



Russian Central Asia in the Works of Nikolai Karazin, 1842–1908

Ambivalent Triumph

Elena Andreeva

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To my family, both living and departed

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Happiness depends on ourselves, because all you need for happiness is to know how to make other people around you happy [underlined by N. Karazin] – and those who can do it – will be strong enough to parry all the accidental blows of fate, and therefore, will be happy. Your father has professed this his whole life and in the half a century of his life has become firmly convinced of this truth, holy as God himself. Good luck! 1893,” wrote Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin to his daughter Maria on the back of the painting of a pine tree and a palm tree which also contains his photographic portrait.¹ While this testament is the best summary of his life credo, the painting on the back of which it was inscribed is an equally stunning expression of his life’s passion. The painting reproduced on this book’s cover shows a lonely pine tree covered in snow perched on a rock, also covered in snow and ice. Out of the dark coldness of the northern night appears a fantastic vision – an elegant palm tree glittering with warm light and reflected, as if in an invisible mirror, in light grey color.

The painting was inspired by the famous free translation by Mikhail Lermontov of a poem by Heinrich Heine about a lonely pine tree dreaming of a lovely palm tree.² “Morgenland – the Orient of Heine, ‘the

¹Larisa Deshko, “Kartina,” in *Osnova. Karaziny* (Kiev: Vidavetz Androshchuk P. S., 2014), 142, <http://dspace.univer.kharkov.ua/handle/123456789/12892> (accessed 14 June 2018). All translations from Russian in this book are made by the author, unless stated otherwise.

²[http://wikilivres.ru/The_Pine_Tree_\(Lermontov\)](http://wikilivres.ru/The_Pine_Tree_(Lermontov)) (accessed 14 June 2018).

southern land' of Lermontov, for Karazin is the embodiment of the East,³ not the geographical latitude, but an allegory of the inaccessibility in time and space," wrote modern art critics.⁴ The photographic portrait of the artist added to the painting in 1895 reinforces the poetic and ethical message of the painting and the inscription, thus turning this work into a powerful symbol of Karazin's professional and personal life.

This book is dedicated to Nikolai Karazin's art about Central Asia, to its place in the culture of the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century, and by implication, to the cultural facets of imperial history. The author of this book has to admit that what had started as a purely academic project has gradually turned into a labor of love since the author found it impossible to remain detached from the artist's captivating passion for Central Asia, his overarching humanism, and his masterful and detailed artistic images. The author was fortunate to communicate with the Karazin family members Larisa Deshko, Natalia Karazina, and Nadezhda Karazina, and their kind support for this project opened a personal channel between the author of this book and Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin. This book is a humble tribute to the man who, in her opinion, so much deserves it.

A fascinating and complex character, Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin (1842–1908) was a talented and popular painter, writer, journalist, book illustrator, war correspondent, traveler, and ethnographer. At the same time, he was a soldier who participated in the Russian military campaigns in Central Asia – and later in its exploration – during the second half of the nineteenth century. His extensive experience of Central Asia and his life-long passion for the area and its peoples illuminated his visual and literary works. Karazin spent more than ten years in Turkestan,⁵ far more time

³ In the context of the dilemma of Russia's position between "East" and "West," "just as 'East' included lands and peoples in Russia and Asia but also an elaborate *imaginaire*, so the 'West' meant not only the countries of Europe... but also shifting ideas about the Western world as a construct." "Russia's Orient, Russia's West," introduction to Michael David-Fox et al., eds., *Orientalism and Empire in Russia*, Kritika Historical Studies 3 (Bloomington: Slavica, 2006), 3.

⁴ Natal'ia Usenko and Tat'iana Bakhmet, " 'Na severe dikom...': pis'mo schast'ia," in Deshko, *Osnova*, 145. They also point out that Nikolai Karazin was influenced by the painting *Na severe dikom...* (In the wild north) by Ivan Shishkin. See Usenko and Bakhmet, " 'Na severe dikom...', " 145.

⁵ Turkestan was a unit formed in 1867, which included two oblasts, Semirechie and Syr-Darya, with the Transcaspian area added in 1897. According to the current *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Turkestan is the area in Central Asia between Siberia in the north; Iran,

than his famous contemporaries, painter Vasilii Vereshchagin (1842–1904) and writer Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826–89), whose works on Turkestan are relatively well known in Russia and in the West.

The winner of multiple credits and awards during his lifetime, he was also an immensely popular artist. Karazin's life was full of adventure and hard work, his energy and enthusiasm seemingly inexhaustible: "With his rich creative imagination and enormous artistic taste, Karazin was marked with an unusual quickness and easiness in work. His capacity for work and productivity were amazing."⁶ During his lifetime, Karazin published extensively in various Russian periodicals, such as *Niva*, *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*, *Delo, Slovo, Sever*, *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, *S. Peterburgskie vedomosti*, *Novoe vremia*, and *Pchela*, as well as in foreign ones, such as *Illustrated London News*, *Illustration*, and *Über Land und Meer*.⁷ He created around 4,000 drawings and watercolors, and around 100 paintings, and illustrated dozens of books.⁸ For example, in 1901, *Niva* claimed that in a period of thirty years, it had published more than 450 drawings and sixty novels, stories, and essays by Karazin in its pages.⁹ Karazin's visual works are kept in more than twenty galleries of the former Soviet Union, including the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, and museums of Tallinn, Samara, Yaroslavl, Kazan, Ekaterinburg, Ashkhabad, and Tashkent. The famed collection of published materials related to Central Asia and consisting of almost six hundred volumes, *Turkestanskii Albom* (Turkestan Collection), contains multiple works by Karazin. A complete collection of his literary works consists of twenty-five volumes. He is credited with being the first (or among the very first) in several areas: one of the first war correspondent-illustrators, a serious book illustrator who introduced several innovations into the illustration of books in Russia,¹⁰ the first illustrator of

Afghanistan, and Tibet in the south; the Caspian Sea in the west; and the Gobi Desert in the east. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkistan> (accessed 22 February 2019).

⁶ P. A. Korovichenko, "Karazin, Nikolai Nikolaevich," in K. E. Velichko, ed., *Voennaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 12 (St. Petersburg: T-vo I. D. Sytina, 1913), 376.

⁷ *Biobibliograficheskii slovar'*. *Khudozhniki narodov SSSR*, vol. 4, book 2 (St. Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe agenterstvo Akademicheskii proekt, 1995), 208.

⁸ E. V. Nogaevskaia, "Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin, 1842–1908," in A. I. Leonov, ed., *Russkoe iskusstvo. Ocherki o zhizni i tvorchestve khudozhnikov. Vtoraia polovina deviatnatsatogo veka II* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1971), 358.

⁹ *Niva* 49 (1901): 742.

¹⁰ A. A. Sidorov, *Istoriia oformleniia russkoi knigi*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Kniga," 1964), 328–29, 348; Idem., *Risunok russkikh masterov (vtoraia polovina XIX v.)* (Moscow:

Dostoevsky, and the creator of the first illustrated postcards in Russia¹¹ and of the first artistic projects of the Moscow metro,¹² as well as one of the founding members of the new society of Russian watercolor painters in St. Petersburg.

His literary works range from novels to short stories, essays, and travel-ogues. His most famous novels about Central Asia include *Dvunogii volk* (Two-legged wolf), *V kamysbakh* (In the reeds), *Pogonia za nazhivoi* (Chasing profit), and *Na dalekikh okrainakh* (In the outlying districts). Among his best-known stories are “Ak-Tomak,” “T’ma neprogliadnaia” (Pitch darkness), and “Tigritsa” (Tigress). His visual works are represented by large oil paintings, watercolor paintings, and sketches, with the oil painting series about the conquest of Turkestan probably being the most famed one.

Yet in spite of the outstanding role he played in the cultural history of Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century, Nikolai Karazin remains mainly unknown to the Western public, while receiving limited attention from scholars. This book is the first comprehensive attempt in Western scholarship to introduce Karazin’s images of Central Asia to the Western audience, to supplement the Western scholars’ knowledge of his works with specific details, and to relate his works to the cultural aspects of Russian imperial history.¹³ It analyzes the ways his multimedia discourse

Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 364; V. Shumkov, “Master illiustratsii,” *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, 9 July 1976. Karazin was the first Russian book illustrator who followed the famous French illustrator Gustav Doré in drawings with his brush directly on the wooden boards and by doing so he created new methods of toned wood engravings. He also was praised for his artistic design of both open pages as an art work. Sidorov, 328–29. According to an article in *Niva*, “they call N. N. Karazin ‘Russian Doré,’ thinking that this is an honor for him. But Doré has nothing to do with it. N. N. has his own ‘self’ and his own artistic face...”; *Niva* 50 (1906): 803. Shestimirov claims that in the 1870s, Karazin traveled to Paris to study with Doré. Alexander Shestimirov, *Zabytye imena. Russkaia zhivopis'* (Moscow: Belyi gorod, 2001), 220. Karazin’s adventure novels were also compared to those by Mayne Reid: K. Sh. Kereeva-Kanafieva, *Russko-kazakhskie literaturnye otnosheniia (vtoraia polovina XIX – pervoe desiatiletie XX v.)* 2nd ed. (Alma-Ata: “Kazakhstan,” 1980), 138. The goal was similar – to praise the Russian artist by comparing him to the famous European artists.

¹¹ Shestimirov, *Zabytye imena*, 220; Idem., “Otkrytki khudozhnika Karazina,” *Antikvariat*, nos. 1–2 (January–February 2004).

¹² Shestimirov, *Zabytye imena*, 220–21.

¹³ See also Elena Andreeva, “Discourse of Empathy: Images from Central Asia in the Works of Nikolai Karazin (1842–1908),” in *Orientality: Cultural Orientalism and Mentality* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale S. p. A., 2015).

inflected, and was inflected by, the expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia.

This book is based on materials obtained through research in the archives and reserves of Russia's museums and libraries, including the State Tretyakov Gallery – the National Museum of Russian Fine Arts, the Museum of the Peoples of the Orient, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts, and the National Library in Moscow; the Russian Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Russian State Historical Archive, and the Archive of the Russian Geographical Society in St. Petersburg. Additionally, the author was able to use the Karazin family archive. The book incorporates multiple reviews, encyclopedia entries, commemorative addresses, and articles dedicated to Karazin during his lifetime. It is important to understand the artist's views from the nineteenth-century perspective, and from the perspective of his audience, since using late twentieth-century perceptions “poisons the deep wells of sympathy and respect which artists of all sorts felt for the East in the nineteenth century, which they expressed in distinctively nineteenth-century ways, not necessarily amenable to the critical values of the twentieth century.”¹⁴

In the second half of the nineteenth century, when Russia was finally prepared to experience the Orient¹⁵ directly, as opposed to borrowing its perceptions of the Orient from Western Europe, Central Asian motifs were being incorporated into mainstream Russian culture. During this

¹⁴ John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), xviii.

¹⁵ The term “Orient” in relation to Russia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is even more ideologically loaded than “East” and more often than not is seen in connotation to the concept of Orientalism formulated by Edward Said in his 1979 book of the same name. The Russian Orient is defined at least as vaguely as the Orient in the West European context. Russian intellectuals usually positioned the Orient/the East (*vostok*) in the east, south, southeast, and even in the north (Siberia) of the Empire, in the territories inhabited predominantly by Muslims. The case of Crimea and the Caucasus was especially complicated: their assignment to Asia or the Orient was highly controversial already in the nineteenth century: “Like the allegedly civilized West, the Russian Orient included territories that, if we follow Said, were parts of the ‘good old Orient.’ This was the Orient that had flourished once, but degenerated over the centuries. This holds not only for China, Japan, or the Holy Land, but also for the present-day regions of Armenia and Georgia in the South Caucasus, once a stronghold of early Christianity.” Kerstin S. Jobst, “Where the Orient Ends? Orientalism and Its Function for Imperial Rule in the Russian Empire,” in James Hodkinson and John Walker, eds., *Deploying Orientalism in Culture and History: From Germany to Central and Eastern Europe* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013), 193.

period of time, the routine use of photography for purposes other than portraits was still in its infancy.¹⁶ Hence Karazin's keen eye for observation, passion for details, and extraordinarily skilled and vivid images – and the combination of different media he employs – constitute a gift to historians and ethnographers. Based on his personal experience, his Central Asian pieces add primary ethnographic and social-historical materials to those already in scholarly circulation. Such works as *Ot Orenburga do Tashkenta* (From Orenburg to Tashkent), a combination of a travelogue and an early travel guide, and “Samarskaia uchenaiia ekspeditsiia” (Samara scholarly expedition), a combination of a travelogue and a scholarly report, provide rich ethnographic, geographic, and topographic details in an easily digestible form. Karazin possessed a natural gift for descriptions – slow-paced and detailed, they maintain readers' concentration and fascination. His reviewers justly pointed out that he created visual images and sketches with his words: “The essence of his talent consisted of being able to capture and remember the external features of his objects and create a [verbal] painting out of them. All his essays and short stories are nothing other than verbal presentation of paintings existing in his mind.”¹⁷ At the same time, many of his drawings tell a story by capturing an episode which allows for the audience to guess what preceded or followed it.

Several generations of the Russian literary public discovered Central Asia and its peoples through his works – so that his notions shaped their views. He played a mediating role between Central Asia and its public perception – providing a prism through which the reading Russian public looked at its new frontier society. His works enchanted several generations of devoted audiences for whom his descriptions or detailed sketches never felt tedious: in his very best works, he was “simultaneously realistic, fantastic, and picturesque.”¹⁸ It is also important to note that Karazin viewed educating his audiences as his mission, rather than simply entertaining them – and he purposefully structured his works towards that end, providing what he considered to be valuable materials. He masterfully integrates informative passages dedicated to history and nature into most of his works of fiction. His enthusiasm for ethnography is manifested through

¹⁶ Margaret Dikovitskaya, “Central Asia in Early Photographs: Russian Colonial Attitudes and Visual Culture,” in Uyama Tomohiko, ed., *Empire, Islam and Politics in Central Asia*. *Slavic Eurasian Studies* 14 (2007): 104–5.

¹⁷ *Delo* 11 (1874): 5.

¹⁸ A. A. Sidorov, *Russkaia grafika nachala XX veka. Ocherki istorii i teorii* (Moscow: “Iskusstvo,” 1969), 53.

detailed descriptions and images of the local people, their customs, and their habits, as well as folktales, all generously spread through his works. At the same time, his perceptions were interconnected with the development of colonial culture among Russian settlers in Central Asia, in particular with those of the Russian inhabitants of Karazin's beloved city of Tashkent.

Analysis of Karazin's Turkestan is directly related to the discussion about the correlation between culture and empire. What comes first; what follows? "Empire follows Art, and not vice versa as Englishmen suppose," according to a provocative remark by William Blake in which he seems to suggest "that culture is central to the creation and preservation of the imperial regimes."¹⁹ Though this statement sounds too extreme, culture certainly played a significant role in the construction of empire, as empire conditioned the development of culture. Since Russia proper was closely connected to its non-Russian territories, Russians were strongly affected by the territories they ruled: "Empire shaped the literature of Alexander Pushkin and Leo Tolstoy, inspired the music of Mikhail Glinka and Alexander Borodin, added its hues and forms to Russian architecture, and insinuated itself into everything from Muscovite menus to Volga folktales."²⁰ Moreover, it was mainly the relationship to the southern and eastern margins of the empire that formed the "Russian national identity as expressed in literature."²¹

Edward Said proposed a useful theory of "dynamic exchange" between individual writers or texts and the complex processes of empire-building with which they interact.²² In his *Culture and Imperialism*, he strongly emphasized the role culture plays in political and ideological battles related to imperialism: "culture is a sort of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another. ...culture can even be a battleground on which causes expose themselves to the light of day and contend

¹⁹ Alison Smith, David Blayney Brown, and Carol Jacobi, eds., *Artist and Empire: Facing Britain's Imperial Past* (London: Tate Publishing, 2016), 10.

²⁰ Willard Sunderland, "Shop Signs, Monuments, Souvenirs: Views of the Empire in Everyday Life," in Valerie A. Kivelson and Joan Neuberger, eds., *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 104.

²¹ Katya Hokanson, *Writing at Russia's Border* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 13.

²² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 14–15, 23–24, quoted in Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9.

with one another.”²³ When culture is granted a certain degree of autonomy, it is capable of resisting the state’s political agenda, so that writers “utter real, meaningful protests against the given system of power and even effect changes in it.” At the same time young Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, and Lermontov, all of whom were exiled to the Caucasus, “endorsed imperialism in certain ways, while taking issues with others.”²⁴ What seems to be a contradiction to a modern observer was a reflection of the maze of Russian national identity – itself a product of Russia’s peculiar (but not unique) position between East and West, its geographic position and historical development culminating by the late nineteenth century in the creation of its huge Eurasian empire.

Nikolai Karazin’s works about Central Asia are marked by a similar consistent inconsistency. Analyzing Karazin’s “colonial prose,” modern Russian scholar of literature Eleonora Shafranskaia insightfully points out that though Karazin’s goal was objective presentation, “not necessarily pleasing the official propaganda discourse,” he at the same time “was one of the first ones ... to create *a canon of the future* for the newly conquered lands and peoples; this canon would later be circulated in fiction, official propaganda, mythology of the daily life.” Such a model of the future “privatized” by the Russian colonial prose of the last third of the nineteenth century was directly related to the “civilizing project of the Russian empire in Turkestan.”²⁵ While expressing patriotic enthusiasm for the Russian conquest and a paternalistic approach to the peoples and cultures of Central Asia, Karazin presents multiple attractive and noble images of the “Orientals,” alongside numerous and graphic depictions of Russian “civilizers” behaving in a deplorably uncivilized way. There are clear parallels between his depiction of those whom he sarcastically calls *Tashkentskie rytsari* (Tashkent knights) and the poisonous images of *Gospoda Tashkentysi* (The Tashkentians) by M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, known for his biting satire of Russian officials. In effect, showing “good” and “bad” Russians alongside “good” and “bad” local people makes the relationship of power relatively balanced. Karazin consistently expresses warm sympathy for

²³ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xiii.

²⁴ Jonathan Arac, “Introduction,” in Jonathan Arac and Harriet Ritvo, eds., *Macropolitics of Nineteenth-Century Literature: Nationalism, Exoticism, Imperialism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991), 1, quoted in Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire*, 9.

²⁵ Eleonora Shafranskaia, *Turkestanskii tekst v russkoi kul'ture: Kolonial'naia proza Nikolaia Karazina (istoriko-literaturnyi i kul'turno-etnograficheskii kommentarii)* (St. Petersburg: Svoe izdatel'stvo, 2016), 21.

native people and their suffering. Gradually and within boundaries, a “discourse of power” in Karazin’s works combines with a “discourse of empathy.”

The organization of this book is greatly helped by the notion of “imperial networks” connecting metropole and colonial places. Such an approach includes examination of “multiple meanings, projects, material practices, performances and experiences of colonial relations.” Analysis of colonial projects pursued through the imperial networks demonstrates the great variety of colonial interests and practices and the lack of a single colonial discourse. Furthermore, if places are understood as “rather specific juxtapositions or constellations of multiple trajectories” which could be “those of people, objects, texts and ideas,” imperial space will be a complex result of multiple trajectories, directed by “individuals collaborating in pursuit of specific colonial or anti-colonial projects, such as proselytization, humanitarianism, settler capitalism, commercial enterprise, scientific inquiry, governmentality...”²⁶ “‘Strong ties’ of *friendship* and *obligation*,” personal bonds between individuals constitute an aspect of those networks.²⁷ Karazin’s connections with Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman, his military commander at first, and later Turkestan governor-general sponsoring scientific and ethnographic study of Turkestan, very likely contributed to the artist’s enthusiasm for Russian domination over Turkestan. Applying such a conceptual approach to the phenomenon of Karazin’s art exposes the significant role art and culture played in those webs, but without the compulsion to gloss over its complexity.

Karazin personally participated in the military conquest of Central Asia, and in the natural scientific and ethnographic enquiry in Turkestan, and he was a guest at the opening of the Transcaspian railroad in 1888. During those and other visits to Turkestan, Karazin purposefully and passionately collected abundant materials about the conquest, exploration, governance, and commercial activity in the region; interacted with military and civilian Russian individuals, and with many local people from various walks of life; processed the collected information and emotions; and finally transformed them into literary and visual art. These works, in their turn,

²⁶David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careerings in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6–14.

²⁷Zoe Laidlaw, *Colonial connections 1815–45: Patronage, the information revolution and colonial government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 15.

circulated by multiple means including various media, shaped the views of his audience, impacted Russian officials in the metropole and the colonies, and interacted with the official discourses. As a result, all his colonial (as well as anticolonial) art projects constituted trajectories which, meeting with multiple other trajectories, constructed imperial space.

While artistic trajectories in imperial networks in the Caucasus have been relatively well examined by modern Western and Russian scholars, similar work needs to be done in relation to Central Asia. This book is conceived as a contribution to such scholarship. While looking at Central Asia as a part of Russia's "internal Orient" (which also includes the Crimea and the Caucasus), this book also points out some differences between perceptions of "internal" and "external" Orients. Russia's "external" Orient includes those Eastern countries which were never formally a part of the empire: the Ottoman empire, India, and Iran.²⁸ Iran occupied a special position among the other "external" Oriental countries because of the active interference of Russia there, starting with the time of Peter the Great to the Great Game and culminating in 1907 when the Anglo-Russian Convention divided Iran into spheres of influence. The massive presence of Russian officials, many of whom were military, in northern and northeastern Iran during that period of time is reflected in more than two hundred travel accounts and allows for an analysis of Russian Orientalism directed at an "external Orient."²⁹

In Central Asia, Karazin felt that Russians were in control after the successful conquest and therefore there was no threat from the local people. Thus military advantage led to a significant degree of self-confidence. Karazin did not seem to doubt Russia's belonging to the civilized and civilizing West and therefore did not feel any need to prove Russia's westernness to himself or the local people. In comparison, Russians in Iran (as an example of an external Orient) felt threatened by the local Muslim population. Pursuing their military or diplomatic goals, they had to travel alone or as a part of a small group in the formally independent country, where Russian military presence and administrative power were limited. Unsure

²⁸ Vera Tolz's definition of "Russia's own Orient" includes the Caucasus, Turkestan, and the non-European communities of western and eastern Siberia and the lower Volga region, as well as the "Oriental" societies bordering the Russian Empire. *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

²⁹ For such analysis, see Elena Andreeva, *Russia and Iran in the Great Game: Travelogues and Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 2007).

of their position there, multiple Russians in their travelogues repeatedly insist on their thorough Europeaness and close affinity with Western Europe in every aspect including Christianity, in spite of the distinctiveness of Russian Orthodoxy. They also obsessively disparage every aspect of Iran and its people, emphasizing their perceived inferiority. All those modes were to conceal their lack of self-confidence vis-à-vis the Oriental “Other.”

The book is organized thematically, while maintaining chronological order as much as possible. While this chapter serves as an introduction, the second chapter surveys existing literature on Nikolai Karazin’s life and artistic production, followed by his biography with emphasis on his family values of advanced education and service to the motherland. It analyzes his double career – military and artistic, as well as the emergence and development of his lifelong passion for Central Asia. The chapter explains his role in introducing Central Asia to the Russian general public based on his broad popularity and briefly evaluates the artistic merits of his visual and literary works. This chapter also includes the background necessary for the comprehensive understanding of Nikolai Karazin’s art: the conquest of Central Asia and its incorporation into the empire throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, as well as analysis of the evolution of Russia’s self-identification and its placement by Western European and Eastern neighbors. Utilizing a rich body of scholarly literature, the chapter examines the seeming contradiction marking Russian art of the nineteenth century: the combination of anti-autocratic views and enthusiastic support for the “civilizing” mission of the Tsarist government in Russia’s “internal” Orient.

Chapter [three](#) examines Nikolai Karazin’s “military project” in the context of this double-angled perspective on Russia’s role in the Orient. In his prose and visual works dedicated to the military conquest, he at once applauds the Russian expansion and laments the “excessive” violence accompanying it on both sides. As a dedicated Russian military officer, the artist vividly presents Russian heroic “white shirts” (soldiers) and their selfless commanders fighting against a predominantly cowardly and treacherous enemy. This stereotypical picture is made more balanced by several exceptions among his countrymen and the local people, but even more so by the author’s sincere empathy for those suffering on both sides. The “military project” is presented in the context of the “imperial networks,” highlighting the personal connections between privileged officers closely

linked to the metropole and the tensions between those adjutants and aides-de-camp and regular officers of common background.

Chapters [four](#) and [five](#) are dedicated to Karazin's "civilian project," parallel to the military one on several accounts. Chapter [four](#) explains how Karazin, openly proud of the benevolent influence of the Russian domination over the newly acquired territories, praises "Russian" Tashkent and other "Russian cities," the dramatic improvement in the means of transportation, the construction of new post stations in the desert and the Transcaspiian railroad, and the "civilizing" impact of the sedentary agricultural lifestyle. Devoted, honest, and humane Russian men and women, both nobility and commoners, are at work to make sure the people of Turkestan are kindly assisted on their way towards what they see as progress. At the same time, the artist presents a gallery of shockingly incompetent, corrupt, greedy, and cruel Russian newcomers, ranging from officials to merchants, peasants, and even priests. Their malignant activities generate serious drawbacks of that advancement, set bad examples for the local people, and often corrupt them. They are the true "savages," Karazin's readers were to conclude, since they are being held to the highest ethical standards as representatives of the Russian Empire. Their behavior therefore undermines the moral justification of the "civilizing mission" of Russia since often it is unclear who is supposed to "civilize" whom.

Chapter [five](#) reinforces this message by presenting a similar dichotomy among the local people. They also vary from saintly to wildly cruel and treacherous, with their loyalty to the Russians being an important denominator of their overall worthiness. Men and women, sedentary and nomad, local aristocracy and commoners, they interact with the Russians in the newly created "contact zone" in a variety of modes which imply a certain balance of power. In spite of the author's noticeable patronizing tone and occasional Saidian Orientalist stereotyping, the prevailing tone of presentation is one of empathy and humanity.

The concluding chapter offers analysis of the ethnographic aspect in Karazin's literary and visual works, including his fiction, travelogues, and reports of two scientific expeditions to the Amu-Darya. Having overcome the view of the Orient as exotic which they had borrowed from Western Europe, by this time Russian artists were directly interacting with the Orient. There was also a great interest among the Russian public, from peasants to the nobility, in the artifacts and images reflecting Russia's new territories. The chapter analyses Karazin's ethnographic endeavors in their connection to the imperial "scientific networks" which linked Turkestan

to the metropole as well as government, military, and scientific players in both the center and the periphery. Karazin presents a virtual reality panorama of Turkestan, being ever attentive to every detail of people's life, including costume, customs, folklore, dwellings, and means of transportation; and of the natural environment, mountains and rivers, and domestic and wild animals. As the ethnography of the time was expected to complement Russian domination, the artist did not avoid the occasional presentation of local people as ethnic types. However, similar to the rest of his art, Karazin's ethnography is marked with the spirit of shared humanity. The conclusion summarizes the main features of Karazin's works in the context of "internal" and "external" Orientalisms and suggests projects for further investigation of his art.



CHAPTER TWO

Nikolai Karazin's "discovery" of Central Asia as Russia's internal Orient

This book aspires to examine Nikolai Karazin's artistic biography as a convenient case study for analysis of the imperial networks: when different trajectories interact, "[i]ndividuals become meeting points for influences, no longer static, but mobile, effusive, decentered, a process not a thing."¹ Karazin's biography offers a lens to look at the broad picture of the Russian colonial endeavor in the late nineteenth century in all its complexity, "addressing some of the historiographical fractures and neglect of imperial diversity."² In his classical book on Orientalism in arts, John MacKenzie outlines several possibilities: "While all forms of representation are of course filtered through the lens of the beholder, some purport to offer a realistic facsimile; others thrive on stereotypical depiction...; while yet others seek to absorb and adapt in a conscious effort to find a syncretic art. The realistic approach may offer positive or negative sentiment, sometimes

¹ M. Shortland and R. Yeo, eds., *Telling lives in science: essays on scientific biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 14, quoted in David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20. See an overview of the "new biography" in Lambert and Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, 19–21.

² J. MacKenzie, "Foreword" to A. Mackillop and S. Murdoch, eds., *Military governors and imperial frontiers, c. 1600–1800: a study of Scotland and empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xxvii, quoted in Lambert and Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, 20.

in almost equal measure.”³ As we are about to see, Nikolai Karazin’s art, filtered through the lens of a benevolent participant in the imperial conquest and colonization, aspired to offer a realistic reflection but was simultaneously very much a part of several colonial projects of his time. Applying the network concept of empire (briefly outlined in the previous chapter) to the relationship between Russia and Turkestan, this book examines several Russian “colonial projects” through Karazin’s art: the military conquest of Central Asia, the Russian administration of Central Asia including connections between the newcomers and the local people there, relations between various groups of Russian people in Central Asia and sometimes relations between different groups of locals, and the collection of scientific and ethnographical materials about Central Asia. This chapter also includes a bibliographical survey of the works dedicated to the artist in English and Russian languages, and provides an overview of Russian apprehension and comprehension of Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

With the exception of two books and an essay, none of Karazin’s works have been translated into English so far.⁴ Sources published in Russian on his life and activities, including those related to Central Asia, are also limited. They include several articles and encyclopedia entries, with the most credible ones concentrating primarily on his battle paintings.⁵ A number

³ John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), xvii.

⁴ *Dyunogii volk*, trans. by Boris Lanin as *The Two-legged wolf. A romance* (University of California Libraries, 1894); Na *dalekikh okrainakh*, trans. by Anthony W. Sariti as *In the Distant Confines* (Authorhouse, 2007); “N. Karazin. Camp on the Amu Daria,” trans. by Elena Andreeva and Mark Woodcock, *Metamorphosis*, Spring 2010.

⁵ P. A. Korovichenko, “Karazin, Nikolai Nikolaevich,” in K. I. Velichko et al., eds., *Voennaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 12 (St. Petersburg: T-vo I. D. Sytina, 1913); *Biobibliograficheskii slovar’*. *Khudozhniki narodov SSSR*, vol. 4, book 2 (St. Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe agenstvo Akademicheskii proekt, 1995); S. A. Vengerov, ed., *Istochniki slovaria russkikh pisatelei*, vol. II (St. Petersburg: Tip. Akademii nauk, 1910); F. I. Bulgakov, *Nashi khudozhniki (zhivopistyi, skulptory, mozaichisty, graviery i medal’ery) na akademicheskikh vystavkakh poslednego 25-letii*, vol. I (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1889); chapter on Karazin in V. V. Sadoven’, *Russkie khudozhniki batalisty XVIII-XIX vekov* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1955); E. V. Nogaevskaia, “Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin, 1842–1908,” in A. I. Leonov, ed., *Russkoe iskusstvo. Ocherki o zhizni i tvorchestve khudozhnikov. Vtoraia polovina deviatnadsatogo veka*

of articles unfortunately lack clear references, in addition to being predominantly descriptive. One article about Karazin, published in the *Military Encyclopedia*, should be mentioned separately: though brief, it is well written and contains accurate information – it was authored by a distant relative of Nikolai Karazin, Pavel Aleksandrovich Korovichenko (1876–1919).⁶

In addition to several articles written about Nikolai Karazin during the Soviet years, there is a book dedicated to “Russo-Kazakh literary relationships” with a chapter partially describing the “Kazakh theme” in Karazin’s “Turkestan novels.”⁷ Sadly, similar to the other works of Soviet scholarship, it is tainted by the ideas of the “progressive activities” of Russians in Turkestan, “joint efforts,” and “mutual consecutiveness and enrichment in all spheres of life” between Russians and Kazakhs, which allegedly culminated in the emergence of the “great historic brotherhood of people – the Soviet nation.”⁸

A story by the prominent Soviet writer Vsevolod Ivanov (1895–1963) entitled “Bukhgalter G. O. Surkov, chestno pogibshii za svoi idei” (Accountant Surkov who honestly perished for his ideas), and written in 1930, grotesquely illustrates the perception of the works by Nikolai Karazin during the Soviet years. One should keep in mind that Ivanov was born in what today is Kazakhstan, did not even graduate from middle school, fought in the Red Army, and later occupied positions of leadership in the Union of Soviet Writers; his writings were favored by Joseph Stalin. In that story, the title character, accountant Surkov, is described as being drawn to Turkestan by Karazin’s novels, and this in turn triggers a discussion of literary taste and the value of Karazin’s novels and short stories:

II (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1971); a chapter on Karazin in Alexander Shestimirov, *Zabytye imena. Russkaia zhivopis'* (Moscow: Belyi gorod, 2001); Vladimir Shumkov, “Zhizn', trudy i stranstvovaniia Nikolaia Karazina, pisatelja, khudozhnika, puteshestvennika,” *Zvezda vostoka* (Tashkent) 6 (1975), lacking a system of reference. Unfortunately, a book about Karazin, *Preodoleem stenu zabvenii (o Karazine Nikolae Nikolaeviche)* by L. P. Aripova (Moscow: Narodnaia pamiat', 2005), is utterly erratic: its organization is chaotic with the life of the author of the book receiving more attention than that of Karazin, most of the information is inaccurate and confusing, and any system of reference is lacking.

⁶ Korovichenko, “Karazin,” 375–76.

⁷ K. Sh. Kereeva-Kanafieva, *Russko-kazakhskie literaturnye otnosheniia (vtoraiia polovina XIX-pervoe desiatiletie XX v.)* (Alma-Ata: “Kazakhstan,” 1980).

⁸ Kereeva-Kanafieva, *Russko-kazakhskie literaturnye otnosheniia*, see for example pages 139, 5.

“Why did you read such apparent imperialist garbage, accountant?” He answered quietly and modestly: “I feel that it is garbage” and looked downwards. From that downward glance I understood that he doubted the value and attraction of books produced by our Soviet literature, and even their meaning. “Yes,” answered accountant G. O. Surkov, “I doubt. I have tried, following the advice of many and in order to enrich my [Soviet] consciousness to add my own [ideas] in the unclear passages, but in those cases such terrible dirt and dandruff creeps into my brain, that it is better to read N. Karazin. If he is a skunk, what can be asked from him?” I did not approve of such a train of thought and admitted that he had not forged his world-view yet, which he agreed to.⁹

Karazin’s posthumous reputation in Russia started to change after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Two years later, a collection of Karazin’s works was published. It included *Pogonia za nazhivoi* (Chasing profit), one of his best-known Turkestan novels, and some short stories and novellas, all dedicated to Central Asia.¹⁰ In his introduction to that book, Georgii Tsvetov, an expert on Russian literature, puts Karazin’s works in the category of the literature “returned” from the “depth of the nineteenth century.”¹¹ This is how he explains the deliberate neglect of Karazin’s work in the Soviet time: the “ideologically keen eye of the Soviet publishers noticed dangerous political mistakes even in Nikolai Karazin’s works.” It was Karazin who recorded the trip of Nicholas II to the East while he was the crown prince. Also, the Communist-supervised *Encyclopedia of Literature* accused Karazin of ignoring the “exploited and deprived of civil rights ‘aborigines.’” The same encyclopedia blamed Karazin for producing “colonial novels” prone to “flashy effects and melodramatic plots,” hence labeling him as an author of salacious novels with malignant ideological propositions.¹² Tsvetov pointed out that the goal of that edition was not the “political rehabilitation” of Karazin – he did not need one. Instead, he justly emphasized the historical and ethnographical value of Karazin’s works, and, most importantly, his humanism – his

⁹Vsevolod Ivanov, “Bukhgalter G. O. Surkov, chestno pogibshii za svoi idei,” *Krasnaia Nov’*. *Literaturno-khudozhestvennyi nauchno-publitsisticheskii zhurnal*, book 7, July 1930, 23. Disclaimer: the poor language is not the fault of the author of this book, whose translation follows the Russian original closely. I am grateful to Dr. Katharine Holt of the University of St. Andrews for pointing out this story to me.

¹⁰Nikolai Karazin, *Pogonia za nazhivoi* (St. Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1993).

¹¹Georgii Tsvetov, introduction to Karazin, *Pogonia za nazhivoi*, 1993, 5.

¹²Tsvetov, introduction, 5.

interest in and attention to a human being, including the native people of Turkestan: "Nikolai Karazin is always concerned with the ethical underpinning of the events, so that good, conscience, compassion, glory and motherland constitute for him permanent notions, not subjected to reevaluation in either exotic environment, or in the heat of pursuits, battles or hostility."¹³

In the last several years, a few additional Russian articles and a book have appeared dedicated to the theme of "Russian Turkestan" in Karazin's prose.¹⁴ The quality of those articles is uneven, with those by the Vasil'evs lacking any analytical framework. According to one of these recent articles, Karazin, arguably, so talented in many different ways, was not inferior to such prominent writers as Nemirovich-Danchenko, Mel'nikov-Pecherskii, Mamin-Sibirskii, Grigorovich, Omulevskii, Korolenko, and other authors who used to write about life in Russian provinces and colonies. Even "in the pre-war period [prior to the Second World War], when Soviet literary criticism still sometimes used to define things by their proper names, Karazin was considered to be the most talented writer of the colonial genre."¹⁵ The author of this brief article, A. D. Kazimirschuk, relates Karazin's works to the modern Western scholarship on Orientalism by Vera Tolz, Edward Said, and Alexander Erkind. In 2016, a book dedicated to Karazin's "colonial prose" about Turkestan was published by Eleonora Shafranskaia.¹⁶ She also addresses the reasons for erasing Karazin's works from the "literary mainstream," the "deliberate forgetting"

¹³ Tsvetov, introduction, 5–7.

¹⁴ A. D. Kazimirschuk, "Dikhtomiia 'Vostok-Zapad' v proizvedeniiakh N. N. Karazina," *Politicheskaiia lingvistika* 4 (46): 2013; Irina Vladimirovna Vasil'eva and Dmitrii Valentinovich Vasil'ev, "Russkii Turkestan v literaturnykh proizvedeniiakh N. N. Karazina," Internet-zhurnal *Naukovedenie*, issue 4 (23), July–August 2014, <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkii-turkestan-v-literaturnykh-proizvedeniiakh-n-n-karazina> (accessed 25 May 2017); Irina Vladimirovna Vasil'eva and Dmitrii Valentinovich Vasil'ev, "Obrazy zhitel'ei Turkestana i ego zavoevatelei v literaturnykh proizvedeniiakh N. N. Karazina," Internet-zhurnal *Naukovedenie*, issue 6 (25): November–December 2014, <http://naukovedenie.ru/PDF/56PVN614.pdf> (accessed 25 May 2017); E. F. Shafranskaia, "Nikolai Karazin – fol'klorist," *Vestnik TvGU*, Seriia "Filologiiia," no. 1 (2015).

¹⁵ Kazimirschuk, "Dikhtomiia 'Vostok-Zapad,'" 204–5. The author quotes S. Iu. Dudakov, *Paradoksy i prichiny filosemitizma i antisemitizma v Rossii* (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi humanitarnyi univesitet, 2000), no page number.

¹⁶ Eleonora Shafranskaia, *Turkestanskii tekst v russkoi kul'ture: Kolonial'naia proza Nikolaia Karazina (istoriko-literaturnyi i kul'turno-etnograficheskii kommentarii)* (St. Petersburg: Svoe izdatel'stvo, 2016).

of him – the main one being his works’ lack of compliance with the Soviet propaganda machine.¹⁷ In her book, Shafranskaia makes several references to the same Western scholars as did Kazimirschuk. Her book focuses on Karazin’s works of fiction from the perspective of ethnography and folklore, and places his works in the broader context of Russian and Soviet literature. Shafranskaia puts Nikolai Karazin on a par with such famous Russian writers as Tolstoy, Leskov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, and Chekhov by drawing parallels between their respective works. In addition to dedicating a separate chapter to a comparison of Nikolai Karazin with each one of those writers, she published a separate article on Karazin and Leskov.¹⁸

Larisa Deshko has recently made available an electronic version of her book *Osnova. Karaziny*, published in Ukrainian with several articles in Russian. The book is dedicated to the history of the Karazin family, “Karazins’ Atalantida,” and includes a chapter on Nikolai Karazin. It uses family archives and contains multiple family photographs and beautiful albums illustrated by the artist. While illustrated family albums were fashionable during Karazin’s time,¹⁹ those illustrated by Nikolai Karazin can count among his best trademark works. In them, his skillful and detailed sketches and watercolors are enlightened by his tender love for his nearest family: wife Maria, daughter Maria (Marusia), and granddaughters Tamara and Magdalina (Magda). In those family albums, Karazin brilliantly did what he was so good at: he “froze the moments” in his cherished family life, turning a trivial album of family photographs into an artistic masterpiece.

CENTRAL ASIAN CONTEXT

On the one hand, Karazin’s personal involvement in the apprehension of Central Asia was part of a long intertwined history of Russia and Asia; on the other, his images were a part of Russia’s comprehension of Central Asia. The complex relationship between Russia and Asia goes back to the early history of Russia and includes the Mongol domination of the

¹⁷ Shafranskaia, *Turkestarskii tekst*, 23, 29–34.

¹⁸ E. F. Shafranskaia, “Karazin i Leskov,” in *Vestnik Nizhegorodskogo universiteta im. N. I. Lobachevskogo*, 2014, no. 2 (2).

¹⁹ Natal’ia Usenko and Tat’iana Bakhmet, “Neizvestnyi Karazin: dnevniki pamiaty,” in Larisa Deshko, “Kartina,” in *Osnova. Karaziny* (Kiev: Vidavetz Androshchuk P. S., 2014), 158, <http://dspace.univer.kharkov.ua/handle/123456789/12892> (accessed 14 June 2018).

thirteenth–sixteenth centuries; its outcome was the interpenetration of Russian and Asian cultures. By the second half of the nineteenth century, Asia had turned into an arena of acute imperialist competition – by the late nineteenth century, Russia's Asian domain was three times the size of its European realm.²⁰ The motives for Russia's expansion into Central Asia were multifaceted and included political, strategic, and economic components, often differentiated between the center and the Asian periphery. Alex Marshall briefly surveys the most popular geostrategic explanations and concludes with rejecting them. According to him, Aleksei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin (1848–1925), the Russian war minister between 1898 and 1904, was the only true geopolitical thinker who presented grand strategic plans facing Russia. However, there was a “difficult gulf between geopolitical theory and messy everyday reality in the Russian Empire.”²¹ As summarized by Marshall in his book on the role of the Russian General Staff in Asia, such scholars as Mark Bassin, Andreas Kappeler, Michael Khodarkovsky, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, and Austin Lee Jersild have presented a “more graduated and localized picture of Russian imperial expansion, in which imperial ideologies of absorption and control and even the very ideology of expansion itself varied dramatically over discrete periods of time.”²² At the same time, defining the conquest of Central Asia as “an almost purely military undertaking, and very much a state enterprise,” A. S. Morrison warns against overestimating the influence of Russia's weak commercial class on the apparatus of the state, which “as a rule was wholly unresponsive to its concerns.”²³

Justifying Russia's conquests in Central Asia, Russian Foreign Minister Alexander Gorchakov claimed in the famous and often quoted dispatch in 1864 that Russia's expansion was involuntary. According to that document, Russia had to secure its borders from a “semi-savage” nomadic population as “all civilized states” were destined to do, and there was no definite limit to the expansion in sight: “The United States in America,

²⁰ Alexis Krauss, *Russia in Asia: A Record and a Study* (London: Curzon Press, 1900), 2–12, quoted in Alex Marshall, *The Russian General Staff and Asia, 1800–1917* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1.

²¹ Marshall, *The Russian General Staff*, 1–2.

²² Marshall, *The Russian General Staff*, 3. Marshall also points out that it would be incorrect to present the above mentioned scholars as a part of a historical “school” whose views do not vary. See endnote 8, page 194.

²³ A. S. Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand, 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 30.

France in Africa, Holland in its colonies, Britain in eastern India – all were drawn less by ambition and more by necessity along this path forwards on which it is very difficult to stop once one has started.”²⁴ As Morrison points out, Gorchakov’s statement was not far from the truth: “The Russians were anxious to obtain a secure frontier on the steppe, which would maintain imperial prestige and prevent the disruption of trade routes by the Kazakhs.”²⁵ Similarly, in his recently published book on the rise and fall of Kokand, Scott Levi suggests that the main motivation for the military expansion was an attempt to find a “stable and ‘natural frontier’ where the Russians could garrison their troops and safely defend their soldiers and their subjects.”²⁶

Russian policies in Asia were directly connected with those in Western Europe. The international position of Russia started to shift by the middle of the nineteenth century: Russia was falling more and more behind Western Europe in technological and military developments. Even after the emancipation of slaves and other reforms implemented by Alexander II (r. 1855–81), “agrarian Russia remained economically backward right up to the First World War.”²⁷ On the one hand, in the second half of the nineteenth century and up to 1914, Russia persisted as a great power and a great empire. At the same time, “it shared too many of the problems of political instability of the peripheral, backward but rapidly modernizing Second World.”²⁸ This internal weakness inevitably altered the international position of the empire. Diplomatic failures in Europe were followed by a humiliating defeat in the Crimean War (1853–56) against Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia. Russia’s international prestige in Europe (which had been significant after the defeat of Napoleonic France) plummeted and its role in European politics was dramatically reduced. As a result, Russia’s policies towards Central Asia and the Far East, as well as its aggressive policy in Iran, gained in significance. To

²⁴ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, trans. Alfred Clayton (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001), 194.

²⁵ Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand*, 30.

²⁶ Scott C. Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khogand, 1709–1876* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), 216.

²⁷ Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy 1860–1914*, trans. Bruce Little (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 4.

²⁸ Dominic Lieven, “Empire on Europe’s Periphery: Russian and Western Comparisons,” in Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber, eds., *Imperial Rule* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 137–38.

compensate for the blow to the prestige of the ruling elite, including the military leaders, Russia tried to catch up with its European rivals by imperialist expansion into Central and East Asia. "Only in Asia can we take up the struggle with Britain with some chance of success," stated Russian diplomat N. P. Ignat'ev in 1857.²⁹

The conquest of Central Asia started in the Kazakh steppe: by the middle of the nineteenth century, most of the Kazakh steppes had been annexed, secured by newly constructed military forts, and divided into several administrative units. The Russian expansion into the steppes led to a confrontation with the Central Asian khanates. Russian military operations began in 1864: in September, Russian forces under Colonel M. G. Cherniaev captured Chimkent (on the second attempt) belonging to the Kokand khanate. Then Cherniaev mounted an attack upon Tashkent in October 1864 but failed to take it. He returned the following year, and on 27 June 1865, the Russian troops stormed Tashkent. Alexander II called it a "glorious affair" and bestowed honors on Cherniaev and his leading officers. The relative ease of the conquest and the lack of protest from the British quieted any opposition in the Russian administration. In the following year, the emperor signed a decree annexing Tashkent to Russia.³⁰ After a blunder at Dzhizak, however, General Cherniaev was replaced with General D. I. Romanovskii. Under his command, Russian troops successfully fought the Bukharan army and took the fort of Nau and the city of Khodzhint in May 1866. Under General N. A. Kryzhanovskii, the Russians won further victories over the khanate of Bukhara and captured the fortress of Ura-Tiube and the city of Dzhizak in the autumn of the same year. In July 1867, General Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman was appointed the governor-general of Turkestan, a newly formed unit. It included two oblasts, Semirechie and Syr-Darya. Kaufman had previously, between 1843 and 1856, served in another part of Russia's internal Orient, the Caucasus, where he participated in numerous suppressions of tribal and village uprisings.³¹ It is this type of connection that demonstrates how "the discourse of governmentality was ... profoundly a product of the mobility of governors themselves."³² It was under Kaufman's command

²⁹ Quoted in Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, 193.

³⁰ Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 20–21.

³¹ Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society*, 33.

³² Lambert and Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, 11.

that Nikolai Karazin would participate in the military campaigns against the forces of Bukhara, including the battles for Samarkand in early May of 1868 and Zharbulak in early June of 1868. Following defeats at Samarkand and Zharbulak, emir Mozaffar-al-Din of Bukhara capitulated. In 1873, after an exhausting advance from Tashkent across the desert, Russian troops led by Kaufman captured Khiva, whose resistance was surprisingly weak. Mohammad-Rahim Khan surrendered, losing huge territories to Russia's annexation.³³

Bukhara and Khiva remained as truncated protectorates of the empire, controlled by Russia in military, political, and economic terms, somewhat similar to the indirect rule of the British over India.³⁴ The fate of Kokand was different: when a rebellion against the khan of Kokand turned into a holy war against the Russians in 1875, Russian troops under Kaufman and General M. D. Skobelev captured the khanate of Kokand after several campaigns. In February 1876, Kokand was annexed to Russia.³⁵ Transcaspia, populated mainly by Turkmen, was next to fall to the Russians. The city of Krasnovodsk, which had been established on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea in 1869, became the main base for the operations. Russian advances led to resentment among the Turkmen performing raids followed by Russian punitive expeditions and the establishment of advance bases. After an embarrassing defeat at the hands of Tekke-Turkmen, a Russian army stormed the fortress of Geok-Tepe in January 1881. The storming was followed by a mass massacre ordered by General Skobelev. This brutality broke the Turkmen's resistance and led to the capture of the rest of Transcaspia. A few days after the fall of Geok-Tepe, a force under Colonel A. N. Kuropatkin captured Ashkhabad. In May 1881, Transcaspia was declared an oblast of the empire. The capture of Merv in 1884 and the annexation of Kushka taken from Afghanistan in 1885 almost erupted into open warfare with Great Britain, but the Pamir treaty of 1885 between the two empires stopped further Russian advances in this direction and settled the Afghan boundaries.³⁶ The Transcaspian

³³Yuri Bregel, "The Russian conquest of Central Asia and the first decades of Russian rule," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/central-asia-vii> (accessed 4 July 2019).

³⁴Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, 197.

³⁵Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia 1867–1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 34–37.

³⁶Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 37–42; David MacKenzie, "The Conquest and Administration of Turkestan, 1860–85," in Michael Rywkin, ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1988), 226.

area was initially under the rule of the Caucasian administration but in 1897 it was added to Turkestan.³⁷

The conquest of Central Asia, unlike the conquest of the Caucasus, did not present Russia with any particularly serious military problems. It has been estimated that a total of one thousand Russian soldiers died, while the casualties of their opponents were immeasurably higher.³⁸ Sparsely settled, poorly armed, and politically divided peoples in Central Asia had no chance in their resistance to the invasion of the superior Russian army, with its modern firearms and artillery, advanced military doctrine, and significant results of the military reform.³⁹ The local rulers dramatically underestimated Russian's military superiority and made no serious attempt to join forces for resistance.⁴⁰ The conquest enhanced the imperial prestige of Russia and confirmed its position as a major colonial power. It also attracted, inspired, and repulsed a number of Russian intellectuals and artists, including Nikolai Karazin.

NIKOLAI KARAZIN'S BIOGRAPHY

Nikolai Karazin and his work were shaped by the society he was a part of, because "authors are... very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history and their social experience in different measures."⁴¹ Karazin's family background significantly affected his future education, interests, and values. He was born into a prominent gentry family, whose Greek founders named Karaji had moved to Russia from Bulgaria during the time of Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725).⁴² His grandfather Vasilii Nazarovich Karazin (1773–1842) was a famous intellectual of his time, the founder of the Khar'kov university still named after him. A proponent of the role of enlightened public opinion in political life and of public education, he also initiated the founding of the Ministry for Public

³⁷ Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, 197.

³⁸ Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, 196.

³⁹ Marshall, *The Russian General Staff*, 4, 61.

⁴⁰ Bregel, "The Russian conquest."

⁴¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xxii.

⁴² "Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh liudei. V. N. Karazin (Osnovatel' Khar'kovskogo Universiteta). Ego zhizn' i obshchestvennaia deiatel'nost'," biographical essay by Ia. V. Abramova, St. Petersburg, 1891, Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts [Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva (RGALI)].

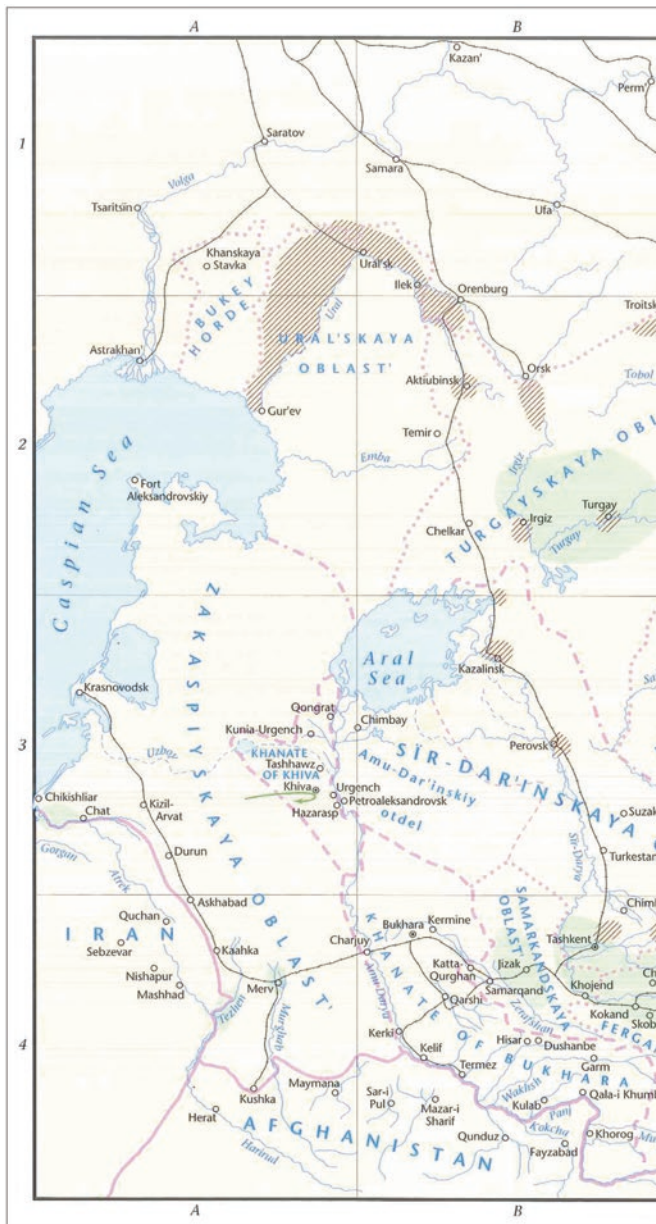


Image 2.1 “The end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries: Western Turkestan under Russian Rule.” Yuri Bregel, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 91. Reproduced with permission from Nataliya Bregel.

