Enterprising Empires

Commercial competition between Britain and Russia became entangled during the eighteenth century in Iran, the Middle East, and China, and disputes emerged over control of the North Pacific. Focusing on the British Russia Company, Matthew P. Romaniello charts the ways in which the company navigated these commercial and diplomatic frontiers. He reveals how geopolitical developments affected trade far more than commercial regulations while also challenging depictions of this period as a straightforward era of Russian economic decline. By looking at merchants’ and diplomats’ correspondence and the actions and experiences of men working in Eurasia for Russia and Britain, he demonstrates the importance of restoring human experiences in global processes and provides individual perspective on this game of empire. This approach reveals that economic fears, more than commodities exchanged, motivated actions across the geopolitical landscape of Europe during the Seven Years’ War and the American and French Revolutions.

Matthew P. Romaniello is Assistant Professor of History at Weber State University, and previously was Professor of History at University of Hawai‘i. He is the editor of Sibirica: Interdisciplinary Journal of Siberian Studies, and is the author of The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia, 1552–1671.
Enterprising Empires

Russia and Britain in Eighteenth-Century Eurasia

Matthew P. Romaniello

Weber State University
For Paul
Contents

List of Figures ix
List of Tables x
Acknowledgments xi
Note on Transliteration, Spelling, and Dates xiv
List of Abbreviations xv

Introduction 1
Baltic Brokers 11
Eurasian Exchanges 15

1 Opening Opportunities 19
Ancient Privileges 21
Romanov Restrictions 29
English Encumbrances 37
Atlantic Anxiety 44
Conclusion 53

2 Managing Mercantilism 56
Crisis Management 58
Creating Ventures 64
Disobedient Diplomats 76
The Draft Commercial Treaty of 1716 86
Complicated Relations 97
Conclusion 102

3 Asian Aspirations 106
Textile Crisis 108
The Anglo-Russian Commercial Treaty of 1734 112
Russian Advances 124
Persian Prospects 132
Elton’s Aftermath 147
Conclusion 158

4 Navigating Neutrality 162
French Affairs 164
The Anglo-Russian Commercial Treaty of 1766 174
Russian Adjustments 183
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shairp Merchants</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Options</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Continental Challenges</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tariff Book of 1782</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Informants</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wartime Commerce</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Arrivals</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoring Relations</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterword</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures

0.1 Map of the Baltic Sea  
0.2 Map of eighteenth-century Russia  
2.1 A map of the route to Moscow and Pekin. Reproduced from Bell, *Travels from St. Petersburg*. Courtesy of the Archives and Manuscript Department, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa  
3.1 “The New Custome House Tarriff.” Author’s photograph  
3.2 Map of Russia and Iran  
3.3 Kazan before the Conflagration of 1842, featuring trading boats on the Volga River. Reproduced from Sears, *An Illustrated History of the Russian Empire*. Courtesy of the Archives and Manuscript Department, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa  
3.4 The Caspian Sea. Reproduced from Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade*. Courtesy of the Archives and Manuscript Department, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa  
3.5 The Habit of a Persian Man. Reproduced from Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade*. Courtesy of the Archives and Manuscript Department, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa  
5.1 A View of the Port of Ochotsk. Reproduced from Sauer, *An Account of the Geographical and Astronomical Expedition*. Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, Stanford University  
6.1 The Fleet in the Baltic, under the Command of Sir Charles Napier, 1857. Engraving by D. J. Pound. Photograph by the Print Collector, Getty Images
# Tables

2.1 London’s balance of foreign trade in 1703 (in £)  

4.1 Merchants exporting goods from St. Petersburg in 1758  

4.2 Commodities exported from St. Petersburg to London in 1758  

4.3 Comparison of British and Russian trade through St. Petersburg, 1764–1768 (in rubles)  

4.4 Comparison of exports from St. Petersburg, 1776–1785 (in rubles)  

5.1 London’s trade with Russian ports by value, 1795 (in rubles)  

5.2 Comparison of exports from St. Petersburg, 1790–1799 (in rubles)
When I began this project, I set out to write a book about Russia’s tobacco trade. After publishing a few articles on Russia’s varied habits of consumption, I started to realize I might not have that much more to say about it. The fact that this idea occurred while I was researching my tobacco project in London turned out to be a productive opportunity. Reading through the records of the Board of Trade and Plantations put tobacco in its place, as one piece of a larger story about Anglo-Russian trade in the eighteenth century. My archival interests were supported by a fortunate combination of circumstances. First, when Jim Millward invited me to talk about Russia’s involvement in Eurasia’s economy for the Critical Silk Road Studies seminar at Georgetown, this encouraged me to think about the position of Russia’s overland commerce as an integrated part the global economy. Then two conversations with Erika Monahan and Nancy Kollmann at an ASEEES (Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies) conference in San Antonio encouraged me to commit to the “bigger” story of Anglo-Russian commerce over the tobacco trade. Without this feedback on this research while it was still an ongoing concern, I’m not sure how this project might have developed. I owe them all a great deal of thanks for nudging me toward the right path.

The majority of the research for this project was completed during my year-long sabbatical in 2013–2014. I thank the History Department and the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for providing the opportunity. I am grateful to the staffs of the National Archives in Kew, the British Library, the National Records of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, the US National Archives and Record Administration, and the Library of Congress for their assistance during this project. I also am thankful for the support of the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center for the University of Illinois for supporting some key library visits. A fellowship at the Tanner
xii Acknowledgments

Humanities Center of the University of Utah enabled me to complete the revisions of the text in 2017–2018.

In the past five years, I have benefited greatly from the opportunity to discuss my research in the United States, Europe, and Australia. I thank the faculty and students of the Global History and Culture Centre at the University of Warwick, the Russian History Workshop at Georgetown University, the Colloquium of East European History at Bremen University, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University, and the Eurasian Empires seminar at Stanford University for their invitations to discuss my work with them. No less important were the conference presentations made during this period, including several ASEEES meetings, the “Objects and Possessions” conference at the University of Southampton, the IMEHA International Congress of Maritime History, the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction, and the Yale Conference on Baltic and Scandinavian Studies.

There are too many people to thank who have influenced my thoughts and arguments in both small and large ways; the audiences for the talks and papers mentioned above are only a partial acknowledgment. Tricia Starks has been my co-conspirator for so many years now; I rely on her advice at every stage. Clare Griffin, Rachel Koroloff, Erika Monahan, Scott Levi, Alison Smith, and Ilya Vinkovetsky have played important parts in the development of this project, either by participating at conferences, reading drafts, or listening to me ramble about the project at a bar. It would not be the same project without them. My wonderful colleagues participating in the University of Hawai’i’s Early Modern Forum, especially Valerie Wayne, Lew Andrews, Frederika Bain, Brenda Machosky, and Elizabeth McCutcheon, have been a constant source of advice and encouragement over the years. I owe them great thanks for their patience with the development of this project. I am especially appreciative of Alison Games for reading the introduction to this book at the eleventh hour and providing some guidance for my revisions. For the past eleven years, I was fortunate to work in the History Department at UH with great colleagues, including Peter Arnade, Shana Brown, Marcus Daniel, Karen Jolly, Vina Lanzona, Matt Lauzon, Kieko Matteson, Njoroge Njoroge, Suzanna Reiss, John Rosa, and Wensheng Wang. I always valued the support of my colleagues in the library, especially our amazing Russian bibliographer, Pat Polansky, for her knowledge and advice. I also thank Monica Ghosh, who enabled me to publish several images in the book by intervening on my behalf with the library’s Archives and Manuscript Department. I must also thank Bill Nelson for preparing the maps for the book.
Finally, I thank the two reviewers for the CUP, as well as my editor, Michael Watson and his team for their advice and guidance throughout the project. The final version of this monograph is much stronger for their recommendations. If problems remain, they are my fault alone.

None of this would have been possible without the support of my family on the East Coast and in Utah. Changing jobs (and states) in the middle of the revision process was unfortunate timing, but they made the entire experience much easier and far more enjoyable. I dedicate this book to Paul Hibbeln because his support and encouragement has made everything possible.
Note on Transliteration, Spelling, and Dates

The transliteration of Russian words and names follows the Library of Congress system except for the familiar spelling of Peter I, II, and III, as well as Catherine II. The spelling of original sources has been kept for the English sources. Dates on all documents are given as listed in the original sources, although I have adjusted some to reflect January 1 as the start of a new year. In 1752, Britain switched to the Gregorian calendar. Documents following that date written by diplomats and merchants in Russia tend to have two dates, reflecting the Russian and British calendars. In those cases, both dates are indicated in the notes.
Abbreviations

ARO Voskanian, Armiano-Russkie otnoshenii vo vtorom tridtsatileti v XVIII veka
BRB Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT
BL The British Library, Manuscripts, London
CSP Birch, A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe
LOC Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, DC
NARA The National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
NLS National Library of Scotland, Special Collections, Edinburgh
NRS National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh
PSZ Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii
RGADA Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, Moscow
RIO Antonova and Gol’berg, Russko-Indiiskie otnoshenii v XVII v.
SA Senatskii arkhiv
SGGD Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov khramiashchikhsia
SIRIO Sbornik Imperatorskago Russkago istoricheskago obshchestva
STR Sound Toll Registers Online, Denmark
TNA The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
TSRA Dmytryshyn, Crownhart-Vaughn, and Vaughn, To Siberia and Russian America