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THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF CENTRAL ASIA

The Russian conquest of Central Asia was perhaps the nineteenth century's most dramatic and successful example of European imperial expansion, adding 1.5 million square miles and at least 6 million people – most of them Muslims – to the Tsar's domains. Alexander Morrison provides the first comprehensive military and diplomatic history of the conquest to be published for over a hundred years. From the earliest conflicts on the steppe frontier in the 1830s to the annexation of the Pamirs in the early 1900s, he gives a detailed account of the logistics and operational history of Russian wars against Khoqand, Bukhara and Khiva, the capture of Tashkent and Samarkand, and the bloody subjection of the Turkmen, as well as Russian diplomatic relations with China, Persia and the British Empire. Based on archival research in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia and India, memoirs and Islamic chronicles, this book explains how Russia conquered a colonial empire in Central Asia, with consequences that still resonate today.

ALEXANDER MORRISON is Fellow and Tutor in History at New College, Oxford. His publications include *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (2008).

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A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814–1914

ALEXANDER MORRISON
New College, Oxford

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In memory of John Malcolm Morrison (1949–2017)

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NOTE ON TRANSLATION, TRANSLITERATION AND DATES

For the transliteration of Russian terms and proper names I have used the simplified library of Congress system without diacritics, apart from ʼ to indicate the soft sign (**ь**), and using ***ya*** rather than the misleading *ia* for **я**. Terms and names in Central Asian languages are generally transliterated from historic spellings in the Arabic script, again using a simplified system without diacritics except for ʻ to indicate *ʻain* (ع) and ʼ for *hamza* (ء). Where familiar versions of a name already exist in English I have stuck with the established spelling (e.g. Samarkand not Samarqand). Where a direct English equivalent exists, technical terms have been translated, notably *oblast'* (province) and *uezd* (district). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Russian, French and Persian are my own, while all translations from Chaghatai are by a friend who prefers to remain anonymous, but whose assistance I gratefully acknowledge.

Before 14 February 1918 the Russian empire operated according to the Julian calendar, which was thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the rest of Europe, and now worldwide. Almost all dates in this book are Old Style (O.S.), but when the Russians were dealing directly with the British I have also given Gregorian dates. All dates in the footnotes are those given in the original document, which in most cases means they are O.S.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Archives

F. – *Fond* (Fund); **Op.** – *Opis'* (Catalogue); **D.** – *Delo* (File); **l.** – *list'* (folio); ***ob*** – *oborot'* (verso).

AV *Arkhiv Vostokovedov Sankt-Peterburgskogo Filiala Instituta Vostokovedenii RAN* (St Petersburg Filial of the Oriental Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Archive of Orientalists)

AVPRI *Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Archive of the Russian Empire's Foreign Policy, Moscow).

BL British Library, London.

GAOO *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Orenburgskoi Oblasti* (State Archive of Orenburg Province, Orenburg)

GARF *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow).

IAOO *Istoricheskii Arkhiv Omskoi Oblasti* (Historical Archive of Omsk Province, Omsk)

IOR India Office Records (British Library, London)

IISH International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam

NAG National Archives of Georgia (Tbilisi)

NAI National Archives of India (New Delhi)

RGIA *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (Russian State Historical Archive, St Petersburg)

RGIMOPI *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Muzei, Otdel Pis'mennykh Istochnikov* (Russian State Historical Museum, Division of Written Sources, Moscow)

RGVIA *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (Russian State Military-Historical Archive, Moscow).

TsGARKaz *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan* (Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty).

TsGARUz *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Uzbekistan* (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent).

Document Collections

AKAK *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoi Arkheograficheskoi Kommissii* (Tiflis: Tip. Glavnogo Upravleniya Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1881)

KRO F. N. Kireev (ed.): *Kazakhsko-russkie otnosheniya v XVIII–XIX vekakh (1771–1867 gody): sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1964)

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MPITT	V. V. Struve, A. K. Vorovkov & A. A. Romaskevich (ed.) *Materialy po Istorii Turkmen i Turkmenii* Vol. II (Moscow–Leningrad: Izd. AN SSSR, 1938).
PP	*Parliamentary Papers*
PSZ	*Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*
PT	A Il'yasov (ed.) *Prisoedinenie Turkmenii k Rossii. Sbornik Arkhivnykh Dokumentov* (Ashkhabad: Izd. AN Turkmenskoi SSR, 1960)
RTO	S. G. Agadzhanov & A. Il'yasov (ed.) *Russko-Turkmenskie otnosheniya v XVIII–XIX vv. (do prisoedineniya Turkmenii k Rossii). Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov* (Ashkhabad: Izd. AN Turkmenskoi SSR, 1963)
Serebrennikov *Sbornik*	A. G. Serebrennikov (ed.) *Sbornik Materialov dlya istorii zavoevaniya Turkestanskogo Kraya* 1839 g–1845 g (Tashkent: Tip. Sht. Turkestanskogo V.O., 1908–1912) 4 Vols & *Turkestanskii Krai. Sbornik Materialov dlya istorii ego zavoevaniya* 1846 g–52 g, 1864 g–66 g (Tashkent: Tip. Shtaba Turkestanskogo Voennogo Okruga, 1914–15) 13 Vols
SIRIO	*Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva*
VPR	*Vneshnyaya Politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka: Dokumenty Rossiiskogo Ministerstva inostrannykh del* Series I & II (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1960–1995)
Zagorodnikova *Bol'shaya Igra*	T. N. Zagorodnikova, (ed.): *'Bol'shaya igra' v Tsentral'noi Azii: 'Indiiskii pokhod' russkoi armii. Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov* (Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniya, 2005)

Chronicles

Donish *Risala*	Ahmad Makhdum-i Donish: *Risala ya Mukhtasari az Ta'rikh-i Saltanat-i Khanadan-i Manghitiyya* (*c.* 1898) ed. Abulghani Mirzoev (Stalinabad: Nashriyat-i Daulati-yi Tajikistan, 1960)
TA	Mullah Muhammad Yunus Jan Shighavul Tashkandi: *Ta'rikh-i 'Aliquli Amir-i Lashkar* (*c.* 1903) ed. & trans. T. K. Beisembiev as *The Life of 'Alimqul. A Native Chronicle of Nineteenth-Century Central Asia* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003)
TJT	Muhammad Salih Khwaja Tashkandi: *Ta'rikh-i Jadidah-yi Tashkand* (*c.* 1886) Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences Manuscript No. 11073/II, portions transcribed by Bakhtiyar Babajanov at http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t386.html
TSh	*Mullah Niyaz Muhammad b. 'Ashur Muhammad Khoqandi: Ta'rikh-i Shahrukhi* (1871) ed. Nikolai Pantusov as *Taarikh Shakhrokhi. Istoriya Vladetelei Fergany* (Kazan': Tip. Imp. Universiteta, 1885).

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TSM	Mirza ʻAbd al-ʻAzim Sami: *Ta'rikh-i Salatin-i Manghitiyya.* (*c.* 1907) ed. & trans. L. M. Epifanova as *Istoriya Mangitskikh Gosudarei Pravivshikh v Stolitse, Blagorodnoi Bukhare* (Moscow: Izd. Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962).

Journals and Publications

AHR	*American Historical Review*
AI	*Ab Imperio*
AS	*Asiatische Studien*
CAC	*Cahiers d'Asie Centrale*
CAS	*Central Asian Survey*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society & History*
EcHR	*Economic History Review*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
GJ	*The Geographical Journal*
HJ	*The Historical Journal*
IIRGO	*Izvestiya Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle-East Studies*
IS	*Iranian Studies*
IV	*Istoricheskii Vestnik*
IZ	*Istoricheskie Zapiski*
JAH	*Journal of Asian History*
JBFGO	*Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JGH	*Journal of Global History*
JIS	*Journal of Islamic Studies*
JMH	*Journal of Military History*
JPS	*Journal of Persianate Studies*
JRGS	*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*
JWH	*Journal of World History*
Kritika	*Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*
MAS	*Modern Asian Studies*
MES	*Middle-Eastern Studies*
PPV	*Pis'mennye Pamyatniki Vostoka*
PRGS	*Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*
RA	*Russkii Arkhiv*
RS	*Russkaya Starina*
RV	*Russkii Vestnik*
SEER	*Slavonic & East European Review*
SR	*Slavic Review*
St Pb.	St Petersburg

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TKLA	*Protokol zasedaniya i soobshcheniya chlenov Turkestanskogo Kruzhka Liubitelei Arkheologii*
TOUAK	*Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
TVOIRAO	*Trudy Vostochnogo Otdeleniya Imperatorskogo Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva*
TS	*Turkestanskii Sbornik*
TV	*Turkestanskie Vedomosti*
VE	*Vestnik Evropy*
VIRGO	*Vestnik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*
VS	*Voennyi Sbornik*
ZIRGO	*Zapiski/Zhurnal Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geographicheskogo Obschestva*
ZVOIRAO	*Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniya Imperatorskogo Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva*

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GLOSSARY

'Adat – customary law, applied in the Russian Empire to the law used by nomads.
Aul – a nomadic encampment or winter settlement.
Aqsaqal – 'white-beard'. An elder, a village headman.
Arba – a high, two-wheeled cart.
Ariq – an irrigation canal.
Batyr – a warrior or hero, cognate of *Bahadur* (Persian) and *Bogatyr* (Russian).
Bek/*Beg* – a title of respect, (sometimes) governor of a province.
Berdanka – affectionate term for the Berdan rifle, introduced in the Russian army after 1870.
Bii – a Kyrgyz or Qazaq judge or figure of authority.
Dadkhwah – a Khoqandi court rank, literally meaning a 'petitioner for justice'.
Dasht-i Qipchaq– 'the field of the Qipchaqs'. Name used for the steppe between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries.
Desyatina– Russian measurement of area, equivalent to 2¾ acres or 1.09 hectares.
Diwan – Qazaq term for the administrative divisions created by the Russians in the steppe in the 1820s, but with the broader meaning of a court or political centre.
Diwan-begi – chief minister (Khiva).
Dungan – Han Chinese Muslims, many of whom migrated to Russian Turkestan in the 1880s.
Fazany – 'pheasants' – a contemptuous term for aristocratic officers who secured a transfer to Central Asia when there was a campaign and a chance of medals or promotion.
Jigit – Turkic term meaning a mounted warrior, used by the Russians for mounted messengers, bodyguards etc.
Jungharia – what is now northern Xinjiang in western China.
Khan – a royal title indicating (in principle) both Chingissid descent and widespread recognition of a right to rule. By the nineteenth century only Qazaq Khans were genuinely Chingissids.
Khoja or *Khwaja* – a religious honorific indicating descent from the prophet's kin, and (sometimes) membership of a Sufi lineage.
Kibitka – term used by the Russians for nomadic households and *yurts*.
Kirgiz – The generic term used by the Russians for both Qazaqs and Kyrgyz in Central Asia. I have preserved it in quotations from primary sources, while referring to Qazaqs and Kyrgyz in the main body of the text.
Inorodtsy – literally 'those of a different birth'. A term used to describe some of the non-Russian peoples of the empire. As a legal category it denoted those excluded from Russian citizenship.

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Ishan – a religious leader, whose authority could derive from personal charisma, or from blood descent from or being taught by a famous saint. Associated with Sufism, although not all *ishan*s belonged to a Sufi order.
Lazutchik – scout or spy.
Manap – a figure of authority among the Kyrgyz.
Mawara' al-nahr – 'the land beyond the river'. The river in question is the Oxus or Amu-Darya. This was the classic Arabic term for the settled lands of Central Asia, lying roughly between the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya.
Oblast' – a province, with a population of a million or more. Known as a *guberniya* in European Russia.
Okrug – a military district.
Otdel – an administrative division.
Pood – Russian measurement of weight, equivalent to 36 lbs.
Pristav – in this period the officer in charge of a region whose administration has not yet been regularised.
Qazi-Kalan – the chief Islamic judge of a city.
Qush-begi – Chief Minister (Bukhara).
Sarbaz – infantry drilled according to modern methods in the armies of Bukhara and Khoqand.
Sart – a generic term used both by Russians and by nomads for the settled population of Central Asia.
Sayyid – one claiming descent from the tribe of the Prophet.
Shaika – raiding band.
Sotnya – a company of Cossack cavalry, usually 100–120 men.
Stanitsa – a Cossack settlement.
Sultan – a title which among Qazaqs indicates Chingissid descent, i.e. membership of the 'white bone' aristocracy.
Taranchi – 'farmer' – the name by which the modern Uyghurs were known in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.
Töre/Tura – a title of respect, indicating membership of the 'white bone' Chingissid aristocracy among Qazaqs.
Trakt – highway or post-road.
Tuzemtsy – 'natives'. The general term used by Russians to describe the local population.
Uezd – a district, which in Turkestan could have a population of 250,000 or more.
'ulama – the collective term for Muslim clergy and theological scholars, plural of *alim*.
Verst – Russian measurement of distance, equivalent to about two-thirds of a mile.
Volost' – an administrative division, in Central Asia usually with about 2,000 households.
Zakat – the Islamic tax on goods, 1/40th of their value – widely applied to livestock in Central Asia.
Zhuz – 'hundred', usually translated as 'horde'. Name for the three political divisions of the Qazaqs.

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Map 1 Central Asia before the Russian conquest. (Redrawn from 'Central Asia: First Half of the 19th Century'. © Yuri Bregel, with the kind permission of Natasha Bregel.)

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