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The Alim-Kyrgyz clan group among the Qazaqs of the Northern Aral Sea region¹

Rakhim A. Beknazarov*Doctor of History, Vice-Rector for Science and Innovation,
Aktobe Kudaibergen Zhubanov Regional University, Aktobe, Qazaqstan.**E-mail: r.beknazarov@gmail.com**<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1033-9660>*

Key words: Junior Zhuz; Northern Aral region; the Qazaqs; the Kyrgyz; Alimuly; kirme; the Alim-Kyrgyz	Тірек сөздер: Кіші жүз; Солтүстік Арал; қазақтар; қырғыздар; әлімұлы; кірме; әлім-қырғыз	Ключевые слова: Младший жүз; Северное Приаралье; казахи; кыргызы; алимулы; кірме; алим-қырғыз
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The article examines the ethnic history of the Qazaq *Alim-Kyrgyz* group in the larger Qazaq ethnic association of the *Alimuly* (qaz. *әлімұлы*) of Junior Zhuz (*Кіші жүз*), who lived in the Shalkar district of the Aktobe region of the Republic of Kazakhstan. There are different views on the time and circumstances of the appearance of the *Alim-Kyrgyz* in the Northern Aral region, where the local Qazaqs called them *кірме ру* ('the incoming clan'). In different periods of the Qazaq ethnic history, there were cases when some Qazaq clans would include new Qazaq, and sometimes also non-Qazaq ethnic groups and call them the incoming clans. The new nomads arrived in groups (*auls*); sometimes they were descendants of prisoners forcibly moved from their former nomadic territories because of military raids. In the Junior Zhuz the *Kyrgyz* groups were also present in the *Taz* clan. During the middle of the 18th century, the *Kyrgyz* subclan played a significant role in the political affairs of the Junior Zhuz. The *Qazaq Kyrgyz* are repeatedly mentioned in various documents from the 19th century, for example, among other Qazaq clans that paid various taxes. Written sources and Qazaq *shezhire* (genealogies) speak of the inclusion and assimilation of the *Kyrgyz* subclan into the Qazaq ethnic structure. As late as the beginning of the 20th century, the memory of their migration from the Semirechye/Zhetysu Alatau was preserved. In conclusion, certain arguments are presented to suggest that the *Kyrgyz* arose in the Northern Aral Sea region during the first half of the 18th century, possibly during the reign of Abulkhayr Khan in the Junior Zhuz. *Kyrgyz* subclan groups are also present among such Qazaq tribes as *Zhalaiyr* and *Naiman*.

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Солтүстік Арал қазақтарының құрамындағы әлім-қырғыз рулық тобы

Рақым А. Бекназаров*тарих ғылымдарының докторы, инновация және ғылым жөніндегі проректоры,
Құдайберген Жұбанов атындағы Ақтөбе өңірлік университеті, Ақтөбе, Қазақстан.*

Мақалада Кіші жүздің ірі руы – әлімұлының құрамына кіретін, қазір негізінен Қазақстанның Шалқар ауданына шоғырланған әлім-қырғыз рулық тобының этникалық шығу тегі сөз болған. Жергілікті қазақтар «кірме» деп атаған әлім-қырғыздардың Солтүстік Аралда қашан және қалай пайда болғаны туралы алуан көзқарастар баяндалған. Қазақ тарихының қилы кезеңдерінде қандай да бір руларға сырттан қосылған этникалық топтарды қазақтар «кірме» деп атағаны мәлім. Соғыс, жаугершілік кезінде қолға түскен тұтқындардың ұрпақтары да кірме аталып, кейін өз алдына рулық топқа айналып, өз алдына бөлек қоныстанған. Кіші жүз қазақтарының құрамындағы таз руының арасында да қырғыз атаумен кездесетін тағы бір этникалық топ бар. XVIII ғасырдың ортасында қырғыз руынан

¹ Translation into English: Zarine A. Dzhandosova, Candidate of History, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Central Asia and Caucasus, St. Petersburg State University.

шыққан қазақтар Кіші жүздің саяси өмірінде маңызды рөл атқарғаны туралы мәліметтер де бар. XIX ғасырдағы әртүрлі құжаттарда қазақ қырғыздарының атауы әлденеше рет кездеседі, әртүрлі алым төлеген өзге қазақ руларымен бірге де аталады. Жазба дереккөздері мен қазақ шежіресінде қырғыздардың қазақ этникалық құрамына қалай сіңіскені туралы мәліметтер айтылған. XX ғасырдың бас кезінде олардың Жетісу Алатауына қарай қоныс аударғаны жөнінде де мағлұматтар бар. Мақала авторы қырғыздар Солтүстік Аралда XVIII ғасырдың алғашқы жартысында, шамамен Кіші жүз ханы Әбілқайырдың билігі тұсында пайда болған деген қорытындыға келген. Осыған аттас рулық топтар жалайыр мен найман руларының ішінде де кездеседі.

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Родовая группа алим-қырғыз в составе казахов Северного Приаралья

Рахым А. Бекназаров

доктор исторических наук, проректор по науке и инновациям, Актюбинский региональный университет имени Кудайбергена Жубанова, Актөбе, Казахстан.

В статье рассматривается этническая история казахской родовой группы *алим-қырғыз* в составе крупного казахского этнического объединения алимұлы (әлімұлы) из Младшего жуза (Кіші жүз), компактно проживающей в Шалкарском районе Актюбинской области Республики Казахстан. Приводятся различные точки зрения о времени и обстоятельствах появления алим-қырғыз в Северном Приаралье, которых кочевавшие в этом регионе казахи именовали *кірме ру* (вошедшие рода). В различные периоды казахской этнической истории были случаи, когда в состав тех или иных казахских родовых групп входили новые и иногда иноэтнические группы, которые получали среди местных кочевников такое наименование. На новые кочевья они прибывали группами (аулами), а иногда это потомки пленных, насильно привезенных из своих прежних мест кочевания в результате военных набегов. В составе казахов Младшего жуза группы с названием *қырғыз* присутствовали также в родовом подразделении *тазы*. Есть сведения о том, что уже в середине XVIII века казахи из подрода кырғыз играли важную роль в политической жизни Младшего жуза. Неоднократно упоминаются казахские кырғыз в различных документах XIX века, в том числе среди других казахских родов, плативших различные подати. Сведения письменных источников и казахских шежире (родословных) говорят о включенности и ассимиляции подрода кырғыз в казахскую этническую структуру. При этом еще в начале XX века сохранялась память об их переселении из семиреченского Алатау. В заключении приводятся доводы о том, что кырғыз в Северном Приаралье появились в первой половине XVIII века, возможно в правление хана Младшего жуза Абулхайра. Одноименные родовые группы также есть среди казахов рода жалайыр и найман.

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Introduction

The history of the Qazaq clans remains a relevant topic for research. A characteristic feature of the Qazaqs is a ramified intra-ethnic structure, recorded in oral traditions and *shezhire* (genealogies), different written sources and monuments of material culture. The Qazaq ethnos was comprised of numerous hierarchically arranged intra-ethnic groups, commonly referred to as tribes and clans in scholarly publications. Each such conditional 'tribe' or 'clan' consisted of small, interconnected subdivisions and branches.

The subject matter of this article pertains to the Qazaq intra-ethnic group of *Kyrgyz*, which was a member of the renowned *Shekty* clan of the *Alimuly* tribal association of the Junior Zhuz and currently resides in the Shalkar district of the Aktobe region of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Discussion

In the village of Aishuak, located in the northern part of the Uly Borsykkum sand massif in the Shalkar district of the Aktobe region of the Republic of Kazakhstan, there is a compact population of Qazaqs of the *Alim-Kyrgyz* or simply *Kyrgyz* clan. I received information regarding them while participating in the Aktobe detachment of the West Kazakhstan Complex Ethno-Art Expedition

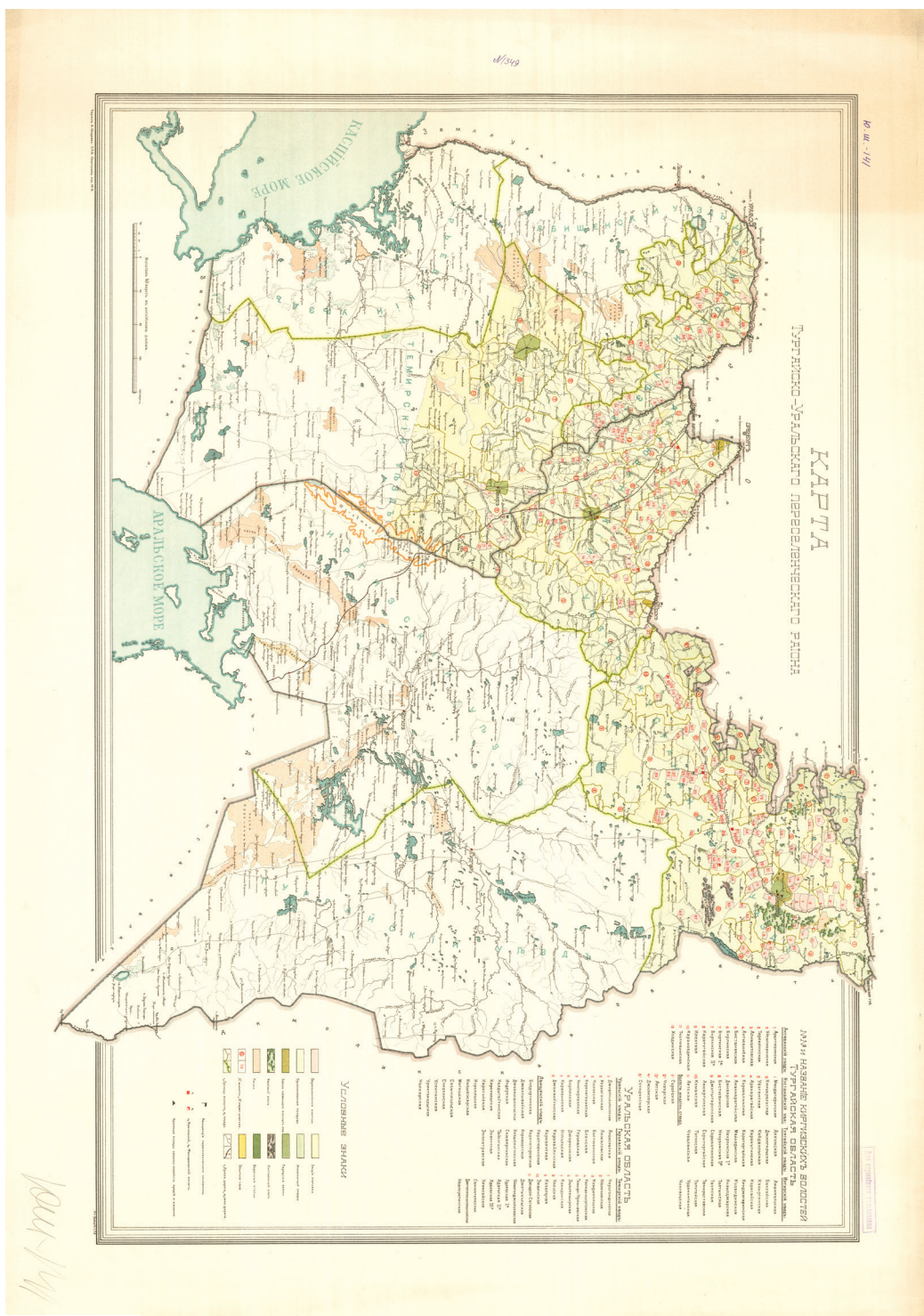


Fig. 1. Map of the Turgay-Ural resettlement region. Archive of the Institute for Humanities Studies ABDI 1-сур. Торғай-Орал переселен ауданының картасы. АБДИ гуманитарлық зерттеу институтының мұрағаты

Рис. 1. Карта Тургайско-Уральского переселенческого района. Архив Института гуманитарных исследований АБДИ

in 2005, led by Professor Serik Azhigali, the head of the expedition. As part of the expedition, I was collecting materials on the folk history of the *shezhire* of the large Qazaq tribal association *Alimuly* (Әлімұлы) of the Younger Zhuz (Кіші жүз). Geographically, this region is called the Northern Aral Sea region (Fig. 1).

During a further survey of the population, it became clear that the *Alim-Kyrgyz* themselves, as well as representatives of other local clans, mostly *Shekty* and *Tortkara*, express different points of view on the issue of the origin of the *Alim-Kyrgyz*.

According to some, the modern *Kyrgyz* in the Northern Aral Sea region are the remnants of the tribes of the Kyrgyz Khaganate (this opinion was expressed by Zakratdin Baidosov, the Aktobe historian and candidate of history); others believe that these *Kyrgyz* could have migrated or were forcibly resettled during the times of Kenesary Khan and Karatay Sultan; according to others, the *Kyrgyz* were forced to move here due to the epidemics and diseases that spread to the Tien Shan at the end of the 18th century.

As further research has demonstrated, representatives of local Qazaq clans categorize the *Kyrgyz* among the alien subclans, commonly referred to as *қырме* (*қырме рулар*, literally “incoming clans”) in the Qazaq folk tradition.

In the Northern Aral Sea region, in addition to the *Kyrgyz* (қырғыз), the “incoming clans” include groups named *Qaraqalpaq* (қарақалпақ), *Bashqyr* (башқұрт, естек), *Uaq* (уақ) and *Nogay* (ноғай). At the same time, the last two, although they belong to the *қырме*, are considered uniquely Qazaq clans (*olar ozimizdin qazaqtar* – “they are our own Qazaqs”).

An analysis of historical and ethnographic documents and materials revealed that one of the main sources of replenishment of the *қырме* groups in Qazaq clans was, of course, captives obtained during military campaigns and raids on their closest neighbors. These captives were then turned into slaves. Some of them subsequently received conditional freedom and could have a family and run a household “under a master”. Slaves could be resold, given as gifts, included in a bride's dowry, and so on. And among them there could be representatives of almost all neighboring peoples. As, for example, Yakov Gaverdovsky writes, the Qazaqs “get these unfortunates through predation from the Russians, Qaraqalpaqs, Qalmyqs, Persians, Zungarians and even the Chinese” [Erofeeva, Zhanayev (comp.) 2007: 495]. This aspect of nomadic life was reflected in detail in the codes of Qazaq steppe laws, for example, in “Zhety Zhargy” [Zimanov, Öserov 1975]. Another option for the inclusion of the above-mentioned groups in the Qazaq environment was their mass incorporation into certain Qazaq clans on a certain contractual basis, such as the purchase of cattle, the services of providing troops for a campaign, in exchange for the provided territory for nomadism. A good example of such a mass transition of representatives of other ethnic groups into the environment of Qazaq clans, is the resettlement of the Qaraqalpaqs in the 18th century. As Pyotr Rychkov notes, the Qaraqalpaqs live among the Qazaqs in “special kubitkas (yurts)”. At the same time, the political events of the early 18th century forced the Qaraqalpaqs to seek refuge among the peoples of Central Asia, subjects of Russia:

Having no other refuge, they themselves left their places to live in the Kyrgyz-Kaisak uluses, asking to be included among them [Rychkov 1999: 94–95].

Naturally, the Qazaq steppe aristocracy took advantage of this situation, including the ruler of the Junior Zhuz, Abulkhayr Khan. It should be noted that the immediate cause of the bloody denouement between Abulkhayr Khan and Barak Sultan was the latter's attack on the Qaraqalpaqs who had joined Abulkhayr [Erofeeva 2007: 398]. Subdivisions with the name *Kyrgyz* are also present in other tribal subdivisions of the Qazaq clans, particularly the *Taz* clan. For example, one version of their *shezhire* says that Taz had four sons: Zhastaban, Sharga (Шарға),

Abdol, Nurym (Нұрым). Abdol also had four sons: Bekquly (Бекқұлы), Zhantai, Seitimbet (Сейтімбет, Kulet (Құлет):

A boy comes to Bekqul. He raised him. He named him Tunyk. He came from the Kyrgyz [Qūlbaiūly 1994: 60].

Let us dwell in more detail on the history of the emergence of the Kyrgyz in the Northern Aral Sea region. Thus, we can note the earlier existence of the Kyrgyz sub-clan among the *Alimuly* Qazaqs from the report of engineer-second lieutenant Ivan Rigelman and translator Yakov Gulyaev of the Orenburg provincial chancellery on the results of their trip to Nuraly Khan in June 1750. On June 5, they, together with Nuraly Khan, took part

at the funeral of the deceased Chikli-Kyrgyzlar family elder Baimbet Batyr with the khan and his two brothers, where Iset Tarkhan, Bakhtybay Biy, etc. [Kireev 1961: 514–519].

The Northern Aral *Kyrgyz* considered themselves *Shekty-Alim* by the middle of the 18th century, and at the funeral of their headman the Qazaq khan and his closest entourage were present. To raise the “incoming” clan to such a status, time is needed, and it should be assumed that the *Kyrgyz* could have joined the Qazaq clans, at least at the beginning or in the first half of the 18th century. In our opinion, it is also not possible to talk about their more ancient existence, for example, in the 17th century among the *Alim*, in our opinion, since this should have been reflected in the *shezhire* of local Qazaq clans, in official documents, in which we still do not record them.

Alexey Lyovshin provides interesting information about the early history of the *Kyrgyz*:

The Chumyakey clan of the Junior Horde believes that it did not previously belong to the Kirghiz-Cossacks, but is descended from the Turks and received its name from its khan, Chumyakey, who, due to enmity with Chingis, seceded from him and came with his followers to the places now occupied by the Middle Kirghiz Horde. His descendant Ayusyrym, having taken possession of the area around the Sarasu River, gave his only heir and daughter in marriage to the son of Alim (the founder of the Alimuly generation), which is why his subjects united with the Kirghiz-Cossacks [Lyovshin 1996: 147–148].

We can indirectly obtain information about the existence of the *Kyrgyz* among the Qazaqs of the Junior Zhuz later from the documents of the Khiva Khans' Archive, which were confiscated by Russian troops after the capture of Khiva. For example, the journals of the zakat collected from the Qaraqalpaqs and Qazaqs (1869, 1870, 1871, August 1871, 1872), indicate the names of the debtors and their clans: Aday, Alasha, Alim, Bayuly, Qazaq, Qara-Kesek, *Kyrgyz* (as one of the *Alim* sub-clans), Kete, Qypchaq, Tabyn, Tama, Tortqara, Chekty (*Shekty*), Chumekey (*Shomekey*) [Bregel (comp.) 1967: 278, 283].

Another such example is the report of the collegiate secretary Abdul-Qadir Subkhankulov to the chairman of the Orenburg border commission Mikhail Ladyzhensky dated March 26, 1857, with the appendix of an alphabetical list of the most honorable and influential “Horde men” near the Aral fortification, in which under No. 8 Burangul Dzhangerov is described as a person “of the *Kyrgyz* clan, *Istek* department, *Chagray* sub-department” [Zhanayev, B. 2006 (comp.): 193–194]. Statistician Petr Khvorostansky writes in the “Materials on *Kyrgyz* land use...” (1913) for the Irgiz district, that among such large Qazaq clans of this region as *Shekty*, *Shomekey*, *Karakesek*,

a few representatives of other clans are scattered in different places in separate auls. Altny from Qazaly District, ... Uak (Middle Horde) in Qulandy Volost and Karakirgiz (newcomers from Alatau, Semirechye Region) in Chingil Volost [Materialy 1913: IV].

The author of the early 20th century, as we see, clearly identifies them as *Kyrgyz*, and, moreover, as those who came from Alatau.

According to Soviet ethnographers Veniamin Vostrov and Marat Mukanov, groups of *Issyk-Kul Kyrgyz* lived among the *Argyn* clans of the Middle Zhuz of the Atbasar District of the Aqmola

Region in the 19th century. They were settled in the north of the Tersaqan Volost, around the Baluan Lake and Saskakol Lake. According to legend, these *Kyrgyz* clans participated in the uprising on the side of Kenesary and after the defeat of the latter they were afraid of revenge from their *manaps*, so they moved north with the bulk of the Qazaq clans and settled in these places. They adopted the way of life and culture of the Qazaqs, completely lost their language, i.e. they were completely assimilated. When asked about their ethnicity, the representatives of this clan answer that they are Qazaqs of the *Kyrgyz* clan [Vostrov, Mukanov 1968: 191].

Analyzing all the materials we have, it seems to us that we can make a preliminary conclusion that the most reliable version is the one put forward, in particular, by Nikolay Aristov, who suggested that the *Kyrgyz* among the Qazaqs (including in the territory of the Northern Aral Sea region) and other Turkic peoples are “fragments” of the Yenisei *Kyrgyz*, who at the beginning of the 18th century were part of the Dzungarian state:

During the troubles and wars that marked the destruction of the Qalmyq kingdom, the Kirghiz Volost was exterminated or split into small parts, which scattered throughout the eastern part of the Kirghiz-Cossack steppe and Western Mongolia, joining in a few families with the Tien Shan Kirghiz, the Kirghiz-Cossacks, the Uriankhais and, perhaps, the Altaians². It can be assumed that the existing Kyrgyz clans (Kyrgyz, Irgyt, Saryk) between the Sagays and Kyzyls and the Tuba Ulus between the Nagins, on the former Kyrgyz lands, were made up not only of the Kyrgyz who did not move, but of a certain number of Kyrgyz who fled at different times, especially after 1757, from Dzungaria. [Aristov 2001: 191–192].

Aristov listed in detail the names of the *Kyrgyz* tribes (*Kyrgyz*, *Kirghiz*, *Irkit*, *Irgyt*), who were included in the tribes of the Altaians and Uriankhais, and dwells separately on the *Kyrgyz* tribes that settled between the nomadic Kundrau Tatars of the Akhtuba region, in the lower reaches of the Volga River. These *Kyrgyz* groups, apparently, having fled from Dzungaria, joined the Volga Torgouts, while merging first of all with the Turkic population of this region, the Kundrau Tatars. He also noted that among the “Jalayirs of the Great Horde, on the Qaratal River, a tributary of Balkhash, there is also a subdivision of “Kirghizdar”” [Aristov 2001: 192].

Some information about the inclusion of the *Kyrgyz* in the Qazaq clans in Eastern Kazakhstan was provided by Nikolai Abramov. For example, in his article “The Ayaguz River with its environs” in the “Tobolsk Provincial Gazette” (1861), as well as in “The Qaratal River with its environs” in the “Papers of the Russian Geographical Society” (1867), he showed “a *Estemis* branch of the *Kyrgyz* clan, including 147 kubitkas (yurts)” as part of “the *Dzhanchuly-Semis* of the Naiman Volost of the former Sergiopol District” [Aristov 2001: 192].

It is necessary to mention the opinion of Professor Doolotbek Saparaliev, the modern *Kyrgyz* historian, who during a personal conversation voiced the point of view that the *Kyrgyz* first began to appear among the Qazaq clans in 1771 because of the “dusty campaign” (шаңды жорық) of the Qalmyq tribes. The latter, which presumably included *Kyrgyz* clans, fought their way through the territory of Western Kazakhstan from the Edil River to Torgay River, through the Emba River and Yrgyz River basins, the spurs of the Mugalzhar Mountains and further to the east from January to June 1771. As researchers write, the Qazaqs ultimately “destroyed thousands from the flanks, drove away entire villages, and seized enormous booty” [Qozybaev 2010: 264].

Conclusion

Thus, in connection with the above data, it should be assumed that the outflow of the *Kyrgyz* from Dzungaria, obviously, began much earlier than 1757, even earlier than 1750, presumably in

² See, for example: [Asankanov 2009: 128–135].

the first half of the 18th century. Most likely, some of the Kyrgyz, who fled in the western direction to Zhaiyk to the Kundrau Tatars, settled in the Northern Aral Sea region by agreement with the Qazaqs. It should also be assumed that this happened during the reign of Abulkhayr Khan in the Junior Zhuz. The latter, to strengthen his troops, attracted not only Qazaq clans from other *zhuzes*, but representatives of other peoples, particularly the Kyrgyz. Our opinion is that the visit of Nuraly Khan, the son of Abulkhayr Khan, to commemorate the headman of the Northern Aral Kyrgyz, is a tribute to the services of the deceased to the Qazaq aristocracy, and undoubtedly shows his authority among the local Qazaqs.

Based on the analysis of the above sources, it should be assumed that the *Alim-Kyrgyz* are indeed an alien population of the region, and most likely they arrived in this region in the first half of the 18th century, perhaps precisely during the period of the resettlement of other Kyrgyz clans among the nomadic Kundrau Tatars of Akhtuba region, in the lower reaches of the Volga River. And what is important, their migration to the territory of the *Alimuly* tribal association occurred “peacefully”, compactly, with the consent of the local clans, which was an important reason for their rapid, painless inclusion in the culture of the Qazaqs of the Northern Aral Sea region.

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