

Ivan V. Mushketov - a correspondent of Eduard Suess in Russia: Letters from archives

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There are 21 letters of Ed. Suess to I. Mushketov in the Department of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library in Saint-Petersburg. Written in 1881-1900 the letters are in German (18), French (2), and in Russian (1)!

Ed. Suess published his three-volume geological synthesis "Das Antlitz der Erde" in 1885-1901. He studied original papers on regional geology and was in correspondence with a wide range of geoscientists. Ed. Suess much appreciated works of Russian explorers but felt a lack of information. Finally, he was successful to find such perfect experts on geology of Russia as Ivan V. Mushketov (1850-1902), Alexander P. Karpinsky (1874-1936), and Vladimir A. Obruchev (1863-1956).

In search of information on geology and tectonics of Asia Ed. Suess appealed to I. Mushketov who had explored Central Asia in 1873-1880. Some accounts of I. Mushketov were published in Russian ("Orography of the Northern Tian-Shan", 1877; "Geological studies in Tian-Shan and Pamir", 1877; 1880, etc.), and in French ("Les volcans de l'Asie centrale", 1877; "Les richesses minérales du Turkestan russe", 1878). Ed. Suess has relied upon the experience of a Russian geoscientist and quoted his letter the chapter „Die Beziehungen der Alpen zu den asiatischen Gebirgen“ of the 1st volume of "Das Antlitz der Erde" (1885) (pages 598-603). The first geological map of Turkestan was published by I. Mushketov and G. Romanovsky in 1881.

The two scientists were in correspondence during 20 years. I. Mushketov supplied Ed. Suess with editions of the Russian Geographical Society. They exchanged geological information. Ed. Suess has read the proofs of Mushketov's famous monograph "Turkestan" (1886) and informed his Russian colleague about its recognition in Europe.

I. Mushketov has accepted geological concepts of Ed. Suess and propagated his ideas in the textbook "Physical Geology" (2 vols., editions 1888, 1891). Such Russian 'rock stars' as Vladimir Obruchev, Karl Bohdanovicz, Leonid Lutugin, Valerian Weber, went through Mushketov's geological school at the Mining Institute in Saint-Petersburg.