

Gulmira S. Sultangalieva and Ulzhan Zh. Tuleshova, eds., *Kazakhskoe dvoryanstvo XIX-nachalo XX vv. Monografiya v dokumentov* (Almaty: Qazaq universiteti, 2020), 429 pp.

Dr. Gulmira Sultangalieva has made an incredible contribution to the contemporary historiography of Kazakhstan. Perestroika and the collapse of the Soviet Union gave Kazakhstani historians the great opportunity to review and deconstruct historical writing. While the early years of independent Kazakhstan witnessed a large number of studies on the Kazakh national movement (*Alash orda*) and intellectuals, few attempts had been made on the socio-political history under the rule of the Russian Empire. Sultangalieva has filled the research gap. Drawing on the enormous amount of primary sources collected in the archives of Kazakhstan and Russia, her research has dealt with the imperial governance and its actors in the Kazakh Steppe. Needless to say, her research has contributed not only to refreshing the national history of Kazakhstan, but also to giving a unique and vital reference point to the study of the Russian Empire. In recent years, Sultangalieva, in collaboration with Dr. Ulzhan Tuleshova, an up-and-coming Kazakhstani historian, has engaged in the examination of Kazakh nobilities, and this volume is a result of the project (As a companion article of this volume, see Gulmira Sultangalieva, Ulzhan Tuleshova, and Paul W. Werth, "Nomadic Nobles: Pastoralism and Privilege in the Russian Empire," *Slavic Review* 81, no. 1(2022), pp. 77–96).

Although the existence of the Kazakh nobility is well-known for such a few famous names as Chokan Valikhanov (1835–1865) and Alikhan Bukeikhanov (1866–1937), little is known about its detailed picture, particularly under Russian rule dating from the mid-nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. The Russian Empire controlled a vast space with a multi-diverse population, finding the intermediaries among the elites of each indigenous group. Following the estate (*soslovie*) system, they were incorporated into the nobility (*dvoryanstvo*). This volume is a comprehensive collection of primary sources on the Kazakh nobility derived from the archives of Kazakhstan (Almaty) and Russia (St. Petersburg, Kazan, Astrakhan, Orenburg, and Samara). They consist of over three hundred documents (such as petitions, reports, resumes, and certificates) exchanged among various actors ranging from the central government to the local Kazakh community. Chronologically, they cover a century from the early nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.

This volume allows us to find the great variety in what was categorized as "Kazakh nobility." The Kazakh nobility consisted mainly of the "white bones" (*aq-süyek*) or the blue-blooded class, such as khans and sultans, whose descent could be traced through the male line of Genghis Khan. The First Part ("The formation of Kazakh nobility") contains the documents on the nobility clans (*dvoryanskii rod*), which were granted hereditary (*potomstvennyi*) status. In total, there were fourteen clans of hereditary nobility. The Second Part ("The titled Kazakh nobility) shows the cases of Kazakh knighthood (*knyaz'*). In addition to the hereditary nobility clans, some Kazakh white bones received personal nobility status according to their high rank and achievements. Naturally, among the personal nobilities, there were those who tried to move up to the hereditary nobility status (the Third Part). Meanwhile, the hereditary nobility clans and the personal nobilities did not always cover all of the privileged classes among the Kazakhs. In this regard, the Fourth Part of the volume pays attention to the "honored citizenship (*pochetnyi grazhdanin*)." According to the documents, the descendants

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of the personal nobilities could apply for this status, which was inherited by their descendants. In sum, the volume reveals that Kazakh society saw the development of nobilities as a solid and formally confirmed privileged social class under Russian rule. Such a circumstance sharply contrasts with the Qirghiz, which lacked the white-bone chieftains of Chinggisid origin and had no officially recognized nobilities under Russian rule (See Tetsu Akiyama, *The Qirghiz Baatir and the Russian Empire: A Portrait of a Local Intermediary in Russian Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2021)).

Impressively, some documents dated in the early twentieth century demonstrate that many Kazakh nobilities were intent on maintaining their privilege until the collapse of the Russian Empire. How can we interpret such a situation, while knowing that Kazakh proto-nationalism matured sufficiently to be the foundation of their eventual national movement? In other words, we can see a new agenda emerging: reconsidering the Kazakh national movement based on the accumulated knowledge and research on the socio-political history of the Russian colonial era.

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