

# A Sound of Silence in the Archives: On Eighteenth-Century Russian Diplomacy and the Historical Episteme of Central Asian Hostility

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*Cui bono* information and record keeping? In his most recent work devoted to the study of British and French imperialism in the Levant in early modern history, Cornel Zwierlein has argued that “empires are built on ignorance.” It is, of course, true that during the old regime Western knowledge of things “Oriental” was patently defective, marked as it was by blind spots and glaring gaps; and if observed in the broader context of European colonialism in Asia, the British and French cases are hardly exceptional. Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s *Europe’s India* has shown compellingly that the Portuguese, too, blindly forged ahead in their imperial expansion into South Asia, with a good dose of improvisation. By focusing on a mission to Khiva, Bukhara, and Balkh in 1732, I set out to show that the Russian venture in Asia too was premised upon ignorance, among other things. More specifically, I argue that diplomatic and commercial relations between Russia and Central Asia developed in parallel with the neglect of intelligence gathered and made available in imperial archives. Reflecting on the fact that the Russian enterprise in Asia was minimally dependent on information allows us to complicate the reductive equation of knowledge to power, which originates from the “archival turn.” Many today regard archives as reflective of projects of documentation, which granted epistemological virtue to the texts stored, ordered, and preserved therein. The archives generated truth claims, we are told, about hierarchies of knowledge produced by states and, by doing so, they effectively operated as a technological apparatus bolstering the state. However, not all the texts which we find in archives *always* retained their pristine epistemic force. To historicise the uses, misuses, and, more importantly, the practices of purposeful neglect of records invites us to revisit the quality of transregional connectivity across systems of signification in the early modern period.

**Key words:** archives, knowledge, Khiva, Muscovy, documentation, truth claims, epistemic force

## Introduction

On 5 February 1732 a caravan left Astrakhan, a commercial hub perched on the delta of the Volga River, headed towards Khiva, one of the major urban centres in the oasis of Khorezm and the seat of power of the Khanate of Khiva. At the head of the caravan was a military officer of German origin named Johann Gustav Garber. After nearly four weeks of travel the caravan reached a place called Saraychik on the lower Ural River. There the caravan was ambushed by a group of Kazakhs guided by Bātir Khān, a tribal leader who operated within the territory under the rule of his uncle Abū ‘I-Khayr Khān, the leader of a major constellation of Kazakh tribes called the Minor Horde, who had just taken an oath of allegiance to the tsar in 1730.<sup>1</sup> While Bātir Khān besieged the caravan, Garber was able to send a group of men to Khiva to request help from the local ruler. After two weeks, Garber and most of his fellow travellers returned to Astrakhan robbed of their possessions. A smaller group of merchants, however, proceeded towards Khiva, and after two days of travel they encountered a military detachment, which Ilbārs Khān, then the ruler of Khiva, had sent to rescue Garber and his caravan. These are the bare facts of a disastrous mission to Central Asia.<sup>2</sup>

The composition of the caravan was quite unusual. It reflected not merely the interests of a group of merchants, mostly subjects of the Russian Empire, who aimed to exchange or purchase goods in Central Asia. In fact, that caravan was designed to restore diplomatic as well as commercial relations between Russia and the Khanates of Khiva and Bukhara, which at the beginning of the eighteenth century under Peter I (r. 1682-1725) had gone awry, and thus to relaunch the Russian quest for “Indian gold” under the newly enthroned Empress Anna Ivanovna (d. 1730-1740).<sup>3</sup> Behind this initiative lurked one of the empress’s most influential personalities, cabinet minister Alexey Cherkassky, who was to become one of the key actors in Russia’s foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

On the face of it, early 1732 would have seemed like an ideal time to give a boost to Russian ambitions in the East: in early 1731 a Central Asian ambassador known as Yādīgār reached Astrakhan and informed tsarist authorities that the new man in power in Khiva was “asking to restore old friendship and commerce” (*novoi khan khivinskoi prosit o sostavlenii prezhnei družby i komertsii*).<sup>5</sup> Yādīgār suggested on behalf of the Khan of Khiva that securing free and safe trade required the composition of a caravan escorted by an armed convoy (*obnadezhivaia svobodnym torgom i dacheiu konvoia*).<sup>6</sup> Not only did Minister Cherkassky take on board the suggestions coming from the Central Asian envoy, he also found the most fitting of all men of arms in Russia to lead the caravan: Johann Gustav Garber. A native of Brandenburg, Garber had joined the Russian army in 1710 as a lieutenant of artillery and was an active participant in the Northern War, where he had distinguished himself for his bravery. From 1722 to 1729, he was tasked with the settlement of border disputes with Persia, where he contributed to the drawing of a new map of the Caucasus, for which mission he received the rank of lieutenant.<sup>7</sup>

Garber was more than a distinguished military officer, however. He was also a man with a profound fascination for Central Asia. The time he spent in Gilan, a northern

region of what is today Iran on the Caspian littoral, seems to have fostered an ethnographic sensibility in him, which led him to collect a plethora of information on the land known at that time as “Bukharia” and its putative rivers of gold. Most such information amounted to a random gathering of wonders based on ludicrous hearsay, to be sure, but Gerber’s gleanings nonetheless made it to the press of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1760 in Saint Petersburg.<sup>8</sup> Their printing is important for us because it signals that what, with some latitude, may be termed Central Asian gold fever was spreading far and wide and affecting prominent members of the foreign affairs’ entourage.<sup>9</sup>

Most probably on account of his cartographic experience and ethnographic knowledge, albeit rudimentary, Garber was instructed to draw a map of commercial routes across the lower Middle Volga and to collect information about the political and economic situations in Khiva and Bukhara, their trade facilities, and which goods were in most demand and how much might be purchased in a year. Most importantly, he was to find out how Russians could push Khivan and Bukharan rulers to fulfil their commercial obligations. Finally, Garber was expected to clarify whether it would indeed be possible for Russians to reach India and those places where gold and other precious gemstones were thought to be available.<sup>10</sup>

All in one, so to speak, this caravan represented a state mission of reconnaissance designed to reestablish commercial as well as diplomatic relations with Central Asia after the lethal blow inflicted in 1716. In that year, after lending credit to a story told by a Turkmen about Khivans diverting the flow of the Oxus into the Aral Sea to extract gold, Peter I dispatched several thousand men under Kabardian Prince Bekovich-Cherkassky and sent them to Khiva on a mission engaged with surveying work. A massacre ensued in which more than three thousand perished.<sup>11</sup> That story has been the subject of extensive commentary and there is little need to return to it.<sup>12</sup> We should nevertheless remind ourselves that, to add insult to injury, in 1719 the Khivan ruler Shīr-Ghāzī Khān wrote a letter to Peter I blaming the episode on an “unfortunate misunderstanding” (originating, he said, from a mistake made by the royal envoy himself) and asking “the king to resume the exchange of embassies and caravan trade.”<sup>13</sup>

Fourteen years later Ilbārs Khān, the new sovereign of Khorezm, appeared to be stretching out his hand to the Russians and inviting them back to probe the infamous land route around the Caspian Sea into Central Asia, at least according to what Yādigār had told the Russian authorities in Astrakhan. Ilbārs Khān did not encounter Peter I and his entourage, however, but a completely different cast of characters, who had no experience whatsoever in entertaining relations with Central Asia. Alexey Cherkassky, son of the *voevod* of Tobolsk, first made a name for himself as the *ober-kommissar* of Saint Petersburg, tasked by none other than Peter I himself to refashion the architecture of Saint Petersburg. He was then appointed to the post of governor of Siberia, where he acquired enough serfs to make him the richest man in Russia. So when Anna Ivanovna designated him to hold the post of cabinet minister, his experience with Asia was mostly confined to the development of measures to safeguard Siberia from incursions of Mongols and Bashkirs. His estrangement from Central Asia conjures up an

image of Cherkassky as someone who must have entertained great hopes in the message brought by Yādigār that a new powerful man in Khiva was ready to cut a new deal with Russians and help them into the region.

But something went wrong, as we know. In 1732 Garber and Yādigār came back to Astrakhan unable to accomplish their mission, returning to the Council of Foreign Affairs the empress's letters for the rulers of Khiva, Bukhara, and Balkh, and told a story of how the Khivans had turned a blind eye to Russian needs. The unedifying story of Garber's caravan ends officially here, consigned to oblivion amid many other small events casting Russian diplomats and merchants as the victims of Kalmyks and Kazakhs in pursuit of Central Asian wealth. Indeed, a century and a half later, while the colonisation of Central Asia was in full swing, Russian historians framed Garber's mission in the following way:

Our foreign contacts with Central Asian khanates under Anna Ivanovna did not stand out for any practical achievement. In the year in which she was enthroned came to Moscow the Khivan ambassador Iadiger with a warrant [supplied by] his [ruler] and the Bukharan khan. As an answer to this [initiative], there was sent to Khiva and Bukhara the lieutenant of artillery Gerber [sic] with a commercial caravan, who, however, fell under attack of the Kazakhs when he was close to the river Emba and the embassy had to come back without reaching the Khivan borders.<sup>14</sup>

However, as I will show, Garber's mission lived on in at least two other incarnations. One took shape in the paper trail produced by the imperial institutions involved in this mission: a long chain of correspondence between the Council of Foreign Affairs, the Chancellery of the Astrakhan *voevoda*, the Council for Trade, the Chancellery of the Autocrat, and the scribal apparatus of the Khan of Khiva. In 1809 this correspondence was collected, partly copied, and ordered chronologically into the Inventory of Khivan Affairs (*Reestr Khivinskim ili Iurgenskim delam*)<sup>15</sup> by Nikolai Bantysh-Kamenskii, director of the Archive of the College of Foreign Affairs and experienced registrar (*aktuarius*), and one of the most prominent faces of post-Petrine official tsarist historiography. Accommodated in a new archival environment, Garber's story acquired a further dimension: through practices of record keeping, translation, and copying, this story underwent a sanitising process whereby the contemptible details of the Kazakhs' ambush and the unbearable frustration of Garber at the Khivans' rebuffs were removed. Once sanitised, the new archival version of the Garber affair acquired a precedential value, a foundational status for the development of subsequent commercial and diplomatic relations between Russia and Khorezm.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Garber's story found a second, completely different incarnation. This time the story left the imperial archives and made it to the public sphere thanks to a group of Orientalists-cum-colonial officials, who had vested interests in showing the Khivan's entrenched "cunning" (*kovarstvo*) and "insolence" (*derzost'*) towards Russia.<sup>16</sup> Nothing could have served better than a case of Kazakh aggression and Khivan hostility in the first half of the eighteenth century to telescope into the imperial past the idea that Central Asians always behaved savagely with Russia. In Garber, history supplied an eloquent example to show why Russia needed to embark on a civilising mission and pursue the colonisation of Central Asia.<sup>17</sup>

The two incarnations of Garber's mission were closely connected. Their trajectories, however, could not be more different. While Garber's story gained visibility during the climax of the Russian colonial enterprise in Central Asia, nearly a century and a half after the event occurred, the archival version of his story was never fully publicised. One could say that in fact the documentary voices of the Garber affair became silent. This case suggests that if archives can hardly talk, they can be ventriloquised if needed, at best.

Taking stock of cases of archival silences complicates the current "archival turn," which invites us to view archives as institutional and political agents, rather than innocent repositories of texts to be mined at will. The work of Ann Laura Stoler in particular has pushed many to conceptualise the colonial archive as a project of documentation, which grants epistemic value to the texts it stores, orders, and preserves.<sup>18</sup> The colonial archive, according to Stoler, generates truth claims about hierarchies of knowledge produced by the state and, by doing so, it effectively operates as a technological apparatus which bolsters the state, thereby producing "regimes of credibility."<sup>19</sup> But there is a problem with this proposition: the assumption that texts, once they become "documents" by virtue of being filed in archives, enter an ahistorical dimension which allows them to retain their intended epistemic potential. Document once, document forever, Stoler seems to suggest. One wonders, however, whether all texts that we find in colonial and imperial archives *always* retain their original intended purpose and their pristine documentary force.<sup>20</sup> In this essay, I want to show that if one conceptualises archives as subjects rather than just objects, one should also recognise that archives can in fact silence the voices coming from the texts which they preserve and, by so doing, they can weaken and ultimately deactivate the potential epistemic value of such texts.

Once we have acknowledged the historical significance of archival silences, we can make a further move and observe the problems that imperial Russia encountered in the first half of the eighteenth century while attempting to reach the Central Asian shores of the Caspian Sea. While knowledge about naval connections flooded the imperial archives and papered the Caspian thalassology,<sup>21</sup> in the 1730s many between Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Astrakhan did not know (or pretended not to know) how to navigate the Caspian Sea.<sup>22</sup> To observe how information accumulated in Russian imperial archives and yet failed to morph into usable knowledge allows us to synchronise scholarship on archival studies with the most recent developments in imperial history. *Cui bono* information and recording keeping? In his most recent work devoted to the study of British and French imperialism in the Levant in early modern history, Cornel Zwierlein has argued that "empires are built on ignorance."<sup>23</sup> It is, of course, true that during the old regime Western knowledge of things "Oriental" was patently defective, marked as it was by blind spots and glaring gaps; and if observed in the broader context of European colonialism in Asia the British and French cases are hardly exceptional. Sanjay Subrahmanyam's *Europe's India* has shown compellingly that the Portuguese blindly forged ahead in their imperial expansion into South Asia with a good dose of improvisation.<sup>24</sup> Our case study, however, indicates a peculiar form of "imperial ignorance," which is premised upon the disregard of specific knowledge embodied in imperial archives.

By analysing the documentary detritus of Garber's mission to Khiva, Bukhara, and Balkh in 1732, I set out to show that the Russian colonisation of Central Asia was founded on the purposeful neglect of the logistical and ethnographic knowledge on the region that had been accumulated in the preceding epochs. More specifically, I argue that such disregard manifested itself patently in concomitance with the siege of Khiva in 1873, when Russians neglected the existing documentary wealth about the pre-Petrine history of the Russia–Khiva partnership. By that time information about earlier relations with the Khanate of Khiva had been repurposed chronologically into an orderly documentary apparatus available in the archives of the College of Foreign Affairs. At the time of the military campaign against Khiva, Russian imperial historians were mainly committed to sustain and further develop a specific narrative about Central Asian savagery. For this reason, they sought to silence the archival material that specifically depicted the khans of Khiva as commercial and diplomatic partners and not only as brigands.

The remainder of this essay consists of three parts. In the first one, I detail how in the second half of the nineteenth century Russian imperial officials and Orientalists “rediscovered” Garber's diary of his disastrous mission to Central Asia and deployed that text as part of a discourse about Khivan insolence and entrenched hostility towards Russia. Garber's diary lent itself easily to such a manipulation. This text, crafted in the first half of the eighteenth century, included in fact many of the civilisational tropes that one can read in the memoirs of Russian military officials or in European travelogues at the height of Western colonialism in Asia. The second part offers an illustration of the documentary corpus about Russian–Khivan relations, which includes references to Garber's mission. Such a corpus was assembled officially at the beginning of the nineteenth century into a dedicated file on Khiva and, like many other files in the archives of the College of Foreign Affairs, was made available to historians for publication. Here I will show how nineteenth-century historians silenced the documentary voices of Garber's mission coming from the imperial archives. In the third part, I will explain the reason for such purposeful neglect. My argument is that, when read along the grain, the Inventory of Khivan Affairs tells a story far removed from the one emerging from Garber's diary. Indeed, the documents assembled in this file, which refer to Garber's mission, cast Ilbārs Khān in a benevolent light, and show that at the middle of the eighteenth century, Russia was looking at the Khanate of Khiva as a commercial partner rather than merely an Asiatic enemy to civilise.

### **Part One: From Oblivion to Publication, A Version for the Public**

Garber's story remained largely unknown to the public until 1870, when the *Journal of the Russian Imperial Geographic Society* announced the discovery of an important manuscript: nothing less than Garber's diary of his mission to Khiva.<sup>25</sup> The announcement of the *trouvaille* offered hints about traces of ancient roads built across Eurasia and the presence of ruins dating back to the pre-Mongol period. That was enough to trigger Orientalist interest in the diary, suggests the announcement. However, the individuals

who gathered at the Geographic Society to discuss such manuscript represented in fact a curious blend of Orientalists and high-ranking imperial officials. One finds, for example, Vasilii Grigor'ev (1816–81), former chairman of the Orenburg Border Commission and the man behind the major policies for the colonisation of the Kazakh steppe.<sup>26</sup> Peter Lerch (1828–84),<sup>27</sup> who had been to Khiva as a diplomat in the 1850s, was also present. Though intimately familiar with the region,<sup>28</sup> Lerch was hardly enthusiastic about its ruling party. Indeed, he was adamant about the Khivan Khanate being a “brigand state,” a *Räuberstaat*, as he put it.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the diary of Garber, and especially the part which pauses to detail the horrors of the ambush and the Khivans’ ostensibly faked attempt at rescuing the caravan, was deemed of particular interest. The commission enthusiastically recommended that the diary be translated into Russian and published.

But what could spark so much interest among Russian Orientalists in the disturbing details of a band of Kazakhs attacking a caravan and making its occupants die of thirst, one wonders. To answer this question one has to zoom out and take a bird’s-eye view of the larger context in which relations between Russia and the Khanate of Khiva were developing. In the year 1870 events were far removed from the years when Empress Anna was on the throne. Russia had subdued the Khanate of Khoqand and dealt a fatal blow to the Emirate of Bukhara. Large stretches of Central Asia, ranging from the Syr-Darya to the Ferghana and Zarafshan Valleys, including urban centres as important as Tashkent and Samarkand, were now within the territory of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan. Only one piece of Central Asia was left to conquer, namely Khorezm. Subduing the Khan of Khiva became one of the priorities for the Governor-General of Turkestan, Konstantin von Kaufman.<sup>30</sup>

Roughly thirty years earlier, in the winter of 1839, Russian’s ambitions to settle scores with the rulers of Khorezm and change their history of defeats with the Khivans ended once again in carnage: after months of careful logistic planning and bargaining with the Kazakhs over camel supplies, a well-equipped column of the Russian infantry under the stern rule of General Perovskii was decimated at the doors of the Ust-Yurt Plateau. According to Alexander Morrison, this military debacle “assumed a symbolic significance as a tragic, heroic sacrifice, which showcased Russian hardiness and endurance.”<sup>31</sup> If Russians were to recover their military prestige in Asia, which they had lost against the Ottomans and the British in the Crimean War, no better opportunity could present itself than to subdue the Khanate of Khiva, ostensibly a cradle of barbarism which for centuries had manifested hostilities towards Russia.

Thus, the rediscovery of Garber’s failed mission to Khiva must be read in the context of an interest among imperial officials in showing the aggressive stance the Khivans maintained against Russia. Written in 1734 in German, Garber’s diary features all the usual commonplaces about the incommensurability of cultural systems between Russia and Asia. Specifically, it employs most of the vocabulary with which historians of colonialism are all too familiar. But more specifically, it claims that Ilbārs Khān turned a blind eye to Garber’s request for aid on account of his kinship ties with both Bātir Khān and Abū ‘I-Khayr Khān, who had married the two daughters of the previous Khivan ruler

Shīr Ghāzī Khān. Pausing to reflect on the following excerpt taken from his diary allows us to appreciate that Garber regarded the Kazakhs and Khivans as partners in crime:

Bātīr Khān<sup>32</sup> is a cousin and son-in-law of Abū '1-Khayr Khān, chief of the Kazakh Horde and brother-in-law of the current Khivan [ruler] Ilbārs Khān, also closely related to this and have both [taken] the daughters of the former Shīr Ghāzī Khān from Khiva as their women. When this Shīr Ghāzī Khān was massacred three years ago in his residence in Khiva by his own [relatives], the Khojas and Uzbeks chose this Bātīr Khān from the Kazakh Horde as their khan, whereby he married a daughter of Shīr Ghāzī Khān, as previously thought, so that the Khivan Uzbeks, as loved by Shīr Ghāzī Khān, may have more affection for him. Under such circumstances, he inquired through his new wife, where the wealth belonging to her father, Shīr Ghāzī Khān, was and whether it was in custody. When he learnt from her [the whereabouts of Shīr Ghāzī Khān's wealth], he secretly packed all this up, and left with this treasure, along with all the garments belonging to the khan from Khiva, and returned to the imperial Horde. [This occurred] after not even three months had passed since his enthronement by leaving his wife along with his whole entourage in Khiva. From this it is to be judged, what a beautiful and honorable people must be here [*Hieraus ist zur Genüge zu urtheilen, was für schöne und ehrliche Leute hier sein müssen*].<sup>33</sup>

Garber's diary makes it plain that he believed the ruler of Khorezm purposely ignored his request for help because Khivans had actually concocted the ambush with the Kazakhs. That the Kazakhs often brought what they stole to the bazaars in Khorezm to sell, Garber thought, was evidence of a sustained criminal partnership (*Die räuberischen Kaisaken und Chiwiner sind gute Freunde*):<sup>34</sup>

These predatory Kazakhs are constantly in Khiva, and Russian merchants have assured me to have seen with their own eyes, that they [the Kazakhs] bring to Khiva freely and uncontested everything which they steal from them along the way. . . . They wanted to bring some of the things captured from us straight to Khiva and sell them there. . . . It is certainly true that these two nations are in every respect identical with each other. The Kazakhs inquire in Khiva, when a caravan goes back to Astrakhan, how strong it is. In this way, the caravans traveling from Khiva to Astrakhan can be robbed with more ease and success than those going from there. For this reason, Russian and Armenian merchants, when they have gone this way to Khiva and Bukhara, . . . once they have sold their goods, if they can they make return via Mashhad and farther through Persia to Astrakhan because this path is safer because of the robbers.

Garber also claimed that the Kazakhs of Bātīr Khān learnt from the Uzbeks in Khiva the news that he was putting together a big caravan. In so doing, he was pointing his finger directly at the Khivans and suggesting that they had betrayed him and the caravan and that they were as responsible for the disaster of his mission as the Kazakhs were.<sup>35</sup> "In which way I and the caravan were betrayed" (*Auf was Art ich und die Caravane verrathen worden*):

In the bleak autumn, some among the Kazakh Horde were in Khiva to sell their cattle there. At the same time a caravan from Astrakhan arrived there. . . . It was made known that there was another strong and rich caravan in Astrakhan that was getting ready to come to Khiva during the upcoming winter. This piece of news was spread by these people who had been in Khiva, whereupon their best warriors [*Batīrs*] came



together and resolved to pillage this caravan and divide [the booty] among themselves. For this reason, they had brought together a thousand men from the best and well-armed warriors [*Alhamanns* < Turkm. *alaman*]. They went out [into the steppe] three months in advance and waited for us. At the same time, they sent a messenger to the Kalmyks under a different pretext to inquire about the caravan, which would certainly make its way to Khiva. When [our caravan] reached [the city of] Sham, they occupied all three routes leading to Khiva. Especially they put one hundred fifty men on the largest one, where they suspected we would have to pass on account of the many camels [we had].

In 1902 Garber's diary was published in Saint Petersburg, the same year Russian generals in Turkestan began a campaign to finally end the Khivan protectorate and turn Khorezm into a full-fledged part of Russian Turkestan. A clique of ministers and officials in the metropole, however, were against this plan. The protectorate and the local ruling dynasty (the Qonghrats) had for more than three decades provided a substantial source of income for corrupt colonialists who were eager to pocket the money coming from Khiva.<sup>36</sup> The diary of a disastrous attempt to reach Khiva offered a timely reminder to officials in Saint Petersburg that it would be strategically advisable to milk the Qonghrats from a distance.

### **Part Two: A Version for Archivists**

So much for Garber's diary. But what about the archive of Russian diplomacy? It was purposely ignored. Garber's story was most certainly known among prominent scholars who had a vested interest in developing a narrative of Central Asians' hostile relations with Russia. Already in the year 1851, the cartographer Iakov Khanykov, not a great fan of Central Asians to be sure, published what amounts to the first comprehensive historical study of failed diplomatic contacts featuring Russian interactions with Khiva. Khanykov's essay is not particularly generous towards Garber: "In the year 1731 the lieutenant of artillery Gerber [sic] was sent with a commercial caravan to Khiva and Bukhara, who rapidly had to come back after the robbery of the caravan after the Urals."<sup>37</sup> Did Khanykov have access to Garber's diary? I doubt it, given that the Geographic Society celebrated the discovery of the manuscript in one of its archives some nineteen years later.

But what is most striking about the neglect of the records preserved in the archive of the College of Foreign Affairs is that prominent tsarist historians of the Russian encounters with Khiva and Bukhara clearly did have access to that archive. In 1879 Prince Dmitry Khilkov published an anthology of documents which included a section featuring what he regarded as the most representative records for the history of diplomatic relations between Russia and Bukhara. That Khilkov, or the person who helped him select the records, had unmediated access to the archive of the College of Foreign Affairs, and especially the files which included the paper trail produced by the Garber case, is simple to prove: while Khilkov's preeminent interest lay in the publication of records shedding light on relations between Russia and Bukhara, he provided a detailed summary of what happened to Yādīgār and Garber after the caravan's ambush in 1732. One passage of his summary particularly warrants our attention, for it provides strong evidence that someone did access the file on Garber:

Iadiger [Yādīgār] remained in Astrakhan [with the caravan] awaiting a new resolution of the Russian court to send him to Bukhara. As he did not receive any order, in 1734 he sent his cousin Akhmamet Barmametov to Saint Petersburg with a report to the Council of Foreign Affairs. With this report he informed the Council that as the caravan was destroyed he returned to Astrakhan where he lives happily [sic] with the deeds which had been given to him, without receiving any financial support from the Governor of Astrakhan and without using the land in the city which had been granted to him, as a result of which such land went fallow. For this reason he asked for a warrant allowing him to leave to Khiva and Bukhara and granting him the money he deserves.<sup>38</sup>

To date there is only one known copy of Barmametov's petition on behalf of Yādīgār to the Russian court, and it lies in the file which includes Garber's papers.<sup>39</sup>

But an even clearer attempt to ignore Garber's case came with Nikolai Veselovskii. A prominent Orientalist at the Saint Petersburg University and corresponding member of the Imperial Academy, he made himself a name by studying the history of Khorezm and publishing a monograph on the Khanate of Khiva only four years after the Russian siege of 1873.<sup>40</sup> In 1884, nearly a decade after the establishment of the Russian protectorate in Khorezm, Veselovskii published an essay on the history of Khivan embassies to Russia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with specific attention to the court protocol in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.<sup>41</sup> In a revealing passage, Veselovskii explained his interest in the "Khivan files" (*Khivinskie dela*) by noting that the "Bukharan files" had already been published by Khilkov.<sup>42</sup> Together with a patronising view of the history of Khorezmian encounters with Russia, the essay featured the publication of documents mined from the archive of the College of Foreign Affairs, which shed light on two embassies from Khiva. In particular, it included the publication of documents concerning a Khorezmian embassy to Russia in 1741, a decade after Garber's mission.

While indulging in the usual set of demeaning comments on the Khivans and dubbing the khanate a nest of "aggressors" (*khishnikov*), Veselovskii's article ends with an unexpected turn. Indeed, he explained the need to publish such documents in order to appreciate the differences in court protocol between Russia and Khiva. To this end, he claims, he added a rich commentary "including facts which are still archival secrets."<sup>43</sup> And buried in this rich apparatus of comments we find a significant passage: "see the file about Garber's mission to Khiva" (*sm. [otrite] delo ob otpravlenii Garbera v Khivu*).<sup>44</sup> This reference suggests that not only were all the documents of the Garber affair accessible to historians, but also that scholars like Veselovskii who had a vested interest in Russian colonialism in Central Asia could regularly access them.

### Part Three: How to Explain the Silence?

What was to be silenced, one may ask, in the paper trail of Garber's failed mission? One can imagine how frustrated tsarist authorities were to hear that yet another state mission in pursuit of Indian gold had miserably failed when Yādīgār and Garber returned to Astrakhan in 1732. The more so because a few months after that debacle, a Khivan diplomatic mission reached Moscow. The mission consisted of an ambassador and an envoy

whom Ilbārs Khān had sent to Russia to persuade the Empress Anna that this time, on the occasion of the Kazakhs' ambush, Khivans behaved differently from their predecessors and showed benevolence towards the Russians. The missives produced by the ambassador and the envoy cast Khivans in the usual light of friendly neighbours. It is of course true that such gestures at immemorial friendship amounted in fact to a literary trope which is to be found almost everywhere in the history of Russian and Khorezmian diplomatic relations. But this time the letters carried by the Khivan embassy make the case for Ilbārs Khān's goodwill effort to establish friendly relations. There is something unique in the wording of these letters that might have pushed the new elite around Empress Anna to lend credibility to them. First of all, Ilbārs Khān shows deep awareness of the fact that so far things have gone quite badly between his country and Russia. He gestures at the gruesome fate of the Russian troops headed by Bekovich-Cherkassky in 1719, and asks the empress to regard his rule as marking a clear break with that of his predecessor, Shīr Ghāzī Khān. Thus, he writes:

That said, let it be known that from time immemorial we were two countries [between which] our ambassadors and merchants had been shuttling [regularly] when needed. Whatever happened prior to the time of our government, that was the past. Now let it be [known] that during the last period something new has happened [nearly] every hour. [Indeed,] every moment something turbulent has taken place [in this] world. [Therefore] let us put our reciprocal good doings first and put aside what is negative. Let our ambassadors and merchants ply between us all the time for our own welfare and safety so that our and your good names will remain until the end of this world.<sup>45</sup>

Ilbārs Khān's attempt at distancing himself from what had happened between his predecessor on the Khivan throne and the tsar does not stop here. Indeed, he offered practical suggestions for Russian authorities to improve the diplomatic and trade relations between Khorezm and Tsardom. Ilbārs Khān formulated a clear and simple proposal to the Russians to avoid the land routes infested by Kazakhs: put merchants on boats escorted by a military convoy, have them sail across the Caspian Sea to the peninsula of Mangyshlaq, then send a courier to Khiva. When informed about their approach, Ilbārs Khān would send his own military to escort the merchants safely to Khiva. So said the missive:<sup>46</sup>

And now let it be ruled that the merchants that come from that side should be put on a ship [*ūchāngha sālīb*] and come [to Khiva] through the territory of Mangyshlaq. Let [also] a messenger be sent to our service. From this side let us send some trustful [people] among our subjects who with a military convoy [*badālgha birla*] will bring [here] the merchants without suffering any vexation or annoyance [*bī-taṣḍī' wa bī-āzār kīlālī*]; let us also send camels who will bring the load. When they come [to us] in this way, once they have completed their business, we will send them back with an armed convoy, put them on a boat and let them make return [in this way] so that they will be protected from the robbery of the calamitous Kazakhs who operate in this space [*bū ārada yūrtī tūraghān awbāsh waa bībāsh Qazāqñīng ghāratīdīn mahfūz būlghāylār*]. For this reason, I have appointed the well-wisher subject Dūstak Bahādur [to the post] of ambassador and sent [him to you]. He will convey what remains to be said. Let it be known as the truth.<sup>47</sup>

As I will show, Ilbārs Khān's proposal struck a chord with Cherkassky and Osterman, individuals with little experience with things Central Asian. Unable to realise that this was not a particularly original plan, since throughout the seventeenth century Russian merchants had in fact sailed to Mangyshlaq and reached Khiva,<sup>48</sup> the College of Foreign Affairs, and most astoundingly, the Cabinet of Ministers in Saint Petersburg were attracted again into the foreign territory of Central Asian diplomacy. This attraction brought about a massive paper trail. The story of a caravan ambushed in the back of nowhere south of the Urals had morphed into a case of diplomatic discoveries, inspired the production of an impressive chain of records, and led to an extended exercise in disciplining archival practices.

After the first missive from Ilbārs reached the empress, in autumn of 1732 another Khivan envoy by the name of Raḥmān Qulī brought two other missives addressed to Empress Anna.<sup>49</sup> This envoy too went to Moscow, where the missives were translated and then brought to the attention of the imperial court in Saint Petersburg. Raḥmān Qulī's letters offered practical details about how Ilbārs Khān had made great efforts to help the caravan and provide assistance to the besieged Garber. He added the tally of the cavalry he dispatched to help the Russian officer; he could point to the place in which the ambush had occurred; and he gave the name of the commander of the cavalry he sent to rescue the merchants. Finally, he explained that it was on account of the treacherous road and the fact that Garber had in the meantime cut a deal with his assailer Bātīr Khān and then decided to return to Astrakhan, that the Khivan army could not prove its goodwill.<sup>50</sup>

These two missives were designed to hammer home the same message Dūstak Bahādūr had previously delivered to the imperial court: were Russians to organise logistically for their merchants to reach the Mangyshlaq Peninsula by the sea together with a military convoy, Ilbārs Khān would ensure that they would be escorted by his infantry and reach Khiva safely.

The idea that the new ruler in Khiva was a man different from his predecessors and one to be trusted hit the target this time, or at least this is what the archival records lead us to think. Indeed, the possibility of reaching Khorezm by sea was beginning to make headway with the Russian authorities, as if only now they discovered that it was indeed possible to sail the Caspian. At the end of September 1734, two years after Garber's caravan was ambushed by the Kazakhs, a new ambassador from Ilbārs Khān reached Astrakhan. His name was Mullā Raḥīm Jān and he brought a letter stamped with the seal of the Khivan ruler and addressed to the Astrakhan governor Ismailov, which lamented that the land connection between Russia and Khiva was no longer viable for merchants and diplomats, both Russian and Khivan alike. For this reason, said the letter, Ilbārs Khān made logistic arrangements for a sea route to be set up between the port of Astrakhan and Tiuk Karagan, a port on the Mangyshlaq Peninsula; and, argued the ambassador, said route appeared to work well, for a boat had recently reached Mangyshlaq, prompting Ilbārs Khān to send a group to escort merchants to Khiva.

In addition, the ambassador explained that the land route was becoming so perilous that a group of Khivan merchants attempting to reach Astrakhan had been attacked by

Kazakhs from Gur'ev, which suggested, again, that something had to be done to put an end to circumstances so unfavourable for both sides. As the College of Foreign Affairs was notified about the content of this missive and reported to the higher authorities about it, Mullā Raḥīm Jān and his entourage were invited to Saint Petersburg for further consultations. During a stopover in Moscow, however, Mullā Raḥīm Jān died. At this point, the Russians were curious to know more about the other messages that the ambassador carried with him and thus decided to invite the Khivan retinue to court and allow Mullā Raḥīm Jān's nephew, one Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn,<sup>51</sup> to speak on behalf of the deceased ambassador. A first meeting was to take place at the private apartments of none other than Vice-Chancellor Duke Andrei Ivanovich Osterman, who sent a gondola with the dragoman Alexander Turcheninov to collect Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn. When they met, Osterman asked Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn three things: (1) whether Ilbārs Khān was doing well at the time he left Khiva; (2) whether he travelled over land or by the sea; and (3) how long it took for him to reach Russia.<sup>52</sup> As Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn reassured Osterman about the good health of Ilbārs Khān and that he indeed travelled by boat from Mangyshlaq to Astrakhan and that en route from Khiva to Saint Petersburg he had spent more than a year, the Russians then asked him whether he had any other messages for the empress, at which point Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn produced a communiqué. Reading the following passage will allow us appreciate the degree to which the story of Garber offered a chance for the ruler in Khiva to conquer the hearts of Russians:

[Let it be known to] the most respectable white sovereign of the Russian Empire, the great Empress, elevated to the throne, that I wish you [Her] good health, and that I am here on my golden throne in all well-being. From times immemorial, ambassadors and merchant caravans from Russia came to our domain [called] Khorezm [*vo vladenie nashe Khavarizm*]. Although prior to my enthronement as khan [*prezhd moego vstuple-niia na khanstvo*] between the Russian Empire and our domain some disorders occurred, now that state of affairs has passed, and I wish that ambassadors and commercial caravans from both sides may be able to travel well, and that friends, yours as well as ours, may be in pleasantness, and that [our common] enemies may be in enmity. As I inherited the khanate and adopted its rules [*i kak ia po nasledstvu vstupil na khanstvo, i prinial pravilnye*], I now have to follow the customs of my father, to facilitate the business of my subjects, and protect them from all attacks. Equally, it is always my desire that people [travelling] from Russia to Khiva as well as those leaving from Khiva to Russia may move safely. And here I shall do my utmost to defend the independent people inhabiting this region. When, some time ago, Kazakhs attacked the ambassador and the merchant caravan which you sent to us, we ordered that the most dedicated and brave subjects among our people be dispatched to outflank that attack. However, because of the lengthy road, when our subjects arrived there, the aforementioned Kazakhs had fled. Had our subjects been able to reach your [people] during the Kazakh's attack, they would not have allowed such robbery to take place. And on account of the length of passage, we now ordered [everyone] to travel by sea. In following our command, recently a few people arrived from the sea, whom we escorted to our convoy in every well-being to Khiva.<sup>53</sup>

Once again, Ilbārs Khān used the story of Garber as evidence to prove his magnanimity towards Russia and thus resume trade relations with his closest and most powerful neighbour. In so doing Ilbārs Khān successfully resuscitated Garber's disastrous mission and endowed it with an afterlife in Russian and Khorezmian diplomacy. This move had practical effects. The documents produced by the highest echelons of Tsardom show the autocrat's appreciation for Ilbārs Khān's continuous efforts to establish a safe route for traders travelling from Russia to Khiva across the Caspian Sea. Such appreciation was fully articulated in an official letter, which the Empress Anna addressed to Ilbārs Khān<sup>54</sup> and which was entrusted to Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn, who was allowed to travel back to Khiva with his retinue. Before he left Saint Petersburg he had another opportunity to speak on behalf of the Khivan ruler, and formulated more demands. Prior to the establishment of the sea route from Astrakhan to Mangyshlaq, the ruler of the Kalmyks used to apply a tax to the caravans shuttling overland between Khiva and Russia. Now that caravans were travelling across the sea, such tax was unfair, argued Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn. The Khivan ambassador also asked for a reduction in the taxes the Astrakhan governor levied on the cash Khivans carried with them when they travelled by boat from Mangyshlaq. The College of Foreign Affairs issued a decree for the satisfaction of Ḥājji Muḥammad Ākhūn's request.<sup>55</sup>

### Conclusions

If practices of record keeping produce facticities, that is, what David Dery has termed "papereality," then the correspondence between Ilbārs Khān and Empress Anna filed in the archives of the College of Foreign Affairs cast Khivans' behaviour during Garber's failed mission in a benevolent light. There could be no place for such a positive aura in a discourse of Khivan insolence and entrenched hostility towards Russia. Ignoring such records while elevating Garber's diary to the status of publication was effectively a move whereby historians and officials alike effaced their documentary value.

For a twist of irony, the Orientalists in Saint Petersburg who rediscovered Garber's diary in German and ordered its translation did not know that said diary had in fact been translated by individuals working for the College of Commerce as early as 1732. That translation entered a voluminous file and was stored in the archive of the College of Commerce in Saint Petersburg. Therefore, it could not be introduced in the inventory of Russian–Khivan relations of the Archive of the College of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. Together with the Russian translation of the diary, however, the correspondence between Garber and the College of Commerce offers important, indeed vital information for the success of any Russian initiative in Central Asia. It shows that prior to the caravan's departure, Yādigār had warned Russian authorities about the challenges represented by the Kazakhs and, most importantly, explained that Khivans recommended travelling by sea to the shores of the Mangyshlaq Peninsula.<sup>56</sup>

I submit to your Grace that three weeks prior to my arrival [in Astrakhan], came here the Khivan envoy who, in my presence, informed me about the fact that he did not receive

any allowance to support him [financially], that he is [therefore] frustrated and that he aims to proceed quickly to the imperial court. In his conversations [with me], he told me about earlier proposals [*prezhnye propozitsii*] to dispatch a caravan by water to Mangyshlaq and that as soon as I reach Khiva I would be exploring [the peninsula]. And if I see that it will be possible to shuttle free along this route, then for my own return along the same route I will send at the first good opportunity someone to the [Astrakhan] Governor with a request to send to the aforementioned place [Mangyshlaq] a boat, with which I can make return. In this way, it will be possible to explore the freedom of travel along this route. Also, the Khivan envoy informed me that upon my departure he will send a man of his who, having reached the Khivan frontier, will announce the arrival of the caravan. Now I was informed by my own interpreters (*ot svoikh tolmatchei*),<sup>57</sup> who were in conversation with the people who gathered around the aforementioned Khivan envoy, that the Russian envoy will be pleased if during his stay in Khiva he is supported [financially] in the same way in which their envoy was supported here.

At that time few in Russia were keen on trusting Yādīgār; this is perfectly understandable if one keeps in mind that just thirteen years earlier the Khivans' invitation to Khorezm had ended miserably, that is with the massacre of the troops headed by Bekovich-Cherkassky. But for our purposes, it is most interesting to note that such archival records cast Khivans in a favourable light, for their recommendation to travel by sea would have spared Garber and his caravan enormous tribulations. However, Russian imperial historians were unwilling to recognise Khivans' benevolence and therefore suffocated Yādīgār's voice in the archives.

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## Notes

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- 1 To date the best English-language works on the relations between Russia and the Kazakhs, including the oath of submission taken by Abū-'l Khayr Khān before the Russians, is Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, and Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*.
  - 2 Iukht, *Torgovlia s vostochnymi stranami i vnutrennyi rynek Rossii*, 152.
  - 3 Longworth, *The Three Empresses*.
  - 4 Buskovitch, "Princes Cherkasskii or Circassian Murzas."
  - 5 Cabinet Minister Cherkassky to the Chancellery of Empress Anna Ivanovna, Ancient Documents Section of the Russian State Archive [henceforth, RGADA], f. 276, op. 1, d. 505, l. 45a.
  - 6 Ibid.
  - 7 Belkovets, *Rossia v nemetskoj istoricheskoj zhurnalistike XVIII v.*, 89.
  - 8 [Graber], *Nachrichten von denen an der westlichen Seite der Caspischen See*. See especially the section titled *Nachricht von dem Gold-Sande in der Bucharen von denen deshalb unternommenen Reisen*, 183–264.
  - 9 Pujol, "Les voyageurs Russes." See also the article by Ulfat Abdurasulov in this thematic issue of *Itinerario*.
  - 10 Iukht, *Torgovlia s vostochnymi stranami i vnutrennyi rynek Rossii*, 151–2.
  - 11 "About three thousand reached Khorezm in June 1717. After an initial battle with the troops of Khiva, a truce was made, and Bekovich agreed to divide his troops into five parts in order to have them accommodated in different parts of the country; when it was done, the troops of Khiva immediately attacked and slaughtered almost all the Russians, including Bekovich himself." This is how the eminent historian Yuri Bregel summarises the story for us in Munis and Agahi, *Firdaws al-igbāl*, 572, n314.
  - 12 The story became part of the official historiography of Russian relations with Asia. See, for example, among a massive corpus of references, Chulkov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie rossijskoi kommertsii*, 47–8.
  - 13 Kozintsev, "Gramota Khivinskogo khana Shir-gazi tsariu Petru I," 7.
  - 14 Shevelev, *Materialy dlia istorii Khivinskogo pokhoda 1873 goda*, 26.
  - 15 RGADA, *opis' fonda*, 134.
  - 16 Governor-General Konstantin Petrovich Von Kaufman to War Minister Dmitri Miliutin, 18.03.1871, Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan [henceforth, TsGARUz], f. I-715, op.1, d.45, l. 3390b-40.
  - 17 On this topic, see Morrison, "Introduction: Killing the Cotton Canard."
  - 18 Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance." See also Dirks, "Annals of the Archive," esp. 47.
  - 19 Burton, "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories," 7.
  - 20 On the notion of documentary force, see Sartori, "Seeing Like a Khanate: On Archives, Cultures of Documentation, and Nineteenth-Century Khorezm."
  - 21 Consider, for example, the following files: GAAO, f. 394, op. 1, d. 406, *Vedomost' o raskhode admiral'skikh summ po Astrakhanskoi gubernii i v g. Baku, Geliane i Derbente za 1725 [1732]*; d. 529, *Delo o zapreshchenii prodazhi morskikh sudov i otravlennii russkikh matrosov po sudoustroeniiu v Persiiu, soglasno sekretnym ukazom A. Ostermana i ob uchete v sviazi s etim morskikh kupecheskikh sudov [1735]*.
  - 22 For an excellent overview of Russian diplomatic missions to Central Asia in the 17th century, see Sela, "Prescribing the Boundaries of Knowledge."

- 23 Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, 1.
- 24 Subrahmanyam, *Europe's India*. On the front of bureaucratic improvisation, see also Flores, *Unwanted Neighbours*.
- 25 "Zhurnal zasedaniia Otdeleniia Étnografi," 46–8.
- 26 Knight, "Grigor'ev in Orenburg"; Etkind, *Internal Colonization*, 164–8; Sartori and Shabley, "Tinkering with Codification."
- 27 Lunin, *Istoriografiia*, 209–15.
- 28 I draw here on Lerch, "Voprosy predlagaemye Imperatorskim Russkim geograficheskomye obshchestvom pri issledovanii Khivinskogo khanstva," 43–73.
- 29 See Lerch, *Khiva oder Kharezsm*, 54. After Lerch, the eminent Orientalist Vasilii Barthold too dubbed the Khivan Khanate a "brigand state," see Barthold, "Kh<sup>w</sup>ārizm." More recently, Yuri Bregel argued trenchantly that "with all the patronage of arts and literature, . . . the Khanate of Khiva still behaved as a "brigand state" in its relations with its neighbors." Munis and Agahi, *Firdaws al-Iqbāl*, xii, f16.
- 30 For a general overview on the history of Russian colonisation, see Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand*.
- 31 Morrison, "Twin Imperial Disasters," 256–7.
- 32 For purposes of clarity and consistency, I give no account of how Garber rendered Central Asian proper names into German. I opt instead to transliterate them from their *presumed* Arabic-script rendering.
- 33 Garber, *Journal von der Reise aus Astrachan nach Chiwa und Bucharen*, 57–8.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 77.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 36 Sartori and Abdurasulov, "Imperial Strategic Uncertainty."
- 37 Khanykov, "Poiasnitel'naia zapiska k karte Aral'skogo Moria i Khivinskogo Khanstva," 322–3.
- 38 *Sbornik kniazia Khilkova*, 478.
- 39 RGADA, f. 134, op. 1, d. 4 [god 1616].
- 40 Veselovskii, *Ocherk istoriko-geograficheskikh svedenii o Khivinskom khanstve*.
- 41 Veselovskii, "Priem v Rossii."
- 42 Cf. *ibid.*, 70.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *Ibid.*, 104.
- 45 Archive of the Foreign Relations of the Russian Empire [henceforth, AVPRI], f. 125, op. 2, d. 56, 1. 20b.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 The official Russian translation of this letter to Empress Anna was patently lacking in linguistic precision. Not only did the translator (*perevodchik*) cut corners here and there, but he also omitted to mention the idea of putting merchants on boats. The translator signed himself as Mustafa Turchinov, the one and lone translator operating at the imperial court in Saint Petersburg. Most probably a Tatar renegade who embraced Orthodoxy, Mustafa, alias Alexey Turchinov, completely misunderstood how Khivans referred to the Kazakhs who were raiding caravans between the Middle Volga and Central Asia. While the original Chagatay missive stated "put them on a boat and let them make return [in this way] so that they will be protected from the robbery of the calamitous Kazakhs who operate in this space," Turchinov has: "And after the caravan would be brought to us, and after its departure, they [the merchants] will be escorted, so that they will be defended by those Ovbash and Bebash Kazakhs who perpetrated those robberies." RGADA, f. 134, op. 1, d. 4 [god 1616], 11. 1120b–113.
- 48 Allen, "Sources."
- 49 AVPRI, f. 125, op. 2, d. 59, 1. 3; d. 60, 1. 3.
- 50 "Let it be known that when the ambassador of the White Empress was coming [to Khorezm] close to [the locality called] Till-i Urus, he encountered a group of Kazakhs. After being arrested, they sent a messenger to our august threshold of [Sayyid Ilbārs Muḥammad Bahādur Khān]. As soon as he reached [us], we arranged to dispatch a squad of our men, infantry and cavalry, armed with rifles. While our soldiers were proceeding

day and night, [overcoming even the] thirst, and coming close to Till-i Urus with all the advanced [forces], on the spot the ambassador and the caravan [members] bargained with the Kazakhs. The latter took the possessions of the ambassador and the merchants and fled to the steppe, while the ambassador made return [to Astrakhan]. Two days after this event, several men [left] from the caravan met our soldiers and told them what had happened,” AVPRI, f. 125, op. 2, d. 60, l. 3.

- 51 The title *ākhūn* suggests that he was most probably a scholar.
- 52 RGADA, f. 397, op. 1, d. 314, l. 122
- 53 *i radi dlinnogo puti proezdu nyne poveleli my ezdit' morem i potamu opredeleniiu nashemu v skorykh chislakh neskol'ko liudei morem i priekhali, kotorykh my*

*svoim konvoemu vo vsiakom blagopoluchii do Khivy preprovodili*, RGADA, f. 397, op. 1, d. 314, l. 1220b-123.

- 54 RGADA, f. 397, op. 1, d. 314, l. 1240b-125.
- 55 RGADA, f. 397, op. 1, d. 314, l. 1250b-126.
- 56 Garber to Cherkassky, 01.11.1731, RGADA, f. 397, op. 1, d. 314, l. 2260b.
- 57 “An interpreter (*tolmach*) was often illiterate and transmitted his findings orally. A translator (*perevodchik*) could both read and write, and knew how to compose letters, petitions, contracts, and promissory notes, and how to formulate the elaborate forms of address and appropriate phrasings requisite in addressing dignitaries and high government officials,” Poullada, *Russian-Turkmen Encounters*, 74.