach due to their non-Han origins. The Manchu elites developed institutions and frontier policies different from those of previous dynasties. Thus, the Qing authorities were able to exercise much closer control and establish their power over the border regions.

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