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The Role of Ancient Writings on Stones in Studying the Development of the Kyrgyz People's Religious Understanding

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April 2018

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Political Encyclopedia* provides examples of different forms of pluralism, including “confessional pluralism (in Latin, pluralism means plural, confessionalism means confessional),” which is defined as the “presence in society of a number of confessions and people with different religious beliefs” [translated by the author].¹ Using this definition of pluralism, this paper will use ancient writings on stone monuments to show that during different eras in Kyrgyz’s history, there were conditions favourable for confessional pluralism.²

In the past, Kyrgyz peoples maintained various religious and cult systems; for example, Tengirchilik, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Christianity and Islam. Their religious beliefs were recorded in different forms and in different sources such as written monuments, traditions, customs and ceremonies. In our research, we focused mainly on ancient writings on stone monuments, including those pertaining to the 7th–10th century Enisey writings, the 13th–14th century Nestorian (Siro-Turkic) writings and the 12th–19th century Arabic graphic writings found in modern-

day Kyrgyzstan. We analyzed the language utilized (words, patterns, idioms and sentences), which express concepts that directly or indirectly reflect religious beliefs and concepts to draw our conclusions.

II. THE ENISEY WRITTEN MONUMENTS

The Enisey written monuments were found by D.G. Messerschmitt and D.T. Strahlenberg in the 18th century and became known to the scientific world through Strahlenberg’s work *Das Nord- und Östliche Theil von Europa und Asia*, published in Stockholm in 1730, which had copies of several monuments. The interest in such monuments increased after G.I. Spassky’s article, «Древности Сибири» (“Antiquity of Siberia”), was published in 1818 and F.I. Krug’s book *Inscriptiones Sibiricae* was published in 1822.³ Following these works, many researchers sought to discover who created the monuments and to date the writings on the stones. Arguments over certain issues still continue today. The majority of the researchers

This paper is part of **Global Voices on Pluralism**, a new publication series from the **Global Centre for Pluralism**. These seven papers were produced in 2016 as a part of **History and memory in Kyrgyzstan – toward an inclusive society**, a project developed to support local scholars. Each paper explores an aspect of Kyrgyzstan’s history as a diverse society with the aim of generating awareness in Kyrgyzstan about the importance of more inclusive historical narratives as a pathway to pluralism.

who studied the Enisey written monuments note that they belong to the Kyrgyz (e.g., S.E. Malov, I. V. Kormushin, V. Thomsen), while some argue that most belong to the Kyrgyz and the rest to other Turkic peoples (C. Alyılmaz, A.B. Ercilasun).⁴ There are also differing views about the era to which the monuments belong. Scholars agree generally that the monuments were created between the 8th and 10th centuries. Since a majority of the monuments were written in an epitaphic manner, they are short in length. Despite this, one can see among them linguistic means that express religious beliefs. The monuments were given names depending on their location when first found, i.e., Uyuk-Tarlak, Ottuk-Tash, etc. Later on, in order to use one system, the names E 1, E 2, E 3 and so on were given to introduce order. This same method was used in conducting the research for this paper. The words, sentences and their translations come from N. Useev's book *Enisey Written Monuments*.⁵

Tengri

S.G. Klyashtornyĭ relied on the Orhon written monuments in reconstructing the religious system of the ancient Turks. Using that information, Klyashtornyĭ noted that the ancient Turks divided the macrocosm into upper, middle and lower parts, and all those between them, including live organisms and gods, were divided between these three macrocosms as well.⁶ The upper macrocosm, the sky, belongs to *Tengri*, the earth—the middle macrocosm—belongs to *Yduk Yer-Sub* (sacred Land-Water) and the underworld was *Erklig-khan*'s realm. The Orhon written monuments and the Enisey writings both mentioned the first three macrocosmic parts. *Erklig-khan* is not present in the Orhon monuments, only being mentioned in the Enisey writings. *Erklig-khan* takes away people's lives by sending his "death messengers to them."⁷

Klyashtornyĭ noted that in the Orhon writings there were only three gods: *Tengri*, *Umai* and *Yduk Yer-Sub*.⁸ Since *Tengri* drew more attention, as it was studied

separately from the other two, some researchers provisionally called *Tengirchilik* (*Tengrianstvo*, Tengriism, *Tanrıçılık* and others) an ancient Turkic system of religious beliefs, including amongst Kyrgyz. Since there is no vowel for ң (ng) in the Russian language, in Russian sources this vowel was made up by two letters ңг. "*Tengir*," which is used in Kyrgyz language now, was mentioned in the Enisey writings as "*Tengri*." In the Enisey writings it had three meanings: "god," "sky" and "sacred":

In its meaning as "god": «теңрим өчүк бизке «Теңирим очок (колдоочу) бизге» (*Tengir* is our supporter) (E 36) and «теңри кулы адырылтымыз «Теңир кулдары ажырадык» (We are deprived as servants of *Tengir*) (E 69).

In its meaning as "sky": «теңридеки күнке, йердеки элимке бөкмөдим «Асмандагы күнгө, жердеги мамлекетиме тойбодум» (I did not have enough of the sun in the sky and government on earth) (E 7).

In its meaning as "sacred": «теңри элимке, башда бегимке бөкмөдим «Ыйык мамлекетиме, башымдагы бегиме тойбодум» (I did not have enough sacred government and my leader) (E 16).⁹

Nuridin Useev said among these three meanings, *кудай* (god) comes first and was considered the most important, while the other two complemented it.¹⁰ In the Orhon writings, this word was used exactly in these terms. In modern Kyrgyz language, *Tengir* as a word is used to mean: God, sky and blue.¹¹ Among the examples above, the phrase *теңир кулы* (*Tengir*'s servant) draws particular attention because such a concept can be seen in other religions as well. For example, in communities practicing Islam, names starting with a-b-d are common: *Abdurahman*, *Abdurashit*, *Abduvahab*, *Abdumalik*, *Abdullah*, and others. *Abd* in Arabic means "servant," whereas *Rashit*, *Rahman*, *Malik* and other such words mean the 99 qualities of Allah, or, in other words, represent the names of Allah. Thus, all these names mean "Allah's servants." This concept of "servant of God" can be

seen in the Russian language as well. For example, раб божий [Servant of God] is widely used. Thus, it can be concluded that the cult of *Tengir* (*Tengirchilik*) viewed the relationship between God and a person, like in other religions, as between a servant and God (*Tengir*).

According to I.V. Stebleva, the ancient Turks thought of *Tengir* as a divine sky with the functions of a creator, supporter, creator of fates and punisher, and viewed him as associated with the male origination.¹²

Even before the Turks, worshipping *Tengir* was common in the population of Central and East Asia including among the Hun, Usun, Suanbi, Gaotuy, Uhuan, Gaochan and Gaogyuli.¹³ Although this cult later spread among the ancient Turks, only some of its elements have been preserved by some people as relics. The traces of Tengriism traces in the lives of Kyrgyz can be seen in the following cases:

1. The word *Tengir* is still present in people's names. There are such names as *Tengirberdi* or *Kudayberdi* (Given by *Tengir* or *Kuday* [God]), but there are no names such as *Allahberdi*.
2. Unlike the word *Allah*, *Kuday* and *Tengir* are more frequently mentioned in idioms. The same goes for wishes and prayers. In this regard, S.M. Abramzon cites the words of M. Venukov, saying "...I haven't come across a case when a Kyrgyz, like other Muslims in certain situations, turned to 'Allah;' according to other's observations, the Kyrgyz in such situations, like people observing Shamanism, turn to the sky."¹⁴ Even now the Kyrgyz who are less religious turn to the sky when making a wish thinking that the *Kuday* (God) is in the sky. In Islamic teachings, Allah is believed to be everywhere. Even though Kyrgyz call themselves Muslims, they often refer to God as *Kuday* and *Tengir*; rather than *Allah*, which is evidenced in idioms, sayings, blessings, curses and oaths. For example, the Kyrgyz language and Kyrgyz-Russian vocabularies simply provide

explanations of *Alda* and *Allah* without giving the idioms and proverbs in which they are used: алда, алдоо акпар, алла, алло акпар (*Alda*, *Aldo Akpar*, *Alla*, *Allo Akpar*),¹⁵ whereas proverbs and idioms with words *Kuday* and *Tengir* are used widely by people: «Кудай бетин салбасын» (let *Kuday* spare you from his wrath); «кудай буюрса» (if *Kuday* is willing); «кудай жалгап» (approved by *Kuday*); «кудай кут кылсын» (Let *Kuday* bless); «кудай урсун» (Let *Kuday*'s wrath befall you); «кудайга (кудая) шүгүр» (Thanks *Kuday*) and others;¹⁶ «кудайыңа ишенсең, жөө каласың» (if you believe your *Kuday*, you will find yourself barefoot); «башы оорубагандын кудай менен иши жок» (No headache, no thinking of *Kuday*); «кедей байга жетем дейт, бай кудайга жетем дейт» (the poor wants to reach the rich, the rich wants to reach *Kuday*) and others;¹⁷ «теңир, теңири, теңир жалгасын» (let *Tengir* spare you); «теңир урган» (Cursed by *Tengir*); «теңирден тескери» (those who turn away from *Tengir*); «теңирин таануу» (recognizing your *Tengir*); «теңирси» (Remember *Tengir*) and others;¹⁸ «Бекерден теңирим безер» (No wonder *Tengir* is anxious); and «момундун ишин теңир мактайт» (*Tengir* praises the devotee's work).¹⁹

Based on the above examples, it can be concluded that the cult of *Tengir* dominated the lives of ancient Kyrgyz, and later was embedded in the people's consciousness in the form of sky-worship ceremonies, human names, proverbs, idioms, curses, oaths, and words of praise.

Umai

Umai is considered to be one of the gods mentioned in the Orhon writings. In the Enisey writings, the word "*Umai*" is used in the following sentence: «укымыз умай бегимиз биз уйа алп эр өзин алты кылмадың, өзлек ат өзүн үч кылмадың» (Our ancestor is *Umai beg* [protector]. You did not let our warriors and

their horses die).”²⁰ Dubbed *Umai beg*, this mythical *Umai* mother was depicted as a protector of newborn children during delivery and their lives thereafter.²¹ S.M. Abramzon notes that the cult of *Umai ene* (mother) is one of the oldest cults: “Before starting to examine this cult, it is worth noting that it is part of the complicated system of religious beliefs of the ancient Turks.”²² According to Abramzon, the notion of *Umai ene*, viewed as a forebearer of women, was widespread and survives today as a relict. While tending labouring women or when treating sick children, Kyrgyz nurses would often repeat, “These are not my hands, but *Umai ene*’s.”²³ Later, when Islam spread, one of the Prophet Muhammad’s daughter’s names, Fatima (Batma in Kyrgyz), would be repeated alongside the phrase.²⁴ Apart from this, when the harvest was rich and livestock increased in numbers, *Umai ene* would often be remembered with expressions such as “Milk has come from *Umai ene*’s breast.”²⁵ Among these expressions, “Not my hands, but *Umai ene*’s” is still recited by new mothers.

The character of *Umai ene* is still present in Kyrgyz’s folk literature. For example, in the most voluminous epos of the Kyrgyz people, *Umai ene* comes to help when *Manas*²⁶ was born.²⁷ The “Mongolian blue spot,”²⁸ which is referred to in sources, is called the “spot of *Umai ene*” in the Kyrgyz language. This bluish-coloured birthmark appears on the lower backs of newborns and is clearly seen until the age of four or five. Kyrgyz believe that it is explained by *Umai ene* spanking their bottoms.²⁹ The relicts of the cult of *Umai ene* also remain in the beliefs of such peoples as the Shor, Teleut, Kazakh, Kuman, Hakas, Tuva, Tofalar, Sakha (Yakut) and Mongols.³⁰

There were different opinions voiced with regards to the origin of the name of *Umai ene*, and even now there is no clear agreement. Most researchers believe that the cult of *Umai ene* appeared during the rise of matriarchy. According to S. Attokurov, initially, she was the god of rich harvests, but over a period of time she became a protector of women and children.³¹ The

ancient Turks believed *Tengir* had a male character, while *Umai ene* had a female character. Researchers see this as confirmed in the Orhon written monuments, reading: «Теңирдей каган-атам, Умайдай каныша-энем» (Khagan-father is like *Tengir*, queen-mother is like *Umai*).³² In addition, S.G. Klyashtornyi notes that this sentence informs a myth that considered these two gods as a couple.³³ Kyrgyz has preserved exactly such a perception. The perception of *Umai ene* as a mother demonstrates this. Songs also show that ordinary people viewed *Tengir* and *Umai* as a couple:

Умай эне, тенир ата, (*Umai* mother, *Tengir* father)
Урпактарын колдосун (May you support your
descendants).³⁴

Having analyzed ethnographic materials, L.P. Patapov concludes that:

... during the era of ancient Turks, *Umai* as goddess had very large appeal. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain how the same or a similar cult has managed to retain its influence among a number of Turkic-speaking people in the current Sayan-Altai and Central Asia. These people have been able to preserve its generally known version, name *Umai*, and related folklore, despite their centuries old cultural and geographical gaps, as well as well-established religious differences. As a god, *Umai* was mentioned in the post-Orhon-Enisey written monuments, it was well preserved in people’s memories.³⁵ [translated by the author]

S.M. Abramzon notes Central Asia as the birthplace of the Kyrgyz’s cult of *Umai ene*, which then spread to Altai, Tian-Shan and the populated western parts of Central Asia.³⁶ The same can be said of *Tengri* God, and the folklore about sacred land and water.

In general, as S.M. Abramzon observes, the character of *Umai* is multi-faceted.³⁷ For example, the cult of *Umai* gets “intertwined, and in some cases fully combined” with the cult of fire.³⁸ Apart from this,

Kyrgyz have an ornament called *Umai*, which resembles a falcon. In the Kyrgyz language, the word *umai* has two meanings: a fairy falcon, which nests in the air; and a mythical female character who supports newborns.³⁹ The word *umai* that is associated with falcons came from the Iranian language (*huma*), according to which, it means a falcon that lives in a world garden.⁴⁰

Umai played an important role in the ancient Turks' religious beliefs and had a female character. Initially seen as a god of rich harvest, over time, she turned into a protector of newborns. The majority of the Turkic people today, including the Kyrgyz, have preserved this to varying degrees. The Kyrgyz have preserved *Umai* primarily through her function as a protector of children. Although it is slowly disappearing from daily life, the older generation has kept *Umai* in its memory, customs, as well as in creative arts and folksongs. Also, the character of *Umai ene* is represented as a falcon in Kyrgyz ornamental arts. Certain organizations try to revive the cult of *Umai*. Scholar Ch. Seidahmatova has studied the significance of the *Umai* cult in Kyrgyz life.⁴¹

The Cult of Earth and Water

It was mentioned above that the ancient Turks' macrocosm was divided into three parts: upper, middle, and lower. With *Tengir* and *Umai* viewed as gods of the upper world, the middle world's main god was the Sacred Earth and Water.⁴² In the Orhon writings, this god is not remembered in isolation, but rather mentioned along with *Tengri* and *Umai*. Foreign sources, including the Chinese dynastic chronicles and Theophylact Simocatta's *History* book, confirm the ancientness of the cult of Sacred Earth and Water.⁴³ The cult of Earth and Water was also preserved among the Tian-Shan Kyrgyz. For example, "when an absence of rain led to draught, villagers would gather on the banks of a body of water and slaughter a sheep or goat to offer sacrifices and worshipped the Earth and Water asking for water. After finishing their

food [people] would pray (о кудай, жер оомийин, суу оомийин [God, Earth amin, Water amin], and go home. This was called a feast dedicated for Earth and Water. Such ceremonies were conducted when disease affected livestock, crops, grass, and locusts increased in numbers." Also, "people would gather and ask from Earth and Water to save their animal yield and help it survive the winter. 'Running water, dear father Earth, please keep our livestock from accidents and diseases,' would be said in worships. Later when Islam spread, these worships incorporated Allah."⁴⁴

Kyrgyz would call Earth and Water worship «жер-суу тайы / жер суу таяу» (Earth and Water *taiy*/Earth and Water *tayu*).⁴⁵ T.D. Bayalieva notes that Earth and Water *tayu* was organized not only during the times of drought, but also regularly two times a year: when grass starts to grow on mountains, sheeps start to breed (early spring); and when owners of herds would move to winter pastures and prepare for the harsh winter (late fall).⁴⁶ According to T.D. Bayalieva, as part of this ceremony, tribe members took their prepared food to the place where a sacrifice would be made, and an elder would ask *Kuday*, Earth and Water to save them from accidents and disease. The meat would then be boiled in a pot and served to participants along with food prepared in advance. After finishing the food, a prayer would be made. People paid special attention to the ceremony of Earth and Water *tayu* during accidents like earthquakes and floods. Work produced by the Aigine Cultural Research Center shows such ceremonies are still practiced.⁴⁷

It is possible to consider the cult of Earth and Water as a general cult separate from the cult of the Mountain. The tradition of perceiving mountains as sacred is an ancient practice that found its way into some religions. For example, Mount Olympus for the ancient Greeks, Mount Sinai for the Palestinian Jews and the Himalayas for Indians. Central Asians worshipped mountains only in ancient times. Turkic peoples in the southern Siberia such as the Hakas, Altai, Tuba, Shor, Chelkan and Kumandin also had ceremonies related

to the cult of Mountains. L.P. Patapov's article has extensive information on this.⁴⁸

As the written monuments suggest, Bodyn-Inli Mountain was considered sacred during the reign of the First Gokturk Khaganate.⁴⁹ Using materials from the Orhon written monuments, scholars wrote that the Second Gokturk Khaganate considered Otuken Mountain to be sacred. The Enisey written monuments (E 115) mention *Tebsei Tengri*. *Tebsei* is the name of a mountain, which now is known as *Tepsei*. *Tengri* is *Tengir* or, in other words, used in its meaning of God. Thus, this is the name of a god of mountains. In the Altai written monuments as well (A 95), there is a sentence implying a mountain cult: «Бичер кая бөңкү бер» (“Give [us] eternity, rock of fate”).⁵⁰ If the rock is considered part of a mountain, it can be inferred from this sentence that the mountain was a type of god.

There are materials confirming that until the mid-20th century, the cult of Mountains existed among Kyrgyz. For example, relying on the materials collected during field research in 1953, S.M. Abramzon wrote that local Kyrgyz had their own sacred mountains: for the Bapa tribe, Dinguromo Mountain; for locals of Kochkor, Kochkor-Ata Mountain; for Kashgari Kyrgyz, Muztag-ata, Markan-Ata and Opol mountains; for the Bugu tribe, Alamyshyk Mountain. In Abramzon's view, the cult of Mountains is disappearing among Kyrgyz, though words such as “*taiy*” and “*oboo*,” and such fixed phrases as like «Ополдун тоосун тайыпсын» (You lost Opol Mountain's favour) have remained. With the spread of Islam, “*oboo*” has been replaced with “*mazar*” (tombs of the saints).⁵¹ After the Soviet Union's dissolution, religions, including Islam, became more influential and such customs are slowly disappearing. Nowadays, evidence that cult of Mountains rituals are still practiced includes Sulaiman-Too and Kochkor-Ata, where people come to pray, considering them to be sacred.

The cult of Earth and Water, one of the ancient beliefs, and reflected in the written monuments, is found in

certain words and phrases still used by Kyrgyz and in the existing rituals of visiting places considered to be sacred.

Erklig

As S.G. Klyashtorny noted, the upper macrocosm, or sky, was *Tengri*'s realm, Earth was *Yduk Yer-Sub*'s realm (sacred Land-Water) and the underworld was *Erklig-khan*'s. In the Orhon written monuments, as well as in the Enisey writings, the first three are mentioned. *Erklig-khan* is not present in the Orhon monuments; he is mentioned only in the Enisey writings.

Erklig-khan takes away people's lives by sending his “death messengers” to them.⁵² In the Enisey written monuments, *Erklig* is mentioned in the following sentence «төртинлигү эртимиз, бизни эрклиг адырты, айыта» (We were four siblings, we were separated by *Erklig*) (E 28).⁵³ The author of these lines had four siblings, who were separated by *Erklig*. S.G. Klyashtorny notes that the *Erklig* mentioned in the sentence was the god who ruled the underworld and took away people's lives.⁵⁴ According to the Altai people's belief, there is a god called *Erlik* who is the ruler of the kingdom of dead and the underworld. In Altai myths, *Erlik*, as a brother of *Ulgen*, who ruled the upper world, participated in creating all the creatures of Earth, but after an argument with *Ulgen*, he left for the underworld and since then has taken away people's lives.⁵⁵ The character of *Erklig* or *Erlik* has not been preserved in modern Kyrgyz memory.

Ezrua

The word *Ezrua* is mentioned in the Enisey written monuments in the following sentence: «эрдем болсар муныг эрмез, муныг эрсем эзруа алканып, эрдемлиг батур мен» (The brave heart is never lost; If I am lost, I will praise *Ezrua* and will regain my bravery) (E 29).⁵⁶ According to an ancient Turkic language dictionary, *Ezrua* is a god called *Zervan*.⁵⁷

While writing about monument E 29, I.V. Kormushin shared his thoughts, stating that it was the biggest surprise to see God *Zervan* in the runic inscriptions (in the third row of the second phrase on the stone) for the first time as a correction. He described the whole phrase as demonstrating that the monument belongs to the Manichaeism confession.⁵⁸

According to Mary Boyce's *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, in the Avesta language, *Zurvan* means "time," whereas in Mini Avesta it was used in several places to represent a supporting god of secondary importance. Later, a group of Zoroastrians began to believe *Zurvan* was the father of *Ahuramazda* and *Angra-Mainyunun*. This is how myths about *Zurvan* emerged, paving the way for a religious belief called Zurvanism (Zervanism), which came out of Zoroastrianism. Zurvanism began to develop at the end of the Achaemenid era and enjoyed support from the majority of the Sasanian state's population. With the emergence of Islam, after several centuries, Zurvanism disappeared altogether.⁵⁹ In Geo Widengren's view, Mani (the founder of Manichaeism) used Zurvanism as a basis for his doctrine.⁶⁰

There is no mention of Zurvanism in the scholarship about the history of Enisey Kyrgyz. However, there is information evidencing that some Enisey Kyrgyz observed Manichaeism. Hence, it can be considered that the word *Ezrua*, which was written on the stone and meant God *Zervan*, represented Manichaeism.

Mar

In the Enisey written monuments, the word *Mar* is mentioned in the following sentence: «марыма йүз эр, туруг бертим» (I gave my mentor a hundred warriors and a dwelling-place) and «огланым эрде марыманча бол, канга тап, катыглан» (my sons, be like our mentor when among the warriors, serve the blood, take courage) (E 47).⁶¹ It is worth noting that on the E 47 written monument, there is a sentence

reading «Кыргыз оглы мен» (I am a son of Kyrgyz), which demonstrates the author was Kyrgyz. According to N. Useev's work, the monument was dedicated to a Kyrgyz judge named Buyla Kutlug, and, although this monument was found in Mongolia, scholars think that, based on its distinct content, paleography and language, there is solid ground to consider it part of the Enisey written monuments.⁶²

As seen in the examples above, the word *Mar* is used with its meaning as "mentor." Manichaeists call their mentors *Mar*.⁶³ Therefore, it can be concluded that the author of the text and Judge Buyla Kutlug, the author's mentor, were followers of Manichaeism.

Considering the way *Ezrua* and *Mar* were used, it can be concluded that Manichaeism was, to a certain extent, practiced among the Enisey Kyrgyz. According to O. Karaev's research, Arab and Persian authors including Abu Dulaf, Abu Said Abd al-Hai ibn az-Zahhak ibn Mahmud Gadizi, Sharaf az-Zaman Tahir al-Marvazi and the anonymous author of *Hudud al-Alam* wrote that, in 1000–2000 BCE, Kyrgyz practiced Manichaeism along with religious beliefs like Shamanism, the cult of *Tengir* and the cult of Ancestors.⁶⁴ In previous eras, in the territory of the present-day Kyrgyz Republic, Manichaeism spread considerably among the local population. Looking at the archeological information and written monuments, between the 8th and 9th centuries, the nomadic tribes of Karluk, Chigil and Yagma began to settle down in the Yssyk-Kul and Chui valleys; and, under the influence of locals, began to embrace the Manichaeism and Nestorian branches of Christianity.⁶⁵

Scientists such as Wilhelm Thomsen and Annemarie von Gabain considered Бүрк Битин» (*The Book of Divination*), written in runic letters in the 9th century, a Manichaeistic writing. The writing has two characters: Ала атлыг йол теңри (god of paths riding a white-and-black horse [fate]); and Кара йол теңри (god of the black path). In I.V. Stebleva's opinion, these two characters show that ancient Turkic peoples

had two opposing gods: white (bright), compassionate (beneficent) or, in other words, good, as opposed to black, cruel, and, in other words, bad.⁶⁶ Today, Kyrgyz have such words as ак жол (good luck), *ак жолтой* (that bring good luck) and кара жолтой (that brings bad luck). The word *Ak jol* is used with the following meanings: 1) “Right path which leads fairness and justice;” 2) “Long-established customs that wish benevolence and charity;” and 3) “Thought, wish, hope about a successful journey without obstacles.” When wishing someone success and wellness, one says «Ак жолуң ачылсын!» (May your white journey be open!) The phrase *Ak joltoi* (that brings good luck) means «Жолдуу, жолу жакшы, кандайдыр бир кубанычтуу кабар алып келүүчү, жакшы жышаналуу» ([someone or something] that brings good luck, good news, is a good omen). The phrase *Kara joltoi* means «Жамандыкты, кырсыкты кошо ала келе турган, жолу катуу деген мааниде»⁶⁷ ([someone or something] that brings bad luck, accidents, harsh conditions). The presence of semantic similarities between the names of gods in the 9th century *Book of Divination*, and the use of the words white, black and journeys in modern Kyrgyz idioms can encourage one to look at modern Kyrgyz idioms as the linguistic means that preserved their Manichaeistic meanings.

In addition to this, the *Nooruz* holiday can be viewed as the vestiges of Zoroastrianism. Kyrgyz celebrate *Nooruz* on 21 March, the day of the equinox, i.e., the first day of Zoroastrianism's new year. Mary Boyce notes that there is no doubt that Zoroaster himself established this as a holiday, since it is one of Zoroastrianism's central events.⁶⁸ In Persian, it means “new day;” and, in Zoroastrianism, it celebrates the seventh and last fire created, and its supporter, Asha-Vahishta. Now Kyrgyz practice a cleansing ceremony by jumping over fire on *Nooruz*. In addition, Kyrgyz widely practice a custom called *Alas*, which also directly involves fire. Dried juniper is burned and its smoke is used to cleanse the house, air and other items.

Based on the above mentioned, it can be concluded that Manichaeism, which emerged under influence of Zurvanism (Zoroastrianism), was widely followed by Kyrgyz, and now Kyrgyz still practice some vestiges of Zoroastrianism, including the celebration of *Nooruz*, jumping over fire and exercising *Alas* rituals with juniper cleansing, and the use of such idioms as “white journey” and “black journey” as vestiges of Manichaeism to wish good luck.

Alty Kyl (Dividing into Six)

The verb *alty kyl* (to make six) is used in the Enisey written monuments and can represent a religious belief. This verb is mentioned in the following sentence: «Умай бегимиз биз уйа алп эр өзин алты кылмадың, өзлек ат өзин үч кылмадың» (Ancestors of ours is *Umai beg* [protector]. You did not let our warriors' bodies divide into six [die] and their horses into three [die]” (E 28).⁶⁹ N. Useev interprets the verb “dividing into six” in this sentence as “depriving of six senses,” and tries to link it with the Kyrgyz idiom «алты саны аман» (a person's six parts are safe). The Kyrgyz dictionary of idioms interprets this idiom of six body parts as: 1) “Human's all body parts, the whole organism;” and 2) “Total, all, everything;” and “six body parts safe” is interpreted as “in good health, not ill, strong.”⁷⁰ Useev has researched well-known speculation about where this expression came from. He concludes that the idiom about the six body parts means the six senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch and intelligence), and this concept appeared under the influence of Buddhism and Manichaeism, while the word “*san*” (in Kyrgyz it means thigh) in ancient Turkic means “to think and feel” with a core verb being “*sa*.” Useev supports his conclusion with the Yakut word “*sana*,” which means “intelligence, thought, feeling.”⁷¹ It is possible to consider the verb “*sana*” and noun “*sanaa*,” which have a meaning in Kyrgyz of “think, wish, remember” and “thought, wish, disappointment, sadness” respectively, with the word “feeling” used in a semantic sense.⁷² Useev's arguments seem plausible because, in reality, human

parts counted with different criteria would not amount to six. In Buddhism, however, six senses are considered separately: the traditional five senses (taste, touch, smell, see, and hear) and intelligence.⁷³ Anvarbek Mokeev stated, “Central Asia, located in the center of the Great Silk Road, has been for a long time a bridge between East and West in terms of exchange of not only goods and education, but also spiritual values. In this very region Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam overlapped and coexisted.”⁷⁴ Taking this into account, in Kyrgyz history, Buddhism, along with other religions, also played an important role. Thus, if Useev’s speculations are accurate, we can conclude that as Buddhism spread widely in both Kyrgyz-populated parts of Enisey and present-day Kyrgyzstan, it found implicit reflection in the Enisey written monuments and is found today in the form of Kyrgyz idioms like «алты саны аман» (six body parts safe).

III. THE NESTORIAN WRITTEN MONUMENTS

In the 5th century a debate arose among bishops and scientists as to whether Jesus was a god or a human. Emperor Justinian tried to reinforce the opinion of Cyril the Alexandrian, who believed Jesus was a “real god.” Justinian tried to influence the Constantinople Council accordingly, but as a result, the Byzantine state church split into two, with those who opposed him out of the church. Constantinople’s Archbishop Nestorian believed Jesus was human. Following Nestorian’s death, those who believed in his teaching were named Nestorians and their missions spread throughout Asia, maintaining their influence until the mid-13th century.⁷⁵ Academic V.V. Bartold wrote that Central Asian Nestorians did not call themselves Christians or Nestorians; and the reference “Nestorian” did not find root in the Eastern languages and was not mentioned on monuments in the Semirechie

regions. He also noted Christians of this church called themselves *Nasrani* or *Nazorey*.⁷⁶ Indeed, I did not come across the word Nestorian while studying the Nestorian written monuments. Whatever they are called, what interests us is that the written monuments belonging to this church were preserved in modern-day Kyrgyzstan. In this paper, these written monuments will be referred to with the well-established scientific term: Nestorian written monuments. The words in written monuments and their translations are in accordance with Ch. Jumagulov’s book *Nestorian and Turkic Written Monuments in Kyrgyzstan*.⁷⁷

The Nestorian written monuments in Kyrgyzstan were found unexpectedly at the end of 19th century. In the 1880s, an old Christian cemetery was discovered near Bishkek and Tokmok, where many written monuments were found. At some point many of those stones were taken to such cities as Almaty, Saint Petersburg, Tashkent and Omsk. Their current status is unknown.⁷⁸ Considering some of these stones had writings in Turkic language, it can be concluded that not only newcomers, but also Turkic-speaking local communities in some areas of present-day Kyrgyzstan believed in Christianity. Such Turkic names as *Aymengu*, *Alma-Katun*, *Altun*, *Arslan*, *Yok-Tegin* and *Yol-Kutluk*⁷⁹ appeared on those stones and also support this assertion. Some researchers point out that in the pre-Islamic period, Christianity was popular among nomadic Turkic peoples.⁸⁰ It is also known that Mongol tribes such as the Nayman and Kereit followed the Nestorian religion during the zenith of their reign.⁸¹ At some point, parts of these tribes assimilated with Turkic peoples. For example, the composition of Kyrgyz peoples includes the Nayman and Kereit tribes. Also, it was said that among the Chigil, a Turkic-speaking nomadic tribe who resided in Yssyk-Kul region, there were those who observed Christianity.⁸² Since there is no information that the Chigil moved elsewhere, it can be concluded that they intermingled and assimilated with Kyrgyz. In any event, there is no doubt that the Nestorian belief influenced the people of Kyrgyzstan over a certain

period of time. Furthermore, traces of Nestorians can be found in the Manas Epos. Sagymbai Orozbekov's version has the following lines:

Токсон эки адам зат (92 people)
 Баары турган муңайып. (All appear sad)
 Кимсиңер? — деп, сурады, (Who are you? — asked)
 Билдирмекке жайы-күйүн, (To tell their background)
 Бирден айтып чуулады. (Each of them began to speak)
 Бири барган Тарсадан, (One came from Tarsa)
 Минтип алар чарчаган. (That is why they are tired)
 Бир-экөөсү жөөттөн, (One or two are Jews)
 Минтип жүрүп көбөйткөн. (In such a way they increased)
 Бир мынчасы индүдөн, (Some are Hindus)
 Үңкүр ичи үйүлгөн (who are gathered in the cave)⁸³

The Epic of Manas is considered to be the only Kyrgyz-language source that gives information about *Tarsars*. К.К. Yudahin interprets this word to be: 1) Christian (people of the old book); and 2) people's name (in epos).⁸⁴ As a name, it has not reached present-day Kyrgyzstan. In the Mongol Empire, Nestorians were called *Erkugun* or *Tarsa*.⁸⁵ The word *Tarsa* is mentioned in Kyrgyzstan's toponymy. Rashid-ad-Din addressed this: "Chui is an area with many towns and villages. The biggest cities are Tarsakent and Kara Yarlyk, from which to Samarkand is two weeks on the road."⁸⁶ Kyrgyz academics think Tarsakent is the current Kara-Jygach town located in southeast Bishkek. Nestorian written monuments were found in the town as well.⁸⁷ Town names such as Tars or Tarson are also mentioned in Armenian sources, and their use is directly linked to Nestorians.⁸⁸ Ioan Plano Carpini writes that Batyi (grandson of Genghis Khan, son of Jochi, ruled Golden Horde) kept around him people of Nestorian belief.⁸⁹ Also, Mongols supported Nestorians and, consequently, this belief spread among the Mongols.⁹⁰ These events demonstrate that the word

Tarsa was used in relation to Nestorians.

The Nestorian written monuments contained primarily information about deaths, such as the name of the deceased and the date (year, month, day) when the person died. It is worth mentioning that when identifying the date, this standard sentence was used: "(According to) Alexander King's year count." Thus, the Nestorians that lived in the territory of modern-day Kyrgyzstan used a different calendar from their religion. Such a difference, for example, can be observed with Muslims as well. They begin to count years from the time the Prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina. Many of the monuments had both the dates based on the above-mentioned calendar and years named after 12 animals, a system used by the Turkic people. This demonstrates that the Nestorian belief was held not only by the newcomers, but also by local communities.

Almost all the monuments in question had an engraved cross as the symbol of Christianity. Some monuments had no writings on them, only a cross.⁹¹

As for the words that imply Christianity, on the N 8 Tapterim and Yuntuzbek monuments at the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan there are such words as *Mari*, which means "religious mentor;" *Mamedana* (on the Tapterim monument), which means "christianizer;" *da'arubata*, which means "on Friday prayer;" *amin* (on the Tapterim, Yushmed, Mayfrah and Maryam Asha monuments; the N 59 monument at the Hermitage; and N 8 and N 14 monuments at the Almaty museum); *auday-edta* (on the Yushmed monument), which means "the day of praying at church;" *meshiha* (on the Yushmed monument), which means "Christ, Messiah;" *mahimnata (mehaimanta)* (on the Mayfrah and Maryam Asha monuments; the N 1, N 2, N 3, N 10, N 11, N 12 monuments in Kara-Jygach; N14 near Buragana; and N56 monument at the Hermitage), which means "believer in faith;" *kasha (kashaa, kashisha)* (on the N34 monument in Kara-Jygach; the N 3, N 5, N 42, N 45, N 48, N 52, N

54, N 57, N 81 monuments at the Hermitage), which means “priest;” *askuliya* (on the N 4, N 31, N 49, N 53, N 57, N 63 monuments at the Hermitage), which means “scholiast, teacher;” *episcopo* (on the N 73 and N 92 monuments at the Hermitage); and *periduta* (on the N 3 monument at the Hermitage), which means “episcopo’s assistant.”⁹²

Among these words, *amin* (*amin*), *meshiha* (Messiah), *kasha* (priest), *askuliya* (scholiast), *episcop* (episcopo) and *periduta* (episcopo’s assistant) have particular importance because these words are still actively used among Christians without any changes (episcopo, *amin*), with minor changes in vowels (*meshiha*, *periduta*), or as different words, but with the same meaning.

The word *Amin* came to Christians from Jews, who used it to mean “truly.” In synagogues and churches, believers say *amin* after finishing their prayers to give support to their wishes.⁹³ This word is used in Islam with the same meaning and purpose.

Episcopo (“overseer” in Greek) is the main priest of his eparchy, who looks after the sacred church and serves as mentor to lower-level religious figures and attendants.⁹⁴

A *Periodevt* (“traveller” and “observer” in Greek) was selected by the Patriarch (a religious position at Christian churches) to observe churches and religious workers in their designated territory and report to the Patriarch.⁹⁵

A scholiast is an interpreter of the sacred book. The collection of sacred books interpretations by a priest was called *Scholia*.⁹⁶ At a glance, the word scholiast may have no etymological connection with *askulia*, but there is a connection with the word *scholia*.

The word Messiah (in Aramaic *messias*, in Hebrew *mašiah*) means Christ.⁹⁷

The use of these terms demonstrates that Kyrgyzstani Nestorians had a well-developed church system.

In addition, as discussed above, the monuments in question included the names of the deceased. Many of these names were introduced under the influence of Nestorianism and were alien to Turkic-speaking peoples. For example: Aaron, Avraam, Alexandr, Andra (Andrey), Antonniy, Veniamin, Georgiy, Elena, Zaharia, Iakov, Israil, Ioann, Isaak, Marfa, Matvey, Moisey, Pavel, Simeon, Filipp and Yulia, etc.⁹⁸ Of course, among these Christian names Turkic names can be found. In some cases, one person had both Syrian (the language is used by Christians in the Middle East as a literary language) and Turkic names. Ch. Jumagulov explains this phenomena in the following way: “there is a possibility that religious people living among the Turkic people took on Turkic names in order to get closer to them” and “perhaps, local Turkic people took on Syrian names after their conversion to Christianity.”⁹⁹

In T.D. Bayalieva’s view, Christianity (Nestorian) was pushed out by Islam and therefore did not have traces in Kyrgyz religious beliefs.¹⁰⁰ The disappearance of the Nestorian faith in Kyrgyzstan can also be explained by another factor: in 1338–39, the Nestorian-Christian population experienced two waves of the plague.¹⁰¹

In the 13–14th centuries, the Nestorian religion spread through the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan, particularly in certain areas of the Chui and Yssyk-Kul regions, and was followed by certain Turkic-language communities. Later, they intermingled and assimilated with peoples who became the Kyrgyz. Tribes of Mongol ethnicity such as the Nayman and Kereit are now part of the Kyrgyz people along with other Turkic language-speaking people. At some point the Nestorian branch of Christianity was popular among Mongols. For example, the Chagatai showed them support.¹⁰² It is quite possible that the Nayman and Kereit practiced the Nestorian faith. Thus, there are grounds to assume

that tribes that practiced the Nestorian faith assimilated with the Kyrgyz. Nestorianism did not leave traces on modern Kyrgyz's religious beliefs, but the idea of Nestorianism has been preserved in the Epic of Manas through the word *Tarsa*.

IV. MONUMENTS WRITTEN IN ARABIC

A majority of the written monuments are considered to have writings epitaphic in nature. Such writings were found in various regions of Kyrgyzstan, including the Chui, Talas, Yssyk-Kul, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions. Some of them are now displayed at local museums, school museums, the Kyrgyz National University Museum and the Kyrgyz State History Museum, while some remain where they were found. The words, sentences and their translation come from Kubat Tabaldiev and Kayrat Belektin's books.¹⁰³ These epitaphs represent religious ideas related to death, and the texts have primarily standard Arabic words.¹⁰⁴

For example, in Islam, the term "*basmala*" or "*bismillah*" means *bi-smi-Llyahi-r-rahmani-r-rahim*. It is translated into Kyrgyz as «мээримдүү жана ырайымдуу Алланын ысымы менен» (In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). In Islam, all supplications, all events and documents written by a Muslim start with Allah's name.¹⁰⁵ The majority of the monuments in question have texts starting with exactly such standard Islamic words. For example, one can see this word on the monuments found in the village of Sheker (Talas region's Kara-Buura District), the village of Kara-Suu (Naryn region's Kochkor District) and the village of Batiktin Bas-Boltogu (Chui region's Alamudun District, near Burana).¹⁰⁶

Islam has short quotations for praying. One of the

standard expressions is «Аузу биллахи минаш-шайтанир-ражим». In Kyrgyz, it translates as "I seek shelter in Allah from the rejected Satan." This quotation comes before "*bismillah*" and the Quran starts exactly with these words.¹⁰⁷ These words can be seen on monuments in the Kyrk-Kyz area of Naryn region's Kochkor District and the village of Burkut (Yssyk-Kul region's Tong District).¹⁰⁸

The term "*Shahada*" in Islam means "there is no God, but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger."¹⁰⁹ In Kyrgyz, it is called "*kelme*."¹¹⁰ The "*shahada*" or "*kelme*" declares "*La ilaha illa Llah, Muhammadur-rasulu-Llah*." In Kyrgyz, it reads: "There is no God but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." "*Kelme*" is one of the pillars of Islam and the most important one. This standard creed can be seen on a majority of the monuments in question. For example, it was found on the monuments discovered in the villages of Kara-Suu and Kyrk-Kyz (Naryn region's Kochkor District), the village of Chychkan (Yssyk-Kul region's Jети-Oguz District), Chui region's Kichi-Kemin District and in other places.¹¹¹

Muslims add a standard phrase, "*Sallallahu aleihi va sallam*," when they mention the Prophet Muhammad. In Kyrgyz, it is translated as "Peace be upon him." These words were also frequently used on the monuments. For example, it can be found on the monuments in the village of Chychkan (Yssyk-Kul region's Jети-Oguz District), the villages of Bokonbaev and Burkut (Yssyk-Kul region's Tong District) and in other places.¹¹²

In addition, one can see many standard sayings on the monuments including «Алейхума раббе хамден» (Gratitudes to Allah) and «Худаху валлаху» (Believe in Allah).

Some monuments have full *surahs*.¹¹³ For example, the monuments, including one found in the village of Orgochor (Yssyk-Kul region's Jети-Oguz District), one found near the Cholpon-Ata area and currently held

at the Cholpon-Ata Museum, six monuments found by N. Pantusov, who provided copies, and a tenth monument found near Burana, have 16 (18), 17 (19) *ayats* of the Quran's three *surahs* called the "Family of Imran" and 112th *surah* called "Cleansing of (the Belief)" written in full.¹¹⁴

In addition, some monuments have both calendars, "*sene milady*," which is used worldwide, and "*sene hijri*," which is used among Muslims, demonstrates how Islam influenced those who wrote on these monuments.¹¹⁵

R. Abdykulov discusses how Islam spread among Kyrgyz: "Islam's spread on Kyrgyzstan's territory is important from two aspects: first, Islam made its first step into the territory, located in the center of Central Asia, through the Talas War in 751; second, it is the place of residence and centre of Karahans, recognized as the first Muslim Turkic state."¹¹⁶

Although Islam was recognized as a state religion in the territory of present-day Kyrgyzstan for over a thousand years, we can say that until Kyrgyzstan's independence, Islam's influence was not strong among Kyrgyz. For example, in 16–17th century historical sources, Kyrgyz are portrayed as "neither infidels, neither Muslims."¹¹⁷ S.M. Abramzon, who conducted an ethnographic field expedition among Kyrgyz in mid-20th century, notes the following: "The endurance of patriarchal and feudal relations among the Kyrgyz enabled preservation of an ideology reflecting this people's world view. Religion played an important role in Kyrgyz's spiritual world, but the essence of their religion was not very compatible with Islam. Islam spread among Kyrgyz relatively late."¹¹⁸ Widely used among Kyrgyz, and documented by K.K. Yudahin, this humorous sentence, «Эшегин эптеп токуйбуз, намазын кантип окуйбуз?» (We barely saddle our donkey, are we able to pray five times a day?), clearly demonstrates it.¹¹⁹ In Yudahin's opinion, this sentence, which turned into a phraseological unit, was coined in 1636 when Kyrgyz went to Ferghana. According

to the American orientalist, Dave Davies, the Islamic conversion of Dasht-Kypchak nomads was based on pre-Islamic customs.¹²⁰ While people in the western part of Central Asia embraced Islam by the end of the 8th century, in Kyrgyzstan and adjacent areas of Semirechie, this process was very slow. The main reason for this is, during this period, these areas had sedentarized centres with Persian populations living alongside incursive Turkic nomads, who jointly stopped the intrusion of the Arab Khalifate into Semirechie in the 8th century.¹²¹

With the coming of the Soviets, religion was severely controlled, since the Soviets focused on an atheistic worldview. After Independence, religious restrictions were lifted. Currently, religion, including Islam, is spreading. For example, before 1991, Kyrgyzstan had 39 mosques, whereas, in 2015, Kyrgyzstan had one Religious Directorate of Muslims, nine branches of the Directorate in regions, 2,239 mosques, 74 Islamic unions, 10 Islamic colleges and 89 madrasas. In total, 2,422 religious institutions are functioning.¹²²

V. CONCLUSION

In the past, the Kyrgyz and peoples who lived in the territory of present-day Kyrgyzstan used different writings. The writings on stones are currently studied by the scientific community as one of the major sources of information with regard to linguistics, folklore and history, among other areas. The monuments discussed in this paper are also important for studying the development of Kyrgyz religious beliefs. For example, different authors from different eras provided information about Kyrgyz religious beliefs and about those peoples who lived in the territory of present-day Kyrgyzstan. For example, "Eastern Tengir-Too, East Turkestan were places with historically strong influence of Buddhism,

Christianity, Manichaeism, and Shamanism. Talas and Isfidjabda were under strong influence of such beliefs as Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Manichaeism.¹²³ Scholars such as V.D. Goryacheva, V.A. Livshitz and Anvarbek Mokeev repeatedly spoke about this.¹²⁴ The texts written on the stones confirm such information. The written monuments have words, phrases and sentences that reflect beliefs pertaining to particular eras. They once again prove that the Kyrgyz and peoples who once lived in present-day Kyrgyzstan's territory followed different religious beliefs. The traces of these religious beliefs continue to live in the memories of people in forms such as words, phrases, idioms and rituals. Thus, in the history of the Kyrgyz and of those who once lived within the present-day borders of Kyrgyzstan, there was no absolute dominance of one religion. There has always been a natural religious pluralism.

When Soviet rule was established, religious leadership was repressed illegally. Places for praying including mosques and churches were destroyed or closed. During the early years of Independence, freedom was granted to those wishing to practice religion, with religious places being renovated and people turning actively to religion. In order to meet the population's religious needs, media programs promoting religion appeared and religious holidays were re-introduced. Madrasas and other education institutions were re-opened to promote religious education.

Although a majority of Kyrgyz are Muslims, other religious confessions are active. For example, in 2016, the State Commission for Religious Affairs ordered a sociological study, and out of the 1,184 surveyed 92.9% identified as Muslims, 5.0% as Orthodox Christians, 0.4% as followers of the Church of Jesus Christ, 0.3% as Baptists and 0.3% as Jehovah's Witnesses.¹²⁵ Among these, Islam and Christianity are considered to be traditional religions in Kyrgyzstan. B.A. Maltabarov adds Krishnaists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Munists to the list of non-traditional religious groups.¹²⁶ Thus, currently, there is a level of

religious pluralism present in Kyrgyzstan.

The issue is to take necessary measures to prevent conflicts from taking place between religious movements. Both the Quran and the Hadiths call for tolerance towards other religions. For example, Ayat 13 of Surah 49 in the Quran states, "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another... [translated by the author]."¹²⁷ There are examples from the Prophet Muhammad's calling for tolerance towards other religions; for example, he surprised people sitting next to him when he got up to recognize the procession carrying the body of a deceased Jew. On another occasion he agreed to the demands of Kurayshit to put the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah in force, which limited Muslim rights in order to preserve the peace between Paganists and Muslims.¹²⁸

NOTES

¹ G.Y. Semigin (2000), *Политическая энциклопедия* [Political Encyclopaedia], vol. 2 (Moscow: Мысль (Idea), 143.

² This paper will focus on confessional pluralism, as defined here; however, it should be noted that the Global Centre for Pluralism takes a more holistic view of pluralism and defines it as an ethic of respect for diversity, which includes ethno-cultural, religious, linguistic, gender, etc.

³ Nurdin Useev (2011), *Енисей жазма эстеликтери I. Лексикасы жана тексттер* [Enisey Written Monuments I: Lexicon and Texts] (Bishkek: Biyiktik), 15.

⁴ Ibid, 41.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ S.G. Klyashtornyi and D.G. Savinov (2005), *Степные империи Древней Евразии* [Steppe Empires of Ancient Eurasia] (St. Petersburg: Philological Department of St. Petersburg State University), 167.

⁷ S.G. Klyashtornyi (1976), «Стелы Золотого озера» [“Stele of Golden Lake”], *Turcologica* 70th Birthday of A.N. Kononov (Leningrad), 261–64.

⁸ S.G. Klyashtornyi and D.G. Savinov (2005), 166.

⁹ Nurdin Useev (2011), 617, 553, 416, 437.

¹⁰ Ibid, 140.

¹¹ A. Akmatallyev et al. (2010), *Кыргыз тилинин сөздүгү* [Kyrgyz Language Dictionary] (Bishkek: Avrasya-Press), 1166.

¹² I.V. Stebleva (1972), «К реконструкции древнетюркской религиозно-мифологической системы», [“On the Reconstruction of the Old Turkic Religious and Mythological System,”] *Тюркологический сборник* [Turkology Collection] 1971 (Moscow: Наука (Science)), 213–14.

¹³ S.M. Abramzon (1990), *Киргизы и их этногенетические и историко-культурные связи* [Kyrgyz and Their Ethnogenetic and Historical-Cultural Ties] (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan), 307.

¹⁴ S.M. Abramzon (1990), 308; M. Venyukov (1861), *Очерки Заилийского края и Причуйской страны* [Features about Zailiyskiy region and Nearchui areas], 4th book, West. RGO, 117.

¹⁵ A. Akmatallyev et al. (2010), 79, 80, 85.

¹⁶ Ibid, 801–2.

¹⁷ K.K. Yudahin (1965), *Кыргызча-орусча сөздүк* [Kyrgyz-Russian Dictionary] (Moscow: Soviet Encyclopedia), 436.

¹⁸ A. Akmatallyev et al. (2010), 1166–67.

¹⁹ K.K. Yudahin (1965), 226.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Centre gratefully acknowledges the members of the project's international advisory committee: Gulnara Aitpaeva (Aigine Cultural Research Center, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan), Morgan Liu (Ohio State University, Columbus, USA), Benjamin Loring (Victor Pinchuk Foundation, Kiev, Ukraine) and Jeff Sahadeo (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada).

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