Qing Frontier of the Qazaqs: Middle and Senior Zhuzes between Two Empires in the second half of the 18th – first half of the 19th centuries

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The article deals with the history of cross-border interaction between the Qazaqs of the Middle and Senior Zhuzes, or Hordes, and the Chinese Qing Empire in the second half of the 18th – first half of the 19th centuries. Based on archival and published materials, as well as previously conducted research, the policy of the Qing Empire towards the Qazaqs is highlighted. The Qing Empire approached the borders of the Qazaq Zhuzes after it destroyed the Dzungar Kaganate and seized its territories. The eastern pasture areas of the Qazaqs, previously captured by the Dzungars, now were in the possession of China, which sought to establish its control over them. The Chinese authorities tried to prevent the relocation of the Qazaqs to the former Dzungarian territories, repeatedly sending special military detachments against them, but after the withdrawal of the Chinese troops, the Qazaqs used to return to these nomadic areas. These “territorial disputes” contributed to the establishment of contacts between the two countries. The conquest of the Qazaq Khanate was not the goal of the Qing Empire; it was content with recognizing the formal vassalage of the Qazaqs. In the first half of the 19th century, the Qazaqs of the Middle and Senior Zhuzes were relatively independent from the Qing Empire. Unlike the Russian Empire and the Khanate of Kokand, the Qing Empire at that time was the only state interested in preserving the Qazaq statehood; Qing tried not to interfere in the internal political life of the Qazaqs. The article examines the development of diplomatic and trade relations of the Qing Empire with Abylai Khan and his descendants and gives an analysis of archival documents reflecting the confrontation between Russia and China for political supremacy in the Qazaq Steppe. The inclusion of the Qazaq lands in the Russian Empire has been studied.

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Introduction

The history of the Qazaq Khanate (the khanates of the Middle and Senior Zhuzes, or Hordes) and its connections with the neighboring countries and peoples in the second half of the 18th – first half of the 19th centuries was studied from different angles in Qazaqstani and foreign historiography. Several special studies have been devoted to Qazaq-Chinese relations. At the same time there is a lack of studies dealing with the issues of frontier relations between the Qazaq khans and sultans with the Qing administration, changes in the policy of the Qing Empire towards the Qazaqs, the establishment of diplomatic and trade connections between them, as well as the increasing role of the Russian Empire in Central Asia. These aspects of Qazaq-Chinese relations are, in our opinion, rather relevant and significant for historical research. Therefore, the purpose and objectives of the presented article are to analyze the relations between the Qing Empire and the Qazaq rulers. Such research is of theoretical and practical significance and can be used in more generalizing studies on this topic. The object of the study is the policy of the Qing Empire in the Qazaq Steppe in the second half of the 18th – first half of the 19th centuries.
The chronological framework is the historical period when direct political contacts between the Qazaq rulers and China were established. However, the history of direct relations between the Qazaqs and the Qing Empire lasted no more than one century. Already from the first third of the 19th century, the Russian Empire became a third party in these relations. Henceforth, the Qing administration was forced to establish its position in the Qazaq Steppe in the conditions of constant confrontation with Russia. In the article, in chronological order, the Qing attempts to seize Qazaq lands are analyzed, the process of establishing diplomatic and trade relations between the Qing and the Qazaqs is highlighted, the conditions of interaction between the Qazaq rulers and the Chinese administration are studied, and the confrontation between Russia and China in the Qazaq Steppe is discussed.

The topic of interaction between the Qazaq rulers and the Chinese state was addressed in several scholarly works both in the Soviet and in modern historiography and was studied by such historians as Vyacheslav Kuznecov [Kuznecov 1983], Vladimir Moiseev [Suleymenov, Moiseev 1988; Moiseev 1991], Klara Khafizova [Khafizova 1995; Khafizova 2008; Khafizova 2019]. Many archival sources, including Russian and Chinese documents, has been published [Kireev and others 1964; Khafizova, Moiseev 1989]. Irina Erofeeva has published the epistolary heritage of the Qazaq rulers [Erofeeva 2014]. In addition to the above-mentioned studies and published documents, this article uses previously less known and unpublished archival sources from the collections of the Russian State Historical Archive [RSHA, h. 1264, r. 1, f. 214, 332, 334] and the Central State Archive of the Republic of Qazaqstan [CSA RQ, h. 3, r. 1, f. 330].

These and other studies, published and archival documents made it possible to consider the development of Qazaq-Chinese connections and the gradual strengthening of the role of the Russian Empire in the region. The entry of the Qazaq lands in the Russian Empire led to the fact that Western Siberian authorities subsequently became regulators in the interactions of the Qazaqs with the Qing administration. However, the final and formal inclusion of the Qazaqs in the Russian imperial space was preceded by a fairly long period of established diplomatic and trade relations between the Qazaqs and China. Although as the vassals of the Qing, the Qazaq khans had to pay a certain tax to them, in general the Chinese authorities preferred not to interfere in the internal life of the Qazaq Steppe.

Materials and methods

For the present research, the available Russian archival documents stored in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Qazaqstan (Almaty) and the Russian State Historical Archive (St. Petersburg, Russian Federation) have been used. We have also reviewed the Chinese documentary sources published in the collection «The Qing Empire and the Qazaq Khanates. Second half of the 18th – first third of the 19th century».

The academic achievements of domestic and foreign authors concerning the history of Russia and China, Central Asia, and Qazaqstan of the late 18th – mid-19th centuries, including the well-known works of Klara Khafizova and Vladimir Moiseev, have served as the theoretical and methodological basis of the presented article. The main methods to achieve the objectives of this study have been the comparative and the problem-chronological approaches accompanied by the analytical, differentiated, descriptive and other principles of research.

Discussion

In the first half of the 19th century, the Qazaqs of the Middle and Senior Zhuzes were relatively independent from the Qing Empire. Unlike the Russian Empire and the Khanate of Kokand, China was the only state interested in preserving the Qazaq statehood. After the defeat of the Dzungar Khanate, the Qing Empire made several attempts to establish its power in the Qazaq lands, previously subject to the Oirats. However, the outbreak of the Opium Wars, the Khoja Uprising in
East Turkestan, the civil war, and other socio-political upheavals in China diverted the attention of the Qing authorities from this frontier. Foreign policy factors also were of importance in this issue. The Russian Empire, competing with the British Empire and France, supported China during the Opium Wars. As a result, the Qing authorities were not interested in aggravating relations with Russia, which, after conquering the Qazaq of the Middle Zhuz, in the first third of the 19th century began to spread its influence on the southeastern lands of the Qazaqs. That’s why, Beijing and the Xinjiang administration adhered to a more restrained policy towards the Qazaq clans of the frontier, trying not to interfere in the internal political life of the Steppe.

After the weakening of the Dzungar Khanate, even before its complete defeat by the Qing, the Qazaqs of the Senior and Middle Zhuzes began to return to their former pasture areas in the territories of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqstan. The Chinese authorities tried to prevent the relocation of the Qazaqs to the «former Dzungar possessions» by repeatedly sending special military detachments to the Steppe. But despite this, after the withdrawal of the Chinese troops, the Qazaqs used to return to their places. However, the concept of «former Dzungar possessions», which Qing China motivated its territorial claims, was conditional. As Vladimir Moiseev’s research shows, between the Qalmaq and Qazaq nomads a strictly delineated, or marked with border signs, or recorded in certain cartographic documents border never existed [Moiseev 1991: 117]. In this case, the Qing Empire, by right of the strong, unilaterally decided for itself where the borders of the «Dzungar possessions» would lie.

In November 1757, to protect the Qazaq nomads from the incessant attacks of the Qing troops, the sultans of the Middle Zhuz Abylay and Abulfeiz became the subjects of the Chinese Emperor [Khafizova, Moiseev 1989 (1): 143]. The charter granted by the emperor stated that he considered the Qazaq sultans to be his external vassals living far away. And for this reason, the emperor cannot honor them with any ranks, like his internal officials, because in such case «you will be bound by service». And therefore, the Qing Bogdykhan allows them to live according to their previous laws and stay in their nomadic areas. At the same time, there was a warning not to start any unrest on the frontier.

According to Vyacheslav Kuznecov, from that time on, ambassadorial relations between the rulers of the Senior and Middle Zhuzes and the Qing court started to improve. By receiving Qazaq embassies in Beijing, the Qing authorities sought to protect the western frontier of their empire from unnecessary shocks [Kuznecov 1983: 25]. At first, the Chinese administration preferred not to aggravate relations with the Qazaqs, giving their rulers (khan and sultans) certain privileges. In addition, the need for stable relations with the nomadic population contributed to the expansion of Chinese trade in the Qazaq Steppe. Meanwhile, Abylay Sultan and Abulfeiz Sultan themselves hoped to protect the Qazaq nomads from new incursions of Chinese troops and to advance the nomadic territory of the Middle Zhuz into the basins of the Ili and Irtysh rivers, and on the other hand, to create, in the person of a second patron, a certain counterbalance to the political pressure of the Siberian and Orenburg authorities on the structures of khan’s power in Northern and Central Qazaqstan [Suleymenov, Moiseev 1988: 61–80]. Over time, the political contacts of the Qing Empire with the Qazaq rulers were not limited to ambassadorial connections and diplomatic correspondence. Some Qazaq sultans arriving in Beijing were awarded the honorary titles «gong» and «wang», which in China were given only to the highest aristocracy. The honorary title «gong» was equivalent to the Qazaq status of «khan», and «wang» was equivalent to Qazaq «sultan». In particular, the Qing authorities began to use the institution of titling in the second third of the 18th century, after the start of delimiting the territories of the Chinese and Russian empires [Khafizova 1995: 152]. At the same time, Beijing would assign title «gong» to a Qazaq ruler only after the latter was proclaimed a khan in the Steppe. Thus, the «khan» title of Abylay was approved by the Qing emperor Qianlong only a year after Abylay was proclaimed the khan of three Qazaq zhuzes in the Khoja Ahmad Yasawi Mosque in 1771 [Erofeyeva 2014: 277]. Later,
recognizing the title of Vali, the khan of the Middle Zhuz, the Chinese authorities hoped that he would be able to ensure peace in the frontiers of Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqtan. With the same intention, in 1824 the Qing authorities made an unsuccessful attempt to proclaim his son, Gubaidullah Sultan, a khan of the Middle Zhuz.

From the beginning of the 1760s, Abylay Sultan and Abulmambet (Abu-l-Muhammad) Khan of the Middle Zhuz united with Erdene-batyr, the ruler of Tashkent, Fazyl Biy, the ruler of Khujand and Ura-Tyube, and Ahmad Shah Durrani, the king of Afghanistan. Together they began to actively oppose the strengthening of the political influence of the Qing. According to the published sources, in the middle of the 18th century the nomads of the Middle and Senior zhuzes were already present in the Southern Altai, in the valleys of the Ayagoz, Kokshal, Shagan, Emel, Lepsy, Karatal, Ili, and Khorgos rivers, with their tributaries, near Lake Alakol and in other regions of Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqtan [Khafizova, Moiseev 1989 (2): 12, 28–33]. Therefore, in August 1767, the Chinese emperor was compelled to recognize the spread of Qazaq nomads throughout Zhetysu and issue a special decree allowing them to use these pasture areas on the terms of a certain rent.

To collect tribute, China annually sends two detachments from the upper reaches of the Ili River and two from Tarbagai and Kashgar. The Ili detachments marched along the Karatal River to Ayagoz, then united with the Tarbagai detachment and walked through Santash along the northern and western shores of Lake Issyk-Kul. The Kashgar detachment marched through Terekty, crossed the Aksu Plateau, the Bish-Bilchir Range and reached the upper reaches of the Naryn River to meet with other detachments [Valikhanov 1985: 137]. The tax was calculated as follows: nomads had to pay one head for a thousand head of sheep, and one head for a hundred head of horses, or cattle. However, according to Vyacheslav Kuznecov, the terms of the «lease» were recognized as valid only on paper, since the Qazaqs did not perceive their nomadic areas in Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqtan as the Chinese possessions, and, moreover, did not always consider it obligatory to pay taxes to the Qing authorities [Kuznecov 1983: 29–34]. Usually, military detachments were accompanied by Chinese traders who exchanged their goods for livestock. These detachments were called «traveling detachments», and their route was called «traveling border». In addition, the Chinese authorities opened trade missions for Qazaq and Qyrqyz cattle breeders in Kulja and Chuguchak. In particular, the Chinese were happy to acquire Qazaq horses. The interest in Qazaq horses was explained by their relative cheapness. An equivalent product purchased on the domestic market cost twice as much. Thus, in May 1761, a decree was issued ordering local authorities to purchase horses only from Qazaq nomads [Kuznecov 1983: 37].
Fixed low prices for livestock did not suit the Qazaqs. In addition, having established control over trade with the Qazaqs, the Qing authorities sought to limit this exchange to Dzungaria. The Qazaq rulers made attempts to sell their livestock to Mongolia and East Turkestan. But the Chinese managed to suppress any Qazaq attempts to enter these regions. The Qazaq embassy repeatedly tried to resolve this issue in Beijing, but to no avail.

Thus, using certain trade and economic levers, the Qing authorities exercised political control over the Qazaqs to a relative extent. As mentioned above, the Qazaqs were allowed to come to Western China only through Western Dzungaria and prohibited from traveling through other regions. This maneuver of the Qing administration can be called one of the political levers of pressure on the Qazaq khans and their subordinates. Management of all Qazaq subjects to the Qing was given to the Ili Governor (jiang-jun), who was called the commander-in-chief over all generations of steppe khans and sultans. It was legally prescribed for the Ili jiang-jun to send gifts to the Qazaq aristocracy, when corresponding with them. And he was also given the right to apply the death penalty against those nomads who disturbed peace on the Chinese frontier [Valikhanov 1985: 138].

At the beginning of the 19th century, the political situation in the Qing Empire was changing. Under the foreign pressure, the economic and internal political situation of the Celestial Empire was worsening. At this time, Western China was rocked by anti-Qing protests among the Muslim population. Among the first to oppose the domination of the Qing were the Kashgar khojas, led by Jangir (Jahangir) Khoja. He was supported by the Tien Shan Qyrgyz [Valikhanov 1985: 141–144]. The uprising was suppressed, but the political influence of the Qing authorities in Western China was shaken. Therefore, according to Chokan Valikhanov, the Chinese authorities, weakened by internal strife, from 1825 stopped sending military detachments to the «traveling border» in Zhetysu [Moiseev 1991: 148]. For border troops, the Chinese authorities preferred the route through the Muzart glacier.

In addition, during this period, trade with such neighbors as the Qazaqs, Qyrgyz and Kokand Khanate, was placed under strict control. First, caravans with goods were no longer allowed into the interior of East Turkestan. For this purpose, special trading yards were created on the border. To a greater extent, these measures were directed against the traders of the Kokand Khanate, which supported the protests of the Muslims in Xinjiang. However, for other reasons, prohibitive measures also affected the Russian merchants.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the struggle of Kokand and Bukhara for hegemony in Southern Qazaqstan and, consequently, the subordination of the Qazaq clans of the southern regions by the Kokand rulers, caused the relocation of Adil Khan (the third son of Abaylay Khan) with his 10 thousand subject families of the Senior Zhuz from the Talas region to the Manchu dominions. Having not found mutual agreement with the Chinese authorities, Adil Khan returned to his native land a few years later and was forced to recognize the power of the Kokand Khanate [Zhanaev 2013: 33–34]. However, Adil’s first contacts with the Qing began under his father, Abaylay Khan, when in February 1774, Adil Sultan, at the head of the Qazaq embassy, was received at the Beijing court [Khafizova, Moiseev 1989 (2): 93]. It is known that in the second half of the 18th century, Abaylay Khan sent Adil Sultan and his other sons to Zhetysu, which resulted in improving of Adil’s relations with the Qing. Thus, in November 1789, Adil, along with other sultans, sent a request to the Chinese administration to receive a Qazaq embassy in Beijing on the emperor’s 80th anniversary. Apparently, after the death of Abaylay Khan and the election of Adil as a khan by the influential elders of the Senior Zhuz clans under his control, the Manchu emperor awarded him the honorary title «gong».

Adil Khan’s successors in the interactions of the Qazaqs of South-Eastern Qazaqstan with the Manchurian administration in subsequent years were his son Abaylay Sultan (Kulan) and grandson
Hakimbek. Thus, since 1827, the name of Abylay Adilev was mentioned in Chinese documents with the title «gong», which indicated a certain attention paid to him by the Qing administration [Khafizova 2008: 55]. According to Qazaq sinologist Klara Khafizova, in 1827, Abylay Sultan sent an embassy led by his brother Ergali to China and presented thoroughbred horses to the Qing emperor. He also expressed support for the arrest of the rebel Jahangir, who for seven years had been bothering the Chinese in Kashgar and reported on the invasion of Kokand troops into Kyrgyz and Qazaq nomadic areas and the beginning of the construction of Pishpek fortress. According to Abylay, the Kokand authorities have repeatedly tried to lure him to their side. However, he did not heed the appeals of Kokand and forbade the Senior Zhuz clans under his control to migrate to the territory of Kokand. In recognition of the Sultan’s devotion and for conveying this information, the Qing authorities presented him with a set of clothes with dragons and four large pieces of satin.

Klara Khafizova wrote that during these years the Abylay Sultan (Kulan) actively opposed the Kokand Khanate, advertising his support for the Qing Empire. At the same time, he either misled the Qing administration, or he himself was mistaken in Jahangir’s intentions to get to Kashgar through the territory of the Qazaqs [Khafizova 2008: 56]. Nevertheless, Abylay Sultan, in his own way, sought to prevent the strengthening of the power of the Qing Empire and the Kokand Khanate in South-Eastern Qazaqstan. At this time, the relations between the Qazaq rulers of the Senior Zhuz and China remained rather stable. The Adilev sultans controlled all trade routes and passages to Xinjiang through Zhetysu. Merchants were to pay duties for the passage of their caravans through the nomadic areas of the sultans, who controlled the passes to Western China from the Karatal River to Lake Issyk-Kul. Constant communication between Abylay Sultan (Kulan) and the Xinjiang authorities in Kulja was maintained. In addition, all traders traveling to Kulja had to take from Abylay Sultan (Kulan) and his brothers a paper with signatures and seals confirming that they were their representatives [Khafizova 2019: 265]. In addition, the Qazaq rulers were obliged to assist the Qing frontier troops in capturing the rebels who had fled from the interior of Xinjiang, and to take the necessary measures to return stolen livestock, since there were frequent cases of robbery by the Qazaqs. To keep Qazaq subjects under control, China regularly sent patrol units to inspect the nomads of the frontier and used the internal and external mobile guards at the border. Every year, in summer or early autumn, the Qing authorities sent detachments to South-Eastern Qazaqstan to collect duties and monitor the trade of Qazaq nomads with the indigenous Muslim population of Xinjiang. In addition to strict restrictions on the horse trade, for security reasons, the Chinese authorities completely prohibited any sale of weapons to the Qazaqs. A ban was even imposed on the sale of metal products, as the Chinese feared that the metal could be used to produce weapons [Kuznecov 1983: 51]. And although the Qing administration did not interfere in the internal life of the Qazaq Steppe, it preferred to carry out the external coordination of the actions of its Qazaq subjects.

It is impossible to say with certainty what the actual scale of the Qing Empire’s plans for the Qazaq clans was. An analysis of documentary sources and previous research indicates that in the second half of the 18th century, the Manchu authorities had a tougher position on this issue. In part, this was due to the strengthening of the Qing on the western frontier at that time. It’s important to note that between the Qazaq clans and the central regions of the Qing Empire was Xinjiang, where local Muslim agricultural population predominated. This region required the concentration of large military forces to keep it under tight control. Although, the reverse side of the solution of this military-organizational issue was the creation of a necessary bridgehead in Western China aimed at further spreading the political influence of the Qing Empire in the north-western direction, deep into the Qazaq lands. However, in the first half of the 19th century, due to the complicated internal and external political situation in China, the Manchu dynasty was most likely forced to abandon the original plans. Not the least role in this matter was played
by the Qazaq rulers themselves, who by their actions since the second half of the 18th century prevented the Qing Empire from strengthening its political influence in the Qazaq Steppe. Nevertheless, despite the failure of China’s invasive plans to subjugate the Qazaqs of Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqstan, the Qing authorities continued to exert a certain pressure on the nomads, using external trade and economic restrictions.

In the first decades of the 19th century, the Qing Empire experienced an unprecedented rise in its power. The newly acquired subjects in Western China were calm; there were no preconditions for Muslim uprisings. Western European states were busy with other issues, and the time of the Opium Wars had not yet come. After an unsuccessful attempt to title Sultan Gubaidullah a khan of the Middle Zhuz, the Qing authorities subsequently stopped interfering in the internal affairs of the Qazaqs in the Russia-controlled areas of the Middle Zhuz. At the same time, China was monitoring the actions of the Russians in the Qazaq Steppe, trying to prevent the latter from entering Zhetyus. Meanwhile, the Russian government was not interested in aggravating relations with the Qing authorities during this period. However, both powers could not put up with the ambiguity of this issue for so long. Each side was looking for its own way out of this situation. And at this moment the Qazaq rulers of the Senior Zhuz became, to some extent, the initiators in intensifying the confrontation between the Qing and Russian empires in the Qazaq Steppe.

In 1818, the sultan of the Senior Zhuz, Syuk Ablaikhanov, submitted a petition to the Russian authorities to accept him and the Zhalair clans under his control as the subjects of the Russian Empire. After him, in 1824, the rulers of the Dulat clans of the Senior Zhuz, the Adilev sultans, addressed the Russian government with a corresponding petition. In the same year, Sultan Syuk Ablaikhanov, who was a nominal subject of Russian empire, arrived in Omsk and turned to Colonel Semyon Bronevsky, holding the post of Omsk regional chief, with a «complaint about the baranta
of some of his neighboring sultans» and with a request to open a separate external district in his volost according to «Charter on the Kirghiz» [RSHA, h. 1264, r. 1, f. 332, fol. 48]. Although the regional chief rejected the Sultan’s request, arguing that the solution depended on the permission of the Russian government, but still yielding to Syuk’s persistent requests, he sent a detachment of 15 Cossacks with one officer as an honorary guard to accompany Syuk to his nomadic area. The Russian officer was given several copies of announcements and a translation of the «Charter on the Kirghiz» to be proclaimed among the Qazaqs at the right opportunity. The report of the Governor-General of Western Siberia, Pyotr Kaptsevich, said that it was planned to open an external district in the «Yusun volost» next spring, unless some reason prevented this. In this case, it was necessary to consider the fact that the specified volost was located near Chinese border. And in this regard, Kaptsevich considered it necessary to clarify the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this issue: «whether there will be any claims from the Chinese about this» [RSHA, h. 1264, r. 1, f. 332, fol. 49–49ob].

In the spring of 1825, a military detachment was sent to South-Eastern Qazaqstan under the command of the commandant of the Yamyshev fortress, Lieutenant Colonel Fyodor Shubin, consisting of 120 Cossacks, with two guns. The detachment also included influential Qyrgyz biys, whose nomadic areas were around the Lake Issyk-Kul and who expressed their intention to become Russian subjects. Upon the arrival of the Cossacks in the «Yusun volost», the head of the detachment was given the task to send a separate detachment of 50 Cossacks to the Qyrgyz nomads to accompany their deputies. In the instructions given by the Omsk authorities, the commander of the detachment was instructed that upon approaching the «nomads of the Senior Horde under the 8th class sultan Syuk Ablaikhanov», and having warned him in advance about his arrival, he should bring the detachment into full uniform and, upon meeting, honor the said ruler with a military ceremony, then hand him a letter from Pyotr Kaptsevich, the Governor-General of Western Siberia, and greet him «on behalf of the main line managers» [RSHA, h. 1264, r. 1, f. 334, fol. 12].

A separate paragraph of the said instructions to Colonel Fedor Shubin concerned the contacts of the military detachment with the Chinese authorities and sounded as follows:

1. In the month of August or early September, when the Chinese usually leave Kulja to collect yasak horses from some clans of the Senior Horde, you may, of necessity, have a meeting with them, for they often come to the very nomadic lands of Sultan Syuk; and therefore you need to inquire in advance about their departure and prepare for the meeting, keep the detachment in battle order and in all shape.

2. Since Russia highly values friendly ties with the Chinese state, all your actions and the type of relations you would have with the subjects of that state are determined on this basis; from here it follows: 1) To look as calmly on the arrival of the Chinese in the Horde for the gathering of horses as our government desires, as our government desires them to look calmly there on the appearance of our detachments. 2) To prevent any insult to them. 3) Not to act against them and especially against their power, if they show it over the Kirghiz people, but to keep deep silence and carefully notice to what extent this power extends.

3. If the Chinese, for this or any other reason, arrive at the nomadic lands of Sultan Syuk and if you happen to have a meeting with them, then your explanations with them should be as friendly, moderate, and careful as possible. Perhaps they will turn to you with questions about the reason for your arrival and the instructions of your superiors, as well as about the detachments located in the two external districts, then answer without delay that the detachment under your command was sent at the request of the very sultans who were visiting Russia and who recently returned from there, and that your duty is to protect against robberies and restore peace, that apart from this you have no assignments from the government, and that you believe that the other detachments located in the Steppe have the same assignments.

4. During the time that you will be with the nomads of Sultan Syuk, you may, under the guise of trade, to inquire through the Asians living under the Sultan and especially the experienced
adherents of Russia in the Chinese frontier city of Kulja, located no further than 180 miles, about the opinions of the Chinese or the border authorities, on your entry into the Horde. For this purpose, you may use with extreme frugality the things allotted to you for extraordinary expenses [RSHA, h. 1264, r. 1, f. 334, fol. 17–19].

In addition, the garrison doctor Thaddeus Sibberstein, who was attached to the military detachment, had to scout out the location of the trade routes running through the nomadic areas of the Qazaq Senior Zhuz and the Kyrgyz into the possessions of the Qing Empire. The West Siberian Governor-General wrote: «...to find out the most important thing and as reliably as possible the path convenient to trade with Kashgaria, the Chinese city of Aksu and Tibet». In the following decades, the policy of the Russian government in South-Eastern Qazaqstan led to a convergence of the borders of the Russian Empire and Qing China in the region under study. Although, for reasons unrelated to the situation in South-Eastern Qazaqstan, in the 1820-1830s, Russia’s active advance deep into Zhetysu temporarily stopped. The Chinese authorities, as before, continued to send patrol units to Zhetysu to collect tribute in livestock from their Qazaq and Kyrgyz subjects. The note «On the Kyrgyz-Kaisak Senior Horde» by Chokan Valikhanov records information about sending one of these «traveling» detachments to Zhetysu. So, in 1840, a border detachment consisting of three thousand Chinese appeared in the Trans-Ili region with the intention of collecting the required tribute from the Qazaqs of the Senior Zhuz and then proceeding to the «Tashkent aksakal for negotiations». However, during the battle at the Tiren-Uzek tract, the Qazaqs of the Shapyrashty clan dealt a crushing blow to the Chinese army. According to Valikhanov, the Chinese still cannot forget the defeat inflicted on them and speak with deep indignation about any Qazaq from the Shapyrashty clan [Valikhanov 1984: 181]. This historical episode indicates that for some time now the Qazaqs began to refuse to pay yasak to the Qing authorities.

During these years, the complex domestic political situation in Russia associated with the death of the Russian Emperor Alexander I and the Decembrist uprising, and on the international stage the Russo-Iranian War (1826–1828), the Russo-Turkish War (1828–1829) and the Polish uprising (1830–1831) did not allow the Russian authorities to seriously take up the affairs of the Senior Zhuz. At the same time, the situation in the Russia-controlled territories of Qazaqstan was becoming unstable. With the abolition of khan’s power in the Qazaq Steppe and the creation of external districts, the Qazaqs of the Junior and Middle Zhuzes opposed the colonial policy of the Russian Empire. A wave of liberation movements and uprisings swept across the Steppe. Under these conditions, the government of the Russian Empire in the 1840s again intensified its actions in the southeastern and southern regions, aimed at completing the long and complex process of conquering Qazaqstan.

The spread of the liberation movement under the leadership of Kenesary Kasymov across the territory of Zhetysu greatly alarmed the Russian government. In 1846, the West Siberian authorities quickly granted Russian allegiance to the Qazaqs of the Senior Zhuz. On June 23, 1846, the sultans, and influential elders of the Dulat, Zhalair, Alban, Suan and Shapyrashty clans accepted «an obligation in connection with becoming the subjects of Russia» [Kireev and others 1964: 319]. Also on this day, «a resolution of the sultans and biys of the Senior Zhuz on their attitude towards Kenesary Sultan» was issued. In 1848, to manage the Qazaqs of Zhetysu the position of a pristav to the «Kirghiz of the Senior Horde» was established. In the hands of a pristav the entire administrative and territorial management of the Trans-Ili region was concentrated. Major Baron Moretz Wrangel was appointed as the first pristav to the «Kirghiz of the Senior Horde».

From this moment on, the Russian Empire became the main regulator of the relations between the Qazaqs of the Senior Zhuz and Qing China. So, in January 1850, the Governor-General of Western Siberia Pyotr Gorchakov informed the Minister of War that last autumn Major Baron
Фиг. 3. Дело о командировании русского военного отряда в Большую орду. РГИА. Ф.1264. Оп.1. Д.334
Fig. 4. The instruction given to the commander of the detachment leaving for the Senior Horde. Russian State Historical Archive, holding 1264, register 1, file 334, page 6–22

Рис. 4. Инструкция начальнику отряда следующего в Большую орду. РГИА. Ф.1264. Оп.1. Д.334. Л.6–22
Список
Родословной вельможи Курганный
отделений об афганцах.
Октябрь грам. 1825 г.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Чураны</th>
<th>Отделение Знамени от Орд.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Абый афганец</td>
<td>Порождаем рода с афганцев</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Гайки афганец</td>
<td>Первый порождем с афганцев</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Удостоем афганца. Сей Чураны или несостоявает отделений об афганцах, но:

* Образем афганцев, родословной вельможи с чураны, 
* Майером имя кабардин афганец.

* Образем афганцев и суть несостоявает отделений об афганцах.
Fig. 5. The list of the clan chiefs of the Senior Kirghiz Horde, according to the degree of their importance. Russian State Historical Archive, holding 1264, register 1, file 334, page 82

Рис. 5. Список родоначальников Большой Киргизской орды, [п]о степени их важности. РГИА. Ф.1264. Оп.1. Д.334. Л.82 и об.
Fig. 6-6a. Route map of the frontier Omsk region with the Chinese possessions indicated. Fragment. Russian State Historical Archive, holding 1264, register 1, file 334, page 97

Рис. 6-6а. Маршрутная карта пограничной Омской области с обозначением китайских владений. Фрагмент. РГИА. Ф.1264. Оп.1. Д.334. Л.97
Moretz Wrangel took measures to satisfy the claims of the Chinese for the cattle captured from the Kalmyks by the Qazaqs. At the insistence of the pristav, with the participation of the senior sultans of Zhetyusu, the stolen horses and camels were collected. The Russian official entrusted the transfer of the collected livestock to Sultan Nuraly Adilev, who fulfilled this task with «special diligence» [Serebrennikov 1915: 26].

In 1847, on the Kopal River in the foothills of the Dzungar Alatau, the Russian authorities founded the fortification of Kopal, which became the administrative center of the pristavstvo⁴, established in 1848 for the Qazaqs of the Senior Zhuz, which was later transformed into the Alatau External District with its center in the Verny fortification. At the same time, the West Siberian authorities were taking appropriate measures to develop the region. The first Cossack villages appeared in Zhetyusu. The intensified actions of the Russian government displeased China, which considered the Qazaqs roaming in the frontier areas with Xinjiang as its subjects.

In May 1850, Foreign Minister Karl Nesselrode wrote to the commander of the separate Siberian Corps, Governor-General Pyotr Gorchakov, that the Chinese government «recently approached us with a complaint about our occupation of a point in the Semirechye region, disputing these places and considering them their property» [Serebrennikov 1915: 73]. The Russian government, which preferred to avoid any misunderstandings with the Qing Empire regarding the Qazaq clans of the Senior Zhuz until the middle of the 19th century, this time took a tougher position.

The claims of the Chinese to our Semirechye region, where the Kirghiz, subjects of the sovereign emperor, roam, of course, cannot be recognized as valid on our part. No treaties established the border with China in the designated places. A chain of Chinese guards, for the lack of any other clear boundary. Only in the strict sense can it be considered a border line, and the fortification we built in the Semirechye region on the Kopal River is far from the designated line of their guards.

In this regard, the Russian government considered that the demands of the Chinese side were not legitimate.

At the same time, the West Siberian authorities were now recommended to pay «special attention to our situation in the steppe adjacent to the Chinese possessions» and to take the necessary «measures to ensure it in case of any hostile attacks on the part of the Chinese». And although the central authorities did not expect more daring actions from the Chinese, they still considered that «prudence requires taking the necessary precautions, and of course without any noise or publicity, and giving them any plausible excuse». Besides, in connection with the upcoming negotiations with the Chinese government on the interests of both parties in Central Asia, among other topics, Count Karl Nesselrode instructed the administration of the Semirechye region to find out some details about the location of the Qing guards, which separate the Chinese possessions from the territory of the Senior Zhuz, «in what exact places are they located, at what distance from the points known to us in the Senior Horde» [Serebrennikov 1915: 74]. The specified names of the Chinese guards and their locations were ordered to be included on the map of the Russian border. All this information was planned to be used in future negotiations with the Chinese authorities. In 1850, Governor-General of Western Siberia Gustav Gasford announced the death of the senior sultan of the Alban and Suan clans, Khakimbek Kulanov, who closely interacted with Xinjiang [RSHA, h. 1291, r. 81, f. 214, fol. 10ob]. After his death, the connection between the Qazaqs of the Senior Zhuz and the Qing Empire weakened. Tezek Ablaykhanov, who replaced him, predominantly considered himself a subject of the Russian Empire, although some Alban and Suan clans under his control continued to roam in Western China. Shortly before the above events, in 1847, a Uyghur uprising led by Valikhan-tyurya and known in historical literature

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⁴ Pristavstvo was an administrative-territorial structure.

² Russian for Zhetyusu.
as the «Revolt of the Seven Khojas» broke out in Kashgar. To suppress the uprising, the Qing authorities were forced to use a significant part of the military forces of Western China and therefore could not significantly prevent the strengthening of Russia’s positions in Zhetyusu.

In July 1851, the Kulja Treaty was signed between Russia and China, which laid the legal basis for the subsequent creation of diplomatic documents on the division of the Qazaq lands between the two empires. Article 6 of this treaty eliminated any interference by the Qing Empire in matters arising west of the Chinese guard line. Thus, Beijing completely abandoned its previous claims to the Qazaq and Qyrqyz lands, leaving them entirely at the discretion of the Russian government [Grumm-Grzhimaylo 1926: 730]. The Kulja Treaty gave the Russian authorities freedom of action in South-Eastern Qazaqstan. How important this document was for the Russian government was emphasized by Ivan Babkov in his memoirs:

The successful conclusion of this treatise by E.P. Kovalevsky seemed to indicate the urgent need for us to firmly occupy the Trans-Ili region and establish proper order and tranquility among the Kirghiz of the Senior and Wild Stone Horde, which could ensure the unimpeded passage of trade caravans to Western China through the lands occupied by the Kirghiz. From this point of view, the Kulja Treaty is important not only for trade, but also politically, having served as an energetic incentive to continue the offensive movement deep into Central Asia, launched by General Gorchakov, who was the first Governor-General of Western Siberia to initiate our occupation of the Trans-Ili region and reported to the government and the scholars the first information about a separate outskirts of our fatherland [Babkov 1912: 133–134].

In September of the same 1851, the pristav to the «Kirghiz of the Senior Horde», Captain Mikhail Peremyshlsky, did not allow the Chinese patrol detachment to carry out the traditional detour of the frontier Qazaqs. So, upon the arrival of two Qing officials, accompanied by 4 officers and 50 soldiers, on the Karatal picket on September 12, 1851, a military detachment of 30 Cossacks under the command of Captain Przemyslsky came out to meet him. In response to the demand of Chinese officials to let them through to the Lepsy River «to exchange letters with a Tarbagatai official», Peremyshlsky stated that he could not allow this without the permission of higher authorities [CSA RQ, h. 3, r. 1, f. 330, fol. 5–6v]. The Governor-General of Western Siberia, Gustav Gasford, approved the actions of the pristav to the «Kirghiz of the Senior Horde» Peremyshlsky, noting in his letter dated December 15, 1851, that

by such expulsions of detachments to the places we occupy, the Chinese apparently want to prove their rights to these lands». Further, the commander of a separate Siberian corps wrote that «the Chinese government, without any doubt, still does not cease to think that the places we now occupy in the Senior Horde belong to them, the Chinese. On this subject, namely regarding our occupation of Kopal, there was already correspondence with them, which has not yet ended. And we can even expect that they will again turn to us with any questions regarding the Senior Horde. But on the other hand, the Chinese see us already entrenched in these places, occupying them not in an imaginary, but in a real way [CSA RQ, h. 3, r. 1, f. 330, fol. 7–69ob].

At the same time, he warned to avoid open clashes with Chinese troops. The warning of the West Siberian Governor-General indicated that at that time the Russian authorities, which did not have a strong enough position in Zhetyusu, were still not interested in aggravating Russo-Chinese relations.

In subsequent years, the events of 1850–1860 allowed Russia to strengthen its position in South-Eastern Qazaqstan. At the same time, the political situation in Xinjiang became more complicated. All over Western China, Muslim peoples began opposing the Qing authorities. The main ethnic core of the uprising were the Dungans, followed by the Uyghurs. In such a situation, the Chinese authorities turned to the Russian government with a proposal to continue negotiations on defining the border between the empires. Considering that the situation was not in Beijing’s favor, Russian Empire was able to secure Qazaq lands in South-Eastern Qazaqstan, which already belonged to
On November 2, 1860, a Russian-Chinese treaty was signed in Beijing, according to which the border between both states was established for the first time [Khalfin 1965: 79]. Among other things, this agreement assigned to Russia all the disputed Qazaq lands in the southeastern and eastern parts of Zhetysu. We must admit that the Russia and Qing empires would divide the lands of other peoples they conquered at different times, and not their own ethnic territories. At the same time, the interests of indigenous peoples were, as a rule, not considered by the contracting parties. Thus, along its entire length, the border quite conventionally cut off the nomadic areas of the same-clan Qazaqs and Qyrqyz, connected by kinship and common use of land. This led to disobedience to the border authorities of both states by the Qazaq and Qyrqyz tribal rulers, who refused to pay taxes, serve mail, and send their horsemen on patrols and pickets. In the second half of the 19th century, protests against the Russian authorities broke out from time to time among the Qazaqs and Qyrqyz. The migration of Qazaqs from one empire to another became more frequent.

Conclusion

The policy of the Qing Empire in the Qazaq Steppe depended on several reasons. First, it is worth noting that the Chinese authorities attempted to extend their influence on the nomadic Qazaq ethnic groups. However, unlike the sedentary Muslim population of Western China, which represented agricultural civilization, the Qazaqs led a nomadic lifestyle. Which made it significantly more difficult to exercise control over the supposed subject population of the Qazaq Steppe. In addition, the policy of the Qing Empire in this region was an integral part of Russo-Chinese relations, which imposed a certain context on their interactions with the Qazaqs. The Qing administration was forced to pursue its policy in the Qazaq Steppe, being in constant confrontation with the Russian government. In general, the military-political situation in Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqstan was in favor of the Russian Empire. The construction of Russian military fortifications in the frontier areas of Qazaqstan adjacent to China strengthened Russia’s
position. This circumstance was supported by the fact that the majority of the Qazaqs in Eastern and South-Eastern Qazaqstan decided to accept the allegiance of Russian Empire. In the 19th century, the Qing Empire was in a difficult socio-economic and political situation and was unable to seriously counteract the spread of Russian influence throughout the Qazaq Steppe, including the areas adjacent to the Qing Empire. In the 1860s, a wave of Muslim uprisings swept across Western China, and several independent state entities in this region arose as a result. The Chinese government was under threat of losing its possessions in Xinjiang and East Turkestan. And under these conditions, the Qing authorities in the second half of the 19th century chose to finally abandon their territorial claims in the Qazaq Steppe, at the cost of preserving their possessions in Western China.

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Qozheke Nazaruly and Archival Sources

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The article is devoted to the activities of Qozheke Nazaruly, one of the leaders of the Qazaq national liberation uprising against the Russian colonial policy in Zhetysu (Semirechye). The formation of Qozheke Nazaruly as a bright socio-political figure, defending the interests of the Qazaqs, took place in his childhood in the conditions of the changing political situation in Zhetysu in the 1840–50s. His versatile activity, participation in the organization and leadership of the Qazaqs, military command and creative mastery were manifested early in his life under the influence of his father Nazar. He proved to be a skillful organizer and ruler, a brave batyr, a skilled composer and performer of kyuys (kyushi). Qozheke Nazaruly was one of the prominent representatives of the Zhetysu school of kyushi, who participated in its formation.

In the autumn of 1885 Qozheke Nazaruly died under torture in a Chinese prison. New archival documents reveal the life path and activities of Qozheke Nazaruly.