Islamic Transformation on the Kazakh Steppe, 1742-1917: Toward an Islamic History of Kazakhstan under Russian Rule

Allen Frank

Introduction

The Islamic revival that took place on the Kazakh steppe during the period of imperial Russian rule, from about 1742 to 1917, is commonly acknowledged in most of the general surveys of Kazakh history, although authors differ widely on its significance and its nature. In most studies, this revival is described as the "Islamization" of the Kazakh nomads by Tatars.[1] We can readily dismiss the term "Islamization" as infelicitous, insofar as the Kazakhs were already Muslims at the time of the Russian conquest, and in fact considered Islam to be their ancestral religion, adopted by their ancestors in the distant past. Nevertheless, the period of Russian rule witnessed a rapid Islamic transformation of nomadic Kazakh society, which was characterized by exponential expansion of Islamic education, institutions, administration, book-publishing, and Islamic identity. At the same time, the period of imperial Russian rule saw the integration of the Kazakh steppe into Russia's economic, legal, and ultimately political systems. Many observers have depicted the Kazakhs' Islamic revival as separate from their integration into the Russian empire. They admit that the eighteenth century Enlightenment policy of Catherine the Great to "convert" the Kazakhs involved state support of Islam, but they argue that the policy backfired, and both the Kazakhs and the

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1 Most general studies of Kazakh history in the imperial Russian period identify the Islamic revival among the Kazakhs as largely caused by external forces. Most commonly, these studies conclude that the "Islamization" of the nomads was a result of Russian "policy" instituted in the reign of Catherine II (r. 1762-1796); cf. for example Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, California, 1987), pp. 101-104.

Tatar "missionaries" who brought Islam to the steppe, conceived of their religion as a means of thwarting the imperial enterprise.[2] When looking at only Russian sources, and especially official sources, such a conclusion is not surprising. Muslim sources, however, paint an entirely different picture. Indeed, on the basis of these sources the Islamic transformation on the Kazakh steppe was a potent aspect not only of political and economic integration into the empire, but also of the development of Kazakh Islamic identity. These processes closely paralleled similar processes among Muslims in the Volga-Ural region or Russia proper, where national and religious identity became closely intertwined. The origins of the transformation of Kazakh Islamic life lie in the eighteenth century, but it is in the second half of the 19th, and, especially, in the early 20th century that we see its full development.

One of the driving forces of the Islamic transformation of the Kazakh steppe was the migration there of Muslims from within Russia proper; that is, Muslims from communities in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia who, having been Russian subjects since the 16th century, were of course well integrated into the economic and political structures of the Russian empire. These Muslim communities were at the same time experiencing their own highly dynamic Islamic revival, which strongly stimulated their own Islamic life and institutions. This revival involved the creation of a regional Islamic identity that formed an important foundation for the development of national identities in the 20th century.[3] These Muslims, whom, in the context of Kazakhstan, Russian sources identify as "Tatars," in fact comprised a number of different groups who appear in Muslim sourc-

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2 Cf. Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, pp. 46-47; Elizabeth Bacon, *Central Asian under Russian Rule* (Ithaca, New York, 1968), pp. 41-42; this view in large measure can be traced back to the writings of Chokan Valikhanov; cf. especially "O musul'manstve v stepi," *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh,* III (Alma-Ata, 1985), pp. 71-75.

3 Cf. especially Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789-1889: Der Islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin, 1998); Christian Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich* (Stuttgart, 2000).

es as Bashkirs, Teptiars, Mishars, and others.[4] Nevertheless, as Muslims from the Volga-Ural region, they shared common Islamic institutional and educational structures.

This paper argues that the Islamic transformation that took place on the Kazakh steppe can be understood in part as a consequence of Russian rule, if not of Russian policy. To be sure, the driving force in this transformation was above all the Kazakh nomads themselves, who sought to perfect their practice and understanding of Islam. In this sense, we can see the transformation as institutional and educational, and firmly oriented within the boundaries of Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxis. At the same time, the expansion of the Russian economy into the Kazakh steppe resulted in the establishment of substantial towns and commercial centers along the northern periphery of the Kazakh steppe. This trade was dominated by Volga-Ural Muslims who migrated to the Kazakh steppe in large numbers and brought their Islamic institutions with them. Indeed, it was these "Tatar"-dominated institutions that formed the institutional and educational foundation that turned the Islamic transformation among the Kazakhs into a mass phenomenon, especially on the northern and western steppe. At the same time, one must be careful not to overemphasize the ethnic aspects of this revival or to overlook the actual multi-ethnic nature of the Islamic expansion that took place in Kazakhstan.

1. THE CENTRAL ASIAN INHERITANCE

Before dealing with the specific characteristics of the Islamic transformation of Kazakh society, it is first necessary to briefly examine the preconditions of the Islamic transformation that Kazakh nomadic society underwent in the eighteenth century. In fact, the Islamic transformation, or revival, was built on

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4 Gul'mira Sultangalieva, "'Tatarskaia' diaspora v konfesional'nykh sviaziakh kazakhskoi stepe (XVIII-XIX vv.)," *Vestnik Evrazii-Acta Eurasica* 4:11 (2000), pp. 20-21.

an existing Islamic foundation that was more or less common throughout nomadic Kazakh society.

It is important to remember that before the Russian annexation, the nomads of the Dasht-i Qipchaq as a whole had been Muslims since the first half of the 14th century, according to both their own oral accounts and the historical record.[5] Throughout the history of Islamic Central Asia, the steppe nomads formed a crucial element of the political, religious and ethnic synthesis that defined Central Asia as a pivotal and essential part of the Islamic world. Kazakhs inhabiting the southern portions of the steppe, mainly the Khorezm region and especially the Syr Darya Valley, shared many features of Islamic practice with the sedentary populations of Central Asia. These common features can be called the Kazakhs' "Central Asian Inheritance" and were in evidence throughout nomadic communities in the Kazakh steppe. Several features can be said to characterize the outlines of this Central Asian Inheritance; 1) hagiolatry, 2) the presence and prominence of "khoja" kinship groups, 3) the oral transmission of Islamic knowledge, and 4) the relatively dominant position of customary law. It should be emphasized that none of these features can in and of themselves constitute aspects of a "degraded" Muslim status for the Kazakhs, as none of them in any way prohibit a Muslim from carrying out his fundamental religious obligations.

Kazakh hagiolatry was primarily centered in the Syr Darya Valley. The chief Kazakh shrine, both as a political and religious symbol, was the tomb of Ahmad Yasavi, in the town of Turkistan. This shrine was also the site of the tombs of Kazakh rulers, and, as late as the 18th century, was the site of the coronation of Kazakh khans. Other important centers included the shrine complex at Sayram and various centers in Chimkent, Auliya Ata, and elsewhere. Other significant shrines were also

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5 For an in-depth discussion of issues surrounding the Islamization of the steppe nomads cf. Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and the Conversion to Islam in the Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1994).

located in the western reaches of the steppe, especially near the mouth of the Ural River.[6]

Similarly, Khoja groups, that is, groups claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad and also from local saints, were concentrated in southern Kazakhstan. While they may have lacked the same political prominence they held in sedentary Central Asia or among the Turkmens, they were without question an important and privileged group among the Kazakhs, and provided the same role as that filled by mullas among sedentary communities. Although Khoja groups could be found throughout Kazakhstan, they were concentrated, and most influential, in the Syr Darya Valley.[7] In the eighteenth century, Russian observers commented on the almost universal illiteracy that supposedly existed among Kazakh nomads at all levels of society. As a result, Islamic knowledge, much of it preserved by khojas, was chiefly passed orally. In truth, illiteracy was not universal, and at least some Kazakhs received educations in madrasas in the Syr Darya Valley, Khorezm, Tashkent, as well as in Bukhara and Samarqand.[8]

Finally, Kazakh communities were regulated by customary law, or "adat." This was in large part due to the absence of Islamic legal scholars on the steppe, although, as Virginia Martin has demonstrated, little is known of Kazakh customary law in the pre-Russian period, and there is evidence that elements of

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6 For the most complete enumeration of Kazakh shrines and hagiolatry cf. I.A. Kastan'e, *Drevnosti Kirgizskoi stepi i Orenburgskogo kraia* (Orenburg, 1910); Ashirbek K. Muminov, "The Veneration of Holy Sites of the Mid- Syrdar'ya valley: Continuity and Transformation," in Michael Kemper, Anke von Kuegelgen, Dmitriy Yermakov, eds., *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries,* Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1996), pp. 355-367.

7 Cf. Ashirbek Muminov, "Die Qozhas – Arabischen Genealogien in Kasachstan," Anke von Kuegelgen, Michael Kemper, Allen J. Frank, eds., *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries, Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 139-210.

8 For a discussion of Islamic culture among the Kazakhs before the Russian conquest, cf. N.D. Nurtazina, *Islam v istorii srednevekovogo Kazakhstana* (Almaty, 2000).

Islamic law were being integrated into Kazakh customary law as early as the 17th century.[9]

It is important to emphasize that the Kazakhs inhabiting the regions of the southern steppe in proximity to, or under the political control of, the Central Asian khanates were the least affected by the Islamic revival that characterized the Islamic transformation on the northern and western steppe. This was due to the fact that, as the last Kazakh communities to come under Russian control, only in the 1860s and 1870s, Russian economic penetration in the region was certainly more limited. Furthermore, these southern Kazakhs often lived interspersed among sedentary Central Asian communities. Thus, stereotypes notwithstanding, the Islamic consciousness and practice of these "shamanistic" Kazakhs differed little from that of their "orthodox" Central Asian neighbors. In addition, it was precisely in proximity to these sedentary communities that the major Kazakh Islamic institutions, khoja communities and hagiolatry, were concentrated. Thus, in southern Kazakhstan there already existed both the traditional Kazakh institutions and easy access to the Islamic institutions of the Central Asian khanates.[10] As a result, the influence of the Islamic transformation seems to have been more limited among the Kazakh communities of the Syr Darya Valley.

2. Russian Steppe Policy and Islam in the 18th Century

The political background of the Islamic transformation originates with the introduction by Catherine II in the late 18th century of a host of new policies institutionalizing the religious life of Russia's Muslim subjects. However, well before the reign of Catherine II, and, in fact, as early as the 14th century, the Rus-

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9 Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom on the Steppe: the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2001), p. 1; cf. also S. Zimanov and N. Öserov, *Qazaq ädet-ghurïp zhangdarïna shariattïng äseri* (Almaty, 1998).

10 On the religious life of these southern Kazakhs in the 19th century cf. R.M. Mustafina, *Predstavleniia, kul'ty i obriady u kazakhov* (Almaty, 1992).

sian authorities had relied upon Muslim subjects to help defend the steppe frontier. Russian rulers relied on Muslim translators, spies, Cossacks, and even puppet dynasts to ensure its security and expand into the steppe regions. The Russian state particularly depended on Muslims to subdue other Muslims over the course of the 18th century, and it was in the 1730s that we see local administrators begin to establish the rudiments of an official Muslim religious establishment in Ufa.[11] Already, by 1742, the Russians had appointed an *akhund* for the newly founded city of Orenburg, one Ibrahim b. Tilak-Muhammad (Ibraim Tliakov in Russian sources), whom the Tatar historian and theologian Shihabaddin Marjani (1818-1889) identified as the first known *akhund* of that city. This figure administered the submission of several Kazakh khans in 1742.[12] Later in the 18th century, numerous Russian official documents, as well as European travel accounts, comment on the presence of numerous "Tatar" mullas and scribes in the entourages of Kazakh khans. While some of these figures functioned at times as spies, they were also essential to the khans, who used them as teachers, advisors, and scribes. In any case, the partnership between Russian military authorities and Muslims, especially Muslim clerics, in bringing about the submission of the Kazakhs, as well as the Kyrgyz and Karakalpaks, was a consistent one, and is evident from the 1740s down to the conquest of the Khanate of Qoqand in the 1860s.[13]

2-1. Catherine II

The reign of Catherine II ushered in a new direction regarding imperial policy toward Islam and Muslims, which not so much influenced, as determined, the relationship that would exist

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11 Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and Bulghar Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden et al., 1998), pp. 26-38.

12 A.A. Sazonov, ed., *Pod stiagom Rossii: sbornik arkhivskikh dokumentov* (Moskva, 1992), pp. 375-380; Shihabaddin Marjanī, *Mustafad al-akhbar fi aḥvali Qazan wa Bulghar* II (Kazan, 1900), pp. 209-210.

13 Allen Frank, "Tatarskie mully sredy kazakhov i kirgizov v XVIII i XIX vekakh," *Kul'tura, isskustvo tatarskogo naroda: istoki, traditsii, vzaimosviazi* (Kazan, 1993), pp. 124-131.

between the Russian state and the Muslim communities of Russia proper down to 1917. The institutions and policies that Catherine introduced, and their influence on the Muslim communities of Russia and Siberia have been discussed in numerous works. Suffice it is to say for our purposes that the creation of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (OMSA), based in Ufa, and the conferral of communal rights on the Muslim community of the Volga-Ural region against the backdrop of an already relatively privileged social position, had a tremendous effect on the creation of a more or less unified Muslim community united by a common Islamic Bulghar regional identity, a common Islamic Discourse, and by a dynamic merchant class that grew rich from foreign and domestic trade within an expanding Russian economy. In other words, the Muslim community and its institutions were for the most part tightly integrated into the empire and identified with imperial enterprise.[14]

The historical role of Kazakhstan is central to the policies instituted by Catherine, and to the general institutional and economic integration of the Muslim community within the Russian empire. Catherine's motivation in regulating and integrating Russia's Muslim community was not solely restricted to the efficient administration of the Muslim communities of Russia and Siberia. There was an equally important foreign dimension directly linked to Kazakhstan. It is no accident that the first official Islamic establishments in Russia appeared on the steppe frontier in Bashkiria, in the 1730s. However in Catherine's reign we see Volga-Ural Muslims, and especially the clerical elite, becoming instrumental not only in political and diplomatic activities relating to the Kazakh khans, but also in creating a religious infrastructure and, in effect, integrating the Kazakh nomads into the institutional structures of "Russian Islam."[15] By

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14 Cf. Charles Robert Steinwedel, "Invisible Threads of Empire: State, Religion and Ethnicity in Tsarist Bashkiria, 1773-1917," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1999; Frank, *Islamic Historiography...*, pp. 197-199.

15 Charles Steinwedel has particularly emphasized the foreign policy concerns underlying the creation of the OMSA; cf. Steinwedel, "Invisible Threads...," pp. 50-54.

"institutional structures of Russian Islam" we mean Sufi and scholarly networks, as well as the administrative system characterized by the OMSA and Russian civil law, which governed Islamic institutions.[16] This integration also affected the Kazakh nomads, since they themselves were important actors in these developments, and this process of integration came to have a strong influence on their society. These issues, especially as they developed in the 19th century, will be discussed below in more detail.

Let us briefly examine the activities of Catherine's administration regarding Islam on the Kazakh steppe. Beginning in 1782, Catherine subsidized the construction and staffing of mosques and madrasas in settlements along the Kazakh steppe, such as Orenburg, Troitsk, Petropavlovsk, and Verkhneuralsk. There were numerous economic and political advantages to funding this mosque construction project. First, the presence of mosques and madrasas often attracted the Kazakh khans, and, indeed, several mosques were built at their request. The mosques were staffed by clerics from the Volga-Ural region, who had a close relationship with the Russian authorities, and whose political reliability was certainly a factor in their appointments. Perhaps most importantly, as the presence of mosques and madrasas attracted Kazakh nomads, they also attracted commerce, and customs duties. It is perhaps no accident that all of the towns in which the Russian authorities subsidized mosque construction became major commercial centers, and, at the same time, major centers for Islamic learning, including centers for Sufi and scholarly networks.[17]

In addition to promoting the establishment of mosques and madrasas on the Kazakh steppe, it was under Catherine's rule that we see the regulation and organization of the Volga-Ural

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16 Cf. Allen Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: the Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde* (Leiden et al., 2001), pp. 314-317.

17 Cf. A. Dobrosmyslov, "Zaboty imperatritsy Ekateriny II o prosveshchenii kirgizov," *Trudy Orenburgskoi uchenoi arkhivskoi komissii* 9 (1902), pp. 61-63.

'ulama. While these policies affected the *'ulama* throughout the Volga-Ural region, the establishment of the OMSA in Orenburg, and later in Ufa, and its staffing with Muslim figures who proved their political reliability through steppe diplomacy, especially with the Kazakhs, demonstrates the significant position of the Kazakh steppe in the formulation of these polices. A good illustration are the first muftis of the OMSA, Muhammadjan al-Husayn (r. 1788-1824), who served as a diplomat for the Russians on the Kazakh steppe, and 'Abdassalam b. Abdarrahim (r. 1825-1840) who was also closely connected with the Orenburg Border commission and steppe administration.[18]

In light of the numerous complaints made by Russian officials and the Russianized Kazakh elite in the latter half of the 19th century regarding Catherine's policy of "Islamizing the Kazakhs," we should keep in mind that Catherine's administration had in fact discovered a remarkably effective manner of integrating the Kazakhs into the Russian imperial system (to say nothing of raising revenue) in which "Russian" Islamic institutions played a major role. However, we must credit Catherine with establishing the institutional foundation for the Islamic revival that fundamentally transformed Kazakh society over the course of the 19th century.

2-2. The Volga-Ural 'ulama in Russian state service

The close cooperation in political matters between members of the Volga-Ural *'ulama* on the Kazakh steppe and the Russian authorities continued throughout the first half of the 19th century. Close cooperation between the Russian military authorities, local Volga-Ural *'alims*, and Kazakh chieftains is evident in sources dealing with the submission of Kazakh, and indeed Kyrgyz, clans, as well as in sources dealing with the founding of administrative centers on the steppe.

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18 Danil' D. Azamatov, "The Muftis of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in the 18th and 19th Centuries: the Struggle for Power in Russia's Muslim Institution," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia...,* Vol. 2, pp. 355-384; cf. also M.P. Viatkin, "Zhurnal Orenburgskogo Muftiia," *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 2 (1939), pp. 117-220.

'Alims were especially important in effecting the submission of the Kazakh Senior Horde. Already in 1817 the imperial authorities had awarded two Tatar mullas gold medals for their role in advising the khan of the Senior Horde, Suyuk Ablayev, to submit to Russia. In 1822 the Russian governor in Semipalatinsk sent a delegation of four *mullas* from that city, led by a certain Tashbulat Mulla, to persuade the Senior Horde to submit. Similarly, in 1846 a *mulla* named Abdulla Menlibaev was involved in drafting documents explaining to the Kazakhs their duties as Russian subjects.[19]

In fact, during the first half of the 19th century, Russian administrators typically appointed Volga-Ural *mullas* to serve in an official capacity as the *imams* of the given Kazakh *volost'* or *prikaz*. Typically, one of these figures would receive an official license from the OMSA, and would be officially recognized as the district (*volost'* or *prikaz*) *imam* by the local Russian authorities. The historian Qurban'ali Khalidi informs us of precisely this process when, in the 1820s, the first *imam* of Ayaguz, Muhammad-Sadiq Hazrat b. Mulla Isma'il, was appointed to that position by the local authorities.[20]

As a result, it was common for many Kazakh rulers to make formal requests to the Russian authorities to fulfill their requirement of appointing a *volost' imam* or *akhund*. For example, in 1833, the Senior Sultan K. Kudaimendin wrote a letter to Lieutenant General de Sen-Loren in Omsk pointing out the legal provision whereby Russia was required to assign a *mulla* to the *okrug* to lead the Kazakhs' prayers. He specifically requested that the current acting *mulla*, a certain Prince Isfandiyar Chanyshev, be officially appointed to that position.[21]

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19 B. Dzhamgerchinov, *Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Kirgizii XIX veka* (Frunze, 1966), p. 29n; Sazonov, ed., *Pod stiagom Rossii...*, pp. 392-393, 401-402.
20 Qurban'ali Khalidi, *Tawarikh-i khamsa-yi sharqi* (Kazan, 1910), p. 407.
21 Zh. Kasymbaev and I. Agubaev, *Istorii Akmoly* (Almaty, 1998), p. 141.

3. THE ISLAMIC TRANSFORMATION OF MUSLIM SOCIETY ON THE STEPPE

An appreciation of Russian policy toward Muslim communities and Islamic institutions on the steppe frontier is crucial for understanding the Islamic history of the Kazakh steppe under Russian rule. However, another aim of this paper is also to explore in the broadest terms how Muslims in Kazakhstan organized and understood the Islamic expansion that took place under Russian rule, and, above all, to explore how economic bonds, common Imperial Islamic administrative institutions, as well as shared Sufi and scholarly networks between Kazakhstan and other Muslim regions of the Russian empire were the engines that powered the Islamic revival on the Kazakh steppe. An important characteristic of the Islamic transformation on the Kazakh steppe is the dynamism of the expansion of Islamic institutions directly connected with Russia proper. Just as Islamic institutions in Russia proper expanded rapidly, and even "exploded" over the course of the 19th century, a similar expansion is evident on the Kazakh steppe. One result of this expansion was an Islamic transformation within Kazakh society itself, through the introduction of large-scale Islamic education and literacy on a scale never before seen on the Kazakh steppe.

3-1. Commerce and Islamic Educational Networks

Perhaps the most significant and far-reaching result of the Kazakhs' submission to Russia was the development of economic ties between Russia and the Kazakh steppe. Before the first half of the 19th century, Kazakhstan's main economic importance to Russia was as a thoroughfare for the Central Asian caravan trade, primarily between the Central Asian khanates, China, and India on the one hand, and Siberia and the Lower Volga region on the other. However, the Russian military settlements founded along the Kazakh steppe in the first half of the 18th century, especially Orenburg, Petropavlovsk, and Semipalatinsk, also became the sites of trade fairs, which, as well as redirecting the Central Asian caravan trade, also generated trade between Kazakhs and merchants from Russia, a substantial pro-

portion of whom were Muslims. By the end of the 18th century, it was, for the most part, the Muslims in these towns who dominated the direct trade with the Kazakhs, either as independent merchants or as agents of Russian merchants. It should be added that these merchants, like many of the region's Muslims clerics, often worked very closely with the Russian authorities, acting as diplomats, spies, and advisors to Kazakh leaders. Indeed, many of these merchants, as educated Muslims, also acted as religious advisors to Kazakh leaders. Their close cooperation with Russian military and civil administrators is especially well documented in the sources.[22]

Unlike the caravan trade, which was highly capital-intensive and concentrated in a limited number of marketplaces, the Kazakh steppe trade can be considered ubiquitous, attaining remarkable volume in the larger market centers. The Kazakhs primarily sold livestock products, both animals on the hoof, primarily sheep, horses, and cattle, as well as wool and hides. The main article purchased by the Kazakhs was wheat, which could be grown in abundance along the steppe frontier. The expanding wheat trade carried several benefits for the Russian government, making peasant and Cossack settlement on the steppe frontier more economically viable, and producing a local market for wheat in the absence of means for its economical transportation to central Russia, especially before railroads were built in the area in the late 19th century.[23]

Another type of steppe trade was the itinerant retail trade serving nomadic Kazakh communities. In the steppe regions, this sort of trade had originally been in the hands of Central Asian merchants, who would exchange Kazakh livestock for Central Asian luxury goods. Beginning in the latter part of the 18th century, Volga-Ural Muslims began taking an increasing role in this trade in most of the steppe region, exchanging low-

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22 Cf. for example, F. Zobnin, "Semipalatinskie avantiuristy," *Zapiski Semipalatinskogo podotdela Zapadnosibirskogo otdela IRGO* 2 (1905), pp. 1-11; Sazonov, ed., *Pod stiagom Rossii...*, pp. 387-392.

23 Cf. N.G. Apollova, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie sviazi Kazakhstana s Rossiei v XVIII-nachale XIX v.* (Moskva, 1960).

cost Russian manufactured goods for the Kazakhs' livestock and livestock products. There is evidence that while the Central Asians sold luxury goods mainly to wealthy Kazakhs, Volga-Ural Muslims, selling cheaper goods with more day-to-day utility, were able to expand their market to a much larger section of the Kazakh population.[24] Another article of trade that came to have a large impact on Kazakh religious consciousness was the trade in Islamic printed books, which could be cheaply produced in the towns of Kazan, Orenburg, and Ufa. There was also an important religious component to the itinerant Kazakh trade. Commerce and religious education were often conducted by the same merchant, and when some Russian officials in the late 19th century sought to prohibit Volga-Ural Muslim teachers from traveling on the Kazakh steppe, it was a simple matter for these teachers declare themselves itinerant merchants, and provide Islamic education to the Kazakh nomads.[25]

The significance of these commercial centers for the creation of an Islamic establishment on the Kazakh steppe cannot be overemphasized. We have seen how the mosque construction policies of Catherine II resulted in the simultaneous creation of commercial and Islamic religious centers. Beginning at the end of the 18th century and continuing down to 1917, the commercial centers of Orenburg, Troitsk, Petropavlovsk, and especially Semipalatinsk developed into major Muslim urban centers (Semipalatinsk even boasted a majority Muslim population by the middle of the 19th century). These town were also important as the focal points of Islamic scholarly and Sufi networks – the town of Troitsk was possibly the premiere Sufi center on the Kazakh steppe – anchoring a network that extended throughout the Kazakh steppe, inextricably joining it to the Volga-Ural region's dynamic Islamic revival, and extending that

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24 Allen J. Frank and Mirkasyim Usmanov, *Materials for the Islamic History of Semipalatinsk: Two Manuscripts by Ahmad-Wali al-Qazani and Qurban'ali Khalidi*, ANOR 12, (Berlin, 2001), p. 75.

25 Cf. Shariazdan Elewkenov and Zhumaghïz Shalghïnbaeva, *Qazaq kitabïnïng tarikhï* (Almaty, 2000); Jahanshah an-Nizhgharuti, *Tarīkh-i Astarkhan* (Astrakhan, 1907), pp. 26-28.

network into Central Asia and even into a substantial portion of China's Xinjiang province.

In addition to this large-scale commercial activity, Muslim merchants also dominated the itinerant retail trade with the Kazakh nomads, with Muslims also being well represented in the urban retail sector. Finally, in more modest economic endeavors, Muslims, especially Volga-Ural Muslims, were broadly engaged in craft production and other trades. At the lowest level, dispossessed Kazakhs, formerly nomads, occupied the lowest rung, the urban casual labor market. All of this urban Muslim economic activity fueled and funded the region's Islamic institutions, and centered them in the region's cities located along the northern tier of the Kazakh steppe. Just as Kazakhstan's economy became increasingly integrated with that of Russia, the region's Islamic institutions, especially its Sufi and scholarly networks, became increasingly enmeshed with those of the Volga-Ural region. However, on the Kazakh steppe, Kazakhs, themselves as Sufis, scholars and patrons, held an increasingly important position in funding and staffing these institutions.

3-2. Sufi and scholarly Networks: the case of Semipalatinsk

The urban centers in which Islamic institutions and networks of the Kazakh steppe were centered were by no means strictly uniform in their character, although certain common features, as discussed above, are evident. For example, while we can characterize all the centers' networks as having close bonds with the Volga-Ural region, geographic factors also played an important role in determining the characteristics of a given city. One of the largest Islamic religious centers in Russia was the city of Orenburg, with its Islamic suburb of Qarghali (also known as Seitovskii Posad in Russian sources, or Sa'id in Muslim sources). Much of the literary and scholarly activity that characterized the Islamic revival in the Volga-Ural region originated in Orenburg, and networks centered there embraced the entire Volga-Ural region. Similarly, Riza'addin b. Fakhraddin's and Murad Ramzi's biographical dictionaries of the Volga-Ural region were produced and published for the most part in Orenburg, which was a major publishing center for the Volga-Ural region.

At the same time, Orenburg was an important Islamic and economic center as well, even for Kazakhs. In fact, the city directly shaped the Islamic revival of both the Volga-Ural region and the Kazakh steppe, and testifies to the shared Islamic institutional bonds of the Volga-Ural region and Kazakhstan.

However, as we move further east, the situation begins to change. The Islamic networks of the Kazakh steppe cities become progressively less well documented in the biographical dictionaries of the Volga-Ural region. For example, Sufis and scholars from Troitsk are fairly well represented, especially in the biographical dictionary of Murad Ramzi, who himself studied in that town, While only a handful of figures from Petropavlovsk are featured, and only one figure from Semipalatinsk, a major Islamic center, appears in these dictionaries. Other geographical factors also help define the settlements of the Kazakh steppe. Among the Islamic scholars in Semipalatinsk and Petropavlovsk we see bonds not only with the Volga-Ural region, but also with Western Siberia. Similarly, the presence of Sart and Tajik merchant communities, such as those in Semipalatinsk and especially Akmolinsk, lead to direct connections with Central Asia.[26]

Thanks to the existence of two Islamic histories of Semipalatinsk, we can reconstruct with a degree of confidence the Islamic networks centered in that city. One these histories is by Ahmad-Wali al-Qazani, a senior scholar and Sufi of that city, whose history was composed in 1888. The other is by Qurban'ali Khalidi, an *imam* in the Chinese border town of Chuguchak, who had studied in Semipalatinsk and whose history was composed there around 1912. The *'alims* mentioned in these histories could in a very real sense be seen as the scholarly elite of Imperial Russia's Muslims. Semipalatinsk's *imams* were for the most part Volga-Ural Muslims and, as a result, they were

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26 The three major Islamic biographical dictionaries from the Volga-Ural region are: Marjanī, *Mustafad al-akhbar*, II; Riza'addin b. Fakhraddin, *Athar*, I-II (Ufa-Orenburg, 1900-1908); Muhammad Murad ar-Ramzi, *Talfiq al-akhbar wa-talqiḥ al-athar fi waqa'i' Qazan wa-Bulghar wa-muluk at-Tatar* I-II (Orenburg, 1908).

firmly connected to the Volga-Ural region by kinship and by education. A substantial number, however, were also Kazakhs. The most prominent *imams* were trained in Central Asia, especially in Bukhara. Scholars who were to become *imams* in Semipalatinsk often studied in prominent madrasas in the Volga-Ural region, such as the madrasas of Qishqar in Kazan province, of Machkara and Aday in Vyatka province, and of Chalpu in Samara province. The local Islamic centers, such as the towns of Ust'-Kamenogorsk, Zaisan, and Ayaguz, were staffed by scholars who had received training in Semipalatinsk. These two manuscripts illustrate the city's status as a major Sufi center in Kazakhstan, with particular ties to Bukhara.[27] This Semipalatinsk-based scholarly and Sufi network extended beyond the borders of the Russian empire. Qurban'ali himself served as *imam* and *qazi* in Chuguchak. Similarly, near the headwaters of the Irtysh River in northwestern Xinjiang province, Tatar scholars from Semipalatinsk staffed the so-called Abaqiya Madrasa founded in that area in 1904.[28]

There were a number of other features that helped distinguish Semipalatinsk from the other Muslim centers of the Kazakh steppe periphery. In these cities, including Kazan, Muslims were usually minorities, living in separate settlements, either near the centers of the cities, as in Kazan and Astrakhan, or in separate towns some distance from the cities, such as Qarghalď, near Orenburg, or Mamliutka, near Petropavlovsk. By contrast, in Semipalatinsk, Muslims formed an absolute majority of the population probably already by the beginning of the nineteenth century; in the second half of the nineteenth century numerous travelers commented on the city's overall "oriental appearance," which they felt distinguished it from the other cities along the Kazakh steppe they had visited. Furthermore, unlike in other cities where Tatars dominated the urban Muslim population, the largest single Muslim ethnic group in Semipalatinsk was the

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27 Frank and Usmanov, *Materials*..., passim.

28 Näbizhan Muqametkhanulï, *Qïtaydaghï qazaqtardïng qoghamdïq tarikhï (1860-1920 zhzh.)* (Almaty, 2000), p. 252.

Kazakhs, who outnumbered the combined Tatar and Central Asian population and made up the majority of students in Semipalatinsk's madrasas.[29]

Semipalatinsk appears to have been a bastion of traditionalism, despite a mounting tide of Islamic modernism that gained strength in Russia in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Qurban'ali tells us in his manuscript that Islamic modernism, or jadidism, came very late to the madrasas of Semipalatinsk, only after 1907, and that by 1912 educators had deemed the jadidist curriculum unsuitable for children, dropping it in favor of more traditional methods.[30] Unlike nearly every other major Muslim center in Russia, Semipalatinsk did not publish a single Tatar journal or newspaper before 1917. By contrast, Tatars in Kazan, Orenburg, Astrakhan and other towns were publishing dozens of journals and newspapers. The conservatism of Semipalatinsk's Muslim community is alluded to in a variety of sources.[31]

3-3. Islamic Administrative Institutions

Urban, and to a lesser extent rural, Muslim religious institutions became established in Kazakhstan from the end of the 18th century, gradually gaining in momentum throughout the 19th century, Volga-Ural Muslims from within Russia brought with them the basic Islamic administrative structure, which had been established, as we have seen, during the reign of Catherine II. The unifying features of this administrative structure were 1) the presence of the OMSA, which had responsibility for verifying the credentials of every *imam*, *mudarris*, and *mu'adhdhin* elected, or appointed, to serve a community in the Volga-Ural region, and 2) provincial-level Russian civil authorities, who retained the right of final approval in the election of Muslim clerics in their jurisdictions, and who also issued permits ,†or mosque and madrasa construction projects. The imperial authorities also played a role in the appointment of the most senior

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29 Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...*, pp. 1-9.
30 Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...*, p. 82.
31 Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...,* pp. 34-35.

Muslim clerics, and in the election of *imams* in economically or politically high-profile locations. The Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities had only limited authority in matters of mosque construction, and none whatsoever in matters of selecting Muslim clerics.[32]

As we have seen, Russian state policy regarding the steppe and the Kazakh nomads was a prominent factor in the foundation of the OMSA. Volga-Ural Muslims contributed to the establishment and expansion of the Russian state and its economic power on the steppe. The administrative structure, characterized by the dual authority of the OMSA, on the one hand, and local civil and military governors on the other, extended into the Kazakh steppe. Unlike in the Volga-Ural region, where sedentary Muslim communities, with their firmly established administrative institutions, enjoyed a degree of prolonged stability, Russian administration over the Kazakh nomads was shifting and often improvised. An obvious reason for this fluidity was that from the 1740s, when the Kazakh khans began declaring themselves Russian vassals, until the conquest of the Central Asian khanates in the 1860s and 1870s, the Kazakh steppe was a frontier region in every sense of the word. Gradually, Russia was able to organize, administer, exploit and colonize the region more effectively as the 19th century progressed. But we see Kazakhstan evolve in terms of the administration of local Islamic institutions into a transitional zone between the relatively organized and formal system that evolved in the Volga-Ural region, and the openly colonial system of non-administration in Central Asia that was characterized by the *laissez-faire* "benign neglect" personified in the Russian governor of Turkestan, von Kaufman.

The administrative structure for communities on the Kazakh steppe differed according to whether a region was administered as a province (*guberniia*) or as a territory "*oblast'*." Thus, the towns along the Kazakh steppe, in Astrakhan, Saratov, Orenburg, and Ufa provinces, and the provinces of Siberia proper

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32 Cf. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions...,* pp. 120-124.

were administered jointly by the OMSA in Ufa and their respective provincial civil authorities, since they belonged to "Inner Russian" jurisdictions. These congregations were almost exclusively populated by Tatars or Bashkirs, although in some cases Kazakhs would dominate local congregations where their numbers were particularly prominent. The administrative arrangements remained essentially unchanged in these provinces from 1789 until 1917.

Elsewhere on the Kazakh steppe the situation varied considerably. Most of Kazakhstan was governed either from Orenburg in the west, or from Omsk in the northeast. In this vast area, for a rather extended period from 1789 until 1868, the OMSA examined the qualifications of the *imams* and *akhunds* in the sedentary congregations in the cities, towns, and Cossack settlements and the local Russian governors confirmed their elections or appointments. Typically, each nomadic Kazakh *volost'* had a formally appointed *akhund*, and smaller clans had their own *imams*. For the most part these figures were from the Volga-Ural region, but increasingly over the course of the 19th century, Kazakhs filled these positions as well. It is not clear what role, if any, the OMSA played in the certification of these clerics, but evidently a large proportion did hold some sort of OMSA-issued credentials, since they appear in Muslim sources often with the title "*manshurli*" or "*ukazni.*" Finally, the *imams* of the Central Asian merchant communities in Kazakhstan were not administered at all by the OMSA. Rather, until the 1870s, they had a degree of self-rule as foreign subjects, and after the conquest of Central Asia, they retained their independence from the OMSA.[33]

In 1868, the imperial authorities in St. Petersburg removed all of Kazakhstan from the authority of the Orenburg Mufti, except of course for those regions within full-fledged Russian provinces, such as Orenburg and Troitsk. Similarly, the Syr Darya

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33 For a general discussion of administrative arrangements on the Kazakh steppe cf. *Istoriia Kazakhstana* 3 (Almaty, 2000), pp. 413-468; cf. also Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...*, pp. 31-33.

Valley, which had been wrested from the khanate of Qoqand in the 1860s, and the Semirechye, which had come under Russian control in the 1820s, were attached to the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan, which was ruled first by von Kaufman from his seat in Samarqand. Von Kaufman and his successors steadfastly refused to grant any authority to the OMSA in their territories. However, in the remaining areas of the steppe, ruled from Orenburg and Omsk, the authority of the OMSA had been reestablished by 1883, and appears to have remained in force up until 1917, at least for the sedentary communities.[34]

A rather unique administrative structure evolved in the Inner Horde, located between the Ural and Volga Rivers north of the Caspian Sea. Here, between about 1830 and 1845, the local Chingisid ruler, Jahangir Khan, created his own administrative system modeled on the OMSA, but which functioned completely independently, evidently until 1868, well after his death in 1845. Jahangir's Islamic establishment was characterized by a centralized administrative bureaucracy, initially staffed by Volga-Ural *'alims*, headed by an Orenburg cleric named Jabir Akhund ibn Hamad. Like the OMSA, the Islamic administration of the Inner Horde gave examinations to prospective *mullas*, who were assigned to every sub-clan in the Inner Horde, thereby promoting Islamic knowledge and education among the nomads. Jahangir Khan also supported the education of Kazakh students in well-known madrasas in the Volga-Ural region, especially in Astrakhan, Steribashevo, and Sterlitamak. By the end of his life, Jahangir had witnessed a large and substantial increase in the number of Kazakh *imams* in his realm, as well as the integration of Kazakhs into the regional Sufi and scholarly networks. As a result of Jahangir's policies, the religious life of Kazakh nomadic society in the Inner Horde was fundamentally and permanently altered.[35]

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34 P.P. Litvinov, "Antitatarskaia politika tsarizma v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane," *Materialy po istorii tatarskogo naroda* (Kazan, 1995), pp. 372-373.

35 Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions...,* pp. 278-305.

4. ISLAMIC CULTURE FOR THE KAZAKH MASSES

To this point we have mainly discussed the role of Muslim economic and political elites in the expansion of Islamic institutions on the Kazakh steppe, and this emphasis is fitting, since during the imperial Russian period the core Islamic institutions – mosques, madrasas, imams, and even Sufism – were largely dominated by elites from the village to the imperial level. Nevertheless, the humbler levels of Muslim society played an equally vital role as the "consumers" of Islamic institutions. In Kazakhstan, as in the Volga-Ural region, poorer Muslims funded mosque and madrasa construction, contributing probably a greater proportion of their income than did the elites. However, in Kazakhstan, numerous sources, both Muslim and Russian, testify to the seemingly insatiable demand on the part of Kazakh nomads for Islamic education. In fact, the two major avenues of introducing Islamic education and Islamic consciousness among the Kazakh nomads were the nomadic school, staffed by itinerant teachers, and the dissemination of vernacular Kazakh-language Islamic literature among the Kazakhs.

4-1. Nomadic schools

Nomadic maktabs and even madrasas probably existed among Inner Asian nomads from the outset of their Islamization. We know, for example, that some Bashkir nomads in the 18th century, made use of full-fledged madrasa that accompanied nomads to their summer encampments.[36] Similarly, during the same century, we know that some Kazakh khans had teachers and schools in their encampments. However, over the course of the 19th century, the availability of Islamic education to nomads on the steppe increased dramatically. Two developments facilitated this trend. The first was the ability of Kazakh nomads, usually wealthier ones, to employ teachers, which was naturally linked to the demand for Islamic education on the part of the nomads themselves. While Russian sources often speak of "Tatar mullas" indoctrinating Kazakhs, Muslim sources make

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36 Muhammad-Salim Umetbaev, *Yadigar* (Kazan, 1897), p. 108.

it clear that the demand for the services of these mullas originated with the nomads themselves. The second was the increasing number of Volga-Ural *'alims* who graduated from madrasas in the Volga-Ural region and Kazakhstan and sought employment teaching Kazakhs. These individuals often came from the regions bordering the Kazakh steppe. Thanks to local Islamic historiography, we possess particularly complete data on figures coming from Samara Province, at the western extreme of the Kazakh steppe, as well as those in eastern Kazakhstan, most of who appear to have come to eastern Kazakhstan from the Kazan region. However, V. V. Radlov points out that, for example, *'alims* from Siberia were especially well represented in the northeastern regions of Kazakhstan.[37]

The *maktabs* (primary schools) among the Kazakh nomads were typically funded by wealthy notables, who were usually the only members of the community who could afford to support a teacher. They were usually attended by the notable's children, but often the other children would attend as well. Financial arrangements varied considerably. In some cases the parents of children attending the school would contribute, other times, a notable would himself take on the cost of supporting the teacher, often providing the teacher with his own herds and yurt. From what we can reconstruct of the curriculum, the emphasis was on Islamic catechism, some Arabic prayers, and possibly a degree of literacy in Turki. It probably differed little from the *maktab* curriculum in the Volga-Ural region. Naturally, the quality of such education varied widely, depending on the skills and education of the instructor, Nevertheless, we can assume the presence of such education created the foundation of a common "Islamic Discourse" among the Kazakh nomads, and provided a foundation from which Kazakh nomads could seek higher education in the madrasas of cities such as Petropavlovsk and Semipalatinsk, as well as in the Volga-Ural region.[38]

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37 Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions...*, pp. 296-297; Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...*, passim; V.V. Radlov, *Iz Sibiri* (Moskva, 1989), p. 303.

38 Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions...*, pp. 291-296.

In fact, we know that by the second half of the 19th century the majority of students in the main Muslim educational centers of Kazakhstan, Semipalatinsk and Petropavlovsk, were Kazakhs, and that large numbers of Kazakhs were studying in the madrasas of Troitsk, Astrakhan, and Orenburg's Seitovskii Posad, as well as in smaller communities along the steppe frontier. Clearly, the foundation for Kazakhs to attend these madrasas was the proliferation of the nomadic *maktabs*.[39]

4-2. Islamic Book Publishing in Vernacular Kazakh

Islamic ideas were also disseminated among Kazakhs through the wide availability of religious pamphlets and books sold throughout Kazakhstan, and printed primarily in the Islamic publishing centers of Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg. In fact, beginning in the second half of the 19th century, Muslim printers in the Volga-Ural region published a vast amount of literature in vernacular Kazakh, usually in the form of small and cheaply produced pamphlets. The most popular works, judging from the frequent editions and reprints, consisted of poetic works devoted to the lives and actions of major Islamic figures, such as the prophet Muhammad, the four Righteous Caliphs, and the Battle of Kerbala. Other works were devoted to the legends surrounding Islamic heroes, such as Sayyid-Battal, or Qur'anic prophets. Evidently, Kazakhs distinguished this sort of material from the more traditional epic materials (which also featured strong Islamic themes) performed by bards. The works based on the vernacular pamphlets could be, and were, read aloud by literate persons, who possessed a basic knowledge of Turki. In some cases, these were anonymous works, in others they were recorded from specific performers. A catalog of "Kazakh" books from the tsarist era indicates that a very large proportion of all titles published for the Kazakh market was of this type.[40] The

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39 Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...*, p. 36; A.K. Geins, *Sobranie literaturnykh trudov*, I (St. Peterburg, 1867), p. 220.

40 For a bibliography of this vernacular Kazakh literature cf. U. Sukhanberdieva and S.D. Seyfullina, *Qazaq kirabïnïng shezhiresi 1807-1917* (Almaty, 1996); Radlov, *Iz Sibiri*, p. 323.

oral transmission of Islamic knowledge by means of poetic works certainly predates the rise of Islamic publishing in imperial Russia, but its widespread dissemination by means of inexpensive pamphlets that could be performed by any literate person, rather than by a formal epic performer, demonstrates that by the second half of the 19th century the demand for, and spread of, Islamic knowledge had increased dramatically, in large part as a result of mass-market publishing based in the Volga-Ural region.

5. THE ISLAMIC TRANSFORMATION OF KAZAKH SOCIETY

By the second half of the 19th century, we can say that Kazakh society was in the midst of a powerful Islamic transformation that was changing aspects of Kazakh social life, including communal and political identity. While Islamic identity had been deeply rooted among Kazakhs well before the beginning of the 18th century, during the second half of the 19th century we see it expressed in new ways and with a new intensity and fervor not before observed among the Kazakh nomads. In Russian sources, especially official Russian sources, we find that there is a gradual shift in statements claiming the Kazakhs to be "lightly" Muslims, or to be irreligious or "shamanistic at heart." Russianized Kazakhs, such as Chokan Valikhanov, sought to show that the Kazakhs "really" possessed a "shamanistic" nature, but also pointed out that such a desirable (i.e., politically desirable) nature was giving way to a "fanaticism" engendered by the presence of "Tatars" in the midst of the Kazakhs.[41] Similarly, Islamophobic Russian officials and missionaries began, in the mid-19th century, to sound the same alarm, going so far as to attempt to ban "Tatar missionaries" from the steppe (where fifty years before Russian officials had banned Central Asian clerics in favor of "Tatars"). Such contradictory statements – the proposition that the Kazakhs were "at-heart" non-Muslims, yet at the same time Muslim fanatics – were accepted uncritically by later

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41 Valikhanov, "Sledy shamanstvo u kirgizov," and "O musul'manstve v stepi," *Sobranie sochinenii* III, pp. 48-75.

scholars, and are commonly encountered in Soviet and much Western historical literature on the Kazakhs. However, they are at best refracted observations of Islamic life on the steppe. The region's Islamic literature, while displaying its own assumptions and agenda, nevertheless provides a more informed and informative picture of Islamic life.

5-1. "Tatar" Evaluations of Kazakh Piety

The self-image of Volga-Ural Muslims in the Kazakh milieu was in part influenced by their perception of themselves as bearers of Islamic civilization to the "ignorant" Kazakhs, and this sense of a "civilizing mission" among Muslim nomads bears uncanny resemblances to the imperial ideology of a "Russian civilizing mission" among non-Russians.[42] To be sure, both Kazakhs and Tatars developed stereotypes, often unflattering, of one another. Nevertheless, we also find many Tatar historians display a salient awareness of, and respect for, Kazakh piety and devotion in religious matters. While comparison with a "noble savage" as a means of indicating the defects in ones own society is a venerable and universal literary device, it seems more likely in the case of these Tatar historians that they are observing what they believed was an actual phenomenon. This is likely because observations of Kazakh piety appear in all of the important Tatar histories compiled on the Kazakh steppe, covering the whole of Kazakhstan. We see this feature in histories compiled in the Astrakhan and Samara provinces in the west, and in Semipalatinsk and Chuguchak in the east. But more importantly, the authors offer specifics from their own observations, pointing to actual events, rather than referring to abstract and impersonal instances. These authors also describe a strong

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42 Cf. Allen J. Frank, "Varieties of Islamization in Inner Asia: the Case of the Baraba Tatars, 1740-1917," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 41:2-3 (2000), pp. 256-260; for a discussion of mutual stereotypes between Kazakhs and Tatars cf. A.V. Vasil'ev, *Materialy k kharakteristike vzaimnykh otnoshenii tatar i kirgizov s predvaritel'nym kratkim ocherkom etikh otnoshenii* (Orenburg, 1898).

current of religious conservatism and orthodoxy among the Kazakhs.[43]

As an example, the Qurban'ali Khalidi chides the Kazakhs for altering their genealogies, replacing Chingisid ancestors with Muslim saints and Qur'anic figures. Qurban'ali criticized this behavior as overzealous, since he argues that every Muslim has non-Muslim ancestors, and that there is no shame in Kazakhs having Chingisid ancestors. Qurban'ali is clearly concerned with the displacement of older historical traditions among Kazakhs, and such a concern from a Tatar *imam* and historian on the Kazakh steppe clearly indicates that older traditions were being displaced by new "Muslim traditions." Indeed, as Devin DeWeese has indicated, there is no clearer statement of Muslim affiliation for Inner Asians than such displacement of ancestral affiliations by new Muslim affiliations.[44]

5-2. Kazakh "Nasihat" literature

By the end of the 19th century we begin to see the Kazakhs producing their own Islamic literature beyond the vernacular epic poetry discussed above. While the manuscript legacy of the Kazakh steppe is very poorly documented, we have a better idea of the printed Islamic literature that, as noted above, was produced for the most part in the Volga-Ural publishing centers of Kazan, Orenburg and Ufa. Much of this literature, which really became widespread after about 1885, deals with various aspects of local Islamic institutions; commemorations of mosque and madrasa construction, elegies to prominent Sufis and imams, and so forth. In fact, it is doubtful whether this genre of literature can be considered exclusively Kazakh, since such institutions were shared by the various ethnic components of the Muslim community.

However, we do find many works written exclusively by Kazakhs for a Kazakh audience, written in a self-conscious Ka-

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43 For a discussion of evaluations of Kazakh piety cf. Frank and Usmanov, *Materials...*, p. 4.

44 Qurban'ali Khalidi, *Tawarikh-i khamsa-yi sharqi*, p. 453; DeWeese, *Islamization...,* p. 179 ff.

zakh vernacular. The most popular type of this sort of literature is the "Nasihat" genre. Between 1900 and 1915 there were five separate works bearing the title *Nasihat-i qazaqiya*, some of which appeared in multiple editions, testifying to their popularity among Kazakh readers. In fact, this genre rapidly evolved in this period into a vehicle for a nascent Kazakh national identity and national program, particularly in the works of Mizhaqip Dulatov and others, such as the *Oyan Qazaq*. Nevertheless, even these "nationalist" works displayed a strong Islamic component rooted in the multi-ethnic institutional foundations established under Russian rule.[45] As an Islamic term in Central Asia and the Volga-Ural region, "nasihat" signifies "advice," "counsel" or even "admonition." In its earliest forms, we see it appear in a manuscript work written by Jabir b. Hamad Akhund of the Inner Horde, written probably in the 1840s, following the death of Jahangir Khan in 1845.[46] Here the nasihat is part of a larger text, and in addition to advising the readers on proper Islamic behavior and beliefs, it also includes an elegy to the late khan. Thus, already here we see a link between political discourse and Islamic counsel. The earliest full example of this genre is the *Nasihat al-qazaqiya*, published in Kazan in 1900 by Orantay al-Qipchaqi, which restricts itself almost exclusively to religious themes. However, further examples of the genre appear immediately following the 1905-1907 Revolution, from 1907 to 1909, with second editions appearing up until 1915.[47] These works remain to be examined in detail, but from preliminary observa-

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45 In a discussion of Dulatov's *Oyan Qazaq!* Tomohiko Uyama points out that the author strongly supported raising the profile of Islamic institutions, such as Islamic law and education, in Kazakh society; cf. T. Uyama, "The Kazakh Intelligentsia at the Crossroads of Three Civilizations," *Reform Movements and Revolutions in Turkistan: 1900-1924, Studies in Honor of Osman Khoja* (Haarlem, 2001), pp. 396-398.

46 *Risala-yi khanan* (Kazan, 1908).

47 Cf. Maqïsh b. Qaltay, *Nasihat-i qazaqiya* (Ufa, 1911); Orantay b. Qurimbay Qipchaqi, *Nasihat al-qazaqiya* (Kazan, 1900); Zaynal'abidin b. al-Hajj Hamrah al-Jawari, *Nasihat-i qazaqiya* (Ufa, 1908); 'Abdassalam b. al-Hajj 'Abdarrahman, *Nasihat-i qazaqiya yakhud qazaqlarding hallari* (Kazan, 1908).

tions they appear to display a strong emphasis on religious themes, and a close connection between religious themes and political discourse. As we have seen, such an interplay was already evident in the earliest example of the nasihat genre from the middle of the 19th century, and we must question the appearance of such works as evidence of a "new" Kazakh national awakening, when in fact they can equally, or rather more probably, evince the discourse of a mature Islamic society expressing itself in a new "national" idiom.

CONCLUSION

One of the major results of Russian rule over the Kazakh steppe was the development of a complex and multi-ethnic Islamic society on the Kazakh steppe. A crucial element in the expansion of Islamic institutions and Islamic consciousness among the Kazakh nomads was the gradual, but prevailing, integration of the Kazakhs into the Russian economic system, due to a large proportion of the commercial activity on the Kazakh steppe falling into the hands of Muslims from the Volga-Ural region. As a result, large numbers of Volga-Ural Muslims emigrated from Russia to the cities on the northern periphery of the Kazakh steppe, and these Muslims brought with them both their Islamic institutions as well as their institutional structure, which was itself integrated into the Russian administrative system. It was these institutions, largely dominated by scholars and Sufis from the Volga-Ural region, which resulted in the education of large numbers of Kazakhs both in madrasas and in nomadic encampments through the work of itinerant teachers. Furthermore, the Islamic publishing business, centered in Volga-Ural region, facilitated the large-scale production of inexpensive Islamic books and pamphlets written in the Kazakh vernacular, and expressly produced for the Kazakh market. For the Kazakhs of the northern and western steppe, economic integration into the imperial Russian system also involved integration into the Islamic institutional structure of imperial Russia.