

On the eve of major administrative reforms in Russian Central Asia: The 1867 Moscow ethnographic exhibition, a reflection of what was at stake for local tsarist colonial administrations and Central Asian elites

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Doi: 10.5077/journals/connexe.2025.e2428

Abstract

This article examines the representation of Central Asia in the first Russian ethnographic exhibition of 1867 and consider the Paris World's Fair held the same year. It focuses on the pivotal period of 1865-1867, just prior to the creation of the Turkestan General-Governorship, considering the relationship between Central Asian elites and regional tsarist administrations. The construction of a colonial vision of Central Asia was concomitant with the administrative restructuring of the region. The Russian ethnographic exhibition and the Paris World's Fair conveyed an image of the region through artefacts collected mainly by Central Asian mediators, who were mostly Kazakhs, along with one Uzbeks and a Tatar from Tashkent. The Kazakhs belonged above all to the group of *töre*, descendants of khan, to whom the Tsarist authorities had granted political primacy until 1867-1868. The Uzbek and Tatar were merchants trading between Russia and Central Asia. The representations of the peoples of the Russian Empire were part of a global enterprise of modernisation based on knowledge, and the article discusses the forms of agency of Central Asians in this process. Although they were involved in preparing the exhibition, their role in selecting the objects and representing the populations was not fully recognised. They were considered merely as informants.

Keywords: Central Asia, colonial empire, exhibition, ethnography, anthropology, knowledge

Résumé

Cet article analyse la représentation de l'Asie centrale à la première exposition ethnographique russe de 1867, tout en portant un regard sur l'Exposition universelle de Paris qui s'est tenue la même année. Il se concentre sur la période charnière de 1865-1867 précédant tout juste la création du gouvernement-général du Turkestan. L'attention est portée sur les relations entre les élites centrasiatiques et les administrations régionales tsaristes. La construction d'une vision coloniale de l'Asie centrale est concomitante à la restructuration administrative de la région. L'exposition ethnographique russe et l'Exposition universelle de Paris ont véhiculé une image de la région à travers des objets collectés principalement par des médiateurs d'Asie centrale, qui étaient pour la plupart des Kazakhs, ainsi qu'un Ouzbek et un Tatar de Tachkent. Les Kazakhs appartenaient avant tout au groupe des *töre*, descendants du khan, auxquels les autorités tsaristes avaient accordé la primauté politique jusqu'en 1867-1868. L'Ouzbek et le Tatar étaient des marchands qui faisaient du commerce entre la Russie et l'Asie centrale. Les représentations des peuples de l'Empire russe s'inscrivaient dans une entreprise mondiale de modernisation fondée sur la connaissance, et l'article examine les formes d'action des Centrasiatiques dans ce processus. Bien qu'ils aient participé à la préparation de l'exposition, leur rôle dans la sélection des objets et la représentation des populations n'a pas été pleinement reconnu. Ils étaient considérés comme de simples informateurs.

Mots-clés : Asie centrale, empire colonial, exposition, ethnographie, anthropologie, savoir

Introduction

Most European countries began organising their own exhibitions in the second half of the nineteenth century, seeking to compete with their predecessors. The industrial boom and colonial conquests were their breeding grounds. The role of such exhibitions has been widely questioned in historiography, and their success has left its mark on imaginations and representations of the world (Hoffenberg 2001; Geppert 2010; Greenhalgh, 1988). Their ambitions have always been of an ambiguous nature: while developing a scientific discourse on knowledge, they have also embraced the political and colonial aspirations of states. The interest in ethnography and anthropology was shared as much by political and scientific circles as by colonial administrations and the general public. Ethnographic exhibitions were inseparable from the ‘wider context of the collecting, measuring, classifying, picturing, filing, and narrating of colonial Others during the heyday of colonialism’ (Corbey 1993, 338). All felt the need for the legitimisation of colonial empires. The Great exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, held in 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London, launched the trend for ethnographic display and inspired following exhibition in Europe (Auerbach 1999).

This article examines the representation of Central Asia in the first Russian ethnographic exhibition of 1867 and also consider the Paris World’s Fair held the same year. Although Central Asia was not at the heart of the ethnographic exhibition, which celebrated the diversity of the Slavic world, the timing of its preparation and staging made it an important moment for all those involved in the region under Russian rule. Following the conquest of Tashkent, the years 1865-1868 were indeed pivotal for the development of colonial policy in Central Asia, which required the production of knowledge about the region and its peoples. The Russian General Staff and the relevant administrations were well aware of this. M. Krasovskii, who was tasked with studying the Kazakh steppes, introduced his study published in 1868 as follows:

A well-known system for managing the masses (народная масса), which is intended to improve their lives but sometimes achieves the opposite results, must be based on accurate knowledge of all the conditions of their existence (народный быт). Consequently, the more data available, the less erroneous the choice of one or another method for organising administrative affairs in the country can be (Красовский 2007, 5).

In Central Asia, collecting data couldn’t be achieved without local population involvement. To quote Ian Campbell:

the Russian Empire’s encounter with the steppe, though certainly characterised by unequal power relations, was thus an exchange of knowledge, whereby Kazak and tsarist actors represented themselves and one another to one another. Many of these representations had long-lasting social and political repercussions (Campbell 2017, 3).

The exhibitions will be explored with the idea of highlighting the parallel strategies adopted by Russian high-ranking officials in Central Asia and Central Asian political and economic elites in this pivotal period. This approach is inextricably linked to the development of a scientific sphere seeking to modernise the Russian Empire, which was fully aware of its limited knowledge on Central Asia. In this context, the agency of the Central Asian elites is particularly worthy of examination. A specific part will describe how Central Asians are represented through the objects on display and the link between the collections and the integration of various populations into the Empire. The question will be to compare the Russian demands and expectations with the choices of the Central Asians.

The primary sources for this article are essentially the various publications and catalogues associated with the 1867 exhibitions. Two catalogues were published for the Russian Ethnographic Exhibition in 1867 and 1878, respectively (*Всероссийская этнографическая...* 1867; *Этнографическая выставка 1867...* 1878). The two were quite different in their content as was their destination. The 1867 catalogue, published after the exhibition closed, emphasises the programmatic aspect of the exhibition in its introduction, and then focuses on the progress of the exhibition, particularly official visits. It also includes a complete list of people who received medals for participating. This list is absent from the 1878 version, which instead publishes the full minutes of the organising committee's meetings. The introduction recounts the history of preparing and staging the exhibition. The main part is dedicated to the full list of exhibits with a short description. A third publication was also produced, namely an exhibition guide describing the dioramas and objects on display, with specific attention to visitors' impressions (*Путеводитель* 1867). Publications for the Paris World's Fair include a catalogue dedicated specifically to the Russian section (*Catalogue spécial...* 1867) and a collection entitled *L'exposition universelle illustrée*, which published articles throughout the duration of the exhibition (Ducuing 1867). At least two other publications have also been devoted to the iconography of the Russian exhibition, complementing the online collection of objects and photographs from the 1867 exhibition held in the Russian Ethnographic Museum (Российский Этнографический музей) and the Kunstkamera (Кунсткамера - Музей антропологии и этнографии им. Петр Великого РАН) (Калашникова 2008; Соловьева 2022).

The writings of Russian and Central Asian contemporaries provide valuable context for these publications. I would like to warmly thank Sergei Abashin for making available a large number of published sources from the 19th and 20th centuries on his Academia.edu page. The archives in Orenburg, Osmk, Moscow and St Petersburg could not be consulted, and it seems that some items, especially photographs, have not been preserved. Therefore, some questions couldn't have been answered.

Numerous studies have examined the 1867 exhibition, linking its organisation to broader processes at work in colonial societies both in Russia and around the world, the transformations of the Russian Empire, and the history of knowledge and science (Mogilner 2015; Cvetovski 2014; Campbell 2015; Geraci 2001; Yarovshevski 1997). However, the place of Central Asia and the specific mechanisms of its representation at the Moscow exhibition have been much less thoroughly explored. Moreover, these publications contain errors and inaccuracies concerning Central Asian collections and often lack sources for the points they discuss.

This article also refers to the more specific situation of Russian Central Asia, examining its recent conquest and administrative integration (Brower 2003; Morrison 2020; Khalid 1999; Sahadeo 2010; Campbell 2017; Абашин 2007). In addition to providing context, secondary sources were used to gather information about the Central Asian figures involved in the exhibition process.

An empire of knowledge: Premise and organisation of the ethnographic exhibition in Moscow

Anatolii Bogdanov and anthropology

Anatolii Bogdanov (1834-1896), renowned professor of zoology at the Moscow University, was the ideological inspiration, organiser and author of the original plan and programme of the Russian Ethnographic Exhibition. As a member of the Acclimatisation Society, he was sent to Europe in 1859 with the purpose of visiting zoological gardens and museums. Between 1858 and 1864, he organised several zoological exhibitions in Moscow and finally established the Moscow Zoo. He was committed to increasing knowledge about animals with the aim of promoting the introduction of

new species for Russian agriculture. His scientific approach was always focused on disseminating knowledge to a wider audience and for the benefit of the Empire (Костина 2015, 130-131).

His journey through Europe brought him to Leiden, Berlin, Brussels, Paris and London, where he had the possibility to view ethnographic collections on display from the 1830's on.¹ He found the visit of the Crystal Palace exhibition which has been rebuilt with an extended ethnographical section in 1854 at Sydenham Hill,² to be the most impressive: "It featured newly commissioned ethnological models that were used to create a court of natural history, [...] [and] functioned as an ethnological museum and training ground for aspiring scholars" (Qureshi 2013, 362). The Natural History Court consisted of:

tableaux of brightly painted plaster casts of non-European peoples [...] displayed alongside stuffed exotic animals and botanical specimens. [...] Curated by the naturalist Edward Forbes, the tableaux were arranged geographically to demonstrate that 'Animals and plants are not scattered indifferently over the earth's surface' (Nichols 2017, 7).

This visit served as inspiration and motivation for Bogdanov. As he later noted,

visiting London, and especially the British Museum and the Crystal Palace, made me feel ashamed of the pitiful role we played at that time with our scientific handbooks. It inspired me to spend several years supplementing the most important ones through exhibitions (Балаханова 2015, 116).

According to Kerimova and Zolotukhina who worked with many archival sources relating to the 1867 exhibition, "Bogdanov's dream was, in a sense, a reflection of the international trend. The awareness that Russia had been left behind in terms of public displays of academic knowledge was perhaps one of the main driving forces behind the creation of the exhibition" (Kerimova 2022, 113). In the context of the colonial conquests and the development of social sciences, Bogdanov's aim was just as much to build up a knowledge of the Empire in all its diversity. He observed that "the [Russian] public was more familiar with the main characteristics of the peoples of Africa and Australia than with those of the populations living in Russia" (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 1).

Bogdanov's commitment coincided with the period of the "Great Reforms" in Russia, which stemmed from a desire to modernise the empire and assert its status as a major power on a par with the European colonial empires. In this context, the two new sciences of ethnography and anthropology were mobilised to establish an empire of knowledge (Mogilner 2013; Cvetkovski 2014). As in Europe, the Tsarist regime supported these new sciences, viewing them as a "toolkit for exercising power" (Cvetkovski 2014, 2).

Bogdanov conceived the ethnographic exhibition with the aim of popularising anthropology and establishing it on a scientific basis in Russia. He considered anthropology to be more comprehensive and global approach than ethnography, viewing the latter only as a component of the former. The purpose was to use race science as a basis for rationalising the approach to population diversity. However, he adopted a more liberal non-elite approach in which hierarchy was not central. In the context of the exhibition, this scientific imperative was associated with the search for authenticity in the representation of peoples. The "empire of knowledge" presupposed the adoption of these population representations by the public. Thus, as Marina Mogilner points out,

Exhibition as a form of representation of anthropological knowledge was definitely a part of the "European science" to which Russian anthropology wholeheartedly belonged. [...] Exhibitions

1 Royal Ethnographic Museum (Leiden) opened in 1837. Ethnographic collections presented at the Neues Museum (Berlin) in 1856. Ethnographic Gallery at the Louvre (Paris) opened in 1852. Ethnological Gallery at the British Museum (London) opened in 1845.

2 The Crystal Palace in Sydenham was destroyed by fire in 1936.

were, so to speak, spaces of direct communication between the new sciences and the broader public (Mogilner 2013, 24).

The first step happened to be the foundation of the Society of Devotees of Natural Scientists at Moscow University in 1863, which was permitted by the new statute adopted that same year (Балахонова 2015, 124). The activities of learned societies reflected their involvement in the changes taking place in Imperial Russian society. From the 1860s onwards, “the idea of citizenship [гражданственность] took the form of a revitalised civil order, comprising networks of civic associations” (Yaroshevski 1997, 61). These associations were behind initiatives of a scientific, political, and social nature, and the 1867 exhibition is an example of this.

The preparation for the ethnographic exhibition

Under Bogdanov’s influence, the Society of Devotees opened an anthropological section in 1864 and he convinced it to organise the first Russian ethnographic exhibition in Moscow. The organising committee met for the first time in December 1864. Initially, Bogdanov’s idea was to present all the peoples of the world, and he was unsuccessfully in obtaining permission to copy the dioramas at the Crystal Palace. Due to budgetary constraints, the exhibition ultimately focused on the Russian Empire, with the addition of the Slavic peoples of Central and Eastern Europe for geopolitical reasons (Jezernik 2019). The Moscow exhibition offered visitors a microcosm of the Empire in its entirety, with dioramas depicting Slavic and Russian populations alongside those devoted to all the other populations collectively referred to as allogenous. It thus differed from its English predecessor, which only exhibited non-European populations to clearly demonstrate the racial hierarchy. Nevertheless, the expectation in Russia was to see an imperial and colonial representation of peoples: ‘Thus, our Russian exhibition, summarised the *Москва* (Moscow) [newspaper’s] correspondent [in January 1867], becomes Russian-Slavic, especially as the indigenous peoples (*инородцы*) will be represented as secondary and subordinate’ (Майорова 2001, 96).

The preparation and organisation of the exhibition was the responsibility of the Society of Devotees at Moscow University. Therefore, it was neither commissioned nor funded by the Tsarist authorities, but the exhibition programme was officially approved by Alexander II on 15 (28) July 1865 (Соловей 2022, 65). The organising committee was thus able to receive support from administrations, calling on regional ones to help collect items. Statistical committees were particularly involved in the preparation and assisted with the delivery of items from regions to Moscow (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 87).

At the very first meeting of the organising committee, the question of funding was discussed, and it was decided to turn to private donors (*Всероссийская этнографическая... 1867*, 4-5). Vasilii Dashkov (1819-1896) was the principal individual contributor who made the exhibition possible thanks to his donation of 20 000 rubles (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 2-3).³ A renowned patron of the arts and collector from a prominent aristocratic family, he was appointed at the head of the exhibition organisation committee and became in 1868 director of the Moscow Public and Rumyantsev Museum. This same year, he opened an ethnographic section with the objects collected for the exhibition that was to become the future Dashkov Ethnographic Museum (Миллер 1887, vii-xiv).⁴

³ The total budget amounted to 43 000 roubles for expenses and 45 000 for income, including 23 000 from the exhibition ticket office (*Всероссийская этнографическая... 1867*, 91-93).

⁴ The objects are now part of the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum in Saint Petersburg.

The organising committee for the ethnographic exhibition published in its programme the rules for collecting items, which was later published in the newspaper Северная почта, and also sent to local administrations:

For the exhibition, it was decided to display the following items: the most complete costumes typical of the different populations and regions with all their accessories; household items, such as interior decorations, tableware, domestic objects, musical instruments, furniture, toys and children's items, dwellings [...]; busts; photographs; agricultural and craft tools (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 74).

The financial report details the expenses for the purchase of costumes and ethnographic objects. It appears that the acquisition of items from European Russia, the Caucasus, Transcaucasia, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe was at least partially the subject of a financial transaction, but that items collected in Central Asia were donated without financial compensation (*Всероссийская этнографическая... 1867*, 91-93).

Aleksei Fedchenko (1844-1873) and Vasilii Oshanin (1844-1917), two former biology students at Moscow University and members of the Society of devotees of natural scientists, anthropologists and ethnographers, were appointed to head an Asian committee responsible for representing Central Asia, among other territories. This included the Kazakhs, who had been part of the empire since the 18th century, as well as the newly conquered territories. As Bogdanov pointed out: "Each group of tribes represented at the exhibition must be placed in a geographical sequence" (Kerimova 2022, 114). Through their intermediary, letters were sent to regional administrations in Orenburg and Omsk, requesting the collection of ethnographic items. The case of the new administration in Tashkent was slightly different as will be discussed below.

The Russian ethnographic exhibition took place in the Manege building in the centre of Moscow from 23 April to 19 June, hosting 83 048 visitors. The exhibition was divided into three main parts: the first represented the peoples of the Russian Empire and the Slavs; the second presented objects, photographs, drawings and ethnographic studies; and the third was devoted to anthropology (physical anthropology and archaeology). The first part was divided into three sections: indigenous populations, Eastern Slavs and Western and Southern Slavs.

The populations of Central Asia were covered by a statutory definition of indigenous/allogenic (*инородцу*), which defined their rights and their status as subjects of the Empire (Иванова 2004, 191-216). At the exhibition, the Kazakhs were overrepresented due to their longer experience of relations with the Tsarist administration. The Uzbeks, who had only been under the authority of the Turkestan oblast administration for a year, appeared more succinctly and the Kyrgyz who were recently and only partly integrated to the Russian empire, were overlooked. As the ethnic naming of subject peoples was so crucial for colonial administrators (Anderson 1991, 163-185), the populations were also given their own colonial names: 'Sart' for Uzbek,⁵ 'Kirgiz' for Kazakh,⁶

5 The definition of sart and uzbek is very complicated. It was the subject of heated debate which began in the 1860 and continued until the early 1920s, among Russian orientalists, ethnographers and civil servants as well as Central Asian intellectuals (Baldauf 1991; Khalid 1999, 199-209; Абашинов 2007, 25-29 and 95-176).

6 *Kirgiz* in italics is based on the name given to Kazakhs in Russian sources. To some extent, the term was also used for the Kyrgyz. In the article, the Kyrgyz are named according to the transcription of the endogenous denomination except specific mention. The choice of the name *Kirgiz* for the Kazakhs originated in an error made by Russian officials in the first half of the 18th century. Based on a Dutch atlas that mentioned the *Kirgiz* of the Yenisei, it was deduced that the Kazakhs were the descendants of the *Kirgiz* (Ерофеева 2005). Many critics tried to show that the first people concerned never used this term, but this error was not corrected and all official documents referred to them as *Kirgiz* or *Kirgiz-Kaisak*. Chokan Valikhanov explained the use of the same name for the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs on the one hand because of their ethnic kinship and on the other because of their identical anthropological characteristics, language and way of life. He nevertheless asserted that under no circumstances would a Kazakh call himself a Kyrgyz. This error had repercussions on the "authentic" Kyrgyz, who became mountainous *kirgiz* (дикакокаменные киргизы) or *qara-Kirgiz* (кара-киргиз) (Валиханов 1985a, 7).

‘mountain *Kirgiz*’ (*дикокаменные киргизы*) for Kyrgyz. These names reflect the difficulty of matching the ethnic composition with the categorisation system of Tsarist power, as with all the colonial powers (Cohn 1996). Adeeb Khalid rightly notes:

The Russian classificatory project remained mired in problems, and it would flatter the state to credit it with a significant role in defining the parameters of national debate among indigenous intellectuals. Central Asia had been subjected to ethnographic scrutiny since the Russian conquest, but the substantial corpus of literature that emerged had failed to create a stable nomenclature for describing, let alone analysing, the region’s population (Khalid 2015, 269).

In the first section, Central Asia was represented by three groups of mannequins – the *Kirgiz* of Siberia, the *Kirgiz* of Orenburg and the *Sarts* of Tashkent (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 43-44) and in the general section on household items and tools. The mannequins were staged accompanied by various objects, and the décor consisted of several yurts, horses and a camel. These groups were presented on behalf of three different administrations with no collaboration between them: the Governor-Generalship of Western Siberia, the Governor-Generalship of Orenburg and the Turkestan oblast.

At the same time, the 1867 Paris World’s Fair opened its doors from the 1 April to 3 November and included a Russian section (Kazakova 2014). However, the Russian committee responsible for preparing for the Universal Exhibition was completely independent of the Moscow exhibition committee (*Catalogue spécial... 1867*, IX-XI). This committee was under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance and high-ranking officials responsible for industry, agriculture and manufacturing. In September 1866, Aleksandr Butovskii (1814-1890), an economist and senior official at the Ministry of Finance, who chaired the committee overseeing Russia’s participation in the Paris Universal Exhibition, wrote to Vasilii Dashkov. He asked him to postpone the ethnographic exhibition until the following year in order to promote the event in Paris and share the collected artefacts. Dashkov categorically refused, citing the anteriority of the project and the publicity already given to it. He added that “For us Russians, our attention must be first and foremost focused on the success of our first Russian ethnographic exhibition in Moscow” (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 7). Although Butovskii had greater resources and support, the ethnographic exhibition benefited the Slavonic Congress held in Moscow and St Petersburg in May 1867. Many representatives of the Slavic peoples were present and the exhibition gave them a prominent place (Майорова 2001).

None of the governors or Central Asians, who took part in preparing for the ethnographic exhibition, were involved in the Paris event (*Catalogue... 1867*, ix-xi). The Orenburg Auxiliary Committee for the Paris Exhibition was chaired by Nikolai Zalesov (1828-1896), assistant Chief of Staff of the Orenburg Military District. The Orenburg region was mainly represented at the World Exhibition by productions of the Ural Cossaks, and no Kazakh items were included. Western Siberia had no committee of its own and was under the authority of the Irkutsk committee. Kazakh ethnographic items were collected in Semipalatinsk oblast and Semirechye. The Turkestan oblast was not represented at all.

Collaboration of Russian high-ranking official and Central Asian elites for the exhibition

The conquest of Central Asia between 1840s and 1860s gave rise to powerful imagery and sparked heated debates among various Russian figures, including generals, high-ranking officials, and governors. These debates aimed to define policies and strategies to be pursued in the region. At first, new administrative entities were established under the two main existing administrations: The Siberian *Kirgiz* [Kazakh] oblast, created in 1854 and incorporated into the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts in 1868, was under the authority of the West Siberian Governor-Generalship.

The rest of the territories were under the authority of the Orenburg Governor-Generalship. The capture of Tashkent in 1865 was followed by the creation of the Turkestan oblast, which was formally attached to Orenburg. That same year, a commission was set up to determine the status of the newly conquered territories. This resulted in the establishment of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship proclaimed on 23 July 1867. The exhibition took place one month before this crucial decision was made. Therefore, during the preparation of the exhibition in 1866-1867, the governors of the various entities were eager to assert their power so that the administrative reorganisation could take place in their favour. The boundaries of the new administrative entities and the appointments of future governors were pending (Brower 2003, 26-35; Morrison 2020, 168-254).

Mikhail Chernaev (1828-1898), the general who conquered Tashkent and had become Governor of the Turkestan oblast created in 1865, had hoped to be appointed to head the future governor-generalship, but he was dismissed before the exhibition had closed (Gorshenina 2009, 136). Nikolai Kryzhanovskii (1818-1888) was appointed Governor-General of Orenburg in 1864 and remained in this position until his death. In 1866, he went himself to Turkestan and participated in military campaign. Having officially authority over the Turkestan oblast, he sought in vain to retain control over the future administrative entity that was to manage the territories conquered from the Uzbek khanates (Kokand Khanate and the Emirate of Bukhara). The Orenburg General-Governorship had already lost control over the Ufa region in 1865 (Гутьяр 1894, 55-56). Gerasim Kolpakovskii (1819-1896), who had been given command of the Siberian *Kirgiz* oblast in 1858 and of the Semipalatinsk oblast in 1864, continued to play a political role in Central Asia for the next few decades (Morrison 2021, 188-189). The Governor-General of Western Siberia, Aleksandr Dyugamel' (1801-1880), was involved in the initial preparations, but retired in October 1866.

Their involvement in preparing the exhibition and collecting objects is highlighted in the three publications devoted to it. The catalogues indicate the institution or person who sent each object. Medals were also awarded, specifying the service rendered to the exhibition. Alongside the aforementioned generals, the presence of the names of the Central Asian donors enables us to identify the network mobilised in Turkestan and in the Kazakh steppes to showcase the region to Moscow. The generals' competition for prestige and recognition is also evident: the number of models for the Orenburg *Kirgiz* and Siberian *Kirgiz* was the same, and each general sought to present the most visible and symbolic objects on their behalf, such as the yurt.

Siberian *Kirgiz*

Following the receipt of a letter from the exhibition organising committee, Aleksandr Dyugamel' summoned all the *agha-sultan* (senior sultan: *kaz. аға султан, rus. старший султан*)⁷ of the Siberian *Kirgiz* oblast in September 1866. He requested them to collect items for the exhibition. The *agha-sultan* of the Kokchetav district, Chingis Valikhanov (1811-1895), grandson of the Kazakh khan Abylai, was put in charge to collecting objects by his peers, as others were not so eager to take on the task.⁸ He had studied at the Omsk Cadet Corps and had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Russian army. Always close to the Tsarist governors, he had held the post of *agha-sultan* since 1834. In 1850, the Imperial Russian Geographical Society thanked him for donating a nine-piece male costume (Валиханов 1968, 237) and he later gave his father's helmet, coat of mail and other accessories to Alexander Geins (1834-1892) who visited him in 1865 on a study mission concerning the Kazakh economy and law (Валиханов 1968, 239; Малышев 1991, 75).

⁷ *Agha sultan* was an official elective position created after 1822 to replace the khan's authority, whose function was to administer Kazakh districts under the supervision of Russian military administration. Even if it was not always the case, the *agha-sultan* should be chosen among the sultans, descendant of khans and belonging to the privileged social group called *töre*. This preference ended with the new regulations in 1867-1868.

⁸ Report by Dzhenev, *agha-sultan* from Atbasar district, Центральный государственный архив Республики Казахстан. Ф. 345, Оп. 1, Д. 874, Л. 26-27.

His son, Chokan Valikhanov (1835-1865), also a graduate of the Omsk Cadet Corps, was a renowned ethnographer and orientalist during his lifetime and was well introduced in Russian intellectual, scientific and political circles.⁹ In 1862, Chokan presented himself as a candidate for the position of *asha-sultan* of the Atbasar district, but Dyugamel' opposed him, having been offended that Chokan had been presented to the Tsar without his intermediary.¹⁰ The balance of power was fragile and depended on relations with high-ranking regional officials. Chingis Valikhanov, who was highly respected in the steppes, faced the same challenge: his re-election was put on hold in both 1863 and 1866 before finally being confirmed by Dyugamel'.¹¹ The role of Central Asian mediators entailed protecting their compatriots while also acting as representatives of tsarist power, which resulted in complex relationships with Russian officials (Hallez 2022).



Figure 1. Chingis Valikhanov in the middle of influent Kazakhs gathered to meet with the Tsarevich Nikolai Romanov (Omsk, 1891) (Picture taken probably by Georgii Katanaev)

- ⁹ Chokan Valikhanov impressed Russian scientists and high-ranking officials alike. Pavel Nebol'sin, ethnographer and member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, said of him: "With one exception, none [of the Kazakhs encountered in Saint Petersburg] stood out in any particular way.[...] Chokan Valikhanov gave a lecture to the Russian Geographical Society, revealing independent and truly humanistic views and complete erudition" (Валиханов 1868, 535). Lev Plotnikov, a Russian official who served in Orenburg and in the Bukey Horde, recounts: "I met Sultan [Chokan] Valikhanov in Saint Petersburg and spent some of my best evenings with him, [...] he is a unique phenomenon among the *Kirgiz* and in our Orenburg steppes, and we will have to wait a long time for another such prodigy" (Валиханов 1868, 536). He even had an entry in the Brockhaus and Efron encyclopaedic dictionary (Грумм-Гржимайло Григорий, 1891. "Валиханов Чеккан Чингисович", *Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона*, СПб.: Типо-литография И.А. Ефрона, 415).
- ¹⁰ Geins wrote in his diary of 1865: "Senator E.P. Kovalevskii, former director of the Asiatic Department, says that, according to the expedition to Kashgar and the report made by Chokan, it is fair to declare him a brilliant young man. Unfortunately, he was not understood. The Siberian administration took offence at the fact that Chokan had been presented to the sovereign in Peterburg without his intermediary and that he had been praised so highly. There began a series of insults and quibbles that drove him to his grave this year [1865]" (Гейнс 1897, 237). In 1864, he accompanied General Chernaev on his campaign in the south-east of what is now Kazakhstan, before falling ill. Although the military circles around Dyugamel' were against him, General Kolpakovskii supported him. He died the following year.
- ¹¹ In 1863, 300 complaints filed by Kazakhs had targeted Chingis Valikhanov during his previous term. He managed to obtain decisions from the *bii* congresses that exonerated him from any failure in the execution of duties. In 1866, the situation was similar, but everything was resolved more quickly. Valikhanov wrote a letter to the general governor explaining that these complaints were all false and contributed to the destabilisation of Russian power in the steppes (Валиханов 1968, 182-185).

Chingis Valikhanov carried out the task he had been given. His precise description of Kazakh craft products and their production locations related by Geins in 1865 revealed Valikhanov's knowledge of the Kazakhs' material culture and his acquaintance with the master craftsmen who produced it (Гейнс 1897, 254-256). For the exhibition, he collected a large number of objects, including clothing, utensils and miscellaneous items, a list of which has been kept.¹² This ensemble was completed by a yurt containing all the interior decorations, which was used to stage the exhibition. At no point is there any mention of money; it was a donation with no direct consideration as had previously been the case for a costume and his father's items. His name as a donor was thus clearly mentioned and he received a gold medal from the exhibition with his name at the top of the list.

As the stakes were so high, General Kolpakovskii, who was a subordinate of Dyugamel', also wanted to contribute to the collection and was awarded a second-class medal of honour "for [his] help in presenting *Kirgiz* objects from his oblast" (*Всероссийская этнографическая...* 1867, 100). He assigned Aryngazy Hankozhin [Hangozhin] (1831-?), a descendant of Kazakh khans like Chingis Valikhanov, to collect items. Aryngazy is presented as the agha-sultan of the Semipalatinsk district (*Этнографическая выставка 1867...* 1878, 43). His presence was thus directly linked to Kolpakovskii, the governor of the oblast of the same name. However, this Semipalatinsk district did not actually exist and Aryngazy was never an *agha-sultan*. Nevertheless, he belonged to a family line that had been collaborating with the Russian authorities for two generations. His father, Hankozhi Tatenev, had been *agha-sultan* of the Bayan-Aul district between 1851 and 1853, but his successor was Musa Shormanov (1819-1884), who remained in office until 1868. Nor does Aryngazy Hankozhin appear in the available sources as the administrator of his Samek-Baseitein volost' either (Тилеке 1995, 29-40). Hankozha had achieved the rank of captain in 1830 and was always considered loyal to Russian rule, as was his grandfather Major Taten Urusov who was part of the delegations of Kazakh sultans from the Middle Horde (*zhuz*)¹³ to Saint-Petersburg in 1803 and 1806 (Жаһаев 2006, 495-496). Although Aryngazy was not elected to positions of responsibility, he remained a very influential and wealthy figure in the region and his sons were subsequently elected as volost' administrator and *bii* (local judges). Hankozhin received a silver medal for his donations, which also included clothing, utensils, various other items, and a yurt.

Orenburg Kirgiz

Governor-General Kryzhanovskii played a key role in the preparations for the exhibition. While Dûgamel', like Kolpakovskii, received a second-rate medal of honour, Kryzhanovskii was awarded the most important one, the superior medal of honour. The accompanying comment highlights his enthusiasm and support for the project, as well as the creation of a specific Orenburg committee. It also mentions his desire to present the Orenburg Governor-Generalship and his help in compiling collections from his region (*Всероссийская этнографическая...* 1867, 96). However, the main actor in Orenburg was General Lev Ballyuzek (1822-1879), who took up his post in 1865 at the head of the *Kirgiz* regional administration (Областное киргизское управление). He was appointed by Kryzhanovskii to head the Orenburg committee responsible for preparing the collections for the Moscow exhibition and received the same award as Kryzhanovskii, albeit with a more succinct comment (*Всероссийская этнографическая...* 1867, 97). The available documents do not allow the Kazakhs who helped to collect the objects to be formally identified. All of the objects presented at the exhibition from the Orenburg region are noted as gifts from Kryzhanovskii himself. Ballyuzek's name was later added too, but no Kazakh names were ever mentioned. Kryzhanovskii wanted to appropriate all the prestige resulting from the donation of the objects.

¹² Центральный государственный архив Республики Казахстан. Ф. 345, Оп. 1, Д. 874, Л. 38-41 об.

¹³ Kazakh society was structured around lineage groups, also called tribes (*kaz. py*) which were divided into three larger entities. These three *zhuz* or Horde (senior, middle and junior) occupied its own geographical zone, respectively the south, the centre and east, and the west of modern Kazakhstan.

He also appeared as a financial contributor, offering the sum of 1,083 roubles to support the committee's operations. Additionally, 600 roubles were earmarked for the purchase of an album of drawings by Vladimir Plotnikov (1832-1875). Plotnikov received a silver medal for the album, but the documents consulted made no mention of his involvement in preparing for the exhibition, despite him working under the supervision of Ballyuzek. Having taken up his post in the Kazakh steppes south of Orenburg in 1857, he knew the region inside out, being appreciated by the local population (Масанов 1965).

The objects were collected by the committee set up by Kryzhanovskii. As we have seen for the 'Siberian Kirgiz', it was customary for the administration to delegate the task to local Central Asian representatives, with whom the Tsarist high ranking officials worked most closely. These influential figures were crucial informants for the administration, as well as for the military and scientists sent to Central Asia (Ohayon 2015; Campbell 2017). Some of them undertook their own ethnographic research and were accepted as members of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society; the most notable example is Chokan Valikhanov. In the Orenburg region, Derbisali Berkimbaev (1837-1913), leader of Zhagalbaily lineages,¹⁴ occupied a privileged position and later obtained the rare title of public servant with special missions (чиновник особых поручений).¹⁵ At Kryzhanovskii's request, Berkimbaev endeavoured to convince Kazakh lineage leaders of the merits of building the Aktyubinsk fort, the project for which had provoked rebellions in 1866-67. Ballyuzek, the governor of Turgai oblast from 1869, built the fort that same year thanks to Berkimbaev's effort to ease the conflicts. In 1879, Berkimbaev became a member of the Orenburg branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, symbolising his contribution to regional studies. Although there are no documents confirming his involvement in the preparations for the exhibition, he seems to be the most likely candidate for the role assumed by Valikhanov and Hankozhin in the Siberian Kirgiz oblast. He later became a member of the Turgai oblast support committee for the 1896 All-Russian Industrial and Arts Exhibition (Султангалиева 2020; Байдосов 2007).

Another potential candidate could have been Muhammed-Galii Tyaukin who was also closely associated with the Russian authorities and to the ethnographer Pavel Nebol'sin (1817-1893). Tyaukin sent Nebol'sin Kazakh artefacts in the 1850s, which are now housed in the Kunstkamera (Небольсин 1860). However, these artefacts were not included in the collections exhibited in 1867. Tyaukin had fallen from grace in 1866 and Kryzhanovskii even had him arrested (Кыдыралин 2016).

Tashkent

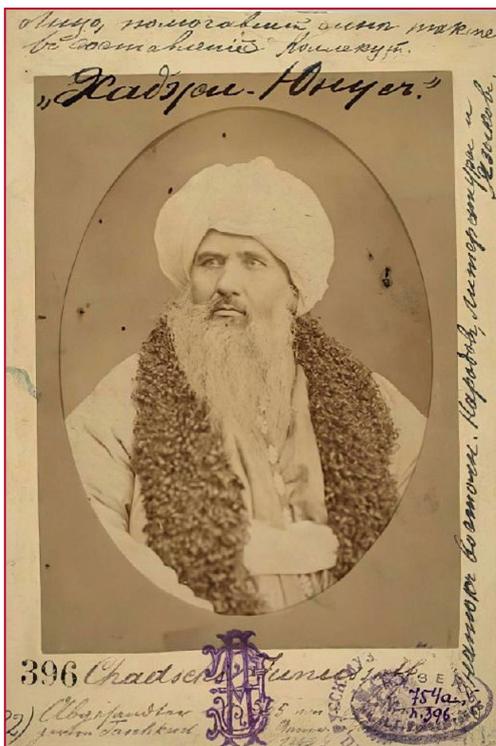
The last set of exhibits prepared by the Governor of Turkestan was much more modest, reflecting the very recent Russian presence in the region and the unclear administrative situation. Nevertheless, Chernayev felt it was important to participate in the exhibition in order to give Turkestan a place in the Empire. His future was in question, and he had to make the most of every opportunity to promote his work. He was awarded a second-class medal of honour in recognition of the resources made available for collecting objects as well as his desire to publicise 'the productive capacities of the Turkestan oblast'. This is a crucial point, and one that all future Governor-Generals of Turkestan will have to address. Jeff Sahadeo notes in his monograph on colonial society in Tashkent that "Russian officers, as they marched their troops south from the Kazakh steppe, encountered a dynamic society that belied many of their images of Asian stagnation and backwardness" (Sahadeo 2012, 23).

¹⁴ Zhagalbaily lineage group belongs to the Zhetiru inside the Junior *zhuz* and inhabited mainly around Aktyubinsk (Востров 1968, 206-210).

¹⁵ Only 6 Kazakhs received this title (Sultangaliev 2015).

The list of objects from Turkestan indicates a gift from Chernaev, including a chest containing a large amount of women’s jewellery (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 61). As with the objects from Orenburg, their origin is unknown, and they are attributed to Chernaev. Before the conquest, Russians had few relays in Tashkent and the main Uzbek figure to engage in relationships with the future conquerors was Said Azimbai Muhammadbaev (1825-1881). He was actively involved in trade with Russia and opposed to the the Kokand Khanate’s domination over Tashkent (Sahadeo 2012, 21-22; Brower 2003, 73-74; Morrison 2021, 247,272). In 1866, he presided over the newly formed body responsible for managing the indigenous population, demonstrating a progressive orientation, speaking Russian and opposing slavery. On 24 March 1867 he was presented to Tsar Aleksandr II in St Petersburg as a member of a special Turkestani delegation and was awarded a diploma (грамота) for helping to free Russian slaves; he was also given the title of hereditary honorary citizen. Nikolai Ostroumov (1846-1930), a renowned orientalist, ethnographer and educator who moved to Turkestan in 1877, described him as follows: “Long before any of his compatriots, he understood the advantages of a rapprochement with the Russians, seizing every opportunity to demonstrate his willingness to assist the Russian regional administration” (Остроумов 1896, 106-107). Surprisingly, the Turkestani delegation, supported by Kryzhanovskii and Chernaev didn’t attend the ethnographic exhibition, leaving for their home on 4 April (Хазреталикызы 2020).

Unlike in the case of the Orenburg *Kirgiz* oblast, Chernaev is not the only one to be credited for the items collected from Turkestan. Two costumes, female and male intitled “Sart from Taskhent” are attributed to Alim-Hodzha Yunusov (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 44). The donator was a rich Tatar merchant who studied at Kazan University and settled in Tashkent, probably following the Russian conquest. He had previously travelled to Europe, Africa and the Middle East, performing the *Hajj*. He was a renowned connoisseur of Islam and Eastern cultures (Стремоухов 1883). In the early 1870s, silk was mainly imported from the Bukhara Emirate or the Kokand Khanate, but he was the first to attempt to develop the silk industry in Tashkent by bringing in Japanese silkworms via his Moscow connections (Петровский 1874, 58). Throughout the second half of the 19th century, he remained an important figure in Tashkent.



In the first months of 1866, Chernayev commissioned him to bring live animals for the zoo and a collection of industrial, agricultural and natural samples to Moscow. This collection was given to Society of Devotees of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography which studied the samples with high interest (Котомина 2024, 207). Unlike the Sart costumes donated by Alim-Hodzha Yunusov (Figure 2), the collection did not exactly match what the organising committee had in mind. Chernayev’s choice reflected his desire to showcase Turkestan’s economic potential, rather than being strictly ethnographic or anthropological in nature. Consequently, it was given to the museum of the Moscow agricultural society (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 81).

Figure 2. Alim-Hodzha Yunusov [Юнус Хаджи] (Photograph annotated by August Eichhorn in the 1870’: “the person who helped me assemble the collections. A connoisseur of Oriental peoples, literature and languages”)

Central Asia at the Paris World Fair

As stated above, the persons involved in collecting items for the Paris World Fair were distinct from those mentioned for the Russian ethnographic exhibition. The Russian high-ranking officials in Central Asia prioritised the Moscow exhibition, which was to be visited by the Tsar and many other prominent political figures. Furthermore, as the organisers of the Paris World Fair were primarily concerned with the economic aspect, the Russian section paid less attention to presenting ethnographic items, focusing instead on animal skins, wool and minerals from the Kazakh steppes. Apart from the animal skins, the other products were presented by Russian entrepreneurs for the ores¹⁶ and by the Ural Cossacks for the wool ‘from *Kirgiz jebaga* sheep’.¹⁷ No Kazakh products were presented. For Central Asia, the ethnographic part consisted of objects collected in the Siberian *Kirgiz Oblast* and the Semirechye. The Orenburg Governorate did not send any Kazakh objects.

No documents are currently available to establish the Russian intermediaries involved in collecting from the Kazakhs. The only name that appears is that of Dmitrii Sorokin, a Russian official in Kopal (the former Tsarist administrative centre of the Alatau district in Semirechye), who donated tiger, snow leopard and lynx skins (*Catalogue... 1867*, 146). He also presented a Kazakh saddle adorned with silver plates and accessories. The Kazakh historian, Azamat Aqylbekov, claims without providing references that the objects were collected at the request of Mikhail Peremyshl’skii (1813-?), but the latter was head of the Alatau district only until 1858,¹⁸ before retiring for health reasons and returning to Russia. He was replaced by Kolpakovskii, whose correspondence mentions the Kazakh sultan Tezek’s donation of certain objects for the Paris exhibition (АҚЫЛБЕКОВ 2013, 131-132). Central Asian donors were again mainly Kazakhs, two individuals and a group of four persons, to whom was added one Uzbek living in the Kazakh steppes.

The two individual Kazakh contributors were Tezek Ablaihanov (1820-1879), a relative of Chingiz Valikhanov (*Catalogue... 1867*, 147,257), and Dzhangyr Uvaliev (1811-?), a descendant of Barak-khan (*Catalogue... 1867*, 105). The French catalogue connects Tezek (see [Figure 3](#)) and Dzhangyr to Omsk, suggesting that the objects passed through this city.

Tezek became *agha-sultan* of the Kazakh Alban and Suan lineages¹⁹ inhabiting the Semirechye region in 1849. He was very close to Peremyshl’skii and subsequently to Kolpakovskii who helped him to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 1862 in recognition of his part in the capture of Pishpek from the Kokand Khanate. He welcomed all distinguished guests passing through Semirechye to his aul, including Petr Semenov and Plotnikov in 1857, Geins in 1865 and Chokan Valikhanov twice, in 1856 and 1864-1865. Influential and wealthy, he was held in high regard throughout the region. From 1864, the political situation became complicated for him due to the Muslim rebellion in Xinjiang and



Figure 3. Sultan Tezek
(Drawing by Pavel Kosharov in 1857)

¹⁶ The minerals presented were copper, lead, coal, iron, graphite and manganese clay (*Catalogue spécial... 1867*, 127-130).

¹⁷ “Jebaga. It is wool felted rather densely on rams during winter. This jibaga is removed from rams in spring. The *Kirgiz* sew warm clothes from it, having quilted it quite often to the upper cover, without which it should spread out, and, besides, they wrap their legs with it during the winter” (Дмитриев 2008, 493).

¹⁸ In 1848 the *Kirgiz* bailiff of the Great Horde (Пристав Большой орды) was established after an agreement done with the sultan of the Great Horde which marked their recognition of Russian sovereignty. In 1856, it was reformed as the Alatau district and was part of the Semipalatinsk oblast. The administrative centre was moved from Kopal to Vernyi in 1854 (Жүрсімбаев 2022).

¹⁹ These two lineage groups of the elder *zhuz* were close relatives according to genealogy and nomadised between the eastern Semirechye under Russian control and the Ili region dependent on China (Востров 1968, 129-132).

the strengthening of Russian control over Semirechye. Many of the Alban and Suan lineages were crossing the Russo-Chinese border, putting him in a difficult position with the Russian authorities. Finally, he was arrested in 1868 for allegedly attempting to flee to China and spent a year in prison. The establishment of the Semirechye oblast in 1867 sounded like the end of his authority in the region (Хафизова 2019, 314-338).

Between 1866 and 1867, he should have met with Dmitrii Sorokin, living close to Kopal. Like him, Tezek donated tiger and snow leopard skins, two highly symbolic Central Asian animals. Towards the end of the 19th century, tiger hunting in Semirechye became the subject of numerous stories and images in Europe and Russia (Сиротин 1913; Cobbold 1900, 118-132). He also donated Siberian deer antlers and a male Kazakh costume.

Dzhangyr Uvaliev is listed in the French catalogue with the same title of ‘*Kirgiz sultan*’ as Tezek. However, his position was much less powerful. He only held the position of volost administrator in the Kokpekty district, East of the Semipalatinsk oblast (Жаһаев 2006, 483-484). The Russian administration described him as having a “gentle nature and good mental abilities. Rich” (Жаһаев 2006, 329). In 1868, his son, Dosym Dzhangirov was candidate for the position of *agha-sultan*; however, this position was abolished when the new regulations came into force. Hankozha Tatenov, father of Aryngazy Hankozhin, became *agha-sultan* of the Kokpekty district after 1853 and was in relations with Dzhangyr Uvaliev as was Aryngazy. While there were important links between the various Kazakh sultans – including Chingis Valikhanov, Tezek, Aryngazy Hankozhin, and Dzhangyr Uvaliev – no sources provide information about any exchanges they may have had regarding these two distant exhibitions.

A female costume was donated by a group of four Kazakhs from the Semipalatinsk oblast: “Soltibaeff”, “Djamonbaloff”, “Kunanbaev” and “Djaldaouloff” (*Catalogue...* 1867, 257). The first two were the sons of two brothers, Soltybai (Жаһаев 2006, 250) and Zhamantai (Жаһаев 2006, 229) Bopy-uly descendants of Khan Abilmambet, who were volost’ administrators in the outer Ayagoz district. The two contributors could be identified as Seilkhan Soltybaev, administrator of the Sivanovskaya volost from 1839 to 1842 and considered wealthy (Жаһаев 2006, 252), and Bokbasar Dhamantaev, also a wealthy *bii* of the Nazarovskaya volost (Жаһаев 2006, 279).

The son of Kunanbai cited in the French catalogue is believed to be Abai Kunanbaev (1845-1904), a renowned *akyn* (poet improvisator). Following the death of his elder brother Kudaiberdy in 1866, he became administrator of the Kushik-Tobyktinskaya volost. His father, Kunanbai Uskenbaev (1804-1886), who was not a descendant of kazakh khan but belonged to a powerful family line from the Argyn lineage group,²⁰ was one of the most influential and respected figures in the Semipalatinsk oblast. He was *agha-sultan* of the Karkaralinsk district from 1849 to 1852 before being arrested for abuse of power. He was released after Chingiz Valikhanov interceding with the general governor of Western Siberia in Omsk. Kunanbai was also close to Barak Soltybaev (1790-1865), the elder brother of Seilkhan, who was *agha-sultan* of the Ayagoz district. Sultan Barak supported Kunanbai on many occasions (Янушкевич 2006, 118-121).

The fourth donor, ‘Djadaouloff,’ could not be identified but it is clear that the four Kazakhs mentioned belonged to the political elite of the Semipalatinsk oblast and maintained close relations with each other and with the Kazakh elites of other regions, notably Chingis Valikhanov. This network brought together family lines that had opted for a form of collaboration with the tsarist regime at the beginning of the 19th century. As noted, relations with the Russian authorities remained fragile necessitating the demonstration of loyalty to the Empire in order to preserve one’s position. This loyalty could be demonstrated through support in military campaigns or by providing assistance to

²⁰ The Argyn lineage group belonged to the Middle *zhuz* and was the most numerous one among all Kazakh lineage groups. They mainly inhabited Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblast (Central present-day Kazakhstan) (Ғабжалилов 2010, 5-31).

Russian expeditions in the steppes. Participation in the preparation of the ethnographic exhibition was an opportunity to secure the goodwill of the Russian administration.

Surprisingly, the yurt displayed in Paris wasn't donated by a Kazakh²¹ but by a very wealthy Uzbek merchant originally from Tashkent and based in Semipalatinsk oblast. Some merchants from Tashkent and Bukhara moved to Semipalatinsk at the very beginning of the 19th century, where they prospered by developing their commercial activities as well as horse breeding (Янушкевич 2006, 116-117). One of them was Mir-Kuban Ayupov ("Markouban Aoupof") (*Catalogue...* 1867, 247), who did business between Kashgar, Tashkent, Bukhara, the Kazakh steppes and Russia (Гуляева 2016). He maintained close relations with high-ranking Russian officials and welcomed expeditions crossing the steppes. Chokan Valikhanov stopped at his house to prepare his secret mission to Kashgar in 1858-59, which made him famous (Валиханов 1985b). Ayupov financed the merchant caravan to ensure Valikhanov's anonymity and was rewarded by the Russian authorities after the mission's success (Ермекбай 2013, 102-103).

Representations of Central Asians through the objects on display

The ethnographic exhibit consisted of a main section featuring dioramas and a section 'daily life' presenting various objects and tools used of the lifestyle in display cases. The collection was completed with photographs and drawings. As mentioned previously, the artefacts displayed at the ethnographic exhibition were transferred to the Dashkov Ethnographic Museum. An initial catalogue of the museum's holdings was published in 1877 (Керцелли 1877), but the complete inventory was not compiled until 1887 by Professor Vsevolod Miller (1848-1913), the museum's curator (Миллер 1887). Special attention was paid to indigenous terminology. All objects were labelled with the appropriate term in the language of each relevant people, as was the case in the sketchbooks and was reproduced in the above catalogues.

Dioramas

Similar to the exhibition at the Crystal Palace, the dioramas were to depict each people's way of life, incorporating elements of their natural environment (flora and fauna). In their instructions to the artists, the organising committee asked them to draw on existing ethnographic knowledge and to include distinctive features of each population based on the artefacts collected. The publications, which presented descriptions of the populations of the Russian Empire, shared this essentialist tendencies so prevalent in 19th-century Europe. The faces of the mannequins were to be modelled on photographs, with particular attention paid to highlighting the characteristic features of each population (Figures 4 & 5). While there was no question of a human zoo, representatives of certain peoples – two Estonians, one Bashkir, and two Kazakhs – were sent to Moscow for specific tasks and served as models for mannequins copying their faces. These mannequins were identified by the name of their model, which was in accordance with the instructions given for busts and photographs (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 40, 42, 43). This choice was guided by Bogdanov's desire for authenticity. The exhibition guide published in 1867 describes the various groups of mannequins, including those of interest to us:

Before us now stand the Asiatic indigenous-nomads (*Азиатские инородцы-кочевники*). We see inhabitants of the Turkestan oblast, two Sarts (82 and 83). [...] Further along the left wall of the Manege is a row of felt yurts (*кибиток*) around which stand groups of *Kirgiz*, Turkmen²² and other

²¹ Azamat Akyzbekov incorrectly attributes the donation of this yurt to Tezek, which is repeated in articles and in the press in Kazakhstan (АҚЫЛБЕКОВ 2013, 131).

²² The costumes worn by the two Turkmen models originated in the Stavropol region of the North Caucasus, home to a Turkmen population. The Turkmens of Stavropol had been displaced from the Mangyshlak region in the 17th century by the Kalmyk ruler Kho Orluk (1580-1644).

Central Asians from the steppes of our possessions. They occupy the entire middle section of the Manege. [...] The talent of the artist [Aleksandr] Lyubimov who worked on this group was not so noticeable; all these faces appear to be made of bronze, as if no thought or feeling has ever touched them. This comment applies to all the faces in this section. The *Kirgiz* (67-71) are no exception. The scene in front of which we stopped depicts a wealthy *Kirgiz* and a *Kirgiz* woman, visiting someone of lower social standing, who is serving them (the figure standing). Further on, a poor man waits for the crumbs that might fall from the blessed couple's table. The next highly ornate subject comprises two *Kirgiz* and horses. The richness of the costumes in this second scene is similar to that of the previous two wealthy *Kirgiz*, but it exceeds them in the life it inspires. Next to this group are two more *Kirgiz*, identical to the previous ones. There is also a very interesting *Kirgiz* yurt (юрта) and its interior decorations; the bed inside is particularly original (*Путеводитель* 1867, 31-32).



Figure 4. Kazakh woman with a *saukele* (bride's headdress), 1867 (1867 mannequin dressed in costume given by Nikolai Kryzhanovskii, photographed by Thorvald Mitreuter in the 1880's) Калашникова 2008, 222



Figure 5. Kirgiz and Kirgiz woman of the Bukei Interior Horde, lake Elton (10 July 1863). This woman served as model for the previous mannequin (Photograph by Grigorii Fedchenko, РЭМ 8764-16525)

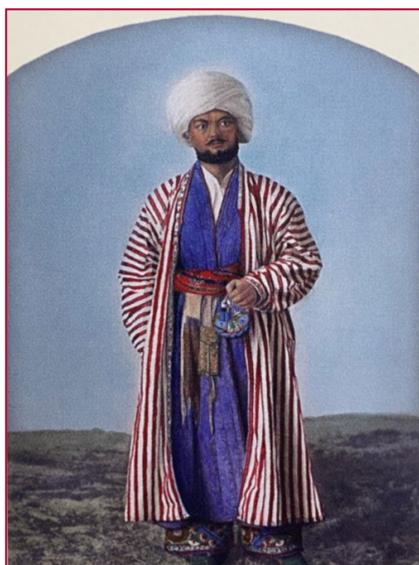


Figure 6. Sart from Tashkent (1867 mannequin dressed in costume given by Hadzhi Yunusov and photographed by Thorvald Mitreuter in the 1880's) Калашникова 2008, 221

The aim of the dioramas was to show the “physiognomy”, way of life and state of development of different societies, using terminology and procedures developed in anthropology and widely disseminated in the popular representations of the Other. The richness of the costumes was a general feature of most mannequins, but the guide emphasised the exceptional character of the Central Asian ones (*Путеводитель* 1867, 26-27). The intention was to emphasise the cultures of the peoples presented. Above all, the construction of an image of the Other was transmitted through the lifestyle of the wealthier classes. The presentation of the social structure was most often caricatured, as shown in the above-described scene. For the Central Asian donors, the choice of objects on display was based on a desire to impress the public and affirm the richness of their culture, as well as demonstrate their generous involvement in a Russian initiative. The authenticity that Bogdanov held dear was undermined, and donors from Central and Eastern Europe opted for the same approach. The dioramas depicting Russians were more in line with Bogdanov’s intentions, as they represented peasant life with less pomp and circumstance. In this sense, the supposed superiority of Russians over indigenous people was not apparent drawing criticism towards the organising committee (Knight 2011, 19-24).

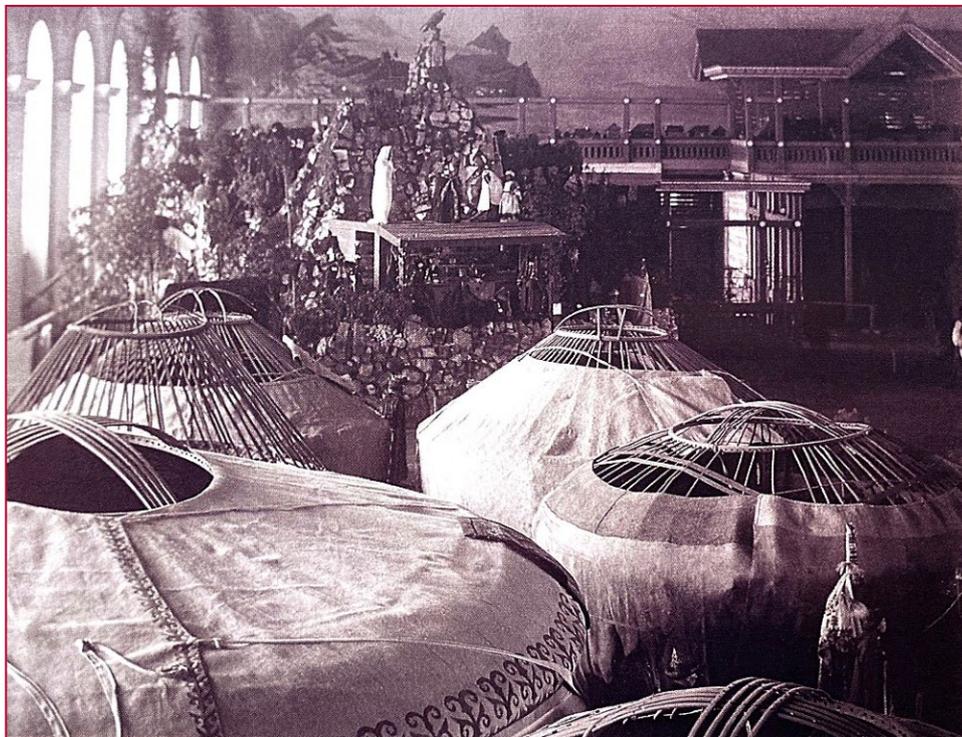


Figure 7. Group of yurts at the 1867 ethnographic exhibition with a Kazakh woman wearing a saukele on the right side between the yurts

Yurt

The dioramas were accompanied by yurts assembled side by side: one Kalmyk, one Bashkir, and three Kazakhs. The nomadic nature of the Kazakhs was associated with the horse and camel included in the scenes, but the major symbol became the yurt (Figure 8). The yurt is still an essential part of any exhibition relating to the nomadic world and has a definite effect on the public. Kryzhanovskii, Valikhanov and Hanzozhin each donated one (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 43). The guide pointed out Valikhanov’s particularly rich one. Already in 1865, Geins, who visited Valikhanov during his expedition across the Kazakh steppe, was impressed by the guest yurt: “The yurt, prepared by Chingis for us, exceeded anything I had seen before. It was a ten-panel one, i.e. *kerege* consisted of 10 latticework. [...] The yurt was covered with beautiful, embroidered white felt” (Гейнс 1897, 263). The opulence of the guest yurt, ақ үй (white yurt) as symbol of richness

and prosperity, showed the authority of the host. The gift of impressive white yurt by Valikhanov and Hanzozhin for the exhibition should be interpreted in that way. In his work on Kazakh yurts, the ethnographer Marat Mukanov explained that the differences in yurts revealed everyone's social status (Муқанов 1981, 211).

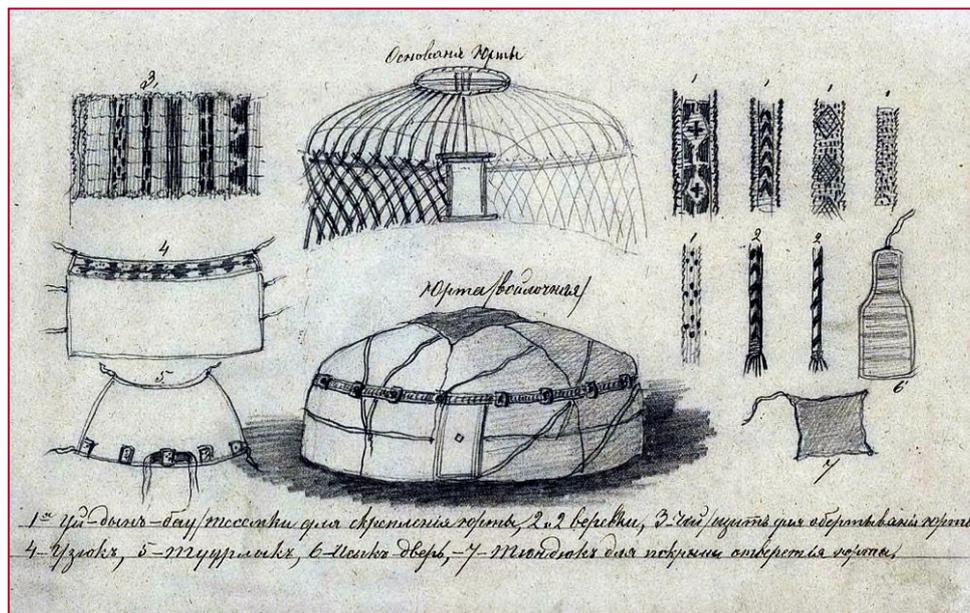


Figure 8. Yurt with details on ornamentation and fastenings
(Drawing by Pavel Kosharov, Альбом “Виды природы в Тянь-Шане”, n°118742/12)

Valikhanov also commissioned two Kazakhs, Maike Sarymsakov (Figure 9) and Tungat Saukenbaev, to transport the Kazakh collections to Moscow, where their main task was to assemble the yurts. Each of them had served as a model for a mannequin. There isn't much information about them, but they must have been master craftsmen. Maike Sarymsakov was from the Akkiik-Kulansu-Koily volost,²³ which Valikhanov described to Geins as the volost of his Kokchetav uezd being renowned for its gunsmiths and silversmiths (Гейнс 1897, 255). Tungat Saukenbaev was from the Karson-Kernei volost²⁴ in the Karkaralinsk uezd, which was quite far from Kokchetav. He was most likely a respected craftsman specialising in the manufacture of yurts (*yūui*). According to Valikhanov's expectations, the display of the yurt had to be perfect in order to assert his position.

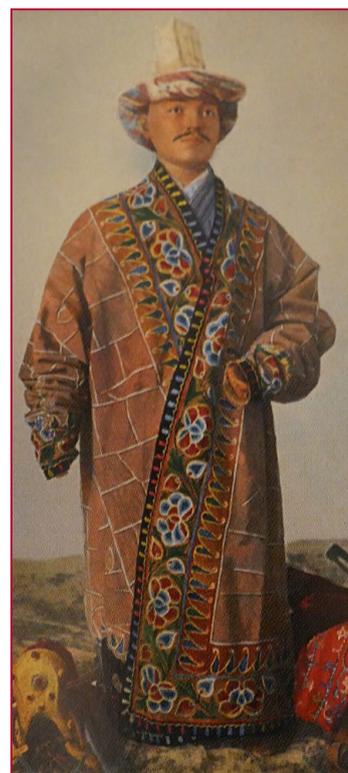


Figure 9. Maike Sarymsakov of the Kokchetav district
(1867 mannequin dressed within costume given by Chingis Valikhanov,
photographed by Thorvald Mitreuter in the 1880's)
Калашникова 2008, 220

²³ Akkiik, Kulansu and Koily were three lineages from the Atygai-Argyn lineage group of the Middle zhuz.

²⁴ Karson and Kernei were two lineages from the Qarakesek-Argyn lineage group of the Middle zhuz.

During the Tsar's visit on 24 April 1867, the two yurts belonging to Valikhanov and Hankozhin attracted his particular attention. The Tsar spoke briefly with the two Kazakhs present, one of whom spoke Russian (*Всероссийская этнографическая...* 1867, 54). The yurt did not only fascinate Europeans; one of the Uzbek riddles collected by Ostroumov in Tashkent describes the “Kirgiz yurt” as follows: “Have you ever seen such a monster? In its body, no soul to move; only one eye shines at the top; many bones assemble it and if you remove its skin, no blood will flow; when it opens its mouth, its breath will attract men from far away who will never try to escape” (Остроумов 1896, 162).

The Kazakh yurts exhibited in Paris and Moscow in 1867 were probably the first to be shown in Europe. The term ‘yurt’ had not yet been established in the 19th century to name the mobile dwellings of the Turko-Mongol populations. The two exhibitions in Moscow and Paris helped to spread the term, which only became predominant in Western discourse at the beginning of the 20th century. Western knowledge imposed this term, whose meaning for the populations concerned was quite different. The Russians borrowed the Turkic word ‘yurt’, which had been found in Russian sources since at least the 15th century and added the ending -a to it in order to associate it with names of dwellings, particularly the *isba*. The term *yurta* (rus. юрта) thus appeared. At the Paris exhibition, the yurt was called ‘yourta’, transcribing the Russian word. Earlier European publications wrote the word as ‘jurte’ in French²⁵ and ‘jurden’ in German, considering it to be of Russian origin (Teissier 2014, 163). However, definitions in French and Russian dictionaries from the 18th century do not precisely correspond to the Turkic-Mongolian yurt but rather encompass all the dwellings of the Siberian peoples. The first Russian encyclopaedic dictionary published in 1794 gives the following definition for *yurta*: ‘Yurta, n. c. f.: *Tashar* [canvas tent], *shalash* [hut covered with branches, grass or earth], *kibitka* of nomadic peoples, *yurta* made of reindeer skins or felt’ (Боратова 2001, 1015).²⁶

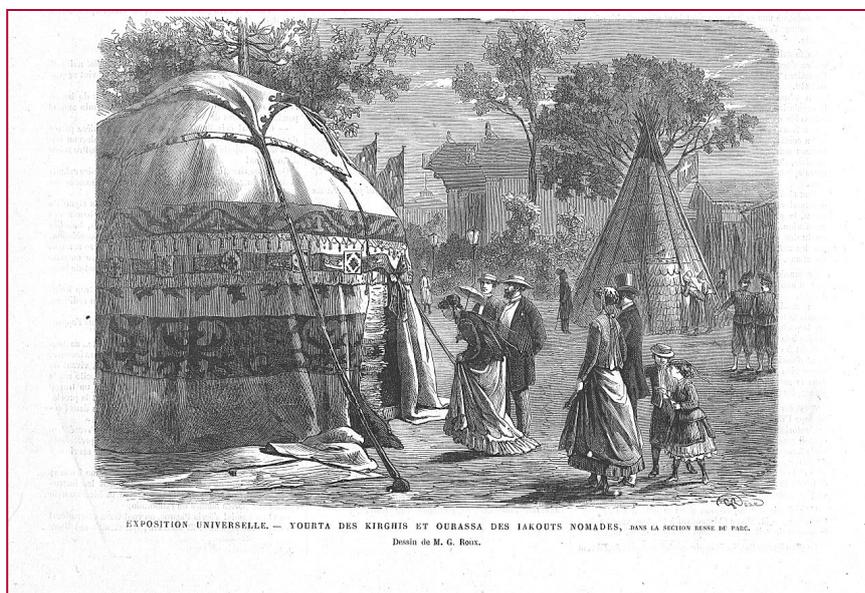


Figure 10. Kirgiz yurta and Yakut ussara at the 1867 Paris World Fair

(Drawing by Gustave Roux, Ducuing F. (eds), *L'exposition universelle de 1867 Illustrée*. vol. II (53), 358)

²⁵ “jurtes ou jurti, (histoire moderne) c’est ainsi que les Russes nomment les habitations des nations tartares qui sont en Sibérie. Chaque famille occupe une cabane formée par des échelats fichés en terre & recouverts d’écorce de bouleau ou de peaux d’animaux, pour se garantir des injures de l’air. On laisse au milieu du toit qui a la forme d’un cône, une ouverture pour la sortie de la fumée. Quand un tartare ne trouve plus que l’endroit où il avait placé la jurte lui convienne, il l’abandonne, & va avec sa famille construite une autre jurte dans un lieu plus commode. Voyez Gmelin, voyage de Sibérie” (Diderot 1767, 84).

²⁶ The definition given in Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* in the previous note reflects this concept. At the end of the 19th century, the entry “iourte/yourte” in the *Larousse* encyclopaedic dictionary was no more accurate: “Hutte, cabane dans laquelle demeurent les Lapons et les Samoyèdes” (Augé 1898, 323).

The description of the yurt provided in *L'exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée* corresponds to the journalist's observations. This enabled him to clearly differentiate the yurt from the Yakut 'ourassa' (*ураса*: conical dwelling covered with birch bark), which was also on display. There is no confusion with the dwellings of the Siberian peoples. François Ducuing, a member of the Paris World Exhibition jury and a journalist, devoted an article to the different types of tents, specifically considering the yurt:

Let us examine the yurt that shelters them [the *Kirgiz*]. A wooden hoop, supported by stakes, covers the ridge of the tent. The fabric that wraps it is made of felted cow hair [sheep's wool]. Inside, the round tent is lined with cut cloth and *soutaché* [suzani: embroidered and decorative textile], indicating a great deal of luxury (Ducuing 1867a, 358).

'Yurt' is a concept used by the Turkic-Mongolian peoples, the scope of which evolved in the various Turkic cultures over the centuries. Relying on Rashid al-din Hamadani's 14th century work *The Compendium of Chronicles*, Chokan Valikhanov defines 'yurt' (юрт) as equivalent to people (el-эль), but he adds that the meaning in Central Asia can also refer to a place of nomadisation or encampment (Валиханов 1961b, 161). Initially, the term also had a political meaning in Russian sources, referring to a "fixed, established territory of residence and nomadisation" which was under the rule of a khan (Трепавлов 2012, 8). Following the conquest of the Bashkirs at the end of the 16th century, Tsarist power integrated nomadic populations and developed a taxation system based on an extended household (семейство), known as *kibitka*.²⁷ The word 'yurta' was associated with it in the 18th century. In Aleksei Levshin's 1832 reference work, it is noted that 'the dwelling of the *Kirgiz* is a *kibitka* (кибитка) or yurt (юрта)' (Левшин 1996, 295). These two terms appear in various publications on the Russian Ethnographic Exhibition and are considered to be synonym.

Russian colonial lexical engineering used to borrow terms and concepts from the dominated populations in order to administer the conquered territories. The resulting categories were often distorted from their original meaning, as they primarily had to correspond to the needs of the colonial power. Russian travellers, ethnographers and civil and military servants were aware of this distortion, and some attempted to rectify it in their writings without really questioning the administrative categories themselves. Hristofor Bardanes notes in his report following an official mission in the 1770s: "They [the Kazakhs] call the *kibitka* in their language üy [үй]" (Барданес 2007, 170). The yurt is indeed designated by the words 'kiiz üy' in Kazakh (kaz. киіз үй), 'boz üy' in Kyrgyz (кырг. боз үй) and 'ger' in Mongolian (mong. гэр).

Musical instruments

Musical instruments were explicitly mentioned in the list of ethnographic objects requested by the exhibition's organizing committee. At that time, the study of Central Asian music was still in its infancy. In various publications, references to musical traditions were limited to brief descriptions and, at best, a succinct list of instruments. Interest in Kazakh music focused mainly on poetry, epics, and improvisations, paying more attention to the text than to the musical setting and musical expression itself. A perfect example of this is the study of the Kazakh steppes published in 1868 by M. Krasovskii, an officer in the General Staff: "Songs create the atmosphere of all *Kirgiz* celebrations. We will not discuss the music, as its artistic expression as such is not particularly remarkable and is almost non-existent" (Красовский 2007, 102). Prior to the ethnographic exhibition, conferences were organized to ensure its "scientific character." One of them was devoted to music and was entitled "On the physical basis of musical harmony and on the musical instruments delivered to the exhibition" (*Всероссийская этнографическая...* 1867, 24-25). The speaker was Aleksei Vladimirskii (1827-1880), a physics professor at Moscow University, who presented a comparative

²⁷ The Russian term "*kibitka*" combines mobility – a means of transport – with the fact of being covered in a cloth or skin.

analysis of traditional music (Владимирский 1868). He didn't talk much about Central Asian music on which he had little knowledge. However, the auxiliary committee in Ufa sent a Bashkir *kurai* flute (called *sybyzghy* by Vladimirskii) player named Muhamed-Hibib Yashikeev to showcase his artistry, which he did during the conference. He also served as model for one Bashkir mannequin.

The first specific studies of Central Asian music began in the early 1870s. August Eichhorn (1844- ?), a German musician who was sent to Tashkent in 1871 to fill the position of military kapellmeister, was one of the first person to collect Uzbek and Kazakh music (Эйхгорн 1963) and gather musical instruments (Эйхгорн 1885). Alim-Hodzha Yunusov played a significant role in supporting Eichhorn (Ртвеладзе 2020, 394). In contrast, interest in Kyrgyz music remained modest until the 20th century, with only brief descriptions, and no Kyrgyz instruments were included in the collections of either the Dashkov Ethnographic Museum or the Kunstkamera. Though, the collection of Central Asian musical traditions has become popular since the end of the 19th century, enriching the museum collections in Russia with many musical instruments from Turkestan (Маслов 1909).

While a fairly complete range of Kazakh musical instruments were presented at the exhibition (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 63), no Uzbek or Kyrgyz objects related to this topic were collected. Valikhanov offered a *kobyz* (a two-stringed fiddle) and a *sybyzghy* (a reedless flute); a set of 9 stringed musical instruments (a *dombra* – a two-string long-necked lute, a *kobyz* and an example of *zhetygen* – a plucked zither) were given by the Orenburg committee. Plotnikov's album also contains drawings of *kobyz* and *dombra* (Figure 11) which are the two most iconic musical instruments in Kazakh culture (Ускенбай 2021, 116-117). According to Vladimirskii's statement, five *dombras* were exhibited, about which he made no comment (Владимирский 1868, 163). The two *kobyz* attracted his attention more, and he considered them particularly remarkable (Владимирский 1868, 162-63). Only, the *sybyzghy* received special treatment with a brief musicological analysis of its original timbre, which he associated with the sounds of the steppe (Владимирский 1868, 164-65). This consideration resulted from the Bashkir *kurai* musician's performance.

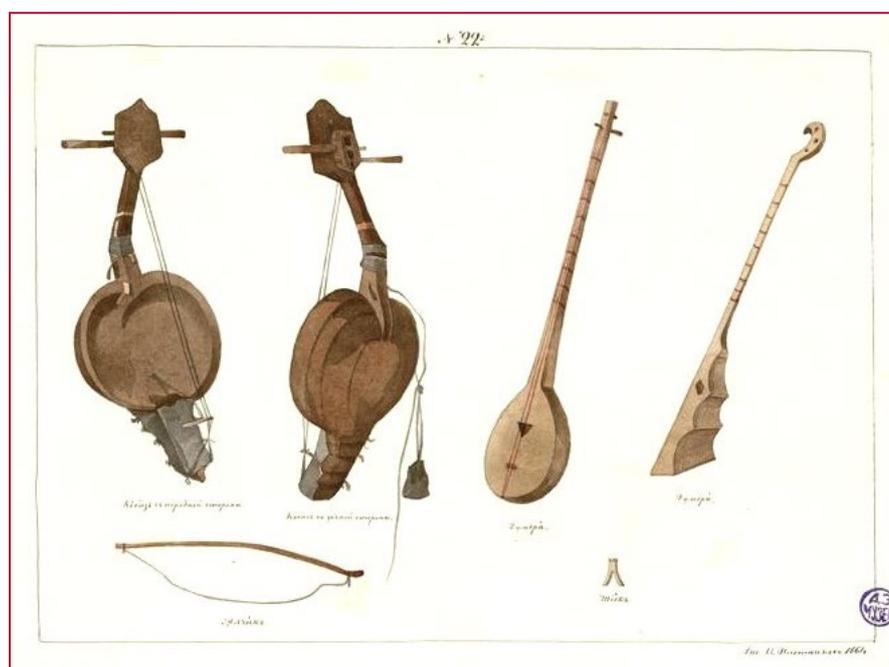


Figure 11. Kazakh musical instruments (*kobyz* and *dombra*)
(Folio n° 22 from Vladimir Plotnikov's album РЭМ 8764-17162)

Arms and weapons

Military campaigns were still ongoing in the region. Kryzhanovskii, Kolpakovskii and Chernayev, who took part in these campaigns, were sensitive to military imagery. Although the conquest of Central Asia was widely debated in the public sphere, it was not featured in 1867, unlike in future exhibitions. No specific section was devoted to weapons. The organising committee had not included weapons in the list of requested items. Nevertheless, Central Asian weapons were sent to Moscow and put on display.

Collecting ancient and modern weapons was a practice common to all European sovereigns, and Russia was no exception (Malgouyres 2014, 9-33). Since the 18th century, armouries had been open to the public, and the 19th century saw the emergence of museums dedicated to these collections. The Kremlin Armoury (Оружейная палата) was moved in 1806 to establish a museum. Inspired by the Moscow example whom he visited in 1827, the Kazakh khan Dzhangir (1801-1845) of the Bukei horde²⁸ dedicated the following year a room in his palace to displaying a collection of weapons. He showed this collection to his guests and visitors, and it was also opened to the Kazakh public. He asked all the descendants of the khans, his relatives, to send him arms and armour of their common ancestors and began to acquire ancient weapons of all origins (Бобров 2014, 264-265; Ермекбай 2017, 127-128). Chokan Valikhanov shared this interest in weapons and devoted an article to Kazakh weaponry, describing weapons similar to those exhibited in Moscow (Валиханов 1961a). Chingis Valikhanov himself had kept the military armour of his ancestor Ablai Khan before giving the helmet and armour to Geins.²⁹ A similar practice is described among the Kyrgyz at the end of the 19th century: “Some *manap* still keep, as an honourable reminder of past military exploits, a full set of armour consisting of a helmet, chain mail, knee pads, a sabre, a spear, a bow, a quiver with arrows, and a shield” (Талызин 1898, 28). Maqysh Raiymbekuly's photographs taken in 1913 for the Semirechye agricultural exhibition confirm this (Figure 12). He wore the 18th century *batyr* (warrior hero) Zhapek's military outfit to honour his memory, but he was himself considered as a *paluan* (a sort of wrestler) and participated in the 1916 rebellion alongside other *batyr* (Ескендір Әбдешев 2012). The outfit represented more than just a parade costume.

From Central Asia, only Kazakh arms were sent, and they were displayed alongside household items and tools (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 61). Chingis Valikhanov provided the most complete equipment, consisting of long-handled axe (айбалта), pike (найза), dagger (қанжар), bow and arrow (садақ) and finally a long-range rifle (мылтық).³⁰ The exhibits included also 3 curved sabres (қылыш), two of which donated by the Orenburg committee. The last one was probably given by Hankozhin as it is not mentioned in Valikhanov's list (Бобров 2013). At the Paris exhibition, Kazakh weapons (Figure 13) were presented more succinctly than at the ethnographic exhibition, including a long-handled axe, the only item contributed by Dzhangyr Uvaliev, and a bow with quiver and arrows donated by Tezek. Drawings of Kazakh arms were also displayed at the Moscow exhibition. Plotnikov's album contained one folio dedicated solely to Kazakh arms as well as two featuring arms alongside other items (Ускенбай 2021, 122-123, 130-131, 136-137). Kosharov's album, displayed at the ethnographic exhibition and presented below, also included two specific folios on this theme (Абрамсон 1953, 181-182).

²⁸ The Bukei Horde (Букеевская орда, Внутренняя (киргизская) орда) was a special-status entity created in 1801 and placed under the supervision of the Astrakhan gubernia. Led by the khan Bukei (1742-1815), 20.000 Kazakhs from the Junior Horde (кіші жүз) were allowed by the Tsar to settle on the right bank of the Ural River, where pastures had been freed by the Kalmyks who had left for China in 1771. In 1808, the Bukei Horde was transferred under the authority of the General-Governorship of Orenburg. Bukei's son, Dzhangir, took over until his death in 1845. The title of khan was then abolished, and the administration of the renamed Kirgiz interior Horde was assumed by a specific council including Russians and Kazakhs (Зиманов 1982).

²⁹ The contents of Dzhangir's armory were dispersed during the 19th and early 20th centuries, without an inventory being made. Some objects have been identified, notably items from the military equipment of his father, Khan Bukei, including a helmet and sword (Бобров 2014).

³⁰ Центральный государственный архив Республики Казахстан. Ф. 345, Оп. 1, Д. 874, Л. 38-41 об.



Figure 12. Maqysh Raiymbekuly (1878-1940), dressed in the *batyr* Zhapek's outfit for the 1913 Semirechye agricultural exhibition in Vernyi (The photograph is simply entitled "batyr" [warrior hero])

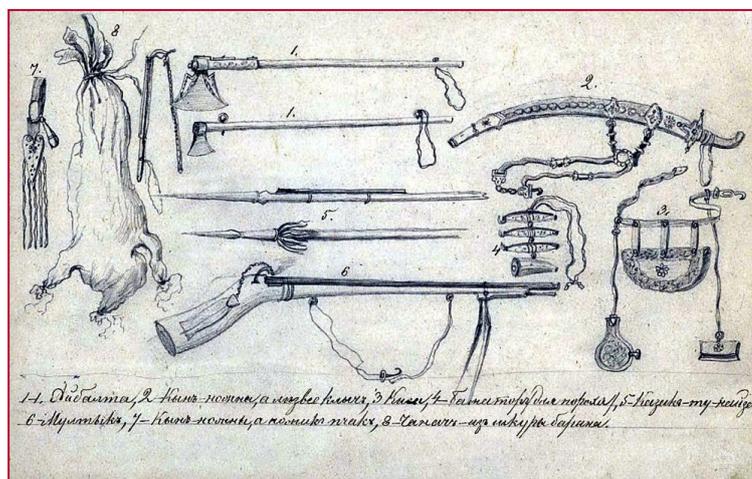


Figure 13. Kazakh Weapons

(Drawing by Pavel Kosharov, folio n° 118742/17, Альбом "Виды природы в Тянь-Шане")

These weapons represent the full range of those used by the Kazakhs and are analogous to descriptions of those used in the Muslim world, whose terminology is quite similar (North 1985, 5-48). Older models persisted until the 19th century: "Once an Islamic armourer had found a satisfactory design, it was often retained for many centuries" (North 1985, 5). Long-handled axes are an example of this, being a weapon used effectively as late as the second half of the 19th century (Бобров 2015, 112). Long-range rifles were modelled on Persian designs from the 17th and 18th centuries (North 1985, 17-21). The longevity of these weapons is also linked to their function as regalia. Sabres and axes were the main elements. It was customary for Tsars to give sabres as presents to Kazakh khans as a mark of honour, and the gift of weapons by the Kazakhs had the same significance. In 1890-91, during Tsarevich Nikolai's tour of Asiatic Russia, Kazakhs offered him a long-handled axe (Бобров 2015, 111).

This raises the question of where the initiative to display weapons as part of the ethnographic exhibition originated. Beyond the warlike atmosphere of the period and the general trend of weapon collecting, two approaches can be considered. The first, from the Russian perspective, would be to demonstrate the backwardness of the Central Asian populations by displaying outdated weaponry, particularly firearms.³¹ The second, from the Kazakh perspective, would be to view weapons as a form of regal symbols, given that the donors were all descendants of khans. In his article, Chokan Valikhanov's adopted a historical, rather than ethnographic perspective, highlighting the use of weapons during the wars waged by the Kazakh sultans. He notes the rarity of firearms but also describes the knowledge of gunsmithing among the Kazakhs, as his father had already pointed it out to Geins, as well as the accuracy of these rifles (Валиханов 1961a, 468). Not only was Dzhangir's collection a museum, but it also served as a real armoury.

³¹ Mikhail Terent'ev's (1837-1909) description of the conquest of Central Asia shows many examples of this (Терентьев 1906).

The absence of representation of Islam

The religious matter was generally absent from the exhibition. Ceremonial or ritual items have been requested by the organising committee,³² but the ethnographic interest focused then on religious practices deemed archaic. A diorama was therefore dedicated to a Yakut shamanic ceremony (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 39). No elements recalling Islam were exhibited. While a Hebrew Bible was included, there was no Quran. The Muslim question, which later became so prominent in Russian discourse (Campbell 2015), did not yet appear to be so sensitive for the ethnographic approach, although Kryzhanovskii was very concerned by this question (Brower 2003, 27-31; Campbell 2017, 50-51). Robert Geraci explains that in the Russian Empire, Muslim societies and Islam were the preserve of Orientalists or Islamologists, and that their study was consequently ignored by ethnography: “Muslim societies were presumably postethnic, all identical, and immune to cultural change” (Geraci 2001, 177).

The other point was that the Muslim practices of the Kazakh nomads were perceived as particularly superficial. The Russians did not observe among the Kazakhs the elements associated with Islam that they were accustomed to seeing among other Muslim populations in the Empire (Campbell 2017, 48-49). This observation served as the basis for the religious distinction between sedentary and nomadic populations. The former were associated with religious fanaticism, which required a cautious approach, while the latter were considered more likely to adopt the culture and laws of the Empire. Nomads had to be protected from the influence of “islamism,” which was the name given to the spread of orthodox Islam and religious fanaticism.

This view of Kazakh nomads can be found in most Russian publications since the early 19th century (Гавердовский 2007 [1804], 439-442; Левшин 1996 [1832], 313-320; Красовский 1868, 391). In his ethnographic description of the peoples of Russia published in 1862, Theodore de Pauly (1817-1867), State councillor and member of the Imperial Russian Society of Geography, expresses himself on the subject, repeating the same arguments put forward by his predecessors and contemporaries:

From a religious point of view, the *Kirgiz* are very backward. They profess a mixture of Mohammedanism and idolatry. They observe neither fasting nor ablutions, which are nevertheless a wise and severe precept of the Koran; each person says his prayers for himself and in his own home, for they have neither mosques nor clergy. Islam is professed, strictly speaking, only by priests from Khiva, Bukhara, and Turkestan, as well as by a few [Tatar] mullahs established by the Russian government (de Pauly 1862, 50).

Chokan Valikhanov, who studied at the Omsk Cadet School and was well connected in Russian intellectual and scientific circles, developed an analysis putting forward the same arguments, while emphasizing Kazakhs' attachment to their Muslim identity. His main difference was to focus on the challenge posed to ancestral Kazakh traditions by an Islam imported from outside. “Our legends, epics, and customary rights have been debased [by Muslim ‘proselytes’] with the shameful name of the felt book, and our pagan rites, games, and feasts are denounced as diabolical” (Валиханов 1961c, 524). He called for Russian schools for Kazakhs to be developed in place of Muslim education, aiming at the emergence among Kazakhs of citizenship (гражданственность), a polysemic concept in the Russian context. This concept was also at the origin of Bogdanov's initiatives.

Islam was therefore not to serve as a gateway to knowledge of Kazakh society or to the administration of the steppes. The majority view among Tsarist circles of power was to implement policies that would diminish the influence of the Muslim religion among the population. In the

³² The rare exception was the display of Kalmyk statues, representing Buddhist deities called burkhan. Kolpakovskij is credited for giving one statue of burkhan.

Kazakh domain, the idea of introducing imperial law was based on the interaction between Russian law and Kazakh customary law, with Sharia law being ignored.

The Kazakhs themselves understood the context and attempted to exploit it in various circumstances. Valikhanov is one of the earliest examples of this approach. He sought to influence the tsarist authorities to adopt a policy that would be more favourable to the Kazakhs. It is highly likely that he shared this strategy with his father and other members of the Kazakh elite. This debate was again exploited at the beginning of the 20th century by the Kazakhs themselves in order to define a common political horizon (Hallez 2014, 287-290).

Photographs and drawings

The iconography exhibited in 1867 comprised just over 1,400 drawings and photographs (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 65-67). Drawings represented only a small proportion of these. The organising committee wanted to use scientific iconography to support the anthropological classification of peoples. Photography was considered more suitable for this purpose than sketchbooks, as the latter were deemed less accurate and more susceptible to the artist's imagination. Photography had been developed in Russia since the 1840s and had flourished by the 1860s and 1870s. As Svetlana Gorshenina and Heather Sonntag observe, "the rapid spread of the new invention was accompanied everywhere by the myth of photographic accuracy and the medium's ability to produce a real image of the world on paper" (Gorshenina 2019, 276).

The exhibition's organising committee focused on the supposed authenticity of photography. The committee's main goal was to document the characteristics of the Empire's populations through portraits that would serve as models for the mannequin heads. A photographic commission was established under the direction of Nikandr Alasin (1818-?), a Moscow merchant from the first guild who founded the photography studio "Русская фотография" in 1861. This studio became one of the largest in Russia, employing up to 18 people (Соловьева 2019, 15). The commission issued precise instructions to photographers and regional governors (*Всероссийская этнографическая... 1867*, 13-14). These were directly inspired by the instructions established by Paul Broca for anthropological studies and translated by Bogdanov in 1865 (Брока Поль 1865, 56-57). Front and profile portraits were requested, accompanied by the following comment: "The choice of people for the portraits must be motivated by their typical character, in the sense that the faces correspond to those most frequently encountered among this people or in this territory" (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 5). It was also desirable to obtain portraits of people from different social classes. Each portrait had to be accompanied by the subject's name, age, origin, and the location where the photograph was taken, as recommended by Broca.

The photographic commission received a much larger number of photographs than expected. It was therefore decided to add a special section to the exhibition dedicated to photographs and drawings, which were displayed according to geographical principles, similar to the dioramas. While all images were numbered in the 1878 catalogue, the information provided was often brief, and it has not been possible to find more detailed information on most of the photographs presented in 1867 (Соловьева 2022; Калашникова 2008).

Central Asia was a region that had received little photographic attention in 1867, and the photographers there were often military personnel. The Russian authorities understood the value of this new technology as a source of strategic information about territories and populations, as well as for propaganda purposes. Consequently, the military topography service was equipped with a photographic section in 1855, primarily tasked with cartography and supporting military operations. Military photography also quickly turned its attention to populations and the natural environment, producing portraits and landscapes (Gorshenina 2019, 280-282).

Upon his arrival in Orenburg in 1865, Governor General Kryzhanovskii utilised photography for intelligence gathering and cartography. Officers were trained in this field, including Mikhail Priorov (1842-?). Priorov was included in the Steppe Commission, leading him to travel around Central Asia and photograph the region (Gorshenina 2021, 47-48). At the 1867 exhibition, the Orenburg Support Committee donated the main body of photographs from Central Asia, comprising 53 images. Apart from the indication of “*Kirgiz-Kaisak of the Little Horde*,” neither the subjects nor the authors of the photographs are specified, and no document has yet enabled them to be identified. Given the quantity of photographs, Svetlana Gorshenina concludes that the primary photographer must have been Priorov (Gorshenina 2021, 49).

Three photographs were attributed to Grigorii Fedchenko (1834-1866), Aleksei Fedchenko’s brother. A chemist by training, he undertook an expedition around the Caspian Sea in 1863 to study salt lakes (Федченко 1870). The photographs, which depict Kazakhs from the Bukei horde, were taken during his expedition. One of them, showing an unidentified Kazakh couple, is particularly interesting, as it features the female model who served for one of the mannequins. The comparison partly vindicates the critics regarding the quality of the faces created by the artists. This photograph was taken near Lake Elton (Алтын нор, meaning the golden lake) in July 1863 either by Grigorii Fedchenko himself or by one of the members of his expedition. This salt lake, which is located today on the Russian side of the Russian-Kazakh border, not far from Volgograd, was one of the largest self-sedimenting lakes in the Astrakhan region and the Bukei Horde. In his study of the lake, Grigorii Fedchenko makes no mention of the Kazakh population (Федченко 1870, 82-91), despite the fact that a significant proportion of the salt mined there was transported to Saratov or Astrakhan by Kazakhs (Джумагалиева 2012).

Chingis Valikhanov sent six photographs, which were the only pictures taken in the Siberian *Kirgiz Oblast*. No additional information is available to allow for further comment. There are no sources that mention his practice or interest in photography.

Two photographs from the Astrakhan gubernia also depicted Kazakhs. They were part of an album made up for the 1867 exhibition by Stepan Vishnevskii (1835- ?), who opened the first photography studio in Astrakhan in 1861 (Вишнеvский 1866). One is the portrait of Zhangir khan’s son, Gubaidulla Chingizkhan [Dzhangirov] (1840-1909), with his first wife whose name is unknown (Gorshenina 2011, 43-44). The photography is simply entitled “*Kirgiz khan and his wife*” (Figure 14). The second (Figure 15) represents an anonymous Kazakh with a camel, which became a typical picture reproduced in the same posture by photographers and artists (Ускенбай 2021, 115). The Russians took a strong interest in camels as pack animals. Camel was also chosen to become the main figure in the shield for the coats of arms of the Semipalatinsk oblast and the cities of Kazalinsk and Perovsk (oblast of Syr-Darya).

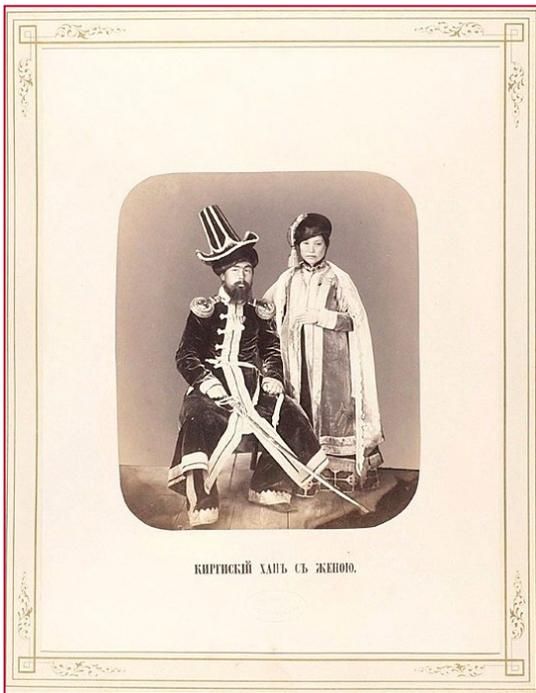


Figure 14. Gubaidulla Chingizkhan on a photography entitled “*Kirgiz* khan and his wife”

(Photograph by Stepan Vishnevskii, Вишнеvский Степан, 1866. *Фотографический альбом видов и типов Астраханской губернии* [Photographic album of views and types of the Astrakhan province])



Figure 15. *Kirgiz-Kaisak* family from the Orenburg gubernia (Photograph by Carl von Brandis РЭМ 8764-16455)

Turkestan was represented by only three photographs. As a newly conquered territory, it was the least known and did not yet have the iconographic richness it would later acquire. The first photographic album devoted to Turkestan was published in 1867, but it illustrated the military campaigns in Bukhara and Khiva, which were not part of the Russian Empire (Gorshenina 2021, 45-46). Two photographs showing inhabitants of Tashkent were donated by Nikandr Alasin’s studio “Русская фотография,” which actively contributed to both the Moscow and Paris exhibition. The third photograph, entitled “Kokandi prince”, is attributed to Baron Carl von Brandis, who is also credited with a photograph of a “*Kirgiz-Kaisak*”. Originally from Hanover, he was a disciple of the French photographers Léopold Mayer (1817-1865) and Pierre Pierson (1812-1913) and arrived in Russia in the early 1860s. He is renowned for his photographs of Eastern Siberia, several of which were exhibited at the 1867 ethnographic exhibition. He also travelled to Omsk and Semipalatinsk (Абаленцев 2022). The question remains as to whether he was the author of the Kokandi prince’s photograph for which he is credited or whether he acquired and appropriated it, as was often the case. The same remark could be made for the other two photographs from Turkestan.

The instructions designed to ensure the scientific nature of the depiction of the diverse populations were not followed for the photographs concerning Central Asia. All the persons on the photographs are designated by their ethnicity, *Kirgiz* or Sart, or by their place of residence, Tashkent or Kokand. No names are given, as for the mannequins modelled on these photographs. So-called anthropological photographs showing front and profile side face were also rare and would mainly be taken from the 1870s onwards. But neutral backgrounds were widespread, even in the case of the Kazakh couple immortalised at lake Elton far from any photographic studio.

Two albums of drawings complete the Central Asian collections. Both are relatively similar in style and reflect the trend for albums of drawings produced during exploratory or scientific expeditions. Their object was to contribute to the construction of knowledge about Central Asian populations, and these two albums have a pronounced ethnographic character. As at the 1867 exhibition, attention was paid to noting the indigenous terms, even though errors crept in. No notes nor ethnographic studies were added to them by the author.

The first album is the Plotnikov's, which has already been mentioned. It consists of 45 sheets and 213 drawings made during his years of service in the administration of the Orenburg *Kirgiz* between 1859 and 1866. In a 1859 letter addressed to his hierarchical superior, Vasilii Grigor'ev (1816-1881), Plotnikov explains that, although he acted on his own initiative in his free time, his work was nevertheless based on the idea of serving his home administration: "Such drawings should not be of no use to Your Excellency or the members of the Russian Geographical Society, especially since my motivation in this matter was in the unflinching preservation of their national character (национальность)" (Ускенбай 2021, 12). The drawings were compiled into an album for the ethnographic exhibition. After the exhibition, the album was forgotten until 1953 (Бежкович 1953).

A series of sheets is devoted to costumes, alternating between drawings of different costume elements and Kazakhs in costume. As with the dioramas, the emphasis is on the costumes of wealthy Kazakhs. Plotnikov also illustrates the differences in female and male costumes between the two main Kazakh lineage groups nomadizing south of Orenburg that he had been in contact with: the Zhagalbaily of the Junior *zhuz* and the Qypshaq³³ of the Middle *zhuz* (Ускенбай 2021, 30-31, 58-59). None of the Kazakhs are identified by name. The influence of anthropological methodology can be seen only on a single sheet, which shows the different types of Kazakhs encountered, featuring three front-facing portraits and one profile portrait (Ускенбай 2021, 52-53). Another series of sheets is devoted to objects, tools, and accessories, including yurts, musical instruments, and weapons. Finally, the album includes scenes of *aul*, summer and winter encampments.

Alongside Plotnikov's album, a second one was presented. Pavel Kosharov (1823-1902), professor of drawing at the University of Tomsk, was invited by Petr Semenov to make the drawings for the 1857 expedition to the Tyan-Shan and the shores of Lake Issyk-kul (Семенов-Тянь-Шанский 1946). In 1865, Kosharov offered to lend a collection of his drawings depicting Kazakhs and Kyrgyz to the organising committee of the ethnographic exhibition. Entitled Album of *Kirgiz* from the Elder Horde and Mountain *Kirgiz* [альбом Киргиз большой орды и дико-каменных киргизов], it was later recovered by the author, who donated it to the *Kunstkamera* in 1880 (Абрамсон 1953).

Unlike Plotnikov, Kosharov provides a table of brief descriptions of the subjects alongside his album. The other difference is that Kosharov chose to depict Kazakhs and Kyrgyz mainly in groups of two or three people, adding a narrative element rather than simply being descriptive. Other sheets are devoted to animals, clothing, yurts, and various other objects and utensils, including weapons and musical instruments, which have already been mentioned. A few scenes also appear: a prayer, the only image of the Muslim character of Central Asians (Абрамсон 1953, 172), and a *baranta* (rus. баранта; kaz. барымта; kyr. барамта) led by Kyrgyz (Абрамсон 1953, 164). This practice impressed Russian observers as early as the 18th century and was mainly associated with cattle theft and looting. However, it played a central role in regulating conflicts and relations between Kazakh and Kyrgyz clans (Martin 1997; Hallez 2019, 264). In his account of the expedition, Petr Semenov describes numerous *baranta* and provides a detail analysis of the one illustrated by

³³ The Qypshaq lineage group was the third group by his population among the Middle *zhuz*. They occupied a large space in Central present-day Kazakhstan, on the Western flank of the Argyn. Their main zone of habitation was the Turgai plateau (Масанов 1995, 60).

Kosharov opposing two Kyrgyz lineage groups, Bugu³⁴ and Sarybagysh³⁵ in 1856-1859 (Семенов-Тянь-Шанский 1946, 142). The expedition was in jeopardy, but was saved by the intervention of sultan Tezek, who took advantage of the situation to strengthen his power and his relations with the Bugu. Kosharov dedicated a drawing to Tezek, who he is the only person identified by his name. This special treatment highlights his importance and, beyond that, the importance of the Central Asian elites for the two explorers, as well as the interest that the latter may have had in responding to certain requests from the Russians.

Conclusion

The Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition of 1867 was part of the Western industrial and colonial powers' desire to capture the world they were in the process of conquering and appropriating. Dominance over largely unknown areas meant creating an image of the conquered populations so that they could be controlled and integrated into a colonial administrative system. This system was designed to benefit the metropolis economically. Administrations needed information regarding populations, territories and economic prospects. This was the meaning of the close collaboration between Russian scientific societies and regional administrations in Central Asia. The year after the exhibition, Governor-General Kryzhanovskii obtained the establishment of the Orenburg branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, which had jurisdiction over the Orenburg gubernia, the Ural and Central Asia. Ballyuzek, who compiled a significant collection of Kazakh customary law (Баллюзек 1871), was put in charge of the branch. The Western Siberia branch opened in 1877, followed by the Turkestan branch in 1895. Many Central Asians collaborated with the two branches with some becoming members (Бегимбаева 2015).

Ethnographic expeditions to Central Asia followed one another as the region attracted increasing attention. Aleksei Fedchenko, a key figure in organising the 1867 exhibition, travelled to Turkestan from 1868 to 1871. He presented his new collections at the All-Russian Polytechnic Exhibition in 1872, which further opened its doors to Central Asia. Many of those involved in the first exhibition in 1867 went on to play a part in subsequent exhibitions. Fedchenko's friend and colleague at the Asiatic committee for the organisation of the ethnographic exhibition, Oshanin, undertook a study trip abroad to investigate silk production. Upon his return in 1872, he was appointed director of the silk production school in Tashkent. He worked in Central Asia until 1906.

The 1822 regulations on the administration of the allogenous laid the foundations of the Russian colonial regime in Central Asia, and the new 1867-1868 regulations established the administrative structure that was to govern Central Asia until 1917. Both high-ranking Russian officials and Central Asian mediators sought to secure advantageous positions within this new colonial regime. This was reflected in their participation in the ethnographic exhibition. Among the most active senior officials, Kryzhanovskii made his mark on the Orenburg General-governorship until 1881, while Kolpakovskii, appointed governor of the Semirechye oblast in 1867, became the first general governor of the steppes in 1882.

However, the presentation of Central Asia would not have been possible without the participation of native mediators who belonged to the local political and economic elites. Colonial regimes have always relied on indigenous mediators, introducing privileges and rewards to secure their support.

³⁴ The Bugu lineage group was one of the largest among Kyrgyz and the richest according to Chokan Valikhanov. They controlled the territory of the Issyk-Kul lake and commercial routes further East (Валиханов 1985а, 42-46; Абрамзон 1960, 15-22).

³⁵ The Sarybagysh lineage group was less numerous than the Bugu but had a central political role among Kyrgyz. They had their pastures at the West of the Issyk-Kul Lake and in the Tokmak region. Valikhanov estimated them to be powerful and warlike. They were in conflicts with the Bugu from the mid-18th century and finally took from them part of the lands on the south of lake Issyk-Kul at the end of the 1850's (Абрамзон 1960, 31-40).

Isabelle Ohayon (2015) describes this specific relationship in a special issue devoted to mediators in Central Asia:

One characteristic feature of empires is that they invent or design mediation technologies to hold together a number of diverse communities, territories and cultures. The extent and complexity of imperial constructions require this capacity for mutual negotiation between colonisers and incorporated societies (Ohayon 2015, 617).

The representation of Central Asia was partly co-constructed by Russians and Central Asians, with the latter seeking to defend their immediate interests and those of their compatriots, as well as to promote their cultural, social, and political heritage.

For these exhibitions, the mediators were mainly Kazakhs, along with one Uzbeks and a Tatar from Tashkent. The Kazakhs belonged above all to the group of *töre*, descendants of khan, to whom the Tsarist authorities had granted political primacy until 1867-68. Those involved in the Paris and Moscow exhibitions were particularly wealthy and influential. They were also known to be connoisseurs of their own culture. Despite their efforts, the political tide turned against them and the *töre* lost their political primacy after 1868, which wasn't the case for the Uzbek and Tatar merchants. They were all mobilised to showcase the way of life and culture of the people of Central Asia, but neither in Paris nor in Moscow was the economic potential of the products of the Central Asians on the agenda, even though expeditions were led in those years to study this issue.

The exhibition provided the highest Russian authorities, particularly the Tsar and Tsarevich, who visited the exhibition with an initial image of the peoples of Central Asia. From 1867 onwards, this image was often stereotypical, highlighting the conflict between a scientific approach to understanding Central Asian societies and the desire to categorise them for colonial administrative purposes. The inappropriate choice of names for populations highlights the intrinsic tension of any colonial regime.

Bogdanov's intention was not really achieved. In the 1878 edition of the catalogue, he acknowledged the scientific limitations of the ethnographic exhibition himself: "There were errors on the part of the organisers themselves. One of these was to isolate the collected items from the circles of specialists who alone could have organised them scientifically and reaped the scientific benefits" (*Этнографическая выставка 1867... 1878*, 11). This observation also reflects the ignorance towards Central Asians in the development of ethnographic and anthropological knowledge. Although they were involved in preparing the exhibition, their role in selecting the objects and representing the populations was not fully recognised. They were considered merely as informants.

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