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978-1-107-04309-1 - The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early  
Modern Empires to the End of the First World War

Alfred J. Rieber

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## The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands

This book explores the Eurasian borderlands as contested “shatter zones” which have generated some of the world’s most significant conflicts. Analyzing the struggles of the Habsburg, Russian, Ottoman, Iranian, and Qing empires, Alfred J. Rieber surveys the period from the rise of the great multicultural, conquest empires in the late medieval/early modern period to their collapse in the early twentieth century. He charts how these empires expanded along moving, military frontiers, competing with one another in war, diplomacy, and cultural practices, while the subjugated peoples of the borderlands strove to maintain their cultures and to defend their autonomy. The gradual and fragmentary adaptation of Western constitutional ideas, military reforms, cultural practices, and economic penetration began to undermine these ruling ideologies and institutions, leading to the collapse of all five empires in revolution and war within little more than a decade between 1911 and 1923.

Alfred J. Rieber is University Research Professor of History at the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania.

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to the End of the First World War*

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To Marsha: “. . . like gold to airy thinness beat . . .”

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[More information](#)

## Contents

---

<i>List of maps</i>	page viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction	1
1 Imperial space	5
2 Imperial ideologies: cultural practices	79
3 Imperial institutions: armies, bureaucracies, and elites	166
4 Imperial frontier encounters	293
5 Imperial crises	424
6 Imperial legacies	532
Conclusion: Transition	615
<i>Index</i>	618

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Modern Empires to the End of the First World War

Alfred J. Rieber

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Maps

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1.1 The Mongol Empire, 1241	<i>page</i> 16
1.2 The Qing Empire at its height, <i>c.</i> 1850	36
3.1 Poland–Lithuanian Commonwealth at its height, 1660–1667	173
3.2 Height of Ottoman expansion in Europe, 1674	251
3.3 The Safavid Empire at its height, 1660	267
4.1 Sweden at its height, 1660	295
4.2 Habsburg–Ottoman Military Frontier, <i>c.</i> 1790	305
4.3 The Caucasian isthmus, <i>c.</i> 1790	381
4.4 Trans Caspia to 1886	409
5.1 Between the Treaty of San Stefano and the annexation of Bosnia	443
6.1 Ukraine after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk	568
6.2 South Caucasus, 1918–1921	600



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## Acknowledgments

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---

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### **Note on Romanization**

In wrestling with this perennial problem, I offer solutions that will surely not satisfy everyone. The Library of Congress system has been followed in general for Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Ottoman Turkish, and Persian. The pinyin system has been adopted (reluctantly) for Chinese. I have retained diacritical marks in Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian. When the same term appears in two languages, such as *qizilbashi* (Persian) and *kizilbaşı* (Turkish), I have tried to use one consistently, in this case Persian, reflecting the primary cultural context in which the subject appears. The spelling *ulama* has been used throughout, reflecting its Arabic origins. Exceptions abound, mainly due to the frequency with which words have become familiar in English language texts. But this too is rather arbitrary. In transliterating Ukrainian names I have generally used the Russian spellings of place names to acknowledge the imperial structure, and Ukrainian spellings of individuals to acknowledge ethnic identities. The exception is Map 6.1 showing the independent Ukraine after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, where I have retained the Ukrainian spellings of place names.