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Revisiting the History of Studying F. B. von Lutke Papers from the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts

Abstract

The article reviews the history of studying Admiral F. B. von Lutke's manuscript legacy. An outstanding navigator, statesman and scientist, founder and first vice-chairman of the Russian

Geographical Society, president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, he was a key figure in the intellectual life of Russia. Lutke's archive contains valuable materials on social history of science in general, as well as on certain branches of knowledge. His papers are scattered over various St. Petersburg and Moscow archives, thus remaining little studied. Using methods of systems analysis, retrospective and comparative approaches, the authors summarize the experience of studying Lutke's papers stored in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA). They have examined published research, as well as manuscript of dissertation of the Admiral's descendant, N. F. Lutke. It is concluded that most documents remained unintroduced into scientific use. However, attempts to investigate and publish Lutke's papers were undertaken by Soviet historians of science after World War II. St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences and Technology holds a unique manuscript "F. P. Lutke – Vice-Chairman of the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–74: Collected Letters and Materials" compiled and prepared for publication under A. I. Andreev. It contains 140 documents from the Central State Archive of Ancient Acts: letters from K. E. von Baer, A. V. Golovnin, E. I. Lamansky, R. F. F. von der Osten-Sacken, O. W. Struve, A. T. Kupffer and others addressed to Lutke; correspondence of Konstantin Nikolayevich; references, notes and projects of L. V. Dubbelt, etc. The authors reconstruct the process of the almanac preparation. Its publication was to coincide with two memorable dates: the 100th anniversary of the Russian Geographical Society and Lutke's 150th anniversary. A review of V. R. Svirskaya (Leikina) reveals that the book remained unpublished for ideological reasons. The authors compare documents from Andreev's collection with sources used in subsequent works devoted to Lutke. They conclude that most documents found in mid-1940s remain unstudied. Publication of the most valuable materials from F. V. Lutke's fond in the RGADA is an important scientific task.

Keywords

F. P. Lutke, Russian State Archives of Ancient Acts, history of navigation, Academy of Sciences, Russian Geographical Society, Konstantin Nikolaevich.

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