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Kazakh History in British Periodicals: Interpretations and Historical Accuracy

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Abstract

In the 19th century, the expansion of the Russian Empire into the Inner territories of Asia faced a confrontation with British interests. British press closely monitored Russia’s actions from the perspective of global competition, known as the “Great Game”. The Kazakh steppe, located at the intersection of imperial interests, played a significant role in this process.

The British periodicals developed distinct views on Kazakh history, conveying the steppe's complex political, economic situation to a global audience. In this context, the study will undertake a comprehensive analysis of the content, interpretation, and historical accuracy of the data concerning Kazakh history presented in periodicals.

The following conclusions have been drawn: alongside political, economic topics, the extensive coverage of ethnographic information about the Kazakhs in British periodicals contributed to changing stereotypical views; the sources not only highlighted the importance of the Steppe in the system of international relations and the economic interests of the empires, but also emphasized its role as a transit corridor and a source of raw materials; the potential of using periodicals as sources for the study of 19th century Kazakh history was established; gaps in the coverage of issues related to the Kazakh Khanate, the Kazakh hordes were identified.

Keywords: Kazakh history, Kazakh Khanate, British periodicals, interpretation, historical accuracy.

1. Introduction

Due to changes in the current global geopolitical landscape, events from the 19th century may now be viewed in a completely different light. However, just as today, the Central Asian region back then also sparked significant interest from major powers, becoming a focal point for their geopolitical ambitions. Among these, the Kazakh steppe, situated at a strategic point in Central Asia, played a crucial role. It served as a corridor linking Russia and China and connected Great Britain with the countries of the Near East and India via the Caspian Sea, making it strategically important both militarily and economically.

In the first half of the 19th century, the competition between Russia and Great Britain for influence in Central Asia intensified, and Britain began to show interest in Russia’s border regions, including the Kazakh steppe. As part of Russia’s frontier, the Kazakh steppe had become an essential element of the “Great Game” between the major powers. British periodicals highlighted this in their publications.

In contemporary domestic historiography, it can be said that the events related to Kazakh history in British periodicals have not received sufficient attention. While Kazakh history has been well-studied within Russian academic circles, information from British newspapers and journals has often been overlooked. This

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creates a gap in understanding how Kazakh history was perceived in the West, especially in the context of colonial struggles and international diplomacy. Therefore, the aim of this research is to identify and analyze the information published in British periodicals regarding Kazakh history, with a focus on interpretations related to the Kazakh Khanate.

The relevance of the research topic can be explained by several factors: 1) English publications provide an opportunity to study Kazakh history within a global context. By illustrating the strategic significance of the Kazakh steppe in the “Great Game”, this research enables a deeper understanding of Kazakhstan's role in world history; 2) It reveals the interpretations of Kazakh history within a Western audience. This may help to complement or reconsider some traditional narratives presented in domestic historiography; 3) The active presence of English periodicals suggests that the foundation for the field of “Kazakh Studies” has been established in the Great Britain.

Moreover, this research contributes the following innovations to the existing historiography: 1) it provides an opportunity to study Kazakh history through the lens of British press; 2) it aids in understanding Kazakh history, particularly the events during the colonial period, from an objective perspective. While the British press at that time was dependent on Russian information sources, it still offered its own evaluations of events in the region; 3) it highlights an angle of studying Kazakh history in relation to international politics, thereby enriching the current historiography regarding the international history of Central Asia.

2. Materials and Methodology

British periodicals that focus on analysing Kazakh history can be classified as scientifically significant sources. They place particular emphasis on the developments of events in the Kazakh steppe in relation to the competition between Great Britain and Russia. Therefore, the documentary foundation of this research is based on the collection of periodicals from “The British Newspaper Archive” located in the British Library.

Due to the extensive nature of the source collection, the chronological scope of the research is linked to the peak and climax of the “Great Game” between Great Britain and Russia, primarily focusing on materials from the 1830s to the 1860s. Among these, texts that encompass broader materials directly related to the topic have been selected, and issues concerning the Kazakh Khanate up to the 1830s have undergone critical analysis.

During the considered period, the Kazakhs were often referred to by the names “Kirghiz” or Kirghiz-Kaisak”, thus the research materials were searched using the key term “kirghiz”. However, this term can also be found as a few words within advertisements or in broader texts. Additionally, it is worth noting that the same text may appear in multiple publications, and there are often texts on mixed topics.

Thus, it is important to note that the following publications were comprehensively utilized in this research: “Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly Gazette” 16 July 1827, “Morning Post” 05 December 1829, “Weekly Dispatch” 28 June 1840, “Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser” 27 June 1840, “West Kent Guardian” 27 June 1840, “Leicester Herald” 27 June 1840, “The Birmingham Journal” 27 June 1840, “English Chronicle and Whitehall Evening Post” 30 December 1841, “Morning Herald (London)” 26 July 1842, “The Morning Herald” 01 January 1842, “English Chronicle and Whitehall Evening Post” 26 July 1842, “Northern Warder and General Advertiser for the Counties of Fife Perth and Forfar” 06 May 1854, “Church & State Gazette (London)” 04 August 1854, “Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser” 17 October 1854, “John Bull” 12 December 1857, “Daily News (London)” 17 December 1857, “Hereford Times” 16 January 1858, “The Morning Advertiser” 14 March 1859, “The Morning Post” 16 November 1863, “London and China Telegraph” 16 June 1865, “Friend of India and Statesman” 13 July 1865, “Evening Mail” 10 October 1866, “Newcastle Journal” 24 June 1869, “Home News for India, China and the Colonies” 24 September 1869 and “Lancaster Gazette” 26 September 1874.

Additionally, the documentary foundation of the research includes the periodical “Turkestanskije vedomosti” published in Tashkent in 1871, obtained from the National Electronic Library of the Russian Federation, as well as a collection of Diplomatic Documents of the Russian state (16th – 17th centuries) published in Almaty in 2005.

Overall, it can be stated that there is currently a substantial body of historiographical work concerning the policies of Great Britain and Russia in Central Asia, which is based on ethnographic essays and travel writings about the Kazakhs.

Among them, the research conducted by Russian scholars R.A. Arslanov and A.L. Klimashin is notable for its focus on analyzing the rivalry between Russia and Great Britain over Central Asia as reflected in Russian periodicals. The researcher S.N. Brezhneva, while studying Russian society of that time, reveals the perspectives present in Russian periodicals. However, these works focus more on Russian issues than on those related to the Kazakhs.

Within the scope of this research topic, it is essential to highlight the foundational scientific work of K.L. Esmagambetov, titled «What was written about us in the West», published in 1992, which is a significant contribution to the historiography of Kazakh history in foreign literature. The author notes that the Kazakh steppe served as a trade route for the English and references the first English merchant to write about the Kazakhs, A. Jenkinson, as well as other English researchers ([Esmagambetov, 1992: 21](#)). Additionally, one can mention the work «The First English Travellers in the Kazakh Steppe», published in

2006 as part of a state program. This work is entirely based on the travel writings of A. Jenkinson and T.W. Atkinson. Furthermore, within the framework of this research topic, A.B. Alzhanova's monograph «Western journalism on the Kazakhs during the period of Tsarism», published in 2011, should be noted. This work studies the writings of European travellers and journalists concerning the history and spiritual life of the Kazakh people. During the research, additional scholarly works were utilized that relate to the development of the topic beyond those mentioned above.

However, it is important to note that the works of the researchers are largely based on travel writings, essays, and diaries. In contrast, there are very few studies that have utilized the comprehensive array of British national, regional, and local periodicals as sources for Kazakh history. Therefore, this research will undoubtedly contribute a significant new set of data to the documentary foundation of Kazakh history.

The research was conducted based on an interdisciplinary scientific approach that utilized methods from history, political science, cultural studies, and sociology. Specifically: 1) the content analysis method was employed to analyze the topics and events presented in the publications, determine the frequency of term usage, and compare the aspects emphasized in historical data; 2) during the period under consideration, the international geopolitical situation was tense. Therefore, the historical discourse analysis method was used to interpret the information presented, identify the political and cultural perspectives and explain how the portrayal of the Kazakhs as “barbarians” in contrast to the “civilized” was a way to justify colonialism. This method encompasses the synthesis of history and political science as well as cultural studies; 3) the historical comparative method was used to compare the data in the publications with archival documents and scholarly research on Kazakh history. This involved investigating the accuracy of the interpretations of historical events and figures, as well as analyzing the reasons for any distortions or inaccuracies in the historical narrative. This method also integrates the interplay between history and sociology; 4) statistical or quantitative analysis methods were employed to examine the volume of publications related to Kazakh history, the distribution of topics, publication years, places of publication, and other relevant characteristics; 5) the historical genetic method was applied to predict the reasons for the emergence of information about Kazakh history in the publications, explore the factors that motivated research on the Kazakhs, and examine its political and cultural foundations; 6) the event analysis method was utilized to identify the impact of the “Great Game” on Kazakh history through British periodicals.

Thus, this combination of methods will aid in a deeper analysis of the interpretations of the Kazakhs found in British periodicals.

3. Discussion

The aim of British periodicals in the 19th century was to inform society, with their main content covering political, economic, social, and cultural issues. This included information on international events, British colonies, and relations with other great powers. Topics related to the Kazakh Khanate, the Kazakh steppe, the lifestyle of the Kazakhs, and their colonization, as well as national liberation movements against Russia, were raised. It is important to note that while there is limited direct information concerning the Kazakh Khanate, there are sufficient data related to the colonization period.

One of the first researchers of English sources on Kazakh history, domestic scholar K.L. Esmagambetov, noted that “the region has been unevenly studied in terms of time and space. Foreigners were mainly interested in border areas and routes of trade caravans and railways” (Esmagambetov, 1992: 135). Consequently, information about the Kazakhs and their history in British press began to appear in a fragmentary manner within the context of Russian policy from the 1820s onwards. For example, the “Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly Gazette”, published on July 16, 1827, noted that information about the Kazakhs was not frequently encountered (Received..., 1827), and the “Morning Herald”, published on January 1, 1842, made a similar observation (Progress..., 1842).

In the 1840s, the widespread recognition of the Kazakhs in Britain can be particularly attributed to the works of the Russian author A.I. Levshin, who wrote about the Kazakh and Kazakh steppes and their regions (Progress..., 1842). However, it is evident that political interests took precedence for the British. In an article published on June 28, 1840, in the “Weekly Dispatch”, it was noted that “this is a translation from Russian, and the work is important to us as a specimen of Russian literature and because it relates to a country which terminates the extreme south of Russia dominions, and the extreme north of our East India connections” (Descriptions..., 1840). Thus, we can infer that the growing interest in researching the Kazakh steppe arose in relation to the “Great Game” between Great Britain and Russia. This highlights the significance of Kazakh land in global politics.

The decline of the khanate rule in the Kazakh steppes significantly influenced the balance of power between Great Britain and Russia in Asia. This also can be seen as one of the main factors that prompted Great Britain to deepen its understanding of the Kazakh steppes. This is supported by a statement published on December 30, 1841, in the London newspaper “English Chronicle and Whitehall Evening Post”, which noted: “The vast plain which extends from north to south between Siberia mountains of Cabul and Persia, and from east to west between chain of the Oural, the river of that name, the eastern side of the Caspian Sea, and the western frontier of China, comprehend several distinct provinces which we shall describe successively, and the most important of which, from its extend, is the country of the Kirghiz-Kazaks”

([Progress..., 1841](#)). Furthermore, an article published on January 1, 1842, in the “Morning Herald” stated: “England should carefully watch every movement of her rival on the plateaux of Upper Asia, for it cannot be denied that the latter is in a position to cause serious uneasiness with regard to her positions in the east. The danger perhaps may not be immediate, but it is a storm which should be averted” ([Progress..., 1842](#)). This suggests that by the mid-19th century, there was a noticeable intensification of the struggle for influence in Central Asia between the aforementioned states. Therefore, the examples provided above demonstrate that the Kazakh steppes played a significant role in shaping the global geopolitical landscape, and it is evident that British periodicals also turned their attention to this region.

However, there are researchers who present this from a different perspective. For instance, A.B. Alzhanova states: “although the countries of Western Europe and Kazakhstan are geographically distant and differ in cultural typologies, their mutual acquaintance was established through Russia's multifaceted mediation forms. In the 19th century, the progressive role of advanced Russia in the development of the Kazakh people became such a clear and significant phenomenon that it inevitably sparked interest in Kazakhstan among Western scholars and writers” ([Alzhanova, 2011: 42](#)).

Starting from the 1840s, British periodicals not only introduced the Kazakh steppes as part of Russia's Central Asian policy but also indicated that the competition between empires had turned into an information war. For example, in the “Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser”, published on October 17, 1854, it was stated: “Henceforth for a century to come the aggressive prowess of Russia has lost its prestige, and any attempt she may make to frighten the nations will be treated with the scorn and ridicule it must inevitably provoke” ([From our..., 1854](#)). Similarly, in the “Turkestanskije Vedomosti”, published on June 14, 1871, it was remarked that “the English race does not distinguish itself through gentle negotiation” ([Nashe polozenie..., 1871](#)).

Thus, British publications assessed Russia's policy in Central Asia as steps taken towards the conquest of Britain's “jewel”, India. In contrast, Russia disguised its colonial policy as efforts to liberate the local population from backwardness to fulfill a “civilizing mission”, strengthen its borders, and protect itself from Great Britain.

It is important to note that Russia categorized not only the nomadic Kazakhs but also the sedentary Central Asian khanates as “backward”. “In the Russian periodicals of the right orientation, there emerged a perception of the Central Asian peoples as beings less committed to civilization than the Russians. The fact is that in the 19th century, the dominance of leading world powers over Eastern countries was regarded by science as a natural phenomenon. The backwardness of Eastern nations was seen as perennial, with their progress deemed possible only under the influence of Western nations” ([Brezhneva, 2012: 27](#)).

Initially, British periodicals, lacking comprehensive data, described the Kazakhs as a dangerous people. For instance, the “The Birmingham Journal” on June 27, 1840, stated that the Kazakhs were a “a common Kirghiz is always on the watch to steal his neighbour's child, to sell it as a slave” and “they have the art of reducing their Russian prisoners, by a dexterous blow on the head...” ([Interior of Asia, 1840](#)). Similarly, the “Morning Herald (London)” reported in its July 26, 1842, issue that “On all these roads from the oasis of the Oxus and Jaxartes (or the Amoo and Sir-Daria) the trade is exposed to the rapacious attacks of the Kirghiz-Kazaks, especially those of the middle and smaller hordes” ([Russian Design..., 1842](#)). However, over time, a shift in this perspective began to emerge. For example, in the “Lancaster Gazette”, published on September 26, 1874, which falls outside the chronological scope of the study, we learn that the author of this entry did not want these people to change. The newspaper stated: “I should be sorry, indeed even to see these simple, happy people inoculated with our civilization and its attendant vices” and “I have always found them kind hospitable and honest” ([The Hospitable Kirghiz, 1874](#)).

As we can see, while Western authors maintained their stance as representatives of a colonizing nation on key issues, there were instances where they conveyed the truth once they had access to more information.

It is worth noting that the seven-year journey of the traveller T.W. Atkinson to “Siberia, Mongolia, the Kyrgyz Steppes, and Chinese Tartary” generated considerable interest in British publications at all levels. Previously, several English travellers had also visited the region in earlier centuries ([Pervye anglijskie..., 2006: 6-7](#)). However, the accounts and lectures delivered by T.W. Atkinson during his travels had a particularly profound impact, as evidenced by the excerpts from his extensive writings being published in various periodicals over several years. Undoubtedly, this contributed to changing British perceptions of the Kazakh people.

T.W. Atkinson studied the life, culture, and customs of the Kazakhs, leaving many positive remarks about their hospitality, friendliness, and nomadic culture in his works. In a piece published on December 17, 1857, in “Daily News (London)”, he stated: “the following vivid description of the yurt, or dwelling, and hordes of Mahomed, one of the wealthy chiefs of the Kirghiz, will give our readers a good idea of these pastoral nomads” ([Oriental..., 1857](#)), and he proceeded with an excerpt from his travelogue.

Thus, negative perceptions of the Kazakhs almost did not appear in British publications from the 1860s to 1869. On the contrary, in the Monday issue of the “Morning Post” published on November 16, 1863, it was stated that “only the Kirghiz of the steppe preserved the spirit of independence” ([Memorandum..., 1863](#)).

However, there are also significant errors in the interpretation of historical events in periodicals. Certainly, the likelihood of publications making mistakes in their explanations, alongside providing reliable

information, cannot be dismissed. For example, one source traces Russia's rule over the Kazakh steppes back to the 16th century (Progress..., 1842). Analyzing the historical accuracy of this information, it is indeed true that in the 16th century, the Moscow prioritized establishing close economic ties with the Kazakh Khanate. The Kazakh steppes served as a transit region for the Moscow, facilitating trade relations with other Asian countries and ensuring the safe delivery of goods to the markets of Inner Asia. Consequently, as stated in the periodical “at the request of the Stroganov's, the Tsar sent an envoy to establish relations with the Kirghiz Kazaks. However, the Khan of Siberia, who was defending his independence against the Muscovites, not only obstructed the embassy but also sought to draw them to his side” (Progress..., 1842). The “Morning Herald” also noted that “during this war, the Kazakh Khan Tauke's nephew fell into the hands of the Russians” (Progress..., 1842). This information refers to the capture of Oraz-Muhammed, the grandson of Khan Shyghay, by Commander D. Chulkov in 1588 (Abuseitova, 1985: 195), as is known in history.

In general, neither historical sources nor contemporary researchers deny the events mentioned above. On the contrary, they expand on these events by noting that Russian envoys Semyon Maltsev and Tretyak Chebukov arrived in 1569 and 1573, respectively. Furthermore, on May 30, 1574, Ivan the Terrible issued a charter allowing the Stroganov brothers to trade with the Kazakhs without paying taxes. In sending this embassy, he aimed not only to develop trade relations but also to encourage the Kazakhs to form a military alliance against the Khanate of Siberia (Atygaev, 2023: 53-55). The Khanate of Siberia was considered one of the dangerous neighbours to the Tsardom of Moscow at that time. Therefore, it can be inferred that the Russian rulers regarded the Kazakh Khanate as an equal partner.

The misunderstanding regarding the statement that “Russian authority was established in the Kazakh steppes in the 16th century” may be influenced by the following historical facts: Documents from the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, specifically from fund No. 122.1595, contain information about Russian-Kazakh relations in the records dated January 20-29, 1594 and No. 130 (Posol'skie materialy..., 2005: 191-194), March 28, 1595 and No. 135 (Posol'skie materialy..., 2005: 197).

Among these, the document from January 20-29, 1594, reveals from the text of the conversation between the envoy Kulmagambet and Oraz-Muhammed that Khan Tauke did not request asylum from the Russian tsar (Posol'skie materialy..., 2005: 191-194). The next document is a letter from Tsar Boris Godunov to Kazakh Khan Tauke. At the beginning of the letter, it mentions that Khan Tauke sent a letter to the Russian tsar through his envoy Kulmagambet, and it further discusses how the Khan of Siberia, Koshim, was expelled from his court due to treachery against them. Here, the tsar indicates that he would accept the Kazakhs under his authority. He also instructs to bring Koshim, the Khan of Siberia, who had betrayed the Russians like a subordinate, and to conquer the Khanate of Bukhara, leading them to the tsar's doorstep (Posol'skie materialy..., 2005: 197).

The text of this letter indicates that the Russian tsardom did not regard the Kazakhs as equal military allies; rather, it seems prepared to accept them as subjects. However, there is no evidence of Khan Tauke having taken an oath of allegiance.

A deeper analysis reveals that this error did not originate from the inherent interpretation of the British publication. According to researcher N. Atygaev, this confusion arose from the fact that “the Russian diplomatic service misinterpreted the Kazakh Khan's proposal as a form of “dependence” (Atygaev, 2023: 159). This viewpoint is also supported by researcher M. Kh. Abuseitova (Abuseitova, 1985: 82).

Additionally, there is a letter dated October 4, 1693, in which Khan Tauke wrote to Peter the Great of Russia to support friendly relations. This letter is preserved in the archive of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In this correspondence, the development of trade relations and the continuation of peaceful ties between the two states are discussed (Posol'skie materialy..., 2005: 401). Researcher T.I. Sultanov also notes that Khan Tauke sent diplomatic missions to Russia five times between 1686 and 1693 (Sultanov, 2006: 232). This indicates that he effectively capitalized on the favorable moment presented to Tsar Peter I. The British press also observes this development, stating: “The Zungars, driven out of the lands which they occupied in China, came to bring trouble and disorder into the Steppes. They got possession of Turkestan, and subjugated the great horde, which, notwithstanding its name, had been for some time less numerous and important than the two others. The rest of the nation have also suffered from the attacks of the same enemies, and from those of the Kalmouks of the Volga, and the Bachirs. In their distress the Kirghiz-Kazaks had recourse to Russia, who, thanks to the influence of the master genius of Peter the Great prepared herself for new and glorious destinies by the accomplishment of a great internal work” and it further states: “he comprehended what political and commercial advantages were attached to the possession of the Steppes, and he resolved to procure them some day for his country” (Progress..., 1842).

Therefore, it can be stated that after the 16th century, the relationship between the Russians and the Kazakhs developed into a partnership based on equality rather than dependency.

Another deficient text related to the Kazakh Khanate appears in the periodic publications regarding the origins of the Kazakh tribes. Concerning Tauke Khan, it was noted that “One of them, the Khan Tiavka, whose name reminds the inhabitants of the Steppes of the golden age of their history, knew how to make himself respected by all the hordes who composed the Khirghese nation, although it was difficult to comprehend his motive for dividing the people into three distinct hordes, under the title of the small, the middling, and the large” (Progress..., 1842).

This topic remains one of the complex issues that has not been definitively resolved even today. However, it is essential to clarify the source of the contradictions. For instance, in the works of the medieval Persian historian Rashid al-Din, he discusses the origins of the tribes that comprise the modern Kazakh “jüz” (horde), including the Qongyrat, Qangly, Kipchak, Zhalayir, and Naiman, as well as the roles of certain figures from these tribes within the empire (Rashid ad-Din, 2023: 80-125). Nevertheless, he has not mentioned their organization into “jüz”. Here, it is worth noting the statements of Soviet scholars V.V. Vostrov and M.S. Mukhanov, who argue that “if there had been a non-military division into “jüz” among the tribes at that time, it would not have escaped the attention of medieval historians and travellers” (Vostrov, Mukhanov, 1968: 9). Their argument is based on N.Ya. Bichurin's assertion that the term “jüz” does not appear in accessible sources concerning the history of Kazakhstan from the IX to the XVIII centuries. Therefore, the authors attribute the earliest reliable document indicating the division of the Kazakh people into three “jüz” to the year 1731. In their view, the first credible source is the statement made by the translator Tevkelev, who wrote to the emperor regarding the Little Jüz of the Kazakhs (Vostrov, Mukhanov, 1968: 10).

However, recent studies have revealed evidence of documents related to the Kazakh hordes that predate 1731. For example, Russian diplomatic documents from 1616 contain information about the Kazakh hordes. According to these documents, Russian envoys Tomil Petrov and Ivan Kunitsyn reported during their visit to the Kalmyks that the Great Horde of the Kazakhs was under the authority of Tole Batyr. This indicates that the mention of the Great Horde of the Kazakhs by the envoys suggests the existence of “hordes” within Kazakh society by the early 17th century. Therefore, we believe that the information from British publications stating that Tauke Khan divided the people into three groups likely arises from his efforts to strengthen the institution of khans through the management of the Kazakh hordes.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that the informational data provided by British periodicals, particularly regarding the 19th century, are highly reliable. Moreover, these sources undoubtedly contribute valuable insights into the history of Kazakhstan, especially concerning the processes of Russian colonization in the 19th century.

4. Results

Publications in British periodicals were primarily based on reports from their correspondents, international telegraphic services, and foreign intelligence messages received from places such as Germany, France, and St. Petersburg. For example, a report from Germany July 05, 1829 states: “such a good understanding has long prevailed between Russia and China, that the former Power took possession, a few years ago, of a country Central Asia, as extensive as France and Holland together. This is the country inhabited by the Kirghis Kaissacks and other Nomade tribes, who have been induced, by skilful negotiations, to submit to Russia” (German Paper, 1829). In the 1842 publication of the Morning Herald (London), a plan concerning Russia's intention in Asia was disclosed. The article notably included the detail that “the copy whence the translation was made was a literal copy from the original memoir now in the Imperial Archives of St. Peterburg (Russian Design..., 1842).

These details not only illustrate the channels through which information was obtained but also enhance the credibility of the published accounts. When analyzing the research issue by years, it becomes evident that the number of articles published in the 1830–1839 period was relatively low and covered a wide range of topics. This indicates that while the overall volume of reporting on the subject was limited during this decade, the information provided was diverse, reflecting different aspects of the events and developments being covered.

During the 1840–1849 period, there was a noticeable increase in the number of reports covering various topics. This rise can be attributed not only to political developments but also to the repetition of certain articles across multiple publications. For example, the piece titled “A Hint to Phrenologists” was published on June 27, 1840, in the “Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser” (A Hint..., 1840), “West Kent Guardian” (A Hint..., 1840a), and “Leicester Herald” (A Hint..., 1840b). Similarly, the article “Russian Design on India/Memoir on the means at the disposal of Russia for an advance against the possession of Great Britain in India” appeared on July 26, 1842, in both the “Morning Herald (London)” (Russian Design, 1842) and the “English Chronicle and Whitehall Evening Post” (Russian Design, 1842). Perhaps these repetitions in various newspapers highlight the proliferation of important political commentary, especially regarding Russia's strategic intentions in Central Asia, which attracted widespread attention in the British media during this period.

Furthermore, compared to other periods, the content of publications during these years reflected both negative and positive attitudes towards the Kazakhs. For instance, in the June 27, 1840 edition of the “Birmingham Journal”, they were described using terms like “robbers” and “thieves” (Interior..., 1840), while the July 26, 1842 edition of the “Morning Herald (London)” (Russian Design, 1842) reported that the Kazakhs had abandoned robbery and transitioned to a peaceful way of life. This shows a shift in perspective over time, suggesting that the portrayal of Kazakhs in British publications was evolving and becoming more nuanced.

In the publications from 1850 to 1859, although a variety of topics were covered, the main issues can be categorized into political, economic, and anthropological themes. Among these, there were articles

criticizing Russia's colonial policies towards the Kazakhs. For example, the May 6, 1854 edition of the "Northern Warder and General Advertiser for the Counties of Fife, Perth and Forfar" ([Blackwood's Edinburgh..., 1854](#)), as well as the August 4, 1854 issue of the "Church & State Gazette (London)" ([The Serf..., 1854](#)), discussed how Orenburg Governor-General I. Nepluev had used tactics to incite conflict between the nomadic Bashkirs and Kazakhs, pitting them against each other. This indicates that British press outlets were paying attention to Russian colonial strategies and were critical of the ways in which the Russian Empire manipulated relations among local ethnic groups to maintain control in Kazakh Steppe.

Materials published in British newspapers clearly reflect a keen interest in the natural resources of the Kazakh steppe. Texts from 1850 to 1859 frequently discussed the region's mineral wealth and its strategic importance as a crossroads between East and West. For example, the John Bull newspaper from December 12, 1857, describes the Kazakh steppe not only as vast open land but also as a territory rich in minerals, gold, and copper deposits ([Oriental..., 1857](#)). In addition, records from 1850 mention the discovery of substantial lead deposits in the Kazakh steppes ([Oriental..., 1857a](#)). Some reports even noted that Chinese families had settled in the region near gold mines ([The Russian..., 1859](#)).

As researchers noted, "their primary focus was not on the expansion of territories or the assertion of Russia's military might, but rather on ensuring economic growth, including leveraging the potential of Central Asia, and implementing liberal reforms within the country" ([Arslanov, Klimashin, 2018: 163](#)).

The anthropological issues were further explored through the work of T.W. Atkinson, which was published in excerpts across several British periodicals over many years. For instance, in a piece published on January 16, 1858, in the "Hereford Times", T. Atkinson depicts the lifestyle of a Kazakh village. He notes that, similar to contemporary practices where Kazakhs sacrifice a sheep for honored guests, the host in his account also had a sheep slaughtered, showcasing the hospitality and warmth characteristic of Kazakh culture ([The Dwelling, 1858](#)).

Although the 1860s saw a focus on political themes, a variety of topics were frequently addressed during this period. For instance, in the June 16, 1865, edition of the London and China Telegraph, the religious propaganda conducted by Russia towards the Kazakh tribes is discussed. The article describes how the Russian Government proceeded to erect mosques, and appointed Tatar Mullahs, under which influence the Middle and Great Hordes of the Kazakhs over the years ([Russian Propagation..., 1865](#)). This issue is also mentioned in the Friend of India and Statesman, published in British India on July 13, 1865 ([A Russian..., 1865](#)).

Furthermore, in an article titled "Russians in Central Asia", published on October 10, 1866, in the Evening Mail, it is stated that "the Kazakh steppe is now part of Russian territory" ([The Russians, 1866](#)). This can be presumed to be linked to the incorporation of the Great Horde of Kazakhs into the Russian Empire.

Additionally, during this decade, the uprisings of the Kazakhs against Russia are featured in several publications. For example, the Newcastle Journal on June 24, 1869, discusses the Kazakh uprising ([The Kirghiz..., 1869](#)). In an article published on September 24, 1869, in the "Home News for India, China and the Colonies", it is noted that the Khiva Khanate was supporting the Kazakh uprising against Russia by promising silver and livestock ([Russia..., 1869](#)).

Thus, as noted above, in different periods, especially with regard to political and economic issues, the information provided was mainly provided as part of Russian news.

When researching British periodicals, one can encounter not only accurate information but also certain shortcomings. These shortcomings are particularly evident regarding the era of the Kazakh Khanate, the names of historical figures, and toponyms. It can be assumed that the errors in personal names and toponyms stem from phonetic peculiarities of the language. However, it is important to highlight the significant inaccuracies related to issues such as "the submission of the Kazakhs to Russian rule" and "the three jüz (hordes) in Kazakh society" during the era of the Kazakh Khanate.

Overall, historical events and figures published in British periodicals generally exhibit a reasonable correspondence to historical facts.

5. Conclusion

The content of periodicals during the research period reflects the intensification of Russia's colonial policy toward Central Asia in the 19th century. Initially, this was examined within the framework of events such as Russian-Kazakh relations and Russia's expeditions to the Central Asian khanates. However, it later became evident that there was an increase in information regarding the Kazakhs' resistance against Russia.

The economic significance of the Kazakh steppe was highlighted as a source of raw materials and a transit corridor for Russia, Great Britain, China, and the Central Asian khanates. The ownership of mineral resources in the Kazakh steppe by Russia and China, along with the British interest in natural resources, indicated the economic interests of these powers in the region.

The emergence of specific writings about the Kazakhs, particularly regarding ethnographic topics, in the second half of the 19th century demonstrated their relevance to British audiences. These studies contributed to a shift in Western society's perceptions of the Kazakhs to some extent.

In conclusion, first and foremost, the detailed coverage of the military actions of the Russian Empire towards the Kazakh steppe and the Central Asian khanates in British periodicals indicated that these events were part of a global struggle. Notably, the discussions surrounding the Kazakhs' resistance against

colonialism underscored that these movements were not only local but also part of a broader global anti-colonial movement. This highlighted the strategic significance of the Kazakh steppe.

Furthermore, the descriptions of the Kazakh people's culture, religion, and way of life in publications revealed that they were portrayed not only in a stereotypical manner but also with respect. This indicates a shift in the perspectives of the British audience.

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