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Viewing the 19<sup>th</sup> - century Kazakh nomads through the lens of Russian ethnographers

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## **Abstract**

Ethnographic findings of Russian colonial representatives are the main sources for studying the Steppe inhabitants from the time of their first contact with the Russian Empire until the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917. Generally, such ethnographic accounts bring biases and prejudices to describing the nomads' traditions and mores, portraying them as “backward people”, who need to be civilized according to “European standards”.

By implementing content method analysis, my research paper aims to scrutinize the extent of partiality, inaccuracies, and contradictions between different ethnographic narratives to learn more about the Kazakhs of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the time of the intensive incorporation of the Steppe in the Russian Imperial colonial system.

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## Introduction

“Can the Subalterns speak?” is a prominent essay by Gayatri Spivak, in which she questions the validity of primarily white and mostly European ethnographers in adequately addressing the customs, traditions, and religions of the natives. One of the essay’s key points is that the distortion of data that reflects the nature of research objects occurs due to the different world perceptions between white scholars and native peoples. The narratives of the metropolitan ethnographers frequently displayed the indigenous as deprived of any civilization and therefore needing to be colonized and brought to civility. In terms of Kazakh Steppe, in academic and scientific circles, the voluminous paper “The description of the Kirgiz-Kazak, or Kirgiz - Kaisak, hordes, and steppes” by Aleksey Levshin is considered the authoritative one, which compiled fragmented information about the Kazakhs into one holistic one and presented it to the European audience. For his part, Aleksey Levshin is very confident in terms of the credibility of his research sources. Thus, in the preface of his paper, he asserts the following: “The circumstances under which I gathered data were so favorable and sources so credible, and finally, I repeat, so little is known about the Kazakh Hordes that I found my obligation to shed light on their past and current conditions.”<sup>1</sup>

Levshin’s research papers were published in 1832 as the outcome of his three-year academic efforts. He was quite dramatic in his findings about Kazakhs’ mores and traditions, and the reading audience was swayed by Levshin’s negativity. Two years earlier, another Russian high-ranking military official, Semyon Bronevskii, published the work with some positive comments about Kazakhs’ social behavior, despite not being fully favorable to Kazakhs. Unlike Levshin, who conducted his research mostly at libraries and archives, Bronevskii wrote his notes after direct observation of Kazakhs, which lasted for 20 years. Then, why was

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<sup>1</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз - казачьих, или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 3-4.

Levshin so negative about the Kazakhs' moral traits based on what he called "credible sources" while at the same time neglecting Bronevskii's eyewitness memos? Alima Bissenova partially answers this question. "In pre-revolutionary Russia, ethnography was perhaps even more of a "servant of colonialism" than anywhere else because knowledge about the culture of "Asians" was collected and produced most often by colonial officials,"<sup>2</sup> - she writes - "Their activities in the administrative apparatus or the army gave them access to the field and the opportunity to communicate with the natives; however, the need to solve imperial tasks often distorted or clouded the scientist's view."<sup>3</sup> Here, it is essential to note that the thesis does not make clear academic gradation of who can be called Russian ethnographers. In my case, it is rather all officials, military personnel, missionaries, and doctors. Thus, I would like to draw attention to the fact that I apply the term "ethnographers" based on the ethnographic work they produced and not on their educational and academic credentials.

My research follows a similar line of argument and explores the scale and features of "ethnographic distortions" through a qualitative content analysis method. I compare data from the Russian ethnographers' research papers, then assess their language tone (negative, positive, or neutral) and the rhetoric they used to justify the colonization of the Kazakh steppe. I will try to find the answers to the questions: What did Russian ethnographers think about Kazakh religion, traditions, and lifestyle? How did they depict Kazakhs in their researchers' findings, and how did those findings support the colonization of the Kazakh steppe? Were there any contradictory narratives and statements in their papers while describing the Kazakhs? My research timeframe is the 19<sup>th</sup> century period.

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<sup>2</sup> Бисенова, «Поле и жизнь: размышления «укорененного» антрополога», 134.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## **Literature review**

The literature review is to cover two sections. The first section explores the literature of Kazakhstani and Russian authors after 1991, and the second part touches upon the research papers of scholars at international institutions. It is worth noting that although Soviet historiography also paid substantial attention to the Russian Empire's ethnography of Kazakhs, I abstained from reviewing the Soviet period literature for two reasons. The first reason is that studying Soviet Kazakh ethnography is beyond the scope of my research project. The second reason is the strong influence of Marxist-Leninist ideology. What I mean by the Leninist–Marxist ideology is that it is doubtful to consider the Kazakh nomadic society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the lens of the Leninist–Marxist ideology of class struggle. As an example, consider the work of the Soviet historian Ermukhan Bekmakhanov, “The Accession of Kazakhstan to Russia”, date of publication 1957. In the introduction of the book, the author several times focuses on the presence of class struggle between the feudal stratum and the working class in pre-revolutionary Kazakhstan. Hence, the theory of class struggle in Marxism implies the presence of the bourgeoisie and the working class, but the Kazakhs of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had neither a class of the bourgeoisie nor a class of workers in factories. My position when arguing about the excessive influence of Marxist-Leninist ideology is that Soviet scientists were under duress to interpret history from the point of view of the communist ideology of the class struggle, where it was necessary to divide society into oppressors and oppressed. At the same time, I argue that in the Kazakh society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were internal conflicts and internecine strife, but they were more of a tribal nature, and therefore the theory of class struggle is simply not applicable to of the nomads of that time.



## Part 1: Literature of Kazakhstani and Russian Authors

This section of the literature review covers research papers by Kazakhstani and Russian authors after the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. In this regard, the most comprehensive approach to studying the ethnography field in Kazakhstan is taken by Kurmanbek Kosanbayev in the monograph “The History of Formation and Development of Ethnography of Kazakhstan (XVIII-XX centuries).” The monograph highlights three core phases of Kazakh ethnography development: Imperial (tsarist), Soviet, and contemporary (an independent stage development). According to my research goals, the literature review primarily covers the tsarist’s period ethnography. Kosanbayev touches upon the research papers of such Russian ethnographers as Ivan Andreev, Grigoriy Spasskii, Vasily Radlov, Egor Meyendorff, Fedor Herman, Aleksey Levshin, Ivan Blaramberg, Vasily Grigoriev, Pyotr Semenov-Tyan-Shansky, Grigory Potanin, Nikolai Grodekov, and other tsarist representatives. By considering the papers of these ethnographers, Kosanbayev pays primary attention to the domestic and economic aspects reflected in the ethnographic works. One of the monograph's points is that Russian ethnography has negative and positive connotations in representing Kazakhs’ lives and traditions. Further, Kosanbayev reflects two different opinions: the first is in Ivan Yavorsky’s work “Central Asia: Russia’s Cultural Successes and Challenges in It”, which conveys clear chauvinistic and colonial expressions<sup>4</sup> and the second is in the arguments of Vasily Radlov, who claims that Russia in the Steppe is dealing with a stage of civilization opposite to the culture of settled peoples and that it is needed to look at Kazakhs’ actions and behavior from a different perspective.<sup>5</sup>

Further, according to Kosanbayev, Russian ethnographic science did a lot to collect, systematize, classify, and analyze factual data on the traditional way of life, mores, customs,

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<sup>4</sup> Косанбаев, «История становления и развития этнографии Казахстана (XVIII-XX вв.)», 28.

<sup>5</sup> Радлов, Из Сибири.

rituals, and many elements of material and spiritual culture. But the downsides of this historical period are frequent superficial judgments about many complex aspects of the Nomads' history, culture, and ethnography. Often, the assessments of the Kazakh ethnic group include attributions of savagery, ignorance, inertia, laziness, cruelty, unsociability, stubbornness, and many other negative features. Of course, these are manifested elements of both methodological Eurocentrism and great-power chauvinism, especially among those representatives of the Russian bureaucracy who visited the Kazakh lands only on rare occasions. At the same time, those Russian officials, officers, scientists, teachers, and doctors who had lived next to the Kazakhs for a long time expressed themselves as more restrained, democratic, and friendly. They made a significant contribution to the formation of the scientific and ethnographic study of the Kazakh people.<sup>6</sup>

The monograph mentioned above is not Kurmanbek Kosanbayev's sole effort to explore the area of the ethnography of the Kazakh Steppe. In 2019 he collaborated with Aisha Begalieva and published another paper named "The History of the Study of Ethnography of the People of Turkestan in the Works of pre-revolutionary Russian Researchers in the XVIII - early XX Centuries". In this paper, the authors distance themselves from Russian ethnography criticizing Kazakhs and try to display only positive connotations reflected in Russian pre-revolutionary writings. However, in light of the tense relationships between the natives and Slavic settlers, especially on land-related issues, it seems quite arguable when the authors assert that the tsarist government prevented the rapprochement between the Russian and Kazakh peoples. Moreover, according to the authors' point of view, tsarism repeatedly resorted to inciting national discord and enmity, inciting Kazakhs against Russian peasants and vice versa.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, in the authors' opinion, the historical ties between the Kazakh

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<sup>6</sup> Косанбаев, «История становления и развития этнографии Казахстана (XVIII-XX вв.)», 34 - 35

<sup>7</sup> Косанбаев and Бегалиева, «История изучения этнографии народа Туркестана в трудах дореволюционных российских исследователей XVIII - начала XX веков».

and Russian peoples, based on the commonality of their historical destinies and their joint struggle against foreign invaders, were strengthened yearly and not violated under any circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Also, the main weakness of the study is the position of Kosanbayev and Begalieva in exploring Russian ethnographers' only positive reflections relatable to the nomads. This means the authors state that the majority of democratically-minded Russian researchers, due to their honesty, decency, and responsibility to historical science, could not mislead the scientific community, who were deeply interested in the rich history and ethnography of the peoples of Central Asia.<sup>9</sup> However, that statement, to some degree, contradicts Alima Bissenova's standpoint mentioned in the introduction of the thesis that Russian researchers were also "servants of colonialism."<sup>10</sup> What is also worth noting that this monograph fails to mention the ethnographic notes of Semyon Bronevskii, Lev Meyer, Nikolai Krasovskii, and Vladimir Tronov, who deserve particular attention from the perspective of learning about Kazakhs of that period.

Nursan Alimbay and Bolat Smagulov study the works of Russian researchers on the Customary Law of the Kazakhs (late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). They explore the research papers of the chief Russian ethnographers who had contributed to codifying and systematizing the Kazakh legal system and studying the core norms of the Customary Law of the Kazakhs that regulated civic, family, and intercommunity relationships in Kazakh society before introducing the colonial judicial system. The authors highlight the importance of studying the customary law, which role in the life of the traditional society due to the absence of a centralized state apparatus was essential. Accordingly, in the nomadic society, the institutions, norms, and principles of customary legal norms were almost the only regulators of life as an

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Бисенова, «Поле и жизнь: размышления «укорененного» антрополога», 134.

ethnic group.<sup>11</sup> Unlike other Kazakhstani researchers who neglected Bronevskii's ethnographic notes, Alimbay and Smagulov studied Bronevskii and, based on his findings, argue that Islamic ideology permeated significantly into the Kazakh society of that period.<sup>12</sup>

Rustem Dosmurzinov praises the famous ethnographer Grigory Potanin (1835–1920) for his rigorous folklore studies, including genealogical legends and oral and musical folk heritage of the Kazakhs. Along with Potanin's enormous contribution to studying Kazakhs' cultural heritage, Dosmurzinov points out that Potanin treated the Kazakh people and their culture with great reverence.<sup>13</sup> According to him, Potanin belongs to the cohort of progressive Russian scientists of the humanistic, democratic, educational direction. Thus, Potanin's assertion that "Russian intelligentsia must take measures to protect natives from extinction, to make them capable of self-preservation... inspire self-confidence, concern for their future"<sup>14</sup> demonstrates his favorable and impartial attitude toward the Kazakhs.

Another Kazakhstani historian, Jaras Ermekbay, notes that the local branch of the Russian Geographical Society and other statistical committees that studied the Kazakh steppe until 1917 contributed to gathering historical and cultural data and ethnographic data relatable to the Kazakhs.<sup>15</sup> The author lists the names of principal Russian ethnographers and their papers whose findings of Kazakhs made known to the World previously obscured vast Central Asian region and culture and traditions of its habitants. Ermekbay is also one of the few scholars who mentions the ethnographic contribution of the renowned Russo – Ukrainian painter and poet Taras Shevchenko during his ten years of exile in the Kazakh steppe. At the same time, I argue that the paper suffers from an accurate representation of Chokan

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<sup>11</sup> Alimbay and Smagulov, "Contribution of Russian Researchers in the Collection and Study of Materials on the Customary Law of the Kazakhs (late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries)", 85.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 88 – 89.

<sup>13</sup> Досмурзинов, «Этнография казахского народа в работах Григория Николаевича Потанина», 107.

<sup>14</sup> Потанин, «Доклад Западно-Сибирского отделения Русского географического общества», 35.

<sup>15</sup> Ермеkbай, «Из истории изучения казахского края Российской империи в XVII–XIX веках», 81.

Valikhanov's viewpoints about Aleksey Levshin's monograph. The author asserts that Valikhanov named Levshin the Herodotus of the Kazakh people and praised his monograph as an invaluable scientific asset.<sup>16</sup> While it is a fact that Valikhanov, in his letter to Professor Ilya Berezin, called Levshin "Herodotus of our people" ("thanks to Herodotus of our people Levshin"),<sup>17</sup> there is no evidence that he thought highly of his work. In light of Valikhanov's strong disagreement with Levshin's views on the religiosity of the Kazakhs mentioned by Alima Bissenova,<sup>18</sup> such kinds of inaccuracies falsely increase the credibility of Levshin's ethnographic research may, and to a certain extent, disorient readers.

Unlike Alima Bissenova, Abilseit Muktar highly praises Levshin's knowledge of Kazakhs. For instance, Bissenova writes that there is no direct and explicit data on how often, how far, and under what circumstances Aleksey Levshin traveled to the Steppe to observe the Kazakh.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, Muktar asserts Levshin's collected his material in direct communication with the Kazakhs during the diplomatic service in the Orenburg Border Commission (1820-1822).<sup>20</sup> Bissenova cites Irina Erofeeva, who also asserts that "we should bear in mind that Levshin had relatively little direct contact with the Kazakh people themselves, and therefore did not have any serious grounds for broad generalizations and categorical statements."<sup>21</sup> Another serious contradiction occurs when Abilseit misquotes Levshin and changes the meaning of the text's context from negative to more favorable. Thus, in Levshin's statement: "Had Rousseau lived for several months in the Kazaks hordes and known these people well... so close to the state of his natural man, then, perhaps, then we would not have read his arguments about the inequality of people and the harm of the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Валиханов, Собрание сочинений в пяти томах, Т.1, 164.

<sup>18</sup> Бисенова, «Поле и жизнь: размышления «укорененного» антрополога», 135.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>20</sup> Муктар, «Геродот казахский степей – Алексей Ираклиевич Левшин», 165.

<sup>21</sup> Ерофеева, «Послесловие. А.И.Левшин и его работа «Описание киргиз-казахских, или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 585.

sciences...”<sup>22</sup> Muktar after ellipsis missed the words “through ignorance, rudeness, carelessness, and impulses of passion” which negatively characterize Kazakh people.<sup>23</sup> By doing that, Muktar may have intended to change the flow of Levshin’s work from negative to positive. Consequently, his whole article pursues the objective of extolling Levshin’s endeavors without revealing Levshin’s overt Eurocentric approaches to studying Kazakhs. In addition to that, I contend that Levshin’s monograph has at least two explicit calls to support colonization of the steppe, which I will discuss in the chapter on the Kazakhs’ mores and traditions (Chapter 3 of the thesis).

Another researcher, Olga Gundova takes a somewhat different view on Aleksey Levshin. She says he subscribed to the theory, according to which Kazakhs’ world–historical development lagged behind a civilized society, and the image of Kazakhs was represented with such features as savagery, excessive greed, cruelty, vindictiveness, ignorance, untidiness, and other negative qualities. Such a negative picture of the Kazakhs resulted from the dominance in the Russian public of the Enlightenment philosophy, characterized by the clash of the concepts of “savagery” and “civilization” where non–European peoples ranked at a lower stage of historical development.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, I want to point out that Aleksey Levshin’s scientific endeavors must be respected. Thus, Alima Bissenova points out that Levshin was the first to take on a holistic view of the Kazakhs, “who at that time were not united politically or, perhaps, even ethnically.”<sup>25</sup> By supporting this statement, Paolo Sartori and Pavel Shablei also point out that Levshin, who had access to various archives, could successfully systematize and synthesize

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<sup>22</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз-казахских, или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 68.

<sup>23</sup> Муктар, «Геродот казахский степей – Алексей Ираклиевич Левшин», 169.

<sup>24</sup> Гундова, «Образ казахского народа и казахской степи... в «Описании киргиз-казахских, или киргиз-кайсацких, орд и степей» А.И. Левшина», 132.

<sup>25</sup> Бисенова, «Поле и жизнь: размышления «укорененного» антрополога», 134.

several materials his predecessors prepared.<sup>26</sup> Further, their book “Empire Experiments: Adat, Sharia and Knowledge Production in the Kazakh Steppe” emphasizes Russian ethnographers' efforts in codifying and systematizing Adat and Sharia law in the Customary Law of the Kazakhs for better ruling the Steppe. Amid these discussions, the most valuable narrative is about the scientific study of Russian colonial official Ivan Osmolovskii, who, despite his huge research efforts has mostly been understudied due to the closeness of his research findings to the wider scientific community. The authors highlight Osmolovskii's thorough approach to systematizing the Nomadic norms. Osmolovskii considered it necessary to record what the informants told him and carry out preliminary testing of the prepared materials on their “target audience.”<sup>27</sup> As an example, they cite the situation when Osmolovskii one day, having learned about the meeting of *biys* and honorary Kazakhs in the Mikhailovsky fortification, considered it necessary to read his collection publicly and ask “if they find a lack of it or something contrary to the Kirgiz way of life.”<sup>28</sup>

Regarding the other literature of the post – Soviet Russian scholars, the article “Some Issues of Studying Kazakhs of Asian Russia by Russian Researchers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” by Evgeniy Dmitrienko deserves consideration. It focuses primarily on the Russian researchers who explored the Kazakhs' judicial norms and system. The author asserts that the review of the works of Russian authors determines the relevance, peculiarity, objectivity, sovereignty, and subjectivity when considering certain aspects of Kazakh life.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Russian researchers, considered professionals, came to the Kazakh Steppe to collect, describe, systematize, and publish material on the Nomads, and their efforts deserve respect and attention of descendants.

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<sup>26</sup> Сартори and Шаблей, «Эксперименты империи: адат, шариат и производство знаний в Казахской степи», 75.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 109

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>29</sup> Дмитриенко, «Некоторые вопросы изучения казахов Азиатской России российскими исследователями XIX века», 42.

The last source considering which I would like to end this section is the article by Anna Afanasyeva, “Qazaq Religious Beliefs in the Writings of Russian Doctors during the Imperial Age (1731–1917)”. The author’s research endeavors explore the accounts written by Russian colonial doctors working in the Kazakh steppe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Afanasyeva argues that despite having various mistakes and distortions, those describings include many benefits because doctors had not obliged to gauge the level of Islamization of the Kazakhs, in comparison to Orthodox missionaries, who had to exonerate their failures or inspire others to conduct missionary activities among the Nomads. Further, the article widens the scope of research studies by comparing and observing nomads’ religious faith from medical points of view. That means, being professional medical workers, Russian doctors observed how Kazakhs were practicing their religious feelings, either Islamic or shamanistic for healing and other medical purposes; this to a certain extent helps us estimate the degree of connection of the Nomads to Islam religion or other non – Islamic beliefs.

Overall, the literature about Russian ethnographers, written by post-Soviet Kazakhstani and Russian scholars emphasizes mostly the substantial contribution and role of Imperial ethnographers in forming Kazakh ethnography.

However, at the same time, little ink has been spilled on critically evaluating the Russian ethnographers’ findings in a broader context. In other words, they have mainly accumulated their studies around Levshin’s legacy and consequently paid scant attention to other Russian colonial ethnographic materials. Moreover, the literature of Kazakhstani scholars touches upon specifically “scientific” aspects with no significant conclusions relatable to Russian ethnographers’ justification of the Empire’s expansion into the Steppe, intrusion into Kazakhs’ lives, and harshened tsarist colonial policy. In addition to that, there are no noticeable references to the issue of Orientalism and considerations of it. Kazakhstani



authors do not discuss any oriental views of Russian ethnographers of the Steppe inhabitants and how those views influenced their descriptions of the nomads' lives, mores, religious beliefs, and social behavior. Thus, I argue that, from that point of view, the post-Soviet literature differs from approaches adopted by international, primarily Western scholars. And their points of view are considered in the next section of the literature review.

## **Part 2. Literature of International Scholars**

Unlike most Kazakhstani and Russian scholars, international scholars present a more complex picture of the tsarist ethnographers' efforts that reveal the Empire's affairs to systemize the Steppe's administrative, economic, and colonial governance. Additionally, they also present a broader picture of the adherence of Kazakhs to Islam, another noticeable point that differs in the literature of the international scholars from the findings of their Kazakhstani and Russian colleagues.

One of those comprehensive papers is the book "Knowledge and the Ends of Empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian Rule on the Steppe, 1731–1917" by Ian W. Campbell, who explores economic, religious, demographic, social, and land-related issues arising in the Kazakh Steppe in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus according to Campbell's assertion, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, vigorous attempts to study the Kazakh steppe were made by Russian military officers Peter Shagin and Karl Meier, who gathered corresponding data during their travel to the khanates of Central Asia.<sup>30</sup> Further, regarding Aleksey Levshin's monograph, Campbell's position is slightly ambivalent. Thus, on the one hand, the author asserts that the three-volume monograph resulted from Levshin's ethnographic observations of the Nomads and rigorous exploration of Orenburg's archive. On the other hand, Campbell states that the monograph rested on "two years of archival and library

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<sup>29</sup> Campbell, "Knowledge and the ends of empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian rule on the steppe, 1731-1917", 16.

research in St. Petersburg.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, it is not clear, according to the author’s point of view, to what extent Levshin approached the secondary resources of other authors and data gatherers rather than his observation notes. Nevertheless, Campbell calls Levshin’s work groundbreaking.<sup>32</sup> What is worth noting here is that Campbell does not hesitate to openly speak out Russian imperial ethnographers’ narratives about Kazakhs’ mores and traditions, unlike most Kazakhstan and Russian scholars. The author highlights that the significant chunk of description about the character of Kazakh people was grounded in their nomadism and similarly pessimistic. These gross generalizations of Kazakhs’ character consist of Rychkov’s accusation of ignorance and cunning; Shagin’s views of cruelty; according to Bardanes and Pallas, the Nomads’ excessive suspiciousness towards strangers; and Levshin’s description of Kazakhs’ cowardice and greediness.<sup>33</sup> Campbell points out that the imperial Russian observers were ethnocentric and observed the Kazakhs’ lives through a sedentary European worldview.

Additionally, it is essential to mention that Campbell is one of the few scholars discussing the research outcomes of the lesser-known Russian anthropological observers, Vladimir Tronov and Nikolay Zeland. The results of both observations were to some degree identical and represented a grim picture of the so-called “lower animal life”<sup>34</sup> that Kazakhs led. As a result, emotional language, such as primitive lifestyle, ignorance, laziness, immorality, and other negative connotations describing Kazakhs, prevailed in those two Russian ethnographers’ research findings.<sup>35</sup> In addition, Campbell asserts that, according to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Russian ethnographers, fundamental backwardness of the Steppe was impossible to overcome by any means of regulation and policy.<sup>36</sup>

Another important area to consider is colonial ethnographers' views regarding the degree of the permeation of Islam into the Kazakh Steppe. Campbell states that in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all available data represented that Kazakhs from all corners of the Steppe were barely Muslims.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the paper raises the discussion of Russian colonial officials about the religiosity of Kazakhs; in other words, colonial military and civil representatives doubted to what extent the Kazakhs were true Muslims. The author cites Meyer, who claimed that many Kazakhs had only a vague understanding of Islam religion canons, and the nomadic lifestyle and the surrounding environment of different confessions was the reason.<sup>38</sup> Further, the argumentations of such colonial officials as Krasovskii and Pashino are represented. The former argues that "the Kazak should be considered a Muslim in appearance only, and only temporarily,"<sup>39</sup> and according to the latter's opinion, polygyny was the actual reason for the conversion of Kazakhs to Islam.<sup>40</sup> Robert Crews expresses a similar assumption and states that Russian ethnographers were doubtful about Kazakh's affiliation with Islam. They assert that Catherine's religious policy was inadequate in introducing Islam among the nomads who had a blurred understanding of the faith or whose sympathy for Islam was subtle.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, along with Alima Bissenova, Campbell provides Chokan Valikhanov's strong disagreement with the aforementioned colonial standpoints of Kazakhs' religiosity, especially with Aleksey Levshin's assertions, to which Valikhanov writes his counter-argumentations.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>38</sup> Мейер, Материал, 228.

<sup>39</sup> Красовский, 1:391. 84.

<sup>40</sup> Пашино, "Туркестанский край 1866 г."

<sup>41</sup> Crews, "For Prophet and Tsar Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia", 195.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell, "Knowledge and the ends of empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian rule on the steppe, 1731-1917", 50;

For his part, Alexander Morrison makes a substantial effort to explore understudied ethnographic literature related to the colonization of the Kazakh steppe, namely the report of the Commission for the Inspection of the Turkestan Region led by Senator Count Konstantin Konstantinovich von der Pahlen (1861–1923). Despite the absence of practical implementation and being mainly forgotten after its publishing, the report became a valuable data source available for historians from Soviet archives in Russia and Uzbekistan.<sup>43</sup> The information shed light on many negative spots that had taken place in the so-called Turkestan region, such as rampant corruption, arrogance, incompetence of local colonial officials, and breaches of the law during the design and implementation of a settlement policy.

Similarly, Daniel Brower tries to uncover another previously neglected historical discussion of the contribution of Governor-general Kaufman to the development of ethnographic knowledge in the Turkestan region during his province's rule. Brower asserts that during Kaufman's period in Turkestan (1867–1882), ethnography received substantial attention. Kaufman called on ethnographic data for imperial purposes, with so-called “scientific findings” integral parts of his colonial endeavors.<sup>44</sup> By organizing ethnographic, archaeological, and geological expeditions inside the region and holding an oriental exhibition in St. Petersburg, Kaufman made a significant effort to search for and invite civilian specialists, orientalist, and scholars across the Empire to help develop and promote science in the colony. One particular initiative to portray exotic and little-known Turkestan subjects that deserves special attention is the artwork by painter Vasily Vereshchagin, creation of which was possible only through Kaufman's active administrative and financial support. According to Brower, an oriental art similar to ethnography, the project named “Turkestan

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<sup>43</sup> Morrison, “Sowing the Seed of National Strife in This Alien Region”: The Pahlen Report and Pereselenie in Turkestan, 1908–1910”, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Brower, “*Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*”, 44.

Series” provided metropolitan citizens with realistic pictures of their recently conquered colony.<sup>45</sup>

Along with the authors Paolo Sartori and Pavel Shablei, who were mentioned earlier, Virginia Martin in her book, “Law and Custom in the Steppe. The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century” thoroughly studied the area of the Nomads’ customary law (*Adat*) through the lens of Russian colonial ethnographers. Accordingly, Martin describes how Russian ethnographers perceived Kazakhs’ traditional law institutions and how Russian colonial authorities attempted to govern the nomads by institutionalizing both, *Adat* and Russian colonial legislation. In addition to that, I argue that Martin takes a rigorous approach to studying *barymta*, the nomads’ legitimate judicial instrument of securing social justice in the fragile Kazakh society. Thus, Martin’s main merit is that she explores *barymta* from the point of view that is opposite of the core conception represented by the Russian colonial side. Hence, when the Russian colonial administration and lawmakers regarded *barymta* as a crime,<sup>46</sup> Martin argues that it was “a legitimate custom sanctioned by *Adat*”.<sup>47</sup> To buttress her point Martin refers to “the official in the colonial administration in Turkestan Ivan Ibragimov, who described a case of *barymta* committed in response to the breakdown of *tamyrstvo*, a strong bond of friendship symbolically consecrated by the exchange of gifts”.<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, Martin argues that *barymta* is rather *Adat* regulated “self-justice and integral part of the system”<sup>49</sup> than “arbitrary and unregulated” law practice, as Aleksey Levshin asserts.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 143.

Overall, international institution scholars are more willing to relate ethnographic findings of tsarist representatives to colonial policies in administrative, religious, economic, and land-related areas. Additionally, they are free to speak out about the negative attitude that the majority of Russian ethnographers practiced to represent the peoples of the Steppe.

## **Conclusion**

The Literature Review attempts to examine the literature of Russian ethnographers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in two contexts: the perception of colonial ethnography by post-Soviet Kazakhstani and Russian scholars on the one hand, and international scholars on the other. Succinct overviews of study-related research papers demonstrate that the majority of contemporary Kazakhstani and Russian scientists are still stuck in the framework of Soviet conception; thus, if they make some attempts to challenge colonial ethnographic pasts, they do so only timidly. Unlike their counterparts, international scholars try to make more complex data overviews, explore a wider variety of ethnographic resources, and readily adapt a postcolonial frame to their study of colonial ethnography on the Kazakh steppe.

## **Research design and hypotheses**

In order to answer the research question in due manner, I argue that conventional qualitative content analysis is the most helpful research design to exploit. Cengiz and Karlsson define qualitative content analysis as “a research method that is useful for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”.<sup>51</sup> The data for coding and analyzing is extracted from the materials of Russian ethnographers, whose research endeavors are considered in chapter 1 of the thesis.

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<sup>51</sup> Cengiz and Eklund, “Portrayal of immigrants in Danish media — A qualitative content analysis”, 45.

The hypothesis to achieve research goals is the doctrine of justification of colonialism when colonizers provide moral, cultural, religious, and economic pieces of evidence to substantiate their colonial policies, no matter how brutal and inhumane those actions may be. Thus, the hypothesis reflects the assumption that natives are primitive and barbarian or even non - or less than human; therefore, they can be treated accordingly. The claim of Hanke “if the Indians were considered barbarians, almost anything could be justly done to them by Spaniards. ... even in this twentieth century, the excuse given by Peruvian upper classes for their harsh treatment of the Indian is that they are animals, not men”<sup>52</sup> acts as the basis of this hypothesis. In addition to that claim, Boucher points out that the accounts of anthropologists and explorers, who had been visiting Australia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, depicted Australian Aboriginals as non-human beings and if as human, their place on the scale of civilization was so low that they could not be treated with civility.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, those Aboriginals were regarded as extremely dangerous beings with no humanity patterns and civilization signs that their extermination rather than slavery would be better. Besides this, the case of South Africa needs to mention, where its infamous president Paul Kruger spoke towards blacks or the Kaffir “They are not men”, he exclaimed, “they are mere creatures. They have no more a soul than a monkey has”.<sup>54</sup> Contemporary claims of this nature are regarded as offensive and condemned internationally, yet in the era of colonialism and imperialism those assertions were legitimate and were just a means of confirming the superiority of white colonialists over other persons of color. Correspondingly to this hypothesis, my research project attempts to find out whether there are racial or other superior connotations in the narratives of the Russian

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<sup>52</sup> Hanke, “*The First Social Experiments in America*”, 12-13.

<sup>53</sup> Boucher, “Invoking a world of ideas theory and interpretation in the justification of colonialism”, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Holmes, “*The life story of the President of the Transvaal*”, 65.

ethnographers, travelers, and anthropologists in portraying Kazakhs when such accounts justified colonialism by highlighting Russians' supremacy over the steppe inhabitants.

Also, I argue that since my main research problem is related to the issue of colonialism, I need to consider the aspects of Orientalism. It is undeniably true that, regarding the theme of Orientalism, Edward Said's book "Orientalism" is the methodological centerpiece. For centuries, Said says, Orientalism remained a hegemonic discourse for Europeans, formed and developed quite naturally, but preserving the idea of the supremacy of the "Western man" in his relations with the "East". In addition, Said cites many examples from the history of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries colonial policy, when "academic orientalism" served the state interests and justified colonization. At the same time, the "orientalists" - scientists themselves turned into a special workshop, which allegedly possessed special, unique knowledge about the East and without which the state authorities could not do their Eastern policy.<sup>55</sup> This Said's idea interconnects with Alima Bissenova's interpretation of Russian colonial representatives as "servants of colonialism".<sup>56</sup> One of the first and adamant opponents of Edward Said was the well - known American orientalist B. Lewis, whose criticism begins with the boundaries of the studied "East" defined by Said, as well as Oriental studies. On the one hand, Lewis speaks of an incorrect "narrowing of the East to the Middle East, and the Middle East to its Arabic part, excluding Turkology, Iranian studies, and Semiology".<sup>57</sup>

Regarding Russian Orientalism, Said practically does not consider it. In his book, Said mentions Russia and the Soviet Union only about ten times. However, both Said himself and many followers of his concept unequivocally attribute Russian ideas about the "East" to the

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<sup>55</sup> Соболев, «Историография российского ориентализма: к вопросу о методологии исследования», 40.

<sup>56</sup> Бисенова, «Поле и жизнь: размышления «укорененного» антрополога», 134.

<sup>57</sup> Соболев, «Историография российского ориентализма: к вопросу о методологии исследования», 41.



same "Western" Orientalism, associate it with colonial conquests — primarily in the Caucasus and Central Asia — and put Russia on a par with Great Britain, France, and other colonial powers.<sup>58</sup>

From this account, I find the research efforts of Nathaniel Knight about Russian ethnographer Vasilii Grigoriev valuable. Knight refers to Grigoriev as a colonial administrator rather than an ethnographer and argues that Orientalism was an essential component of Grigoriev's vision.<sup>59</sup> This vision manifested in the idea that Russia carried out the "civilization mission" by bringing the light of civilization to the remote inhabitants of the East<sup>60</sup> mainly due to the superiority of the Russian culture over Central Asian.<sup>61</sup> In the same vein as most Russian ethnographers and colonial officials at that time, Grigoriev was driven by stereotypes regarding Islam, which he associated with fanaticism and violence.<sup>62</sup> As a result, Knight argues that Russian Orientalism was the centerpiece of Russian ethnography, in which the language of seeking "differences" prevailed over the finding of the diversity of the Eurasian cultures.<sup>63</sup> However, Knight also states that Orientalism in Russia had a unique, different character from "Western" Orientalism; accordingly, Said's concept does not fit well on Russian soil. This idea prompted the discussion, where the well-known specialist on Central Asia, Adeb Khalid, provides a counterexample, according to which the activity of orientalist Nikolay Ostroumov in the service of the empire in Tashkent developed the ideas of Said about Russia and proved that Russian Orientalism is very similar to Western and hardly has such a "specificity" that would allow us to talk about the uniqueness of this phenomenon.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>59</sup> Knight, "Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?", 79.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>64</sup> Соболев, «Историография российского ориентализма: к вопросу о методологии исследования», 47.

Here it should be mentioned an American scientist Willard Sunderland, who created several publications on Russia's colonial policy towards the steppe peoples and Central Asia. Perhaps even more consistently than other scientists, Sunderland insists on the actual colonial status of "Asian" territories within the empire, including Siberia, the Volga Region, the Urals, and the Northern Black Sea region. He tries to prove that even if Russia never had a colonial ministry, it had every chance to be created, and consequently, ignoring or non-recognition by the Russians of the imperialist nature of their actions only prevents them from "revealing" their true colonialist inclinations.<sup>65</sup>

Canadian historian David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye takes a different perspective on Russian Orientalism from that of Khalid and writes that Russia itself is an Orient for the West. In his monograph "Russian Orientalism. Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration", the Canadian scholar considers the relations between Russia and Orient from pre-Ordyn times and ends with Aleksandr Prokhanov and Genadij Zyuganov. The Russian Eurocentrism is not entirely "pure" and combines with oriental connotations. For the West, Russia is the cliché, which Karl Marx defines as "semi-Asiatic" and an "Oriental despotism."<sup>66</sup> Schimmelpenninck's arguments find their validity in the confrontation of Russia with the so-called "collective West," where the war in Ukraine, as the political, ideological, and cultural disagreement that has reached its highest point since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, to a certain extent shows that the western world has never regarded Russia as its equal and not an oriental counterpart. In Western eyes, Russia is still an oriental despotic country that is trying to revive its colonial imperial might, and the recent call from Ukrainian President Zelensky to rename Russia Muscovy is a reference to the oriental historical memory of the Russian nation.

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<sup>65</sup> Sunderland, "*Taming the wild field: colonization and empire on the Russian steppe*". 227 - 228.

<sup>66</sup> Schimmelpenninck, "*Russian Orientalism. Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration*".

## **Chapter 1. Introduction to Russian Ethnographers**

### **Introduction**

Earlier in my methodology chapter, I stated that Imperial ethnography provides sufficient data on the role of ethnographers in justifying colonization. I hypothesize that Russian ethnographers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century depicted the Kazakhs partially and thus called for the colonization of the nomads by abolishing their traditional social institutions, which were considered primitive and backward. For instance, the bibliographic index of articles concerning the ethnography of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz from the author Aleksey Haruzin includes 289 pages of ethnographical materials from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the same time, asserting that all materials have appropriate relevance or availability for conducting comparative data analysis and subsequently receiving desirable academic outcomes would be misleading. Unfortunately, many materials are accessible neither in paper nor in digital format. Thus, in the data gathering process and further thoughtful materials evaluation, I compiled ninety ethnographic research papers for data coding and analysis. In this chapter, I will introduce the readers to the authors whose ethnographies I will analyze and tell about their personal and professional backgrounds. The cohort of Russian ethnographers who I present in the thesis varies from military and civil colonial officials to medical workers and representatives of the Russian Orthodox clergy.

Furthermore, along with revealing information about the authors of the ethnographic paper, I provide brief explanations to show how this chapter supports the thesis research goals. I list these materials chronologically according to the date of publication. Personal and academic data about authors are primarily derived from open sources. However, in some instances, the identity of the paper's author was not available; thus, in that case, broader attention was channeled to the research paper itself because it is my conviction that the lack of

information about the author is not a valid reason to disregard the ethnographic paper if it has a particular academic interest and approachable for the aims of the thesis. Thus, the first part of the text is the name of the ethnographic paper, and then it is followed by information about the author and a concise interpretation of the paper and its relevance to the thesis.

### **1.1.Introduction to Russian Ethnographers**

The first author and source to study is the essay “About the Kirgiz” (*O Kypçuzax*) by the Fedor German, who was born in 1789 in Tomsk Province, went to serve in the military and achieved the rank of a colonel. He died in St. Petersburg on July 3, 1852, after a long and severe illness. He came to the Kazakh steppe in 1817, when he was appointed adjutant to the Orenburg Military governor and commander of a separate Orenburg corps P.K.Essen. The latter entrusted him with the border part of his chancellery.<sup>67</sup> In his publications, German first considered the beliefs of the Kazakhs, their customs, and the causes and consequences of *barymta*. In his note, Fedor German writes: “These people are called Kirgiz - Kaysaks, lead a nomadic life in felt huts, called kibitkas, and are divided into three Hordes: Great, Middle and Younger. We will mainly talk about the latter”.<sup>68</sup> Based on the last sentence, it can be assumed that the Kazakhs of the Younger Horde were Fedor German’s core research area. The materials were published in the journal *Herald of Europe*, issues 21 in 1821, 3, 4, and 22 in 1822. Herald of Europe was one of the first Russian literary and political magazines, published in Moscow from 1802 to 1830 in two issues a month. The founder of the magazine was Nikolay Karamzin. The magazine was published in Moscow for the noble intelligentsia. Accordingly, German’s ethnographic materials were for an educated European audience.

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<sup>67</sup> Половцов, Модзалевский, and Курдюмов, «Русский биографический словарь», 443.

<sup>68</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 2.

For the thesis, issues 3 and 4, dated February 22, 1822, are the most significant assistance. In issue 3, Fedor German touches upon the Nomads' religious affairs, more precisely, the Kazakhs' controversial and superficial attitude to Islam and their firm rejection of the efforts to convert them to Christianity. Moreover, in that sense, German's publications are valuable in terms of narratives about the Scottish Bible Society, notably, about the Society's futile efforts to spread the Catholic religion among the Kazakhs. What is particularly helpful for this thesis is that the author provides vivid examples of how the Nomads observed Islam from various facets and dismissed European missionary proposals. Also, in that issue, the author provides the norms of the Customary Law *Adat* relatable to the interpretation and punishment of criminal deeds such as insulting women, mutilation, theft, and murder. Issue 4 concentrates on the Kazakhs' traits, mores, and traditions that present valuable data for grasping the Nomads' behavioral patterns. Thus, among the Nomads' different features of behavior, the aspect that should mostly be stressed is the Kazakhs' robust attachment to nomadism, which according to the author's narratives, was more substantial than any colonial efforts to settle even the most impoverished part of Kazakh society.

In 1939 in St. Petersburg, Pavel Svinyin, the editor of *Otechestvennyye Zapiski*, published in his journal "The Notes of Major General Bronevsky about the Kirgiz - Kaysaks of the Middle Horde" (*Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз-Кайсаках Средней Орды*). *Otechestvennyya Zapiski* is a Russian literary magazine of the XIX century. It was published in St. Petersburg from 1818 to 1884 (with interruptions). One of the first Russian "thick" magazines, which had a significant impact on the literary life and public thought in Russia. The author was Semyon Bronevsky, Lieutenant General, senator, and renowned figure of the Siberian Region. He was born in 1786 and died on February 14, 1858. By Speransky's special favor, in 1823, he was promoted to colonel and appointed the first chief of the newly formed Omsk region, which included several regions that are now part of

Kazakhstan: Akmola, eastern Kazakhstan, Karaganda, Pavlodar, and northern Kazakhstan regions. Promoted four years later, on January 8, 1935, to Major General by personal decree of Emperor Nicholas I, Bronevsky assumed the post of Governor-General and commander of the troops of Eastern Siberia. In the history of Siberia, Bronevsky's long-term activity has left a lasting mark. He established the first Russian colonies in the Kazakh steppe. The Siberian line Cossack army owes its structure to him. He also carried out the government's thoughts on forming combat forces in Eastern Siberia, which had not existed under the former civilian authorities.<sup>69</sup> The core research field of this colonial ethnographer was the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde. Overall, "The Notes..." consist of three parts; each includes a wide range of precious data relatable to almost all aspects of the Nomads' lifestyle. The most valuable chapters for the thesis research objectives are about Kirgiz, Kirgiz's lifestyle, mores, spiritual rites, women, pleasures, public spectacles, and the laws. Notably, the chapter "Mores" includes the variation of data which broadly characterizes the Nomads and provides almost all their traits. What is worth noting here is that Bronevsky mainly narrates his observations, making his notes more credible and reliable for the purposes of research project.

"Description of Kirgiz – Kazak or Kirgiz – Kaysak hordes and steppes" (*Описание киргиз-казачьих или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей*) by the author Alexey Levshin is ethnographic research that includes voluminously compiled data about the nomads. Moreover, many Kazakh scholars point out the credibility given to him by Chokan Valikhanov, who, in his letter to Professor Vladimir Berezin, writes, "So thinks Herodotus of our people Levshin."<sup>70</sup> This aspect plays an additional role in enhancing the academic recognition of Levshin's monographs. Alexey Levshin, a member of the State Council and a Doctor of Technical Sciences, was born in 1798 and died in the estate of Kursk Province on September 16, 1879. After receiving his education at Kharkiv University, he entered the College of

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<sup>69</sup> Половцов, Модзалевский, and Курдюмов, «Русский биографический словарь», 669.

<sup>66</sup> Валиханов, «Собрание сочинений в пяти томах. - Алма-Ата: Основное издание Казахской советской энциклопедии», 164.

Foreign Affairs service with a master's degree (1818) and enrolled in the Asian Department. Further, in 1820, he was appointed to serve under the chairman of the Orenburg Border Commission and began to analyze the archive of Kirghiz affairs.<sup>71</sup> As an outcome of such analysis, the research above emerged. For the first time, the monograph was published in St. Petersburg in 1832 with a circulation of 400 copies and was further translated into several foreign languages. Levshin's monograph consists of three parts. In the first part, the author collected all the geographical data about the Kazakh steppe. The second and third parts of the book are devoted to the historical and ethnographic review of the Kazakh people.<sup>72</sup> The research sites are the territory of the Kazakhs of the Younger Horde, archives of Orenburg and St. Petersburg, and information from the Orenburg Border Commission. Without exaggeration, the monograph is an invaluable source of information that provides abundant materials for comparative data analysis. At the same time, the chapters most usable for our research are Faith and Superstition, Mores, and Upbringing. Additionally, I argue that the main reason for Levshin's success, which determined his entire subsequent fate in academia and, to a large extent, in the public office, was directly related to this monograph, which includes detailed historical, cultural, and ethnographic information that surpassed all the studies on Kazakhs written at that time. The monograph was published in St. Petersburg in 1832 by Karl Kral Printing House and mainly was targeted at an educated Russian audience.

The ethnographic notes "Military statistical review of the Kirgiz – Kaisak (Bukeevskaya) and Trans-Ural (Malaya) lands Hordes" (*Военно – статистическое обозрение земли Киргиз – Кайсаков (Букеевской) и Зауральской (Малой) Орды*) was compiled by the author Ivan Blaramberg. He was born in 1800 and died in 1878. He was a memoirist and an orientalist. He served in Orenburg under Vasiliy Perovsky. The family of Blaramberg was originally from the Netherlands. In 1820 he entered the University of Hesse.

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<sup>71</sup> Половцов, Модзалевский, and Курдюмов, «Русский биографический словарь».

<sup>72</sup> История Актюбинской области, «Левшин А.И. Описание киргиз - казачьих, или киргиз-кайсацких, орд и степей. Издание 1832 года».

In the spring of 1823, Blaramberg arrived in St. Petersburg and then moved to Moscow, where he studied Russian, history, geography, mathematics, and other disciplines for a year. In 1824, Johann Blaramberg transferred to Russian citizenship and became Ivan Fedorovich. Blaramberg graduated from the Institute of the Corps of Railway Engineers (1828) in Moscow. After serving in the Caucasus, he participated in an expedition to study the coasts of the Caspian Sea. In 1840, he was assigned to a Separate Orenburg Regiment. Since January 1841, he had been in Orenburg, where he became a loyal assistant to the Orenburg governor, Vasilii Perovsky, carrying out military and diplomatic assignments by organizing the protection of diplomatic missions, choosing places for the construction of fortifications, conducting topographic surveys, and preparing for the Ak Meshet campaign.<sup>73</sup> In his statistical review, Blaramberg used primary resources such as Hanikov's note, the captain of the General Staff Romanov's notes, the natural history of the Orenburg Region by Professor Eversman, and other official documents from different local private enterprises.<sup>74</sup> Although Blaramberg's military statistical review primarily focused on geographical and economic aspects, the data about nomads' medical, nomadic, and military spheres of life also represents valuable meanings. The notes were published in Orenburg in 1848. They represent information about the Kazakh, who resided in the Orenburg region (Bukeevskaya and Trans-Ural Hordes), and thus were mostly for a local audience.

Another ethnographic compilation that is used for the aims of research project is "Materials for Geography and Statistics of Russia collected by officers of the General Staff. Kirgiz Steppe of the Orenburg Department" (*Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Киргизская степь Оренбургского ведомства*) by Lieutenant - General Lev Meyer. For several years, he actively participated in the activities of the Orenburg Department of the Russian Geographical Society. The materials

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<sup>73</sup> Оренбургская область, «Памятные даты Оренбургской области «Апрель» 8 апреля».

<sup>74</sup> Бларамберг, «Военно – статистическое обозрение земли Киргиз – Кайсаков (Букеевской) и Зауральской (Малой) Орды», 2-3.



were compiled based on other printed sources, such as Levshin, Blaramberg, Nebolsin, Eversman, and Muravyev, i.e., the author primarily collected information from secondary sources. The core aspect that needs to mention is that the author warns the audience that his research endeavors include many inaccuracies and errors made due to the finance deficiency and overlapping military and study purposes.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, the distinctive character of the materials is that it includes more sophisticated economic explanations of the colony's industrial and commercial fields. Regarding relevance to the thesis objectives, the chapters on religious education, mental education, and mores and customs are the most practical. Even though many narrative points, incredibly relatable to the Kazakhs' mores and traditions, are the simple repetitiveness of other Russian ethnographers (Aleksey Levshin particularly), some moments about the Nomads' oath signing bring a different perspective for research analysis. Materials were published in St. Petersburg in 1865 by the printing houses of Neumann and Persona and mostly targeted a European audience.

“The Description of Kirgiz – Kaysakov” (*Описание Киргиз – Кайсаков*) is written by the author Ilya Kazantsev (born and death dates are unknown ~ XIX century), who was a Russian scientist - ethnographer. In the 1830s-1850s, he worked in the border chancellery of the Orenburg and Samara General governorships. He was a member of the Russian Geographical Society. He studied the history and ethnography of the Orenburg Kazakhs of the Younger Horde, their ancestral composition, origin, and interrelationships with the Russians. In 1838, in the St. Petersburg Vedomosty, he published an article about the Kazakhs of the Inner or Bokeev Horde and the functioning of their *Barymta*. He gave valuable information about the customs of the Kazakhs, their hospitality, rituals associated with the birth of a child and migration, and the history of the origin and meaning of the term “Kirgiz - Kaysaks.”<sup>76</sup> He

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<sup>71</sup> Мейер, «Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Киргизская степь Оренбургского ведомства».

<sup>76</sup> Казахстанская национальная энциклопедия, s.v. «Казанцев Илья Михайлович».

knew the khans of the Younger Horde Shergazy and Dzhangir<sup>77</sup>. Presumably, he collected his data and wrote his observations based on his own (fieldwork) experience. The most valuable parts of the essay for my research are named Orenburg or Trans – Ural Kirghiz – Kaysaks and Kirgiz Barymta; and Sultan Baymukhamet. The paper’s core aspect is that Ilya Kazantsev tries to address the characteristics of the Kazakhs peculiar to the inhabitants of the middle and western parts; in other words, he tries to identify the regional behavioral attributes of the Nomads. The materials were published in St. Petersburg in 1867 by printing House of the Partnership “Obshestvenaya Pol’za” and mostly targeted an educated Russian public.

“Materials for geography and statistics of Russia collected by officers of the General Staff. The region of the Siberian Kirgiz” (*Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Область Сибирских Киргизов*) are the result of the research efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Nikolai Krasovsky, who was born in 1833 and died in 1886. Biographically he is known as a hero of the Russian-Turkish War (1878-79). He graduated from the 2nd Cadet Corps and Infantry School in 1853 and the Imperial Nicholas Academy of the General Staff in 1860. He obtained the military rank of lieutenant colonel in 1861. His working background includes holding a position as an officer of the General Staff for special assignments as Commander of the Kazan Military District between 1861 and 1865 and as a military head of the Voronezh Province from 1865-73. Further, he worked as Chief of Staff of the 36th Infantry Division in 1873–79 and participated in the Russian-Turkish War, which took place between 1878 and 79.<sup>78</sup> The materials mainly were the compilation of the research efforts of other Russian ethnographers; however, what is worth noting here is that in terms of Kazakh history, the author, along with referring to Russian historian-orientalist Velyaminov Zernov cites Tarihi Rashidi as the source of learning the Nomads’ historical narrative. I argue that this distinctive feature differentiates his study

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<sup>77</sup> Казанцев, «Описание Киргиз – Кайсаков».

<sup>78</sup> Хроно, «Биографический указатель. Красовский Николай Иванович».

from Levshin's monographs, which lack such references. Regarding the thesis's research purposes, the chapter describing the physical and moral characteristics of the inhabitants represents the most valuable source of data and analysis. That chapter mostly touches upon the Nomads' attitude toward religion, the status of women and children in the Nomads' social hierarchy, relations between spouses, and other domestic issues within Kazakh families. The notes were published in St. Petersburg in 1868 by the printing houses of Tranchel, Retger and Schneider. The materials' main target audience was Russian readers.

“Turgay region and its structure” (*Тургайская область и ее устройство*) is the essay written by an Orenburg citizen and a colonel of the Orenburg Cossack army Fyodor Lobyshevich. Besides the paper about Turgay, he is known as the author of the historical and statistical notes: “Orenburg”, “The Description of the Khiva expedition in 1873”, and “The progressive movement to Central Asia in Trade and diplomatic - military relations.” In the paper about Turgay, the author analyzes the first two years of his life in the new Turgay region, which included almost the entire territory of the modern Aktobe region.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the author discusses the result and hindrances of implementing the reform of provisional regulation in the Kazakh steppe. For this research, Lobyshevich's paper is helpful because it gives us a glimpse of the Nomad's mores, the treatment of women, and Russian colonial policies. According to Fyodor Lobyshevich's assertion, his sources consisted of the author's observations and the archive of the former border commission. Besides that, the author argues that promoting the Russian language and Russian education curriculum would be highly useful for raising the mental and moral development of the Kazakh people<sup>80</sup>. In other words, Fyodor Lobyshevich advocated for the Russification of the Kazakh steppe. In addition, the author was against Bashkirs' and Tatars' Islamic missionary activities in the Steppe; however,

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<sup>79</sup> История Актюбинской области, «Лобысевич Ф. Тургайская область и ее устройство. Военный сборник 1871 год».

<sup>80</sup> Лобысевич, «Тургайская область и ее устройство».

he found building mosques in the Steppe permanently and assigning Mullahs to serve there practically helpful. At the end of his paper, by discussing Turgay territorial aspect regulation, Lobysevych provides his recommendations and suggestions for better territory organization. The essay was published in Orenburg in 1871 in *Voeniyii Sbornik*, issue 4. *Voeniyii Sbornik* was a monthly military magazine in the Russian language and the official organ of the Ministry of War of the Russian Empire. The magazine was subject to general censorship; a mandatory subscription was prescribed for all headquarters, starting with the headquarters of individual battalions.

The ethnographic essay “Notes on the Kirgiz Court” (*Заметки о киргизском суде*) is the research outcome of Ivan (Shakhimardan Miryasovich) Ibragimov, who was born in 1841 and died in 1891. He came from the Orenburg province and was brought up in the Siberian cadet corps, then in the Omsk semi-battalion of military translators from the Tatar language. His service and class rank began in 1856 as a sultan clerk of the Kokchetav district order. Further, since November 30, 1867, he had been a translator of Persian and Tatar languages at the office of the Turkestan Governor - General in Tashkent. Then, from April 19 to June 9, 1868, he participated in the campaign against the Bukhara Khanate and was a personal interpreter for the commander of the troops. Speaking about his academic endeavors, it is worth mentioning that he was the author of several publications of an ethnographic nature, the first of which appeared in 1870. In 1871 his article about mullahs – in the Kirgiz (Kazakh) steppe appeared. In 1872 he published an essay about the Kazakhs of the Great Horde. In 1874, notes on the Khiva Turkmens and Kirgiz were published. He compiled and published the first publication in Central Asia in Uzbek – “Calendar for 1871”<sup>81</sup>. Since April 24, 1882, he had been a full state councilor, a military officer, a translator, an ethnographer, and an employee of the Russian and national press of Turkestan. According to the author, the essay

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<sup>81</sup> Дипломаты Российской империи, «Иван Иванович (Шахимардан Мирясович) Ибрагимов».

“Notes on the Kirgiz Court” was based on observations during his residence among the Kazakh of the Middle Horde.<sup>82</sup> The notes are helpful for the thesis research purposes as they give a perspective on the inner mechanisms of customary litigation practice. Most valuable about the notes’ narrative is that the author’s transcription and explanation of *barymta* differs from traditional Russian viewpoints. Thus, according to the author’s assertion, *barymta* is not a criminal deed but a practice incorporated into the Nomads’ customary law, *Adat*. This discovery is essential in contextualizing *Adat* practices versus Russian colonial legislation to understand the legitimacy of *barymta*. The notes were published in St. Petersburg in 1878 and mostly targeted an educated Russian audience.

Another valuable source to analyze is “Kirgiz. Ethnological essay” (*Киргизы. Этнологический очерк*), which was authored by the colonial medical worker Nikolay Zeland. The years of life were from 1833 to 1902. After graduating from the St. Petersburg Academy of Medicine in 1859, he worked in various Kazakhstan regions. 1882–1888, he was an ordinator in the Orenburg military hospital and the Turkestan Region. Nikolay Zeland published articles on various topics (sanitation and hygiene) in the newspaper “Steppe Region.” The next place of his work was Semirechye, where he was first assigned as a regional doctor. Then during the 12 following years, from 1888 to 1896, he worked as an assistant to the Turkestan regional naval inspector. Nikolay Zeland is the author of works in medicine and anthropology. “Kirgiz. Ethnological essay” characterizes the temperament of the Kazakh people as sanguine. This work is the first study of the psychological characteristics of the Kazakh people in the Russian Empire.<sup>83</sup> More precisely, the essay is a historical and ethnological study mainly about the Kazakhs of the Semirechye region. In addition, the paper includes a description of the nature of the Tien Shan, the population's lifestyle, the peculiarities of nutrition, crafts, economic life, marriage, parenting, social life,

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<sup>82</sup> Ибрагимов, «Заметки о киргизском суде».

<sup>83</sup> Ulakat, «Зеланд Николай Львович».

and administrative structure, as well as other anthropological information. At the end of the essay are seven tables with anthropological and metric data. The most precious chapters for the thesis research objectives are Lifestyle, Nutrition, Crafts, Marriage, Parenting, Social Life, Physical type, Temperament, and Moral and Mental development. The place of publication was St. Petersburg and the year of publication was 1885. The essay was primarily for a Russian audience.

“Materials for studying the legal customs of the Kirgiz. Substantive law”

(*Материалы для изучения юридических обычаев Киргизов. Материальное право*) was compiled by a member of the Semipalatinsk Statistical Committee and local judge Peter Makovetsky. According to the information from KSU “Regional Universal Library named after Abay” Makovetsky devoted a lot of time to the ethnographic study of the Kazakh people. He was friends with Abay and many political exiles, among whom stood out for their extraordinary abilities: Cherniy, Gross, Dolgoplov, and others. In 1887, at the general meeting of the Statistical Committee, Makovetsky put forward a whole program of scientific and ethnographic research in the Semipalatinsk region. The General Meeting of the committee approved this initiative of the proposal and invited him to appeal to officials and individuals of the region with a request to collect scientific materials on his program. However, soon Makovetsky, like some exiles, left Semipalatinsk, and no one continued his work.<sup>84</sup> “Materials for studying the legal customs of the Kirgiz. Substantive law” consists of three sections: Family law, Property law, and Criminal law. Information was collected since 1882 in the Semipalatinsk region based on a particular program. Then the data were summarized by Peter Makovetsky, and the study results were published in the issue. This was up-to-date information about the rules and customs of the Kazakh people.<sup>85</sup> For the thesis

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<sup>84</sup> Областная универсальная библиотека КГУ имени Абая, «135 лет со дня образования областного статистического комитета (1878)».

<sup>85</sup> История Актюбинской области, «Материалы для изучения юридических обычаев Киргизов. Материальное право. Публикация 1888».

research purposes the section Family Law, Contractual relations, and Crimes against the Individual represent the particular interest. Materials were published in Omsk in 1886 by the printing office of the district headquarters. Accordingly, the materials were locally scaled.

Nikolay Balkashin, who was born in 1840 and died on 12 October 1887, authored an ethnography titled “About the Kirgiz and in general and about Muslims who are subjects of Russia” (О Киргизах и вообще, о подвластных России мусульманах). Balkashin joined the office of the Moscow Governor - General; then, he performed the duties of librarian and an assistant director of the Demidovsky Law Lyceum. From 1875 to 1882, he was an official of special assignments at the main directorate of Western Siberia, and, finally, from 1882 to his death, he was the Russian consul in Chuguchak. Balkashin authored the following work: “From the People’s Passions”, a drama in 4 acts (in “Conversation,” 1872, book 6); “On shipping in the Gulf of Ob and the maritime trade of Western Siberia with Europe in 1877-1879” (in “Notes of the West Siberian Department of Imp. Russ. Geographical Society”, 1879, book. I and 1880, Book II); “Was Ermak granted a prince” (ib., Book II); “Trade movement between Western Siberia, Central Asia, and the Chinese possessions” (ib., 1881, Book III); “On the research of the Kirgiz Horde” (in “Izvestia Imperial Russian Geographical Socie,” 1882, vol. XVIII); “About the Kirgiz and in general and about Muslims who are subjected to Russia,” (St. Petersburg, 1887). In addition, he participated in the compilation of the “Chronological Index of Events Related to the History of Western Siberia” by F.N. Usov.<sup>86</sup> The essay “About the Kirgiz and in General and about Muslim Subjects of Russia” is devoted to Islam in Russia. About twenty pages on Pp. 18-38 are dedicated to Kazakhs. The statistical data is available. For the thesis research purposes, the data provided in the essay is valuable for understanding the religiosity of the nomads compared to other Muslims of that

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<sup>86</sup> Половцов, Модзалевский, and Курдюмов, «Русский биографический словарь», 796.

time Russian Empire. The essay was published in St. Petersburg in 1887 by the Printing House of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and targeted educated Russian public.

Vladimir Tronov, a doctor and an inspector of the medical unit of the Altai district, wrote another valuable ethnographic essay titled “Materials on Anthropology and Ethnology of the Kirgiz” (*Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз*) and “Customs and customary law of the Kirgiz” (*Обычаи и обычное право киргиз*). Tronov was born in 1851 and died in 1920. He graduated from the Imperial Kazan University and began his professional medical activity in 1876. According to unofficial information, he served in the military department. On February 23, 1890, he entered the service in the Altai District under the department of His Imperial Majesty's Cabinet. From 1890-1898, Vladimir Tronov was a doctor at the Zmeinogorsk Hospital, the Loktevskaya Pharmacy, and in the Ridder Hospital. In 1898-1901, he was a doctor at the disposal of the head of the Altai factories, with the duties of a doctor at the Zmeinogorsk hospital. From 1901 to 1905, he served in a similar position as a doctor at the Suzun Hospital. From 1905 - 1910, he was an inspector of the medical unit of the Altai District and lived in Barnaul on Pushkinskaya Street. After the abolition of the medical department, he retired. On April 2, 1912, behind the staff, he finally retired from service.<sup>87</sup> “Materials on Anthropology and Ethnology of the Kirgiz” was published in separate number 2 issue 17 volume Notes of the Russian Geographical Society on the Department of Ethnography, under the editorship of the well-known orientalist Nikolay Veselovsky. The essay provides data on anthropometric measurements and information on the life of Kazakhs who lived in the Zaisan district of the Semipalatinsk region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The author provides narratives about the Nomads’ customs and traditions and medical and anthropological data. What is worth mentioning here is that almost unconsciously, Vladimir Tronov, in his essay, makes a racial evolutionist statement:

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<sup>87</sup> Официальный сайт Алтайского края, «Владимир Дмитриевич Тронов (1851-1920), врач, инспектор медицинской части Алтайского округа, исследователь Алтая».



“Standing at a low level of development, the Kirgiz in the struggle for existence must give way to their neighbors, more cultured”.<sup>88</sup> Further, in the essay, the author mostly negatively represents the Kazakh people; thus, in terms of gauging the degree of bias and prejudices of Russian ethnographers about the Kazakhs’ lifestyle, this essay addresses the thesis research purposes. The essay was published in St. Petersburg in 1891 and pursued the goal of introducing a European audience to the life and customs of the Middle Horde Kazakhs.

“Life and Customs of the Kirgiz” (*Быт и нравы киргизов*) is the outcome of a research compilation by the children’s writer Alexander Smirnov. Aleksander Smirnov was born in 1854 and died in 1900. A number of his stories appeared in “Family Evenings,” “Family and School,” “Spring,” “Children’s Reading,” “Leisure and Business,” and other children’s and folk publications. The book “Life and Customs of the Kirgiz” includes chapters of useable information for data analysis, particularly relevant to the Nomads’ mores and domestic issues. The author’s narratives are distinguished by their relative neutrality and the absence of overt bias and negativity toward the Kazakh people. Thus, learning other stories besides other negatively permeated Russian research narratives would be helpful for the thesis research endeavors. The essay was published in St. Petersburg in 1892 by the Printing house of A. Katansky and mostly targeted a Russian-reading audience.

The essay “Folk customs that had, and partly still have, the force of law in the Small Kirgiz Horde” (*Народные обычаи, имевшие, а отчасти и ныне имеющие, в Малой Киргизской орде силу закона*) is written by the author Lev Balluzek. His military rank was Lieutenant General; he was born in 1822 in Karlsruhe, and died at the beginning of 1879. Upon completion of the course at the Mikhailovsky Artillery School in 1843, he was released into the horse artillery and, being listed according to the latter, was soon assigned to the staff of the Feldzeichmeister General, from where in 1849, he was appointed to be under Grand

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<sup>88</sup> Тронов, «Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз», 8.

Duke Mikhail Pavlovich. After the death of the Grand Duke, he was sent to the Caucasus to conduct experiments on rockets, where, remaining two years, he participated in many expeditions.<sup>89</sup> Also, he was a diplomat, the first permanent representative of Russia in China, the first head of the Turgay region, and a chairman of the Orenburg Department of the Russian Geographical Society. The essay was published in Kazan in 1871, and thus was read by specialists.

Regarding the paper, the most distinctive feature that differentiates it from other Russian ethnographical materials is that it was indeed the research outcome of Kazakh officials who served in the Tsarist colonial administration. One was Sultan Seidalin, who is mentioned in the author's book. Thus, Fedorovich Balluzek performed the role of materials compiler, and the actual researchers were the Nomads themselves. That factor, to a certain degree, increases the credibility and validity of the paper. For the thesis research objectives, the most useable chapters of the books are customs regarding the violation of the rules of *kalymmal*, *barymta*, and solving murder cases.

“Causes of unrest in the Kirgiz steppes. The Kirgiz question” (*Причины волнений в киргизских степях. Киргизский вопрос*) is a newspaper article written by the author Lev Arasansky. There is no available information in the open resources relating to the personal or professional characteristics of Lev Arasansky. For that reason, the attention is more focused on the newspaper *Sovremennaya Letopis* (*Современная летопись*) that published the article. The newspaper in 1861-1862 was published as an appendix to the *Russkii Vestnik* and then since 1863 as an appendix to the *Moskovskie Vedomosti*. The article criticizes the colonial administrative system and refers to the incompatibility of the newly implemented colonial orders with the Nomads' customs and their mental understanding of society's functioning organization. Lev Arasansky argues that the Nomads are harboring a feeling of dislike and

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<sup>89</sup> Половцов, Модзалевский, and Курдюмов, «Русский биографический словарь», 796.

disgust for the new order, and a myriad of commanding persons have put the Kazakhs at a dead end so that they do not know whom to go to appeal.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the author's boldest argumentation is that nomadic people cannot be governed according to European models. For those people, the main advantage of any social system is simplicity and clarity in relationships.<sup>91</sup> Besides that, the article provides data on the religiosity of the Kazakhs, which is attractive to my research. The essay was published in the newspaper *Sovremennaya Letopis* in 1869. It had local context and thus its core audience were local readers.

The ethnographic paper "Ordinary family law of the Kirgiz" (*Обычное семейное право киргиз*) was a compilation result generated by the author Nikolay Malyshev. Although no information was found about the author, the material represents a particular study interest for the thesis research purposes. The paper is a thorough 100 – page work on the core aspects of the life of the Kazakh people. It consists of the elements relatable to the customary Kazakh law and its characteristics, the general nature of marriage, the status of the Kazakh woman, matchmaking and wedding, customs regarding the violation of the rules of matchmaking, conditions for marriage: religion, parental consent, age, kinship, number of wives, kalym, personal and property relations between spouses, personal and property relations between parents and children, adoption and foster son – in – law, illegitimate, termination of marriage, divorce, and custody. The appendix contains several specific cases from the practice of the Kazakh People's Court, as well as 146 proverbs on the topics of Kazakh family law.<sup>92</sup> It is a high – quality material. The author is one of few Russian ethnographers who, besides describing the features of the common Kirgiz law, also describe the influence of Sharia and Russian legislation on it. In addition, I want to highlight the author's statement, which is not present in other Russian ethnographers' observations, that Barymta, despite being mainly

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<sup>90</sup> Арасанский, «Причины волнений в киргизских степях. Киргизский вопрос».

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> История Актюбинской области, «Малышев Н. Обычное семейное право киргиз. Публикация 1902».

characterized by colonial authorities as an illegal action, was adopted by them as the one effective means to govern the Nomads. The paper was published in Yaroslavl' in 1902 by the Printing House of the Provincial Government.

The essay “About the domestic life of the Kirgiz of the Turgay region” (*О быте киргизов Тургайской области*) is written by a Russian publicist, an official (state councilor) and a public figure, a teacher, a chairman of the Kyiv Department of the Russian Assembly Boris Yuzefovich. The years of his life were from 1843 to 1911. He was born in the family's estate in the village of Sosinovka of the Piryatinsky district, Poltava province; he was the son of a participant in the Patriotic War of 1812, a prominent historian and public figure, trustee of the Kyiv School District Mikhail Yuzefovich (1802 – 1889). On March 8, 1877, Boris Yuzefovich was appointed to the post of a supernumerary official of special assignments under the Orenburg Governor – General Kryzhanovsky, on whose behalf, after three months, he went to the Turgay region. During this three – month – long ethnographic expedition, he collected information about nomadic Kazakhs' household, economic, and sanitary living conditions.<sup>93</sup> Yuzefovich's research findings are valuable in terms of providing the different narratives that are ignored mainly by other Russian ethnographers, namely the interconnection between *kalymmal* (payment for a bride) and dowry (commodities given to bride); thus, according to the author's observation daughters' dowry almost always exceed the price received for a daughter bride, and Kazakh fathers treat their daughter fairly and do not deprive them of feasible material assistance.<sup>94</sup> Besides that, the paper includes usable data about Kazakhs' attitudes toward kinship connections, religious affairs, behavior, and family relations.

“Essays on the Inner Kirgiz Horde” (*Очерки Внутренней киргизской орды*) was generated by the author Alexander Alektorov. He was born in 1861 and died in 1919. The son

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<sup>93</sup> Хроно, “Биографический указатель. Борис Михайлович Юзефович”.

<sup>94</sup> Юзефович, “О быте киргизов Тургайской области”, 826.

of a priest, he was educated at the Penza Theological Seminary. He was an Orenburg teacher and a local historian, an author of many printed works on the history and ethnography of the Orenburg Region and Kazakhstan. In March 1883, he was appointed to the post of teacher-inspector in the 4 – class school of Orsk. However, at his request in August of the same year, he was transferred to Orenburg and became a teacher at the city’s 2 – class school under the Orenburg Teachers’ Institute. At this time, Alexander Alektorov became interested in local affairs and joined the work of studying the materials of the archive of the Orenburg Governor-General. Soon his publications on the history, geography, and ethnography of the Orenburg Region began to appear, based on the study of literary and archival sources. In 1882, his “History of the Orenburg Province” was published in the newspaper “Orenburg Leaflet,” published in a separate edition in 1883. In 1884, the same newspaper published a “Geographical sketch of the Orenburg province”; in 1885 – an article, “Bashkirs.” In 1886 – “Kalmyks” and “Kirgiz.” On October 6, 1886, Alektorov was appointed to the post of inspector of Kirgiz (Kazakh) schools in the Inner Bukееv Horde and moved to the Khan’s headquarters in Rynpeski. He worked there for eight years, and during this time, he published many articles in various newspapers and magazines. Further, in 1887, he (under the pseudonym Aleksey Petrov) published an article, “The Capture of the Kokand Fortress Ak - Mosque” in the Orenburg Leaflet, in which he gave information based on archival materials about the relations of the Kazakhs with the Kokand people in 1842–1854. On July 1, 1894, Aleksander Alektorov was appointed inspector of Kazakh schools in the Turgay region. In 1902 he was transferred to the post of director of public schools in the Akmola and Semipalatinsk regions. His pedagogical activity resulted from the study “Essays on Public Education in the Turgay Region: The Chronicle of 1744–1898,” published in Orenburg in 1900 (in three issues).<sup>95</sup> For thesis research purposes, the most valuable chapters of the essay

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<sup>95</sup> Оренбургская область, «Памятные даты Оренбургской области. Александр Ефимович

are those on the religious and moral life of the Kirgiz, diseases prevalent in the horde, and medical care. The essay was published in the newspaper *News of the Orenburg Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society*, Issue No.2 in 1893. Accordingly it had local context and targeted local readers.

The essay “The Kirgiz of Akmola Region” (*Киргизы Акмолинской области*) is a series about the daily life of the Kirgiz of Akmola Region that was published in the newspaper “The government bulletin” (*Правительственный вестник*) in 1885, in issues 8, 9 and 13. The newspaper’s brief description is that it is a daily newspaper of the General Directorate for Press Affairs, established on October 27, 1868. It was published in St. Petersburg from January 1, 1869, to February 26, 1917 (March 11), daily, except for Mondays and other post-holidays; it replaced the newspaper *Severnaya Pochta*. It included government orders, reports from State Council and Council of Ministers meetings, internal and administrative news, telegrams, and information about charitable institutions and scientific societies in the city and Zemstvo, voter lists, circulation tables, stock indexes, and weather forecasts.<sup>96</sup> As we can see, the core content of the newspaper consisted of official announcements and reports; thus, the previous description of Kazakhs in the Akmola region is also a highly reliable source for the thesis research objectives. As part of its data available for content analysis, the report includes aspects regarding the education and religious obligations of Kazakhs, as well as daily domestic matters. The essay’s core audience are government administrators and bureaucrats.

The ethnographic notes “From a notebook. Ethnographic notes. Kirgiz proverbs” (*Из записной книжки. Этнографические заметки. Киргизские пословицы*) is the result of research efforts written by Major General Karl Gern. He was born around 1816, was descended from Vitebsk province nobility, was Lutheran, and attended the Main Engineering

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Алекторов».

<sup>96</sup> Президентская библиотека Бориса Ельцина, «Правительственная бюллетень. Приложение».

School. He was assigned to the General Staff at the end of it on December 9, 1842, and returned to service in Orenburg on January 7, 1843. Further, he was entrusted with drawing up maps of the Orenburg Region. On March 9, 1844, he was promoted to lieutenant with a transfer to the General Staff. On March 30, he was appointed acting divisional quartermaster of the 22nd Infantry Division (approved with the production of staff captains on April 7, 1846). From May to September of the same year, 1844, he participated in an expedition against the rebellious Kazakh Sultan Kenessary Kasimov. Under his leadership, the steppe was photographed over 9,000 square miles. Karl Gern participated in the compilation of the “Military Statistical Review of the Orenburg Province” (St. Petersburg, 1848). In the “Russian Archive” of 1898 (volume III, pages 550–555), his letter to Lazarevsky was printed (reprinted in The Kyiv Antiquity of 1899, No. 2) with information about the stay in exile in the Orenburg Region of the poet Shevchenko, who was on good terms with Karl Gern and in 1850 lived for some time in his apartment.<sup>97</sup> His ethnographic notes have such valuable research interest for Kazakhstani ethnographic studies that in 2006, a group of Kazakhstani scholars Arin, Ismagulov, Agigali, Shalekenov, and Artikbayev published the book “Kazakhs’ Behavior and Mores” by compiling Karl Gern’s research efforts. Regarding the thesis’s research purposes, particular precious aspects are Karl Gern’s narratives of *barymta*, which provide a slightly different understanding of such a custom from other Russian colonial representatives.

The essay “The Oath of the Kirgiz before the Russian Court (*Присяга киргиз перед русским судом*)” is a compilation of research by the Russian scientist, archaeologist, and ethnographer Ivan Anichkov. He was born in 1863; the year of his death is unknown. Ivan Anichkov, in 1888, graduated from the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University. Then, his work career proceeded in the scientific institutions of Turkestan and

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<sup>97</sup> Половцов, Модзалевский, and Курдюмов, «Русский биографический словарь», 442.

Orenburg. His articles mostly describe the stone sculptures, mounds, and other archaeological monuments near Merke, Kostanay, Kazaly counties, the Turgay region, and the ancient city site in the Besagash settlement Aulieata, Taraz, and the Sauran Tower. In one of his works, “Forgotten Land, the Collapse of the National Economy in the Kirgiz Steppes”, he describes the difficult situation of the Kazakh people. In addition, Ivan Anichkov criticizes the Russian colonialists, writing that “the Kazakh people had no plan so far as to leave their fate so unnoticed than under the rule of Russia.” He followed the “Russification” policy and respected the Kazakhs' customs. In his work “Essays on the Life of the People in Turkestan,” he portrays the way of life of the Kazakhs. Along with the above-mentioned papers, it is worth noting his article “Kirgiz batyr Zhankozha Nurmukhamedov” in which he provides accurate information about the uprising of the Kazakhs throughout the Syrdarya in 1896. Another of his notable articles, “Monuments of Kirgiz Folk Art,” published in “Kazan University's Scientific Notes” contains a wealth of historical and ethnographic information about the nomads. Regarding the relevance of his findings to the thesis’s purposes, the valuable connection is that Ivan Anichkov explored different aspects of Kazakh religiosity, or more precisely, he did not categorically assert that Kazakhs are “bad Muslims” but tried to learn the peculiarities of the Kazakhs approach to Islam according to the specificity of local traditions and mentality. Moreover, Ivan Anichkov’s paper brings precious research prospects to grasp the institution of orphanages and custody in the Kazakh steppe. The essay was published in the Journal of the Ministry of Justice in 1898. The journal was published monthly in St. Petersburg, edited by A.M. Troitsky. The core target audience were imperial bureaucrats and administrators.

“Notes of the Missionary, Priest Efrem Elisiev” (*Записки миссионера, священника Ефрем Елисеев*) were written by an orthodox priest, Efrem Elisiev, who undertook a mission in the Kazakh steppe to convert Kazakhs to Orthodoxy. He was a baptized Tatar, and his



notes were primarily published in *Pravoslavniy Blagovestnik* and *Tserkovnye Vedomosti* at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Pravoslavniy Blagovestnik* was a magazine published since 1893 by the Orthodox Missionary Society in Moscow, two books a month. The editor was Nikolay Komarov. *Tserkovnye Vedomosti* was a weekly magazine (published since 1888), by the official organ of the Holy Synod. An unofficial part (“Additions to Ts. Vedomosti”) contains words selected from the works of the patristic, sermons of modern pastors of the Russian Church and articles of theological and church-historical content. According to this information, the magazines were for the orthodox clergy and educated orthodox public.

Efrem Elisiev was a core actor in his narratives and described events that he directly witnessed and observed. The centerpiece of his notes is the religious aspects of Kazakhs, namely how they practiced Islam and how the religion reflected the daily lives of the nomads. In addition, the notes touch upon the issue of the rejection of Orthodoxy by the majority of Kazakhs. Because these notes were written by a religious official who opposed Islam to a certain extent, any positive remarks he has made about the Kazakhs' Islamic religiosity can be construed as credible sources of information in this thesis.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter introduces the readers to the Russian ethnographers whose narratives are analyzed in the thesis. Thus, the core information about the personal and educational backgrounds of Russian colonial military and civil officials and the focal points of their paper is provided. Moreover, I am convinced that understanding Russian ethnographers' background and “conditions of writing” will facilitate a better understanding of their narratives and aid the audience in comprehending the thesis objectives.

## Chapter 2. The religiosity of the Kazakhs through the lens of Russian Ethnographers

### Introduction

The aspects of the religiosity of the Kazakhs have occupied significant parts in the narratives of 19<sup>th</sup>–century Russian ethnographers. Expectedly, the general tone of those accounts in a broad context was negative and diminishing, with Kazakhs referred to as Muslims in name only, whose Islamic canon observations intertwined with remnants of shamanism. Hence, in this thesis’s chapter, I aim to explore the profundity of the Russian ethnographers’ stories about the Nomads’ religious affiliation and the common association of their religiosity with superficiality, or on the contrary, I try to ascertain counter arguments that may dismiss the above – mentioned assumption of the Kazakhs’ negligence in the Islamic affairs. Unlike the situation in the Caucasus, in the case of the Kazakh Nomads Russian colonial vision did not regard Islam as a factor that posed a significant threat to the Empire’s colonial presence in the steppe. That assumption is buttressed by the fact that, unlike Chechens and Bashkirs, the Kazakhs did not call for the Holy War (Jihad) against the colonial presence in their territories. Moreover, even Sultan Kenessary Kasymov, who led the uprising against Russians and strived to practice Islamic slogans by calling the Kazakhs to fight the infidels, failed to be heard by the majority of the steppe inhabitants.<sup>98</sup> Further, what is worth noting here is that in the Steppe colonization period, the colonial policies imposed on Islam were never palpably well – defined or sustained. Notably, at the initial point of establishing the relationship between the Empire and its new vassal, colonial authorities considered the oath taken upon the Quran by Kazakh Khans as an essential attribute of submission and allegiance.<sup>99</sup> In addition to that, Robert Crews points out that Catherine the Great associated

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<sup>98</sup> Malikov, “*Tsars, Cossacks, and Nomads. In Tsars, Cossacks, and Nomads*”, 98.

<sup>99</sup> Noda, “*The Kazakh Khanates between the Russian and Qing Empires: Central Eurasian international relations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*”, 58.

Islam with civility and subsequent policies of sponsoring the building of mosques and Islamic schooling institutions in the area adjacent to the Orenburg frontline.<sup>100</sup> However, by intensifying the colonial burden, particularly in the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, Islam came to be perceived as a rival force,<sup>101</sup> which allegedly encouraged disobedience of the steppe peoples to the central colonial authorities. The head of the Orenburg Borderlands Commission (1854 - 1859), Vasilii Grigorev, conveyed such anti-Islamic rhetoric, which I mentioned in the literature review's earlier part. Grigorev was a strong proponent of imposing the Russian culture as a civilizing force on the steppe inhabitants. Hence, regarding Islam, he believed that Islam had been the central obstacle to the Russian colonial advancement among the Kazakhs.<sup>102</sup>

Furthermore, concerning territoriality, the chapter tries to examine Yuri Malikov's suggestion that Kazakhs' religious attributes varied from region to region when the author argues that different variants of practicing Islamic beliefs by the Kazakhs residing in different steppe areas averted the formation of affiliation to each other and hampered the religious unification of all steppe Nomads.<sup>103</sup> The mentioned - above Orenburg frontline mainly included the Kazakhs of the Younger Horde, which was the central research area for most ethnographic literature exploring the religious nature of the Nomads. Critical ethnographical findings of Feodor German, Aleksey Levshin, Lev Meyer, Nikolay Blamberg, Iliya Kazansev, and many others were based on their Younger Horde experience. Further, the Russian ethnographers' efforts connected to the religious pattern of the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde were the materials compiled by such ethnographers as Semyon Bronevsky, Ivan Ibragimov, and Nikolay Krasovsky. The ethnographic narratives of an orthodox priest, Efrem Elisiev, and the research outcomes of colonial medicine representatives Vladimir Tronov accumulated

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<sup>100</sup> Crews, "*For Prophet and Tsar Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*", 199.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>102</sup> Knight, "Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?", 91.

<sup>103</sup> Malikov, "*Tsars, Cossacks, and Nomads. In Tsars, Cossacks, and Nomads*", 97,

data about the religious life of the nomads in eastern Kazakhstan, such as Semipatinsk and the Zaisan district, which are also recognized as Middle Horde areas. Nikolay Zeland's ethnographic outcome is mostly about the Semirechye Kazakhs, who tend to be recognized as the Great Horde inhabitants. Accordingly, by examining chronological and territorial factors, this chapter attempts to discover the differences in the religiosity of the Kazakhs according to their geographical place and historical period. At the same time, despite my rigorous efforts, I could not place ethnographic materials by some Russian authors regarding the territoriality of the Kazakhs they studied. Thus, one separate chapter will speak about the religiosity of the Nomads in general without making references to their places of residency.

The structure of the chapter is as follows; firstly, I will ascertain data relevant to the religiosity of Nomads in the Russian ethnographers' research efforts according to their territoriality and chronology. Then by making a content analysis, I will determine analogies and contradictions between these research findings to examine the extent of biases presented in ethnographical papers. Consequently, to achieve the intended outcome, I will apply four evaluation criteria: total absence, weak (poor, superficial), proper (intense, profound) religious affiliation, and the superstitious views of the Younger and Middle Hordes Nomads. The fourth criterion about the aspect of superstitions of nomads will be considered in the context of paganism.

Regarding my arguments of the chapter, I argue that Russian ethnographers, in their narratives, only retranslated one general preconception about Kazakhs' weak affiliation to Islam and propensity to superstition. Having a lack of knowledge concerning the canons of the religion of Islam and how Islamic norms intertwined with the customary beliefs of the Nomads, Russian ethnographers failed to comprehend in due manner the accurate picture of the religious nature of the steppe inhabitants. Thus, they operated in the framework of the general notion of Nomads' superficiality or absence of religiosity. Moreover, their research

findings ignored studying Kazakhs' religious authorities and institutions; as Allen Frank argues, they adhered to the notion that, unlike the Muslims from the Volga - Ural realm and Central Asia, Kazakhs are only nominal Muslims without the emotional and social attachment to Islam.<sup>104</sup>

## **2.1. The Younger Horde Kazakhs' religiosity as described by Russian Ethnographers**

This chapter focuses on the Russian ethnographical materials of the Kazakhs who resided in the Younger Horde territory. As the thesis research objectives cover only the 19<sup>th</sup> century period, the first Russian ethnographer whose accounts are considered is Fedor German, who published his research outcomes in the journal *Herald of Europe* in 1822. Thus, German makes a strong statement asserting the absence of Kazakhs religious beliefs, such as “Kirgiz do not pray at all and do not know any religion” (*«Киргизы вообще не молятся и не знают никакой религии»*),<sup>105</sup> however, he asserts an exception for those Kazakhs who were brought up or lived for a long time in Bukhara, Khiva, and other Central Asia.<sup>106</sup> Further, German backs his claims by proving similar statements: “Having, generally speaking, no faith, the Kirgiz are very superstitious” (*«Не имея, говоря вообще, никакой веры, Киргизы весьма суеверны»*)<sup>107</sup> and “Professing no religion” (*«не исповедующее никакой религии»*).<sup>108</sup> Hence, data analysis shows that German argues for the absence of formal religious affiliation among the Younger Horde Kazakhs except for a few and their particular predisposition to superstition. At the same time, he states that the Islamic Ulama institution existed in the Younger Horde: the representatives of Muslim clergy — eleven people had been sent and appointed by the colonial government.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, in his narratives, the author states but

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<sup>104</sup> J. Frank, “Islamic scholars among the Kereys of Northern Kazakhstan, 1680-1850”, 5.

<sup>105</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 218.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

does not explain why the missionary efforts of the Scottish Bible Society failed in spreading the Catholic religion among the Orenburg frontline Kazakhs.

The well — monograph of Aleksey Levshin, “Description of Kirgiz-Kazak or Kirgiz-Kaysak Hordes and Steppes” (*Описание киргиз-казацких или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей*) published in St. Petersburg in 1832 by Karl Kral Printing House. In a general sense, Levshin follows Fedor German’s standpoint in describing the religious affiliation of the Younger Horde Kazakh people. He describes the Nomads’ religious beliefs in the chapter called “Faith and Superstition” (*Вера и суеверие*). At the beginning of his chapter, Levshin questions whether the Kazakhs are Mohammedans, Manichaeans, or Pagans (*Магометане, Манихейяне или язычники*)?<sup>110</sup>

Aleksey Levshin’s central assertion, which corresponds to German’s statements, is that Kazakhs do not adhere to Islamic tenets: “The Kirgiz do not observe fasts and ablutions” (*«постов и омовения, Киргизы не соблюдают»*)<sup>111</sup>, “They find it difficult to pray five times a day” (*«молиться по пять раз на день, находят они для себя затруднительным»*),<sup>112</sup> and “Some do not observe any religious rites at all” (*«некоторые же совсем никаких обрядов религии не соблюдают»*).<sup>113</sup> Regarding the Nomads’ tendency to superstition, Levshin writes the following: “They believe in sorcerers” (*«верят колдунам»*).<sup>114</sup> However, some of Aleksey Levshin’s statements oppose Fedor German’s claims about the total absence of religiosity among the Kazakhs. These assertions are: “They all have a concept of a Higher Being in general” (*«все они вообще имеют понятие о Высшем существе»*)<sup>115</sup>, “they classify themselves as Sunnis” (*«сами себя причисляют к Суннитам»*),<sup>116</sup> and “They go to worship them (graves), read prayers over them” (*«Они ездят им (могилы) поклоняться,*

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<sup>110</sup> Левшин, *«Описание киргиз - казацких или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей»*, 52.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 54.

*читать над ними молитвы»*).<sup>117</sup> Consequently, I argue that these Levshin's assertions advocate for the Nomads' formal religious affiliation criterion. At the same time, some of Levshin's statements do not allow us to certainly assert whether what Kazakhs believe is a nexus of Islamic canon or nomadic superstitions. Some other comments that they "recognize the existence of many other spirits" (*«признают существование многих других духов»*)<sup>118</sup> and "to appease the evil spirit, they read prayers, offer sacrifices to him, holding out their hands up, begging him to be lenient" (*«для умиротворения злого духа читают молитвы, приносят ему жертвы, протягивая руки вверх, заклиная его быть снисходительным»*) show some Islamic affiliation.<sup>119</sup> After analyzing Aleksey Levshin's materials regarding the religiosity of Kazakhs, it is hard not to disagree with Chokan Valikhanov, who states that "the former was too carried away by the ignorance of the people he described."<sup>120</sup> My arguments correspond to Valikhanov's assertion that "Levshin does have a vague comprehension of the essence of the Kazakhs' religiosity by asserting that witchcraft, deception, and divination are part of the religion of the Kirgiz-Kaysaks; however, they are not part of religion but only superstition, which exists among the people of all faiths."<sup>121</sup> Due to Aleksey Levshin's unfamiliarity with the Kazakh language and lack of knowledge about the Islamic canons, he does not provide an accurate interpretation of the word "*Худай*."<sup>122</sup> Thus, Aleksey Levshin interpreted the term *«Худай»* as a good deity who cares about the happiness of people (*Божество благое пекущегося о счастье людей*)<sup>123</sup>, which indeed is the Kazakh word (although borrowed from Persian) for "Allah." This argument is validated in the essay of another Russian ethnographer, Semyon Bronevsky, whose observations are relatable to the Middle Horde Kazakhs. Thus, he observes the

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>120</sup> Валиханов, Собрание сочинений в пяти томах, Т.1, 199.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Левшин, *«Описание киргиз - казачьих или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей»*, 52.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

religious nature of Kazakhs as follows: “They often repeated from the depths of the soul, alla!” (*«Часто повторяемого из глубины души, алла!»*).<sup>124</sup> Accordingly, the Kazakhs were practicing the term *«алла»* as the canonical language in their ordinary lives. Hence, I argue that the expressions *«Худай»* in Levshin’s account and *«алла»* in Bronevsky’s notes have the same meaning and, to a certain degree, confirm the obvious connection between the Nomads’ religiosity and the religion of Islam. Bruce Privratsky supports my hypothesis and argues that the Persian version of God is *Quday*, and *Alla* is the term borrowed from Arabic; both words are synonyms and mean the one God of Islamic monotheism.<sup>125</sup>

Another valuable source for content analysis is “Materials for Geography and Statistics of Russia Collected by Officers of the General Staff. Kirgiz Steppe of the Orenburg Department” (*Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Киргизская степь Оренбургского ведомства*). The author is Lev Meyer; the materials were published in St. Petersburg in 1865 by the printing house of E. Neumann and F. Persona. One of the chapters in the monograph chapter named Religious Education (*Религиозное образование*) is devoted to the religious education of the Orenburg region’s nomadic population. In contrast to Fedor German and Aleksey Levshin, Meyer does not insist categorically on the absence of any religious faith among the Nomads who lived in the Orenburg region. His research findings mainly convey the poor religiosity of the Kazakhs rather than its total absence. He writes “[The Kazakh] is not developed in religious aspects and he does not know what kind of religious sense he holds” (*«не развит в религиозном отношении и сам определенно не знает какого религиозного толка держится»*)<sup>126</sup>, “Has only a very vague understanding of the existence of two interpretations of Mohammedanism: Sunni and Shiite” (*«имеет только весьма смутное понятие о*

<sup>122</sup> Бронеvский, *«Записки Генерал – майора Бронеvского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды»*, 171.

<sup>125</sup> Privratsky, “Muslim Turkistan: Kazak religion and collective memory”, 77.

<sup>126</sup> Мейер, *«Материалы для географии и статистики России»*, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Киргизская степь Оренбургского ведомства», 228.



существование двух толков магометанства: суннитского и шиитского»)<sup>127</sup>, and “Despite such a weak development of religious ideas among them and the absence of a Mohammedan spiritual hierarchy, Christianity among the Kirgiz is very little spread” (*«не смотря на такое слабое развитие религиозных идей в народе и отсутствии магометанской духовной иерархии, христианство между киргизами, весьма мало распространяется»*).<sup>128</sup> However, it is essential to note that Meyer’s research findings, to some extent, contradict each other. Namely, in opposition to the statements that I mentioned earlier, he also reports witnessing Kazakhs performing their religious duties: “The Kirgiz perform the prayers prescribed by the Mohammedan religion quite regularly, but they observe few fasts because of their innate voracity” (*молитвы, предписанные магометанской религией, киргизы творят довольно исправно, но постов мало соблюдают, по причине врожденной прожорливости их*)<sup>129</sup> and “Along with the spread of wealth and settlement, religion will become more important among the Kirgiz” (*вместе с распространением богатства и оседлости, религия получит между Киргизами большее значение*).<sup>130</sup> Further, I find one of Meyer’s claims, “They deviate from the rules of Mohammedanism, and make images of animals and children in these tombs” (*«отступают от правил магометанства, и делают в этих гробницах изображения животных и детей»*)<sup>131</sup> relatable to the criterion of superstition traits existence among the nomadic peoples. In addition, I argue that another of Meyer’s research findings is quite controversial in its actual meaning, which does not correspond to the weak or proper criterion of the Nomads’ religious affiliations. Hence, the assertion “They do not particularly honor the Mohammedan holidays, but they observe some fasts (Uraza) and celebrate certain days” (*«не особенно чтут магометанские праздники, однако соблюдают некоторые посты (ураза), и празднуют*

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 254.

*известные дни*)<sup>132</sup> does not provide a clear understanding of what kinds of Islamic celebrations the Kazakhs ignored and what types of holiday days they accordingly observed fasting (Uraza). Moreover, there is a lack of concrete explanation of the meaning of the vague term “certain days” (*«известные дни»*). In addition, I argue that the principal reason for this is that Meyer was a military official lacking any religious education, especially regarding Islam. In addition, as said in the previous chapter, the author only compiled the research outcomes of other Russian ethnographers without spending time (i.e., conducting fieldwork) among Kazakhs. Consequently, in many instances, the note only reflects others’ ideas and findings, and as the author admits himself, the materials also include many inaccuracies and errors.

The next highly regarded Russian researcher of Kazakhs is Ilya Kazantsev, a colonel who served in the offices of the chief heads of the Orenburg Region for over 20 years and who personally knew the khans of Shergazy and Dzhangir. In his ethnographic paper, “The Description of Kirgiz-Kaysakov” (*Описание Киргиз-Кайсаков*), he provides pertinent information about the Nomads’ religious beliefs, which simultaneously reflect three evaluation criteria: both strong and poor connection to Islam, and superstitions of the Younger Horde Kazakhs religious faith. Thus, speaking about Orenburg or Trans-Ural Kazakhs’ formal religious affiliation, Kazantsev asserts that they “profess the Mohammedan religion” (*«Исповедают магометанскую религию»*)<sup>133</sup> and then regarding the weakness of the Kazakhs religious faith, the ethnographer states that “the Kirgiz are not too afraid of violating the oath taken through the mullah according to the Quran” (*«нарушение присяги, принятой через муллу по алкорану, киргизы не слишком страшатся»*).<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, taking into consideration superstition as the third criterion, Kazantsev’s assertion is as follows: “They are extremely superstitious, inclined to divination and believe in sorcerers” (*они чрезвычайно*

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Казанцев, *«Описание Киргиз – Кайсаков»*, 31.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 30.

*суеверны, привержены к ворожбе и верят колдунам).*<sup>135</sup> The named author is the second examined ethnographer, along with Meyer, whose narratives address no evidence of the total absence of religious faith among the Younger Horde Kazakhs. At the same time, the content analysis of Kazantsev's materials shows that the author rewrites other ethnographers' notes without making his research effort to study the Nomads' faith patterns. As evidence, two cases about the religiosity of the Kazakhs have been presented in both German' and Kazantsev's notes. The first case depicts the situation when an alleged sorcerer persuaded Kazakhs to attack the Russian caravan and assured the attackers that he had turned the Russians' canon into clay by God – given power to him. But when Russians, during the assault, fired shots and wounded many Kazakhs, the sorcerer's fraud was revealed, and he was further ashamed and banished. The second case relates to the failed mission of the Scottish Bible Society to distribute the Bible among the Orenburg Kazakhs. Accordingly, my argument is that Kazantsev's materials only retranslate the same vision about the religiosity of the Kazakhs as other Russian sources without delving into the issue for a more detailed examination.

Despite having collected important information about the household, economic, and sanitary living conditions of nomadic Kazakhs of the Turgay region, a Russian publicist, Boris Yuzevovich, has left scant descriptions of the nomads' religiosity in his ethnographic paper "About the Domestic Life of the Kirgiz of the Turgay Region" (*О быте киргизов Тургайской области*). As a result, his paper reflects only two brief narratives of the nomads' faith, both of which apply to the criterion of proper religious observation by the nomadic population of the Turgay area. The first of Yuzevovich's assertions are, "The isolation in which the Mohammedan faith puts the Kirghiz, however, does not lead to fanaticism" (*Замкнутость, в какую ставит Киргиза магометанская вера не ведет, однако к*

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

фанатизму)<sup>136</sup> and the author's second claim is relatable to Islamic ritual practice: "Prayers, according to the Muslim custom, are performed by them five times a day" («Молитвы, по мусульманскому обычаю, совершаются ими пять раз в день»)<sup>137</sup>. At the same time, it is essential to note that Yuzefovich acknowledges that his research paper only represents a general area of the nomads' lifestyle; thus, it remains unclear how profoundly the ethnographer studied the religiosity of the nomads in question. However, despite the scarcity of narratives, Yuzefovich provides some valuable accounts about the presence of Islamic institutions in the Turgay region, which evidences that an Islamic social and educational network operated among the Younger Horde Kazakhs. Thus, the author first mentions that local parishioners invited him to visit a mosque, but he refused to do so due to the absence of clean shoes. Concerning the Islamic institutions of the region, the author also notes that in all districts of Iletsk uezd except for Tuztubink, mosques and schools (madrassas) were present.<sup>138</sup> To a certain degree, these research findings prove that at least in the middle of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kazakhs living in the Iletsk uezd of the Turgay region had access to the basic level of Islamic education. It is worth noting that Yuzefovich is one of the few Russian ethnographers who pays attention to the existence of Islamic institutions in the Steppe, which is critical to understanding the nomadic population's affiliation with Islam.

"Essays on the Inner Kirgiz Horde" (*Очерки Внутренней киргизской орды*) by the author Alexander Alektorov, which was published in the 3-d issue of *Izvestie of the Orenburg Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society* in 1894, devotes a comprehensive chapter to the religious and moral life of the Bukeev Horde Kazakhs. The chapter, along with the narratives about Khan Dzhangir's efforts to enhance the role of Islam in the daily life of Kazakhs, pictures how the celebration of the Islamic religious holiday Kurban – Bayram was held in the Horde. Then, his narrative concerning Islam has a connotation of the weakness of

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<sup>136</sup> Юзефович, «О быте киргизов Тургайской области», 803.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 831.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 812.

the Nomads in religious issues when Alektorov asserts that the Bukeev Horde Kazakhs were inappropriate Muslims. The author's assertion about that is the following "The Kirgiz, except for very few sultans and Khojas, had almost no religious beliefs and were very bad Mohammedans (according to the Sunni sense)" (*Киргизы, за исключением весьма не многих султанов и хожей, не имели почти никаких религиозных убеждений и были очень плохими магометанами (по суннитскому толку)*).<sup>139</sup> Further, Alektorov considers the spread of Islam among the nomads as a factor hampering the latter's rapprochement with the neighboring Russian Christian population.<sup>140</sup> In that regard, Alektorov's assertion corresponds with Grigoriev's vision about the role of Islam in thwarting colonization of the steppe region.

Ivan Anichkov is the last Russian ethnographer whose research endeavors about the Younger Horde Kazakhs' religiosity I will consider. He published the article "The Oath of the Kirgiz before the Russian Court" (*Присяга киргиз перед русским судом*) in *the Journal of the Ministry of Justice* in 1898. What distinguishes the material from the other aforementioned ethnographic papers is that Anichkov disagrees with the general notion of the superficiality of the Nomads in religious affairs and argues that Kazakhs were as appropriate adherents of Islam as any other Islamic nation. This point witnesses the next Anichkov's statement that "the Kirgiz, as confessors of the Mohammedan religion, are just as legitimate Muslims as other nations" (*«киргизы, как исповедники магометанской религии, такие же правомерные мусульмане, как и прочие народы»*).<sup>141</sup> Further, Anichkov provides two assertions explaining the falsity of the Russian general perception of the Nomads' religious pooriness. Such statements are, "If it seems to us that the Kirgiz are bad Muslims, then this is due to the fact that we do not separate the religious side from the social side" (*«Если нам кажется, что киргизы плохие мусульмане, то это происходит от того, что мы не*

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<sup>139</sup> Alektorov, «Очерки Внутренней киргизской орды», 6.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>141</sup> Аничков, «Присяга киргиз перед русским судом», 34.

*разделяем религиозную сторону от социальной»*)<sup>142</sup> and “the demands of the Mohammedan religion did not absorb the life of the Kirgiz, in the sense of everyday life, and if Islam penetrated into their midst and made great conquests, then this sphere of activity was limited to the religious side, not having to cover their social system” (*«требование магометанской религии не поглотили жизнь киргизов, в смысле житейского обихода и, если Ислам приник в их среду и сделал большие завоевания, то эта сфера деятельности ограничилось религиозной стороной, не успев охватить их социальный строй»*).<sup>143</sup> That means Kazakhs properly held the Islamic ritual canons, such as praying five prayers daily and fasting. Still, they preferred to follow traditional nomadic traditions and customs (*kalymmal, barymta*). At the same time, according to this author’s statement, the role of Islam is elevated in the steppe: “Islam is increasingly seizing the Kirgiz masses, and the views of Sharia are reflected in them” *«мусульманство все интенсивнее захватывает в свои руки киргизские массы и взгляды шариата отражаются в них.»*<sup>144</sup> Regarding the evaluation criteria, I argue that these assertions by Anichkov correspond to the rare view of the Nomads’ formal religious affiliation. Moreover, the author is among a few Russian ethnographers who describe the functioning of Islamic social and educational institutions (mosques and madrasas) in the steppe, as well as the existence of the Ulama (the Islamic scholars) such as Ishans, Sufis, and Akhuns.<sup>145</sup> By asserting that, Anichkov additionally argues that those Islamic tendencies were brought and implemented by outsiders, such as Tatars and Central Asians.<sup>146</sup> According to Allen Frank, such a statement is the general standpoint among scholars on Kazakh history. However, Frank, to a certain extent, questions this popular viewpoint and argues that the Ulama as the religious stratum had already been

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 33

established long before the Tatars and Central Asians religiously approached the Kazakh steppe.<sup>147</sup>

## 2.2 The Middle Horde Kazakhs' religiosity, as described by Russian Ethnographers

The chapter about the religiosity of the Middle Horde Nomads begins with “The notes of Major General Bronevsky about the Kirgiz-Kaysaks of the Middle Horde” (*Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды*) by the author Semyon Bronevsky, which was published in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski* in 1830. Bronevsky, from 1822 to 1938, was the head of the Omsk region. The region was under the governorship of Western Siberia, which administered the Siberian Kirghiz, who belonged to the Middle Horde. Concerning the Middle Horde Kazakhs' religious faith, Bronevsky is not wordy enough; however, although he provides only basic interpretations without delving into the details, his notes include some precious observations that shed light on the presence of the Islamic institutions among the Nomads and the aspects of observing the latter, the Islamic practices such as the prayer five times a day.

In general, his religious narratives differ little from Aleksey Levshins's descriptions of the Nomad's beliefs and primarily reflect the Nomads' superstitions and lack of “proper” religion. Thus, speaking of the Kazakhs' religious weaknesses, Bronevsky asserts that the Nomads are “true ignoramuses in religion” (*«истинные невежи в религии»*)<sup>148</sup> and “He rarely knows any prayer and has an idea about the Quran; they do not express external reverence for God at all” (*«редко знает, какую либо молитву и имеют понятие о Коране, наружного богопочтения они вовсе не изъявляют»*).<sup>149</sup> And the second facet relatable to the Nomads' proclivity to superstition or paganism can be seen in the following Semyon

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<sup>147</sup> J. Frank, “Islamic scholars among the Kereys of Northern Kazakhstan, 1680-1850”, 5.

<sup>148</sup> Броневский, «Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды», 171.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

Bronevsky's claims "The Kirgiz are drowning in ignorance and superstition; they are Mohammedans only in name" (*«Киргизы утопают в невежестве и суеверии; они суть Магометане только по названию»*)<sup>150</sup> and "The inner worship of God consists of superstitions and prejudices" (*«Внутреннее богопочтение состоит из суеверий и предрассудков»*).<sup>151</sup> Hence, somehow Bronevsky's scant ethnographic findings provide enough evidence to conclude that the Middle Horde's nomadic population, although calling themselves Muslims, were ignorant of the Islamic religious rituals and canons. However, a more thorough analysis of Bronevsky's materials reveals the author's poor comprehension of the nomad's religious life, the Islamic religious institutions, and the peculiarities of observing the Islamic rituals by the nomadic population and the nomadic lifestyle in general. Bronevsky states that "Kirgiz–Kaysaks, although professing the religion of Mahomet, essentially ignorant of it; they keep Akhuns, Mullahs, and Khojas in the Volosts, but do not have any mosques" (*«Киргизы-Кайсаки, хотя исповедуют закон Магомета, но суть невежды в нем, Ахунов, Муллов и Ходжей содержат в волостях, но нет у них ни мечетей»*)<sup>152</sup>. Thus, despite his repetitiveness about flat Kazakh affiliation to Islam, the author admits the presence of the Ulama (the Islamic clergy and scholars) among the Nomads. And the absence of permanently built mosques per se does not mean that the Kazakhs did not have mosques in their way for such religious practice. The Kazakhs, being nomads and leading a nomadic lifestyle, had their interpretation of the mosque's function. Thus, according to the canons of Islam, mosques may be the place of collective convention and prayers everywhere except for dirty places such as toilets and bathing rooms; therefore, the Nomads used yurts as the place of gathering and performing communal Islamic rituals such as Friday prayers. Accordingly, the mosque was either a separate yurt constructed primarily to observe Islamic practices or a yurt where a Mullah or other representative of the local Islamic clergy was living. Spasskii, in

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Броневский, *«Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды»*, 96.



his observation, proves that aspect by asserting that some well-off Kazakhs set up a yurt for a mosque while his *aul* (nomadic encampment) was out on the steppe.<sup>153</sup> In the same vein, the Turkestan Teachers' Seminary's pupil, Bukin Ish-Mohammed, states that among the Nomads, the mosque was replaced by an ordinary Kazakh's khibitka (*yurt*).<sup>154</sup>

And Semyon Brovetsky, in his ethnographic observation, to some extent proves this assumption as well as the assertion that the Kazakhs were properly performing namaz, one of the five mandatory canonical pillars of the religion of Islam; thus, he writes as follows: "In any aul, a Mullah, or in case of his absence, one of the honorable elders who knows the law better, by coming out of the yurt, calls some prayers loudly five times a day. Then everyone suspended their chores, falls on their knees and prays" (*«во всяком ауле, Мулла, или за неимением его, один из почетных стариков, более знающий закон, пять раз в сутки, выйдя из юрты, громко кричит некоторые молитвы. Тогда все, оставляя занятия, повергаются на колена и несколько молятся»*).<sup>155</sup> This author's observation provides a great explanation of the Middle Horde Kazakhs' formal affiliation to Islam, both institutionally and canonically. Thus, my argumentations from those sentences are as follows *«во всяком ауле, Мулла, или за неимением его, один из почетных стариков, более знающий закон»* "in any *aul*, a Mullah, or case of absence of him, one of the honorable elders, who knows the law more" means each Kazakh settlement had its own Ulama, who was represented by a Mullah or other person recognized within the community as the most proficient in knowledge of Islam religion to be the representative of local Islamic clergy; then (*«пять раз в сутки, выйдя из юрты громко кричит некоторые молитвы»*) "by coming out of the yurt calls some prayers loudly five times a day" means "the yurt" was the place for collective prayers either a mosque or a Mullah's living place, and "calling some prayers

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<sup>153</sup> Спасский, «Потребностью православной миссии», 6.

<sup>154</sup> Букин, «Физическое и умственное воспитание у киргиз», 10.

<sup>155</sup> Броневский, «Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды», 95 – 96.

loudly five times a day” nothing else but calling “*Azan*” the canonical call for the five daily prayers in Islam religion; and the last part of the observation, “Then everyone suspended their chores, falls on their knees, and prays” (*«Тогда все, оставляя занятия, повергаются на колена и несколько молятся»*) means that all Aul’s inhabitants living in that particular settlement suspended their deals and started to pray, where “falls on their knees” (*«повергаются на колена»*) nothing else but the performance of namaz. As a result, according to my arguments, the aforementioned Semyon Bronevsky’s ethnographic observation, particularly in the last section discussing the aspect of observing the five daily prayers by every member of the local Kazakh community, calls into question the general perception of Kazakhs as superficial Muslims who ignore Islamic canonical rituals. Further in this thesis chapter, these research outcomes will be compared with other Russian ethnographical materials concerning the Middle Horde Kazakhs’ religious beliefs.

Another Russian ethnographer who compiled data on the Middle Horde Kazakhs’ religiosity was a colonial military officer, Nikolai Krasovsky. In the same vein as Semyon Bronevsky’s research findings, the paper “Materials for Geography and Statistics of Russia Collected by Officers of the General Staff. The Region of the Siberian Kirgiz” (*Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Область Сибирских Киргизов*) does not include ample information concerning the religion of the Middle Horde Kazakhs in question. Accordingly, he points out that the nomadic Middle Horde people, although recognizing themselves as adherents of the Islamic religion and observing Islamic ritual practice, were indeed weak in their religious convictions. It is evident from the following Krasovsky’s assertions: “ritual, performing prayer, etc., he is ready to give up everything tomorrow” (*«обрядность, при совершении намаза и прочее, готов завтра же все бросить»*)<sup>154</sup> and “a Kirgiz should be considered a Mohammedan only in appearance,

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<sup>154</sup> Красовский, «Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Область Сибирских Киргизов», 392.

and a temporary one” (*«киргиза должно считать только по наружности магометанином и притом временным»*).<sup>157</sup> Reflecting on the general colonial perception of the lack of hygiene among the Kazakhs and their laziness, the author makes a subsequent claim that “only laziness can explain why a Kirgiz-Mohammedan, who regularly performs prayer, even five times a day, never does ablution” (*«только ленью и можно объяснить, почему киргиз–магометанин, исправно совершая намаз, положенный даже пять раз в день, ни разу не делает омовение»*)<sup>158</sup> corresponds to the criterion that Kazakhs were proper and diligent in some of their Islamic rituals but not in others. What is worth noting here is that Krasovsky, who, as the mentioned-above ethnographer from the Younger Horde Meyer, was also a military officer obtaining only military education from the Second Cadet Corps and Infantry School and the Imperial Nicholas Academy of the General Staff. Thus, I argue that his academic background did not allow him properly comprehend the nuances of the religiosity of the Nomads. Hence, Krasovsky prefers using the term Mohammedan (*магометане*) instead of naming adherents of the Islam religion as Muslims, along with Meyer and other Russian ethnographers, who lacked knowledge of the Islam religion.

Reflecting the previously mentioned materials, the ethnographic essay “The Kirgiz of Akmola region” (*Киргизы Акмолинской области*) does not provide much data that may shed light on the religious faith of the Middle Horde Kazakhs in a broader context. On many points, the essay reflects Nikolay Krasovsky’s assumptions about the Nomads’ superficial attitude towards the Islam religion. Thus, the statement “In religious terms, the Kirgiz cannot be called true Mohammedans” (*«В религиозном отношении киргизов нельзя назвать истинными магометанами»*)<sup>159</sup> is an example of such an analogy. What needs to be pointed out is that the essay proves that the Middle Horde Kazakhs practiced Islamic rituals.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>159</sup> “The Kirgiz of Akmola region” (*Киргизы Акмолинской области*).

Still, similarly to Nikolay Krasovsky's arguments, it associates the Nomads with darkness and ignorance. It is evident from this assertion of the essay: "With a nomadic lifestyle and illiteracy, they mainly focus their religious concepts on the blind observance of rituals" (*«При кочевом образе жизни и безграмотности, они преимущественно сосредотачивают свои религиозные понятия на слепом соблюдении обрядов»*).<sup>160</sup> On the other hand, the essay provides the information that "their winter quarters should be kept as clean as possible, to which they are forced by their religious rites of daily fivefold prayer and ablution" (*«их зимовки содержаться по возможности в чистоте, к чему их принуждают их религиозные обряды ежедневного пятикратного моления и омовения»*)<sup>161</sup> which, to a certain degree, disagrees with Krasovsky's assumption about the Kazakhs' poor sanitary conditions and proves that the latter held the Islamic rituals in due manner.

Vladimir Tronov, who anthropologically studied the Kazakhs of the Zaisan district of Semipalatinsk and reflected research findings in his essay "Materials on Anthropology and Ethnology of the Kirgiz" (*Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз*), obviously only paraphrases Nikolay Zeland's assumptions regarding the religiosity of the Middle Horde Kazakhs. His statements are similar to Zeland's, where Tronov argues that Kazakhs, although recognizing themselves as Muslims, lacked the understanding necessary to comprehend the dogmas of Islam. Tronov writes: "The Kirghiz are Mohammedans by religion, but in essence, the religion of Mahomet is as little known to them as any other" (*«по вероисповеданию киргизы магометане, но в сущности религии Магомета им также мало известна, как и всякая другая»*)<sup>162</sup> and "only the ceremonial side of religion is known, but its essence, its

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Тронов, *«Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз»*, 17.

dogmas are inaccessible to the understanding of the Kirghiz” (*«известна только обрядовая сторона религии, сущность же ее, ее догматы недоступны пониманию киргиз»*).<sup>163</sup>

What is worth noting here is that Vladimir Tronov, being a colonial medical representative and not being religiously educated, may have introduced some distortions in their findings concerning Kazakhs’ religious faith. Fortunately, for my thesis research, I have access to the accounts of an orthodox priest, Efrem Elisiev, who can be considered the primary source of information related to the Middle Horde Kazakhs’ religious beliefs.

The orthodox priest Efrem Elisiev (*Ефрем Елисеева*) published his ethnographic materials relatable to the Kazakhs’ religious faith in *Pravoslavniy Blagovestnik* and *Serkovnye Vedomosty* at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The centerpieces of his research endeavors were the areas of Semipalatinsk and Ust-Kamenogorsk regions. I argue that his findings are the most valuable and credible narratives among all available ethnographic sources due to their particular directivity to religious issues. First and foremost, it is crucial to point out that in the first chapter of his notes Elisiev firmly disapproves of all previously circulated Russian ethnographic assumptions asserting the superficial Islamization of Kazakhs. It is evident from the following statements:

Until now, I have repeatedly heard and read that the Kirgiz are not as passionate as the Muslim Tatars. According to rumors, I knew that the Kirgiz, although Muslims, were only touched by Islam on the outer, ritual side and that, therefore, the Kirgiz steppes could serve as a favorable soil for sowing the word of God. The Kirgiz are only external executors of the law and the rites of Islam. Many never perform namaz (prayers); they do all the rak’ahs (bows) clumsily when they do. Unfortunately, this idea of the Kirgiz is often far from being true. The Kirgiz often display the same blind devotion to Islam as the fanatical Tatars”

*(До сих пор мне неоднократно приходилось слышать и читать, что киргизы не так фанатичны, как мусульманствующие татары. По слухам, мне было известно, что киргизы хотя и мусульмане, но мусульманство коснулось их только внешней, обрядовой стороной и что, поэтому, киргизские степи могут служить удобной почвой для сеяния слова Божья. Киргизы только внешние исполнители закона и обряда мусульманства. Многие из них никогда не совершают намазов (молитв), совершая намаз, делают все ракаяты (поклоны) неумело. К сожалению, такое представление о киргизах часто далеко не*

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

*соответствует действительности. Киргизы зачастую проявляют такую же слепую преданность Исламу, как фанатики – татары).*<sup>164</sup>

Elisiev's statements show what misconceptions regarding Kazakhs' religiosity established among Russian colonial officials and ethnographers and to what extent those prejudices and biases distorted the portrait of Kazakhs' religiosity by depicting them as a nation of nominal Muslims. Further, the priest witnessed his observations that Kazakhs prayed at the time when Elisiev hosted the nomads. Elisiev states that "at the appointed time, at night, the Kirgiz got up for prayers" (*«В урочные часы, ночью, киргизы вставали на намазы»*).<sup>165</sup> Elisiev provides no significant evidence that his missionary efforts to baptize Kazakhs resulted in any tangible results regarding his missionary activities to introduce the inhabitants of the Middle Horde to the Orthodox religion. The notes mainly represent a few cases when Kazakhs voluntarily agreed to be converted to Orthodoxy; on other occasions, the Nomads preferred to stay cold and indifferent to Elisiev's preaching. In addition, according to Elisiev's accounts, Kazakhs were sometimes inclined to radically treat someone of their tribe for changing their religion from Islam to Christianity, including executing a convert. The priest depicted one such case in the Zaisan district.

### **2.3 The Great Horde Kazakhs' religiosity, as described by Russian Ethnographers**

"Kirgiz: An Ethnological essay" (*Киргизы. Этнологический очерк*) by the author Nikolay Zeland is an ethnographic narrative mainly about the Kazakhs of the Semirecheye region, who tend to be recognized as the Great Horde Kazakhs. As stated earlier in the first chapter of the thesis, Zeland was the first colonial representative of the Russian Empire who thoroughly explored the Kazakh nomadic people's anthropological, psychological, and physical characteristics. Concerning the narratives about the religiosity of the Kazakhs of the

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<sup>164</sup> Елисьев, «Записки миссионера», 4 - 5.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 19.

Semirech'e region, the research results do not substantially differ from the ethnographic stories regarding the nomads, either the Younger or Middle hordes. Thus, the descriptions of the Great Horde Kazakhs' religious features correspond to the two evaluation criteria: their poor knowledge of Islam and their propensity to superstition and shamanism. About the religious ignorance of the Semirecheye inhabitants, Zeland points out the following: "The Kirgiz consider themselves Sunni Mohammedans, but in general they are indifferent to dogmatic issues and are little familiar with them" (*«Киргизы себя считают магометанами – суннитами, но вообще они равнодушны к догматическим вопросам и мало с ними знакомы»*).<sup>166</sup> Although Zeland's assertion, "The main rites, however, are performed, they perform prayer according to Muslim rules and keep large fasts, too, however, not always carefully" (*«Главные обряды впрочем исполняют, творят молитву по мусульманским правилам и держат большие посты, тоже впрочем не всегда аккуратно»*)<sup>167</sup> admits the Kazakhs professing the core Islamic religious prescriptions, it does so with a caveat about the latter's carelessness in such religious issues. At the same time, the author provides information that Sharia law was practiced among the Kazakhs, at least in marriage affairs. The named author in his essay writes as follows: "The marriage takes place through the mullah, who reads appropriate prayers and performs some rituals" (*«бракосочетание происходит при посредстве муллы, который читает подходящие молитвы и совершает некоторые обряды»*).<sup>168</sup> Another author's narrative about the existence of religious institutions and authorities in the Great Horde areas may be considered doubtful and arguable. Zeland narrated that "mullahs are present in the steppe, but there are few of them, and they are uneducated; the theological knowledge of most of them consists in memorizing a few prayers from the Quran. There are very few mosques" (*«муллы есть в степи, но их мало и они малограмотны, богословское знание большинства их заключается в*

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<sup>166</sup> Зеланд, *«Киргизы. Этнографический очерк»*, 31.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 26.

заучении несколько молитв из Корана. Мечетей очень мало»<sup>169</sup> Hence, it seems the author fell into the same trap of limited knowledge about Islam as many other Russian ethnographers. Without specific knowledge of Islam, how could he assess the Mullahs' literacy or their proficiency in the dogmas of the Islamic religion? Further, on the issue of mosques, it is also quite vague what kinds of mosques the author mentioned as I argue in the case of Semyon Bronevsky's observations, a mosque, in the Nomads' view, could be a yurt constructed for collective prayers. Overall, Zeland's academic background does not assure us that his narratives accurately depict the religiosity of the Great Horde Kazakhs.

Further, touching on the narratives of the essay about the superstition or shamanistic nature of existence among the Great Horde Kazakhs, the following three of Zeland's statements may be taken into consideration: "The Muslim rites of the Kirgiz are still mixed with the remnants of paganism" (*«мусульманские обряды у киргиз еще перемешаны с остатками язычества»*)<sup>170</sup>, "respect for burial places among the Kirgiz almost reaches the degree of religious worship" (*«уважение к местам погребения у киргиз почти достигает степени религиозного культа»*)<sup>171</sup> and "Kirgiz often pray on graves" (*«на могилах киргизы нередко творят молитву»*).<sup>172</sup> At the same time, I argue that the last two author's assertions falsely associated the Kazakhs' respect for burial places and praying on graves as acts of paganism. According to the canons of Islam, "visiting graves in Islam is an encouraged action for both men and women."<sup>173</sup> Hence, inadequate knowledge of the Islamic tenets led to false assumptions and prejudice and resulted in picturing of Kazakh Muslims as pagans.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 31 – 32.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> <https://sunna.su/poseschenie-mogil-v-islame/>



## 2.4 The Kazakhs' religiosity, as described by Russian Ethnographers without territory identification

The last chapter relates to the ethnographic narratives of Russian colonial representatives whose ties to the territory remain unidentified. The first of those descriptions in question is Nikolay Balkashin's work "About the Kirgiz and in general and about Muslims who are subjected to Russia" (*О Киргизах и вообще, о подвластных России мусульманах*). Thus, despite calling Kazakhs in a traditional prejudiced colonial style a backward nation, his ethnographic narratives correlate with the criterion of the Nomads having proper bonds with the Islamic faith. Hence, he claims that "The dark Kirgiz people believe that there is a great God and Mohammed is his prophet; there is the Quran, which contains the divine teaching; there is an afterlife and eternal bliss" (*«Темный киргизский народ верит, что есть великий Бог и Магомет его пророк; есть Коран, заключающий в себе божественное учение; есть загробная жизнь и вечное блаженство»*).<sup>174</sup> Although there is no evidence that Balkashin was somehow proficient in the knowledge of the canons of Islam, by this sentence, he rightfully highlights the core dogmas of the Islam religion. He thus subsequently proves that the Kazakhs were as familiar with those dogmas as any other Muslim nation.

In addition to that, Balkashin states that Kazakhs correctly observed religious rituals, namely praying and fasting, as prescribed by the Islamic canons. It is evident to us from the following author's statements: "To achieve it, one must observe circumcision and fasting, and perform the prayer, i.e., pray" (*«Для достижения его должно соблюдать обрезания и посты, и совершать намаз, т.е. молиться»*)<sup>175</sup>, "The property provision of a woman is a God-pleasing matter" (*«Имущественное обеспечение женщины богоугодное дело»*)<sup>176</sup>, and "These beliefs are equally unshakable among the Kirgiz" (*«Эти верования одинаково*

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<sup>174</sup> Балкашин, «О Киргизах и вообще, о подвластных России мусульманах», 32.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

незыблемы у киргизов»<sup>177</sup> However, in general, Balkashin's point of view concerning the Kazakhs was questionable regarding the prospects of rapprochement of Kazakh and Russian peoples when the paper's author finally pointed out that "The Kirgiz represent a peaceful, but alien to Russia Muslim people" (*«Киргизы представляют пока мирный, но чуждый России мусульманский народ»*).<sup>178</sup>

The essay "Life and Customs of the Kirgiz" (*Быт и нравы киргизов*) by the author Alexander Smirnov abstains from the tone of negativity that is usual for the majority of Russian ethnographic materials regarding the Kazakhs. The latter, in their religious beliefs and practices, are represented as Muslims, properly holding Islamic practices but at the same time not deprived of having some superstitious characteristics. This assumption is palpable from the following Smirnov's statements: "having performed ablution and prayer, as their faith prescribes to them" (*«свершив омовение и молитву, как им предписывает их вера»*)<sup>179</sup>, "The Kirgiz profess the Mohammedan faith"<sup>180</sup> and "does ablution and performs prayer" (*«делает омовение и совершает молитву»*).<sup>181</sup> Speaking about the aspects of Kazakhs' inclination to superstition, Smirnov provided two claims: "And even now, there are many various pagan superstitions and prejudices preserved in their beliefs" (*«да и теперь в их верованиях сохранилось много всевозможных языческих суеверий и предрассудков»*)<sup>182</sup> and "they worship them (graves) and offer sacrifices" (*«они поклоняются им (могилам) и приносят жертвы»*).<sup>183</sup> Thus, Smirnov's narratives regarding the Kazakhs' religious beliefs correspond to the criteria of presenting formal religious affiliation and manifesting superstitious features.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>179</sup> Смирнов, *«Быт и нравы киргизов»*, 15.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 21.

In contrast to Alexander Smirnov's ethnographic narratives, Lev Arasansky, in his notes, "Causes of unrest in the Kirgiz steppes. The Kirgiz question" (*Причины волнений в киргизских степях. Киргизский вопрос*) is more pessimistic in depicting the religiosity of the Kazakhs. Although Kazakhs call themselves Muslims, Arasansky describes them as weak in religious matters. These two statements reflect the essay's findings, "they have no idea about religion, although they are considered Mohammedans" (*«о религии они не имеют никакого понятия, хотя и считаются магометанами»*) and "This indifference to religion clearly shows both the savagery of the disposition and the apathy to which these people have been reduced by the scarcity of material resources and the despotism of the rulers" (*«Это равнодушие к религии ясно показывает как дикость нрава, так и ту апатию до которой доведен этот народ скудностью материальных средств и деспотизмом правителей»*).<sup>184</sup> Consequently, only one of four criteria is useable for Arasansky's notes, which is the Kazakhs' weakness in religious issues.

And the last material considering the religiosity of Kazakhs without territory identification is the ethnographic essay "Kirgiz's Domestic Law" (*Обычное семейное право киргиз*) by the author Nikolay Malyshev. The article aims to examine the customary traditions of the steppe's inhabitants from various facets, including social and legislative relations within family and tribe. Regarding the religious aspects, Malyshev covers little, mainly the prospects of marriage and family. Thus, concerning the place of religion in the Nomads' domestic relations, Malyshev provides the following narratives: "In their home life, the Kirgiz do not observe the precepts of the Koran, allowing comparatively greater freedom for women" (*«в своей домашней жизни киргизы не соблюдают предписания Корана, допуская сравнительно большую свободу для женщин»*)<sup>185</sup>, "One of the first and main conditions for a Kirgiz marriage is the unity of religion" (*«Одним из первых и главных*

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<sup>184</sup> Арасанский, «Причины волнений в киргизских степях. Киргизский вопрос».

<sup>185</sup> Малышев, «Обычное семейное право киргиз», 4.

условий для заключения брака киргиз является единство вероисповедания»)<sup>186</sup> and “A marriage that does not satisfy this condition is recognized as illegal and immediately terminated” (*Брак, не удовлетворяющий этому условию, признается незаконным и немедленно расторгается*).<sup>187</sup> As can be seen, such statements represent the positivity of the Islamic dogmas in the Kazakh institution of marriage and family. However, in converse to the assertions mentioned above, the essay has the statement, “Marriage among the Kirgiz is devoid of religious significance. It is simply a civil agreement, the most important condition of which is a kalym” (*«Брак у киргиз лишен религиозного значения. Он есть просто гражданская сделка, самое главное условие которой является калым»*)<sup>188</sup>, which to a certain extent lessens the interconnection of the Islam religion to the customary law of the Nomads. Hence, after analyzing Malishev’s narratives, I argue that two criteria can be applied: the formal affiliations of the Nomads to the Islam religion and the weakness of the Islamic legislative canons in the daily beliefs of the nomadic people. In other words, the Islamic norms, according to the author of the essay, only had legislative meaning without being an inalienable part of the Kazakhs’ faith.

### Conclusion

This chapter attempts to analyze the narratives and materials of the Russian colonial ethnographers in the context of the religious affiliation of the Kazakhs living in the territory of the Younger, Middle, and Great Hordes. Thus, to accomplish this goal, I separate all available resources into four categories according to their attachment to historical chronology and territoriality. The first three categories of narratives are distributed according to the division of Kazakhstan territory into the Younger, Middle, and Great Hordes. The last fourth category devotes to ethnographic findings in which territorial affiliation remains unknown.

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

Further, the data-analysis process includes four evaluation criteria applied to grasp the migratory population's absence, poorness, and decency of religiosity according to the mentioned-above territorial factor. The fourth criterion regards the context of the Nomads' inclination toward superstition or shamanism. Hence, juxtaposing the pieces of data produces the following outcome: Fedor German's ethnographic narratives advocate the total absence of any religiosity among the Younger Horde Kazakhs. Then, by refusing any Islamic values to Kazakhs, German argues for the overall tendency of the Kazakhs to superstition. The materials of other Russian ethnographers do not support German's first finding. Still, his superstition-related aspect echoes in many narratives concerning the Younger, the Middle, or the Great Horde Kazakhs.

Most ethnographic accounts mirror each other regarding the poorness of the three Horde Kazakhs in religious affairs. The poorness in this context means the weak attachment of the nomads to the Islam religion. Thus, while the narratives acknowledge the Kazakhs' observation of Islam-prescribed rituals such as five prayers and fasting, Russian ethnographers are primarily pessimistic about the nomadic worshippers' sincerity in their Islamic faith. What is worth mentioning here is that Russian ethnographers mainly retranslated each other's accounts without producing their own research findings. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period of intensive incorporation of the steppe inhabitants into the Russian colonial system, and accordingly, Kazakh society underwent its own transformation in political, social, and religious spheres. Despite that fact, Russian ethnographers tend to depict that transformation, and thus many of their accounts describing the Kazakhs' religiosity remained unchanged mainly during the whole 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Aleksey Levshin's or Semyon Bronevsky's accounts claiming Kazakhs' weak Islamic religious features, dated in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, found a similar narrative in the accounts of Vladimir Tronov or Nikolay Zeland, which are dated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it is doubtful that the

religious traits of Kazakhs did not transform, even though during this 80-year period the steppe experienced a huge influx of Tatar Islamic missionaries and a wave of mosque and madrassa construction, especially in the space of urban settlements. The account of Aḥmad-Walī al-Qazānī describing the Islamic history of Semipalatinsk provides information about the network of Islamic institutions in that time Semipalatinsk and the names and educational background of the Ulama working as imams in mosques and madrassas. Additionally, the manuscript allows the researchers to learn the alternative narratives which somehow dismiss the cliché that Kazakh were “lightly” Islamized.<sup>189</sup>

The common conclusion drawn by most Russian ethnographers is that the Kazakhs were Muslims in name only rather than in essence, regardless of what horde of residency the nomadic people were. At the same time, other Russian ethnographers’ voices belong to the pens of Boris Yuzefovich and Ivan Anichkov, whose research findings advocate for the persistence of the Kazakhs in their ties to the Islamic religious canons. And the most strongly stated assertion in this regard is made by the orthodox priest Efrem Elisiev, whose primary mission was to baptize Kazakhs: that all assumptions concerning the superficial attitude and carelessness of the Nomads in the Islam religion did not meet the expected reality and the latter was further considered “fanatical” in their faith as many other Islamic nations. In addition to that, I argue that their ethnographic outcomes differ from others because, unlike other Russian ethnographers who studied Kazakhs through archive documents (like Aleksey Levshin) or compiled the research outcomes of other ethnographers (like Lev Meyer or Nikolay Krasovsky), Boris Yuzefovich and Efrem Elisiev wrote their narratives after direct observation of the nomads. Especially, it is related to the ethnographic results of the orthodox priest Efrem Elisiev, whose ethnographic activities were closely intertwined with his direct missionary endeavors. As stated earlier, Elisiev, before his journey to the steppe, believed that

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<sup>189</sup> Qazānī, Aḥmad-Walī al, Qurbān ‘alī Hālīdī, and Allen J. Frank. "Materials for the Islamic history of Semipalatinsk: two manuscripts by Aḥmad-Walī al-Qazānī and Qurbān ‘alī Khālīdī", 3.

Kazakhs were nominal Muslims and that no excessive effort was needed to bring them to Orthodoxy. However, later on, this delusion disappeared when Elisiev started encountering and observing the nomads in their close proximity. Accordingly, the Russian ethnographic community in general was repeating the cliché about the superficial Islamization of the Kazakhs that was formed by the first cohort of Russian ethnographers such as Fedor German, Aleksey Levshin, and Semen Bronevsky. And the ethnographers, such as Boris Yuzefovich, Ivan Anichkov, and Efrem Elisiev, who went beyond this firmly established perception, produced different accounts where the Kazakhs were not lightly Islamized.

### **Chapter 3. Kazakh Nomads' Customs and Mores through the Lens of Russian Ethnographers**

#### **Introduction**

The third chapter examines Russian ethnographic accounts of the lifestyle and traditions of the Kazakh nomads. As a general rule, such narratives reflect negativity and prejudice, as the words “backwardness” and “primitiveness” are the most frequently encountered terms in the language of Russian ethnographers. In many cases, Europeans' biased, permeated attitude towards natives is the common trend. David Boucher argues that in the context of colonialism, the meeting of Europeans with other non – European natives is the contact of a higher civilization with a lower one.<sup>190</sup> To a certain extent, Russian ethnographical narratives correspond with anthropological accounts of travelers to Australia, who depicted Australian indigenous people as non – or less than human. When described as human, Aborigines are still placed at such a low level of civilization that they could hardly be respected with civility. And the final verdict of those accounts was that the Australian natives, with no noticeable features of culture, should have been exterminated rather than enslaved.<sup>191</sup> In many instances, the Russian ethnographic materials reflect similar tendencies of treating the Kazakhs as the native people holding a low point on the scale of civilization; however, these accounts abstain from any call for the extermination of natives, except for Vladimir Tronov, whose essay makes the genocidal assertion that the Kazakhs are standing at a deficient level of development and that in the struggle for existence, they must give way to their more cultured neighbors.

Further, as expected, there are no anticipations that Russian ethnographers, the majority of whom were either military or civilian imperial servants, would treat the steppe inhabitants as equals to Russians. As stated earlier in the introduction, finding the presence of

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<sup>190</sup> Boucher, “Invoking a world of ideas theory and interpretation in the justification of colonialism”, 19.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.



prejudices and Eurocentrism is not the chief purpose of this thesis, but rather understanding the level and the way of formation of such biases is the intended research outcome. Hence, I strive to find out what the backwardness and primitiveness of the Kazakhs mean for the Russians. In other words, what may seem backward to Europeans, for the steppe inhabitants, may be complex and even sophisticated families, and inter-tribal relations that were vital to surviving in the harsh climate and economic steppe environment. The customs of *barimta* or *kalymmal* may be considered as two cases. Thus, in Russian accounts, the description of these customs is filled with negativity; however, both traditional practices were unalienable and intrinsic parts of Kazakh judicial, social, and economic sustainability. Hence, the central argument of this chapter is that Kazakh mores and traditions were not as simple as Russian ethnographers tend to depict.

Furthermore, similarly to the second chapter of the thesis, the Russian ethnographic sources are analyzed based on the territories they describe. Thus, accounts about the Younger Horde Kazakhs are based on the ethnographic findings of Fedor German, Aleksey Levshin, Lev Meyer, Nikolay Blamberg, Iliya Kazantsev, and many others. Further, the narratives of Semyon Brovevsky, Ivan Ibragimov, and Nikolay Krasovsky describe the mores and traditions of the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde. And materials about the Kazakhs who resided in the territory of the Great Horde are attributed to the colonial doctor Nikolay Zeland, and Semipalatinsk Statistical Committee member and local judge Peter Makovetsky.

The roadmap of my research chapter is as follows: firstly, I am going to ascertain pieces of data that are relevant to the mores and traditions of nomads in the Russian ethnographers' research efforts according to their territoriality, and by doing that I will determine analogies and contradictions between these research findings to examine the extent of biases in analyzed ethnographic papers about the Nomads' mores and traditions.

The core argument of my chapter is that the majority of such so-called ethnographers, who were either military or civilian colonial officials, reflect undue prejudices and unproven standpoints that were Eurocentric and superficial without a deep understanding of native cultural patterns and aim to discredit Kazakhs, their mores, and social behaviors to justify the colonization of the Kazakhs' steppe.

### **3.1 The Younger Horde Kazakhs' mores and traditions as described by Russian Ethnographers**

This part focuses on the Russian ethnographic materials of the Kazakhs who resided in the Younger Horde territory. As the thesis research efforts cover only the 19<sup>th</sup> century period, the first Russian ethnographer whose accounts are considered is Fedor German, who published his research outcomes in the journal *Herald of Europe* in 1822. Regarding the mores of the Younger Horde Kazakhs, German mainly delineates “savagery” as the critical character distinguishing the Nomads from other civilized nations. Thus, at the beginning of his essay, the named ethnographer characterizes the nomads as follows: “wild as its nature, harsh as its climate, numerous, brave and once rich” (*«дикий как его природа, суровый как его климат, многочисленный, храбрый и некогда богатый»*).<sup>192</sup> Further, German writes several times about the brutal nature of the Kazakhs by using the following statements, “obeying no authority and having no civil institutions” (*«неповинующееся никакой власти, не имеющее никаких гражданских установлений»*), “Kirgiz’s passion for pillage” (*«в страсти Киргизов к хищениям»*)<sup>193</sup>, and “He values his freedom dearly” (*«дорого ценит он свою свободу»*).<sup>194</sup> However, by asserting that the Kazakhs hold a chaotic way of life, in his materials, German provides several excerpts from Kazakhs customary laws, which regulate the criminal misdemeanors of the Nomads. Thus, by doing so, German somewhat

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<sup>192</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 123.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 138.

agrees that the Kazakhs “obeyed some conditional provisions” (*«повиновались некоторым условным положениям»*).<sup>195</sup> Consequently, their social interactions were not disordered as Fedor German tends to depict. The example is the aspect of women’s rights negligence in Kazakh society, according to which a girl is described as a non-human being deprived of any natural rights and treated only as a human semi-slave or a commodity to sell. An example of this is an account of a colonel of the Orenburg Cossack army and the author of the essay “Turgay Region and its structure” (*Тургайская область и ее устройство*) Fyodor Lobyshevich, who concerning this aspect writes the following, “The moral state of the Kirgiz woman, for the same reasons, and due to her very position among the people, according to the meaning of the Quran, is also in the most pitiful and humiliating position” (*«Нравственное состояние киргизской женщины, по тем же причинам, и вследствие самого положения ее в среде народа, по смыслу Корана, находится тоже в самом жалком и унижительном положении»*).<sup>196</sup> But the accounts of “Kirgiz’s Domestic Law” (*Обычное семейное право киргиз*) by the author Nikolay Malyshev portray a much gloomier picture of the woman’s fate in a Kazakh nomadic society. Thus, Malyshev writes the following assertions, “Buying a wife is also a widespread phenomenon” (*«покупка жены также чрезвычайно распространенное явление»*)<sup>197</sup>, “the miserable, difficult situation of the Kirgiz woman proves only the pitiful state of the Kirgiz people, immersed in the darkness of ignorance and darkness” (*«жалкое же, тяжелое положение киргизской женщины, доказывает только печальное состояние киргизского народа, погруженного в мрак невежества и темноты»*)<sup>198</sup>, “The Kirgiz woman is a disenfranchised being, not even a person, but something faceless”<sup>199</sup> and the worst description is that “A woman is obliged to fulfill everything, even the wildest whims of her husband. Otherwise she will have to be

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>196</sup> Лобысевич, «Тургайская область и ее устройство».

<sup>197</sup> Малышев, «Обычное семейное право киргиз», 10.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 12.

tortured endlessly” (*«Женщина обязана исполнять все, даже самые дикие прихоти своего мужа, иначе ей придется подвергнуться истязаниям без конца»*).<sup>200</sup> However, in contradiction to the generally distorted perception about the low state of women, German notes that “Insulting a chaste woman was prosecuted as murder” (*«оскорбление целомудренной женщины преследовалось как убийство»*),<sup>201</sup> which shows that women’s dignity and honor was highly respected and protected in the nomadic society. Therefore, I could argue that women’s rights were not wholly neglected. Also, many other narratives that deal with women’s position among the Middle Horde Kazakhs support German’s ethnographic accounts.

The second case is relatable to the personal trait of the Kazakhs, which is bravery. Hence, the essay’s author depicted the Kazakhs as brave people. In one of his narrates German describes that a handful of nomads armed with only sticks and stones were ready to fight against one large Russian military regiment possessing 200 rifles and two canons.<sup>202</sup> In addition to German’s account buttressing the brave personal traits of the Nomads, it would be helpful to mention Ivan Blaramberg’s statement that “They fought to the death, wishing to part with their lives rather than with the lands of their ancestors” (*«дрались насмерть, желая лучше расстаться с жизнью, нежели с кочевьем предков»*).<sup>203</sup> These authors’ statements contradict Aleksey Levshin’s assertion that “The Kirgiz are not warriors, but only armed thieves, or shepherds” (*«Киргизы не воины, но только вооруженные воры, или пастухи»*)<sup>204</sup> and Ilya Kazantsev’s claim that “The Kirgiz, on the contrary, are absolute cowards” (*«Киргизы, напротив, совершенные трусы»*).<sup>205</sup> Thus, I argue that Fedor German’s given information is more trustworthy because it provides the circumstances under

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>201</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 226.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Бламберг, «Военно – статистическое обозрение земли Киргиз – Кайсаков (Букеевской) и Зауральской (Малой) Орды», 95.

<sup>204</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 80.

<sup>205</sup> Казанцев, «Описание Киргиз – Кайсаков», 91.

which the incident happened and the rank and name of the Russian military officer (Captain Tsiolkovsky) involved in the conflict with the Kazakhs. In contrast, Levshin's and Kazantsev's accounts have neither of these mentioned details but only their subjective assumptions without any evidence provided.

Further, in many cases, even though Aleksey Levshin's monograph "Description of Kirgiz-Kazak or Kirgiz-Kaysak hordes and steppes" (*Описание киргиз-казацких или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей*) is a recognized primary source covering many facets of the mores and traditions of the Kazakhs, it reflects a great degree of negativity towards the natives. Moreover, I argue that Levshin is somewhat afflicted by Eurocentrism ideas when he is evaluating the indigenous steppe population, particularly the natives' physical features, through the lens of Europeans. It is evident from the following author's assertions, "Kirgiz beauties, they do not amaze Europeans" (*«красавиц Киргизских, то он не поражают Европейцев»*)<sup>206</sup> and "They do not satisfy our perceptions of beauty" (*«не удовлетворяют понятиям нашим о красоте»*).<sup>207</sup> In addition to that, I contend that Aleksey Levshin's monograph has at least two explicit calls to support the colonization of the steppe; thus, in one of his statements describing the natural resources of the Kazakhs, he claims that "but they keep these treasures, for posterity or educated peoples" (*«но, они хранят сия сокровища, для потомства или для народов образованных»*).<sup>208</sup> In that context, Levshin indicates natural resources as metals; according to him, the semi-savage Kazakh hordes are incapable of mining.<sup>209</sup> Accordingly, I argue that under the term "educated peoples," he explicitly implies the Russian nation, "which over time will not fail to dig up underground treasures" (*«которые со временем не преминут разрыть подземные клады»*).<sup>210</sup> The second call concerns the alleged absence of a central authority, which may hold the order among the

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<sup>206</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз - казацких или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 32.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

Kazakhs. This moment Levshin describes in the following fashion, “These vices exist because there are no forces to keep them, there is no power that would subdue them and take care of the commonwealth” (*«пороки сие существуют только потому, что нет сил удержатъ оных, нет власти, которая бы упрощала их и пеклась об общем благе»*).<sup>211</sup> Fyodor Lobysevich holds a similar to Levshin’s viewpoint relatable to the colonization of the steppe; thus, his statements are as follows, “The Kirgiz steppe, with proper exploitation of it, is the richest source of the state; but two conditions are necessary for this: perfect provision of the welfare of the Kirgiz people and its Russification” (*«Киргизская степь, при правильной эксплуатации ее, есть богатейший источник государства; но для этого необходимы два условия: совершенное обеспечение благосостояния киргизского народа и обрусение его»*).<sup>212</sup> However, Levshin’s and Lobysevich’s claims differ because the latter overtly calls for the Russification of the steppe inhabitants. In contrast, the former does not hold such kind of opinion. Consequently, my argument is that according to the authors, due to the Nomads’ inability to sustain any central order, which leads them to live under darkness and ignorance, the assistance provided by the Russian Empire by introducing to them central authority and Russian culture is the essential condition that may bring civilization and prosperity to the inhabitants of the steppe.

Furthermore, Aleksey Levshin’s centerpiece description of the Nomads is, “These people, through ignorance, rudeness, carelessness and impulses of passion, are so close to the state of their natural man” (*«народ сей, по невежеству, грубости, беспечности и порывам страсти столь близко подходящий к состоянию его естественного человека»*).<sup>213</sup> Moreover, I argue that Levshin is overly predisposed to vilify the Kazakhs that some of his accounts resemble more fairy tales rather than serious academic research endeavors. As an example, in one of his accounts, Levshin writes, “The elder’s throat was cut,

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>212</sup> Лобысевич, «Тургайская область и ее устройство».

<sup>213</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз - казачьих или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 68.

and after collecting it, they drank it by handfuls” (*«старейшие разрезали горло, и собрав его, горстями пили его»*)<sup>214</sup> no more than the alleged fiction of the author because there is no any evidence presented in archival or other written or oral sources that Kazakhs had a tradition to drink human blood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, to mention the author’s fiction, I argue that there is another Levshin’s account depicting the Nomads’ customs, the validity of which is under great suspicion. The first custom is relatable to the practices of burial and commemoration; thus, according to the author, the wife or wives of a deceased gathered daily for a long time, in the morning and evening, to cry, scream, and scratch their faces in front of an idol, or a blockhead, who, dressed in a dead man’s dress, serves as dead man’s image for the weeping people.<sup>215</sup> In the chapter about the Nomads’ clothes, Levshin writes about another strange custom of nomads: “Many pass rings through the nasal cartilage to their beloved children of both sexes” (*«Многие продавают любимым детям своим обоего пола кольца через носовой хрящ»*).<sup>216</sup> And again, no accounts from other Russian ethnographers could prove the existence of such a custom among the Kazakhs.

Furthermore, some of Aleksey Levshin’s narratives correspond to mentioned-above Fedor German’s portrayals describing the Nomads’ savage nature, which are, “Having become rooted in rudeness, they are afraid of everything that could soften them” (*«закоренев в грубости, боятся всего того, что могло бы их смягчить»*)<sup>217</sup>, “They think that greatness consists in cruelty alone” (*«думают, что величие состоит в одной жестокости»*)<sup>218</sup> and “The brave must shed blood forever” (*«храбрый должен вечно проливать кровь»*).<sup>219</sup> Thus, according to these Levshin’s descriptions, Kazakhs are merciless people possessing a proclivity to excessive physical violence and cruelty. However,

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

at the same time, Levshin asserts that “reverence for the elderly is the best feature of his character” (*«почтение к старикам суть лучшие черты его характера»*)<sup>220</sup>. Therefore, I am questioning why bloodthirsty and cruel steppe inhabitants should respect in their best manner the weakest and most vulnerable human part of nomadic society. It is essential to note that Levshin emphasizes that respect for older people is not just good; it is the best trait of the Kazakhs. Consequently, I argue that Levshin exaggerates and somewhat embellishes the cruel nature of the natives.

At the same time, it would not be correct to assert for sure that the Kazakhs of the Younger Horde at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were peaceful enough to welcome the intruders. Numerous accounts tell of locals attacking Russians. As in one of his narratives, German writes that Colonel Baron Meyendorff, returning from Bukhara under cover of a light detachment of 50 Cossacks, also experienced on his way, even not so far from our borders, the stubbornness of the Nomads.<sup>221</sup> Here I argue that it would be relevant to provide ethnographical observations by a Russian publicist Boris Yuzefovich written in the ethnographic paper “About the domestic life of the Kirgiz of the Turgay region” (*О быте киргизов Тургайской области*). His accounts, which are dated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, represent the Younger Horde Kazakhs in the following manner, “Kirgiz people are calm, docile, lazy, not loving trials” (*«Киргизы народ спокойный, смирный, ленивый, не любящий тяжёб»*).<sup>222</sup> Hence, the comparative analysis of these accounts at the beginning and end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century shows that the character of the Younger Horde Kazakhs changed over the century from aggressive to more peaceful, from brutal steppe militants to more docile subjects of the Russian Empire.

What is worth noting here is that there is an agreement between Fedor German and Aleksey Levshin’s narratives about the Nomads’ love for freedom; thus, along with German’s

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>221</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 138.

<sup>222</sup> Юзефович, «О быте киргизов Тургайской области», 804.



assertion that “He values his freedom dearly” (*«дорого ценит он свою свободу»*)<sup>223</sup>, Levshin gives somewhat the similar account “value their rude independence above all the benefits of the world” (*«ценящих грубую свою независимость выше всех благ мира»*).<sup>224</sup>

Further, examining the contradictions between Levshin’s research findings and those of other Russian ethnographers concerning the integrity of the Younger Horde Kazakhs is essential. Thus, describing the Nomads’ trait, Levshin writes as follows, “Having received what they want, they no longer think about the fulfillment of this word” (*«получив желаемое, они уже не думают об исполнении данного слова»*)<sup>225</sup> and “in a nation that has such rules of honesty, there are no solid agreements” (*«в народе имеющем такие правила честности, нет прочных договоров»*).<sup>226</sup> Hence, Levshin argues that the Kazakhs were dishonest and inclined to breach taken oaths and promises. However, Lieutenant-General Lev Meyer, who actively participated in the activities of the Orenburg Department of the Russian Geographical Society, provides different narratives, which are “In general, the oath, since it occurs between the Kirgiz, is fundamental and keeps sacred” (*«вообще присяга, коль скоро она происходит между киргизами, имеет весьма важное значение и сохраняет свято»*)<sup>227</sup> and “in the case of a false oath, a rare Kirgiz decides on such sacrilege” (*«в случае ложной присяги редкий киргиз решается на такое святотатство»*).<sup>228</sup> Supporting Meyer’s claims, a member of the Russian Geographical Society, Ilya Kazantsev, writes similar ethnographical observations, “they are firm in the fulfillment of their promises: having given their word, they keep it sacred” (*«тверды в исполнении своих обещаний: давши слово, они свято его держат»*)<sup>229</sup> and “A Kirgiz do not use someone else’s belongings if it

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<sup>223</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 138.

<sup>224</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз - казачьих или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 186.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Мейер, «Материалы для географии и статистики России», собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Киргизская степь Оренбургского ведомства», 256.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Казанцев, «Описание Киргиз – Кайсаков», 90.

is entrusted to him for saving” (*«Киргизец не воспользуется чужой вещью, если она поручена ему на сохранение»*).<sup>230</sup> Consequently, taking into consideration the last two ethnographic accounts, which are firm in their position about the decency of the Kazakhs in honoring oath-taking obligations, Levshin’s statements that assert otherwise are under significant doubt about their validity.

And the last issue that is worth covering is the accounts describing the *barymta* custom, which was widely practiced by the Nomads of three Hordes. Fedor German depicts the custom as “This evil took deep roots and reflected on the poverty of the Nomads” (*«Сие зло пустило глубокие корни и отразилось на нищете Ордынцев»*).<sup>231</sup> Iliya Kazantsev describes the process of *barymta* in the following manner: “Redeemed, half-naked, with wild cries, they destroyed everything; neither sex, nor age, nor strong, nor weak, there was no mercy from them” (*Искупленные, полунагие, с дикими воплями, они истребляли все; ни полу, ни возрасту, ни сильному, ни слабому, от них не было пощады»*).<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, in his monograph, Aleksey Levshin is even more rigid in depicting the custom and calls it the mischief that ruins and corrupts the Nomads.<sup>233</sup> In addition, Levshin implies that the vices such as plundering and illegal livestock seizing are honorable deeds in the nomadic environment. People who are the most skillful in them are not despised, but the most respectful persons possess the name *batyr*.<sup>234</sup> And at this custom depiction, Levshin makes an emotional statement, “Here is Kirgiz heroism! Here is their concept of the greatness of the soul!” (*«Вот героизм Киргизский! Вот понятие их о величии души!»*).<sup>235</sup> Thus, according to Levshin’s understanding, the Nomads had a distorted comprehension of generally accepted

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Герман, «О Киргизах», 138.

<sup>232</sup> Казанцев, «Описание Киргиз – Кайсаков», 40.

<sup>233</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз - казачьих или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 84.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

moral values; evil deeds are perceived by the latter as benign acts, which consequently generates Levshin's resentment towards the deviant morality of the Kazakhs.

On the contrary, Lieutenant General Lev Balluzek describes *barymta* in a slightly different light than the ethnographers mentioned above. He writes: "Barymta means taking out the thief, paying him, as they say, with his coin, i.e., stealing or stealing from him an equal stolen by him" (*«Баранта, значит вымещение вору, оплату ему, как говорится, его же монетой, т.е. угоном или похищением у него равного украденного им самим»*).<sup>236</sup> Hence, Balluzek highlights two key principal aspects that define *barymta*: the first is that action must be taken explicitly against a wrongdoer who initially committed a transgression, and the second is the number of animals seized from the culprit party must be equal to the livestock stolen by the latter. Accordingly, the *barymta* is not a usual action pursuing the goal of plundering or seizing someone's property. Still, it is a highly regulated and complicated act under stringent conditions. Most importantly, such a custom can be undertaken only with permission from the chief tribal authorities (*biys*).<sup>237</sup> In addition to that, the accounts of the participant of an expedition against the rebellious Kazakh Sultan Kenessary Kasymov and the author of the essay "From a notebook. Ethnographic notes. Kirgiz proverbs" (*Из записной книжки. Этнографические заметки. Киргизские пословицы*) a Major General Karl Gern buttress Balluzek research endeavors. Thus, as stated by Gern "Barymtachs, for the most part, act on their own initiative, with the aim of self-compensation for unsatisfied (certainly fair claims)" (*«Барымтачи, по большей части, действуют по своей инициативе, с целью самовознаграждения по неудовлетворенным (непрерменно справедливым искам)»*).<sup>238</sup> Here, particular attention must be paid to the words "fairly unsatisfied claims," which in this context mean the unfairly disregarded rights of the

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<sup>236</sup> Баллюзек, *«Народные обычаи, имевшие, а отчасти и ныне имеющие, в Малой Киргизской орде силу закона»*, 124.

<sup>237</sup> To learn more about *barymta*, see chapter 6 of the book "Law and Custom in the Steppe. The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century" by Virginia Martin.

<sup>238</sup> Герн, *«Из записной книжки. Этнографические заметки. Киргизские пословицы»*, 62.

offended party, which, in the legal framework of *barymta* custom, has the right to restore justice by seizing some livestock from the perpetrator. So, according to Balluzek and Gern, *barymta* is not an act of plundering and illegally appropriating someone's property, as German and Levshin claim, but rather an instrument by which justice is restored, with all the essential characteristics of having the discourse of customary law of the Nomads.

### 3.2 The Middle Horde Kazakhs' mores and traditions, as described by Russian Ethnographers

I want to open this chapter with "The Notes of Major General Bronevsky about the Kirgiz – Kaysaks of the Middle Horde" (*Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды*) by the author Semyon Bronevsky, which was published in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski* in 1830. From 1822 to 1938, Bronevsky was the head of the Omsk region; the notes are the outcome of his observation and interconnection with the local population. In the same vein as Russian ethnographers, who depicted the Younger Horde Kazakhs, Bronevsky portrays the Middle Horde Kazakhs, writing "The people are illiterate and ignorant" (*«Народ безграмотный и невежественный»*).<sup>239</sup> However, the core contrast between the depictions of the two Hordes is that according to Bronevsky's notes, the Middle Horde Kazakhs "do not dare to attack the Russians in any way" (*«они никак не отваживаются нападать на Россиян»*)<sup>240</sup> and "made them safe as our neighbors" (*«сделали их безопасными нашими соседями»*).<sup>241</sup> Thus, although Bronevsky's "Notes..." are written approximately at the same time as Aleksey Levshin's monograph, they disagree with each other on the peaceful nature of the Nomads. Levshin claims that "A European who would take it into his head to wander through their hordes without armed cover will inevitably meet captivity" (*«Европеец, который бы вздумал странствовать по ордам их без*

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<sup>239</sup> Броневский, *«Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды»*, 401.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

вооруженного прикрытия, неминуемо встретит неволю»<sup>242</sup> Consequently, I argue that incorporating the Middle Horde Kazakhs into the Russian imperial system as the actual subjects of the Empire became much earlier than the Younger Horde Kazakhs, who stayed the nominal Empire's subjects until almost the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Further, I argue that Semyon Bronevsky's several ethnographic points have discrepancies with other Russian ethnographers who also observed the mores and customs of the Middle Horde Kazakhs. The first such disagreement is relatable to the position of a woman in Kazakh nomadic society. Hence, as claimed by Brovevsky, Kazakh men are "Female tyrants" (*«Тираны женского пола»*).<sup>243</sup> However, Lieutenant Colonel Nikolay Krasovsky, in his paper "Materials for geography and statistics of Russia collected by officers of the General Staff. The region of the Siberian Kirgiz" (*Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Область Сибирских Киргизов*) does not agree with such a claim. Accordingly, Krasovsky's counter-arguments are as follows "The Kirgiz is not a tyrant in his family at all" (*«киргиз вовсе не тиран в своем семействе»*)<sup>244</sup>, "the treatment of wives stipulated by the custom is strictly observed by him" (*«установленное обычаем обращение с женами соблюдается им строго»*)<sup>245</sup>, and "beatings and harassment of various kinds could take place in their domestic life, but nothing like this happens" (*«побои и притеснения различного рода могли бы иметь место в их хозяйственном быту, но между тем ничего подобного не случается»*)<sup>246</sup>. Moreover, as Ivan Ibragimov mentions in his essay "Notes on the Kirgiz Court" (*Заметки о киргизском суде*), "Widows of noble persons who are respected in the steppe decide court cases" (*«вдовы знатных особ, пользующихся в степи уважением, решают судебные*

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<sup>242</sup> Левшин, «Описание киргиз - казачьих или киргиз-кайсацких орд и степей», 68.

<sup>243</sup> Броневский, «Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды», 85.

<sup>244</sup> Красовский, «Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами генерального штаба. Область Сибирских Киргизов», 394.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

дела»<sup>247</sup> Consequently, it proves that women in Kazakh nomadic society were not oppressed society strata but even had, on some occasions, privileged rights, as in the case of Ibragimov's accounts, judicial rights.

The second discrepancy corresponds to the widely practiced custom of *barymta*, which Semyon Bronevsky categorizes somewhat similarly to the ethnographers Fedor German, Aleksey Levshin, and Iliya Kazantsev, who describe such tradition practiced in the Younger Horde. According to the author's claim, "this dreadful craft weakens the Horde and ruins some Volosts" (*«этот ненавистный промысел привел в ослабление Орду и разорил некоторые волости»*).<sup>248</sup> Hence, if Bronevsky considers *barymta* as an act that had to a certain extent, economic features, Ivan Ibragimov describes it as a judicial undertaking. Thus, as claimed by Ibragimov, "the Kirgiz look at *barymta* as an incentive measure" (*«на баранту Киргизы смотрят как на меру побудительную»*).<sup>249</sup> This statement debunks Bronevsky's postulate about the vindictive character of the custom.<sup>250</sup> Moreover, by referring to colonial legislation, Bronevsky equates the tradition to a felony. On the contrary, Ibragimov argues that Russian colonial understanding of the essence of *barymta* is not pertinent to the Nomads because as he claims that "they live according to their laws and concepts, established as a result of their lifestyle, views, and conditions of their life" (*«они живут по своим законам и понятиям, установившимся вследствие их образа жизни, взглядов, условий их быта»*).<sup>251</sup> Accordingly, Ibragimov highlights the causes of *barymta*, which implies it is part of the litigation process but not a misdemeanor. He describes it as follows, "Kirgiz do not like red tape in solving cases" (*«Киргизы не любят волокиты в решении дел»*)<sup>252</sup> and "an impatient Kirgiz, when his defendant evades the decision of the case, forces him to appear in

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<sup>247</sup> Ибрагимов, «Заметки о киргизском суде», 2.

<sup>248</sup> Броневский, «Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды», 81.

<sup>249</sup> Ибрагимов, «Заметки о киргизском суде», 3.

<sup>250</sup> Броневский, «Записки Генерал – майора Броневского о Киргиз – Кайсаках Средней Орды», 83.

<sup>251</sup> Ибрагимов, «Заметки о киргизском суде», 3.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

court by practicing a *barymta*” (*«нетерпеливый Киргиз, когда его ответчик уклоняется от решения дела, заставляет его явиться в суд барантой»*).<sup>253</sup> Hence, it is evident that *barymta* was committed not to plunder or take revenge but as a litigation instrument to resolve the dispute promptly and quickly. This point of view can be supported by the essay “Causes of unrest in the Kirgiz steppes. The Kirgiz question” (*Причины волнений в киргизских степях. Киргизский вопрос*) penned by the author Lev Arasansky. As stated by Arasansky, “Wild, nomadic people cannot be governed according to European models” (*«диким, кочевым народом, нельзя управлять по европейским образцам»*)<sup>254</sup> and “for such people, the main advantage of any social system is simplicity and clarity in relationships” (*«для таких людей главное достоинство всякого общественного строя – просто и ясность в отношениях»*).<sup>255</sup> Furthermore, in Ivan Ibragimov’s essay, the process of *barymta* has an explanation that dismisses Semyon Bronevsky’s assertion about the criminal feature of the custom. Thus, the former asserts that “With a *barymta*, strictly speaking, not all livestock are seized at all, but only that part of it that is equal to the claimed claim” (*«При баранте, строго говоря, угоняется не весь вообще скот, а только та часть его, которая равняется заявленному иску»*)<sup>256</sup> and what is the most intrinsic to highlight is that “*barymta*, seizing of cattle from the defendant, which is returned to the owner who appeared during the proceedings” (*«баранта, угон у ответчика скота, который при разбирательстве дела возвращается явившемуся хозяину»*).<sup>257</sup> Consequently, I argue that Semyon Bronevsky and other Russian ethnographers, who advocate for the criminal and devastating character of *barymta*, were, to a certain degree, lacking complete comprehension of nomadic customary law and the way of life of Kazakhs as such.

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Арасанский, «Причины волнений в киргизских степях. Киргизский вопрос».

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ибрагимов, «Заметки о киргизском суде», 3.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

### 3.3 The Great Horde Kazakhs' mores and traditions as described by Russian Ethnographers

I open the part about the Great Horde Kazakhs with the work of Nikolay Zeland called “Kirgiz. Ethnological Essay” (*Киргизы. Этнологический очерк*). The essay generates particular interest because it thoroughly describes the Kazakh nomadic people’s anthropological, psychological, and metric characteristics. Thus, it is difficult to assert that Zeland’s materials differ significantly in depicting the mores and customs of the Great Horde Kazakhs from the accounts of other Russian ethnographers. However, in the general sense, his research outcomes are less permeated by negativity toward the natives rather than the materials about the Kazakhs of Younger and Middle Hordes. Hence, Zeland describes the positive personality traits of the local native population, namely the inhabitants of the *Semirech’e* region in the following manner, “among his commendable qualities should be attributed: honesty, compassion, hospitality, sobriety, and patience in suffering” (*«к числу его похвальных качеств, следует отнести: честность, сострадательность, гостеприимство, трезвость и терпение при перенесении страданий»*).<sup>258</sup> Further, laying out the Kazakhs’ honesty, the author explains it as follows, “the honesty of the Kirgiz is also conveyed in the fact that, despite their own needs, they pay off their usurers from among the Russians and Sart as soon as possible” (*честность киргизов выражается также в том, что они не смотря на нужду, при первой возможности расплачиваются со своими мироедами из числа русских и сартов»*).<sup>259</sup> In addition to that, Zeland provides fascinating points related to the bravery of the Kazakhs. As considered earlier, particularly in the case of the Younger Horde Kazakhs, many Russian ethnographers were skeptical regarding the courage of nomads. Thus, according to them, Kazakhs are cowards, and one Russian Cossack could easily beat up to ten Kazakhs. Zeland delves into the theme by asking:

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<sup>258</sup> Зеланд, *«Киргизы. Этнографический очерк»*, 66.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 67.



“Are Kazakhs courageous?”<sup>260</sup> The answer to this question debunks the assumption of the poor military prowess of the Nomads. Consequently, Zeland argues that “The Kirgiz, in the form of a disciplined and well-armed army, would compete in bravery with everyone” (*«Киргизы в виде дисциплинированного и хорошо вооруженного войска потягались бы в храбрости с кем угодно»*)<sup>261</sup> and “A Kirgiz who stands face to face with death, meets it calmly” (*«Киргиз стоящий лицом к лицу со смертью, встречает ее спокойно»*).<sup>262</sup>

However, Zeland’s colleague and contemporary Vladimir Tronov, in his essay “Materials on Anthropology and Ethnology of the Kirgiz” (*Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз*) strongly disagree with such Zeland’s depiction of Kazakh morality. As I already mentioned in earlier chapters, Tronov writes about “a deficient level of development of the Kazakhs”<sup>263</sup> and makes assumptions that “the Kirgiz concepts of morality are deficient and the requirements for it are also low” (*«понятия киргиз о нравственности очень низки и требования к ней также невысоко стоят»*)<sup>264</sup>, “A Kirgiz is first at all deceitful, flattering” (*«киргиз прежде всего лживый, льстивый»*)<sup>265</sup>. The most negative one is “the Kirgiz live the only almost lower animal life” (*«киргиз живет единственно почти низшей животной жизнью»*).<sup>266</sup> Thus, it remains unknown why, despite being both medical workers and studying local neighboring populations in similar periods, Zeland and Tronov generated two different narratives. Zeland’s essay is written more favorably towards the Kazakhs, while on the contrary, Vladimir Tronov tends to represent the Kazakhs in a negative light.

Furthermore, regarding Nikolay Zeland’s essay, it is most noticeable that the author pays substantial attention to the morality of the Nomads about intoxicants such as alcohol, narcotics, and tobacco. Also, even briefly, Zeland touches upon the issues of sexual relations

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Тронов, *«Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз»*, 8.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 12.

within nomadic societies. These two domains of study somewhat remain uncovered by most other Russian ethnographers, no matter what Hordes' Kazakhs they describe. Thus, regarding intoxicants, Zeland asserts as follows, Thee Kirgiz people are still not affected by stimulants and intoxicants" (*«киргизский народ до сих пор не подвержен влиянию возбуждающих и одурманивающих средств»*)<sup>267</sup> and "unaccustomed to poisoning the nervous system with vodka, opium, and tobacco" (*«непривычка к отравлению нервной системы водкой, опиумом и табаком»*).<sup>268</sup> Speaking about the morality of the Nomads in sexual affairs, Zeland provides such descriptions, "if a wife happens, in the absence of her husband, to accept a lover, the husband looks the other way" (*«если жене случится, в отсутствии мужа, принять любовника, муж смотрит на это сквозь пальцы»*)<sup>269</sup>, "such extramarital sins contributed mainly to the spread of syphilis among the Kirgiz" (*«такие внебрачные грешки способствовали главным образом распространению между киргизами сифилиса»*)<sup>270</sup> and "Sodomy among the Kirghiz is completely out of custom, just like bestiality, masturbation, and prostitution" (*«Мужеложство у киргиз совершенно не в обычае точно также как скотоложство, онанизм и проституция»*).<sup>271</sup> Here it is noticeable that Zeland points out two different prospects, where the aspects of abstaining the steppe inhabitants from intoxicants and sexual vices such as sodomy, bestiality, masturbation, and prostitution are covered only by him. As a result, I could not discover in the scope of my research project any similar accounts relatable to these issues from other Russian ethnographic sources; therefore, no further reports may substantiate or dismiss these Zeland's observations. Concerning the existence of adultery and addressing it as the core cause of widespread syphilis among the Kazakhs of the Great Horde, in that case, these Zeland assertions are under significant doubt. Thus, in the essay "Materials for studying the legal customs of the Kirgiz. Substantive law"

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<sup>267</sup> Зеланд, *«Киргизы. Этнографический очерк»*, 18.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 71.

(*Материалы для изучения юридических обычаев Киргизов. Материальное право*) the Semipalatinsk Statistical Committee and local judge Peter Makovetsky point out that “adultery committed solely to have children is not considered by the Kirgiz as a violation of marital fidelity” (*«прелюбодеяния, совершаемые единственно с целью иметь детей, не считаются киргизами нарушениями супружеской верности»*).<sup>272</sup> Further, Makovetsky asserts that according to the customary law of the Nomads, the breach of marital agreement accompanied by violence was counted as a felony.<sup>273</sup> In the case of adultery between a married woman and a bachelor, the punishment was hanging for a man,<sup>274</sup> and self-injurious punishments, such as cutting off the ear, nose, and lips and tearing the nostrils, for a married man for adultery with an unmarried girl.<sup>275</sup> Consequently, resting on Peter Makovetsky’s research endeavors, it could be argued that the Nomads had little tolerance for adultery and punished it harshly. Moreover, there is no substantial evidence that the Nomads led a depraved life, and such immorality was a principal cause of syphilis occurrence.

The aspects of the suffering of the steppe inhabitants from syphilis are another issue to examine. As stated earlier, Nikolay Zeland names cheating in sexual relationships as a chief cause for the disease’s occurrence; somewhat, his colleague Vladimir Tronov provides similar testimonies and asserts that frequently the whole family and nomadic encampments were infected by syphilis, and according to his medical observations, one-third of Kazakhs suffered from the infection, where congenital pathology and cohabitation are listed as the leading causes for the epidemic.<sup>276</sup> “Unbridled sexual relations” (*«разнузданность в половых отношениях»*)<sup>277</sup> is also called by Tronov the reason for disease happening. In addition to that, Tronov points out that dirtiness, the absence of medical aid, and the sensitivity of the

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<sup>272</sup> Маковецкий, *«Материалы для изучения юридических обычаев Киргизов. Материальное право»*, 63.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Тронов, *«Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз»*, 8.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

Nomads' organisms to contagions are the core factors for the pathology.<sup>278</sup> However, what is worth noting here is that along with the connection between the Kazakhs' sexual relations and syphilis, Tronov states that there is no valid statistical data that could substantiate his assertion about the scale of the disease persistence in the nomadic society.<sup>279</sup>

Another pivotal moment to discuss is covering women's status among the Great Horde nomads Vladimir Tronov is quite radical in describing such an issue. His accounts are as follows: "The Kirgiz are above all a despot, a despot over his wife and his loved ones" (*«киргиз, прежде всего деспот, деспот над своей женой и над своими близкими»*)<sup>280</sup> and "the position of a woman in the family is the most humiliated" (*«положение женщины в семье самое униженное»*).<sup>281</sup> In his terms, Nikolay Zeland partially agrees with Tronov's claims and asserts that "the position of men and women among the Kirgiz is far from equal" (*«положение мужчины и женщины у киргиз далеко не равноправное»*)<sup>282</sup> and "after all, she is considered a servant of her husband" (*«все таки она считается слугой мужа»*).<sup>283</sup> At the same time, Zeland contests the inferior status of women by claiming that "however, it cannot be said that the treatment of wives was rude and despotic" (*«нельзя впрочем, сказать, чтобы обращение с женами было грубое и деспотическое»*).<sup>284</sup> And one of Zeland's most interesting points regarding women's roles in family affairs is that "a Kirgiz woman actually determines the center of gravity in family affairs, and her husband is often guided by her advice" (*«Киргизка фактически определяет центр тяжести в семейных делах, и муж нередко руководствуется ее советами»*).<sup>285</sup> Peter Makovetsky delivers three similar arguments considering women's position in society, which are close to Zeland's

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>282</sup> Зеланд, *«Киргизы. Этнографический очерк»*, 28

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 76.

assertions, in the following manner: “Being restricted by the legal custom in her property and social rights, the Kirgiz woman has won a very advantageous position for herself” (*«Будучи ограниченной со стороны правового обычая в своих имущественных и общественных правах, киргизская женщина отвоевала себе весьма выгодное положение»*),<sup>286</sup> “All the property and the entire household lie in her hands” (*«все имущество и все хозяйство лежит на ее руках»*)<sup>287</sup>, and the most valuable accounts is that “the real, actual owner of the house remains his wife and she manages everything at her discretion, reducing her husband to the degree of the nominal owner and head of the household” (*«настоящим, фактическим хозяином дома остается жена его и она управляет всем, по своему усмотрению, низводя мужа на степень номинального хозяина и глава хозяйства»*).<sup>288</sup> The aforementioned - Makovetsky’s ethnographic observations confirm, to some extent, that women’s status in a nomadic society’s social hierarchy was not as low as many Russian ethnographers portray.

Furthermore, it is essential to study inconsistencies between Peter Makovetsky’s and Vladimir Tronov’s narratives concerning social and economic interconnection within a nomadic community. Hence, Makovetsky’s research efforts do not agree with Tronov’s statements that “no one humiliates a Kirgiz as much as a Kirgiz, no one exploits as much as the same Kirgiz” (*«никто так не унижает киргиза, как киргиз же, никто так не эксплуатирует, как том же киргиз»*)<sup>289</sup>. Arguing differently, Makovetsky states that “A rich Kirgiz considers it his duty every summer to provide not only non-property relatives but also many acquaintances with the necessary cattle” (*«Богатый киргиз считает своим долгом каждое лето снабдить не только неимущественных родственников, но и*

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<sup>286</sup> Маковецкий, *«Материалы для изучения юридических обычаев Киргизов. Материальное право»*, 31.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Тронов, *«Материалы по антропологии и этнологии киргиз»*, 10.

*многих знакомых необходимым скотом»*)<sup>290</sup> and “no remuneration is taken, and for the taker, there is only an obligation to return the cattle safely” (*«вознаграждения никакого не берется и для взявшего существует только обязанность возвратить скот в сохранности»*).<sup>291</sup> Nikolay Zeland also agrees with Peter Makovetsky, and his statement about peaceful relations between members of nomadic society is as follows: “When a Kirgiz gives loans, he usually does not take interest” (*«когда киргиз дает в займы, он обыкновенно не берет процентов»*).<sup>292</sup> What is worth noting here is that I think Vladimir Tronov is excessively biased towards the natives due to the language of his research outcomes, which is overwhelmingly dramatic and negative in tone with comments such as “a very low level of development,” “purely animal needs,” and “almost lower animal life.”<sup>293</sup>

### Conclusion

The chapter compiles the core ideas of how Russian ethnographic narratives view the mores and customs of the Kazakhs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from various perspectives. The compilation demonstrates substantial variation in those accounts from negative to positive; some Russian ethnographers describe the Kazakhs in an unduly biased manner, and their emotional and prejudiced language prevails over ethnographic neutrality. Aleksey Levshin’s and Vladimir Tronov’s research endeavors are explicit examples of such negativity. They showed how arrogantly Russian colonial representatives treated the local native population. Thus, according to their excessively partial accounts, the nomads were stuck in their social and cultural evolution, and there were no other purposes of life for the nomads except digestive. As Vladimir Tronov claims sentimentally, “the Kirgiz does not see pleasure above food” (*«выше еды киргиз удовольствия не видит»*).<sup>294</sup> For this cohort of ethnographers,

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<sup>290</sup> Маковецкий, *«Материалы для изучения юридических обычаев Киргизов. Материальное право»*, 52.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Зеланд, *«Киргизы. Этнографический очерк»*, 68.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

“backwardness” is a chief term in characterizing the nomads’ mores and customs. Arguing on the contrary, another group of Russian ethnographers was more impartial, and their position in the best manner conveys a full State Councilor and a military officer, Ivan Ibragimov, whose message corresponds with my chapter’s central argument that steppe inhabitants are living according to their laws and concepts, established as a result of their lifestyle, views, and conditions of their lives.<sup>295</sup> *Barymta* custom is provided as a vivid instance, which some Russians observe as a plundering action and a destructive force in the society, but others view it as a sophisticated litigation instrument for the restoration of social and judicial justice in the fragile nomadic society.

### **Conclusion of the Thesis**

My main goal in writing this thesis was to discover the types of colonial biases brought by ethnographic studies of the Kazakhs from the perspectives of Russian travelers and imperial officials in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I pursued this goal by analyzing and juxtaposing the ethnographic materials and discovering whether there are agreements or disagreements between their narratives.

In the scope of my research, I use the term “Russian ethnographers,” which is not an explicit academic term because not all authors whose materials I analyzed can be called ethnographers in the strict academic sense of this word. Still, I call them “Russian ethnographers” based on the ethnographic works they produced and their general predisposition to think of themselves as people of science and enlightenment – not based on their educational background and academic credentials. Thus, to make the audience more acquainted with sources and their authors, I devoted a chapter named “Introduction to Russian Ethnographers,” where I provide essential information about authors’ personal, educational,

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<sup>295</sup> Ибрагимов, «Заметки о киргизском суде», 4.

and professional backgrounds. Additionally, I briefly touch on what parts of the materials are the most valuable for my research objectives.

Then, I argue that the research problem is connected to the colonial past of the Kazakh nation and needs to be studied more rigorously to reveal new previously ignored dimensions of the colonial ethnography of the Kazakh Steppe. These new prospects would help us understand whether Kazakhs' mores and traditions were indeed so primitive and backward that they needed to be "civilized," or conversely, Kazakhs had had strongly regulated and highly organized social relationships.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I argue that most Russian ethnographers transmitted generally accepted assumptions about Kazakhs' weak affiliation to Islam and propensity to superstition. This happened first due to the lack of understanding of the Islamic tenets and canons and, secondly, a lack of knowledge of the customary beliefs of the Nomads, which were intertwined with Islam. Russian ethnographers failed to construct a comprehensive picture of the religious nature of the steppe inhabitants. Accordingly, they operated within the scope of the nomads' superficiality or the absence of any sense of Islamic religiosity.

The overall conclusion of the second chapter is that most Russian ethnographers argue that the Kazakhs were Muslims in name only, no matter what area the Nomads resided in. At the same time, the second chapter provides the voices of some other Russian ethnographers, such as Boris Yuzefovich and Ivan Anichkov, whose research findings advocate for robust ties to the religion of Islam. At the same time, the orthodox priest Efrem Elisiev makes a strong assertion related to Kazakhs' Islamic credentials, according to all assumptions circulated in Russian ethnographic circles about the superficial attitude and carelessness of the Nomads in the Islam religion is false. He concludes that the Kazakhs are as "fanatical" in their faith as many other Islamic nations.



In the third chapter of the thesis, I discussed the Russian ethnographers' narratives about the mores and traditions of the Kazakhs. The core argument of my chapter is that most of these ethnographers were unduly prejudiced towards the natives and thus discredited their mores and social behaviors. Accordingly, the emotional and dramatic language of some Russian ethnographers, such as Aleksey Levshin and Vladimir Tronov, prevails over academic neutrality. Their excessively partial accounts assert the nomads were stuck on the "low level" of social and cultural evolution. For this group of ethnographers, "primitiveness" is a core feature that characterizes the nomads' mores and social behavior. Another group of Russian ethnographers was more favorable toward the nomads. Their position is best expressed by the military officer Ivan Ibragimov, whose ethnographic writings depict steppe inhabitants as living according to their laws and concepts, established as the result of their lifestyle, views, and conditions of life.

And the final point on which I would like to conclude my thesis is its possible limitations. The first limitation is the principle of territoriality by separating ethnographic materials according to the division of the Kazakhs into the Great, Middle, and Younger Hordes. Thus, the research outcomes do not identify the differences in Russian ethnographers' accounts between Kazakhs' religious beliefs, mores, and traditions according to where they reside. This means that, to a certain degree, Russian ethnographers' research findings retranslate each other and do not provide noticeable points about the differences in customs and traditions of the Kazakhs from different hordes and the extent of their attachment to the Islamic canons.

The second limitation is that all the data used for content analysis is in Russian. What is worth mentioning here is that some phrases of the Russian language used by the authors are outdated and have changed in terms of lexicology and grammar. Thus, to properly grasp the

meaning of words and phrases, I read and explored the data in the context of the entire chapter or paragraph. Additionally, to avoid poor translation from Russian to English, I wrote ethnographic pieces of data both in their original Russian context and their English translations.

And the last limitation is my role as a researcher, which may bring its own biases that misinterpret research findings. According to Corbin and Strauss, a research analyst may bring prejudices, beliefs, and presumptions to the research because individuals' mindsets correspond with their cultures, contemporary living times, gender, and their experience and training background.<sup>296</sup> Thus, I was straightforward in minimizing the limitation by providing analyzed data in direct quotations from authors without paraphrasing their research narratives.

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