# ANNOTATION

**dissertation work of Tilepbergen Akmoldir Maksatkyzy on the topic: «Kazakh themes in the works of Western European publicists of the second half of the 19th century» for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy PhD in the specialty «6D050400 – Journalism»**

**Relevance of the Research.** The 19th century marked a period of intensive geopolitical, social, and cultural transformations in the history of Central Asia, particularly in the Kazakh Steppe. This century was characterized by the gradual colonization of Kazakhstan by the Russian Empire, as well as the growing interest of European states in the region. Materials left by Western European publicists about the Kazakhs represent not only travel notes but also valuable cultural, ethnographic, and ideological sources addressed to the European public.

The formation of the Western European perspective on Kazakh society in the 19th century occurred under the influence of various publicistic works, travels, newspaper publications, and artistic-graphic creations. These texts describe in detail the everyday life of the Kazakh people, their religious beliefs, gender relations, geographical features, political structure, and attitude toward colonial rule. However, in contemporary scholarship, such sources remain insufficiently systematized, and research is often limited to Russian-language materials. Therefore, studying how Western European publicists represented the Kazakhs, which ideological frameworks were reflected in their texts, and what place Kazakh topics occupied within the colonial discourse is highly relevant.

**Features of the Representation of Kazakh Themes in Western Publicistics.** The second half of the 19th century witnessed a sharp increase in European society’s interest in Central Asia. This interest was not limited to political motives but also included a spiritual quest to comprehend the region's rich historical, folkloric, ethnographic, and philosophical heritage. For European countries, the Kazakh steppe appeared as an unexplored, exotic, and partly mythologized space. This process of mythologization is clearly traceable in the texts of Western European publicists.

French, English, German, and Polish authors often employed elements of Romanticism in their descriptions of the Kazakhs: their harmonious coexistence with nature, heroic epics, nomadic freedom, and moral purity were contrasted with the norms of European civilization. In this regard, the image of the Kazakh in Western publicistics largely resembled the concept of the "noble savage." However, such representation often concealed real historical conditions, including internal contradictions caused by the colonial policies of the Russian Empire.

For instance, in Jules Verne’s novel *Michael Strogoff*, the Kazakh steppe is depicted as a space of harsh nature, authoritarian order, and the intersection of East and West. Although the author does not explicitly describe the Kazakhs’ struggle led by Kenesary Khan against the colonial regime, he indirectly references real

events known as the "Central Asian uprisings," thereby artistically reflecting imperial tensions in Kazakhstan and Central Asia at large.

In Bronisław Zaleski's graphic albums and diary entries, Kazakh daily life, musical culture, female images, and harmony with nature are conveyed with exceptional delicacy. These works hold special value as ethnographic and artistic heritage in the historical memory of the Kazakh people. Through Zaleski's visual depictions, a deep respect for the spiritual world of the Kazakhs, their fidelity to traditions, and national identity is expressed.

German researchers Adolf Brehm and Otto Finsch scientifically and systematically described the nature of the Kazakh steppe, regional fauna, and the pastoral lifestyle. However, their works also contain elements of a colonial narrative: the nomadic lifestyle is often portrayed as a backward form of existence requiring transformation according to "civilizational" standards. Thus, publicistic texts simultaneously express admiration for the uniqueness of Kazakh society and convey veiled ideas about its need for "enlightenment" and modernization.

Western publicists paid special attention not only to the material but also to the spiritual culture of the Kazakhs. Literature, folklore, heroic epics, rituals, and customs occupy a significant place in their descriptions. Works such as *Kozy Korpesh – Bayan Sulu*, *Kyz Zhibek*, and *Yer Targyn* were perceived as keys to understanding the inner world of the nomads. Freedom, the pursuit of justice, honor, conscience, and a sense of responsibility toward family and society were interpreted as national character traits.

Thus, Kazakh themes in Western publicistics appear not only in an ethnographic but also in a philosophical dimension. The life of the Kazakhs is presented as a form of existence governed by natural laws and human values. Through this image, Western European authors often sought answers to the spiritual crises and challenges of modernization faced by their own societies.

**Sources and Significance of the Studied Material.** In the second half of the 19th century, Western European publicistics served not only as a means of conveying information but also as a mediator shaping ideological and cultural perceptions. Publications about the Kazakh steppe in newspapers, essays, and travel notes reflected not only the individual views of authors but also the general European public consciousness of Central Asia.

The research material primarily consists of publications from France, England, Germany, and Poland, as well as personal diaries of travelers and ethnographers. Notable figures include Élisée Reclus, Jules Verne, Bronisław Zaleski, Ármin Vámbéry, George Kennan, Adolf Brehm, Otto Finsch, and Thomas Atkinson. These authors were respected publicists and ethnographers of their time, with deep knowledge of geopolitical processes, lending their works special scientific value.

For example, George Kennan in *Siberia and Exile* offers a brief but important characterization of the Kazakhs, emphasizing their cultural flexibility, hospitality, and describing them as a people who managed to preserve their inner spirit despite subjugation by Russian rule. These observations became valuable sources for subsequent ethnographic, historical, and anthropological studies.

**Aim and Objectives of the Research.** The aim of this study is to identify the features of the representation of the Kazakh people in Western European publicistics of the 19th century and to analyze how this representation was shaped within the cultural-civilizational and geopolitical context of that time.

From this aim, the following objectives arise:

1. Identify key Western European publicists and writers who wrote about the Kazakhs and compile a corpus of texts dedicated to this theme;
2. Analyze the substantive aspects of publications concerning Kazakh lifestyle, their connection with nature, aspirations for freedom, and resistance to colonial pressure;
3. Reveal stereotypes and ideological nuances presented in publicistic texts;
4. Assess the purposes for which the image of the Kazakh was used in European consciousness (exoticization, romanticization, legitimation of colonial policy, etc.);
5. Identify which aspects of the spiritual and material culture of the Kazakhs attracted the most attention from Western publicists.

**Theoretical and Methodological Framework.** This study is based on the principles of intercultural communication, theories of postcolonial discourse, media text analysis, and comparative literary approaches. Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism," Homi Bhabha's theories of hybrid culture and representation, and Michel Foucault's ideas on the relationship between power and discourse form the theoretical foundation for analyzing the image of the Kazakhs in European texts.

Additionally, the study considers the genre specifics of Western publicistics, elements of travel literature and reportage, and the structure of artistic-publicistic texts. Historical-contextual analysis reveals authorial intentions and ideological signals aimed at the reader.

**Object and Subject of the Research.** The object of the research comprises the works of Western European publicists of the second half of the 19th century dedicated to Kazakh themes. The subject is the representation of the Kazakh image in works by authors such as Jules Verne (*Michael Strogoff*), George Kennan, Otto Finsch, Adolf Brehm, Bronisław Zaleski, and others.

The analysis reveals stages and transformations in the perception of the Kazakhs. In the first half of the century, they were perceived as an exotic object; in the second half, as representatives of a colonized people with a tragic historical fate. This is especially evident in materials related to the uprising of Kenesary Kasymov and the actions of the Russian Empire in the region.

Gradually, the Kazakh steppe began to be viewed as a space for analyzing Russian expansion into the East. Western authors used the fate of the Kazakh people as an example in criticizing imperial policies, turning Kazakh topics into part of a broader geopolitical discourse.

**Scientific Novelty of the Research.**

- For the first time, 19th-century Western European publicistics is considered as an independent source for representing Kazakh themes;
- Western stereotypes related to natural harmony, nomadic philosophy, the image of women, and attitudes toward colonial power have been analyzed;

- A comparative textual and ideological analysis of the Kazakh image in the works of Jules Verne, Zaleski, Finsch, and Brehm has been conducted;
- It is shown how the spiritual-cultural codes of the Kazakh people were interpreted through the prism of Western publicistics.

**Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research.** The results are significant for such fields as intercultural communication, postcolonial literary studies, media representation theory, and ethnographic journalism. Identifying ways of representing the "other" in publicistic discourse, as well as analyzing the ideological foundations of these representations, is relevant to modern media studies and issues of national image.

From a practical standpoint, the research materials can be used in academic courses on journalism, history, literary studies, and cultural studies. The work contributes to mastering interdisciplinary methods for analyzing publicistic texts and studying historical-cultural codes.

**Conclusion.** Thus, Kazakh themes in the works of 19th-century Western European publicists serve not only as objects of ethnographic interest but also as parts of imperial discourse and colonial ideology. The image of the Kazakh in these texts is the result of a complex process of cultural interaction, conflict, and mutual recognition. Harmonious coexistence with nature, fidelity to traditional values, and spiritual resistance to colonial oppression were presented by Western publicists as phenomena that inspire admiration and sometimes romanticized perception.

This dissertation research is among the first comprehensive analyses of the representation of the Kazakh people in Western publicistics. Unlike previous studies that relied primarily on Russian sources and internal colonial discourse, this work opens new scientific horizons through the systematic analysis of Western European materials.

The analysis of stylistic features and cultural-historical codes in publicistic texts has revealed mechanisms for forming the national image. This is important for contemporary science, including media studies, discourse analysis, postcolonial theory, and studies of historical memory.

Furthermore, the findings align with the tasks of spiritual revival, renewal of historical consciousness, and promotion of Kazakhstan’s national image on the international stage. Western views on the Kazakhs in the 19th century remain relevant for modern cultural diplomacy.

This dissertation research continues and develops the existing scientific tradition, offering a comprehensive analysis of the representation of the Kazakh people in Western journalism, which allows for a new perspective on several key aspects. On the one hand, there is sincere interest in Kazakh culture, ethnographic accuracy, and spiritual admiration; on the other hand, colonial attitudes and stereotypical approaches persist. Therefore, analyzing such texts requires consideration not only of their content but also their ideological, philosophical, and historical dimensions.

The attitude of Western European publicists towards the Kazakh theme in the 19th century was complex and often contradictory. On one hand, these texts reveal a genuine interest in Kazakh culture, marked by ethnographic accuracy and a

profound spiritual admiration for the nomadic way of life, traditional values, and heroic epics. On the other hand, they are imbued with colonial attitudes and stereotypical perceptions shaped by the prevailing imperial ideologies of the time. This duality reflects the broader tensions inherent in the colonial gaze, where admiration and exoticization often coexist with notions of cultural superiority and justification for colonial domination. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of these texts must go beyond their surface content to include a critical examination of their ideological underpinnings, historical contexts, and philosophical dimensions. Only through such a multilayered approach can scholars fully understand the mechanisms by which the image of the Kazakh people was constructed and disseminated in Western discourse, revealing the interplay between cultural respect, misrepresentation, and political agendas. This nuanced understanding is essential not only for reconstructing historical narratives but also for informing contemporary discussions on postcolonial identity, cultural representation, and the politics of memory.