

# Mapping the Heartlands of Ottoman Empire: Russian Cartographic Project in Anatolia (1829-1835)

Mikhail Baskhanov\*

## Abstract

Russian geographical and cartographic ideas about the Asiatic possessions of the Ottoman Empire before the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29) remained extremely limited. The war spotlighted a great need for the geographical exploration of the territory of Anatolia and the creation of reliable geographical maps of this vast part of the Ottoman possessions. Before the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29), Russian military geographers and topographers did not have the opportunity to carry out works in Anatolia. The short-lived Ottoman-Russian alliance (1833-41) was used to the maximum by the Russian General Staff to deploy large-scale work on mapping the Asiatic territories of the Ottoman Empire. In a short period, experienced officers of the Russian General Staff, like Petr Lvov, Mikhail Vronchenko, and Alexander Diugamel, were posted to Anatolia. They collected a significant array of geographical, military and ethnographic data, to carry out important geodetic and topographic works. This wealth of knowledge was widely used to create sufficiently accurate maps of the Asiatic possessions of the Ottoman Empire. The cartographic appearance of Anatolia, for the first time, received clear outlines on Russian geographical maps. The cartographic project of 1829-35 laid the foundation for the systematic study of Anatolia in Imperial Russia.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Empire, Anatolia, Cartographic, Topographic.

## Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Merkezini Haritalandırmak: Anadolu'daki Rus Kartografi Projesi (1829-1835)

### Özet

Rus-Türk Savaşı'ndan (1828-29) önce, Rusların Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Asya'daki toprakları üzerine coğrafi ve kartografik fikirleri son derece sınırlıydı. Savaş, Anadolu topraklarının coğrafi keşfine ve Osmanlı mülkünün bu geniş bölümünün

\* Prof. Dr., Universty of Glasgow, Glasgow/SCOTLAND, mkbaskhanov@gmail.com,  
DOI: 10.37879/9789751756442.2023.38

güvenilir coğrafi haritalarının oluşturulmasına yönelik büyük bir ihtiyaca dikkat çekti. Rus-Türk Savaşı'ndan (1828-29) önce Rus askerî coğrafyacıları ve topografları Anadolu'da çalışma yapma olanağına sahip değillerdi. Kısa ömürlü Osmanlı-Rus ittifakı (1833-41), Rus Genelkurmayı tarafından Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Asya topraklarının haritasını çıkarmaya yönelik geniş çaplı çalışmalar yapmak için azami ölçüde kullanıldı. Kısa sürede Rus Genelkurmay Başkanlığı'nın Petr Lvov, Mihail Vronchenko, Alexander Diugamel gibi deneyimli subayları Anadolu'ya gönderildi. Bu subaylar, önemli jeodezik ve topografik çalışmaları yürütmek için kayda değer bir dizi coğrafi, askerî ve etnografik veri topladı. Bu zengin veri, büyük ölçüde, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Asya'daki topraklarının kafi doğrulukta haritalarını oluşturmak için kullanıldı. Anadolu'nun kartografik görünümü, ilk kez, Rus coğrafi haritalarında ana hatlarıyla belirdi. 1829-35 kartografi projesi, İmparatorluk Rusya'sında Anadolu'nun sistematik olarak incelenmesinin temelini attı.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Anadolu, Kartografi, Topografi.

### **Mapping the Heartlands of Ottoman Empire: Russian Cartographic Project in Anatolia (1829-1835)**

The history of mapping of the Ottoman Empire in Imperial Russia spans over 200 years. During this period, an extensive cartographic archive of the Ottoman Empire was created in Russia, which included general geographical, nautical, special maps, plans of cities and fortresses, maps of border demarcation. Today, this extensive cartographic archive is a valuable source of scientific knowledge. This archive is significantly expanding our knowledge and understanding of the history of the geographical and cartographic study of Türkiye, the history of Russian-Turkish political, military and cultural relations. One of the most interesting episodes of Russian mapping of the Ottoman Empire is the project of the Russian General Staff of 1829-35 to survey and mapping Anatolia and the adjacent Ottoman possessions in the Middle East.

Russian geographical and cartographic ideas about the Asiatic possessions of the Ottoman Empire before the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29) remained extremely limited. The war spotlighted a great need for the geographical exploration of the territory of Anatolia and the creation of reliable geographical maps of this vast part of the Ottoman possessions. Before the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29), Russian military geographers and topographers did not have the opportunity to

carry out works in Anatolia. The short-lived Ottoman-Russian alliance (1833-41) was used to the maximum by the Russian General Staff to deploy large-scale work on mapping the Asiatic territories of the Ottoman Empire.

The Russo-Turkish war (1828-29) clearly pointed to the strategic importance of Anatolia. This part of the Ottoman Empire not only provided a strategic connection between the various parts of the empire, constituted an advanced theatre for the Turkish army in wars with Russia, but was also the main source of supply for the Turkish army with human and material resources. In the era following the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29), attention to Asiatic Türkiye steadily increased in Russian military planning and strategy. Immediately after the war, the General Staff took vigorous measures to map the Asian possessions of the Ottoman Empire extensively. The first Russian mapping encounter with Anatolia is connected with the activities of the General Staff officers, Alexander Dugamel (1829) and Pavel Lvov (1830).

During Russo-Turkish war (1828-29), the General Staff Captain Diugamel (1800-80) was assigned to the headquarters of the army in the field. He saw action, was wounded and captured by the Ottomans. In September 1829 upon his release from captivity, Dugamel was sent to Erzurum to inform the commander-in-chief of Caucasus Corps about cessation of hostilities.<sup>1</sup> Diugamel arrived to Trabzon from Istanbul by sea, then proceeded to Erzurum via Bayburt. On his way back to Istanbul by land route, he observed some inner parts of Anatolia collecting information on settlements and routs. Diugamel travelled through Erzincan, Tokat, Amasya, Bola, and Izmit. All the way he produced route survey drawn to a scale of 1: 84000 (or 1 inch to 1.33 miles). The original manuscript survey was consisted of 42 sheets, it is a unique cartographic material in terms of details, accuracy and surveying skills.<sup>2</sup> Diugamel's mission was the first deep topographic reconnaissance organised by the Russian General Staff to survey and mapping the inner parts of Anatolia, which had previously remained inaccessible to Russian cartographers.

Shortly after Diugamel's trip, the second Russian reconnaissance of the inner parts of Anatolia took place. In March 1830, General Staff Captain Pavel Lvov (1802

1 "Kratkaia zapiska o sluzhbe General'nogo shtaba general-maiora A. O. Diugamelia", Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv (RGVIA), F. 38, Op. 2, D. 360, l. 2.

2 "Al'bom marshrutnykh kart ot russkoi granitsy do g. Erzerum i dalee cherez g. Tokat do g. Gebzu", RGVIA, F. 386, Op. 2, D. 765.

– after 1840) was sent to fill in blanks on the map of Anatolia.<sup>3</sup> He should have surveyed the lines of communications south of the route taken by Staff Captain Diugamel a year earlier. Setting out from Istanbul Lvov travelled through Izmit, Ankara, Sivas, Erzincan, and Erzurum.<sup>4</sup> He produced accurate route surveys and collected valuable geographical data.

The first large-scale Russian reconnaissance of Anatolia took place in December 1832, when Colonel Diugamel was sent to the camp of Ibrahim Pasha, the commander of the Egyptian army, to negotiate the armistice. Diugamel travelled from Istanbul via Konya to Tarsus and Marmaris. On his return way to Istanbul, he travelled through Muğla, Aydın, Izmir, Balıkesir and Mudanya. Diugamel's trip resulted in rich topographic and statistical intelligence. Of particular value were detailed topographic route surveys.

The short-lived Ottoman-Russian alliance (1833-41) was used to the maximum by the Russian General Staff to deploy large-scale work on mapping the Asiatic territories of the Ottoman Empire. For the first time, the Turkish authorities gave Russian researchers access to the deep regions of Anatolia, which marked the beginning of their systematic scientific study in Russia. In February 1833, general Alexander Neidgardt (1784-1845), the Quartermaster General of the Main Staff, promoted a project for a 'complete survey' of Türkiye in Asia with the aim of compile a detailed map of this part of the Ottoman Empire<sup>5</sup>. He received the approval of the Minister of War and Emperor Nicholas I.<sup>6</sup> Two experienced officers of the General Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Pavel Lvov and Captain Mikhail Vronchenko (1801-55), were assigned to conduct a survey of Türkiye in Asia. They travelled under the diplomatic cover being posted to the Russian consulates in Alexandria (Lvov) and Izmir (Vronchenko) as members of consulate's staff.

Lieutenant-Colonel Pavel Lvov was the first officer to travel to Türkiye.<sup>7</sup> He

3 "Kratkaia zapiska o sluzhbe General'nogo shtaba polkovnika L'vova", RGVIA, F. 395, Op. 29, D. 405 (1837). l. 4 *ob.*

4 "Zapiska General'nogo shtaba polkovnika L'vova", 22/03/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 148, l. 7 *ob.*

5 "Doklad general-kvartirmeistera Glavnogo shtaba voennomu ministru", 23/02/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 146, ll. 1-4 *ob.*

6 "Raport general-kvartirmeistera Glavnogo shtaba voennomu ministru", 22/09/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 146, l. 36.

7 More details on Pavel Lvov's mission see: M. K. Baskhanov, "Na kartakh General'nogo shtaba - Levant: istoriia pervoi russkoi razvedyvatel'noi missii v Aziatskuiu Turtsiiu i Siriiu", in Pumpian G. Z. (ed.), *Rossia i Palestina: nauchnye i kul'turnye sviazi*, BAN, St. Petersburg 2018, s. 148-170.

was assisted by Semen Tiutikov, a military topographer, who had experience in topographic surveys of Türkiye in Europe during the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29) and knew spoken Turkish language, and Christopher Buyuklu, a former Turkish subject, who acted as an interpreter.<sup>8</sup>

Early March 1834, Lvov arrived by sea in Trabzon, and travelled to Aleppo via Tokat, Sivas and Gaziantep. From Aleppo he set out for Hama, Homs, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Cairo. In early June, he reached Iskenderun where he stayed for a while sorting out the received intelligence. He compiled a detailed route survey along the Black Sea coast from Trabzon to Fatsa and further east through Sivas, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Jaffa to the Isthmus of Sinai. On the base of astronomical observations, Lvov determined the geographical coordinates of the cities of Trabzon and Aleppo, the longitude of Sivas, Homs and Jaffa. Lvov compiled a description of the Trabzon pashalik (*paşalık*), updated the topographic plan of Trabzon and produced a plan of Aleppo.

In October 1834, Lvov left Iskenderun for Syria and Eastern Anatolia, the latter was almost unknown to the Russian General Staff. Having completed his work, Lvov headed deep into Anatolia, visiting Elazığ, Malatya, Sivas, and Tartus. Early winter he travelled from Tartus to Cyprus and Beirut. Late winter he conducted a route surveys (near 500 miles) of vast unmapped areas of Syria. Early spring, Lvov travelled from Beirut to Iskenderun, and further north to Malatya, Erzincan, and Trabzon. In April 1835 he finished surveys and left Trabzon for Russia.

In total, during his works in Türkiye in Asia and Syria, Lvov gathered geographical and military information on the countries and territories he visited, and produced more 6,000 miles of detailed route surveys. He also produced detailed topographic plans of Trabzon, Sivas, and Aleppo.<sup>9</sup> Lvov compiled an important 'Military Inquiry Map of Eastern Anatolia' which was based on his own intelligence collected during mission and all the latest sources.<sup>10</sup> It was the first Russian map of this part of Türkiye in Asia. Colonel Lvov also compiled a 'Map of Syria', which was published (1837) by the Military Topographic Depot of the Russian Main Staff.

8 "Raport general-kvartirmeistera Glavnogo shtaba voennomu ministru", 28/07/1833, RGVIA, F 38, Op. 5, D. 148, ll. 14 *ob* -15.

9 "Raport General'nogo shtaba podpolkovnika L'vova general-kvartirmeisteru Glavnogo shtaba", 17/01/1838, RGVIA, F 38, Op. 5, D. 148, l. 343.

10 "Voенно-rasproснаia karta Vostochnoi Anatolii", RGVIA, F 450, Op. 1, D. 405.

In March 1834, Captain Mikhail Vronchenko, who had previous experience in geodetic work in Türkiye in Europe during the Russo-Turkish war (1828-29), was assigned to conduct a survey of Western Anatolia. Vronchenko was instructed to explore and survey in detail the space between the Black, Marmara and Mediterranean Seas, and to make accurate determinations of the geographical coordinates of the most important points as well as to compile route descriptions. The intelligence was required for creating a general map of Türkiye in Asia, which was not yet available in Russia.

Vronchenko's trips to Anatolia took place in 1834 and 1835. Early March 1834, he arrived to Izmir via Istanbul. Having received the Sultan's *firman*, he travelled from Izmir through Ankara to Sinop, Samsun, Tokat and Kayseri to the Taurus ridge. Then he again turned north towards Sinop and later reached Izmit. From Izmit he travelled to Konya, reached the Mediterranean Sea, and returned to Izmir by the sea. Vronchenko's travels of 1834 and 1835 are marked on his report map of military topographic and astronomical works.<sup>11</sup>

In winter in Izmir, Vronchenko put his field diary entries in order, drew up routes surveys and calculated astronomical observations. In March 1835 he set out for second leg of his journey in Anatolia. He travelled from Izmir to Muğla, completing survey of the road, which he could not pass through in the autumn of 1834 due to illness. Then he travelled to Konya, Tarsus, and Adana. Near Adana, on the limits of Egyptian Khedive possessions, he was briefly detained as a spy, but was soon released and continued his journey. From Adana he proceeded to Nigde, Kırşehir, Ankara, Isparta, and Aydin, and finally returned to Izmir. From Izmir, Vronchenko made a short trip to Istanbul for making astronomical determinations. The plague epidemic that broke out in Türkiye at that time greatly hindered the work.

On return from to Izmir, Vronchenko put in order collected intelligence and set out for his last trip to Türkiye in Asia to visit the Sea of Marmara. In December 1835 he completed his task and returned to Russia via Istanbul, Wallachia and Moldavia.

Most of Vronchenko's works were secretive and kept from the wider public, nevertheless he managed to get brilliant results.<sup>12</sup> He carried out a topographic

11 "Otchetnaia karta topograficheskikh rabot v Maloi Azii", RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 147. l. 17.

12 "Obozreniia puteshestviia po Maloi Azii i sobrannykh v nei svedenii v 1834 i 1835 godakh", RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 147.

survey of more than 6,250 miles, compiled 128 route survey sheets and drew up 14 topographic plans, including those of Bursa, Izmir, Ankara, Sinop, Amasya, Tokat, Kayseri, etc. He determined geographical position of more than 100 places across Anatolia, including Adana, Aydin, Aksaray, Ankara, Amasya, Bursa, Izmir, Konya, Samsun, Sinop, and others. As a supplement to the main task, it was received a wealth of geographical and military information, as well as intelligence on economic condition and trade of Anatolia.<sup>13</sup>

The major cartographic work of Vronchenko for that period was associated with his 'Map of Asia Minor', published in 1836 by the Military Topographic Depot.<sup>14</sup> The map was being hailed as a milestone in the development of Russian mapmaking of Ottoman Empire. It was the first Russian truly systematic map of the region, constructed on geodetic data and astronomical determinations, albeit without a mathematically precise grid. This outstanding map is illustrative of the progress of cartographic standardisation and of changing nature of intelligence collection and mapmaking skills.

Apart of Lvov and Vronchenko's travels, one more intelligence mission was sent to the depth of Anatolia. In 1833, General Staff Captain Wilhelm Lieven (1800-80) was sent to Anatolia to oversee the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops of Ibrahim Pasha. He took advantage of the trip for topographic reconnaissance. Lieven travelled from Istanbul through Iznik, Sogut, Kutaya, Afyonkarahissar, Isakli and Ladik to Konya and returned back by the same road. During the trip, Lieven compiled highly accurate route surveys on 20 sheets.<sup>15</sup>

Of the other Russian cartographic works that appeared in the period described, it should be noted the topographic survey of the state border between the possessions of the Russian and Ottoman empires in Transcaucasia. In accordance with the Treaty of Edirne (1829), some Turkish lands in Transcaucasia were conceded to Russia.<sup>16</sup> To draw the line of the new state border, a joint Russian-Turkish demarcation commission was formed. The demarcation commission was in charge

13 M. Vronchenko, *Obozrenie Maloi Azii v nyneshnem ee sostoianii, sostavlennoe puteshestvennikom M. V. [Survey of Asia Minor in its current state, compiled by the traveller M. V.]*, Parts 1-2, St. Petersburg 1839-1840.

14 "Karta Maloi Azii", RGVIA, F. 450, Op. 1, D. 280, and for a manuscript copy see RGVIA, F. 386, Op. 2, D. 768.

15 "Marshrutnye karty ot g. Kutakhiiia v g. Kon'ia i iz g. Isakly v g. Sogut", RGVIA, F. 450, Op. 1, D. 863.

16 For more details see: Anita L. P. Burdett, *Caucasian Boundaries. Documents and Maps 1802-1946*, Archive Editions, London 1996.

of a topographic survey of the new line of the state border. In 1834 the survey of the area from the eastern coast of the Black Sea to the Shuragel region (Arpachay river) was carried out by military topographers of the Russian Caucasian Corps, and a detailed map of border line was produced to a scale of 1: 84000.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of the implementation of a major cartographic project in Anatolia, important geographical, economic and military information was obtained, as well as a huge array of topographic surveys and astronomical definitions, which were fully used for the purposes of mapping Anatolia. The cartographic appearance of Anatolia, for the first time, received clear outlines on Russian geographical maps. The cartographic project of 1829-35 laid the foundation for the systematic study of Anatolia in Imperial Russia. Mapping and mapmaking of Anatolia played an instrumental role in Russian foreign and defence policy towards Ottoman Empire. This project is one of many traces of shifting Russian geopolitical interests and vision to Türkiye in Asia. It also illustrates how new geographical and cartographic knowledge changed the Russian perception of the strategic importance of Ottoman territories in Asia.

17 “Topographicheskaiia s”emka gosudarstvennoi granitsy mezhdru vladeniiami Rossiiskoi imperii za Kavkazom i vladeniiami Turetskoi imperii v Azii”, RGVIA, F. 846, Op. 16, D. 25503.

## **Bibliography**

### **Archives**

#### **Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voенno-Īstoricheskii Arkhiv (RGVIA),**

“Al’bom marshrutnykh kart ot russkoi granitsy do g. Erzerum i dalee cherez g. Tokat do g. Gebzu”, RGVIA, F. 386, Op. 2, D. 765.

“Doklad general-kvartirmeistera Glavnogo shtaba voennomu ministru”, 23/02/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 146, ll. 1-4 *ob.*

“Karta Maloi Azii”, RGVIA, F. 450, Op. 1, D. 280.

“[Kratkaia zapiska o sluzhbe General’nogo shtaba general-maiora A. O. Diugamelia]”, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 2, D. 360, l. 2.

“[Kratkaia zapiska o sluzhbe General’nogo shtaba polkovnika L’vova]”, RGVIA, F. 395, Op. 29, D. 405 (1837). l. 4 *ob.*

“Marshrutnye karty ot g. Kutakhiia v g. Kon’ia i iz g. Isakly v g. Sogut”, RGVIA, F. 450, Op. 1., D. 863.

“Obozreniia puteshestviia po Maloi Azii i sobrannykh v nei svedenii v 1834 i 1835 godakh”, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 147.

“Otchetnaia karta topograficheskikh rabot v Maloi Azii”, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 147, l. 17.

“Raport General’nogo shtaba podpolkovnika L’vova general-kvartirmeisteru Glavnogo shtaba”, 17/01/1838, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 148, l. 343.

“Raport general-kvartirmeistera Glavnogo shtaba voennomu ministru”, 22/09/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 146, l. 36.

“Raport general-kvartirmeistera Glavnogo shtaba voennomu ministru”, 28/07/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 148, ll. 14 *ob* -15.

RGVIA, F. 386, Op. 2, D. 768.

“Topographicheskaia s”emka gosudarstvennoi granitsy mezhdru vladeniiami Rossiiskoi imperii za Kavkazom i vladeniiami Turetskoi imperii v Azii”, RGVIA, F. 846, Op. 16, D. 25503.

“Voенno-rasproснаia karta Vostochnoi Anatolii”, RGVIA, F. 450, Op. 1, D. 405.

“Zapiska General'nogo shtaba polkovnika L'vova”, 22/03/1833, RGVIA, F. 38, Op. 5, D. 148, l. 7 ob.

### **Literature**

Baskhanov, M. K., “Na kartakh General'nogo shtaba - Levant: istoriia pervoi russkoi razvedyvatel'noi missii v Aziatskuiu Turtsiiu i Siriiu”, in Pumpian G. Z. (ed.), *Rossiia i Palestina: naychnye i kul'turnye sviazi*, BAN, St Petersburg 2018, s. 148-170.

Burdett, Anita L. P., *Caucasian Boundaries. Documents and Maps 1802-1946*, Archive Editions, London 1996.

Vronchenko, M., *Obozrenie Maloi Azii v nyneshnem ee sostoianii, sostavlennoe puteshestvennikom M. V. [Survey of Asia Minor in its current state, compiled by the traveller M. V.]*, Parts 1-2, St Petersburg 1839-1840.