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Table of Contents

The Sumerian Religious Worldview: Subservience, Reciprocity, Sacred Space and Elite Expectations in Sumer	2
Amanda Iliadis	
Repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece	17
Danika Moir	
Encounters: The Silk Road and the Spread of Disease	28
Olivia Escribano	
How the British Empire Altered the Flora and Fauna of New Zealand	36
Terry McBurnie	
The Ideological Dynamics Between Major Powers in the Asia-Pacific Region, through Paul Robeson and the Mass Singing Movement	50
Chelsea Giannico	
Between the Steppe and the Sown: Rethinking Bukharan Urban History, 1800-1884	59
Jason Marlatt	
Editorial Board	110

The Sumerian Religious Worldview: Subservience, Reciprocity, Sacred Space and Elite Expectations in Sumer

Amanda Iliadis

Religious ideologies seem to have been foremost in the minds of early cultures living in the ancient Near East, playing the central role in their daily lives. One such Near Eastern culture was that of the Sumerians, inhabitants of Sumer in southern Mesopotamia. The Sumerians exhibited early religion in its most extravagant form, creating a dynamic religious culture. Their religious ideology is made most clear in the reading of *Enki and Ninmah*, a tale which details the creation of humankind, and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Visually, the religious worldview of the Sumerians is exhibited in the Warka Vase of the Late Uruk period (3500-3100 BCE)¹ and the Standard of Ur found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur (c. 2500 BCE).² Through an analysis of these literary and artistic mediums, it becomes evident that the Sumerian religious worldview demonstrated prominent ideas of subservience, reciprocity, sacred space, and elite expectations, which remained nearly static with cultural progression.

Through both literary and artistic media, the Sumerians of the ancient Near East demonstrated that subservience to the gods was the essence of their religious worldview. Beginning with the tale of *Enki and Ninmah*, it is clear that human beings were created for the sole purpose of serving the gods who had dominion over them. Early in the tale, Nammu (the primeval mother goddess) urges Enki to create something as a replacement of the gods who are

¹ Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000-323 BCE*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 28-29.

² The Standard of Ur: *The British Museum*, accessed March 26, 2017, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_imagegallery.aspx?assetId=12550001&objectId=368264&partId=1.

toiling on the earth.³ Not only are the humans destined to work on the earth in place of the gods, they also work *for* them by giving the gods their freedom. Further, subservience is coupled with the notion of fate. For example, the senior gods praised Enki as “the one who has the *me* of deciding destinies” and then claim that Enki is the *me*.⁴ The *me* refers to universal order, essentially, the fundamental laws of the universe that society should emanate for the proper functioning of the entire cosmos.⁵ Ninmah also claimed that a human can be either good or bad, but using her own will, she decides everyone's fate.⁶ Therefore, it is clear that human subservience to the gods is synonymous with the fate that humans would expect to experience by the will of the gods.

The idea of subservience is also observable in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a literary composition that reveals the role of the Sumerian king and priestesses in appeasing the gods. According to the Sumerian King List, Gilgamesh was the fifth ruler in the first dynasty of Uruk, and therefore, cannot only be regarded as a literary character, but a historical personage that emanates religious ideas.⁷ Being a ruler, or Lord (*en*), in Uruk means that Gilgamesh would have followed through with the same ritual cosmic marriage to the goddess Inanna that all rulers would perform in order to sustain a fertile city.⁸ This is one way that Gilgamesh would have done his duty to appease the gods, especially being that Inanna was the patron goddess of Uruk. Another

³ Jeremy Black, Graham Cunningham, Esther Fluckiger-Hawker, Eleanor Robson, Gabor Zólyomi, Enki and Ninmah Translation: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/>), Oxford 1998.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jeremy, Black, “Ancient Mesopotamia” in *Mythology: The Illustrated Anthology of World Myth and Storytelling 2002*, ed. C. Scott Littleton, (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2002), 97.

⁶ Enki and Ninmah Translation: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/>), Oxford 1998.

⁷ Black, “Ancient Mesopotamia”, 117.

⁸ Ibid., 127.

interesting observation is that, when the Divine Assembly met to discuss the fate of Gilgamesh and Enkidu because they had offended the gods with their “heroic” acts of slaughter, it is clear that challenging the divine order leads to punishment regardless of your social class.⁹ This is important as it suggests that appeasing the gods, or being subservient, is equated with the fate and fortune that one receives from the gods throughout their lifetime, as well as the length of their life. The connection between subservience and fate is as prevalent here as it is in the tale of the creation of humankind.

The Warka (Uruk) Vase offers another snapshot into the religious worldview of the Sumerians, this time, through artistic expression. The vase depicts the plentiful crops, sheep and goats of Uruk (bottom register), a procession of the people of Uruk carrying their produce in bowls and vessels (middle register), and the region's produce being offered by the *En* to the patron goddess Inanna for the Eanna Temple (top register).¹⁰ This vase can be read as a narrative, a processional offering to Inanna, the patron goddess of Uruk. The elaborate offering of the region's produce to Inanna emphasizes the importance of “offering” in the religious worldview of the Sumerians. Offering the best of their agricultural resources and animals on a regular basis demonstrates tremendous loyalty, appreciation and subservience towards the gods. The goods, of course, will be stored in the Eanna Temple by the Priests to be redistributed to the entire community.¹¹ Therefore, the people providing the offering and partaking in this ritual of subservience will, in return, receive good fortune themselves. Once again, the

⁹ Stephen Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, translated by Stephen Mitchell, (New York: Atria Paperback, 2004), 141.

¹⁰ Strommenger, Eva: *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien*, Munchen: Hirmer Verlag figs. 19-22, Lost Treasures from Iraq- Objects: *Oriental Institute*, last modified April 14, 2008, <https://oi-archive.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/dbfiles/objects/14.html>.

¹¹ Van De Mierop, 28.

relationship between subservience and fate has been made evident in the Sumerian worldview.

Like the Warka Vase, the Standard of Ur also provides this analysis with a similar, but slightly modified, religious worldview of the Sumerians. This Standard adds a new spin to the previous religious view demonstrated in Uruk. Although the Standard does not exhibit anything inherently religious to the fore, traditional depictions of agricultural resources and animals still dominate and fit with the Sumerian theme, presented on the “Peace Side” of the Standard.¹² Standing in contrast to the Warka Vase, however, is the variety of luxury materials used and the great effort put into the construction of this artifact, undoubtedly for the speculation by an intended audience. The luxury materials used in the construction of the standard include; lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone, all of which are set in bitumen as a mosaic.¹³ The real question becomes: who was the intended audience of this artifact, and why? Found in Tomb 1237 at the Royal Cemetery of Ur, it is already clear that this trapezoid box of unknown purpose was placed in the tomb of an elite, probably as a commemoration of their militant victory or the abundance of the region.¹⁴ At the time of its creation, the luxurious artifact was probably housed in the King's palace, so all who entered could behold his victory (“War Side”) and see how he was celebrated by the people of Ur (“Peace Side”). Most notable are the mysterious triangular end panels of the Standard which depict fantastical images of rams, bulls, felines, and rosette and vegetal motifs.¹⁵ The bull motif is especially important as it indicates masculinity, power, and

¹² The Standard of Ur: *The British Museum*, accessed March 26, 2017.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Jean Li, “The Royal Cemetery at Ur: Elite Culture in the Early Dynastic Period” (lecture, Cradle of Civilization- Ancient Near East history course, Ryerson University, Toronto, CAN, January 30-31, 2017).

¹⁵ The Standard of Ur: *The British Museum*, accessed March 26, 2017.

strength.¹⁶ The bulls in the Standard, however, are also visually identical to the mysterious bull-man figure (human above the waist and taurine below) of the Uruk period, symbolizing magical powers and often linked to the storm god Ishkur and the “Bull of Heaven” in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.¹⁷ These depictions of divinity and agricultural prosperity indicate the use of a Sumerian religious tradition that began a millennium prior to the creation of the Standard, and thus, a continuation of a religious worldview, albeit, shifted from the main focus.

Synonymous with the idea of subservience in the Sumerian religious worldview, was the added notion of reciprocity, first exhibited in the tale of *Enki and Ninmah*. First, it is necessary to draw a parallel between the higher gods (Anunnaku/i) and lower gods (Igigi) before a further correlation can be made about the relation between gods and humans.¹⁸ The Anunnaku forced the Igigi into endless labor on the earth, specifically to dig the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for drainage while the Anunnaku revelled in the comforts that gods traditionally enjoy.¹⁹ This parallel is significant because it demonstrates that the concept of subservience was existent even before the inception of human beings among the gods themselves, but that reciprocity was not yet present. Hence, a revolt began among the Igigi towards the Anunnaku because they were being treated unfairly; the lower gods craved freedom, or at least reciprocity for their toil.²⁰ Interesting is that although the higher gods created human beings to relieve the lower gods from toil, humans were in a similar relationship with the gods, save the improvement of reciprocity. It is evident

¹⁶ Black, “Ancient Mesopotamia”, 131.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 109.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Enki and Ninmah Translation: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/>), Oxford 1998-

that the importance of reciprocity in Sumer was founded in the idea of having an element of exchange between a higher and lower power in order to maintain compliance and functionality.

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the concept of reciprocity is present in many ways, but requires deep investigation to find. One example of reciprocity comes in the form of sexual gratification. The poet (unknown) describes how the priestesses of Ishtar would happily provide men with sexual pleasures on behalf of the goddess.²¹ It can be interpreted that the sexual duties of the priestesses appease the gods, which really just pleases the men of Uruk, and in turn, provides a more joyful and “civilized” city. Further, the recount of the flood story by Utnapishtim divulges an interesting addition to the Sumerian concept of reciprocity. Utnapishtim describes that Enlil granted him immortality after the gods found out that he had overheard Ea divulging the flood plan.²² Unfortunately, the exact reason for this gift of immortality is not addressed in the *Epic*, but it can be gathered that Enlil wanted to commemorate Utnapishtim for being able to “hear” the gods. In other words, Utnapishtim was so loyal and subservient to the gods that he was able to understand and communicate with them, which is why he was the only one who overheard their secret plan to send the flood. Therefore, Enlil's gift of immortality is a reciprocation for Utnapishtim's unwavering loyalty to the gods. It is evident that the *Epic* provides accounts of reciprocity between humans and the gods in various ways.

Contrary to *Gilgamesh*, the Warka Vase provides a very clear concept of reciprocity in the Sumerian religious worldview. Not only is this vase the first visual representation of concertized ritual, it is also a direct gateway into

²¹ Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, 14.

²² *Ibid.*, 190-191.

the cyclical practice of reciprocity for the Sumerian culture.²³ As noted previously, the people of Uruk are providing offerings of their land's produce and goods to the temple of their patron goddess Inanna.²⁴ Found in the Eanna Temple Precinct at Uruk and depicting a processional offering to the Temple, this vase presents the very role of the Eanna Temple as a place in which offered goods are stored for redistribution.²⁵ This reciprocal relationship between humans and the gods was a system that worked well for all in the community because both parties received something plentiful. Further, the concept of human subservience, and therefore, *me*, was also maintained.

Likewise, the Standard of Ur provides an account of Sumerian religious reciprocity, albeit presented ambiguously. It can be suggested that the double sided narrative itself accounts for the reciprocation. On the “War Side,” the Sumerians have defeated their enemy, trampling and conquering the opposition.²⁶ On the “Peace Side,” the Sumerians enjoy the luxury of their victory with a celebratory banquet in which they proceed with the goods they have won from the opposition.²⁷ This entire process of victory followed by celebration reveals that, with the help of the gods and their semi-divine king, the people of Ur have triumphed over the other and in turn, have been given new resources. It can be deduced that divine aid was acquired by investigating the end panels that depict bull motifs, a clear symbol of divinity and power.²⁸ The Standard of Ur provides an idea of reciprocity for the Sumerians living in

²³ Beate Pongratz-Leisten, “Mesopotamia” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions 2013*, ed. Barbetta Stanley Spaeth, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 35.

²⁴ Van De Mierop, 29.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶ Eva Strommenger: *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien*, Munchen: Hirmer Verlag figs. 19-22, Lost Treasures from Iraq- Objects: *Oriental Institute*, last modified April 14, 2008.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Black, “Ancient Mesopotamia”, 131.

Ur, in a somewhat new way from previous depictions, while still maintaining traditional messages.

The Sumerian religious worldview also incorporated the very essential notion of sacred space. The tale of *Enki and Ninmah* provides the first indication of sacred space, in the form of landscape. The minor gods were bearing their toil on the earth, specifically, “digging the canals...piling up silt in Harali...[and] dredging the clay”.²⁹ From this backdrop, it is already clear that the earth, water and clay (which is also sacred in human creation) are all important aspects of early sacred space. The necessity of water and irrigation seems to be foremost in the Sumerian worldview as it was vital for the flourishing of agriculture, and thus, livelihood.³⁰ Further, the watery domain was the abode of the god Enki, a god that had a close relationship with humanity, created all the waters and made earth fertile.³¹ *Enki and Ninmah* is an early example of the space that was sacred to the Sumerians, the fertile landscape in which they lived.

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the idea of sacred space is centered on the Temples of Uruk. In the Prologue of the *Epic*, the poet asks the readers to “climb the stone staircase, more ancient than the mind can imagine” and “approach the Eanna Temple, sacred to Ishtar...that no king has equaled in size or beauty”.³² If read carefully, it is clear that the poet described a Ziggurat when they mentioned the stone staircase that leads to a temple. Also emphasized is the extreme sacredness of Ishtar's (Inanna's) Temple in Uruk and the unparalleled magnificence it holds, especially when compared to previously built temples. When one reads the opening of the *Epic*, it suggests

²⁹ Enki and Ninmah Translation: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/>), Oxford 1998-

³⁰ Black, “Ancient Mesopotamia”, 91.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

³² Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, 69.

a majesty and grandeur through discussion of the sacredness of the temple, leading readers into the worldview of the Sumerians. Likewise, Shamhat, the Temple Priestess of Uruk that was sent to “civilize” Enkidu, tells Enkidu of the holy temple of Anu and Ishtar before even mentioning Gilgamesh.³³ To a Priestess, the temple would be extremely important and sacred, if not the most meaningful and significant place in the city (and the outside world). Finally, at the end of the *Epic*, the readers are told that Gilgamesh “brought back the ancient rights, restored the temples that the flood had destroyed, renewing the statutes and sacraments for the welfare of the people and the sacred land”.³⁴ This passage details the importance of sacred space (temples and land) and activities (ancient rites and sacraments) at Uruk for the Sumerians.

Similar to *Gilgamesh*, the Warka Vase also exhibits an overt concept of sacred space. Although the reliefs on the vase are spatially organized into registers, it is clear that the ritual action being performed for the goddess Inanna is dedicated to the cult of her temple. The artifact was found in the Eanna Temple Precinct (which includes Inanna's Temple), further concertizing the fact that the vase holds sacred significance and depicts the events of a dedication towards Inanna.³⁵ It is evident that this building (Inanna's Temple) served a function for society beyond prayer and ritual; it was a storage base for the collection of resources of Uruk to be redistributed to all people in the city.³⁶ Furthermore, the ritual itself is reflective of the sacred time honored by the Sumerian culture, coupled with the physical sacred space of the temple. The Sumerians followed a cultic calendar in which

³³ James B. Pritchard, “Near Eastern Civilizations: The Epic of Gilgamesh” in *Readings in Ancient History: Thought and Experience from Gilgamesh to St. Augustine*, 4-11, 7th ed. (Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 1969), 6.

³⁴ Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, 62.

³⁵ Van De Mierop, 28.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

monthly festivals and rituals would occur in honor of their god(dess).³⁷ The space in which the actions were performed or dedicated were immensely important because a sacred space epitomized a cultural identity; one identity was that of the god(dess), the other, the Sumerian people themselves. Temples as sacred spaces were so vital in Sumerian religion, that often, an architectural plan of the temple would be made either in response to a dream message provided by the god, or to be approved by the god before construction or reconstruction.³⁸ The Warka Vase demonstrates the concept of the temple as a prominent sacred space in the Sumerian religious worldview.

The Standard of Ur demonstrates a somewhat convoluted depiction of what sacred space meant to the Sumerians living in Ur. It can be suggested that instead of depicting sacred space as a temple, ziggurat, or other indoor sanctioned area, the Standard exhibits nature as a sacred entity. The animal depictions and vegetal motifs on the end panels seem fairly out of place at first, especially since the artifact is focused on a military victory and banquet. However, the natural images exhibit the religious element otherwise omitted from the artifact, since nature is one way to depict sacred space for the agriculturally-centered Sumerians.³⁹ One popular motif depicted is that of the “ram in the thicket,” a natural motif of a ram standing on its hind legs among an entwining tree or bush, often representing the fertility of the land.⁴⁰ Although the patron god of Ur was Nanna (moon god), there could still be a possible connection between the “ram in the thicket” motif and the god Enki (god of fertility, earth and humanity) since he was part of the sovereign triumvirate of Sumerian gods. The bulls depicted on the end panels also indicate sacred space in terms of natural elements and religious significance.

³⁷ Beate Pongratz-Leisten, “Mesopotamia”, 42.

³⁸ Ibid., 43.

³⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁰ The Standard of Ur: *The British Museum*, accessed March 26, 2017.

The Standard of Ur demonstrates nature as sacred space, although earlier depictions portray nature as an addition to the sacred landscape rather than the immediate focus.

The story of *Enki and Ninmah* demonstrates the pious qualities and roles expected of the ruling class of Sumerian society. In the tale, Enki embodies the concept of *me*, the universal order that governs all things and decides destinies.⁴¹ Being that the mortal world is meant to reflect the immortal world, it is understandable that the godly quality of *me* is also expected to be maintained among the highest order of human beings, kings.⁴² Further, the story was probably originally a product of oral tradition as all ancient tales were before they were transcribed. Therefore, in the beginning, it would have been accessible to everyone in society through the passing of oral messages, enforcing ideals of godly treatment and pious action. The tale of *Enki and Ninmah* depicts the concept of *me* as something that should be emanated and maintained by kings, a religious expectation of the ruling class.

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a similar, but more elaborate representation of elite expectations is relayed. In the *Epic* it is obvious that there is no separation between the divine and secular; King Gilgamesh himself is two-thirds divine and one third human (semi-divine). Further, on several occasions, Gilgamesh demonstrates that being like a god is desirable and even envied. For example, Gilgamesh believes that death makes him vulnerable, while the gods have the capability of immortality; he must lower himself before the idea that the gods are greater than him.⁴³ Later on, Gilgamesh seeks the gift of immortality for himself, still believing that there must be a way for him to

⁴¹ Enki and Ninmah Translation: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/>), Oxford 1998-

⁴² Beate Pongratz-Leisten, "Mesopotamia", 44.

⁴³ Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, 47.

overcome death or perhaps be granted immortality by the gods themselves.⁴⁴ However, kings are not the only individuals of the ruling class that are discussed in the *Epic*; the role of priestesses are also examined at length. The translator of the text comments that for the priestesses, devotion to their goddess Inanna at Uruk would have been the center of their lives; they would also have been highly respected by all in the city.⁴⁵ In addition, the *Epic* notes that the priestesses give their bodies to any man in honor of the goddess Ishtar.⁴⁶ The role of the Priestess in Sumerian society is, therefore, necessary for the functioning of the entire religious system; through their loyalty to the goddess Inanna, they provided everyone with joy and spread piety. Both the categories of the ruling class are expected to depict and perform certain religious qualities and roles within their Sumerian society.

Likewise, the Warka Vase depicts the religious roles of various members of the ruling class of Sumerian society. The top register portrays both the ruler (*en*), and possibly a high priest passing on the region's produce to Inanna herself.⁴⁷ It is clear that the ruler's role is to present the produce of Uruk to the goddess, while accompanied by a naked man who is probably a high priest.⁴⁸ It is odd that a high priest would be depicted naked, however, it is highly improbable that a man of non-elite status would be directly delivering the goods to Inanna, especially placed in front of the ruler. Nevertheless, both the ruler and probable high priest are not only providing to the goddess with dedicatory offerings, they are responsible for the redistribution of goods for the entire society, acting as providers on behalf of the city and gods. The

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, 55.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁷ Van De Mierop, 29.

⁴⁸ Eva Strommenger: *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien*, Munchen: Hirmer Verlag figs. 19-22, Lost Treasures from Iraq- Objects: *Oriental Institute*, last modified April 14, 2008.

middle register depicts the non-elite of society, suggesting that the role of non-elites was to simply be responsive to the religious ritual action, a responsibility that omits any administrative power. Regardless of their lack of religious power, the non-elites of Uruk are still a necessary component of the system, which without, the religious worldview could not be fulfilled.

The Standard of Ur presents a similar message of the king as the previous mediums, but is more ambiguous. On both the “War” and “Peace” sides, the Lugal is depicted larger than all the other figures.⁴⁹ On the “War Side,” the Lugal is being presented with booty in the form of war captives, presenting him as a victorious ruler. All eyes are centered on the Lugal, and he is placed almost at the center of the top register. Therefore, he is viewed as the most important figure of the Standard, even above the victorious soldiers. On the “Peace Side,” the Lugal is placed on the left hand side of the top register wearing his traditional attire (skirt of leaves), and once again, massive in size if he were to stand up from his chair.⁵⁰ Interestingly, there are other figures seated on chairs, but their skirts are not as elaborate and they are not as tall as the Lugal; the difference between them is easily spotted, and they are probably palace attendants or priests. It is evident that, even in later Sumerian tradition, the king is still viewed as the dominant, religiously prominent, victorious figure in the Sumerian mindset.

The Sumerian culture observed their world predominantly in terms of religion. For the Sumerians, the ideas of subservience, reciprocity, sacred space and elite expectations were demonstrated in their religious worldview. These concepts were transmitted across literary and artistic mediums to exhibit their worldview and present the role that religion played in their lives. Through the related concepts of subservience and reciprocity, it is clear that every

⁴⁹ The Standard of Ur: The British Museum, accessed March 26, 2017.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

individual in Uruk and Ur had their own duties to perform as part of a cyclical system of dedication to the gods and redistribution of goods to the city. In this way, all benefited from the loyalty and piety they expressed towards the gods; human action decided their fate. Sacred space can be represented in numerous ways: the natural and observable world, temples and ziggurats. This analysis reveals all three locations for sacred worship and ritual action, depicting the divine and social roles of nature and buildings for the Sumerians. Lastly, the expectations of the elite to emanate certain religious qualities and actions is exhibited across the mediums as a necessity; being god-like and maintaining order and prosperity for one's city was the goal of any pious ruler. The Sumerian religious tradition set the template for future ancient Near Eastern cultures to follow and was respected as cultures progressed and evolved.

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Repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece

Danika Moir

The Parthenon Marbles have been a long contested topic in the academic and international community, in regards to who the true protectors and owners should be; Greece or Britain. Ultimately, the Marbles should be returned to their true home in Greece. The argument against repatriation poised by those in favour of the British is weak and ultimately ignores the true problems surrounding the issue in its entirety. Several arguments encompass this topic, but two of the more intriguing arguments on this issue have to do with the legality and ethics of Lord Elgin's actions in taking the Marbles, as well as the component of cultural and world heritage. In taking the Marbles from their place on the Parthenon, Elgin exceeded the power that had been given to him in the original firman granting him access to the site, and though the firman was changed several times, ethically his actions were wrong. The position that defends the British on the basis of the length of time they've been in possession of the Marbles in question is also contentious. Taking into consideration how long the British have been promising the return of the Marbles to Greece, and the amount of time Greece has spent fighting to reclaim the Marbles, this claim to ownership on the part of the British is unreasonable. Britain then calls upon the argument of cultural internationalism as a cover for the fact that they have stripped the Marbles of their original context, and imposed their own meaning onto them. To give them back to Greece would be to surrender Britain's ownership, connection to Ancient Greece, and the power of the British Empire that the Marbles portray to the world.

Arguments can be made against Greece in their legal case regarding the return of the Parthenon Marbles; there is no doubt about that. Due to the

significance and the size of the collection that the British Museum possesses, however the case of the Parthenon Marbles is a unique one and should be treated as such. What could be considered as ‘common’ laws that have previously been applied to other cases of repatriation cannot quite be lent to this case due to the circumstances under which the Marbles came under the possession of the British government.

This case needs to be reviewed differently because of the sheer amount of Marbles that were stolen from the Parthenon, and then sold to the British Government by Lord Elgin. Of the five hundred and twenty-four feet of the Parthenon’s main inner chamber, Elgin took about two hundred and forty-seven feet of the whole frieze, as well as seventeen pedimental figures and fifteen of the ninety-two four-by-four metopes.¹

A considerable component of the British argument in terms of the legality of the possession of the Marbles is the firman, which Elgin was given in the nineteenth century, while Greece was under Ottoman rule. According to Merryman, the firman permitted Elgin;

1. to enter freely within the walls of the Citadel, and to draw and model with plaster the Ancient Temples there;
2. to erect scaffolding and to dig where they may wish to discover the ancient foundations;
3. liberty to take away any sculptures or inscriptions which do not interfere with the works or walls of the citadel.²

Elgin was given permission by the local government to enter the site, but since the firman was ratified a few times, there was potentially a case of bribery that

1 John Merryman. “Thinking About the Elgin Marbles,” *Michigan Law Review* 83, no. 8 (1985):1884.

2 *Ibid.*, 1898.

allowed Elgin to stray far from the original firman.³ The language used in the firman that Elgin was given is also up for interpretation. It does not explicitly say that he can take any pieces, but it also does not explicitly prohibit him. The translation states that Elgin should be given no opposition in making pictures and models of what he and his team wished to copy and that they are permitted to excavate the foundations to find writing.⁴ Nothing in the firman actually discusses the transfer of possession of major pieces of the Parthenon from the Ottomans, who then controlled Greece, to Elgin. Though the firman does state that the team should not be hindered from “taking away any pieces of stone with inscriptions and figures”, the context in which it was written suggests that this was intended to refer to anything that had already fallen off of the Parthenon.⁵ By physically sawing off large pieces of the frieze, Elgin exceeded the authority that had originally been given to him in the initial firman, regardless of whether or not he had permission to take anything to begin with. According to Merryman, the firman stated that Elgin only had the permission to take away inscriptions and sculptures that didn’t at all interfere with the walls, architecture, and other works.⁶ By sawing the pieces off of the Parthenon and then sawing the backs off to make the pieces lighter, he not only compromised the architecture, but he also did a great amount of damage to the works in question.⁷ The legality of the firman is not as black and white as politicians and historians would like it to be, however in combination with ethics of ownership, the scale should lean towards the favour of the Greeks.

³ Merryman. “Thinking About the Elgin Marbles,” 1901.

⁴ Ibid., 1898.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Andromache Gazi. “Museums and National Cultural Property II. The Parthenon Marbles,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 9, no.3 (1990): 243.

One could also argue that because the British have been in possession of the Marbles for so long, they legally belong to the British. Although to say this is to ignore the multiple attempts that the Greek government has made to try to get the Marbles back or the times their return has been promised. For example, because Greece was under Ottoman control at the time the Marbles were taken, the British government promised that they would return the Marbles after the Greeks gained independence.⁸ Once Greece gained their independence, the Marbles were not returned. A bill was then presented to the British Museum in 1893 that enabled the trustees to return the Marbles back to Greece, and it was defeated. In the 1940's, the Marbles were promised back to Greece as compensation for their wartime losses, but they were later told that the time was not 'appropriate' to make a decision like that.⁹ In 1975, Greece asked for the Marbles back so they could recreate and restore the site to its original glory, at least to the extent in their power.¹⁰ Greece then submitted the issue to UNESCO in 1983 as their first formal request for the return of the Marbles and did not receive a response from the British government until April 1984.¹¹ In September 1984, a second formal request was made, and there was no reply until October 1985.¹² In the 2010's, Greece asked UNESCO to act as a mediator between the two countries in order for the one-sided negotiations to become an actual conversation, but it once again took the British government nineteen months to reply. In their letter sent in March 2015, they said;

We have seen nothing to suggest that Greece's purpose in seeking

⁸ Irini Stamatoudi. "Alternative Dispute Resolution and Insights on Cases of Greek Cultural Property: The J.P. Getty Case, the Leon Levy and Shelby White Case, and the Parthenon Marbles Case" *International Journal of Cultural Property* 23 (2016): 448.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gazi, "Museums and National Cultural Property II": 245.

¹² Ibid.

mediation on this issue is anything other than to achieve the permanent transfer of the Parthenon sculptures now in the British Museum to Greece and on terms that would deny the British Museum's right of ownership, either in law or as a practical reality. Given our equally clear position, this leads us to conclude that mediation would not carry this debate substantially forward.¹³

The response of the British government to an attempt at negotiations could render this argument in favour of the British as invalid because there have been several attempts to reclaim the Marbles. Every effort from Greece was rejected and every promise the British Government made to them was broken. This once again brings up the question of ethics. The Greeks had been promised on multiple occasions that the Marbles would be returned to them, so why during that time would they attempt to legally get them back if they thought that the British were being genuine? If it were to be argued that the amount of time the Marbles have resided in Britain is significant to their legal defense, then the hundred or so years that the Greeks were promised the Marbles should be subtracted from that time. If that were to happen and the time span in which the Greeks were attempting to have negotiations was the only timespan considered then the British argument would be weakened considerably.

Another significant argument surrounding the repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles largely corresponds to their cultural value. The British claim that this is an issue of world culture and the Marbles do not belong to any specific group, but to the entire world. If the Marbles are indeed a significant part of world culture, then why does it matter where they reside, as long as they are safe and intact? Would it not make more sense for the Marbles

¹³ Stamatoudi, "Alternative Dispute Resolution": 449.

to be held in their original context where they can be fully appreciated for their value in their natural setting?

John Merryman suggests that preservation, integrity and access are the three principles that define cultural internationalism.¹⁴ By using these principles, a theoretical scale can be made to decide whether or not the cultural object(s) should go back to their country of origin, or if they should stay in the country where they currently reside.¹⁵ Banteka points out that the preservation aspect on the scale is what countries use as justification for the removal of the cultural object.¹⁶ This is an argument that has been regularly used by the British and the British sympathizers; the idea that the Greek government historically and presently would be unable to adequately care for the Marbles. In the past two centuries, this argument could have been considered true. However, in the more recent decades Greek preservation methods have been improved and the Acropolis museum has been built with all the technology necessary to preserve the Marbles should the remaining pieces be placed back into their care.¹⁷ The integrity of cultural internationalism lends advocacy to returning the artifact in order to strengthen the original monument that it was attached to.¹⁸ By having the Parthenon Marbles placed in the Acropolis Museum, the monument as a whole would be strengthened in aesthetic and intellectual understanding. Although the original structure of the Parthenon is so damaged that it cannot be reconstructed on the original site, the Acropolis museum has a room where the pieces can be perceived in their original context.

¹⁴ Nadia Banteka. "The Parthenon Marbles Revisited: A New Strategy for Greece," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* 37, no. 4 (2016): 1255.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Jo Angouri, Marina Paraskevaidi, Ruth Wodak. "Discourses of cultural heritage in times of crisis: The case of the Parthenon Marbles," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 21, no. 2 (2017): 215.

¹⁸ Banteka, "The Parthenon Marbles Revisited": 1255.

The lighting that is cast on the Marbles resembles the natural lighting in which they would have been originally viewed and it is also set in the same order as it was on the Parthenon. Although the British display is quite beautiful, the placement and lighting takes away from the original appreciation of the Marbles and distorts the intended view and understanding.¹⁹ Access is the third principle and fairly suggests that culture should be accessible to all people.²⁰ It can be argued that Britain would have a deficit of culture if the Marbles were returned to Greece. One could also argued that as long as they have other displays of Greek art that is equally as powerful there really is no deficit at all.²¹ If visitors are still subjected to pieces that represent the Greek Golden Age, then this argument becomes pointless.²²

The term “cultural property” was given a clear definition during the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict in 1954.²³ The definition outlines that cultural property includes “moveable and immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people,” monuments and buildings that hold cultural importance, and centers like cities that have a large amount of cultural property.²⁴ A more recent definition from the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property in 1970 defines cultural property “which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each State as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science”.²⁵ The Marbles belonged to Greece from twenty-five hundred years

¹⁹ Gazi, “Museums and National Cultural Property II”: 245.

²⁰ Banteka, “The Parthenon Marbles Revisited”: 1256.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 1234.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Banteka, “The Parthenon Marbles Revisited”: 1235.

before they were sent to Britain and therefore are a crucial part of Greece's national identity and its history.²⁶ Clearly, the Marbles hold artistic and historical value to Greece, as they once stood at the center of Western civilization. Because the Greeks have been deprived of the Marbles for so long, they wish to unite the sculptures as a whole and restore and enhance how the Marbles are interpreted by the public; not only do they show masterful art, but they depict a story of a major city in the ancient world.²⁷

Because of the Enlightenment period in Europe, a high value was placed on Greek and Roman artwork, which came to symbolize power for whichever country or governmental body that possessed the works. Britain argues that the Marbles have become an important part of their own 'cultural' and 'world' heritage, but really the British government is holding onto them because the Marbles show that the British Empire was once the most powerful in the world. At the time, sovereign nations were becoming more prominent in foreign affairs and Greek monuments had become the apple in the eyes of France and England during their eighteenth century rivalry for power.²⁸ The worldly cultural experience for most British citizens in the first half of the nineteenth century had been limited to British symbols of war and power, which were objects taken from other countries, such as the Marbles.²⁹ By acquiring antiquities from the Golden Age and consequently maintaining them for two centuries, Britain's cultural profile was exponentially enhanced.³⁰ Britain was able to claim the Marbles as signifiers of 'world culture' by denying them their origins in Greece and instilling a new meaning upon

²⁶ Angouri, Paraskevaidi, and Wodak. "Discourses of cultural heritage in times of crisis": 219.

²⁷ Ibid., 212.

²⁸ Gazi, "Museums and National Cultural Property II": 242.

²⁹ Fiona Rose-Greenland. "The Parthenon Marbles as icons of nationalism in nineteenth-century Britain" *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 4 (2013): 657.

³⁰ Ibid., 659.

them.³¹ Part of what enabled the British to do this is the lack of paint that has remained on the Marbles, either because of the passage of time, or because of purposeful removal. As Rose-Greenland puts it, “white marble can be read as white people - British white”.³² The whiteness of the Marbles gives off the idea of timelessness, which makes it easier for a nation to claim them by removing them from their original context, even though the Marbles would have originally been painted brightly.³³ Additionally, the British removed the Marbles from Greek connection by creating an aesthetic connection between British celebrities and athletes and the statues themselves. While the Marbles were being stored in Elgin’s shed fit British athletes compared themselves to the statues, which represent the power of the Gods and were able to think that they had direct connection to ancient Athens.³⁴ The main reason that the British call upon ‘cultural internationalism’ as a reason for not returning the Marbles is to cover for the fact that the Marbles now represent the British war machine and because the British would like to believe they are directly connected to the power of Ancient Greece.

It has been over two centuries since the Parthenon Marbles were stolen from Greece and put into possession of the British. Since then multiple attempts have been made by Greece to negotiate their return, but much to everyone’s disappointment, the British Museum and government are unwilling to cooperate or engage in discussions. When critically reflecting upon how Lord Elgin came into possession of the Marbles, it is clear that his actions were unethical. By removing the Marbles, he not only razed the structure of the Parthenon, but deprived Greek citizens of their culture. The

³¹ Rose-Greenland. “The Parthenon Marbles as icons of nationalism in nineteenth-century Britain” *Nations and Nationalism*, 667.

³² *Ibid.*, 666.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 665.

British then stripped the Marbles of their original context and reclaimed them as representative of British and 'world' culture, which is their argument as to why the Marbles should remain in Britain. Their defense that the Marbles are representative of world culture and that they should remain in England falls in upon itself. If the Marbles are still in existence, it should not matter where they reside as long as they are accessible to the worldwide community. To put the pieces back with the other Marbles that Greece possesses at the foot of the Acropolis in the museum would give rise to a better understanding of the monument and benefit the worldwide community more than if the Marbles were to stay in Britain. Perhaps in exchange for the Marbles that the British Museum possess, Greece could give the British Museum other artworks from the Golden Age, so that the world's 'cultural exposure' to Ancient Greece in Britain would not be depleted. Molds could be created, like originally intended and the British Museum could take possession of those and the originals could be returned to Greece. Hopefully in the years to come, a resolution can be reached so that the Parthenon Marbles can be returned to their home and the British would still be able to maintain their high standard of Greek Golden Age culture.

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Danika Moir is reaching the end of her third year of study at Ryerson University. At around ten years old she started reading the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan, which peaked her interest in Greek and Roman mythology. Consequently, that interest ended up carrying her throughout the remainder of elementary and high school, into university. Danika's fields of interest currently reside in the Ancient Classical Period and the Third Reich. Although she did try to expand into other fields like the sciences, it never caught her interest quite like history. Writing and reading are second nature to Danika, and she is looking forward to spending the rest of her life in the academic field. One day Danika hopes to be a professional historian, either teaching in universities or working for a museum, where she can continue my studies.

Encounters: The Silk Road and the Spread of Disease

Olivia Escribano

In order to fully understand human history and its development, one must recognize that said history is deeply intertwined with globalization. The development of important historical focal points such as empires, technology, and wars, are predominantly a result of this concept of connection. With the integration of cultures though, come some negative effects. One trade route, which can be accredited to much of the early globalization of Asia, is the Silk Road. This trade route was one of the most impactful historic trade routes, as it allowed for the exchange of many things including, but not limited to: goods, religion, and disease. Several illnesses are said to have travelled with the people who crossed this path. Diseases such as the Bubonic plague¹, leprosy², smallpox³, and Behçet's disease⁴ all travelled along the Silk Road and some have linkages to this trade route even today.

This trade route entails a complex system of land and water routes, which were collectively known as the Silk Road. The land portion of this far-reaching complex of ancient trade routes spanned from the Eastern Mediterranean westward towards China.^{5 6} This essay will focus mainly on

¹ Boris V. Schmid, et al. "Climate-driven introduction of the Black Death and successive plague reintroductions into Europe." *PNAS* 112, no. 10 (2015): 3024.

² Hui-Yuan Yeh, et al. "Early evidence for travel with infectious diseases along the silk road: Intestinal parasite from 2000 year-old personal hygiene sticks in a latrine at Xuanquazhi Relay Station in China." *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 9, (2016): 758.

³ John Green "The Silk Road and Ancient Trade: Crash Course World History #9," Youtube video, 10:30, posted by "CrashCourse," March 22, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfe-eNq-Qyg>

⁴ John Patrick Welsh, et al. "Mystery of the Silk Road." *The American Journal of Medicine* 120, no. 4 (2007) : 322-324.

⁵ John Green "The Silk Road and Ancient Trade"

⁶ Patricia B. Ebrey, and Anne Walthall *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* 3rd ed. (Wadsworth, 2006), 52.

the land aspects of this route. Its origins can be traced back to the Chinese period of Han Dynasty rule. In the first century B.C.E, China had little connection to the outside world. At the close of the first century and into the second century, China began to slowly globalize. At the beginnings of the Silk Road, the reigning Chinese emperor was Emperor Wu.⁷ Wu sent out Zhang Qian, a delegate of his, to search for strong fighter groups whom he hoped would return to China and support the Han dynasty. Zhang was unsuccessful in his attempts to bring back strength to China and so, he was sent out once again. Despite both missions ending unsuccessfully, Zhang Qian did discover something, which would alter the future of China tremendously. As Zhang Qian, the emperor's envoy, trekked through Central Asia, he did not return with what he had set out to acquire, but he returned with information. The information he brought back to China with him was that of the Silk Road.⁸ In subsequent years, a Han general was leading an expedition across the Pamir Mountains. In this show of strength, the Han Dynasty was able to gain unofficial jurisdiction over the Silk Road.⁹ The traders who passed through this trade route were typically Sogdian, Indian, and Parthian peoples. These merchants allowed for Chinese authority along the Silk Road.¹⁰ Those who travelled the trade route, because the presence of the Chinese allowed for safer passage, supported it. According to Verity et al, The Silk Road was so secure that “A maiden bearing a nugget of gold could safely wander the realm.”¹¹ Thus, via the Silk Road trade route system, China was able to gain access to the outside world.

⁷ Ebrey, and Walthall *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*, 52.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ D. H. Verity, et al. “Behçet’s disease, the Silk Road and HLA-B51: historical and geographical perspectives.” *Tissue Antigens* 54, (1999) : 214.

The Silk Road offered more than just the benefits of outside information and the exchange of goods. It also allowed for the vast spread of disease. In early globalization, the spread of disease was rampant with trade. This was as a result of foreign illnesses being carried into unprepared civilizations. These foreign diseases typically would be unable to survive in foreign lands, as they generally require a certain environment to develop.¹² During the time of the Silk Road, populations across Asia remained relatively isolated. For instance, China remained rather secluded from foreign influence until their introduction to the Silk Road.¹³ This isolation is a critical factor in understanding the spread of disease. The peoples who reside in remote, not yet globalized areas are only able to accustom themselves and develop antibodies for diseases, which are predominantly found in the region where they reside. More importantly, the spread of disease was ultimately limited to how far people could travel at the time.¹⁴ Tatem et al (2006) were able to express how the early pioneers of globalization aided in facilitating the spread of disease, in their article it states that, “until World War II, more war victims died of microbes introduced by the enemy, than of battle wounds.”¹⁵ To illustrate how disease is spread through travel and trade, it is helpful for one to consider the expansion and circulation of the Bubonic Plague as an example. The Bubonic Plague, often referred to as the “Black Death,” originated in a bacteria called *Yersinia pestis*.¹⁶ This bacterium has been discovered to have had its origins in rodents, and was spread to the human population through flea bites.¹⁷ Interestingly, this plague is said to have originated in Asia, and traveled

¹² Hui-Yuan Yeh, et al. “Early evidence for travel with infectious diseases” 758.

¹³ D. H. Verity, et al. “Behçet’s disease” 214.

¹⁴ A.J. Tatem, D.J. Rogers, and S.I. Hay “Global Transport Networks and Infectious Disease Spread” *Advances in Parasitology* 62 (2006): 294.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tatem, Rogers, and Hay “Global Transport Networks” 296.

¹⁷ Ibid.

through the Silk Road to later arrive in Europe where it would eventually decimate the population.¹⁸ The disease is said to have affected between one twentieth and two thirds of Europe's population during its spread over the years of 1361, 1371, and 1382.¹⁹ Trade and globalization were detrimental, and lead to the rise of the Black Death. The Bubonic plague was carried to the populations it would eventually effectively slaughter through infected rats travelling along trade routes. Notably, the rodents were often allowed into the populations they would infect via trading vessels. Therefore, trade and globalization were arguably the most important factors in the spread of the Bubonic plague. Furthermore, the example of the Bubonic plague allows one to better understand how trade augmented the travel of diseases and why the introduction of these diseases into vulnerable populations had such a detrimental effect.

One disease that is best known for its travels along the Silk Road is Behçet's Disease, or BD. Often referred to as "the Silk Road disease," Behçet's Disease is an incurable condition whose diagnostic criteria consists of: recurrent oral aphthae²⁰ (ulcers in or around the mouth) with at least three flares in any twelve month period, and any two of the following symptoms: recurrent genital aphthae and scarring (sores on or around genitalia), anterior uveitis (inflammation of the middle layer of the eye)²¹ or posterior uveitis (inflammation of the outer layer of the eye)²², cutaneous lesions (skin sores), or a positive pathergy test result (a test where a needle is used to puncture the skin of the subject and is tested to see if the points where they were pricked

¹⁸ Boris V. Schmid, et al. "Climate-driven introduction of the Black Death" 3020.

¹⁹ Tatem, Rogers, and Hay "Global Transport Networks" 296.

²⁰ "Aphthae" in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003. Continually updated at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

²¹ "American Optic Association." Anterior Uveitis. N.D. Accessed November 18, 2017.

²² "National Organization for Rare Disorders" Posterior Uveitis. 2005. Accessed November 18, 2017. <https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/posterior-uveitis/>

present a red bump, ulceration, or a pus filled lesion).²³ ²⁴ Behçet's Disease was named after the Turkish dermatologist Hulusi Behçet, who first recognized that the collection of symptoms may be as a result of one uniform condition.²⁵ The reason that this condition is often called the Silk Road Disease is that this malady was found significantly more often in areas where the Silk Road crossed than anywhere else.²⁶ Statistics highlight this prominence, as they state that prevalence in Turkish peoples ranges from 80 to 370 cases per 100,000 citizens. The numbers are high as Turkey is located along the trade route.²⁷ In strong contrast, the prevalence of BD in the United States ranges from as little as 0.12 to 0.33 per 100 000.²⁸ This correlation between the ancient Silk Road and prevalence of Behçet's disease along it provides substantial evidence that the Silk Road did in fact carry disease through it.

However, concrete evidence is difficult to find in regards to the widespread travel of ancient diseases. Thus, the theory that the Silk Road was the passageway, which allowed for the proliferation of many historically relevant and sometimes current day diseases, could not be epistemically proven. Rather, this concept was deduced through reasoning and logic. Recent scientific evidence however, has been discovered that supports the hypothesis that disease was carried and passed along the Silk Road. Research by Yeh et al identified intestinal parasitic evidence on 2000-year-old hygiene sticks found in a latrine, located along the historic Silk Road route. These hygiene sticks were discovered in the Xuanquanzhi relay station, an important stopping

²³ John Patrick Welsh, et al. "Mystery of the Silk Road." 322-323.

²⁴ Amanda Oakley "DermNet New Zealand." Pathergy. 2011. Accessed November 18, 2017. <https://www.dermnetnz.org/topics/pathergy/>

²⁵ John Patrick Welsh, et al. "Mystery of the Silk Road." 322.

²⁶ D. H. Verity, et al. "Behçet's disease" 215.

²⁷ John Patrick Welsh, et al. "Mystery of the Silk Road." 322.

²⁸ Ibid.

point along the Silk Road.²⁹ Historic travelers created tools by utilizing wooden sticks wrapped in cloth in order to wipe after passing feces. These tools are referred to as hygiene sticks.³⁰ There were seven of these hygienic apparatuses excavated from Xuanquanzhi³¹, and the feces remnants found on these hygiene sticks were tested. The subsequent discovery was remarkable. Once studied, researchers found several parasitic eggs within the feces. The hygiene sticks tested positive for the following: whipworm, roundworm, tapeworm, and most notably Chinese liver fluke.³² Chinese liver fluke can be spread when an infected person defecates into freshwater. In the freshwater the parasite is able to find a suitable host snail where it can develop until it is able to move on and develop further in a fish. When the fish are eaten by humans, the parasite is then able to affect humans. Through defecation, the cycle continues.³³ The revelation of the presence of Chinese liver fluke was essential to the study of this ancient trade route, as it can be considered proof of the possibility of the spread of disease via the Silk Road. This is because as previously noted, certain diseases are only able to flourish in certain environments. The Chinese liver fluke (*C. Sinensis*), is only able to develop in the marshy wetlands that are found in Southern and Central Asia.³⁴ Therefore, for the feces in the northwestern region of Xuanquanzhi to have been infected with this disease, it had to travel from the marshlands where Chinese liver fluke is endemic.³⁵ Yeh et al's discovery was located 1500 kilometers away from regions that the disease thrives in today, thus indicating

²⁹ Hui-Yuan Yeh, et al. "Early evidence for travel with infectious diseases" 759.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 761.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

the migration of this parasite through travelling people.³⁶ Therefore, the findings of Yeh et al is then, legitimate evidence which supports the suggestion that the spread of disease between eastern Asia, the Middle East, and Europe was largely via the Silk Road.³⁷

The Silk Road was one of the first connections between Eastern Asia and the West. Through this iconic trade route, Eastern Asia, more specifically China, was able to begin the exchange of ideas and goods with foreign nations. The benefits of early globalization though, were paired with the negative repercussions of the circulation of disease. While there has been meaningful discourse surrounding this idea, such as the examination of widespread diseases in history and the study of current diseases with direct correlations to this trade network. In recent years, proof has been discovered which supports the theory that the Silk Road allowed for unbridled spread of disease.

³⁶ Hui-Yuan Yeh, et al. "Early evidence for travel with infectious diseases," 762.

³⁷ Ibid., 763.

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How the British Empire Altered the Flora and Fauna of New Zealand

Terry McBurnie

Abel Tasman on the return of his voyage in 1643 told of a “Great Southern Continent,” in which there would be resources as plentiful as that of the East Indies. James Cook was sent to Tahiti in June 1769 on a scientific expedition to record the Transit of Venus, and to find the Southern Continent.¹ His ships were equipped with astronomers, botanists, and artists, and discovered the land Tasman called *Nieuw Zeeland*. Cook’s discoveries generated an interest in settling Australasia that would ultimately benefit the British Empire. The impact that the British Empire had left behind is still felt tremendously to this day in lands that were once under its domain. British settlers would, on their voyage, take belongings that were reminiscent of their mainland. This included plants and animals that were native to England, but are now found throughout the globe. New Zealand in particular is an interesting settler colony for this reason. New Zealand had a variety of native flora and fauna that were greatly impacted by the invasive species brought over from the British Empire. Captain Cook in his early accounts of New Zealand wrote of plants such as flax, rimu, and manuka that would be beneficial to the empire. This paper will discuss how the British Empire shaped the flora and fauna of New Zealand, and the effects of shifting the Maori from an agrarian lifestyle to a more commercialised way of farming.

Although New Zealand was first discovered by Tasman, it was not until the nineteenth century that serious consideration to colonise the land was made. The prospect of colonisation had been contemplated by the Netherlands,

¹ J. Holland Rose, A. P. Newton, E.A. Benians, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 22.

France, as well as the British Empire, but the fear of the native Maoris and their cannibalistic behaviour deterred many settlers from exploring the land.² Many citizens had believed Tasman that the Great Southern Continent existed because not only was little known about the Pacific Ocean, but the philosopher Ptolemy hypothesised that such a continent must be “necessary to the balance of the world.”³ Thus, the knowledge of a possible Great Southern Continent was prevalent in available literature throughout Europe.

Despite the accounts of the Maori population, there was great interest in the British Empire to establish a colony in the South Pacific. A convenient excuse to visit the lands arose when the Royal Society successfully persuaded King George III to commission a ship in order to study the Transit of Venus scheduled for June 3, 1769.⁴ Tahiti was determined to be an ideal site to observe the transit. The voyage also had a second objective to find the Great Southern Continent, or if it was unable to be found, to examine the lands discovered by Tasman.⁵ Cook’s ship was equipped with botanists Daniel Solander and the wealthy Sir Joseph Banks, who made his name for himself on Cook’s first of three great voyages. Banks paid for his entry to the voyage himself with the mission to collect botanical specimens and ethnographic information.⁶ His discoveries were so prominent that several thousand previously unknown plants, animals, and fish, were returned to England, of which “about one thousand species of plants were not previously described by any botanical author.”⁷

² Rose, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 59-61.

³ Holland Rose, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 22.

⁴ Alan Frost, "Economic Aspects of Empire." Empire Online, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.empire.amdigital.co.uk/Essays/AlanFrost>

⁵ Holland Rose, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 22.

⁶ Frost, "Economic Aspects of Empire."

⁷ Ibid.

In a further study by Cook's crew on his second voyage, it was determined that three of the most beneficial native plants that were native to New Zealand consisted of *flax*, which could be used for cordage and ship building, *rimu*, a conifer that could be used to create a spruce beer, and *manuka*, a flowering plant that could be used to make tea.⁸ Rimu was especially important to the British. A voyage to the colony of New Zealand took eight months from England, and such expeditions were prone to scurvy. The spruce beer was found to be an excellent antiscorbutic, which reduced the likelihood of scurvy plaguing a ship.⁹

The second expedition also included a range of botanists, most notably Johann Reinhold Forster, who was a teacher of Natural History in Lancashire. He was distinguished for publishing *A Catalogue of the Animals of North America* in 1771, while working on translations prior to this voyage. Forster was selected to embark on Cook's second voyage after Banks and Solander withdrew. Forster also wrote about his findings in his voyage to New Zealand, noting plants such as celery and arabis scurvy grass were present throughout the various climates of the South Sea.¹⁰ Most fascinating with Forster's book is that in his work, he accounted for a total of 330 specimens of flora and at least 550 species of fauna, which is a stark contrast to that of the findings of Solander and Banks.¹¹ Part of the discrepancy could be explained in the fact that while both Forester, Banks and Solander would have logged their findings at every leg of their journey, Forester's landings were sparser in number and included barren islands such as Easter Island. In addition, Forester's landings

⁸ Stanley G. Brooker, Richard C. Cambie, and Robert C. Cooper, "Economic Native Plants of New Zealand," *Economic Botany* 43, no. 1, (1989): 79.

⁹ Brooker, "Economic Native Plants of New Zealand," 92.

¹⁰ Johann Reinhold Forster, "Observations Made during a Voyage Round the World," in *Foundations of Biogeography: Classic Papers with Commentaries*, eds. Mark V. Lomolino, Dov F. Sax, and James H. Brown, 23-24.

¹¹ Forster, "Observations Made during a Voyage Round the World," 21, 26.

were relatively close in proximity compared to the landings of the first voyage. These numbers are significant because they highlight the natural environment of New Zealand prior to colonisation, where the ecology within New Zealand would be permanently altered.

Analysis of the plants from New Zealand were taken to the Royal Botanic Gardens, commonly referred to as Kew. Founded in 1759, Kew was a local, accessible destination in England that one could see and study the different flora that existed throughout the empire. It was through the Kew network of the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Kew Gardens that it was determined native grasses in New Zealand, specifically, the grasses found in the montane tussock grassland, would be ideal for raising sheep and cattle.¹² Unlike England, the grass found in New Zealand was rich enough to feign the use of supplementary grains to fatten the sheep and cattle.¹³ The richness of the grass was a major factor in determining how New Zealand would be used as a settlement colony.

Sheep were first brought over from England by Cook on his voyages in 1773 and 1777, but in both cases they did not become established. Instead, it was animals shipped from Australia by missionaries that helped kickstart the sheep and cattle industries.¹⁴ Between 1843 and 1844, four English missionaries shipped 1,600 sheep from Australia to New Zealand in the regions of Wairarapa, Canterbury, and Otago.¹⁵ By 1853, the sheep trade was well established. In Table 1 and Table 2, the principal exports of New Zealand are contrasted by Holland Rose, who wrote the New Zealand volume of the

¹² Brooker, "Economic Native Plants of New Zealand," 83.

¹³ N.L. Doss, *Reminiscences, English and Australasian* (Calcutta: The Herald Press, 1893), 161.

¹⁴ William Beinart, Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 94.

¹⁵ Hugh Stringleman, Robert Peden, "Sheepfarming – the Establishment Phase," *Te Ara*, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/sheep-farming/page-2>

Cambridge History of the British Empire.¹⁶ These tables represent the growing trends relating to the increase and decline of farmland and pastures as the empire saw fit for New Zealand. While wool, meat, and dairy products show steady increases as the number of sheep and cattle increase in the colony, gold and grain show more unusual patterns during these years. Gold has a highly

Table 1: *Principal Exports of New Zealand 1883 - 1923*

	1883	1893	1903	1913	1923
	£	£	£	£	£
Wool	3,014,000	3,775,000	4,041,000	3,058,000	10,905,000
Frozen meat	118,000	1,085,000	3,197,000	4,450,000	9,013,000
Butter	42,000	255,000	1,318,000	2,062,000	10,689,000
Cheese	7,000	100,000	195,000	1,770,000	6,870,000
Tallow	234,000	184,000	518,000	663,000	785,000
Gold	892,000	916,000	2,038,000	1,495,000	699,000
Grain	1,287,000	583,000	534,000	130,000	79,000

Table 2: *Principal Exports of New Zealand 1853 - 1883*

Export	1853	1863	1873	1883
	£	£	£	£
Wool	67,000	830,000	2,702,000	3,014,000
Grain	19,000	—	136,000	1,287,000
Gold	—	2,432,000	1,987,000	892,000
Kauri gum	16,000	27,000	86,000	337,000
Tallow	—	—	67,000	234,000
Timber	93,000	18,000	44,000	125,000
Rabbit skins	—	—	—	101,000

Table 3: *Rural Production in New Zealand in Five-Year Intervals*

	1896	1901	1906	1911	1916
sheep (millions)	19.1	20.2	20.1	24.0	24.8
wool exports (£ million)	4.4	3.7	6.8	6.5	12.4
meat exports (£ million)	1.3	2.3	2.9	3.5	7.3
cattle (thousands)	1,047	1,257	1,810	2,020	2,417
dairy cows (thousands)	276	372	518	634	750
pigs (thousands)	240	251	250	349	298
butter exports (£ million)	0.3	0.9	1.6	1.6	2.6
cheese exports (£ million)	0.1	0.2	0.3	1.2	3.5
wheat (thousand bushels)	6,844	6,527	6,799	8,290	7,108
wheat exports (£ million)	0.1	0.3	..	0.2	..
occupied land (million acres)	33	35.5	..	40.2	..

.. information not available

on board naval ships.

Grain on the other hand, highlights a change in importance of other items. A steady decline in grain exports from 1883 onwards is contrasted by

volatile yield per decade because there were a series of gold rushes. Gold was discovered in Otago in 1861, and Canterbury in 1865, and accelerated the development of the regions. The turn of the nineteenth century also introduced the cyanide process and the opening of the quartz reefs in Waihi.¹⁷ The exporting of frozen meat also steadily increased due to improved refrigeration practices

¹⁶ Holland Rose, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 157, 164.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

the simultaneous rise in cattle and sheep products. This grain mystery may have been solved in the works of a different historian. Donald Denoon is a Professor Emeritus at the Australian National University who has written on the economics of New Zealand. One of his works, *Settler Capitalism*, is a detailed account of colonial development in the Southern Hemisphere. Table 3 is incorporated from Denoon's book and displays that while wheat exports overall declined during the five-year intervals of time, wheat production actually increased.¹⁸ This implies that grain and wheat became a more internally used commodity. Denoon's table also agrees with Holland Rose that sheep, cattle, and dairy related exports were more necessary as imports to the British Empire. Sheep and cattle would become so prevalent as an industry in the colony that in modern times, half of the twenty-six million hectares of land in New Zealand is farmed grassland that is housed by nine million cattle, and sixty-four million sheep, a greater number than the population of the country.¹⁹ The Maori also had their own uses for the crops and animals found throughout the north and south islands. Maori natives had lived off the land for several hundred years prior to British contact, and were settled agriculturalists.²⁰ The Maori are known to have introduced sweet potato, taro, and gourd into New Zealand from their Polynesian origins.²¹ While potatoes and wheat were critical to Maori agriculture, farming also included maize, tobacco, melons, pumpkins, sow thistle, and oats.²² The placement of crops was largely

¹⁸ Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 105.

¹⁹ Brooker, "Economic Native Plants of New Zealand," 83.

²⁰ Raewyn Dalziel, "Southern Islands: New Zealand and Polynesia," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, Andrew Porter, 573.

²¹ Elsdon Best, "Maori Agriculture: Cultivated Food-Plants of the Maori and Native Methods of Agriculture," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 39, no. 156, 346.

²² R. P. Hargreaves, "Maori Agriculture after the Wars (1871-1886)," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 69, no. 4, 346.

determined by the climate and there were significant differences in which species of crops were planted between the north and south island tribes.

The Maori were also adept at using natural resources for dyes and household materials. Brooker, in his study of the native plants of New Zealand, mentions three different plants that the Maori used for dyes. Flax was a plant that could be used for dye only if its skin was broken or bruised, which enabled the Maori to effectively use flax for the fine arts. Mountain flax was a similar plant used to the same effect, and cabbage tree was used for black dyes.²³ Mangrove is a type of tree that has several, thick stems from which Maori used for making soap. Particularly of value to Maori were a family of water plants that were used for their housing. These plants were oioi, sea rush, upoko tangata, and ririwaka.²⁴ These water plants all had similar form factors that resembled thick, durable grass, and the Maori saw them as ideal for thatching material.

Knowledge of these plants and their uses became established in the British Empire when specimens were shipped to Kew. One of the first gardeners to ship these plants among others to England was John Edgerley, who delivered a shipment of these plants in 1842. Edgerley's finds were subsequently published into the *Botanical Magazine*, which directly resulted in the introduction of many native New Zealand plants to European gardens.²⁵ The *Botanical Magazine* is still actively published to this day by Kew under the name Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*.

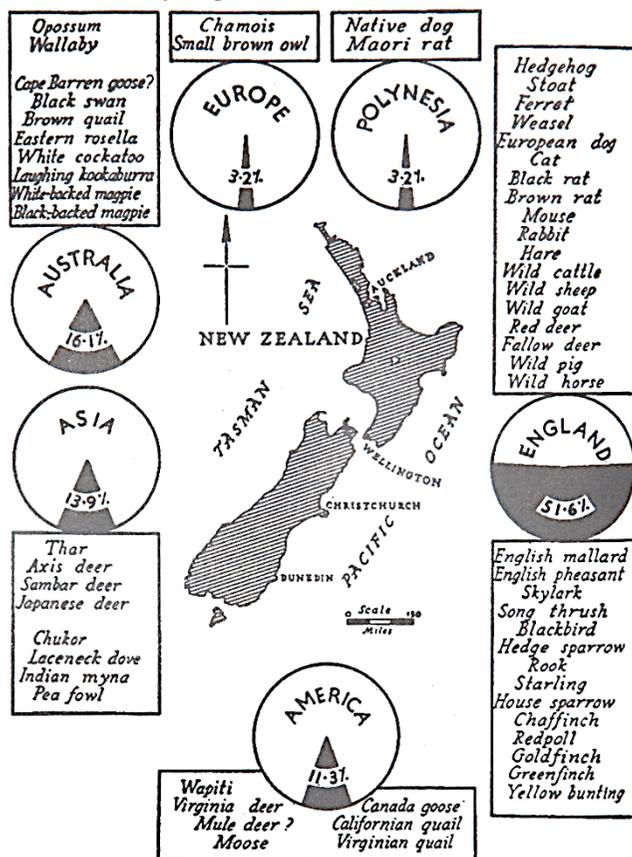
²³ Brooker, "Economic Native Plants of New Zealand," 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

The exchange of flora and fauna between England and New Zealand went both ways, however. As more ‘pakeha’²⁶ settled in the colony, the number of plants and animals imported from England also increased greatly. Plants and animals were brought over typically for food, profit, or pleasure.

Figure 1: Introduced Birds and Mammals in New Zealand and their Countries of Origin



Charles Elton was an English zoologist and animal ecologist who performed comprehensive studies on the impact of invasive organisms. In his essay, “The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants,” the English influence on New Zealand’s ecosystem is clearly reported. Figure 1 is best described as Elton’s summarisation of introduced species to New Zealand and their countries of origin.²⁷ Despite

Australia’s presence as the closest geographic country, its contribution to the invasive species found in New Zealand are dwarfed in comparison to that of England, where over fifty one percent of all introduced species originated from. While the reasoning for shipping these animals varied between pleasure and

²⁶ Pakeha was the Maori word for Englishman, foreigner, or European.

²⁷ Charles S. Elton, “The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants,” in *Foundations of Biogeography: Classic Papers with Commentaries*, eds. Mark V. Lomolino, Dov F. Sax, and James H. Brown, 586.

profit, it is clear that England changed permanently the landscape of New Zealand.

The large sum of introduced species were not without their adverse impacts to the native species of the colony. New Zealand was home to a range of flightless birds, many of which were run to the brink of extinction, unable to adapt to new predators. The kiwi, weka, moa, and kakapo are some examples of these flightless birds. The moa was made extinct due to overhunting, while the kakapo is a critically endangered species today.²⁸ The weka is also a vulnerable bird, and the kiwi is a present day national symbol of New Zealand. Invasive species from England such as dogs, ferrets, and cats are all predatory dangers to these birds.

Native plants also were not without peril, as an interesting discovery was made by Evgenii V. Wulff, a Crimean botanist and plant geographer. In studying maps of flora species in New Zealand, Wulff came to the conclusion that “the endemic species occupied, on the average, the smallest areas in the island, those found also in Peninsular India areas larger, and those that ranged beyond the peninsula the largest of all.”²⁹ This implies that foreign trees are essentially choking out the native trees such that endemic trees are approaching extinction. Wulff argues that this is not the case for all endemic plants, due to the variable climate that is found, particularly in the south island.³⁰ It is worth mentioning in Wulff’s analysis that he compares endemic plants to plants that originate from the Indian peninsula. A voyage directly from England to New Zealand would take on average eight months to complete, but the time could be reduced greatly by departing instead from

²⁸ Doss, *Reminiscences, English and Australasian*, 170.

²⁹ Evgenii Vladimirovitch Wulff, “An Introduction to Historical Plant Geography,” in *Foundations of Biogeography: Classic Papers with Commentaries*, eds. Mark V. Lomolino, Dov F. Sax, and James H. Brown, 529-532.

³⁰ Wulff, “An Introduction to Historical Plant Geography,” 530.

India. As a result, plants from India were also transplanted to New Zealand. Wulff examined this by studying the age of plants found through the north and south islands and confirmed that there were plants of Indian origin scattered throughout New Zealand.³¹ This is also consistent with Elton's invasive species details, where a number of species of Indian and Australian origin are ubiquitous.³²

Historiography on the flora and fauna of New Zealand, is a subject that has seen detailed accounts in the past, but is currently in need of an update from a new generation of scholars. James Belich, a New Zealand historian and professor at the University of Oxford, believes New Zealand historiography is strong in general topics and in select, niche topics, but that there are major gaps in underlying themes that may connect an overall picture of the country's young but important history.³³ Despite plenty of new theses on the Maori land wars, the New Zealand Company, recolonization, Sir George Grey's impact in early New Zealand history, and economic history, works on flora and fauna or research from the Maori perspective are lacking in recent numbers.³⁴ The lack of papers written by Maori natives could possibly be explained by the largely oral history that is Maori custom. Belich also writes that the historiography of New Zealand has benefitted from four main developments since 1940. These developments include "an international explosion in the scope of history, the growth of universities, great bursts of public history, and the slow and incomplete collapse of re-colonisation."³⁵ Institutions such as the Museum of New Zealand, and Kew Gardens can pose as a great starting point

³¹ Wulff, "An Introduction to Historical Plant Geography," 530.

³² Elton, "The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants," 586.

³³ James Belich, "Colonization and History in New Zealand," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography*, ed. Robin W. Winks, 191.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

³⁵ Belich, "Colonization and History in New Zealand," 186.

to understanding the different species of plants and animals that exist, and the great works of Evgenii Wulff, Charles Elton, and their respective research on how invasive flora and fauna species trace the origins of plants and animals that were introduced during the initial colonial chapter of New Zealand's history.

New Zealand has experienced dramatic change since Cook's first voyages in search of the Great Southern Continent. Although it fell below the expectations of an untold land of riches, the colonisation of New Zealand did prove to be beneficial to the British Empire. From the perspective of empire, colonising Australasia was instrumental in gaining prestige. The colonisation of New Zealand meant that the phrase, "the sun never sets on the British Empire" could be used as a measure of propaganda to show the dominance of the empire. The face of New Zealand itself was also dramatically changed by the empire. The colony effectively transformed from an agrarian Maori land to a British controlled pasture, where the main exports quickly became sheep and cattle; two animals that did not exist in New Zealand prior to European contact. As there were no grazing animals, the Maori also had no use for pasture plants before colonisation.³⁶ By 1958, over half the species in New Zealand were of English origin relative to the rest of the world. Settlers were attracted to New Zealand not only because of the possibility of earning a profit from either gold rushes or earning a living off the livestock of the land, but settlers were also attracted to the pure pleasure of the scenery the north and south islands had to offer. Today, Kew, the Botanical Gardens, and the National Museum of New Zealand offer large segments of flora and fauna history for botanists and natural historians to discover and analyse. It is important that these institutions exist because the connections that exist

³⁶ Brooker, "Economic Native Plants of New Zealand," 83.

between England and New Zealand reflect the dominance of the British Empire. It can then be said that the British were the early masters of globalisation.

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Terry McBurnie graduated from the Business Technology Management program in 2015 at Ryerson, while tackling a History minor. While Terry is currently work in the information security field, he has passions for gardening and military aviation photography. It was partially his experimentation in vegetable gardening that helped guide him to write about the Flora and Fauna of New Zealand, and the impact the British Empire had on it. Terry will not forget the night he was researching at the library while eating a bag of chips, only to research that the particular species of potato they were made of came from New Zealand. He has also decided to write on this subject because there was simply not a lot written about the topic in this particular region that he could find. Sometimes the most interesting research papers to tackle head on are not the easy, mundane subjects, but rather the assignments that reward you for braving into the unknown.

The Ideological Dynamics Between Major Powers in the Asia-Pacific Region, through Paul Robeson and the Mass Singing Movement

Chelsea Giannico

Paul Robeson was an African-American actor and famous singer who became an activist in the Civil rights movement in 1954 to 1968, where he came to develop his values in an ethical system based on the concept of “maximum human fulfillment”, which would be seen as Socialist view rather than a Capitalist one.¹ These ideologies were reflected in The Mass Singing Movements from 1935-1939, when China resisted Japanese mobilization and aggression, through patriotism and songs, from this Robeson gained an interest for the Chinese resistance. Due to Robeson’s popularity, musicologist accomplishments, and linguistic background, citizens in China grew fond of him. Soon, in 1941, Robeson sung “Chee Lai” or “March of the Volunteers”, which stood for the Chinese resistance.² Furthermore, this would enhance ideologies of Communism and Socialism within China creating an ally with the Soviet Union. As well, the song “Chee Lai” would become the national anthem of the new founded People’s Republic of China in 1949, giving China the confidence in reforming into a Socialist and Communist system.³ Consequently, in the larger scheme of things, these elevated tensions with American Imperialism and Capitalism, known as the Cold War, composed of

¹ Lloyd L. Brown and Sterling Stuckey, *Here I Stand* (London: British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, 1971), xi.

² Yung Lai, *Chinese American Voices: from the gold rush to the present* (California: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 2006), 204.

³ Ibid.

geopolitical and ideological anxiety lasting from the late 1940s to the early 1990s.

The Mass Singing Movement was a war effort of resistance but among the common people, being the artists, soldiers, consumers, market workers, and general producers in China, this movement was the Patriotic Song Movement.⁴ These protests were created under the name of The Peoples Choral Society started in Shanghai, by Liu Liangmo, who was a Chinese Christian leader and musician in support of the Chinese revolution.⁵ It is significant to remember that the ideology of Nationalism had began in 1912, and the party wanted to create a democracy in China under rule of war lords, diving the country. While Communism, popularized by the Soviet Union, became a growing concept in China and stood as a new cultural movement for the oppressed country. Communism in China reflected a new independent future, the idea rescued China to change their traditions and modernize through ideas such as science. Communism also carried the ideology of Marxism which advocated for an equal economy with shared public ownership, contradicting what Nationalism and Capitalism was possessed of, which was a monopoly over production and private ownership. This created political and ideological tensions within major powers such as China, Soviet Union and America, but also associated China and the Soviet Union together under the concept of Communism. The idea of Communism and Marxism together would form the ideology of Socialism, which served as the foundation of a new Chinese reformation or the “Socialist Reformation”. The rise of Communism in China defied the existing Nationalist party and a Civil War

⁴ Lai, *Chinese American Voices* , 204.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

between the ideological parties emerged from 1945 to 1949, resulting in the termination of the Nationalist party.

Prior to this, the Patriotic Song Movement came together in hopes of Chinese freedom from Japans aggression and towards a Communist future, this beginning immediately after the Manchurian Incident. In another attempt to occupy China Japan invaded the Chinese mountain state of Manchuria in 1931, declaring it an independent state under Japanese authority with the new name of Manchukuo. Furthermore, The Patriotic Song Movement quickly grew to over a thousand participants and branched into other Chinese states such as Hong Kong.⁶ Then in June of 1936 songs of resistance were held at a concert, bringing in thousands more, and in the mists of Nationalist authority the party forced the movement to disperse. Soon after in 1940, Liangmo fled to America to acquire a better relationship with the African-American society for support of the Chinese resistance.⁷ As well the desperateness in China for support was crucial as they had just undergone a seven-week massacre lead by Japanese soldiers, from December 13th, 1937, known as “The Nanjing massacre” or “The Rape of Nanjing”. During this Japanese troops followed the “three all policy” to kill, loot and burn all in China, along with over 20,000 rape cases, ruining Chinas population, economy, army and overall stability.

Thus, in Joshua H. Howard Journal article, Liangmo’s hopes for a new China was “to organize song groups that could resist colonial domination and stimulate anti-imperialist consciousness: If we Chinese want to break free of Imperialism’s iron shackles..., if we want China to exert itself, our people must be able to loudly and vigorously sing powerful songs full of spirit and

⁶ Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 205.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

vitality”.⁸ Liangmo recruited Robeson to popularize these songs of resistance, such as “Chee Lai” in 1941, and due to his iconic voice, activist character and his “linguistic breakthrough”, allowed China to “exert” themselves to be heard for future freedom from Japanese Imperialism.⁹ Speaking multiple languages including a variety of African, Chinese and Russian, Robeson was able to find common links between specific tones, pitches and meanings in the words, enabling him to sing and connect on a worldwide scale, extending colonial relationships as well, demonstrating a linguist breakthrough.¹⁰

The Journal article of *Pan African Studies* states Robeson’s “linguistic insight propelled Robeson ...to embrace the cause of the poor and oppressed people wherever they were”.¹¹ Relating to the academic novel *Chinese American Voices: from the gold rush to the present*, when mentioning “Robeson was very interested in the War of Resistance by the Chinese people because both the blacks in America and the Chinese in China were suffering from oppression...Chinese rose up in firm resolve to fight against Japanese Imperialism made the blacks sympathetic to our cause”.¹² Both academic pieces of work agree on Robeson’s excitement over the resistance and his clear connection with the Chinese population, due to similar experiences, which lead him to “embrace the cause” and feel “sympathetic” for the movement, thus singing the song of resistance of “Chee Lai” in America. It was Robeson’s profound vocals and verbal background that enabled him to spread these

⁸ Joshua H. Howard, "Music for a National Defense": Making Martial Music during the Anti-Japanese War," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* no. 13 (2014): 14, accessed November 4, 2017, <http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-13>.

⁹ Abdul Bangura, “Paul Robeson's linguistics breakthrough,” *Journal of Pan African Studies* 1.5 (2006): 42, accessed October 29, 2017, <http://www.jpanafrican.org/>.

¹⁰ Bangura, "Paul Robeson's linguistics breakthrough," 42.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 205.

messages through song making him the people's singer, as he expresses China's voice in America. This song also became the Peoples Republic of China's national anthem in 1949, which served as nation binding underpinning for a five-year plan from 1953-1957, towards a new industrialized, modern, strong, Socialist region for China.

Music and songs were used to mobilize China in their resistance against Japan because musicians such as Robeson and Liangmo, knew songs were powerful weapons used in propaganda, something anyone at anytime could do. The journal article *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, called this organization by Liangmo The National Salvation Song Movement, and states how music and its participatory nature of singing creates a national identity, one that spreads ideologies in a pleasant manner.¹³ The journal explains how "a song's ideological message was transmitted directly through its lyrics... the emotional force of music accompanying songs enhanced the listener's memory and reinforced the lyrics' message".¹⁴ Supporting how the Mass Singing Movement was so successful at idealising Socialism and Communism for China, as songs are a nation creating medium that manifest a larger issue while keeping the audiences attention. Enabling other concepts like Imperialism and Capitalism from surrounding regions, like America in the near future, to gradually feel threatened by such an emotional binding movement, as the unity of a country acted as a weapon itself. The greatest achievement the movement accomplished was getting China to finally be heard the way they want to be, independently and standing free from Japanese Imperialism, Capitalism and jurisdiction.

Robeson's similar experiences and motives with China and their resistance movement demonstrated the dynamics of how "Asia and Africa are

¹³ Joshua H, "Music for a National Defense," 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

looking at the world developments with their eyes wide open...we know more about Communism than what its American and British detractors have pushed across to us as propaganda".¹⁵ This explores the changing aspects between major power such as America towards Asian regions of Russia and China. As Robeson is a popular figure that exposes the fact that "little as been written about the history of Chinese-African American relations in the United States".¹⁶ Revealing the Imperialism ideology of America at this time and how it left themselves ignorant to the rest of the world, leading to one of the many internal issues that will contribute to tensions that continued to form in the Cold War. Along with the *Journal of the Society for American Music* expresses how "the popular embrace of Robeson's embodiment of this vision becomes all the more profound when considered in light of his outright political ostracism in the postwar/Cold War period".¹⁷ Robeson's "political ostracism" refers to the black-American removal of the Imperialism and Capitalist system in the United States and to a Socialist one, going back to his root of "maximum human fulfillment".

Robeson's beliefs were clearly underlined in the soul purpose of the Mass singing movement in China. As Liangmo's process of teaching, publishing songs, and performing patriotic songs of resistance at mass rallies, had expanded the Singing Movement in hopes of a better life for China free from Japanese Imperialism, and hopefully into a Socialist reformation.¹⁸ Just as Robeson wanted for the black-American population to be free from American Capitalism and Imperialism. Both oppressed situations believed that

¹⁵ Brown and Stuckey, *Here I Stand*, 37.

¹⁶ Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 204.

¹⁷ Lisa, Barg, "Paul Robeson's Ballad for Americans: Race and the Cultural Politics of "People's Music"." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 2, no. 1 (2008): 32, accessed October 29, 2017, doi:10.1017/S1752196308080024.

¹⁸ Joshua H, "Music for a National Defense," 16.

“a Socialist society represents an advance to a higher stage of life-that is a form of society which is economically, socially, culturally, and ethically superior to a system based upon production for private property”.¹⁹ Both cases were done under aspirations to find which economic system would be best for each population or region to adopt.²⁰

Robeson, who was recruited by Liu Liangmo, used his linguistic background and distinct voice, resulting in his title of the people’s singer in China from the Chinese song of resistance “Chee Lai”. Consequently, the American Imperialism and Capitalist system began to feel threatened by the Socialist and Communist uprising in Asian regions. Since Communism, being first introduced to China by the Soviet Union, demonstrated a future free from the constant oppression and inequality they had been suffering from Japan for years. Along with the fall of the Nationalist party in China and a new Communist system grew. The Mass Singing Movement applied to all citizens in China, while music and songs become weapons that harmonized ideologies of Communism and Socialism. Not only did this associate China and the Soviet Union together, but it brought Robeson’s insight on Socialism as well, leading to the Peoples Republic of China in 1949 and ambitions for a Socialist Reformation in 1952 to begin in China. Paul Robeson’s participation in the Mass Singing Movement, bravely directed by Liu Liangmo, shows the “greatness of Robeson is due not only to his talent in singing, but also to the way that he uses his voice to fight for black people and all oppressed people in the world, and to challenge American Imperialism”.²¹ Robeson and the Mass Singing Movement spoke for the oppressed and the equality based ideology of Socialism, which caused future tension with American

¹⁹ Brown and Stuckey, *Here I Stand*, 39.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 208.

Imperialism, anxiety that continued to grow in the Cold War, furthering the vast ideological dynamics between major regions of Russia, China, Japan, and America.

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Chelsea Giannico is first-year undergrad at Ryerson University, majoring in History. Chelsea moved to Toronto from a small town known as Bolton, to study liberal arts and study history in specific because she genuinely enjoy it and feels that the field can be easily undervalued. History is within everything, it keeps a record of human progress and we must understand what dwells in the past so that we may improve our future. History is an open-ended conversation interested in multiple ways of the mundane to the complexities of life. This was this context in which Chelsea wrote this essay, to elucidate an oppressed topic through something light, less stressed upon, and thus uncomplicated to comprehend

Between the Steppe and the Sown: Rethinking Bukharan Urban History, 1800-1884

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The ancient city of Bukhara dates back several millennia and has been home to travellers, merchants, and scholars, en route between empires that benefited commercially and culturally from its strategic location. Islamic Bukhara was a center of Islamic learning and enlightenment, as well as an important centre of trade in the time of Timur. This perception changed during the dissolution of the Timurid Empire and the creation of the Khanate of Bukhara: a shift from a view of Bukhara as a city of prosperity with global connections was now altered to a view of the city as isolated and deteriorated. The elimination of the Chinggisid Empires that connected Asia was a major blow to the region, and this helped fuel European views of a region now dislocated from the networks of trade and communication that ran through the steppe and Bukhara.

Before investigating the city itself, an examination of the current historiography will illustrate the narrative of the “decline” of Central Asia from the eighteenth century that persists to this day. Contemporary work describes Central Asia and the cities within it as being in a state of decline and isolation from the fall of the Timurid Empire onwards until the conquest by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. The scholarship in many ways resembles that of Soviet historiography, which set out to attack Imperial policy in the region and create a narrative of an oppressed, backward people now saved by the Revolution.

The population of Bukhara cannot be defined as a homogenous group living in a reclusive city trapped in a state of suspension. Rather the

demography of Bukhara indicates a city comprised of a diverse collection of people from a variety of backgrounds, languages, religions, and economic positions. Due to its long history of cross-cultural exchange and as a center of learning, Bukhara hosted many people on their way to far off places and merchants seeking their fortune in the city's lucrative markets. Bukhara sits on a patch of fertile soil capable of supporting a settled agrarian population, while being surrounded by deserts of sand and grasses that were home to pastoral nomads who frequently engaged in trade with city dwellers. In addition to the mainly Turkic-speaking city inhabitants and nomads, were small, but prosperous groups of merchants, who lived part of the year in Bukhara. Indians, Russians, Persians, Arabs, and Chinese merchants travelled great distances to sell their wares in Bukhara or in other cities stopping along the way in the oasis city. These people added to the diverse character of the city, fostering a culture of cosmopolitanism.

The geographic position of Bukhara directly resulted in the city's cosmopolitan nature due to the less-than hospitable environment around the city forcing travellers along routes that ran through the city, in search of access to water and necessary supplies. The location of the city also fell close to the border of Qing China and Mughal India, and trade routes to these two regions opened up markets outside of the Eurasian continent. Bukhara's proximity to pastoral nomads necessitated constant contact, which was mutually beneficial, as each society required the goods produced by one another for continued survival. The steppe was an ideal place for raising livestock like cattle and horses, which were traded in the city for finished goods such as metal or earthenware and agricultural products. Nomads were also crucial in the long distance trade that allowed merchants to access markets in Siberia.

Bukhara existed as an independent entity in 1500 with the creation of the Khanate of Bukhara, and remained under the leadership of the Shaybanid

Dynasty until 1599 with the rise of Janid Dynasty. Under Janid rule, the growing independence of Uzbek tribal leaders, the abdication of Abdalaziz, and the murder of Abulfayz Khan in 1747 by Muhammad Rahim Be, led to the Khanate being passed to the Manghit Dynasty under the new name of the Emirate of Bukhara.¹ The transition of power between dynasties was chaotic and resulted in the loss of territories that would become the Khanate of Khiva and the Khanate of Khokand. This period lends credence to the argument of Central Asia being in a constant state of turmoil and upheaval. In reality, under Manghit rule, Bukhara established a strong central state and maintained peace to the best of its ability. The art of government, or governmentality, is important to understand the relationship between the state, trade and civil society. This relationship had profound effects on commerce in Bukhara, impacting the ability of merchants to carry out their trade as well as hampering the trade of merchants from outside of Emirate of Bukhara.

Finally, an examination of trade and commerce in Bukhara will bring together all the elements that made Bukhara a successful, integrated city within the larger continental trade network as opposed to the contemporary historiography of decline. The types of goods being traded and the traders bringing in these goods are representative of a city positioned at the crossroads of civilizations; a rich hub in the trade of textiles, livestock, agricultural goods, and slaves. These realities of movement and commerce argue for the inclusion of Bukhara into a narrative of larger networks of trade, and serve to contest historiography that paints Bukhara as a backwater city under the influence of European powers. Until the conquest of the city in 1868, which forcefully pulled it into the colonial apparatus, Bukhara had exercised considerable autonomy from foreign influence, despite its precarious position between the

¹ Svatopluk Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 179.

powers of Qajar Iran, Tsarist Russia, and British India.

The specific time period being reviewed here is between 1800 and 1884. Russian expansion into central Asia began in earnest in the early eighteenth century with the absorption of the Kazakh steppe into the empire as far south as the Syr Darya from 1730 to 1848. The second stage of Russian expansion began in 1865 with a series of conquests that would finish in 1884 with the suppression of the Turkmen nomads.² Using travelogues of British, American, Hungarian, Russian, and Indian travellers in Bukhara, this period of 84 years will be examined in order to review Bukhara just prior to the Russian conquest and immediately following its absorption into the Russian Empire.

This paper will attempt to show that Bukhara was an example of a Central Asian city that was prosperous and well integrated into a larger economic system in contrast to the traditional historiography that states it was in a period of decline and isolation from the seventeenth century onwards. The demography of Bukhara, the geographic location of the city, the governmentality of the city, and the facilitation of trade, fostered an environment of inclusivity that allowed Bukhara to be a successful urban center in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until its absorption into the Russian Empire and loss of autonomy.

Historiography

The notion of Central Asia being a geo-political backwater compared to Russia, China, or the Middle East stems from Soviet historiography of the region. Modern historiography has in some ways followed the Soviet historiography of Central Asia as having lost its once-great hold over territory and trade. This style of historiography states that following the collapse of the

² Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 195.

Timurid Empire and the dissolution of the remnants of the Chinggisid line of succession, Central Asia became passive in trade and isolated from the world economy. Franck and Brownstone state that:

With the Mongols passed the last of the great days of the Silk Road...
With the fall of Constantinople in the mid-15th century, the Silk Road was decisively cut for a time. Though trans-Asian trade and travel would resume, the Silk Road would never recover.³

This conclusion exemplifies something of what Edward Said has argued in his work, that Orientalism depends on a strategy of flexible *positional* superiority that places the Occident in an equal relation to the Orient, with the Occident always representing superiority.⁴ Central Asia came under direct and complete Russian rule in the 1880s after successful Russian conquests of the region and did not free itself of Russian control until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Considering this more recent history, it is easy to understand why a narrative of decline may have been crafted and perpetuated.

Similarly, Russian historiography has always been instrumental to Russian geo-political interest in Central Asia. During the nineteenth century, a plethora of material was published by representatives of the Russian imperial system, diaries and memoirs of participants in the Russian conquest, both ordinary soldiers, and military commanders, and Orientalist travellers and adventurers, both Russian and foreign.⁵ The work created during this period was intended to produce confirmation of the success of Tsarist policies in Central Asia as well as scientific work on the people and landscape of the

³ Franck and Brownstone, *The Silk Road*, pg. 4. Quoted in Christian, David. *Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History*. (Journal of World History 11, no. 1 (2000): 1-26), 6.

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 7.

⁵ Alymbaev B. Jeenbek, *Historiographic Study of the Russian Conquest of Central Asia*. (Himalayan and Central Asian Studies 16, no. 1 (Jan, 2012)), 34-36.

conquered, or soon to be conquered territories. Early Soviet historiography focused on critiquing the autocracy of Imperial Russia from a purely scientific position. Imperial conquest and colonial rule was described as an 'absolute evil.' From the late 1930s to the end of the 1950s, this historiography became politicised from an 'absolute evil' to the 'joining' of Central Asia to Russia and the 'progressive factor' of bringing the Russian and non-Russian people together.⁶ While Soviet historiography focused more on class and ethnic nation-making, it echoed the Imperial Russian goal of bringing of Central Asia into the Russian Empire and also reflected the presumed benefits the inhabitants of Central Asia received by being included in the Imperial sphere.

The most common argument advanced in favour of the decline of Central Asia as a cosmopolitan center is the competition thesis. This thesis puts forward the idea that overland trade routes were pushed out of use because of new long distance maritime trade routes used by European powers. Steensgaard argues that European companies had an advantage over Central Asian and Iranian competitors because of better technology and communication systems, as well as the reduced cost of maritime travel.⁷ Petrov argues similarly that the cost of transporting goods on ocean vessels was much less and new ships could carry weights far exceeding anything pack animals could carry.⁸

Lapidus argues that the rise of the Safavids and the Russian conquest of the Volga region in the sixteenth century caused the closure of trade routes to the Indian Ocean. This undermined Inner Asian trade and created disorder

⁶ Jeenbek, *Historiographic Study of the Russian Conquest of Central Asia*, 34-36.

⁷ Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (London: 1974), 154.

⁸ Petrov, *Foreign Trade of Russia and Britain with Asia in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, 627.

and insecurity until the arrival of the Russians in the nineteenth century.⁹ In addition to arguing that the discovery of long distance trade routes to Asia by European powers thus adversely effected Central Asia, Lapidus argues that the political landscape of Central Asia aided in the disuse of overland trade routes, causing economic stagnation and the isolation of the region.

However, even during the period that Lapidus investigates, the Khanate of Bukhara continued to extract taxes and allow for the flow of merchants. The government of Bukhara did not directly manage the economy; instead, it imposed taxes on goods entering the city and on specific religious groups to increase its wealth without restricting trade. Bukhara was not in a state of confusion or peril, its merchants and officials were aware of its incredible position in trade and self-interested in the accumulation of its wealth. The association of anarchy and stagnation with nomadic peoples added to the narrative of deterioration; but, in fact, nomads were an integral component of the economic vitality of Bukhara and maintained a relationship of mutual benefit with the settled population of the steppe.

While there may be truth in the historiography of general political strife, weakening of older east-west trade routes, and the disruption of trade due to long distance maritime trade by Europeans, the conclusion of an overall “stagnation” is demonstrably unfounded. As Scott Levi states, “The question to be addressed is not whether the eighteenth century represents a period of Central Asian ‘decline’ or ‘renaissance’.” Rather, Levi calls for a more nuanced understanding of Central Asian history that does not ignore the complexity of historical circumstances that brought Central Asia to its socio-economic position in the nineteenth century.¹⁰

⁹ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*. (Second Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 347-348.

¹⁰ Scott Levi, *India, Russia and the Eighteenth-Century Transformation of the Central Asian Caravan Trade*, 522.

Moreover, the historiography of Central Asian ‘decline’ and/or ‘renaissance’ serves to sanitize the history of colonialism in the region and reduces its inhabitants from active agents to passive observers of their own history. In their history of Bukharan Jews, Ochildiev, Pinkhasov, and Kalontarov create a similar narrative of isolation and deterioration that describes how ‘fanatical mullahs’ feared the expansion of foreign powers and created a ‘closed door’ policy in the Khanate that confined the Bukharan Jews. Their oppressed state was only lifted following the Russian conquest and elimination of Muslim authority. This is part of a much larger narrative of liberation through inclusion into a capitalist economic system and colonial orbit.¹¹

The contemporary historiography still relies on out-dated Soviet work and the accounts of Europeans who did not truly understand the daily life and nuanced experiences of the inhabitants of Central Asia. To begin deconstructing this historiography, the demography of Bukhara is a good starting point, as the eclectic mix of Bukhara’s human composition goes a long way towards unravelling the notion of a city sunk in decline and isolated from the world.

Demography of Bukhara

Bukhara was and continues to be a cosmopolitan city center, the exchange of goods, languages, cultures, religions, and ideas all passed through its gates. The transmission of tangible and intangible things was done by a variety of peoples who travelled thousands of miles to reach Bukhara and lands beyond it. The merchants, travellers, craftsmen, scholars, beggars, and nomads made Bukhara a successful cosmopolitan center, connecting the city to the rest of the Eurasian continent.

¹¹ David Ochildiev, Robert Pinkhasov, and Iosif Kalontarov. *A History and Culture of the Bukharian Jews*. (New York: Club "Roshnoyi-Light" & Authors, 2007), 40,51.

There are varying accounts of the population of Bukhara; Alexander Burnes in 1831 estimated that there were 150,000 people in Bukhara.¹² Mohan Lal estimates a similar number to Burnes at 170,000,¹³ while Khanikoff suggests a much lower number from 60,000 to 70,000.¹⁴ This kind of discrepancy may well be due to the eclectic nature of the people living in the city. A large segment of the population was transient, either nomads or travelling merchants who would flood into the city at different times of the year depending on the trade season. The exact number of inhabitants of the city, however, is not as important as who the inhabitants were and where they had come from.

Travelogues often divide the population into ‘natives’ and ‘travellers,’ but this kind of binary does not properly represent the relationship that people had to the city or their own identity. ‘Natives’ often is used to refer to the Turkic people that inhabit Central Asia including the pastoral nomads and the sedentary people of the Bukhara, and ‘travellers’ used to refer to the variety of merchants that arrived from Russia, Siberia, India, Iran, Arabia, and China; but the “native” inhabitants of Bukhara themselves were also travelling merchants who may have spent equal time in far off cities as they did in Bukhara, and the same can be said for the merchants coming to Bukhara; they may have spent long periods of time living in the city. As such the specifics of geographic origin, language, and religion need to be better understood in an assessment of the composition of the city and how people interacted with each other. Broadening the grouping of the people of Bukhara into sedentary people, religious minorities, and pastoral nomads allows for less limiting definitions like native or foreigner, and takes into account the complexities of

¹² Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, (London: John Murray, 1834), 302.

¹³ Mohan Lal, *Travels in the Panjab, Afghanistan, & Turkistan, to Balk, Bokhara, and heart; and A Visit to Great Britain and Germany*. (London: WM. H. Allen & Co., 1846), 128-129.

¹⁴ M. Khanikoff, *Bokhara Its Amir and Its People*, 123.

identity that brought people together in 19th century Bukhara.

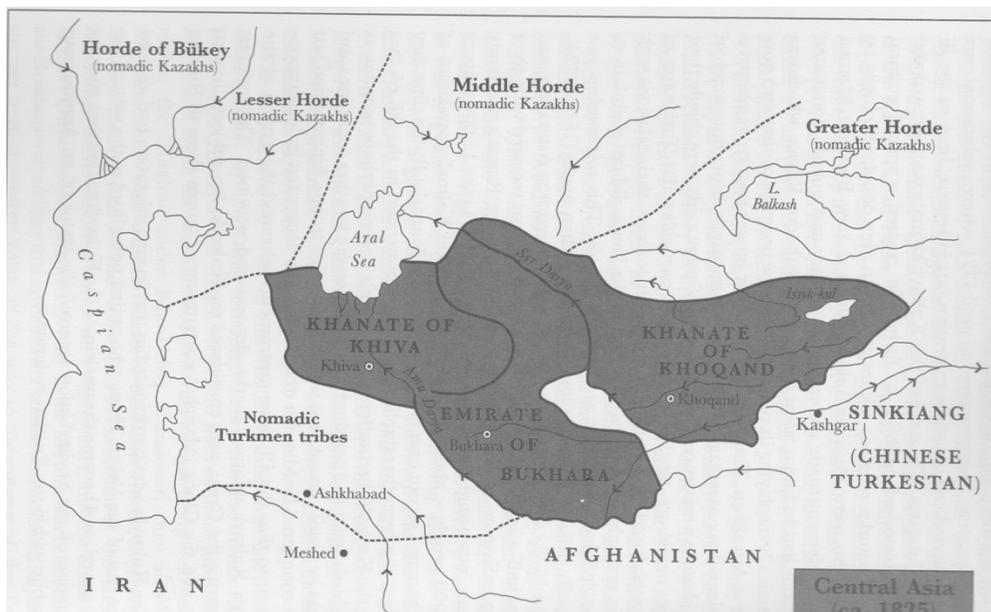


Figure 1 Borders of Central Asian Khanates and Emirates c. 1825 as well as the nomadic population¹⁵

a. Sedentary People

Two groups are understood to be the sedentary inhabitants of the region, Uzbeks and Tajiks. The Uzbeks were a distinct group of nomadic Turkic people before their integration into the Golden Horde, following the disintegration of the Golden Horde over the course of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, smaller khanates began to form claiming Chinggisid lineage.¹⁶ Abdulkhayr (1412-68), establishing his lineage to Juchi's fifth son Shiban, established the Shaybanid dynasty in 1428 when he was proclaimed khan. Under his leadership, the kipchak speaking tribes swept down into Transoxania from the Dasht-i Kipchak contesting the Timurid rulers.¹⁷ Under Abdulkhayr's grandson, Muhammad Shaybani, the jewels of Timurid rule were lost in Central Asia, the conquering of Samarkand and Herat as well as

¹⁵ Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 176.

¹⁶ Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 339.

¹⁷ Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 144-45.

fighting off Babur was a striking blow to Timurid rule in Central Asia.¹⁸ The establishment of the Khanate of Bukhara in 1500 by Muhammad Shaybani, while short lived, was a monumental event in Central Asian history. The continued rule of the Khanate under Uzbek authority would come to an end during Russian conquests of the region in the 1860s.

The other mainly sedentary people inhabiting Bukhara were the Tajiks who can be considered the “indigenous” inhabitants of Central Asia, arriving around the year 2000 BCE when groups of Indo-European tribes migrated south from what is now Russia.¹⁹ Tajik exists alongside Turkic languages but it is an Iranian language, similar to Persian in its morphology but diverges in the syntax and vocabulary.²⁰ The Tajiks are believed to be the ancestors of the Soghdians. For many centuries the Soghdians were central to the trans-continental trade along the east west “Silk Road”. During the fifth century a confederation of Turkic tribes moved westward from the Altai Mountains and pushed the Iranian people into India. This migration was stalled twice; once by the expansion of the Tang Dynasty (617-906) and second by the conquest of Arab Muslim armies in the eighth century. This migration marked the end of the Iranian peoples dominance in the Steppe, the nomadic-pastoralist would continue to dominate the region culturally and quantitatively.²¹

These sedentary people arrived into the region because of their nomadic lifestyle, gradually their way of life adapted to the practice of settled societies. The ability to take up agriculture in the fertile soil around the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, and the newly acquired territory attached these nomadic

¹⁸ Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 149.

¹⁹ Jeff Sahadeo and Russell G. Zanca, *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*. (Indiana University Press, 2007), 16.

²⁰ Karl H. Menges, “People, Languages, and Migrations”. In *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 66.

²¹ Scott C. Levi, “The Turks and Tajiks in Central Asian History”, in *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell G. Zanca, 18-19.

people to the land and separated them from their nomadic neighbours. While these two groups have different ancestries they share a religion, culture, territory, and set of social values, the only thing separating them is language.

b. Religious Minorities in Bukhara

While the majority of residents in Bukhara were Sunni Muslims, there were small but thriving groups of religious minorities. The two largest groups were Jews and Hindus who lived in their own separate quarters and practiced their beliefs relatively freely. These minorities were subject to regulations such as the *jizya* tax because they belonged to the *zimmi*, non-Muslims living in Muslim land, as well as regulations on their movement and where their places of worship could be. Despite these regulations Jews and Hindus lived relatively unrestricted in their own quarters, responsible for their own internal management and engaged in commercial activity inside and outside of their walled quarters.

The Bukharan Jews, lived in their own separate quarters (*makhallai*) within the city, called the *Makhallai Kokhna* (old quarter) before the sixteenth century, and *Makhallai Nav* (new quarter) after the seventeenth century. Bukharan Jews were mainly involved in trade and crafts like textile manufacturing.²² Jewish subjects in Bukhara had to obey to the laws of other non-Muslims belonging to the *zimmi*, such as paying additional taxes, wearing a rope instead of a belt, wearing an astrakhan hat instead of a turban, not riding a horse within the city walls, and observing restrictions on the height of their houses. While these rules were enforced within the city of Bukhara, the rules were much more lax outside of the city.²³

Accounts from the period paint a dreary picture of Jews in Bukhara,

²² David Ochildiev, Robert Pinkhasov, and Iosif Kalontarov. *A History and Culture of the Bukharian Jews*, 28-29.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30.

Thompson and Hogg state that the Jews were oppressed and stripped of their possessions.²⁴ Vassili Verestchagin states that Jews were ill treated and expected to ride into town on a donkey or by foot, were forbidden to wear silk and could wear only a cord of rope for a belt.²⁵ Khanikoff observed that the Jews were limited in numbers and lived in their own quarter within Bukhara and were forbidden to settle outside of this area. They did not wear turbans but small wool caps with sheepskin trim.²⁶ These kinds of descriptions, meant to depict Jews as oppressed, are common among the travel literature of the time, but when these same travellers entered the city they always made note of changing their own wardrobe to fit the norm of non-Muslims in Bukhara. Alexander Burnes changed his outfit to that of a non-Muslim when entering Bukhara; rope for a belt, replacing turban for a small sheepskin cap, removing stockings, and not riding a horse in the city.²⁷ In this sense, the extent of the oppression described by travellers regarding Jews, in particular, living in Bukhara is most likely overstated.

*Figure 2 Illustration of the Jewish quarter including gates leading to the city outside of the Jewish Quarter*²⁸

Another important feature of the city was the small but commercially involved Indian population. In fact, many of the caravans moving from Kabul to Bukhara were composed of Hindus initially from India.²⁹ The Indian diaspora community's spread across Eurasia was mainly composed of Hindus and Jains, who lived apart from other merchants and inhabitants of the city,

²⁴ Scott Cameron Levi and Ron Sela, *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 259.

²⁵ Vassili Verestchagin, *Vassili Verestchagin: Painter, Soldier, Traveller*, 140.

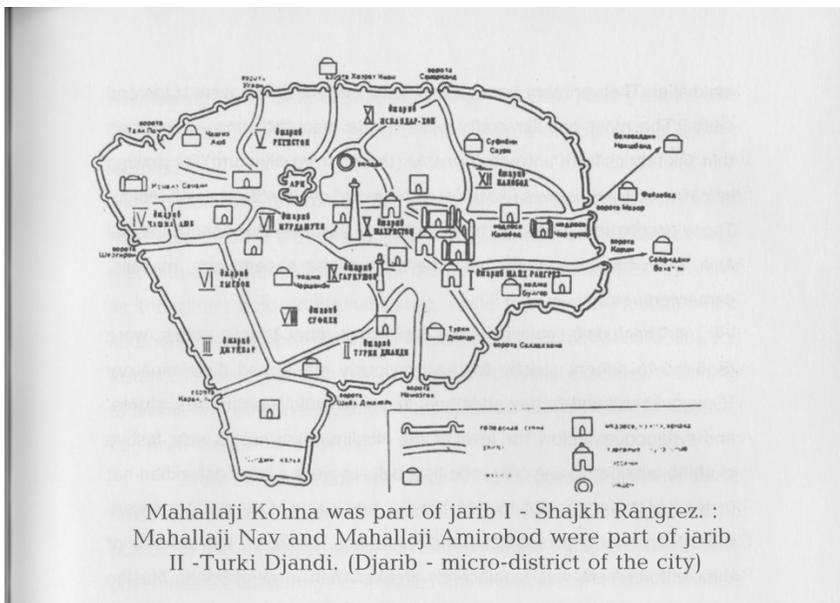
²⁶ M. Khanikoff, *Bokhara Its Amir and Its People*, 88-89.

²⁷ Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 302.

²⁸ David Ochildiev, Robert Pinkhasov, and Iosif Kalontarov. *A History and Culture of the Bukharian Jews*, 40.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

unlike Muslim Indian traders who often lived among their co-religionist. The living area for non-Muslim Indians was called *dvor* and was usually in the caravanserai operated by Hindu Indians in cities across the region.



These merchants were part of caste-based commercial firms known as ‘family firms.’ Pooling resources together, these merchants would travel for several years until new family firm agents came to replace them. The majority of the Indian merchants in Bukhara were from Multan and were called *gumashtas*.³⁰ These merchants would supply Bukhara with corn, palms, sugar, indigo, cotton, oranges, and silk most often either produced or collected in Multan.³¹

Indian traders in Bukhara established hierarchical systems, establishing their own leader (*aqsaqal*, *kalantar*) whose responsibility was to maintain group cohesion. The *aqsaqal* was appointed by a royal order (*manshir*). This allowed a measure of autonomy in the Indian community regarding its own affairs. Indian merchants lived in mixed *mohallas* often with

³⁰ Levi, *Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade, 1550-1900*, 121-124.

³¹ Lal, *Travels*, 392.

Uzbeks and Tajiks close to their shops. Over time these traders began to assimilate, take on Muslim names, and marry Uzbek women.³² Alexander Burnes mentions these Indian traders and how they were not allowed to purchase female slaves or bring their families across the Oxus.³³ More likely the merchants would not bring their families because they remained on temporary rotations in the city until they were replaced with another member of the caste firm. Indians living in Bukhara held a tenuous relationship with the authorities of Bukhara, there was a fear of large amounts of Indians in the city establishing stronger political and economic connections than the ones they already possessed.

An analysis of the religious minorities in Bukhara shows a city tolerant to non-Muslims, unlike the narrative of ‘fanatical Mullahs’ who oppress and forcefully convert non-Muslims. Religious and ethnic minorities were involved in commerce and trades that were imperative to Bukhara. Moreover, the connections those Indian merchants had to India, as well as to other Central Asian cities helped to incorporate Bukhara into a larger trade network that benefited the city.

c. Nomads

Outside of the realm of the sedentary world existed a large variety of pastoral nomads. One such group of nomads were the Kazakhs, who formed a federation of Turks in the region north of the Aral and Caspian Sea. The term “Kazakh” means free (this possibly meant free from Uzbek authority). Kazakhs were organized into small units called *aul*, which represented individual households, then they were organized along family lines, then clans, and finally hordes (*jüz*). In the seventeenth century the Kazakhs were

³² Muzaffar Alam, *Trade, State Policy and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, C. 1550-1750*, 219.

³³ Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 300.

ultimately grouped into the Little, Middle, and Greater Hordes.³⁴ The Kazakh people occupied a huge amount of territory to the north of Bukhara, with the three hordes collectively separating the Russian and Siberian people from the Central Asian Khanates. Playing a vital role in the trade of livestock and slaves, the Kazakhs were connected to the settled population of Bukhara because of the trade that brought merchants of all kinds through their lands. In the mid-nineteenth century, Russian customs records show trade with the Kazakhs constituted 13 percent of imports and 16.8 percent of exports out of all eastern trade for Russia.³⁵

The Kalmyks composed the western branch of the Mongols known as the Oirats or Dörben-Oirats. The Kalmyks are unique in that they remained outsiders in the Eurasian steppe for most of their history, not belonging to the Chinggis Mongol Empire or their Muslim Turkic neighbours. They did share many social and political traditions with other Turkic-Mongol societies but with greater influence from Chinese traditions.³⁶ Situated further to the West, the Kalmyks shared some of the perks and setback of being along the main travel routes between Russia and Bukhara. The Kalmyk people were involved in the slave trade; raiding parties would attack isolated Russian settlements and sell captured villagers into bondage at markets in Bukhara and Khiva. The Kalmyk had a hostile relationship with both Bukhara and Russia, and as such did not discriminate as to which caravan might be raided, often-attacking Bukharan merchants along the empty road.

The Nogays were a tribal confederation related to the Mongol tribe called the Mangits who formed the core of the Nogay Horde. The Nogay

³⁴ Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 339

³⁵ Allworth, "Encounter", in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, 27.

³⁶ Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*, 13-14.

emerged from the Golden Horde during the 14th century under the command of Edige, the founder of the Nogay dynasty. While the Mangits were Turkicized, they remained the dominant tribe in the Nogay Horde, often referred to as the Mangit Horde. What made the Nogays distinct from their Turkic and Mongol neighbours was their claimed ancestry going back to Edige. Because the heirs to the Golden Horde or any part of the Chinggisid Empire needed to be descendants of Chinggis Khan, the Nogays were not eligible for rule.³⁷

The Kyrgyz were another established people. Coming from the Southern Siberian watershed of the Yenesei River they had destroyed the Uyghur khanate in the mid-ninth century and were forced out of that region by the Khitan. They lent their forces to Mongol campaigns in the thirteenth century and by the fifteenth century had made a homeland in the area around the Tianshan, Issyk Kul and Pamir mountains.³⁸

The Turkmen of the Qizil Qum desert and Qara Qum desert west of Bukhara were divided into two main tribes; the largest, Teke, inhabiting the area bordering between Iran and Afghanistan, the second largest, Yomut, inhabiting the Gurgan and Balkhan regions near the Caspian sea and the area bordering the Khivan Khanate.³⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century roughly 20 percent of Turkmen were fully nomadic. The remainder settled around the oases surrounding the Qara Qum Desert, cultivating grain, vegetables, and cotton. Those who settled were known as *chomar*, and those who continued to migrate with their flocks were known as *charwa*. In reality these lines were blurry and it is difficult to make a clear distinction between these two

³⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

³⁸ James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 71.

³⁹ Edgar, "Everyday Life among the Turkmen Nomads", in *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo, and Russell G. Zanca, 37-38.

populations, often families would contain both nomadic and sedentary members to produce the best economic self-sufficiency.⁴⁰ The Turkmen were known to be fierce warriors, feared by locals and foreigners alike. The most prolific operators in the Central Asian slave trade, Turkmen come up repeatedly in accounts of the trade in Bukhara. The speed at which they could travel on horse, combined with the location close to settlements on the periphery of Qajar Iran and Russia made them ideal slavers. For the Russians, they presented a great threat to their colonial endeavour in Central Asia and would not be completely suppressed until 1884.

Tenrism was the predominant religion among the pastoral nomads, Naqshbandi and Yasavi Sufis also travelled across the Kazakh steppe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries bringing Islam, although widespread conversion did not take place until the eighteenth century.⁴¹ All except the Tajiks are Turkic-speaking peoples, geographically the languages from west to east include Turkmen, Uzbek, Kirgiz, and New Uyghur, to the north is Kazakh and Karakalpak.⁴² This allowed them to integrate into the economic and social structure of urban centers like Bukhara.

The diversity of nomadic peoples who inhabited the steppe around Bukhara lent to its cosmopolitan nature. When agrarian and pastoral civilizations spread across Central Asian caravan routes, trade became easier and less costly.⁴³ The inclusion of nomads into Bukhara's sphere of influence also provided necessary connections to cities and centres of trade that lay on the other side of the inhospitable steppe and desert. Without these networks of

⁴⁰ Ibid., 38.

⁴¹ Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 342.

⁴² Karl H. Menges, "People, Languages, and Migrations", in *Central Asia: A century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 60-62.

⁴³ David Christian, "Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History", *Journal of World History* 11, no. 1 (2000), 6.

communication and trade Bukhara would not have been as successful as it was or been able to move beyond subsistence survival. The relationship between the settled and nomadic people was always precarious but overall the intermingling of these people provided valuable exchanges, both cultural and material.

Geography

In arid regions such as Central Asia, access to water often takes primacy over all other needs. In Central Asia flat grasslands that remain unchanging for miles at a time cover much of the region, making the competition for access to water paramount. To the West is the great Qara Qum desert stretching from the east shore of the Caspian Sea to the west bank of the Syr Darya, cradled between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya is the Qizil Qum desert. While crossing the Qizil Qum desert the Hungarian traveller Arminius Vambéry took note of his surroundings and the hopelessness of the landscape:

Our station on the morning of the 5th of July was called *Adamkirilgan*, that is, man destroyer, and one glance taken at the surrounding objects was sufficient to prove the propriety of this appellation. As far as the eye could reach, nothing but sand, sand, now like the stormy sea lashing itself into tremendous waves, now again presenting the spectacle of the rippling caused by gentle breezes on the bosom of a calm lake. No bird can be seen in the air, nor insect on the earth; all the eye can discover here and there are the sad signs of decay, the skeletons of lost men and animals, which are placed in a heap by the travellers in order to serve them as a guide.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Arminius Vambéry, *The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry*. (New York: Frederick A. Stocks Company, 186?), 207.

The landscape of the steppe, not disease or bandits, consumed the thoughts of travellers attempting to cross into the oasis of Bukhara.

Travelers entering this part of the world had a formidable barrier between them and Bukhara. Sitting just east of this desolate landscape is the Amu Darya, also known as the Oxus River, is an oasis created by the Zarafshan River that runs off the Amu Darya. From this hostile landscape a prominent sedentary civilization was built. The psychological location of Bukhara is important in understanding its position historically and why it continued to be a key center of trade from the seventeenth century onwards. Topographical map of Central Asia including the rivers and deserts around Bukhara

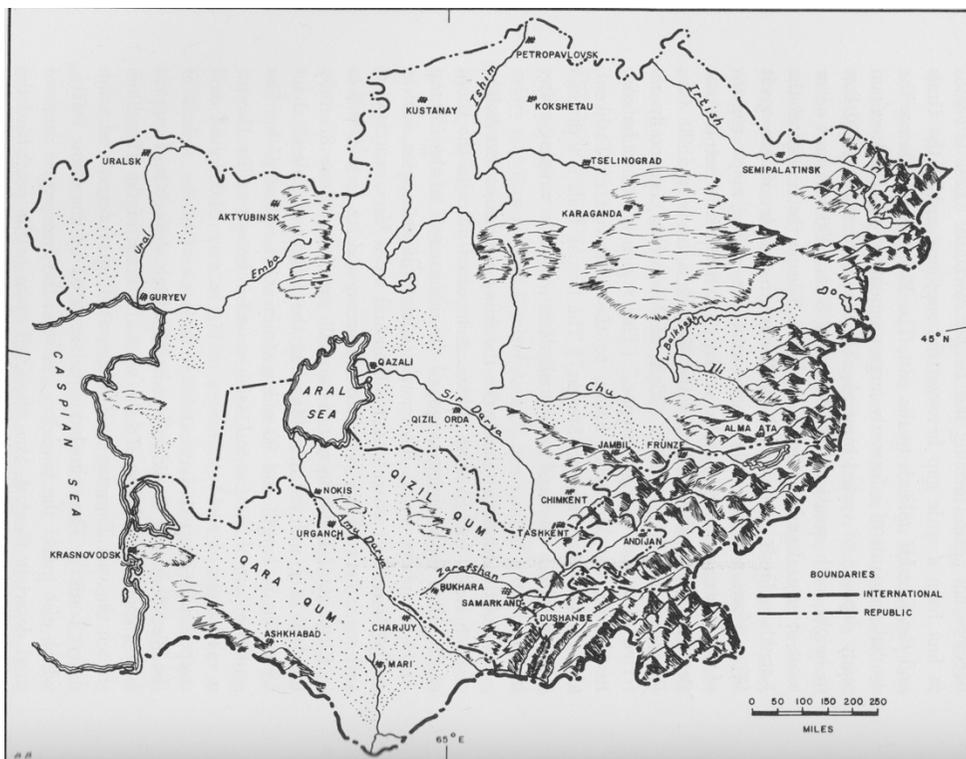
a. Trade Routes

To travel and engage in trade in a region with such dramatic ecological variety requires knowledge of the terrain and of the most efficient routes to reach destinations on the other side of the steppes and deserts. Trade routes to and from Bukhara had a few main regional hubs that were the ultimate destination of most merchants who would then pass on their goods to other merchants from East Asia, Arabia, or Europe. The geographic landscape of the steppe forced trade routes through slivers of land that could sustain man and beast on the long journey. These routes passed through other cities and settlements of varying sizes connecting the settled populations of the steppe.

*Figure 3 Topographical map of Central Asia including the rivers and deserts around Bukhara*⁴⁵

The markets of Muscovy and Siberia were lucrative because of the supply of items produced in Bukhara and India. Bukharan merchants would

⁴⁵ Ian Murray Matley, "The Population and the Land", in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 114.



travel to several major settlements including Tobol'sk, Tara, Tyumen, Turinsk, Tomsk, Yeniseisk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, and Kyakhta. These stops would often then be used to travel east to China or west to Muscovy. Bukharan merchants would travel to Tobol'sk by way of the Qizil Qum desert then breaking off along the Syr Darya. Portaging was required frequently and many rivulets, woods and marshes were crossed. The main challenge along this route was the frequency of robberies and the lack of fuel and food. The whole journey would take 11 weeks at a decent pace.⁴⁶ Another route was similar except for the latter part of the journey, which took travellers west after crossing the Ishim and making way to Ulugh Taq on way to the Tobol river which would take them to Tobol'sk. This route was favoured by nomads because of the abundance of food for men and beast, but the flat, even steppes

⁴⁶ Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History, 1550-1702*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 397-398.

were mainly uninhabited, making travellers easy targets. Additional routes through Kalmyk territory took 40 to 42 days to reach Tobol'sk.⁴⁷ While this was the most direct route it was dangerous for several reasons: the lack of fuel and food on the steppe, raiding parties, and a lack of settled towns to stop and rest in.⁴⁸ The geography and climate of the steppe created many problems and hazards for these travellers. The most direct routes would put them in constant contact with nomads but presented unique dangers to travellers carrying precious goods.

To the West were markets in Iran such as Mashad and Isfahan, most travellers would have to pass through Merv either by way of the Qara Qum desert or along the Murghab river through Sarakhs, which was a central hub in the slave trade. Any journey through the Qara Qum would have taken much longer than others of comparable distance due to the extremely arid desert, which forced caravans to stop every 15 to 22 km instead of the usual 32 km.⁴⁹ Handkerchiefs of silk called Kalaghi (possibly Kollegala, India known for its silk industry) were produced in Bukhara and sent to Persia by way of Mashad. Returning from Iran, traders brought Indian commodities like pepper, dry ginger, and silk cloth called khud from Isfahan.⁵⁰

The most travelled trade routes were to India; merchants had several paths to choose from. One route was via Herat and Qandahar by way of Kabul continuing to Peshawar and Lahore on their way to the Bolan Pass to Dadur and Shirkapur through the Indus valley to Multan. Routes from Balkh were more popular among Bukharan merchants, but this route required travelling

⁴⁷ Ibid., 398.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 399.

⁴⁹ Burton, *The Bukharans*, 400-401.

⁵⁰ Lal, *Travels*, 141-142.

through high mountains and fairing with Afghan tribesmen on the way to the Khyber Pass. From Balkh to Kabul took 11-15 days, from Kabul merchants travelled to Lahore by way of Jalalabad, the Khyber Pass and Peshawar. The biggest disturbance along this route was the huge amount of snow that fell and covered the Khyber Pass during the winter, halting all travel until the spring usually March or April.⁵¹

The Punjabi born British agent Mohan Lal noted that these trade routes between India and Bukhara remained busy and in constant use. Lal's account runs counter to Steensgaard's competition thesis that states that inland trade routes fell into disuse once European long distance trade routes had been established to India. Lal states that Lohanis and Shikarpuris were the main conductors of trade; these merchants took caravans of camels from Bukhara, through the Hindu Kush, and onwards to cities like Multan and Amritsar.⁵² Following these above-mentioned routes merchants were able to directly connect Bukhara to Indian markets.

The trade routes mentioned all passed through incredibly varied and difficult terrain, grasslands, deserts, swamps, and high altitude mountain passes, all with varying climates. To meet these challenges, travelling merchants would have to engage in a cross-cultural exchange with the many pastoral nomads that inhabited the steppe. The success of trade in this region was directly linked to the cooperation and mutual gain of the settled and nomadic peoples. This led to an inclusivity and cosmopolitanism that was, again, reflected in the markets in both India and Bukhara.

⁵¹ Burton, *The Bukharans*, 402-403.

⁵² Lal, *Travels*, 393-394.



Figure 4 Central Asia positioned in the greater geographical setting, this map also shows the general location of the nomadic Turkic people and major settlements

b. Nomads and Trans-Ecological Trade

Through descriptions of these trade and travel routes, we learn of the well-established and interconnected nature of Bukhara in continental trade networks. Indian merchants played a vital role in transporting goods through the Hindu Kush bringing silk, corn, oranges, palms, sugar, cotton, and indigo from Multan to Bukhara.⁵³ The biggest players in the long distance trade were the pastoral nomads. Interactions and trade between Bukharan merchants and the Kazakhs, Kalmyks, Kyrgyz, Nogays and Mongols were frequent especially on the route to Muscovy and Siberia.⁵⁴ Pastoral nomads occupied a unique place in Central Asian trade; nomads were feared by settled populations but necessary for the continued prosperity of cities like Bukhara.

In his work *The Camel and the Wheel*, Richard Bulliet argues that the nomad and the camel were both seen as natural occurrences that should be

⁵³ Lal, *Travels*, pg. 392.

⁵⁴ Burton, *The Bukharans*, 410.

viewed as positive elements in relation to settled society. When the camel breeding nomadic populations were incorporated into the economic space of settled society they became familiar and less antagonistic, as did the desert itself, which was otherwise seen as an unforgiving barrier. These two threats, through the mediation of nomads, became productive and a mutually beneficial relationship emerged.⁵⁵ The same can be said regarding the nomadic people of Central Asia who bred the camels and horses fundamental to trans-regional trade.

The historiography of the Silk Road typically focuses on the “trans-civilizational’ exchanges between literate agrarian societies, leaving out analysis of the role of the pastoral nomads who are typically non-literate.⁵⁶ David Christian argues that trans-ecological exchanges were as important as trans-civilizational exchanges. Much of the Silk Road passed along the ecological frontier creating a natural space for frequent exchanges that each side required. In the case of Central Asia and Bukhara, the oasis created by the Syr Darya was small and bordered the great Qizil Qum desert inhabited by nomadic Turkmen. Goods typically followed a pattern of movement between agrarian societies to woodland or steppe land and vice versa. These goods move in this pattern because of the ecological difference between civilizations, not their competency to produce such products.⁵⁷ The nomads of the steppe were integral to the flow of goods between cities, and as such are essential to a discussion of the vibrancy of a city like Bukhara. Of further import in relation to the vitality of Bukhara were the policies of its rulers of Bukhara who held power of the state and wielded it to best direct trade and diplomacy for their

⁵⁵ Richard W. Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel*. (Morningside ed. Columbia University Press, 1990), 221.

⁵⁶ Christian, *Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History*, 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

benefit.

Governmentality

The variety of trade routes and agents of trade that passed through Bukhara provided an opportunity for rulers to create regulations and enforce taxation to secure monetary wealth and political capital. The state and its sphere of governmentality handled the management of the various merchants coming in and out of the city as well as the relationship to forces outside the city, like the nomads and Russians. Foucault defines governmentality as the art of government with its different objects, general rules, and overall objectives to govern in the best way possible.⁵⁸ Expanding on this, to govern according to the principle of *raison d'État* (national interest) is to arrange the state into a sturdy and permanent institution, so that it becomes wealthy and strong in the face of everything that may destroy it.⁵⁹ Explained below are the methods of government in 19th century Bukhara, which ordered the internal management and regulation of civil society, the development of a permanent army and diplomatic dialog, and the organization of the state established to foster monetary accumulation. To understand governmentality in Bukhara, an examination of the three methods of government defined by Foucault will be reviewed; state involvement in trade, internal management, and the diplomatic relationships with other states. Using the accounts of Russian diplomatic missions to Bukhara, as well as translated documents of positions in the Bukharan government, a picture of governmentality in Bukhara will be created. But first it is worth mentioning who were the leaders of Bukhara.

⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

a. Leadership of Bukhara

The rulers of Bukhara were the Uzbeks, most likely a coalition of warrior clans under the leadership of the Shayban family taking the name of Uzbek Khan.⁶⁰ After the collapse of the Timurid empire the region was broken up between the Safavids in Iran and the Uzbeks of the Transoxania. Uzbek rule over Transoxania began with the Shaybanid dynasty in 1500 and ended in 1598, other Uzbek dynasties followed until the establishment of a Russian protectorate in 1868.⁶¹

The Khanate of Bukhara, first established in 1500, had struggled in earlier times to establish a strong central government. Under Manghit leadership beginning in 1785 the newly styled Emirate of Bukhara that succeeded the Chinggisid lineage achieved greater centralized power. This was accomplished under the leadership of Nasrullah (1827-1860) by reducing the power of the Uzbek tribal chieftains, creating a small, partly non-Uzbek standing army, and the use of a Persian-speaking bureaucratic class composed of the Emir's Persian slaves. The Emir was able to cultivate an image that catered to the religious class, both secular and the Sufi orders, as a devout Muslim and guardian of Islam. The result of this was greater internal stability, economic revival, population growth, and increased trade.⁶²

Western travellers styled the Khans and Emirs of Bukhara as 'oriental despots'; vicious and cruel to the population they ruled over. This contemporary narrative of European travellers runs alongside the historiography of Bukhara as remaining stagnate and in constant turmoil. In reality the Bukharan state accomplished a great deal of diplomatic relations and internal management of trade on par with other contemporary states.

⁶⁰ Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 339

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 344

⁶² Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 180.

b. Diplomatic Relations with Russia

One of the first methods of government outlined by Foucault is the development of permanent diplomacy with other states.⁶³ By opening up dialogue between states, agreements on trade and protocols for handling foreign merchants could be established. The continued flow of trade and diplomatic dialogue was a matter of survival for the state - without the revenues generated by trade, and the diplomatic relations necessary to that trade, the state would collapse. During the nineteenth century, one of the largest trading partners with Bukhara was Russia. The collapse of the Mughal Empire under British pressure altered the trade dynamic between Bukhara and India for the worse by 1800. Simultaneously, Russian interest in Central Asia had been resurrected, focusing on the acquisition of raw goods needed for manufacturers. This need for materials intensified following the Crimean War, which had disastrous effects on the Russian economy and public psyche.

The topic of trade and diplomacy was a constant source of tension between the Russian Empire and Emirate of Bukhara. Allworth describes the relationship between Russia and the Central Asian Khanates since the time of Timur as passive except when it came to trade. Between 1762 and 1819, 11 envoys were sent between Bukhara and Russia to improve trade relations.⁶⁴ These envoys were not always successful but were useful information gathering missions for Russia. The Russian envoy to Bukhara in 1839, Butenef, was to present Russian demands to the Emir of Bukhara. Of primary interest was the conclusion of a treaty of trade and cooperation with Russia. Second on the agenda was the liberation of Russian slaves. Third was gaining permission for allowing the imprisoned British agents Stoddart and Conolly

⁶³ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 5.

⁶⁴ Levi, *India, Russia and the Eighteenth-Century Transformation of the Central Asian Caravan Trade*, 537.

to return with Butenef in accordance with the promises made by the Emir, and fourth was the reduction of duties on Russian goods and merchants.⁶⁵ The envoy led by Butenef in 1839 was only successful in its secondary mission of compiling literature on Bukhara, the geography and climate, as well as extensive land and ethnographic surveys.⁶⁶

Russian policy was not one of conquest, instead, Tsarist policy was focused on securing the southern border of the empire that was constantly in flux due to Kazakh and other nomad raids on caravans and settlements. Allowing access to the markets of Central Asia was the principle goal; to do this the subjugation of the Kazakh, Turkmen, and Kyrgyz nomads had to be achieved.⁶⁷ Russian trade with the Central Asian Khanates in the mid nineteenth century totalled 6 percent of imports and 4.2 percent of exports out of all Asian trade. Trade with the Kazakhs constituted 13 percent of imports and 16.8 percent of exports out of all eastern trade for Russia. Trade between the nomadic people of the steppe and the Central Asian Khanates was very important part of Russian trade east of the Volga, greater control over these people to secure stable trade was an important policy for Russia.⁶⁸ Trade with Russia favoured Central Asians, and by 1865 all trade from Central Asia amounted to 4,704,000 Rubles, while trade to Central Asia was 3,775,000 Rubles.⁶⁹ The imbalance of trade shows the position Bukhara held, the access to markets aside from Russia allowed its merchants to access other markets, unlike Russian merchants who had access to European markets and struggled to penetrate Central Asian markets.

⁶⁵ Venuikof. *The Russians in Central Asia*, 448.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 451.

⁶⁷ Allworth, "Encounter", in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, 53-55.

⁶⁸ Allworth, "Encounter", in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, 27.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

The imbalance of trade had not always existed in this manner. Prior to the eighteenth century it was the merchants and governments of Central Asia who were courting Russia rather than the other way around. As early as the seventeenth century, the Khans would attempt to secure trade cooperation with Russia in order to protect trade against the Kalmyks. During this time the Russian government posed the biggest barrier to greater trade between the Khanates and Russia. Discriminatory levies on merchants traveling from Central Asia or harassment to sell goods at lower than market price was common practices. More aggressive tactics included the detaining of three ambassador-merchants from Khiva and Bukhara in 1623. This was done in order to influence diplomatic relations in Russia's favour but it ended up damaging relations for more than two decades.⁷⁰ This policy worked against Russian interest, excluding Russian merchants from Central Asia and allowing local merchants to control trade and caravan routes.⁷¹ It was now the Russians who were struggling to reach markets due to high levies on goods and discriminatory policies.

The tenuous relationship between Russia and Central Asia was not new to the nineteenth century. Michael Khodarkovsky argues that the relationship between early Muscovite rulers and the people of the Steppe was at its beginning "in a climate of mutual misconceptions".⁷² Citing a peace treaty signed in 1483 between the Muscovites and the chiefs of the Khanty and Mansi people; Russian chroniclers paint a very different picture to the one their neighbours created. The local chiefs considered the agreement a peace treaty

⁷⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁷¹ Ibid., 26.

⁷² Michael Khodarkovsky, "Ignoble Savages and Unfaithful Subjects": Constructing Non-Christian Identities in Early Modern Russia", in *Russian's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and People, 1700-1917*, ed. Daniel R. Brower, and Edward J. Lazzarini, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 10-11.

with strangers; while the Muscovites considered it an oath of allegiance. From this point on, with Ivan IV conquering of Kazan and Astrakhan, Russian scribes and chroniclers performed a deliberate process of constructing an image of the “other”. This act of othering is essential for the colonial endeavour to succeed.

New Russian Imperialist policies from the early eighteenth century onwards focused on pulling Central Asian merchants into Russian spheres of influence by force. The founding of Orenburg in 1735 and the licensing of Tsarist commercial organizations are two examples of this more aggressive strategy.⁷³ The Russian Captain Valikhanof saw the importance of Bukhara for the penetration of markets further on in Afghanistan and India. Part of a generation of military officers focused on the expansion of the Empire, Valikhanof created a list of objectives that would have to be met in order realize Russian goals in Central Asia. They were as follows: first, occupy the upper course of the Syr Darya in order to continue a military campaign against Bukhara and Kokand, second, secure footing on the Amu Darya to stop the trafficking of slaves and subdue the Turkmen tribes, third, connect a line of forts between the Syr Darya and Kyrgyz-Siberian, fourth, the establishment of military outposts like Orenburg, fifth, establish steam communication along the Syr Darya, sixth, establish Russian factories where there were currently Russian commercial relations, seventh, encourage agriculture among the nomads.⁷⁴ This colonial manifesto was more or less followed by Russian authorities until the suppression of the Turkmen nomads in 1884.

Overall, the leadership of Bukhara engaged in diplomatic and trade relations with Russia. The development of a Russian colonial attitude towards

⁷³ Allworth, “Encounter”, in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, 25.

⁷⁴ M. Venuikof, *The Russians in Central Asia*. Translated by John and Robert Michell. (London: Edward Stanford, 1865), 497.

the people and resources of Central Asia had been cultivated for centuries; the turning point in this relationship came in the nineteenth century, a product of the disastrous effects of the Crimean War and the increasing threat nomads presented to the fringes of the Empire. The lack of diplomacy was not due to the ineffectiveness of Bukharan leaders but rather a lack of need. The leadership and merchants of Bukhara realized that they did not need to force their way into Russian markets; instead they used their existing caravan routes and restricted or loosened trade from their end. Also, Bukhara did not rely on Russian markets, the availability of markets in India, China, Iran, and the Khanates of Khiva and Khokand were utilized to great effect.

c. Taxation and Bureaucracy

The final two methods of government Foucault outlines are state involvement in trade and internal management. These methods require the organization of the state in order to enrich itself through monetary accumulation, as well as the regulation of the countries internal affairs.⁷⁵ The collection of revenues by taxation and the enforcement of certain rules on trade allowed the state to regulate who came into the city and what business they conducted. But the state also had to balance the use of its power, high taxes and over regulation would restrict trade and cause tension among the merchants. The collection of taxes, the distribution of water, arbitration of disputes, and the enforcement of the code of law were conducted by an organized central bureaucracy that reported directly to the Emir.

To properly govern, the Emir created a bureaucracy that reported directly to him with administrators in charge of particular public services and maintaining the daily operations of a large bureaucratic system. Towards this end, the *majma' al-arqam*, an administrative manual for the Bukharan

⁷⁵ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 5.

government, was published in 1798. It outlines some of the high level positions that dealt with important public services. In this document four offices of the bureaucracy directly related to taxes and government documents are listed. First, the *divan-i kalan* (high divan) managed all documentation of *tankha*, *tilgu*, etc. Second, the *mushrif*, was in charge of recording government inventory of shields, clothes, assorted gifts, etc. Third, the *daftardar*, decided on affairs of the highest registrars, repeals, or approves *tankha* or *soyurgal*. Fourth, the *divan tanabana*, dealt with all land tax.⁷⁶ The establishment of such specific office holders, and orders of authority, demonstrate the complexity of the Bukhara central administration.

To fill the cities coffers, three major taxes were charged both inside and outside of the city; these were the *tamgha*, the *baj*, and the *zakat*. The *tamgha* was paid on sales and acted as an import tax at the frontiers of the emirate; it was typically 10 percent of the value of the goods. The *baj* was an internal transport tax paid to the towns that goods moved through, it was 2 percent of the total value of goods. The *zakat* was the tax collected for distribution to the poor; it was similar to the practice across the Muslim world and typically amounted to around 2.5 percent of earnings.⁷⁷ The percentage of taxes charged fluctuated depending on the political and social climate of Bukhara. Furthermore, and according to some accounts, the entry tax goods for Christians was 5 percent while it was half that for Muslims.⁷⁸ Mohan Lal estimated that the annual revenue collected in taxes in Bukhara was 20,000 *tillas*, one *tilla* being equivalent to 6.5 rupees. In addition to the tax on Muslims and Christians, Hindus were also taxed upon entering the city.⁷⁹ To

⁷⁶ Scott C. Levi, and Ron Sela, *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Indiana University Press, 2010), 271.

⁷⁷ Burton, *The Bukharans*, 414.

⁷⁸ Scott C. Levi, and Ron Sela, *Islamic Central Asia*, 258.

⁷⁹ Lal, *Travels*, pg. 138.

collect these revenues and record the amounts, four positions of the administration existed, composed of Uzbeks and learned *sayyids*. The first position was the *faizi*, a scholar who had the responsibility of the *mukhtasib* (judge) outside of the city. Second, was the *mir-i asad* a scholar in charge of the duties of the *mukhtasib* inside the city among the *sayyids*. Third, was the *sadr* who was the head of all registration of *waqf* in Bukhara. Finally, the *sudur* dealt with all *waqf* registration outside of the city. One of the most important positions in the city was that of the *divanbegi*, he was responsible for the collection of all revenue from land in addition to being in charge of the official of the chancellery.⁸⁰

The development of a bureaucracy to collect revenues from land and on goods entering the city was essential to the continuation of Bukhara's governance. These revenues allowed the leaders to continue holding their positions of affluence as well as providing for the defence and improvement of the city. The leadership of Bukhara did not force trade towards one direction or another, instead letting the goods pass through and allow the revenues to enrich the city.

Facilitation of Trade and Commerce

There were a great variety of goods that passed through the markets of Bukhara, but for the purposes of this discussion only the trade of horses and slaves, as well as the agricultural and mineral commodities will be examined. These two groups of products represent the foundation of the economy of nomadic and settled life. The trade in horses and slaves was carried out almost exclusively by pastoral nomads, while settled populations possessed the capability to produce agricultural products and mine the earth for minerals. The study of these two categories will shed light on the relationship between

⁸⁰ Scott C. Levi, and Ron Sela, *Islamic Central Asia*, 271.

nomadic and settled populations and the precarious nature of their livelihoods.

a. Horses and Slaves

The success of the city as an urban center was in part due to the direct involvement of the nomadic population of the steppe. Gommans argues that the incorporation of nomads into the settled economic system allowed for the expansion of trade and agrarian production due to the mobile nature of nomadic life.⁸¹ Echoing Bulliet's argument, nomads were seen as a benefit to settled populations and had a great impact on trade and commerce in Central Asia. Arminius Vambery notes that along the travel routes, between cities, one could exchange knives, glass beads, needles, thread, and pocket-handkerchiefs for food and other supplies with the nomadic people.⁸² Aside from these smaller exchanges, nomads were involved in two very profitable and in-demand commodities being moved around Central Asia; these were horses and slaves.

Horses were integral to the Central Asian economy. They were brought to markets in Kabul from Bukhara and Balkh to be sold to Indian merchants. Horses were also the means to the establishment and maintenance of empire; for Timur, Babur, and Nadir Shah, the use of cavalry to quickly conquer large amounts of territory was crucial in their empire building campaigns. India presented a unique challenge to long-term occupation; there was a lack of pastures for grazing in India due to the extreme heat that followed rainfall and the best land was devoted to agricultural production. The arid soil created a barrier to expansion that forced rulers to make a decision as to how they would continue to mobilize their armies.⁸³

Pastoral nomads in the Kalmyk and Kazakh steppes bred most horses,

⁸¹ Jos J. L. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire c. 1710-1780*. (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 14-15.

⁸² Vambery, *The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry*, 230-231.

⁸³ Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire c. 1710-1780*, 16-17.

as well as in the Qizil Qum desert east of the Caspian Sea. Pastoral nomads lifestyle made them the ideal breeders of horses, these nomads would breed the horses and bring them to markets to be sold in exchange for goods otherwise unattainable to nomads living on the steppe. These horses were usually sold at the markets in Balkh, Bukhara, and Herat. In the summer horses would be led to pasture by nomads for one to two months, being fattened for sale in the southern Afghan pastures around Kabul and Kandahar. Joining the caravansaries in October and November, these horses were brought across the Sulaiman Mountains either through the Kyber or Bolan Pass, which would determine their ultimate destination in India.⁸⁴ Mohan Lal took notice of the horse trade while heading to Bukhara by way of Kabul.

Great part of their merchandize is conveyed to Bokhara, which furnishes the merchants in return with fine silks, and also with a good breed of beautiful horses. These fine animals, purchased in Kabul, are sold in India at a price, quadruple their original cost, surpassing the expectations of their first Uzbek masters.⁸⁵

The quality of horses was determined more by geography than by breed; horses were grouped into three categories. The first category came from Arabia and Iran and was referred to as *Bahri* and *Tazi* respectively. The second were called *Turki*, as the name suggests they came from Turkistan and Afghanistan. The third category came from Kohistan (the Himalaya hills in northern India) and was referred as *Kohi*. These are not clear distinctions of breeds but refer to geographic region of import; in reality these horses were crossbred with a variety of breeds.⁸⁶ The geographic landscape of Central Asia once again plays a role in its importance and integration into the larger

⁸⁴ Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire c. 1710-1780*, 79-80.

⁸⁵ Lal, *Travels*, 77.

⁸⁶ Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire c. 1710-1780*, 75-76.

transcontinental economy; the trade-in horses follows Christian's argument of a trans-ecological exchange between the nomadic horse breeders and agrarian settled population of India.

The diverse ecology of Central Asia necessitated the exchange between settled and nomadic peoples, slaves provided a low cost-high return investment to nomads that fit their way of life, allowing them to trade for products otherwise not available in the steppe or desert. The primary goods exchanged for horses were Hindu slaves from India, flesh for flesh. The movement of slaves across north-western India predates the Islamic period; Bukharan *waqfnamas* show large numbers of Hindu slaves as well as other slaves being listed as early as 1326. These slaves were used to cultivate fields, repair canals, maintain gardens, act as household servants, and serve as soldiers. Indian stonemasons were sold and sent to Samarqand to build the Bibi Khanum mosque following Timur's sack of Delhi.⁸⁷ When Anthony Jenkinson was traveling through Bukhara in 1558, he remarked that the slave market of Bukhara was the largest in the region, consisting of Persians, Russians, and Afghans captured by Turkmen.⁸⁸ War was an important supplier of slaves; following the Mughal retreat from Balkh in 1647, large numbers of Indian soldiers were captured and sold as slaves. This flooded the market with slaves and drastically reduced the price of a young male from 225 *tanga* in 1589 to 84 *tanga* in 1647.⁸⁹ In Bukhara, Arminius Vambery states that before war in Iran a male slave could be sold for forty to fifty *tillas* but following the defeat of the Persians at Merv the price dropped as low as three to four *tillas*. During that conflict, as many as 10, 000 slaves had been taken, overloading

⁸⁷ Scott Levi, *Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade, 1550-1900*, (The Brill's Inner Asian Library, Volume 3, 2002), 61-62.

⁸⁸ Anthony Jenkinson, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, 89.

⁸⁹ Levi, *Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade*, 64.

the market with supply.⁹⁰ Autumn was a particularly busy period for trade; with 100 to 150 slaves being presented in each caravanserai. When the market was in large supply of slaves, the price would drop to 20 to 30 roubles for a male slave, but young boys always fetched a higher price.⁹¹

According to some accounts, the nomadic population really drove the slave market in Central Asia. The English Missionary and traveller James Wolff came to Sarakhs in 1831, a small Turkmen encampment on the Eastern shore of the Caspian Sea. Here he learned that Sarakhs was the center of the slave trade for the Turkmen, serving as a meeting place and bazaar for slaves before they were sent to Khiva and Bukhara.⁹² Pastoral nomads were the main agents in this trade of flesh that created great wealth in the cities of Central Asia. The nature of their way of life made them the ideal brokers in this trans-ecological trade. Due to the nature of nomadic life, agriculture was not as popular as breeding livestock and the capture of slaves in raiding parties. Because of this roaming lifestyle, nomads were forced to engage in trade with settled populations like Bukhara to obtain the vital items otherwise not available on the steppe. Livestock and slaves were brought to markets in Bukhara to be traded for foodstuffs such as grain, vegetables, and fruits, as well as finished goods like earthenware, metal products, and textiles.

The number of slaves in the region is in dispute, due to the lack of documents listing figures or personal accounts of slaves, an entire group of people becomes voiceless and simply a commodity. The only available numbers are those from travellers who did not have complete access to the places slaves resided, making any estimate unreliable. The American traveller and adventurer, Josiah Harlan, travelling through Afghanistan in the 1830s

⁹⁰ Vambéry, *The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry*, 220.

⁹¹ Verestchagin, *Vassili Verestchagin*, 100-102.

⁹² James Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and Other Sects*. (Philadelphia: Orrin Rogers, 1837), 111.

accounts the inhabitants around Kunduz,

Consists chiefly of slaves, who have been removed in large bodies from distant and refractory districts under the pretext of insurrectionary movements...This market opens an insatiable outlet for the disposal of Muraad's insubordinate subjects, thousands of whom, with the useful and inoffensive Hazarrahs and the natives of Chitraul, are sold into distant and irredeemable bondage! ⁹³

While the accounts of travelers in the region should be read with suspicion regarding the veracity of entire cities composed of slaves, there is some truth to the estimates of slaves in the region. While in Bukhara in 1832, the British traveller and spy Alexander Burnes remarked that three quarters of the people in Bukhara were descendants from slaves captured in Iran.⁹⁴ Burnes realized the scale of slavery in Bukhara and how the importation of slaves changed the demography of the city over several generations. The pervasiveness of slavery in Central Asia, and the reliance on nomads to supply slave markets, reinforced their integration into the settled economic sphere. The settled population of Bukhara lacked the means to gather slaves on a large scale outside of the setting of war, in addition the political upheaval that would be caused by Bukhara's direct involvement in the capturing of slaves made the practice undesirable. Nomads possessed the means to easily capture poorly protected settlers on the fringe of the Russian Empire, once captured the nomads would bring the slaves to markets in Bukhara to be traded for products otherwise unattainable on the steppe.

The origin of slaves sold in Bukhara changed in the nineteenth century

⁹³ Josiah Harlan, *Central Asia: Personal Narrative of General Josiah Harlan 1823-1841*. (London: Luzac & Co, 1939), 44-45.

⁹⁴ Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 276.

from Indian to Iranian and Russian. Baron Meyendorff in 1821 estimated between 25,000 to 40,000 Iranian slaves in Bukhara. In the 1860s British agents assessing the trade and resources of Central Asia stated that 100,000 slaves live in the Emirate of Bukhara, 20,000 just in the city.⁹⁵ The exact number of Iranian slaves is again uncertain, but the presence of the slaves noted by these travellers' shows a change in the supply of slaves in the nineteenth century. Muslims were not to be sold into slavery but frequently Persian Shi'as were captured and sold into slavery due to the poorly guarded open areas on the fringes of Iran. Arminius Vambéry called the inhabitants of Bukhara hypocritical for buying and selling Muslims, which was forbidden in Islamic law.⁹⁶ Because the majority of Persians were Shi'a the orthodox Sunni khans were able to allow their enslavement because of their heretical beliefs. Similarly, Russian settlers living at the frontier of the Empire were easy targets for slave raiders.

The decline in the number of horses traded in India corresponds with the period of increased raids into Russian territory to secure slaves. As the prospect of reward in horse breeding reduced, the incentive to raid settlements and take captives increased for nomadic peoples. Turkmen raiders targeted Russian settlers on the fringes of the Empire; due to the huge expanse of land and relatively few Russian forts these people became easy targets for the fast moving horse riders. Between 1750-1850 there was an intensification of kidnappings to supply the slave trade by Kazakhs, Turkmen, Khivans, and Bukharans. Economic downturn and increased sanctions by Russia against Central Asian traders forced the increase of raids on Russian settlements, with Russian slaves fetching better prices than Persian slaves.⁹⁷ Russia did have its

⁹⁵ Levi, *Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade*, 68.

⁹⁶ Vambéry, *The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry*, 219-220.

⁹⁷ Allworth, "Encounter", in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth 33-34.

own thriving slave trade and by the seventeenth century Tobolsk and Astrakhan were primary slave markets. The Tsar had a monopoly on all slaves exported, licenses were granted to Central Asian merchants to purchase slaves in Russia. The main suppliers for Russian slave markets were Kazakhs and Bukharans who usually brought slaves from Siberia and Kalmyk territory.⁹⁸

There are several factors involved in the decline of the Central Asian exchange of horses and slaves. Gommans attributes the decline in the demand for Central Asian horses to the quality requirements for British cavalry that required a much taller, stronger, and heavier horse to sustain a fully loaded British dragoon. British predilections for Arabian horses imported from Iraq to Bengal played a role in the reduction of demand for local horses as well.⁹⁹ This decline in horses meeting qualifications was in part due to the loss of interregional trade with Northwest India and Central Asia, owing to westward expansion of the British in India. There was a mirrored relationship between westward expansion of the British and a decline in trade eastward.¹⁰⁰ Centuries-old trade networks were eliminated, not due to maritime trade routes, but due to colonial expansion, which fundamentally altered the economic arrangement of the region.

The Central Asian horse trade declined further after the complete colonial conquest following the Indian Mutiny of 1857. In fact, merchants had already been utilizing sea routes to move goods around the region, including horses. There was a specific name for horses brought over by sea called *Bahri* or “sea” horses. These horses were seen as being stronger and more desirable because they had survived the journey.¹⁰¹ The subjugation of India as a colonial entity of the British Empire also eliminated the supply of slaves that

⁹⁸ Allworth, “Encounter”, in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, 31.

⁹⁹ Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire c. 1710-1780*, 98.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pg. 96-97.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pg. 83-84.

had fed Central Asian markets for centuries, forcing new sources of supply to be found. All of these factors played a role in the elimination of the transcontinental horse and slave trade; the common thread being the encroachment of the imperial powers Russia and Britain. Such realities put in questions narratives of decline that focus on economic atrophy in trading centers like Bukhara

Similarly, Muzaffar Alam attributes the decline in the slave trade between India and Central Asia to the creation of a textile manufacturing industry in India, as this new industry no longer required the exchange of Central Asian horses for slaves.¹⁰² The competition thesis, which proposes that introduction of long-distance maritime trade by European companies disrupted trade, does not illustrate a complete picture for the change in trade in the region. The reduction in the slave trade directly affected the livelihood of nomads who relied on the exchange of horses and slaves for products in the city that they could not produce. The loss of profitable trade forced the nomadic population to seek new economic opportunity by raiding caravans and isolated settlements. When the trade between India and Bukhara was strong and flowed freely, nomads were integrated into the economy and a peaceful relationship was sustained. With the end of this trade the nomads were forced to seek new livelihoods by capturing Persians and Russians and putting them into bondage. This reorientation of the slave trade to the North and West was a source of contention for Qajar Iran and Tsarist Russia as it depopulated their outer territories and posed a significant security threat.

b. Agricultural and Mineral Commodities

Two very important commodities have already been mentioned, but these were only two of an abundance of commodities that passed through

¹⁰² Alam, *Trade, State Policy and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, C. 1550-1750*, 208.

Bukhara. Anthony Jenkinson took note of the many products found in the bazaars of Bukhara: Indian merchants trade cotton for slaves, horses, silks, red hides originally from Russia, and cotton cloth. Persian merchants arrive with wool cloth, linen, wrought silk, horses to trade for these red hides and slaves. Russian merchants brought with them red hides, sheepskin, wool and bridle saddles, exchanging these goods for cotton products, silk, musk, and rhubarb.¹⁰³ Similarly Thompson and Hogg saw cotton, lambskins, rice, cattle, soap, cotton-yarn, and calicoes all produced in Bukhara and traded in Persia for velvet, silk, woollen cloth, indigo, coral, and cochineal, as well as lapis lazuli and other precious stones, traded from Badakhshan.¹⁰⁴ One account of a merchant from Kabul shows the distances merchants and products would go for the best profit; Mullah Rahim Shah bought cashmere shawls for 17,000 rupees from Bukhara and travelled by way of Orenburg to reach the Makria market in Russia. There he sold these shawls for 34,000 rupees, after a transit duty of 200 rupees per shawl.¹⁰⁵ Doubling his money on these shawls shows how lucrative markets were in Russia as well as the profitability of the trade. Other accounts list the most noteworthy trade items as cotton, silk, precious metals and stones, and agricultural products.

Cotton could be found in a variety of forms. In her study of trade in Bukhara, Audrey Burton found six types of pure cotton and three types of mixtures of cotton and other fibers in her research on trade and commodities in Bukhara.¹⁰⁶ Cotton was made into a variety of fabrics, including chintz, muslins, calicos, and glazed and unglazed woven clothes. These were all sold as partly-finished product or as finished goods like tablecloths, shirts, drapes, and caftans.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Jenkinson, *Early Voyages*, 88-90.

¹⁰⁴ Scott C. Levi, and Ron Sela, *Islamic Central Asia*, 259

¹⁰⁵ Lal, *Travels*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ Burton, *The Bukharans*, 363.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, pg. 369.

Central Asia was reliant on Indian cotton due to the limited amount of agricultural land in Central Asia. The relationship was mutual, as India required the vast amount of horses that flowed from Central Asia into India. For this reason raw cotton did not constitute a large amount of exports from Central Asia until the later half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸ The Russian envoy to Bukhara in 1842, M. Khanikoff, noted that there were only 500 square miles of cultivated land and that a lack of water made agriculture difficult.¹⁰⁹ Bukhara's soil was composed of a clayey saline soil with sand steppes surrounded by huge mountain ranges to the northeast and a slope to the southwest.¹¹⁰ This description of Bukhara shows that it was not an ideal place for large-scale agricultural production; instead it was a place of commerce and selective agricultural production.

Russian customhouses in 1865 recorded that cotton represented 74 percent of all commerce with Central Asia. Raw cotton exports to Russia accounted for 74.1 percent of all cotton exports from Central Asia, while fabricated cotton increased from 8.7 percent to 55.1 percent by 1840.¹¹¹ These numbers represent Russian evaluation of goods in the mid-nineteenth century; they show that Central Asian trade in cotton composed a significant portion of trade with Russia. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find exact values or trustworthy assessments of value before the consolidation of the Orenburg line that would bring Russian bureaucracy to the steppe.

As mentioned, the agricultural production in Bukhara was limited mainly to foodstuffs. Khanikoff observed a variety of vegetables grown in the city: carrots, cabbages, onions, beetroot, radishes, peas, lentils, beans, melons,

¹⁰⁸ Levi, *Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade, 1550-1900*, 77.

¹⁰⁹ Venuikof, *The Russians in Central Asia*, 476.

¹¹⁰ Khanikoff, *Bokhara Its Amir and Its People*, 27.

¹¹¹ Allworth, "Encounter", in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth, 29.

watermelons, and pumpkins.¹¹² Garden culture among the rich was also present in Bukhara. In these gardens there were a variety of fruits grown: apricots, figs, pomegranates, peaches, prunes, apples, pears, cherries, to name a few.¹¹³ Foodstuffs were also exported to Siberia, India, and as far as China either fresh, dried, or as seeds. The cost of foodstuffs in Siberia was much higher than in Bukhara and proved a profitable trade for Bukharan merchants.¹¹⁴ Bukharans held a monopoly on the transportation of rhubarb from China to Iran and Muscovy. Its roots were dried as to prevent the sticky bitter juice from leaking out; the process took close to two months before it could be safely exported. Rhubarb was used for medicinal purposes, usually to stimulate appetite, cure indigestion, strengthen bodily functions, and control scurvy.¹¹⁵

Agricultural foodstuffs and textiles like cotton were in high demand and required a system of connected trade networks to supply markets and transport raw goods. Bukharan textiles filled markets in Siberia and other cities of Central Asia, but the limited fertile soil meant the raw cotton required for these textiles had to be imported from India. A prosperous Indian textile market would emerge that reduced the monopoly held by Bukhara although Bukharan finished cotton goods still remained in demand. The greater political circumstances reduced the ability for Bukharan merchants to peddle their goods in the nineteenth century. British India, by the nineteenth century had been turned into a colonial state for the extraction of raw materials to be finished in Britain and sold back in India; this flooded the market with cheaper goods pushing out Bukharan goods. The decline of Bukharan goods in India and Central Asia was not due to their ability to produce quality products but

¹¹² Khanikoff, *Bokhara Its Amir and Its People*, 177-178.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 155-156.

¹¹⁴ Burton, *The Bukharans*, 380.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 383-384.

their inability to combat the British colonial apparatus. The Russian conquest of Tashkent also effected Bukhara's ability to compete with Russia, the city was used similarly to that of British India for the extraction of raw materials to feed Russian markets.

Conclusion

The traditional historiography of Central Asia during the eighteenth and nineteenth century describes a region isolated from the world, full of fanatics enslaving Christians in life-long bondage, and in a constant state of economic and cultural stagnation. Change comes with the Russian conquest of the region and its reintroduction into the global economic system. Central Asia and its many cities did not cease to exist as a physical location, merchants and travellers still had to pass through the deserts and grasslands to reach other lucrative markets before the arrival of the Russians. The formative environment forced a form of exchange between the many nomadic people and the sedentary population of cities like Bukhara that fostered an environment of inclusivity that made trade possible. These nomads have often been seen as a driving force behind the political chaos and stagnation of the region, as well as older associations of deforestation and desertification with the arrival of nomads by contemporary thinkers.¹¹⁶

This paper has attempted to show that the current historiography of Central Asia continues to perpetuate a narrative that enforces the colonial heritage of the region. The nature of the commodities being traded in Bukhara shows that there was a constant exchange of goods and people from across the continent, following the same routes that once carried Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam and other cultural exchanges from the Pacific Ocean, to the artic of Siberia, down to the Indian ocean, and across to the Mediterranean Sea. The

¹¹⁶ Khazeni, *Across the Black Sands and the Red*, 599.

reassessment of this historiography asks how trade changed instead of associating change with internal decline. This starting point allows for a better understanding of the historical complexities of the region.

By examining the role of different commodities in creating a trans-ecological exchange, I have attempted to show that pastoral nomads were not bringers of chaos, but active agents in a vibrant economic system. This also shows a deeper connection between the people of the steppe and the people of the sown that extends beyond Bukhara into other ecological zones. Reviewing the merchants themselves also sheds light on who was moving around Bukhara, what they were selling and the cosmopolitanism that resulted. We learn of a community of Indians in Bukhara who are deeply-connected with the commercial activity of the city, and that their presence helped form strong bonds to other commercial hubs such as Multan, Peshawar, Bamian, and Kabul. The merchants of Bukhara were also important mediators of trade between these various hubs, as well as being experienced long-distance traders themselves.

Bukhara and its inhabitants were mediators, as well as active agents in the largest single highway of exchange in history. The routes that ran through Bukhara would allow travellers to cross a variety of ecological and cultural zones. The success of the city was in part due to its physical location on the edge of the steppe and desert, this location created a space for commodities of all kinds to flow and allowed the government of Bukhara to extract taxes and engage in diplomacy so trade could continue unobstructed. The Soviet era historiography that took on a similar narrative to the Tsarist Russian narrative of 'joining' and 'inclusion' for the better of the Bukharan people has in term effected the contemporary historiography of the city. Reassessing the historiography of Bukhara by asking questions that do not focus on 'decline' but on how change occurred provides greater insight into this astonishing city

106

during the nineteenth century.

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Jason Marlatt's interest in Islamic studies came late during his studies at Ryerson, but quickly became dedicated to this expansive field. Beginning with Middle Eastern history, Jason gradually came to focus on Central Asia and Islamic mysticism. Discovering that this geographic area does not receive nearly as much attention as other areas of Islamic study. His thesis, *Between the Steppe and the Sown: Rethinking Bukharan Urban History, 1800-1884*, focused on the city of Bukhara, long a center of Islamic learning, and the reassessment of the historiography of the city. Using sources detailing the extensive trade routes to Bukhara, demographic characteristics of the city, geography of the region, and governmentality, he attempts to reposition nineteenth century Bukhara as a cosmopolitan center rather than a city in isolation and decay. Jason plans on continuing his current work on this subject and expand into Sufism, holy sites, and the trans-ecological exchange between pastoral nomads and settled populations in Central Asia.

Editorial Board

Ryan Vopni

Ryan is in his final year of at Ryerson, where he will be graduating with a major in History and a minor in Politics. In addition to working on the Ryerson Historical Review, Ryan is the Co-Leader of the International Issues Discussion Series, and the President of Ryerson History Society. His main academic interest is twentieth-century Chinese history, and he hopes to continue his studies through a Master's degree in Chinese History.

Rabiah Choksi

Rabiah is in her second year at Ryerson. She is currently pursuing a degree in History, with a minor in Criminology. In addition to working on the Ryerson Historical Review, Rabiah is also the Vice President of the Ryerson History Society, and will reprise her role for the upcoming academic year. Her main academic interests lie within American history. Rabiah hopes to pursue law school after graduation, with aspirations of becoming a Supreme Court Judge.

Aviva Gomes-Bhatt

Aviva is in her second year at Ryerson. She is currently pursuing a double major in History and English. In addition to working on the Ryerson Historical Review, Aviva is also the Minister of Communications for the Ryerson History Society, and works as a member of the Ryerson Student Engagement and Leadership Team. For now, she is happy to keep her options open, and enjoys exploring various pathways within her disciplines.

Alexandra Ouzounis

Alexandra is in her first year at Ryerson. As she begins her second year, she will be pursuing a double major in history and English. In addition to working on the Ryerson Historical Review, Alexandra is the Chief of Staff for the Ryerson History Society. Alexandra is interested in the editing and publishing industry but is open to exploring other fields.

Claire Smyth

Claire is a first year student at Ryerson University. She is pursuing a English and History double major and hopes to study library science after her time at Ryerson. Claire has enjoyed being a part of the editing process for the Ryerson Historical Review and participating in the Ryerson History Society this year. She excited to return for her second year.

Grace van Vliet

Grace is currently in her third year at Ryerson University, pursuing a History degree with a focus on Modern European History, specifically the Second World War. She is the co-host for the International Issues Discussions Series and holds the position of Minister of Education in the Ryerson History Society. As she transitions into her final year, Grace plans on completing a senior thesis on the manipulation of language in the legislation of Vichy France. She will also be heading the International Issues Discussions and will be the next President of the Ryerson History Society. After completing her undergraduate degree, she plans to continue on to do graduate research, hopefully abroad in France or Germany, and then complete a P.hD in order to become a professor.