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VISUAL SYMBOLISM OF ECONOMIC HISTORY IN TEXTBOOKS ON THE MODERN HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN (SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH–EARLY 21 CENTURIES)

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Annotation. Introduction. This article analyzes the illustrative representation evolution of the economy in school textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan, published from the mid-20th century to the present. The relevance of this topic is determined by the fact that visual images in educational history literature are an important tool for shaping the historical consciousness of the younger generation. **Objectives.** This article analyzes the specific use of visual materials and the dynamics of changes in the symbolism and narratives of economic history in official educational publications on the modern history of Kazakhstan from 1959 to 2025. The objectives included systematizing all types of images in educational publications during the Soviet era and since independence, and conducting a comparative analysis based on the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the content of narratives in the economic history of modern Kazakhstan. **Materials and Methods.** The authors identified and analyzed all illustrative material in textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan, recommended for the national school system. A range of interdisciplinary methods for analyzing visual sources was used to conduct the study. A comparative historical method was used to compare the illustrative content of Soviet-era textbooks with modern textbooks. Quantitative content analysis was employed to systematize and quantify the frequency of images related to various economic activities of the population of Kazakhstan (18th – early 20th centuries). Qualitative content analysis, enhanced by elements of the deconstruction method, aimed to identify hidden ideological characteristics and binary oppositions, such as «tradition/modernity». Finally, the authors analyzed the arrangement of illustrations within the main educational material, assessing the methodological and semantic functions of visual components. **Results.** Quantitative and qualitative analysis reveals that illustrations related to industry were a dominant theme in textbooks of both the Soviet and modern periods. The visual presence of traditional economics on the pages of textbooks has sharply declined, as during the Soviet period, it was used to demonstrate backwardness as opposed to modernization. Moreover, in the post-Soviet period, there has been a significant increase in illustrations dedicated to trade and a slight increase in the representation of crafts, indicating a renewed interest in traditional forms of production as elements of national heritage. **Conclusion.** It has been established that modern textbooks risk reducing visual sources to illustrative supplements

rather than tools for developing critical thinking. In the context of digitalization, the successful implementation of AR technologies in the educational process can transform visual material into an interactive environment, but this must be accompanied by the development of visual literacy and scientific verification of the illustrations used.

Keywords: visual symbolism, economic history, modern history of Kazakhstan, history textbook, visual sources, digitalization, historical education.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ ЖАҢА ЗАМАН ТАРИХЫ ОҚУЛЫҚТАРЫНДАҒЫ ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ТАРИХТЫҢ ВИЗУАЛДЫ СИМВОЛИКАСЫ (XX ҒАСЫРДЫҢ ЕКІНШІ ЖАРТЫСЫ – XXI ҒАСЫРДЫҢ БАСЫ)

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Аңдатпа. *Kipicne.* Мақала XX ғасырдың ортасынан қазіргі кезеңге дейін жарық көрген Қазақстанның жаңа тарихы бойынша мектеп оқулықтарындағы экономика эволюциясын иллюстрациялық тұрғыда бейнелеуді талдауға арналған. Ұсынылып отырған тақырыптың өзектілігі тарихи білім берудегі визуалды бейнелердің жас ұрпақтың тарихи санасын қалыптастырудағы маңызды құралы болып табылуымен айқындалады. *Мақсаты мен міндеттері.* Мақалада 1959-2025 жылдардағы Қазақстанның жаңа тарихы бойынша ресми оқу басылымдарындағы экономикалық тарихтың символикасы мен сюжеттерінің өзгеру динамикасы мен визуалды материалдарды пайдалану ерекшелігі қарастырылған. Міндеттерге кеңес дәуіріндегі және Тәуелсіздік кезеңіндегі оқу басылымдарында кездесетін барлық бейнелер түрлерін жүйелеу, сондай-ақ Қазақстанның жаңа дәуіріндегі экономикалық тарихы сюжеттерінің мазмұнының сандық және сапалық сипаттамалары негізінде салыстырмалы талдау жүргізу кірді. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Авторлар республика мектептерінің білім беру жүйесінде ұсынылған Қазақстанның жаңа заман тарихы бойынша оқулықтардағы барлық иллюстрациялық материалдарды талдады. Зерттеу барысында визуалды дереккөздерді талдаудың пәнаралық әдістер кешені қолданылды. Кеңестік кезеңдегі оқулықтардағы иллюстрациялық қатардың мазмұнын заманауи оқу басылымдарымен салыстыру үшін салыстырмалы-тарихи әдіс қолданылды. Сандық контент-талдау XVIII–XX ғасырдың басындағы Қазақстан халқының экономикалық қызметін бейнелейтін суреттердің тақырыптық жиілігін жүйелеу және есепке алу мақсатында пайдаланылды. Деконструкция әдісінің элементтерімен толықтырған сапалық контент-талдау «дәстүрлі/модерн» сияқты жасырын идеологиялық сипаттамалар мен бинарлық оппозицияларды анықтауға бағытталды. Соңында авторлар негізгі оқу материалының мазмұнымен байланыста берілген иллюстрациялардың орналасуын талдап, визуалды компоненттердің әдістемелік және мағыналық қызметін бағалады. *Нәтижелер.* Сандық және сапалық талдау өнеркәсіпке қатысты иллюстрациялар кеңестік және қазіргі кезең оқулықтарында басым тақырып болғанын көрсетті. Дәстүрлі шаруашылықтың визуалды көрінісі оқулық беттерінде айтарлықтай азайған, себебі кеңестік кезеңде ол

модернизацияға қарсы артта қалғандытың белгісі ретінде ұсынылған. Сонымен қатар, посткеңестік кезеңде сауда тақырыбына арналған иллюстрациялардың айтарлықтай артуы мен қолөнер бейнелердің біршама өсуі байқалды. Бұл дәстүрлі өндіріс түрлеріне ұлттық мұра элементтері ретінде жаңа қызығушылықтың пайда болғанын аңғарады. *Қорытынды.* Қазіргі оқулықтарда визуалды дереккөздердің сыни ойлауды қалыптастыру құралы емес, тек иллюстрациялық толықтыру ретінде қолданлылу қаупі бар екені анықталды. Цифрландыру жағдайында AR технологияларын оқу процесіне тиімді енгізу визуалды материалды интерактивті ортаға айналдыруға мүмкіндік береді, алайда бұл үдеріс визуалды сауаттылықты дамыту және пайдаланылатын иллюстрациялардың ғылыми тұрғыдан тексерілуімен қатар жүруі керек.

Кілт сөздер: визуалды символизм, экономикалық тарих, Қазақстанның жаңа заман тарихы, тарих оқулығы, визуалды дереккөздер, цифрландыру, тарихи білім беру.

Алғыс айту: Жұмыс «XXI ғасырдағы тарихи білім беру трансформациялаудағы VR/AR технологиясының мүмкіндіктері мен перспективалары» (03.04.2025 ж. No 05-04/250 шарт) Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университетінің қаржылық қолдауымен орындалды.

Дәйексөз үшін: Далаева Т.Т., Идрисова А.М. Қазақстанның жаңа заман тарихы оқулықтарындағы экономикалық тарихтың визуалды символикасы (XX ғасырдың екінші жартысы – XXI ғасырдың басы) // Отан тарихы. 2025. Т. 28. № 4. С. 1063–1079. [ағылшын тілінде.].

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ВИЗУАЛЬНАЯ СИМВОЛИКА ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ ИСТОРИИ В УЧЕБНИКАХ ПО НОВОЙ ИСТОРИИ КАЗАХСТАНА (ВТОРАЯ ПОЛОВИНА XX–НАЧАЛО XXI ВЕКА)

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Аннотация. *Введение.* Статья посвящена анализу иллюстративной репрезентации развития экономики в школьных учебниках по новой истории Казахстана, опубликованных в период с середины XX века до современности. Актуальность предлагаемой темы определяется тем, что визуальные образы в учебной исторической литературе являются важным инструментом формирования исторического сознания подрастающего поколения. *Цель и задачи.* В статье проанализирована специфика использования визуальных материалов и динамика изменений символика и сюжетов экономической истории в официальных учебных изданиях по новой истории Казахстана за 1959–2025 гг. Задачи включали систематизацию всех типов изображений в учебных изданиях в советское время и в период независимости, их сравнительный анализ на основе количественных и качественных характеристик содержания сюжетов экономической истории Казахстана нового времени. *Материалы и методы.* Авторами был выявлен и изучен весь иллюстративный материал в учебниках по новой истории Казахстана, рекомендованных в системе школьного образования республики. Для проведения исследования был применён комплекс междисциплинарных методов анализа визуальных источников. Использовался сравнительно-исторический метод для сопоставления содержания иллюстративного ряда в учебниках советского периода с современными учебными изданиями. Количественный контент-анализ был использован для систематизации и подсчёта частотности изображений, относящихся к различным сюжетам

экономической деятельности населения Казахстана (XVIII – начало XX вв.). Качественный контент-анализ, усиленный элементами метода деконструкции, был направлен на выявление скрытых идеологических характеристик и бинарных оппозиций, таких как «традиция/модерн». Наконец, авторы осуществили анализ расположения иллюстраций с содержанием основного учебного материала, оценивая методическую и смысловую функцию визуальных компонентов. *Результаты.* Количественный и качественный анализ показывает, что иллюстрации, связанные с промышленностью, являлись доминирующей темой в учебниках как советского, так и современного периодов. Визуальное присутствие традиционного хозяйства на страницах учебников резко сократилось, поскольку в советский период оно использовалось для демонстрации отсталости в противовес модернизации. При этом в постсоветский период наблюдается значительный рост иллюстраций, посвященных торговле, и небольшой рост репрезентации ремесла, что указывает на новый интерес к традиционным формам производства как элементам национального наследия. *Заключение.* Установлено, что современные учебники рискуют свести визуальные источники к иллюстративному дополнению, а не инструменту для формирования критического мышления. В контексте цифровизации успешное внедрение AR-технологий в учебный процесс может превратить визуальный материал в интерактивную среду, однако оно должно сопровождаться развитием визуальной грамотности и научной верификацией используемых иллюстраций.

Ключевые слова: визуальная символика, экономическая история, новая история Казахстана, учебник по истории, визуальные источники, цифровизация, историческое образование.

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Introduction. Visual historical sources play a vital role in narrative formation, both in scholarly research and in history education. Images serve not only illustrative but also semantic functions. However, despite growing interest, school textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan remain largely unanalyzed for their visual content.

The purpose of this article is to identify strategies for visually constructing economic history in school textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan. The economic history of Kazakhstan from the late 18th to early 20th centuries is characterized by the profound transformation of the traditional nomadic way of life under the influence of the administrative reforms of the Russian Empire. However, the visual representation of these processes in school textbooks is often fragmented and ideological. This creates a methodological and substantive challenge: how to reflect complex economic evolution through visual means without reducing meaning to simple illustrations?

The novelty of the study lies in the fact that the representation of economic history is analyzed not in the textual, but in the illustrative component of the textbook. This provides an opportunity to look anew at the conceptual and semantic framework of the textbook as a means of polycode communication, where meaning is created through a combination of text, images and symbolic codes. This term was introduced by G. Eiger in the 1970s, implying that «polycode texts in a broad semiotic sense should include cases of combining a natural language code with the code of some other semiotic system (image, music, etc)» [Novospasskaya, Dugalich, 2022: 300].

Materials and methods. The materials for this study were illustrations from 28 school textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan (grades 7-8), published between 1959 and 2025. The analysis examines illustrative material (photographs, drawings, maps, diagrams, QR codes) from textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan, published in the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, to trace the dynamics and characteristics of the visual narrative associated with economic history. The selection of the period «Modern history of Kazakhstan» is justified by the fact that the chronological period from the 18th to the early 20th centuries provides the opportunity to use a diverse, verified base of visual sources, such as archival photographs (starting from the second half of the 19th century), maps, artistic and documentary materials from eyewitnesses (N. Khludov, T. Shevchenko, Ch. Valikhanov), etc. This allows us to trace the evolution of the visual narrative on the history of modern times in school textbooks in Kazakhstan.

Importantly, the textbook visuals have evolved from static printed images to dynamic digital content accessible to students via QR codes on personal devices.

Corpus of textbooks «Qazaq SSR tarihy»: a series of textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan by E. Bekmakhanov for grades 8—9 (1959,1961), (further-Bekmakhanov, 1959, 1961) [Bekmakhanov, 1959, 1961] and for grades 7—8 (1962—1971), (further-Bekmakhanov, 1962-1970) [Bekmakhanov, 1962-1970]. Since 1971 till 1981 textbooks were written by E.Bekmakhanov and N. Bekmakhanova (further-Bekmakhanov, Bekmakhanova, 1971-1981) [Bekmakhanov, Bekmakhanova,1971-1981].

Since 1992, these are already textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan - textbook 1992 - 176 p. (further - Babaev, 1992) [Babaev, 1992], textbook publisher «Mektep», 2004 - 248 p., (further - Kasymbaev, 2004) [Kasymbaev, 2004]. textbook publishing house «Mektep», 2012 - 256 p. (further - Kasymbaev, 2012) [Kasymbaev, 2012], textbook publishing house «Atamura», 2012. - 328 p. (further - Kabuldinov, 2012) [Kabuldinov, Kaiypbaeva, 2012], textbook publishing house «Mektep», 2018 - 184 p. (further—Omarbekov, 2018) [Omarbekov et al., 2018], textbook, Atamura publishing house, 2018. - 208 p. (Kabuldinov, 2018) [Kabuldinov et al., 2018], Mektep publishing house, 2025 - 192 p. (further—Omarbekov, 2025) [Omarbekov et al., 2025], Atamura Publishing house, 2025 - 224 p. (further—Kabuldinov, 2025) [Kabuldinov et al., 2025].

The lower limit of the sample was determined by 1959, when, in accordance with the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR of October 8, 1959, the mass teaching of the history of Kazakhstan in comprehensive schools as an applied course to the history of the USSR began [AP RK. F.708 In.6. C.702 P.8]. The upper limit was determined by 2025, when the most recent textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan, recommended by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan for teaching in the 2025–2026 academic year, were published. The first 4 paragraphs of the 8th grade textbook by K. Uskembayev (1900–1945) are devoted to the modern history of Kazakhstan (4 illustrations on economic history), but there is no update of the illustrative material.

The corpus of selected educational literature conventionally covers three main stages of the development of school textbooks:

- 1.Soviet period (1959–1981) – textbooks edited by E. Bekmakhanov, and later by his daughter N. Bekmakhanova.
- 2.The transition period (1990s) is represented in this study by one textbook by D. Babaev.
- 3.The modern stage (2000–2025) – textbooks edited by Zh. Kasymbaev, Z. Kabuldinov, T. Omarbekov.

It should be noted that when compiling the study corpus, textbook reprints that contained unchanged visuals were grouped and considered as single analytical units, while supplemented and revised versions were considered separately. This eliminated duplication and maintained the representativeness of the sample. The analysis is based on illustrations from the aforementioned textbooks that reflect economic issues-maps (trade, transportation), engravings and paintings (traditional Kazakh economy), and photographs (traditional Kazakh economy, cities and their infrastructure, fairs). These serve as a source for the textbook's visual narrative.

The study utilized content analysis. The first stage involved a quantitative analysis, which involved counting the total number of illustrations in each textbook, as well as images illustrating economic history. In the second stage, the illustrative material on the economic history of Kazakhstan was subjected to a qualitative analysis using elements of a deconstructive approach (J.Derrida, R.Barthes), specifically with the aim of identifying hidden ideological assumptions, binary oppositions, and «marginal meanings» that visually justify the transition from tradition to modernity under the colonial subjugation of the Steppe by the Russian Empire. The qualitative analysis utilized an image interpretation method, aimed at analyzing the context of illustration use in sections on economic history. The primary goal of the analysis was to answer the question: How does the information presented in the image (illustration) relate to the textbook text and the historical context? We also employed a comparative historical method to identify similarities and differences in the visual narratives of textbooks published in different years.

The application of these methods of analysis made it possible to characterize the visual symbolism of illustrative materials on the economic history of Kazakhstan in modern times in educational publications of the second half of the 20th – early 21st centuries.

Discussion. In recent years, international historiography has seen a growing interest in analyzing visual material in history textbooks. Research from various countries clearly demonstrates that illustrations in textbooks are often used formally and require a pedagogical rethink, emphasizing the semantic meaning of

the images. For example, Gökalp A., Dinç E. examined the relationship between the visual and textual components in contemporary Turkish history textbooks for grades 9–11. The authors concluded that, despite the publications being richly illustrated, most visual components are poorly connected to the text [Gökalp, Dinç, 2022]. M. Gabowitsch, analyzing 450 history textbooks from the former Soviet Union, namely images of monuments covering the period of World War II, suggests moving away from simply perceiving images as a supplement to the text and studying them as an independent component of the visual grammar of textbooks. Using the concept of «recognition» he shows how images of monuments shape students' sense of belonging to a particular visual tradition, rather than critical understanding [Gabowitsch, 2023]. M. Köse highlights gender inequality in the visual content of Turkish 9th-grade history textbooks. Women are underrepresented, abstract, unrecognizable, and unrelated to specific historical figures, thus failing to visually reflect women's history [Köse, 2023].

In Russian historiography, researchers have focused on the typology and functions of visual sources in educational literature. L. Aleksashkina and N. Vorozheykina propose their own classification of actions with visual sources—from the description of monuments to the use of source information in creative works [Aleksashkina, Vorozheykina, 2018]. L. Belgorodskaya et al. analyzed the specifics of visualization of various periods of Russian history in university textbooks and proposed a model for the scholarly attribution, description, and analysis of visual sources. These studies demonstrate that the textbook's visual narrative is considered an independent source but requires methodological consideration [Belgorodskaya et al., 2024].

In Kazakhstani historiography, most of the works by researchers analyze the textual component of the textbook. The main themes are the evolution of the content after gaining Independence [Dukeyev, 2021], patriotism and national identity [Klyuchareva, 2022], and methodological aspects of compiling school textbooks [Zueva, Nurligenova, 2016].

There are no direct studies on the visual construction of economic history specifically in textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan. B. Kaliyeva characterizes the visual materials in history textbooks from the 1940s to the 1970s [Kaliyeva, 2023]. Most Kazakhstani studies of school history textbooks in Kazakhstan are devoted to analyzing the textual component.

Special attention should be given to the large body of research by historians on the economic history of Kazakhstan in modern times. Key topics covered by these researchers include the crisis of nomadic pastoralism, the development of capitalist relations, the development of industry, the formation of the working class, and others. Visual sources of the modern Kazakhstan and contemporary interpretation were the subject of study in the publication of Kazakhstan's researchers like G. Sultangalieva [Sultangalieva, 2022], Zh. Nurbayev, S. Kishibayeva and G. Sultangazy [Nurbayev et al., 2023], N. Amanzholova, A. Oskembay and K. Tergembay [Amanzholova et al., 2025]. A more detailed analysis of these publications requires a separate study, but this article focuses on the examination and interpretation of visual texts from textbooks on the economic history of Kazakhstan in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Thus, during the period under review, the economy in Kazakhstan represented a complex and multi-layered system, in which the traditional nomadic way of life coexisted with elements of a market, sedentary, and bureaucratically regulated economy. These transformations required an appropriate visual representation of economic processes in educational literature.

Results. The first stage of the quantitative content analysis was to count the total number of illustrations in the textbook and identify those related to economic history (Table 1). Bekmakhanov's early editions (1959–1961) were distinguished by the most visually intensive work among Soviet textbooks on the modern history of Kazakhstan. They contained 50 illustrations, 17 of which reflected themes from economic history. In the author's subsequent editions (1962–1981), the total number of illustrations varied from 10 to 19, and the number of images on economic history varied from 1 to 6. This indicates a relative stability in the visual content of textbooks between 1962 and 1981. Babayev's textbook (1992) does not contain illustrations, which is most likely explained by the economic difficulties of the 1990s, which also affected the field of educational book publishing. Textbooks published in the Independence period show a significant increase in the number of visual illustrations in textbooks on the Modern History of Kazakhstan (from 32 to 158), reflecting a desire to make the educational material more visual and adaptable to the perception of modern schoolchildren. However, this increase in the number of illustrations is not accompanied by an increase in images dedicated to economic history. The fewest number of illustrations in Kasymbaev's textbooks: 43 in 2004 and 32 in 2012 year, but of these, 2 illustrations in 2004 and 1 in 2012 were devoted to economic topics. Despite the richest visual narrative in T. Omarbekov's textbooks (2018, 2025), the number of economic illustrations is limited to 7–8 units. Kabuldinov's textbooks (2012, 2018, 2025) are characterized

by a decrease in the number of illustrations of economic history topics. Thus, quantitative analysis reveals a general trend toward an increase in the number of illustrations, with relative stability in economic history illustrations in textbooks during the study period (1959-2025).

Table 1. The total number of illustrations in the textbooks and those related to economic history

№	Textbook	Year of publication	The total number of illustrations	The number of economic history illustrations
1	Bekmakhanov	1959, 1961	50	17
2	Bekmakhanov	1962	16	1
3	Bekmakhanov	1963–1965	17	2
4	Bekmakhanov	1966	19	5
5	Bekmakhanov	1967–1972	17	5
6	Bekmakhanov	1973–1975	15	6
7	Bekmakhanov	1977–1981	10	3
8	Babaev	1992	0	0
9	Kasymbaev	2004	43	2
10	Kasymbaev	2012	32	1
11	Kabuldinov	2012	93	17
12	Kabuldinov	2018	72	9
13	Omarbekov	2018	157	7
14	Kabuldinov	2025	78	5
15	Omarbekov	2025	158	8

The second stage of the quantitative analysis involved counting illustrations by topic: livestock breeding, agriculture, crafts, trade, and industry (Table 2). The largest number of illustrations relates to the topic of industry: 34 images, 14 of them are from Soviet textbooks and 20 from modern textbooks. The topic of agriculture (22 illustrations: 16 in Soviet textbooks, 6 in modern textbooks) demonstrates a sharp decline in visual presence. The Bekmakhanov textbook, 1959, 1961 have the largest number of illustrations on agriculture, later their number decreases. In the Soviet period traditional farming methods demonstrated the region's backwardness and industry and trade were presented as key factors in involving Kazakhstan in the Russian economic process and symbols of the region's modernization. In Soviet textbooks, Illustrations of trade, increased from 4 in the Soviet era to 16 after Independence. Cattle breeding remain at a relatively low level (only 9 images: 4 in Soviet and 5 in post-Soviet textbooks). Finally, crafts are rarely visualized-only 8 times (one in Soviet textbooks, 7 in new ones). However, their increase in the post-Soviet period indicates the emergence of a new cultural perspective-an interest in traditional forms of production as elements of national heritage.

Table 2. Thematic categories of economic illustrations in the analyzed textbooks

No	Textbook, year	Cattle breeding	Agriculture	Crafts	Trade	Industry
1	Bekmakhanov, 1959, 1961	3	6	1	4	3
2	Bekmakhanov, 1962	0	0	0	0	1
3	Bekmakhanov, 1963–1965	0	1	0	0	1
4	Bekmakhanov, 1966	1	2	0	0	2
5	Bekmakhanov, 1967–1972	0	3	0	0	2
6	Bekmakhanov, 1973–1975	0	3	0	0	3
7	Bekmakhanov, 1977–	0	1	0	0	2

	1981					
8	Babaev, 1992	0	0	0	0	0
9	Kasymbaev, 2004	0	1	0	0	1
10	Kasymbaev, 2012	0	0	0	0	1
11	Kabuldinov, 2012	2	1	3	6	5
12	Kabuldinov, 2018	0	0	2	4	3
13	Omarbekov, 2018	1	2	1	3	7
14	Kabuldinov, 2025	1	0	0	1	3
15	Omarbekov, 2025	1	2	1	2	0

Thus, as the analysis shows, the visual narrative of Soviet textbooks is rather monotonous. The greatest number of illustrations on modern economic history were in the 1959 and 1961 textbooks. Subsequently, the number of illustrations decreased and was occasionally supplemented with new ones. The economic history of Kazakhstan in the Soviet textbook was presented as a story of the movement from backwardness to progress, with an emphasis on class struggle and colonialism, instilling in students a «historical necessity» for the October Revolution. Illustrations served only a supporting function and contained relatively simple scenes: a yurt and a winter hut symbolizing the traditional Kazakh way of life, a pickaxe and a mine representing the labor of workers, etc.

Let's move on to a qualitative analysis of the textbook illustrations. The first group of images in Soviet textbooks is dedicated to livestock breeding and the nomadic way of life. The primary symbolism of this first group of illustrations is seasonal migrations as the basis of the nomadic economy. Thus, the stable, traditional nomadic way of life of the Kazakhs and their backwardness are depicted.

The second group of illustrations shows the development of agriculture in the Steppe. Here we can identify binary oppositions according to the deconstructive approach (J. Derrida and R. Barthes). The hidden goal of the visual narrative is to show the opposition between «local-migrant» and «traditional-progressive» illustrations «Zheragash (Zher zhyrtatyn kural)» («Traditional Plow») [fig. 1], «Zher zhyrtu» («Harvest of millet») [fig. 2], shows us the hard manual labor of the steppe dwellers, symbolizing traditional forms of land cultivation in Kazakhstan. In contrast, the image «Konys audaryp kelgenderdin auyl sharuashylyk mashinalarga arналган koymasy (Pavlodar uezi)» («Warehouse of agricultural machinery of settlers (Pavlodar district)») [fig. 3]. The obvious meaning here is the progressive nature of the Russian Empire's resettlement policy for the region and the growth of productive forces.



Fig. 1. Zheragash («Traditional Plow») [Bekmakhanov, 1961:73]

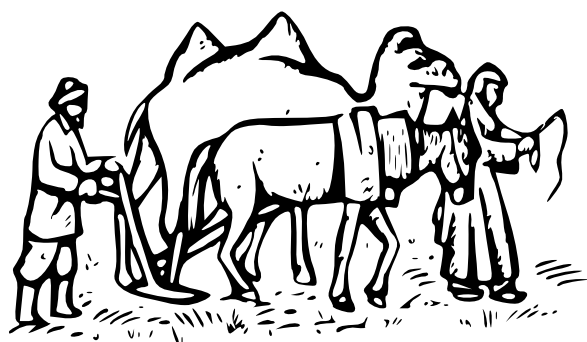


Fig. 2. «Zher zhyrtu» («Harvest of millet») [Bekmakhanov, 1970:62]

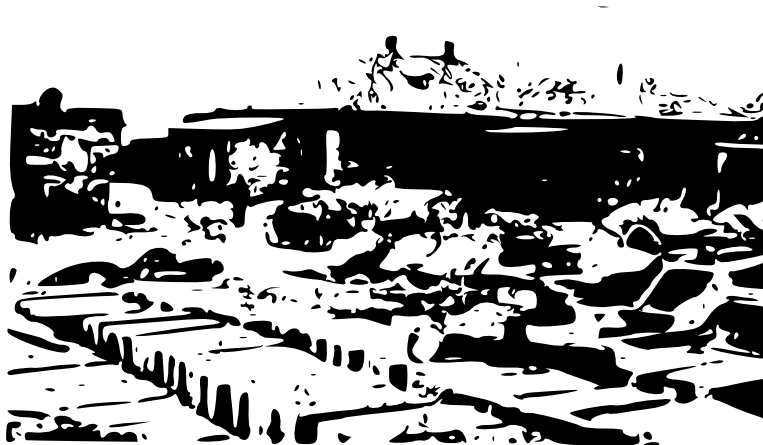


Fig. 3. «Konys audaryp kelgenderdin auyl sharuashylyk mashinalarga arналган koymasy (Pavlodar uezi)» («Warehouse of agricultural machinery of settlers (Pavlodar district)») [Bekmakhanov, 1961:99]

The third group of illustrations characterizes the development of trade and the formation of infrastructure in the steppe, which facilitated integration into the pan-Russian economic space. For example, the graphic «Orynboardagy sauda saraiy» («Orenburg's castle of the trade») show cities as centers of trade and nodes of economic integration [fig. 4].

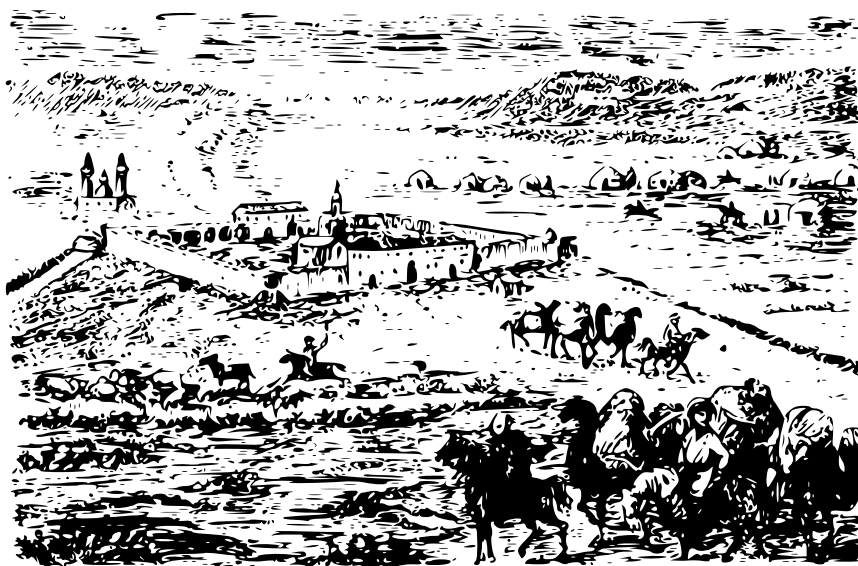


Fig. 4. «Orynboardagy sauda saraiy» («Orenburg's castle of the trade»)[Bekmakhanov, 1961:58]

The fourth group of illustrations depicts the development of industry, specifically the heavy industry, in the 19th century. The main images are associated with the nature of the workers' labor-heavy physical, primarily manual labor in mines and factories (Uspensk and Spassk copper mines, Blagovat-Stefanovsky and Aleksandrovsky silver-lead smelting plants) [fig. 5] [Bekmakhanov, Bekmakhanova, 1974:108]. This visual narrative characterizes the process of capitalism's penetration into the steppe and the formation of the working class in Kazakhstan.

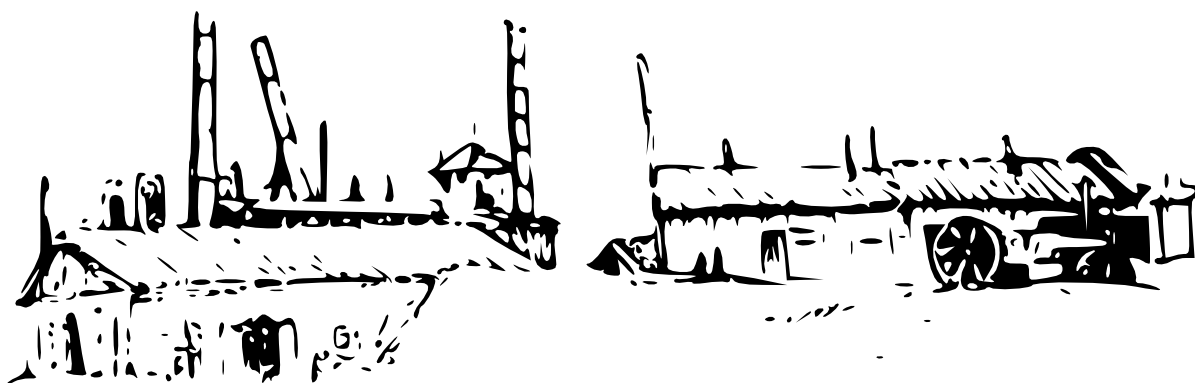


Fig. 5. «Uspensk mys rudnigi» («Uspensk copper mine») [Bekmakhanov, Bekmakhanova, 1974: 107]

Let's look at the illustration «Karagandy zaboiynda» («At the Karaganda plant») [fig. 6]. It depicts several miners in an underground mine, working with a pick and shovel. The workers' figures are depicted dynamically, and the contrasting lighting creates a sense of the mine's depth and intense labor. Looking at it, one can emotionally sense the workers' hard physical labor.



Fig. 6. «Karagandy zaboiynda» («At the Karaganda plant») [Bekmakhanov, 1961:113]

1962 reprint of Bekmakhanov's textbook was supplemented with one illustration. «Karagandy shahtasynda at kushimen adam tusiru» («Lowering miners into the Karaganda mine by means of horse power») [fig. 7]. The sketch depicts a scene in which animals are used to power a mine mechanism. Two horses are visible, harnessed to a circular mechanism, and a man controls them nearby. In the background is a large wooden structure of the mine installation.

In Bekmakhanov's 1966 textbook an illustration was added to Chapter 7 of «The Development of Capitalism in Kazakhstan and the Disintegration of Patriarchal-Feudal Relations» [Bekmakhanov, 1962: 53]. The image is executed in the graphic style typical of Soviet textbooks: a black-and-white line engraving. In the foreground is a male worker with a pickaxe over his shoulder, and in the background is the silhouette of an industrial city with factory chimneys and residential buildings. It served as a visual marker of the topic: from a single image, the student could understand that the discussion would focus on the formation of capitalist relations and industrialization. The engraving sets the emotional tone of the chapter: dynamism, intense labor, and movement toward a new society. It is used as an element of visual propaganda, instilling a positive perception of progress in students.



Fig. 7. The Development of Capitalism in Kazakhstan and the Disintegration of Patriarchal-Feudal Relations [Bekmakhanov, 1966:60]

Now let's move on to a qualitative analysis of publications from the Independence period. Babayev's 1992 textbook contains no illustrations and is presented as a textual narrative. Individual paragraphs touch on Kazakhstan's socioeconomic development but are not illustrated. This is presumably due to the general economic crisis of the 1990s, which included the publication of printed materials.

Most of the illustrations in Kasymbayev's textbook (2012) are portraits, through which the author visually creates an image of history as a series of historical figures. This approach contributes to the formation of historical consciousness and national identity in schoolchildren through glorification. The economic history of modern Kazakhstan is represented here by only one illustration: «The Uspensky Copper Mine» in paragraph 26, «The Economic Development of Kazakhstan in the Second Half of the 19th Century» [Kasymbayev, 2012:161]. Here, it plays not only a supporting role but also creates a conceptual perception of the information, preparing the student for reading the information about the mines on the next page. The image of this industrial facility in the paragraph demonstrates its importance in the development of industry in the region, emphasizing Kazakhstan's role as a source of raw materials for the Russian Empire: «Since the 1860s, Russian industrialists began to invest their funds in organizing industrial production in a region rich in minerals like Kazakhstan» [Kasymbayev, 2012:162].

The most illustrated textbook on the modern history of Kazakhstan, published during the period of Independence, is the textbook for the 8th grade Z. Kabuldinov (2012). The visual series represents a rich narrative illustrating the transition from a traditional way of life to capitalism. The type of images is diverse: photographs, paintings, maps, portraits. Images illustrating economic history are contained in nine paragraphs of the textbook. Photographs in paragraph 24, «Traditional Kazakh Economy» show us the life of Kazakhs in the first half of the 19th century: cattle breeding, hunting, felt mat making [Kabuldinov, 2012:146, 147, 150, 151]. The economic contacts between the resettled peasantry and the Kazakh population are shown in the 19th century. An agricultural machine is depicted with the words that «under the influence of the peasants, the Kazakhs acquired agricultural machinery and iron tools» [Kabuldinov, 2012:204]. The integration of the Kazakhs into the imperial trading system is most clearly illustrated throughout the narrative. Thus, in paragraph 5, «The Annexation of the Kishi (Little) Zhuz to Russia» [Kabuldinov, 2012:32] and paragraph 10, maps in the «The Uprising Led by Syrym Datuly» [Kabuldinov, 2012:61] show trade routes. We see an illustration of 18th-century Kazakh traders on camels in the steppe in paragraph 11, titled «Development of Economic Ties with Russia». [fig. 8] The underlying message is that trade was a part of Kazakh life, with nomads acting as intermediaries in the exchange of products from the steppe and settled regions. The visual narrative then goes on to describe the development of urban trade and Kazakhstan's integration into the Russian banking system, which is linked to the growth of trade turnover in the region [fig. 9].



Fig. 8. Kazakh traders [Kabuldinov, 2012:65]



Fig. 9. Akmola branch of the Siberian Commercial Bank [Kabuldinov, 2012:220]



Fig. 10. A shop in Petropavlovsk, early 20th century [Kabuldinov, 2012:210]

When discussing industrial development, this textbook emphasizes the role of cities as centers of production [fig. 10]. Section 35, «Industrial Development in Kazakhstan» features a photograph, «The Hard Labor of Hired Women» which is logically unrelated to the text on that page. The discussion of the plight of Kazakh workers and the use of child labor appears on page 226, while the photograph appears on page 222, where the text discusses the penetration of foreign capital into the Steppe.

In the 2018-year edition of the textbook by the same author, the number of illustrations was reduced. Technically, the textbook has been updated to color, making it more visually appealing than the two-color blue-and-black 2012 edition. Color maps illustrating trade routes and the development of capitalism, emphasizing large-scale changes, have become an important visual element. A didactic assignment for the new color map, «The Development of Capitalist Relations in Kazakhstan» [Kabuldinov, 2012:137–138] has been added. However, the visuals on economic history have become sparse: illustrations of traditional Kazakh life, the salt industry, Kazakh traders, and urban space have disappeared. Illustrations on economic history are contained only in three paired paragraphs. The photograph «The Hard Labor of Hired Women» now bears no connection whatsoever to the text of the paragraph» [Kabuldinov, 2012: 222].

The textbook for grade 8(7) by T. Omarbekov (2018) contains the largest number of illustrations (157), of which only 9 show economic history. The illustrations are varied: photographs, paintings, portraits. The illustrations relate to traditional Kazakh life and trade. The topic of industrial development is not illustrated. In paragraphs 40-41, «Socio-economic development of Kazakhstan in the second half of the 19th century, «In the textbook «The Penetration of Capitalist Relations» the transition to sedentary forms of economic activity is visually demonstrated. The subsection «Development of Industry» of this section features N. Khlodov's painting «Spring Plowing». The text beneath the illustration reads as follows: «The emergence of enterprises processing traditional livestock raw materials led to the emergence of large suburban settlements» but the image conveys the development of arable farming, which indicates a discord between the textual and non-textual components of the textbook. [Omarbekov, 2018:120-121]. The text of the subsection then lists mines and factories and discusses the Trans-Siberian Railway, but there are no illustrations, although visual images would have helped create a holistic perception of the process of industrial development and the penetration of capital into the Steppe. Furthermore, in paragraph 43 «Development of Trade Relations in Kazakhstan» emphasis is placed on the role of trade fairs in the development of Kazakhstan's economy since the mid- 19th century. Trade is represented by two photographs. The photograph «Auliye-Ata. Horse Bazaar» shows a bustling horse bazaar: crowds of people, stalls, horses, and camels [fig. 11]. The scene reflects the bazaar's role as a key hub of economic activity in the region. The importance of livestock breeding in trade relations is emphasized. Livestock trading was one of the main ways nomads integrated into imperial trade. The second photo shows one of the largest fairs in the steppe, the Koyandy Fair: trading carts, makeshift tents, and people engaged in exchanging and selling goods [fig. 12]. In the background is a gathering of livestock and people. Thus, the author emphasizes that fairs became a new form of trade, incorporating Kazakhs into the empire's commodity-money relations. It's worth noting that, unlike Kabuldinov's textbooks, maps are used here only to illustrate political history: the Kazakh people's liberation struggle against the Dzungars, administrative reforms, and Kazakh uprisings.



Fig. 11. Ayliye-Ata.Horse bazaar. Turkestan album (1871-1872) [Omarbekov, 2018:125]



Fig. 12. Koyandy Fair [Omarbekov, 2018:126]

The 2025 textbooks do not include new visual stories on economic history, but these publications are distinguished by the presence of QR codes with multimedia content (maps, short educational videos with visual content generated using artificial intelligence). For example, in paragraphs 39-40 «Development of Fair Trade» of Kabuldinov's history textbook on Kazakhstan, a QR code with a video about fairs in Kazakhstan is included on the page 145 [Kabuldinov, 2025:145]. The content, lasting 1 minute and 53 seconds, is a brief, voiced summary of fairs in Kazakhstan during this period. The visuals were generated using generative artificial intelligence. Since image generation algorithms are capable of reproducing ideological and cultural stereotypes, it is important to verify the visual content and accompany it with methodological commentary. Without this, there is a risk of distorting historical facts, replacing scientific reconstruction with visual imitation or artistic invention. The video itself is narrated by a synthesized voice, creating a sense of distance from the viewer. Omarbekov's textbook (2025) contains no new visuals, and QR codes are not used for topics on economic history.

Thus, the results of an analysis of illustrative material in school textbooks on the Modern History of Kazakhstan show that the visual narrative of economic history has changed significantly from the Soviet to the post-Soviet period. These changes affect both the frequency and typology of images, as well as the functional meaning of visual sources.

In Soviet textbooks, depictions of economic topics are extremely rare. They serve primarily ideological purposes, are not accompanied by analytical exercises, and are used more as a means of visually reinforcing the narrative than as a tool for independent understanding. Illustrations in textbooks of this period rarely go beyond the framework of Marxist theory. Textbooks of the independence period demonstrate a noticeable increase in the amount of visual material, as well as a broadening of subject matter: scenes of trade, fairs, nomadic and sedentary economies, crafts, and even the policy of resettlement appear in the images. Images rarely become a source of problematic or interpretation—they are still perceived as illustrative rather than analytical.

However, despite the richer and more varied visual design, many images are not always connected to the development of students' historical thinking. Illustrations are often not accompanied by questions or tasks, which limits their potential as a historical source. In this sense, the visual component remains secondary to the text and does not create a fully integrated learning environment.

Thus, the visual narrative of textbooks reflects not only historical content but also methodical approaches to history teaching. While in Soviet times, images were subordinated to an ideological function, modern schools are seeing a shift toward a more diverse, yet still uncritical, use of visual sources.

Conclusion. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the illustrative material in school textbooks on the Modern History of Kazakhstan (1959–2025) revealed the dynamics and characteristics of the visual narrative associated with economic history. A quantitative content analysis revealed that, despite the overall increase in the number of illustrations in textbooks during the Independence period, images devoted to economic topics remained relatively stable and accounted for a limited portion of the visual content. The early editions of E. Bekmakhanov (1959–1961) remain the richest in this regard, whereas in the post-Soviet period, with an increase in the overall number of images, the emphasis gradually shifted from production and economic topics to the visualization of political history and cultural heritage.

A qualitative analysis of illustrations revealed the persistence of key visual motifs and their ideological transformation. In Soviet publications, visual depictions of traditional farming, trade, and crafts were interpreted through the lens of the shift from "tradition" to "modernity" thanks to the Russian Empire. Illustrations emphasized the region's dependence on Russia's political and economic processes and illustrated

the transformation of Kazakh society in the context of the empire's civilizing mission. In post-Soviet textbooks, the visual emphasis shifts toward the cultural heritage, ethnographic features, and diversity of economic forms in pre-revolutionary Kazakhstan. There is a statistically significant increase in images related to trade and crafts, reflecting an interest in traditional forms of production as elements of national heritage. A significant feature of recent textbooks is the inclusion of scenes related to gender history, such as the visualization of the arduous labor of hired women in Kabuldinov's textbook. This significantly expands the thematic range of economic history and makes the visuals more socially oriented.

The current era is characterized by the emergence of QR codes with multimedia and visual content generated using artificial intelligence (further-AI). This opens new horizons for the visualization of historical material, but simultaneously requires a critical approach. Since image-generating algorithms are capable of reproducing ideological and cultural stereotypes, it is essential to verify visual content and accompany it with methodological commentary. Without this, there is a risk of distorting historical facts and substituting scientific reconstruction with visual imitation or artistic invention.

At the same time, the emergence of digital visual forms creates the foundation for the further integration of augmented reality (further-AR) technologies into the educational process. AR can not only visualize economic history-for example, reconstructing scenes from the Koyandy Fair, the mines of Karaganda, or agricultural settlements of immigrants-but also transform visual material into an interactive educational environment, where students become researchers of the past. Such formats can enrich traditional illustrative materials, making history teaching more meaningful, engaging, and multi-code.

However, the implementation of AR and AI-content must be accompanied by the development of visual literacy, critical analysis of sources, and scientific verification of reconstructions. Only under these conditions will immersive technologies become a means of deepening historical understanding rather than a tool for substituting reality.

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МАЗМҰНЫ/ СОДЕРЖАНИЕ/CONTENT
ОТАН ТАРИХЫ. 2025. Т. 28. № 4

<i>Uryustyumova A., Sadvakassova Zh., Omurova Zh.</i> KAZAKHSTAN-KYRGYZSTAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY (2015–2025): THE ROLE OF TURKSOY AND OTHER CULTURAL PLATFORMS.....	990
<i>Sailaubaeva A.K., Zhumatai S.</i> THE ROLE OF THE AKHMET RIZA MADRASAH IN THE EDUCATIONAL AND ENLIGHTENMENT ACTIVITIES OF THE SEMEY REGION.....	1000
<i>Akshanova A.M., Otepova G.E., Kabidenova Zh.D.</i> NATIONAL PERSONNEL POLICY IN THE PAVLODAR REGION UNDER THE FUNCTIONAL NORM OF KORENIZATSIYA (INDIGENIZATION).....	1009
<i>Kapassova G., Sadvakassova Zh., Kaliyeva K.</i> HISTORICAL FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF TOURISM IN THE ALAKOL AND ISSYK-KUL REGIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.....	1020
<i>Dossymova M.K.</i> THE GENERAL SITUATION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND RUSSIA IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR.....	1033
<i>Baigabatova N., Abdrakhim M.</i> ADAPTATION CHALLENGES OF ETHNIC REPATRIATES IN POST-SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN: A HISTORICAL-CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS.....	1050
<i>Dalayeva T., Idrissova A.</i> VISUAL SYMBOLISM OF ECONOMIC HISTORY IN TEXTBOOKS ON THE MODERN HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN (SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH–EARLY 21 CENTURIES).....	1063
<i>Sadvakassova Zh., Kapassova G.</i> KAZAKHSTAN KYRGYZ AND KYRGYZSTAN KAZAKHS: ETHNODEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION AND MIGRATION IN THE FIRST DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE.....	1080
<i>Zhussip S.A., Nurpeisov Y.K., Maslov Kh.B.</i> ALASH ORDA'S SOVEREIGN FOREIGN POLICY: NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK DELEGATION (1918-1920).....	1091
<i>Токашева А.Н., Жуманова А.З.</i> 1944 ЖЫЛҒЫ БКП(Б) ОРТАЛЫҚ КОМИТЕТІНДЕГІ ТАРИХШЫЛАР КЕҢЕСІ: КЕҢЕС ТАРИХНАМАСЫНДАҒЫ ИДЕОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ БАҒЫТ.....	1107

Сулейменова А.Т.РЕСПУБЛИКАЛЫҚ БАҚЫЛАУ КОМИССИЯЛАРЫНЫҢ ҚҰЖАТТАРЫ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДА
1925–1933-ЖЫЛДАРЫ ЖҮРГІЗІЛГЕН НАУҚАНДАРДЫ
ЗЕРТТЕУДІҢ ТАРИХИ ДЕРЕККӨЗІ РЕТІНДЕ.....1117**Абсаликов А.А., Бисенова Г.А.**ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ИСТОЧНИКИ О КОК ОРДЕ (СИНЕЙ ОРДЕ) И АК ОРДЕ
(БЕЛОЙ ОРДЕ): ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЛОКАЛИЗАЦИИ И РЕКОНСТРУКЦИИ
В ИСТОРИКО-ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ.....1136**Молдин Б.А., Мәден А.Т.**XX ҒАСЫРДЫҢ 20-30 ЖЫЛДАРЫНДАҒЫ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ
ХАЛЫҚ НАРАЗЫЛЫҚТАРЫ МЕН КӨТЕРІЛІСТЕРІ МӘСЕЛЕСІНЕ
ТАРИХНАМАЛЫҚ ШОЛУ.....1148**Бейсенбаева Г.К., Касенова А.Д., Богенбаева А.К.**

ПОЛЕВЫЕ АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ДЛЯ ШКОЛЬНИКОВ.....1166

Рахметова Ә., Сарсембаева Г.ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ДЕМОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ ДАМУДЫҢ ЖАҢА
БАҒЫТТАРЫ (2021–2025 жж.).....1177**Есназарова З.Б.**АДМИНИСТРАТИВНО-ТЕРРИТОРИАЛЬНОЕ И СОЦИАЛЬНО-
ДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ГОРОДОВ
КАРАКАЛПАКСТАНА. 1873–1926 гг.....1189**Базарбаев К., Амирбек А., Акдениз Э.**XX ҒАСЫР БАСЫНДАҒЫ ҚАЗАҚ ЗИЯЛЫЛАРЫНЫҢ ҚОҒАМДЫҚ-
САЯСИ САНАСЫНДАҒЫ ТҮРКИЯ ФАКТОРЫ.....1205**Шолахов М.Г., Алпысбес М.А.**

РЕФОРМЫ ЖАНГИР-ХАНА.....1215

Мамраймов С.Д.1937 ЖЫЛҒЫ №00447 БҰЙРЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ
КЕҢЕСТІК РЕПРЕССИЯЛЫҚ АППАРАТТЫҢ
ҚҰРЫЛЫМДЫҚ-ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛДЫҚ ТЕТІКТЕРІ.....1230**Ескалиев С.А., Айтенов Ж.К.**КОММУНИСТІК ПАРТИЯ МЕН КЕҢЕСТІК МЕМЛЕКЕТТІЛІК:
ТОТАЛИТАРЛЫҚ ЖҮЙЕНІҢ ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛДЫҚ ЭВОЛЮЦИЯСЫ
(ТАРИХИ АСПЕКТ).....1245**Сағнайкызы С., Сартаев С.А., Нусунбаева С.А.**КОРРУПЦИЯ И ПОЛИТИЗАЦИЯ: ОТРАЖЕНИЕ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ
ПРАВООХРАНИТЕЛЬНОЙ СИСТЕМЫ КАЗАХСКОЙ АССР НА СТРАНИЦАХ
ГАЗЕТЫ «ЕҢБЕКШІ ҚАЗАҚ» (КОНЕЦ 1920-х – НАЧАЛО 1930-х ГОДОВ).....1260

Қуаныш С.О., Айдосынова Г.Ж., Мурзаходжаев Қ.М. АТЫРАУ Өңіріндегі қуғын-сүргін: өлім жазасына кесілген дін өкілдері.....	1271
Хайдаров Т.Ф., Бейсембаева А.Р. XIV ғасырдың екінші жартысында жошы ұлысында болған індет.....	1284
Түлебаев Д.Ж., Симтиков Ж.К. ҚАЗАҚ ХАЛҚЫНЫҢ ТАРИХЫНДАҒЫ ТІЛДІҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК РӨЛІ.....	1293
Ашимова У.А., Қалшабаева Б.К. ҚАЗАҚ ӘЙЕЛДЕРІНІҢ ДӘСТҮРЛІ КИІМІНДЕГІ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯЛЫҚ ҮРДІСТЕР: МӘДЕНИ ЖАД ПЕН ҰЛТТЫҚ БІРЕГЕЙЛІК ТҮЙІСІНДЕ.....	1304
Kabuldinov Z.Y., Mussabalina G., Beisembayeva A. KAZAKH-OIRAT RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA (15 th – EARLY 17 th CENTURIES).....	1319
Ерғабылов А.Е. ЖЕТІСУ ЖӘНЕ ІЛЕ АЛАБЫНДАҒЫ ОРТАҒАСЫРЛЫҚ ҚАЛАЛАРДЫҢ ЗЕРТТЕЛУІНДЕГІ КЕЙБІР ӨЗЕКТІ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕР (1991-2023 ЖЖ. ЗЕРТТЕУЛЕР НЕГІЗІНДЕ).....	1331



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