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**THE NOMADIC LIFE OF THE KAZAKHS**

In the proposed article, on the basis of studying a large number of original sources, the main features of the functioning of the nomadic Kazakh society are investigated, the processes of adaptation of nomads to specific resources are analyzed. The author made an attempt to create a holistic view of the specifics of the nomadic civilization of the Kazakhs based on the analysis of a huge amount of ethnographic and historical material contained in the works of Russian scientists, travelers, officials, just witnesses and the military. A comparative analysis of the facts and data from various and numerous sources seems to the author to avoid the subjective interpretation of the questions of this study and to exclude biased judgments and conclusions. The evolutionary process of nomadism, the transformation of material culture is considered. The study of the system of material production of nomadic peoples represents a great practical sense, since they have accumulated vast experience. Of particular interest is the balanced, equilibrium state of the nomads in relation to the natural resources of the habitat. The nomadic way of life was the main ethno-integrating factor of their formation and addition to an integral socio-cultural community. In general, the available source material allowed to analyze the nomadic civilization of the Kazakhs in a reliable and complete form.

**Key words:** Kazakhs, nomadic civilization, Masanov N.E., nomad.

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**Қазақтардың көшпелі өмірі**

Бұл мақалада көптеген бастапқы дереккөздерді зерттеу негізінде көшпелі қазақ қоғамының жұмыс істеуі мен оның ерекшеліктері зерттелді, көшпелілердің нақты ресурстарға бейімделу үрдістері талданды. Автор ресейлік ғалымдар, саяхатшылар, шенеуніктер, куәгерлер мен әскери қызметкерлердің шығармаларында қамтылған этнографиялық және тарихи материалдардың үлкен көлемін талдау негізінде қазақтардың көшпелі өркениет ерекшеліктерінің тұтас көзқарасын қалыптастыруға әрекет жасады. Өртүрлі және көптеген дереккөздердегі фактілер мен деректерді салыстырмалы талдау автордың осы зерттеудің субъективті түсіндірмесінен аулақ болуға және жалған пікірлер мен қорытындыларды шығаруға жол ашады. Көшпелілердің эволюциялық үдерісі, материалдық мәдениеттің трансформациясы қарастырылады. Көшпелі халықтардың материалдық өндірісі жүйесін зерттеу үлкен тәжірибелік мағынаны білдіреді, өйткені олар үлкен тәжірибе жинақтады. Тұрғындардың табиғи ресурстарға қатысты көшпенділердің теңдестірілген, тепе-теңдік күйі ерекше қызығушылық тудырады. Көшпелі өмір салты оларды қалыптастырудың негізгі этно-ықпалдастырушы факторы және тұтас әлеуметтік-мәдени қауымдастыққа қосымша болды. Жалпы алғанда, қолда бар бастапқы материал қазақтардың көшпелілер өркениетіне сенімді әрі толық түрде талдау жасауға мүмкіндік берді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Қазақтар, көшпелі өркениет, Масанов Н.Е., номад.

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### Кочевая жизнь казахов

В предлагаемой статье на основе изучения большого круга оригинальных источников исследуются основные особенности функционирования и жизнедеятельности кочевого общества казахов, анализируются процессы адаптации номадов к специфическим ресурсам. Автором сделана попытка создать целостное представление о специфике кочевой цивилизации казахов на основе анализа огромного количества этнографического и исторического материала, содержащегося в трудах русских ученых, путешественников, чиновников, просто очевидцев и военных.

Сравнительно-сопоставительный анализ фактов и данных разнообразных и многочисленных источников, как представляется автору, позволяет избежать субъективной трактовки вопросов данного исследования и исключить необъективные суждения и выводы. Рассматривается процесс эволюции номадизма, трансформация материальной культуры. Изучение системы материального производства кочевых народов представляет большой практический смысл, поскольку ими был накоплен огромный опыт.

Особо важный интерес представляет сбалансированное, равновесное состояние номадов по отношению к природным ресурсам среды обитания. Кочевой образ жизни явился главным этноинтегрирующим фактором их формирования в целостную социокультурную общность. В целом имеющийся источниковый материал позволил в достоверной и полноценной форме проанализировать кочевую цивилизацию казахов.

**Ключевые слова:** казахи, кочевая цивилизация, Масанов Н.Э., номад.

### Introduction

A comprehensive analysis of the spatio-temporal patterns of deployment of the world-historical process, actually determining the dynamics of the historical and cultural development of various societies, is an urgent task of scientific research related to the study of stage and civilizational features of human history.

The geographical differentiation of the conditions of human life quite naturally determined the emergence and functioning of various ways of human adaptation to the environment, the existence of various forms of labor activity and types of social production optimally corresponding to the resource potential of each given ecological niche, and, consequently, the level and basic parameters of civilization development.

**Material and Methods.** At its core, the methodology for this project may be described as journalistic/ethnographic.

The historiographic panorama of nomadism vividly demonstrates a surprisingly diverse range of research techniques and methods for studying the history and culture of nomadic peoples. As a result, it is quite natural that there are many scientific judgments and hypotheses, points of view and concepts regarding the laws of the historical development of nomadism in time and space.

E. Masanov in his work “The nomadic civilization of the Kazakhs: the foundations of the life of a nomad society” writes that in the middle of the XIX century. in connection with the creation of the Russian Geographical Society, the first works appear in which the connection of the nomadic way of life of the Kazakhs with the geographic environment was taken for granted as an imperative and did not need any special reasoning (Blaramberg, 1848; Meyer, 1865; Valikhanov, 1984-1985, Kazantsev, 1867; Potanin, 1867; Zagryazhsky, 1874, etc.) – The natural conditionality of many aspects of the nomadic way of life generated by climate and lack of water gradually begins to be realized (Maksheev, 1856; Zavalishin, 1867; Mayev, 1871; He, 187 2; Balitsky, 1873).

The first works appear in which the system of grazing and nomadism is considered, the choice of pasture land depending on the climatic conditions (Nebolsin, 1852; Chormanov, 1871; He, 1871a; Kalning, 1876, etc.), the nomadic-Kazakh economy system due to the influence of natural factors on it (Rusanov, 1861; He, 1870; Tyaukin, 1861; Medvedsky, 1862; Heine, 1897–1898; Terentyev, 1874, etc.), touches upon the problems of anthropogenic desertification in the Inner Horde (Plotnikov, 1871 and etc.).

Last quarter of the XIX — early XX centuries. characterized by the emergence of many works on various issues of economic life of nomads, depending on the limiting and partly determining

factors of habitat (Smirnov, 1887; Alektorov, 1888; Vasilyev, 1890; Schmidt, 1894; Ostafyev, 1895; Brem, 1896; Kovalevsky, 1896; Cranichfeld, 1898; Gern, 1899; Benkevich, 1903; Divaev, 1904-1905, etc.). Of particular interest in this regard are studies on various cycles of production, wandering, and grazing (Dzhanturyin, 1883; Chormanov, 1883; He, 1906; Aleksandrov, 1884; Kustanayev, 1894; Bazanov, 1904, etc.). The greatest contribution to the description of the nomadic Kazakh economy and the display of its ecological determinants was made by A. I. Dobrosmysov by a series of excellent works (Dobrosmylslov, 1893; He, 1894; He, 1895).

In the second half of the XIX-early XX centuries. in pre-revolutionary historiography, a significant range of views can be traced – from the recognition that “most of the steppes in their natural conditions are suitable only for nomadic life, and if you force the nomads to go to sedentary life, this will certainly cause regress and lead to the desertion of the steppes” ( Radlov, 1989. p. 345), before geographical nihilism. At this time, a point of view is formed about the anthropogenic character of the geographic environment and the transformative role of a person in relation to it (see: Marsh, 1866, etc.).

Western historiography of the new time is also characterized by an extremely wide range of opinions and points of view regarding the processes of interaction between society and nature (see: Johnston, 1987; Krut, Zabelin, 1988; James, Martin, 1988, and others) – from the natural social direction to traditional geodeterminism. And if one of them imposes the responsibility on the nomads to transform the most fertile lands of the Old World into deserts (Marsh, 1866. p. 46, etc.), the other mainly deals with the dependence of life and psychology man, including nomads from the geographical environment (Ratzel, 1896; He, 1906, etc.).

A qualitatively new approach to the development of geographical ideas about the relationship between society and nature is associated with the name of the American geographer E. Huntington (See: James, Martin, 1988. P. 420-422, etc.), whose research is directly related to the history of the nomads. He, in particular, believed that cyclical climate fluctuations, especially the periodic aridization of natural conditions (Huntington, 1907), were the cause of mass invasions of the nomads of Central Asia and above all of the Mongols.

The purpose of our work is to study the mechanism of interaction between natural and socio-economic processes in the development of a nomad civilization, the activity of a nomadic

society, identifying the general and particular in the functioning of the system of material production, the specifics of social relations among nomads.

The methodological basis of the work was primarily a materialistic method of studying social phenomena and processes, which assumed the primacy of the system of material production and the primacy of labor activity.

The works of a number of researchers in which the idea of the integral integrity and interdependence of nature and society in the historical human development.

### Results and discussion

Kazakh nomadism and culture as they existed in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries provides the necessary contextual references for understanding the Kazakh intelligentsia's social and economic grievances and programs. Kazakh national identity, both prerevolutionary and Soviet, was configured by the intelligentsia around the cultural symbols (real and imagined) of a nomadic past. Recognizing these symbols, and their functions within the nomadic society, is crucial to discerning the complex effort required by the Kazakh intelligentsia to define a national identity and to disseminate their program among the Kazakh population.

Numerous works exist from the tsarist period, individual travelers accounts from both foreigners and Russians and reports by Kazakhs themselves, describing Kazakh nomadism, tsarist policies in the steppe regions, and the difficult economic situation that evolved for the nomads. Soviet scholars have also made important contributions to understanding the economic and cultural nature of Kazakh society, which clarifies the concepts and strengthens the comprehension of Kazakh nomadism.

“The term ‘nomadism’ here is used synonymously with ‘pastoral nomadism’. It needs to be understood, however, that not all nomads are pastoralists. For example, some American Plains Indians were nomadic, but they did not maintain livestock and, instead, followed wild herds which were their principal food source, a form of behaviour referred to as transhumance.”

Many recent studies clearly demonstrate that nomadic cultures vary considerably. Among those groups who depend on livestock and spatial mobility as their principal survival strategies, there is a tremendous range of herd management techniques, social organization, land tenure and utilization, agricultural production, differentiation of tasks by gender and age, and interactions with outside groups and sedentary societies.

Until now, there existed their own independent social structures, sociocultural homogeneity, combined with horizontal and vertical mobility and distrust of formal, centralized power. Until the end of the nineteenth century, in the absence of technological mastery and centralized structural power, the main economic and social status remained in the steppe region of Kazakhstan among the steppe nomads.

Many commentators emphasize the egalitarian and democratic nature of the Kazakh organization, emphasize its fragmented and localized model of power and an open and flexible model of display. There is no complex social or occupational stratification characteristic of agrarian societies. However, the Kazakh organization had an internally differentiated, informal hierarchy of status and seniority within the clan segments and clan agglomerations.

Nurbulat Masanov, one of the eminent Kazakhstani nomad scientists, refers to the general “bodybuilding of seniority” among nomads, bodybuilders, which was created by genealogical knowledge and memory (revolves around the demonstration of their position). Segment in the historical lineage of the chain to claim superiority.

Kazakh society was in a constant state of evolution. Although change was sometimes forced, which will become clearer further on, the culture was not stagnant. Finally, while the genesis and subsequent evolution of pastoral nomadism and the domestication of animals are important topics, and briefly discussed below, it is more critical to understand that pastoral nomadism was, and is, a historical fact that was constantly in flux depending upon the various pressures (political, economic, climatic, etc.) being exerted internally and externally. The Kazakhs were pastoral nomads whose social, economic, and political structures were tightly interconnected to their specific way of life and to 2,500 years of Central Asian nomadic heritage.

The nomadic economy was capable of producing many of its own basic supplies, such as food, clothing, housing, fuel, and transport, whereas settled communities might be more susceptible to drought or disaster which created a deficiency and potentially hindered the supply of essential materials. Nomads were also vulnerable to those conditions, in addition to others that might not as adversely affect agricultural communities, but individuals in a mobile community have freer, and perhaps faster, access to necessities not available everywhere, for example salt, metal, wood, water, shelter, and fodder. According to this argument, mobility aided survival.

Nomadism in some cases made more sense for marginal communities and their existence became more secure, particularly in those environments unsuited to rainfall agriculture. A vital symbiosis existed in pastoral nomadism between man and animal. The herder benefited from the basic supplies listed above, while the livestock was protected from predators and guaranteed other necessary intervention critical for survival. This is not to suggest that nomads were purely independent and existed unconstrained by towns, for there was clearly a symbiotic relationship between nomads and sedentary peoples too. A pastoral economy was unable to stand alone for extended periods. According to Lattimore: it is the poor nomad who is the pure nomad: by stripping themselves of the accessories and luxuries that a prosperous nomadism aspires they establish afresh the possibility of survival under strictly steppe conditions, and even in the harshest parts of the steppe, and thus attain once more the extreme phase of departure from the edge of the steppe... they can actually repeat the history of the creation or evolution of steppe nomadism, and thereby reinforce the stock of the steppe nomad society.

The transformation, regardless of where it occurred, was a rapid process and once it began the consequences were ‘sudden and far-reaching’. Indeed, he contends, that although the total number of nomads did not necessarily increase greatly, the much wider scope of movement and the ability to disperse rapidly and concentrate suddenly made the pastoral society of the steppe nomads in its new form more elusive when defending itself and much more formidable in attack.

This new mobility probably appealed to some segments of the nomadic population and induced them to continue the pastoral life. Most likely, the new military capabilities and security also attracted some and justified their decision.

## Conclusion

As Masanov wrote, the convergent process of the accumulation of similar cultural characteristics took place much faster in the nomadic areas than in the marginal zones, which makes it possible to consider them as a kind of “ethnic clots”. It was on this basis that the cultural community of the nomadic Kazakhs was formed. “Kirghiz,” wrote V. V. Radlov, “is a truly nomadic people, wandering all year round in the steppes ... Mores, customs, ways of thinking, in a word, all the life and activity of the Kirghiz are closely connected with these

movements for the sake of animals ...” ( Radlov, 1989. p. 253). The prominent Russian ethnologist N. A. Aristov rightly pointed out that the Kazakhs “preserved cattle-breeding and nomadic lifestyles more than any other Turkic peoples” (Aristov, 1896, p. 350).

It is natural that nomadism is characterized by a very specific view of culture. “There is nothing to say,” emphasizes A. Slovokhotov, “that nomadic life created a whole structure of a nomadic person ...” (Slovokhotov, 1905. p. 59). In this regard, it is interesting to cite the words of A. Vamberi that “... nothing could give me a clearer idea about nomadic life; when I later asked a Kyrgyz woman about the reasons that prompted them to move from place to place, she replied

with a laugh, “We are not as lazy as you ... we cannot sit on all day in one place! A person must move, because judge for yourself: the sun, the month, the stars, the water, the animals, the birds, the fish – everything moves, only the earth and the dead remain in place” (Vambery, 1865. P. 80). “Speaking of nomadic life,” witnesses testify, “a rare Kirghiz will not say: “Only a tree stands in one place and feeds on what is around it; then it is a tree; the free bird flies to where it is better” (KRO, 1964. P. 300).

Thus, there is a desire of nomads to oppose their culture and value stereotypes to the perception of the world of sedentary agricultural peoples. In our opinion, this is a clear testimony to the ethnicity of a nomadic culture and a nomad lifestyle.

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