one that might be partly explained by other moments in the author's exceptional ethnographic-style research. Notably, she shows elements in the Serbia methodology of taking over certain areas that is not widely known or, strangely, accepted when it is pointed out, such as making non-Serbs wear white armbands to distinguish themselves (with echoes of the yellow "J" armbands required of Jews under Nazi rule), moving from there into acutely targeted violence against civilians. It is the depth of atrocity in those situations that gives the sense that recovery from the 1990s will be even harder than from the 1940s. This is all the more so, given that the "long-term. . . lack of legal action against perpetrators. . . reduces the likelihood of reconciliation" (128).

The book is a landmark success in its highly original ethnographic-style research and the account it offers of communities, especially in Croatia before, during, and after war—albeit in retrospective perspective. That is not the whole book, however, and in its other aspects, this wonderful research is perhaps let down. Aside from odd, ill-informed comments—such as the suggestion that the kind of action against civilians might in some way be usual military practice—the book is weaker in two respects. The first of these concerns the comparative material offered regarding Uganda and Guatemala. I can see exactly how someone—perhaps a PhD supervisor, perhaps an editor at the press, perhaps a peer reviewer—might have made a suggestion to broaden the material by adding some comparison, either to make inferences "stronger" and give the material greater "validity," or to widen its potential audience. Whatever the reason, it is a pity because this comparative material never has the texture and strength of the research on Croatia. That weakens the focus on the Croatia material and simultaneously makes the impression gleaned from that material less. The second weakness concerns the title—and with it the main argument taken. Viz., the communities in which these atrocities occur are "amoral communities"—ones in which morality, or a moral compass, has been removed. While making for a catchy theme, this is simply not the right term—these are not "amoral communities" (one reference to Guatemala on page 136, excepted), but rather what I might term hyper-moral communities, that is, ones in which the moral line has been skewed to one end of the spectrum—one extreme—giving an ethic of narrow "right" and broad "wrong," meaning that one position, or one ethnic identity, is the singular version of "right." Morality is distorted and the complex pattern of "wrong" and "right" negotiations that mark ethics are drawn to one pole. But, morality and ethics, in these, perhaps unpleasant shapes remain. Those involved in narrowing the frame and committing atrocities will still feel themselves to be acting morally. This is a point that Dragojević should really have noted, as the point appears on page 112, where she notes that "morality was defined in national, or ethnic, terms, rather than a more universal way." That is the point. It is morality, but one that is very particular and extreme—not open and inclusive. It would have made excellent material even stronger had this been properly recognised and argued—especially as recognising that distorted reality may be an important step dealing with the past.

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Russian Practices of Governance in Eurasia: Frontier Power Dynamics, Sixteenth Century to Nineteenth Century. By Gulnar T. Kendirbai. London: Routledge Publishers, 2020. xiii, 232 pp. Index. Figures. Maps. $124.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2021.110

Gulnar T. Kendirbai's *Russian Practices of Governance in Eurasia: Frontier Power Dynamics, Sixteenth Century to Nineteenth Century* is a book with two critical claims.

First, local traditions arising from the "mobility" needs of nomadic peoples in the north Asian steppes defined the Russian (as well as Qing) policies toward this region between the sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. Second, semiotics provides a useful probe to understand the "frontier power dynamics" that characterized these policies. Unfortunately, both claims are made in passing, without proper engagement with the relevant English-language literature, and without elaborate analytical sections in the text that could substantiate and sufficiently explain the author's claims.

Andreas Kappeler highlighted the steppe's centrality in Russia's eastward expansion for German and English-language readers. Kendirbai evokes Kappeler's theory about the "gathering of the lands of the Golden Horde" (25) but without referencing him—which appears to be an oversight—or engaging the idea in depth. Then, Michael Khodarkovsky suggested that fundamental incompatibilities between the sedentary Russian and nomadic steppe traditions propelled Russia's expansion into the region by forcing it to defend its territories against the incursions of ever-warring nomads. Kendirbai's entire narrative can be considered a response to this theory, but again, without proper elaboration on the theory. She suggests that rather than being on the defensive, Russia actively involved itself in the rivalries of the Kalmyk and Kazakh nomadic elites over pasturelands and benefited from this involvement. It secured trade routes, buffered itself from its imperial rivals across the steppe, and in the long run, acquired new territories and subjects. Kendirbai's detailed analyses of the diplomatic language, gift politics, and ceremonial engagements that characterized Russia's involvement in the region convincingly demonstrate her argument. These analyses are inspired by Richard Wortman's work on the semiotics of imperial governance, and Kendirbai thanks him personally for his instrumentality in clarifying the book's direction (xi). The theoretical relevance of Wortman's work, however, is not spelled out in the narrative.

Thus, for those who are already familiar with the scholarship on Russia's eastward expansion and can identify the reference points, this monograph provides a useful corrective based on a synthesis of Russian-language secondary sources, primary sources that have appeared in print, and some archival material. The text is not gentle on uninitiated readers because of a failure to introduce individuals, institutions, key events, and technical terms sufficiently or as they first appear. However, for non-specialists willing to put some extra research into the reading experience, the book can still be eye-opening. Kendirbai's example of the north Asian steppe strikingly shows the insufficiency of Eurocentric concepts and analytical tools to understand the politics and culture of other regions around the world, especially before the advent of European modernity. The book illustrates how "they do things differently there"—to use Leslie Poles Hartley's wise words—and challenges us to try to understand the steppe of the past in its own terms.

The Kalmyks and Kazakhs occupied the post-Mongol world of the steppes where nomadic leaders of Chingissid descent ensured the following of lesser nobles by continually searching for and securing pasture lands and regulating their followers' access to it. In return, the lesser nobles and their ordinary followers offered the leaders their services in the frequent conflicts resulting from the constant mobility of tribes in search of land. If a leader proved incapable of securing access to needed pastures or failed to win its followers' loyalty through his generosity, arbitration skills, and kinship politics, the lesser nobles and ordinary nomads could vote with their feet and move to the protection of other leaders. Occasionally, a Chingissid leader's fortunes rose thanks to large land grasps made possible by the accumulation of followers during migration into power vacuums that the steppe offered. Over time, a more centralized power structure evolved among Kalmyks with the spread of Tibetan Buddhism, but the Muslim Kazakhs remained fragmented to the end.

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The Russian monarchs entered into this ecological, economic, political, and cultural context during their eastward expansion and quickly noticed that they could use sedentary Russia's resources to become the "*khan*" makers of the steppe by offering protection, titles, gifts, and land access to the nomadic leaders of their choice. They lacked the administrative and military resources to incorporate steppe lands into the empire's core territories until the nineteenth century. However, incorporation was not a desirable move regardless, since the steppe's fractured power configurations conveniently buffered Russia from the Jungar and—after its destruction in 1758—Qing empires. Meanwhile, tsarist agents mastered the steppe traditions, pitting competing nomadic groups against one another, luring aspirant leaders to the Russian sphere of influence, and making sure that the nomads neither united into a formidable force nor fell too weak to be swallowed by rival empires.

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***The Central Asian Revolt of 1916: A Collapsing Empire in the Age of War and Revolution*.** Eds. Aminat Chokobaeva, Cloé Drieu, and Alexander Morrison. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020. xix, 360 pp. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Maps. Tables. $120.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2021.111

This volume is an important addition to a spate of recent publications rethinking events that transpired in the Russian Empire just over a century ago. Like many of these publications, one of its aims is to place the history of the Central Asian Revolt—or, more accurately, *revolts* (3)—within a broader historical context that includes World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the ensuing civil war. Chapters by Ian Campbell, Alexander Morrison, and Jörn Happel emphasize Central Asia's relationship with the Russian empire, enabling comparison with imperial collapse in other borderland regions and with other anti-colonial rebellions globally, while contributions by Danielle Ross, Xavier Hallez, and Isabelle Ohayon place the rebellion within longer histories of Central Asia and the Kazakh Steppe. The essays in the volume are deeply researched, drawing on published and archival materials; particularly noteworthy is the use of non-Russian primary sources, including Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uyghur oral and written poetry and folksongs. Daniel Prior's translation of a Kyrgyz narrative in verse is itself a valuable contribution to indigenous sources about the revolts. The volume should also be commended on its international authorship and inclusion of numerous contributions from Central Asian scholars.

Although the articles do not have to be read in particular order, *The Central Asian Revolt of 1916* lends itself to a thorough reading from the introduction through Chapter 14. Each successive chapter, while not building directly on the research in previous chapters, contributes to the emergence of a cohesive picture of the events of 1916 and their aftermath, with minor differences in interpretation or emphasis; cross-references to other essays in the volume help to keep track of complementarities and differences between authors' arguments. According to the account that emerges, the removal by decree on June 25, 1916 (not 1915, as stated on page 15) of a cherished privilege—the exemption of *inorodtsy* from military service—was the "spark" igniting a series of separate but related revolts across Russian Turkestan. Although it is clear that local specificities mattered, certain factors emerge as salient throughout the region. Many chapters note the weaknesses of Russian rule in Turkestan (Oybek Mahmudov even suggests that regional colonial officials lived in a kind of "virtual reality"), the role of rumor, and the difficult position occupied by