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ACROSS THE BLACK SANDS AND THE RED: TRAVEL WRITING, NATURE, AND THE RECLAMATION OF THE EURASIAN STEPPE CIRCA 1850

Abstract
Through a reading of 19th-century Persian travel narratives, this article locates the history of Iran and Central Eurasia within recent literature on global frontier processes and the encounter between empire and nature. It argues that Persianate travel books about Central Eurasia were part of the imperial project to order and reclaim the natural world and were forged through the material encounter with the steppes. Far from a passive act of collecting information and more than merely an extension of the observer's preconceptions, description was essential to the expansion and preservation of empire. Although there exists a vast literature on Western geographical and ethnographic representations of the Middle East, only recently have scholars begun to mine contacts that took place outside of a Western colonial framework and within an Asian setting. Based on an analysis of Riza Quli Khan Hidayat's *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, the record of an expedition sent from the Qajar Dynasty to the Oxus River in 1851, the article explores the 19th-century Muslim "discovery" of the Eurasian steppe world. The expedition set out to define imperial boundaries and to reclaim the desert, but along the way it found a permeable "middle ground" between empires, marked by transfrontier and cross-cultural exchanges.

In the autumn of 1851, a group of travelers in Central Eurasia filled their water skins from the Oxus River, loaded their Bactrian camels, and set forth westward on the road toward Iran. The caravan was on its return journey and included Riza Quli Khan Hidayat (1800–71), a Persian envoy and writer who had led the expedition to the region of Khvarazm, the large river delta on the Upper Oxus and the northern branch of the fabled Silk Road. For over six months, the mission had traversed the roads on the waterless stages of the Qara Qum or Black Sands Desert to reach the steppes of the Oxus. Its purpose was to free the thousands of Persians held as captives in Central Eurasia and to survey the unsettled eastern borderlands of Qajar Iran. Riza Quli Khan recorded the group's findings in a travel book titled *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm* and upon his return to Iran presented the manuscript to Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96). Riza Quli Khan's journal was part of a genre of 19th-century Persian travel books (*safarnāma*) that mapped and took measure of the Central Eurasian frontier.

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Through a reading of *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm* and other 19th-century Persian travel narratives, this article attempts to locate the history of Iran and Central Eurasia within the context of recent literature on global frontier and environmental processes, including *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World* by John Richards and *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* by Peter Perdue.[1] Taking their point of departure from the imperial histories of India and China, Richards, Perdue, and others have suggested that beginning in the early modern period, there occurred the closing of a great frontier in world history. This process was characterized by the expansion of the frontiers of settlement, intensified land use, and the eclipse of indigenous populations. According to Richards, the period circa 1400 to 1800 saw the global expansion and settlement of imperial frontiers:

> In nearly every world region, technologically superior pioneer settlers invaded remote lands lightly occupied by shifting cultivators, hunter gatherers, and pastoralists. . . . In Africa, Eurasia, and the New World, they expelled, killed, or enslaved indigenous peoples. . . . Expansive early modern states imposed new types of territoriality on frontier regions.[2]

Likewise, Perdue writes: "The expansion of the Qing state formed part of a global process. . . . Nearly everywhere, newly centralized, integrated, militarized states pushed their borders outward by military conquest, and settlers, missionaries, and traders followed behind."[3]

This grand narrative of the closing of the early modern frontier has important parallels in the history of Iran and its Central Eurasian borderlands. The period witnessed the unraveling of the Islamicate-Chinggisid world across Central Eurasia. With the centralization and expansion of Eurasian "gunpowder empires," attempts were made to mold the steppes to the modern imperial state. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Safavid dynasty consolidated its rule and expanded into the Central Eurasian frontier. However, unlike the Mughals, whose reign in India extended into the mid-19th century, and the Qing, who held power in China into the 20th century, the Safavids fell to the Afghans in 1722, leaving Iran's eastern borderlands unsettled in a time of dynastic instability and pastoral resurgence throughout the 18th century. The settlement of this steppe frontier occurred only with the arrival of 19th-century imperial boundary commissions and their cultural and geographical boundary-marking projects, including the production of travelogues, surveys, and maps.

There is a vast literature on Western travel writing, surveying, and mapping projects. Building on critiques by Edward Said in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, scholars such as Mary Louise Pratt, Thongchai Winichakul, and Thomas Metcalf, among a host of others, have examined Western geographical and ethnographic representations of the world.[4] Only recently, however, with the work of C. A. Bayly, Muzaffar Alam, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have scholars begun to probe encounters that took place outside of a Western colonial framework and within an Asian setting.[5] This essay seeks to complement this burgeoning literature by examining environmental themes in Persianate travel narratives about the Eurasian steppes.[6]

These narratives represent 19th-century imperial ventures to explore environments and gather information about the natural world. Persian travel narratives describing the deserts, rivers, oases, and peoples of Central Eurasia were influenced by both indigenous and Western traditions of exploration literature. In describing the environment, Persian

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travel narratives, natural histories, and geographical chronicles marked a continuation of the genres of Islamic road books (*masālik u mamālik*), geography (*jughrāfīyyih*), and encyclopedic books of science and wonders (*ʿajāʾib*). Such texts were also influenced by the growing body of printed Western geographical and ethnographic literature, including travelogues, journals, atlases, and maps that classified and left systematic observations of all that was encountered in the natural world. Since the early modern period, European empires had been actively engaged in efforts to represent, classify, and control environments while producing an array of encyclopedic texts based on newfound knowledge about the lands, oceans, peoples, customs, animals, flora, and fauna to be found at the ends of the earth.[7]

The encounter between empires and the environment has been studied in such works as Alfred Crosby's *Ecological Imperialism* and Richard Grove's *Green Imperialism*.[8] In addition, recent works in the history of science have examined the geographical, naturalist, and botanical knowledge systems of early modern empires in great detail, considering the ways that the expansion of European empires transformed environments across the world.[9] Quite recently, the environmental dilemmas initiated by the advance of Western imperialism have generated the interest of scholars working on North Africa and the Near East. Diana Davis' analysis of the role of French narratives of environmental decline and deterioration in the colonization of Algeria and Edmund Burke's examination of Saint-Simonian engineering projects in North Africa have begun to mine the history of European developmentalist projects in the 19th-century Maghrib.[10] Building on this literature, it is now possible to move past the Western colonial narrative to ask how indigenous or Muslim states and societies used, constructed, and perceived natural environments.[11]

This article argues that 19th-century Persianate travel narratives about the Central Eurasian steppes were part of the global imperial venture to classify and reclaim the natural world. These indigenous descriptions of Central Eurasia were marked by the material encounter with the steppes and were projects for reclaiming the Oxus frontier. Far from a passive act of collecting information and more than merely an extension of observers' preconceptions, description was an essential part of the expansion and preservation of empire.[12] Through an analysis of Riza Quli Khan Hidayat's *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, the following pages explore the 19th-century Muslim "discovery" of the Central Eurasian steppe world. Riza Quli Khan's journal mapped the natural, geographical, and ethnographic boundaries between the steppe and the sown. The Khvarazm expedition of 1851 set out to define imperial boundaries and to reclaim the Qara Qum Desert, but on its journey the mission found a permeable "middle ground," a contact zone in between empires, marked by transfrontier and cross-cultural exchanges such as trade and pilgrimage.[13]

A JOURNEY INTO THE STEPPES

During the first half of the 19th century, the Qajar Dynasty (1797–1925) undertook repeated military and scientific expeditions to explore and reclaim the steppes between the Caspian Sea and the Oxus River. Among these missions were the expeditions of ʿAbbas Mirza and the European-trained "new army" (*niẓām-i jadīd*) in 1832 and 1833 and Muhammad Shah's Herat campaign of 1837. In 1831 the crown prince ʿAbbas

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Mirza (1789–1833) was appointed the governor (*bayglarbaygī*) of Khurasan province. The following year, relying in part on the *niẓām-i jadīd*, he began campaigning vigorously against Turkmen raiders in the eastern borderlands. Marching out against refractory tribes and their fortresses, his troops stormed the frontier post of Sarakhs, pacifying many of the Salur Turkmen. ʿAbbas Mirza died in 1833, while making plans for an expedition against the Sariq Turkmen in the oasis of Marv, thus halting the Qajar's march into the Qara Qum.[14] The eastern campaign later resumed under his son, Muhammad Mirza, following the latter's ascension to the Qajar throne in 1834. In 1836, Muhammad Shah set out on an expedition against the Turkmen and the following year advanced into the contested domain of the Durrani Empire in Afghanistan, seeking to reintegrate Herat into the Qajar kingdom.[15] Under intense pressure from the British, Muhammad Shah abandoned the siege of Herat and his campaign in greater Khurasan in 1838.[16]

Nasir al-Din Shah's reform-minded premier Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir (1807–52) pursued a policy toward the preservation of Iran's eastern frontier as a measure against Russian and British imperial encroachment.[17] Seeking to reassert Qajar control over the steppes of the Qara Qum and the oasis cities of Khurasan and Transoxiana, in 1851 he ordered a government mission to reclaim the liberty of the thousands of Persian Shiʿi subjects taken captive and sold in the slave markets of Central Eurasia. Having served as an official in Tabriz and on the Azerbaijan frontier in northwestern Iran, much of which was lost to the Russians during the course of the early 19th century, Amir Kabir was keen to favorably settle Qajar frontiers in the eastern province of Khurasan. This policy entailed reclaiming the steppes of the Qara Qum and bringing an end to the destructive slave raids of the Turkmen tribes, which had cast serious doubt on the reach of Qajar imperial authority into Central Eurasia.

Amir Kabir appointed Riza Quli Khan Hidayat, a distinguished poet, writer, and scholar in the service of the Qajar court, to lead the expedition to the Oxus River and to make an ambassadorial visit to the court of Muhammad Amin Khan, the Uzbak Khan of Khiva, who had boldly styled himself "Khvarazmshah" and was providing a slave market where Persian men, women, and children could be bought and sold as captives.[18] Riza Quli Khan hailed from an old bureaucratic family in the south and had received the title of "the prince of poets" (*amīr al-shuʿarā*) from Fath ʿAli Shah (r. 1797–1834).[19] He was a talented writer of both prose and verse and was skilled in the writing of history.[20] His works include *Rawzat al-Safa-yi Nasiri*, a multivolume world history completed in the mid-19th century that linked the Qajars to the Islamic-Chinggisid empires of the past and was perhaps the most important chronicle of 19th-century Iran. In 1851, Riza Quli Khan was commissioned by Amir Kabir to gather information and keep a journal of the Khvarazm mission through the steppes of Central Eurasia:

> It is your duty to write in detail a daily journal [*rūznāmijāt*] from the first day the mission is sent until its return to the threshold of Iran, with description and explanation [*sharḥ va basṭ*] of everything including events that occurred, the names of stages on the roads, the calculation of distances, [and] the identification of tribes, their chieftains, and elders [*rīsh-sifīdān*] and to bring this information back so that his highness [the shah] may be informed [*bā-iṭilāʿ*] of those people and have the knowledge he seeks about them.[21]

The deployment of traverse surveys and information-gathering missions fit well with Amir Kabir's reforming agenda to consolidate the Qajar state and its frontiers. He sought

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a reliable, scientific survey and description of Iran's eastern steppe borderlands, detailing the physical and cultural geography of the region. The possession of knowledge about the lands, resources, and peoples of the Eurasian steppe would allow the Qajar state to possess a distant frontier. The purpose of the Khvarazm mission was the reclamation of the Eurasian steppe for the shah; the passage of the expedition and the surveys it produced were to bring imperial territory into existence.[22]

A manuscript of the travel account was presented to the shah upon the completion of the mission. A lithographed text of the *Sifaratnama*, comprising 151 pages in *nastaʿlīq* Persian script, was printed in Cairo, Egypt, at the Bulaq press in 1875 and reissued a year later in Paris under the editorship of the French Orientalist Charles Schefer (see Figure 1).[23] The text stands as just one example of the 19th-century Persianate literature of travel and exploration about the steppes of Central Eurasia.[24] During the 19th century, Persian travel accounts, newsletters, and memoirs came to be read by an ever-growing audience, as the spread of lithography and printing made possible a wider dissemination of texts.[25] Central Eurasian travel books were certain to have had a limited readership, circulating among the upper echelon of the Qajar bureaucratic elite and perhaps other literate classes in Tehran and the provincial capitals. However, through such circulation, they became significant knowledge-making projects that helped determine imperial policies and the ordering of the Central Eurasian frontier. The encounter with the steppes and the effort to reclaim the desert were among the recurring themes in this literature.

BLACK SANDS OF THE OXUS

On the fifth day of the month Jamadi al-Thani in the Muslim lunar year of 1267 (7 April 1851), the Qajar mission, including retinues from Khvarazm and a contingent of horsemen from the Atabay Yamut Turkmen tribes serving as guides (*balad*), embarked from Tehran.[26] The mission was given three months and 2,000 *tumans* to complete a perilous journey that would take it across the eastern boundaries of the empire to "the Jayhun [Oxus] River that flows between Iran and Turan."[27] To reach the waters of the Oxus and the oasis cities of Central Eurasia, the travelers would have to traverse the parched and waterless Black Sands Desert, the Qara Qum.

The expanse of land that forms Central Eurasia extends from eastern Iran to western China. With the exception of the oasis cities of the Silk Road, much of this region comprises steppelands bounded by forests in the north and interspersed with deserts and semideserts in the south. Over the *longue durée*, the history of Central Eurasia has centered on the interactions of the Turkic nomadic pastoralist world with the settled and mostly Persian-speaking populations of oasis cities.[28] This interface between the steppe and the sown is one of the most significant themes in Central Eurasian and Middle Eastern environmental history.

The Oxus River, or Amu Darya, originates in the Pamir Mountains in modern Afghanistan and flows northward, parting the Black and Red Sands deserts before emptying into the Aral Sea, approximately 1,500 miles from its source. From the Pamir Mountains, the stream of the Oxus passes to the north of the Balkh oasis and then winds through the sun-drenched steppes south of the city of Bukhara before reaching the delta of Khvarazm near the end of its course. On its path from the mountains to the sea, it

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یا فتاح

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

لمؤلفه

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که او را خود آغاز و انجام نه / وزو بهرهٔ ما جز از نام نه

نگنجد در اندیشه نه در خیال / نه اندر بیان و نه اندر مقال

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در اینجا همه گفته ناگفتنی است / در این ره همه رفته نارفتنی است

که این ره و رهبر و راهرو / چه فکر و چه بینش چه گفت و شنو

بذاتش همی خلق را راه نیست / که از او بجز او خود آگاه نیست

خرد

FIGURE 1. Introductory page of *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm* by Riza Quli Khan Hidayat. From the Bulaq lithograph (1875), published in France as Riza Qouly Khan Hidayat, *Relation de l'Ambassade au Kharezm*, ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1876). [A color version of this figure can be viewed online at journals.cambrige.org/mes]

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flows through and marks the borders of four present-day states—Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The waters of the Oxus are a source of cultivation and settlement in the steppes of Central Eurasia.

The hydroclimatic history of the Oxus is difficult to trace and not known for certain. The river has flowed north from the Pamir Mountains since the late Pleistocene (the geological period that ended about 10,000 years ago). However, its flow has historically been prone to changes and fluctuations carrying environmental consequences for the frontier between the steppe and the sown. During intervals throughout its history, the river is believed to have partially flowed into the Caspian Sea by way of the Uzboy Channel, an ancient bed of the Oxus that is dried up today. In flood years, the Oxus would overflow, emptying into the Sarykamysh depression about 150 miles southwest of the Aral Sea, continuing its westward flow through the Uzboy Channel into the Caspian Sea. Thus, until the 16th century, when the Oxus is believed to have changed course, the Caspian and the Aral may have been episodically connected through other bodies of water lying between them.[29] Climatic fluctuations as well as irrigation works along the Oxus in Khvarazm may have affected the course of the river and the channels it flowed through. What is certain is that since the 16th century the Oxus has flowed north only into the Aral Sea, and there occurred a complete desiccation of the Sarykamysh depression.

The steppes of the Oxus were legendary in the Persianate geographical imagination, connoting the liminal edges of the empire.[30] In the *Shahnama*, the 10th-century Persian epic poem by Firdawsi, the Oxus is the legendary frontier ground (*sarḥadd*) between Iran and Turan. Classical Muslim geographers, who called the Oxus by the name Jayhun or Amu Darya, classified it as the edge of civilization, designating the land south of it as the Iranian province of Khurasan and the region to the north as Mavaraʾulnahr, "the other side of the river," or as commonly referred to in the West, Transoxiana.[31] Travelers approached the Oxus with great wonder and highlighted its strangeness, such as the fact that it froze over in winter, and called the surrounding steppes "the Desert of the Ghuzz Turkomans."[32] The Oxus was also seen as a cultural divide, "the water where unbelievers were hidden [*āb-i kāfir nahān*]" and the abode of pastoral nomads.[33] The steppes of the Oxus were thus long imagined to mark a geographical and cultural frontier.

The Oxus frontier and its steppes became the subject of unprecedented surveying and cartographic projects during the 19th century. The Qajar dynasty and other surrounding empires sought to gather scientific information and bring cultivation to the desert steppes as a means of claiming territory. Persian engineers in the service of the Qajars were engaged in the effort to map the physical and cultural geography of Iran's borderlands with Central Eurasia and to mark the boundaries between wildlands or desert (*bīyābān*) and cultivated lands (*ābādān*). The remnants of these imperial cartographic projects may be found in Qajar maps, geographies, and gazetteers.[34] Similar sorts of records from the period may also be found in issues of the illustrated imperial gazetteer, *Ruznama-yi Dawlat-i ʿAlliya-yi Iran*, printed under the auspices of the royal house of crafts (Dar al-Funun). In 1863, the gazetteer printed lithographed maps of the Turkmen steppes, noting that scientific mapping "was very new since the area possessed a dangerous and frightening landscape and no engineer had previously ventured there to make maps" (see Figure 2).[35]

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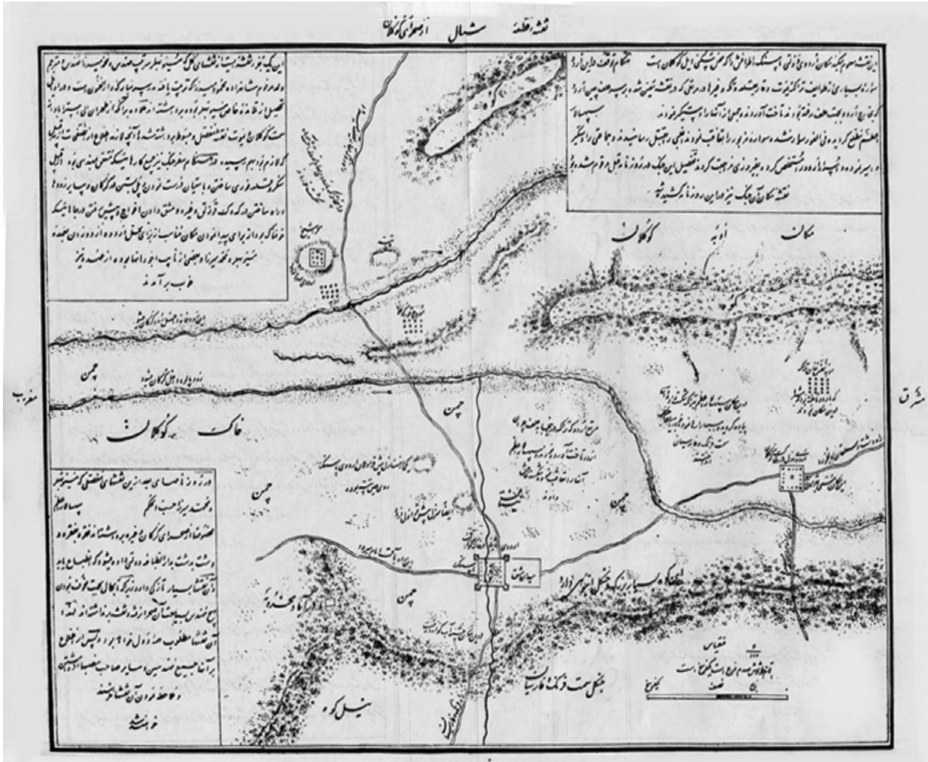

FIGURE 2. Map showing the pastures and encampments of the Yamut and Guklan Turkmen tribes on the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, the province of Astarabad, and the river Gurgan and its tributaries. The map, made at the Qajar imperial school, the Dar al-Funun, following a state military campaign against the Turkmen, shows the location of natural and geographical features on the frontier, including mountain (*kūh*), forest (*jangal*), and pasture (*chaman*). From *Ruznama-yi Dawlat-i ʿAlliya-yi Iran (1281/1863)* (Tehran: National Library of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1370/1991).

Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm may be read in light of this larger endeavor to explore, survey, and define the boundaries between the steppe and the sown. This was as much by necessity as design because the expedition required practical information about the desert to safely reach the Oxus. Standing on the brink of the Qara Qum Desert, Riza Quli Khan and his party arrived at the edge of an "endless ocean [*daryā-yi bīpāyān*]," the sands overshadowing all settlements and villages.[36] "The wilderness road to Khvarazm," he wrote, "is a road that is arduous and full of labors [*rāh-i bīyābān-i khvarazm rāhī ast pur zaḥmat*]."[37] Describing the travelers' sojourn to the banks of the Oxus, Riza Quli Khan wrote, "The sands poured down on our heads, cut the ropes of our tents, and put out our lights."[38] Their journey became a seemingly endless quest to find water, and as the party neared the bank of the Oxus they were surely aware that they had entered a frontier ground beyond the pale of the Qajar dynasty. The Oxus was the classic eastern frontier, but a wide distance now seemed to separate it from the guarded domains of Iran.

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The mission continued its journey through the steppes in order to reach the populated and flourishing places (*maʿmūra; jahān*) that lay beyond.[39]

Upon reaching the Oxus, Riza Quli Khan examined its geography and natural history, recording his observations of the river and its environs. He described the source of the river in the Pamir Mountains and traced its winding course to the Aral Sea, noting that the river shaped patterns of settlement and trade:

> It is said that the Jayhun originates from two waterfalls in the region of Badakhshan and flows mightily passing many cities and settlements on its course toward Khvarazm where it empties into the Aral Sea (Bahira-yi Khvarazm). During winters, the river is frozen over, allowing caravans to pass over it, while the water flows beneath the ice.[40]

Moreover, Riza Quli Khan observed signs of substantial changes in the flow of the river, with consequences for the frontier between the steppe and the sown. He suggested that water from the Oxus had once flowed across the Qara Qum Desert and into the Caspian Sea through riverbeds and canals that had since dried up. Tracing the old bed of the Oxus, he found evidence to support the fact that the Aral and the Caspian were once joined and that historically the course of the river was prone to fluctuations:

> It is said that the Aral once flowed through an underground channel into the Absikun and from there into the Caspian [Bahira-yi Khazar]. And it is written in some chronicles that in the past, the Oxus used to flow eastwards until the Mongols dug a new channel and redirected the waters toward the Caspian. On the road back and forth to Khvarazm, I saw certain vestiges and signs that remained . . . One still sees traces of its dried-up bed.[41]

Riza Quli Khan observed that sometime since, the river again swerved eastward, emptying completely into the Aral Sea.

Along the banks of the Oxus, the expedition passed ruined settlements and cities (*ās̱ār-i shahrhā-yi kharāb va vīrān bisīyār ast*), deserted trade routes where few caravans ventured, and fragmented monuments, their domes and inscriptions worn away by time and covered by dunes.[42] The desert had slowly obscured the monuments of the past, such as the Gunbad-i Qavus, which stood alone, partially buried in the steppes.[43] "Lands where settlements had once flourished," Riza Quli Khan lamented, "had become a desert of sand."[44] The Khvarazm mission discovered evidence to suggest that the fluctuations in the flow of the Oxus had precipitated the expansion of the steppes of the Qara Qum.

Riza Quli Khan displayed an agrarian and irredentist impulse to reclaim the steppes of the Oxus, restoring them to a supposedly more fertile past. His descriptions of the desert echo the "declensionist narrative" of environmental history, which has been deconstructed at length by William Cronon and recently examined by Diana Davis in her pathbreaking study of the French colonial mission in Algeria.[45] Davis explores how a narrative of decline associating the arrival of pastoral nomads with the deforestation, desertification, and degradation of the North African landscape since the reportedly fertile Roman past contributed to French colonial expansion in the Maghrib.[46] She reveals how even the scientific fields of geography, botany, plant ecology, and phytogeography (the geographical distribution of plant species) conformed to the dominant French colonial narrative of environmental decline in North Africa.

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Little is known, however, regarding indigenous, Islamicate systems of knowledge about nature and their role in projects to reclaim natural environments. In many ways, 19th-century Persian travel accounts such as *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm* were also the products of imperial surveying projects and offered narratives of decline and deterioration, painting the Eurasian steppes as fallen and unsettled badlands. However, restricting the analysis to such a perspective would miss other features that emerge from a reading of 19th-century Persianate narratives about the steppes of Central Eurasia.

Alternative descriptions of the desert are discernable in the *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*. Among the most important was that the steppes were not badlands but rather an ecological space created through the fluctuations of the boundaries between cultivated lands and wildlands—the ebb and flow of the steppe frontier. The steppe and the sown were tangled and interwoven. Persian travel writings, geographical literature, and natural histories about Central Eurasia belonged to a perennial and long-standing effort to describe—and thus to control, order, and manage—the arid steppe frontier and its population. However, the boundaries between steppe and sown, as well as those between pastoral nomadic and settled populations, remained fluid, and there was little impulse on the part of the Qajars and their agents to permanently cultivate the desert. The Qajars were, after all, a dynasty with origins based on Turkic pastoral and tribal power. They claimed the Central Eurasian steppes as part of their wild, Turanian heritage. In early Qajar paintings, Central Eurasian and Turko-Mongol historical figures such as Afrasiyab and Chinggis Khan are represented in Persian garb (see Figure 3). For the Qajars, the wildness of the steppes had not lost its appeal.

The Khvarazm expedition of 1851 certainly was driven by an irredentist concern for reclaiming the steppes of the Oxus. For all its ornate language, the record of the mission, Riza Quli Khan's *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, is a text that uses the 19th-century science of description to survey the Central Eurasian environment. However, the project came to be mediated by the physical and material encounter with the steppes.[47] The venture to know and order nature went beyond the preconceptions of observers. It was forged through actual contact with the desert and tempered by the powerful economic and cultural networks that the agents of empire encountered there.

WRITING THE STEPPES

An important element of imperial surveying projects involved the ethnographic representation of "unknown" peoples, races, and tribes of the different parts of the world. Central Eurasia figured into this imperial mission to identify, take measure, and write the histories of indigenous populations. Persian travel narratives of the 19th century attempted to survey and gather information about the customs of the pastoral nomadic Turkmen tribes of the Central Eurasian steppes.

The Turkmen were a conglomeration of frontier peoples inhabiting the steppes between the Caspian Sea and the Oxus River.[48] During the 19th century, their encampments could be found on the fringes of the Kopet Dagh Mountains in the Qara Qum Desert, where they wielded considerable independence and power on the unsettled Central Eurasian frontier. According to the chronicle of Mir ʿAbd al-Karim, the Turkmen were

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FIGURE 3. Qajar painting of Chinggis Khan by Mihr ʿAli, 1803–1804. Private collection, Paris. Courtesy of the Iran Heritage Foundation, London. Reproduced with permission. [A color version of this figure can be viewed online at journals.cambrige.org/mes]

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"settled along the banks [*lab-i āb*] of the Amu Darya River for four or five days march and are made up of the following tribes [*ṭāyifa*]: Ersari, Sariq, Baqah, Salur, Tekke, Amir ʿAli, and Chawdur."[49] They spoke Turkish dialects and adhered to local Islamic beliefs and customs. In the 19th century, the Turkmen practiced both pastoral nomadism and agriculture. The tribes who adopted a nomadic and migratory way of life were called *chūmūr* and those who were sedentary *chārvā*. All possessed flocks of sheep and herds of horses while living in wooden, felt-covered yurts. Nineteenth-century sources estimated the population of the Turkmen according to the number of tents or yurts, with some estimates reaching over 150,000 yurts or roughly 750,000 individuals.[50]

Persianate travel writers and surveyors cast the Turkmen as pastoral nomads on an unsettled and unassimilated frontier. In travel narratives, the Turkmen gallop off the pages as rapacious raiders and slave traffickers marauding the eastern borderlands. A recurring theme in these accounts is Turkmen violence on the frontier. Turkmen pastoral nomads were depicted as the untamed inhabitants of a wild landscape, wicked tribes (*ṭavāyif-i ashrār*) inhabiting the banks of the Oxus and raiding the surrounding roads and villages, carrying off Shiʿi Persians as slaves.[51] In these sources the Turkmen stir havoc and fear through their surprising forays (*chapū*) and violent slave-raiding expeditions (*ālāmān*), with devastating effect on trade and cultivation in the eastern borderland provinces of Astarabad and Khurasan. The slave traffic of the various Turkmen tribes was blamed for having caused the abandonment of villages and for having brought about the decline of cultivation and trade.

On the road to Khvarazm, Riza Quli Khan observed the consequences of slave traffic on the eastern Iranian frontier. He described ruined villages where the entire population had taken flight or had been carried away or killed. Walls fortified the settlements that survived, and towers were raised where peasants could retreat in case of attack. The fear of the Turkmen (*khuf-i turkmān*) was so strong among the peasantry that they carried arms when they worked in the fields and rarely stepped beyond the village walls. On the once thriving trade routes of Khurasan, Riza Quli Khan wrote, the number of caravans that ventured to cross the eastern Iranian frontier had diminished. He described the road ahead as passing through the "terrifying landscape" (*sarzamīn-i makhawf*) of the Turkmen Sahra and recorded verses on the uncertain and arduous journey they faced: "Even a lion of war would be shaking on that hard frontier/Where awaited more than a hundred thousand Turks with spears [*dil-i shīr-i jangī dar ān sakht marz/zi gurgān-i gurgān hami larz larz/hamānā ki turkān-i nayza guzār/dar īn rāh afzūntar az ṣad hizār*]."[52] He and his fellow travelers on the Khvarazm expedition were left "with no feet to go and with no place to stay [*na pāy-i raftan va na jāy-i māndan*]."[53]

Surveying migratory steppe peoples proved a vexing task for travelers and explorers. For instance, in the illustrated manuscript of the travel book *Safarnama-yi Turkistan*, produced at the Dar al-Funun in 1861 and kept at the National Library in Tehran, the pastoral nomadic populations of Central Eurasia are cast as elusive, migrating with their animals and yurts (*ālāchīq*) while "leaving behind only the black patches of their fires on the ground after their departure" (see Figure 4).[54] In a similar vein, Riza Quli Khan lamented the inhospitable nature of the land: "This endless desert [*ṣaḥrā*] has no villages [*ābādī*], no trees [*shajar*], no stones [*ḥajar*], and no signs [*ʿalāmat*]. Distances are not known. The Turkmen call the lands by names of their own and themselves know the

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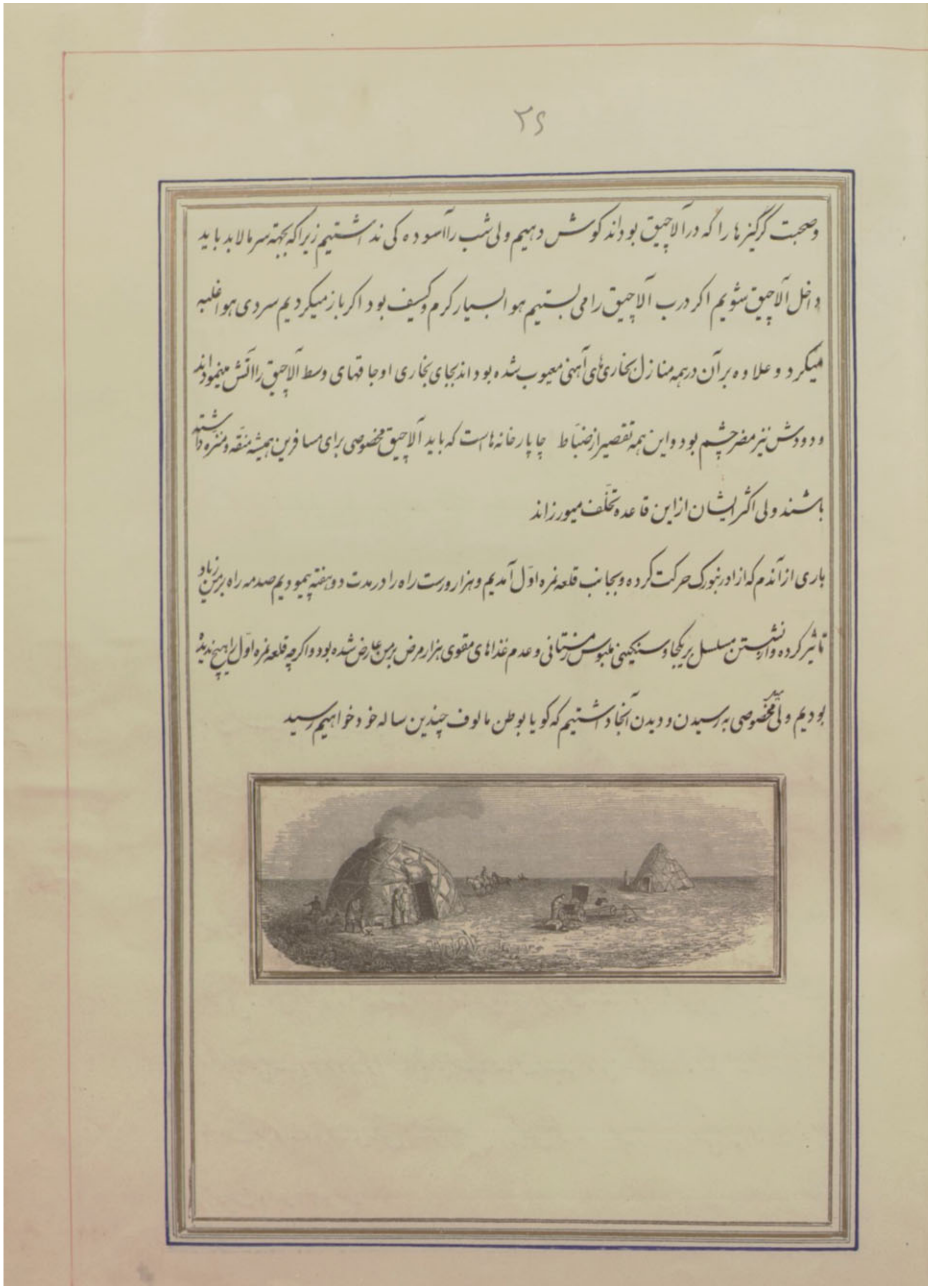
٢٦

وصحبت گرگینها را که در آلاچیق بوده‌اند گوش دهیم ولی شب را آسوده کی نداشتیم زیرا که بجهة سرما لابد باید
داخل آلاچیق شویم اگر درب آلاچیق را می‌بستیم هوا بسیار گرم و کثیف بود اگر باز میکردیم سردی هوا غلبه
میکرد و علاوه بر آن در همه منازل بخاریهای آهنی معیوب شده بودند بجای بخاری اوجاقهای وسط آلاچیق را آتش مینمودند
و دودش نیز مضر چشم بود و این همه تقصیر از ضباط چاپارخانه‌ها است که باید آلاچیق مخصوصی برای مسافرین همیشه منقه و منزه داشته
باشند ولی اکثر ایشان از این قاعده تخلف میورزند

باری از آندم که از ادربورک حرکت کرده و بجانب قلعه نمره اول آمدیم و هزار ورست راه را در مدت دو هفته پیمودیم صدمه راه بر تن زیاد
تاثیر کرده و از نشستن مسلسل بر یکجا و سنگینی ملبوس زمستانی و عدم غذاهای مقوی بهزار مرض بر تن عارض شده بود و اگرچه قلعه نمره اول را هیچ ندیده
بودیم ولی میل مخصوصی برسیدن و دیدن آنجا داشتیم که گویا بوطن مالوف چندین ساله خود خواهیم رسید

FIGURE 4. Manuscript page from "Safarnama-yi Turkistan" (1861), produced at the Qajar imperial school, Dar al-Funun. National Library, Tehran, Mss. 1368. [A color version of this figure can be viewed online at journals.cambridge.org/mes]

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places where water is found."[55] Moreover, Riza Quli Khan continued, information on the unsettled and free-spirited Turkmen was difficult to obtain:

> The Turkmen tribes have no cities that would wall or enclose them and are not constantly settled in one place. It is difficult to estimate their numbers. They are spread and scattered from the steppes of Gurgan to Khvarazm. Some number thirty thousand, some less, some more, and they are met day and night all along the desert that stretches for more than twenty days travel between Astarabad and Khiva. There are various tribes and subtribes and some are enemies to one another. To list the names of all their sections and clans would take too long. Each person is a commander [*sardār*] in his own tribe. No tribe serves another. Even perhaps the lowliest camel driver does not follow his own chief and khan.[56]

The Turkmen steppes were a *terra incognita*, an unknown terrain. In mapping the physical and cultural geography of Central Eurasia, 19th-century Persian travel narratives were prone to casting the steppes as a forbidding and inhospitable land. However, these sources also reveal so much more, above all that steppe peoples were integrated into Eurasian networks of trade, traffic, and cultural exchange. In the parched sands of the Qara Qum, where rivers swerved away and oases were lost, the Turkmen tribes built a thriving pastoral economy and entered the pilgrimage routes of the Naqshbandi Sufi brotherhood.

NETWORKS OF ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In Persianate travel writing about Central Eurasia we find descriptions of economic and cultural networks that fostered an array of transecological and cross-cultural encounters.[57] Collecting information on the geography, natural history, trade, and customs of the Eurasian steppe, travel writers discovered a frontier ground defined by exchanges and interactions between the steppe and the sown.

Though the long-distance trade of silk may be better known, intermediary networks linking nomadic pastoralists to urban life also crossed the caravan (*qāfila*) routes of Central Eurasia. The trans-Eurasian caravan trade—of horses, silver, tea, wool, salt, grains, and plants—linked pastoral nomads and merchant centers. Recent literature has called into question the familiar claim that following the rise of the newly discovered sea routes of the Indian Ocean during the 16th century, Central Eurasian overland traffic and its grand market centers were eclipsed, falling into ruin in the steppes.[58] Throughout the 19th century, the Central Eurasian steppes remained a zone of contacts, encounters, and exchanges across ecological and cultural boundaries. The trade and traffic of the Turkmen, Afghans, Tajiks, Persians, Uzbaks, and other ethnolinguistic groups broke the lines of division in a wider Eurasian world. This Eurasian culture complex was shaped by contacts and exchanges between nomadic pastoralists and settled populations, bridging the steppe and the sown.[59]

During the Khvarazm expedition, Riza Quli Khan observed that the Turkmen's livelihood and subsistence were derived from their horses, camels, and sheep.[60] He described twice-weekly bazaars in the city of Khiva that attracted nomads from the steppes and were crowded with horse traders (*asb-furūsh*), camel traders (*shutur-furūsh*), and slave traders (*asīr-furūsh*) on Mondays and Fridays.[61] In the stables of the Khan of Khiva could be found prized Akhal Tekke horses, each worth between 500 and 1,000

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*tuman*s.[62] In his survey of the Yamut Turkmen of Aq Qalʿa, Riza Quli Khan identified the tribes' resources, which included herds of camels (*shutur*) and flocks of sheep (*gūsfand*), the latter of which were the source of exquisite wool and the basis of the distinctive weavings made by the women of the Yamut.[63]

Other 19th-century travelers provided similar accounts of the Turkmen's role in economic exchanges between the steppe and the sown. According to one observer, in the Qara Qum "twice weekly a makeshift bazaar was assembled in Marv near the near the fortress of Qushid Khan Qalʿa and . . . all the tribes gathered there to trade their goods and merchandise from dawn until dusk."[64] Although some locals possessed Persian and Bukharan currencies, their wealth consisted primarily of livestock and crops.[65] The trade of pastoral nomads, in this case the Tekke Turkmen, in horses, camels, sheep, wool, and textiles bound them to the oases of Khurasan and Mavaraʾulnahr.[66] In the bazaar of Marv they traded with merchants from Khiva, Bukhara, and Mashhad for silk, cotton, tobacco, tea, sugar, and rice, which could not be grown in the sandy and parched soil of the Qara Qum.[67] Others observed the wide circulation of resources from the steppes; the trade in the prized horses of the Turkmen, for instance, reached from the Qara Qum into Qajar Iran and Mughal India.[68]

Travelers also detailed the Turkmen traffic in slaves. Since the fall of the Safavid Dynasty in the 18th century, the Turkmen had raided the borderlands of Iran for Shiʿi slaves. By the early 19th century, it was customary for the khans, princes, and ʿulamaʾ of Central Eurasian cities such as Bukhara and Khiva to endorse the Turkmen marches through the desert to Khurasan to raid caravans, towns, and villages for slaves. The Turkmen built a powerful slave-raiding and trading network in the borderlands of empires. Turkmen slave raids and surprise attacks were predicated on their pastoral economy and were made possible by the speed and endurance of Turkmen horses in crossing the steppes of the Qara Qum. Raiding expeditions were led by a commander and varied in number of horsemen from three to 1,000, depending on the number of men in an encampment possessing a good horse. Raiding parties sought out passing caravans of travelers, merchants, and pilgrims on the roads and plundered frontier towns and villages, carrying away Persian captives tied on to horses or dragged along on foot in chains. Upon reaching the steppes, some of the captives were put to the work of cultivating fields and grazing flocks and herds in the Turkmen grasslands. Others were ransomed or sold into slavery in Central Eurasian cities, including Khiva and Bukhara.[69]

Some information on the slave trade may be gleaned from 19th-century European travelogues. In the 1840s, it was reported that the slaves were sold, through purchase or barter, to Uzbak merchants who visited the Turkmen encampments two or three times a year. At the time, the price paid for a ten-year-old boy was reported to be forty *tuman*s, a man of thirty was worth twenty-five, and so on, the value decreasing with the age of the slave.[70] This estimate overlooks the fact that many of those taken captive were girls and women. In the language of colonial masculinity, Arthur Conolly noted earlier in the 19th century that "the Toorkmuns capture many beautiful women in Persia. . . . torn from their homes, and taken under every indignity and suffering through the desert, to be sold in the Oosbeg markets."[71] Later in the 19th century, Henri Moser reported that Shiʿi slaves were sold in the markets of Central Eurasia for between forty and eighty pieces of gold (*ṭalā*), with girls between the ages of ten and fifteen years and men between twenty-five and forty years being worth the most.[72] The Turkmen took as captives "the

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strong and the beautiful," whom they could sell in the slave markets of Central Eurasia, which became lined with Shiʿi men and women for sale. European accounts of the 19th century estimated that there were 200,000 Iranian slaves in the Khanate of Bukhara and 700,000 in the Khanate of Khiva alone.[73]

Riza Quli Khan's *Sifaratnama* and other 19th-century Persianate travel accounts also surveyed the Turkmen's integration into the cultural networks of the Eurasian steppes. Crossing into the Qara Qum, Riza Quli Khan and other Persianate travelers entered the currents of Islamic networks and brotherhoods; they responded by writing geographies of Central Eurasian Sufism and charting networks of pilgrimage between the steppe and the sown. During the 19th century, pilgrimage to the tombs of saints (*zīyārat*) played a central role in the religious life of the Eurasian steppes. Riza Quli Khan reported the traffic of the Sufis or Muslim mystics/ascetics and mendicants (*darvīshān; qalandarān*) performing wondrous deeds (*karāmat*) among the peoples of the steppes (*ṣaḥrā-nishīn*).

The expedition passed many tombs of saints belonging to the Naqshbandi Sufi brotherhood or *tariqa* (literally "path" or "way").[74] Having made pilgrimage to the tomb of the eponymous founder of the brotherhood, Khvaja Baha al-Din Naqshband (1318–89), on the outskirts of Bukhara, the itineraries of Naqshbandi pilgrims carried them farther into the steppes. Riza Quli Khan observed the disciples of the brotherhood plying their way between the many tombs of saints (*mazār*) and Sufi lodges (*khānqāh; qalandar-khāna*) on the desert road to Bukhara.[75] He took measure of the cultural exchanges connecting the steppe and the sown through such descriptions of Central Eurasian networks of pilgrimage, mapping the complex of Naqshbandi shrines and enumerating the brotherhood's mendicants, mystics, and disciples making pilgrimage across the Black and Red Sands deserts.[76] Moreover, he observed the affinity forged between steppe peoples, such as the Turkmen, and charismatic saints through shrine pilgrimages. With the building of lodges and the organization of pilgrimages, the Naqshbandi brotherhood wove the steppes into a wider Islamic ecumene.

For a Persian with mystical leanings accustomed to the doctrinal and at times stringent juridical brand of Shiʿism found in urban Iran, with the shariʿa-minded ʿulamaʾ class at the forefront, the Sufi culture of Central Eurasia must have been a welcome change.[77] At the turn of the 16th century, as Shah Ismaʿil I established the Safavid dynasty (1501–1722) in Iran, the Shaybanid Uzbaks became the sovereigns of Transoxiana. As the Safavids set out to convert Iran to Shiʿism, the Shaybanids promoted Sunnism, resulting in what some scholars have suggested was an almost permanent cultural rift between Iran and Central Eurasia.[78] Thus, although Iran was mostly converted to Shiʿism in the Safavid period, the Eurasian steppes remained grounded in Sunnism and indigenous "Inner Asian" Islam.

In his travel narrative, Riza Quli Khan traced the Naqshbandi brotherhood's expansion outward from Bukhara into the surrounding steppes. The mission surveyed the geography of Sufism, passing and identifying the consecutive graves of saints with the greeting *az ānjā guzashta mazār-i dīgar rasīdīm*. The party passed the tomb of Khvaja Azizan of Bukhara, a weaver (*nasāj*) who had become one of the disciples (*murīdān*) of the grand Naqshbandi brotherhood. Coming from Bukhara to settle on the banks of the Oxus, the shaykh was said to have had gained so many disciples that he worried the local sultans.[79] The mission passed several other places of pilgrimage, including the tomb of Shaykh-i Sharaf and the Yaraqra Qapi shrine. They passed a tall, blue-tiled dome said

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to be the tomb of a woman saint named Turbay Khanum and that was known to be "frequented by tribes with strange clothes and hats [*libās-i gharīb va kulāh-i ʿajīb*] who made pilgrimages to the tomb."[80]

The expedition arrived at a place on the edge of the Oxus River (*bar lab-i jayhun*), where a Turkish shaykh named Hakim Ata lie buried. Hakim Ata had belonged to the Naqshbandi chain of transmission (*silsila*), and his resting place was at the margins of settlement in Khvarazm (*intihā-yi ābādī-yi khvarazm ast*). The travelers then crossed over to the Red Sands Desert.[81] On the road they passed the tomb of Adun Ata, a Turkish shaykh with great rank (*shān-i ʿālī*) among nomadic pastoralists who regarded his shrine as a place of pilgrimage (*zīyāratgāh*).[82] On another occasion Riza Quli Khan had the opportunity to observe the devotion and loyalty of the Turkmen to the Naqshbandi shaykhs. "On the night of the revered Sayyid Rahmatallah Khoqandi-yi Naqshbandi's death," he wrote, "the Turkmen people came despite great difficulties, and despite the fact that they are people of the steppes and are unaccustomed to crossing tall mountains and full forests [*kūh-i sakht va jangal-i pur-dirakht*]—which do not exist in their lands."[83]

In Khvarazm, Riza Quli Khan also noticed the cult of saints built around more eccentric and heterodox figures on the Central Eurasian frontier. One such example was Mazar-i Pahlavan Mahmud Khvarazmi, also known as Hazrat-i Pahlavan, who was renowned for his strength and considered the champion of his time (*sar-āmad-i ahl-i zamān būd*). Nearby was the Mazar-i Chahar Shahbaz. The poor (*faqīrān*) of Bukhara, Khoqand, and Khiva, as well as "strangers from all lands [*ghurabā-yi har dīyār*]," spent time at these two tombs, which also served as hospices.[84] From contemporary sources, then, it becomes clear that Central Eurasian steppe societies were integrated into wider Muslim networks that bridged ecological frontiers. The Qara Qum was criss-crossed by Naqshbandi networks and immersed in the world of Central Eurasian Sufism.

In surveying the Central Eurasian steppes, the Khvarazm expedition discerned a zone of contact marked by transfrontier networks of trade and pilgrimage that integrated pastoral and settled populations.

CONCLUSION

Following a difficult journey through the desert road and a proverbial brush with a Turkmen raid, the Khvarazm expedition returned to Tehran in the holy month of Muharram in the Muslim lunar year 1268 (November 1851), seven months after the mission had begun.[85] The Oxus expedition, which had been ordered by Prime Minister Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir to reclaim the steppe borderlands of Central Eurasia, had found little success. Instead of hastening the abolition of the traffic in Persian slaves, the members of the expedition were nearly taken captive, and the mission needed Turkmen guides to get in and out of the Qara Qum Desert in safety. Upon meeting Muhammad Amin Khan of Khiva, the expedition found that his rule did not extend into the steppes of the Qara Qum. Although he had established alliances with the slave-raiding Turkmen—offering Khiva as a market for their captives, purchasing some Persian slaves, and allotting the Turkmen land and water rights in return for service as horsemen and retinues—the steppes of the Qara Qum were beyond the pale of his control.[86] This lack of imperial authority was proven in 1855, when the Tekke Turkmen resoundingly

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defeated the Uzbaks, killing the Khan of Khiva in battle and sending his head to the shah. Moreover, in 1860, during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah, the Turkmen routed thousands of Qajar infantry and cavalry that had marched on Marv under the governor of Khurasan, Hamza Mirza Hishmat al-Dawla, and thousands of Persians were led into captivity.[87] The disastrous Marv campaign of 1860 would constitute the last serious Qajar attempt to reclaim the Eurasian steppe frontier.[88] The limitations faced by Islamic empires in the Eurasian steppe convey the compromise and accommodation that defined imperial encounters on the shared contact zone that environmental historian Richard White has termed the "middle ground."[89]

The written record of the expedition, Riza Quli Khan's *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm,* was a boundary-marking project produced through the material encounter with the Eurasian steppes. It may be approached in the context of the imperial venture to survey and reclaim natural environments across the world. Observation and description were means of ordering and domesticating nature. The scientific description and surveying of environments—geographical, naturalist, botanical, and ethnographic—bounded imperial territories and defined borderlands. However, these narratives of exploration were forged through imperial encounters on the ground. During the 19th century, Persianate travel writers and surveyors explored and inscribed the Central Eurasian steppes in the genre of the *safarnāma*. Riza Quli Khan's journal of the 1851 Khvarazm expedition represents the Qajar impulse to define and reclaim Eurasian borderlands. But this reclamation project was reshaped by the encounter with the pastoral steppes and the permeable and protean nature of Eurasian frontiers.

NOTES

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[1] John Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003); Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005). Studies of the frontier in Iranian history have included works primarily concerned with the demarcation of the boundaries of Iran and the emergence of the modern nation–state or homeland (*vaṭan*). For instance, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, *The Story of the Daughters of Quchan: Gender and National Memory in Iranian History* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1998); Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804–1946* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). Others have dealt with the politics of the "Great Game." See B. D. Hopkins, "The Bounds of Identity: The Goldsmid Mission and the Delineation of the Perso–Afghan Border in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007): 233–54; Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Small Players of the Great Game: The Settlement of Iran's Eastern Borderlands and the Creation of Afghanistan* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); Soli Shahvar, "Communications, Qajar Irredentism, and the Strategies of British India: The Makran Coast Telegraph and British Policy of Containing Persia in the East (Baluchistan)," *Iranian Studies* 39 (2006): 329–51, 569–96. For an ethno-history of a tribal frontier in Iran, see Richard Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). On the subject of imperial frontiers in the Middle East, there is a growing literature on the borderlands of the Ottoman Empire. See Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Sabri Ates, "Empires at the Margins: Toward a History of the Ottoman–Iranian Borderlands and Borderland Peoples" (PhD diss.,

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New York University, 2006); Palmira Brummett, "Imagining the Early Modern Ottoman Space, From World History to Piri Reis," *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15–58; Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[2]Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 4.

[3]Perdue, *China Marches West*, 10.

[4]Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978); idem, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: The History of the Geo-body of a Nation* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995).

[5]C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[6]For studies of the Persian genre of the *safarnāma*, see Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Nationalist Historiography* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave, 2001); Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels*; Nile Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen: Travel, Trans-Culture and Technology in the Origins of Muslim Printing," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41 (2009): 203–24; idem, "Among the Dissenters: Reciprocal Ethnography in Nineteenth-Century Inglistan," *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 293–315; Naghmeh Sohrabi, "Signs Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth-Century Persian Travel Literature to Europe" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2005); Iraj Afshar, "Persian Travelogues: A Description and Bibliography," in *Society and Culture in Qajar Iran: Studies in Honor of Hafez Farmayan*, ed. Elton Daniel (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 145–62.

[7]Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 19–22.

[8]Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[9]See Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations in the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006); Londa Schieberger, *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); idem, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Harrold Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007); James Delbourgo and Nicholas Dew, eds., *Science and Empire in the Atlantic World* (London: Routledge, 2007); Pamela Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Colonial Botany and Visual Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Hispanic World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[10]Diana K. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa* (Athens, Ohio: University of Ohio Press, 2007); Edmund Burke III, "The Transformation of the Middle Eastern Environment, 1500 B.C.E. to 2000 C.E.," in *The Environment and World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2009).

[11]See William Beinart, "Beyond the Colonial Paradigm: African History and Environmental History in Large-Scale Perspective," in Burke and Pomeranz, *The Environment and World History*, 211–28. A number of recent works on premodern Iran have explored such subjects as climate, the hunt, and botany. See Richard Bulliet, *Cotton, Camels, and Climate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Thomas Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Christine van Ruymbeke, *Science and Poetry in Medieval Persia: The Botany of Nizami's Khamsa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[12]For other recent studies that similarly suggest that the literature of travel and exploration could indeed reflect the world it set out to observe and was not a dead-end journey into the mindset and culture of the observer, see Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 5–6, 21; Rudi Matthee, "The Safavids under Western Eyes: Seventeenth-Century European Travelers to Iran," *Journal of Early Modern History* 13 (2009): 137–71.

[13]Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix–93. White's "middle ground" is not without

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theoretical parallels in Middle Eastern and North African history, evoking Ernest Gellner's discussion of *sība* or the ungoverned lands of the Maghrib in his classic *Saints of the Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 1–2. Still, White's notion of the middle ground is distinct, and preferred here, for its integration of the encounter into the discussion of imperial frontiers as opposed to an emphasis on political resistance and reaction against the state.

[14]On the campaigns of ʿAbbas Mirza against the Turkmen in Khurasan as recorded in Qajar chronicles, see Fazlallah Shirazi, *Tarikh-i Zu-l-Qarnayn*, ed. Nasir Afsharfar (Tehran: Kitabkhana, Muza, va Markaz-i Asnad-i Majlis, 1380/2001), 2:819–36, 872–87; Lisan al-Mulk Sipihr, *Nasikh al-Tavarikh*, ed. Jamshid Kiyanfar (Tehran: Asatir, 1377/1998), 1:457, 483–88, 500–505; Riza Quli Khan Hidayat, *Rawzat al-Safa-yi Nasiri*, ed. Jamshid Kiyanfar (Tehran: Asatir, 1380/2001), 9:7948, 8022–29. Also see Gavin Hambly, "Iran during the Reigns of Fath ʿAli Shah and Muhammad Shah," in *Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. 7, *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 166; Nasir Najmi, *Iran dar Miyan-i Tufan ya Zindigani-yi ʿAbbas Mirza* (Tehran: Kanun-i Maʿrifat, 1336/1957); Homa Nategh, "ʿAbbas Mirza va Turkamanan-i Khurasan," *Nigin* 10 (22 September 1974): 13–17; Emineh Pakravan, *Abbas Mirza* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1973).

[15]Hambly, "Iran during the Reigns of Fath ʿAli Shah and Muhammad Shah," 169.

[16]On the settlement of the Herat frontier, see Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah and the Iranian Monarchy* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1997); idem, "Herat Question," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, 14 vols. (New York: Columbia University, 2003), 12:219–24.

[17]On Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir, see Fereydoun Adamiat, *Amir-Kabir va Iran* (Tehran: Khvarazmi, 1348/1969); ʿAbbas Iqbal, *Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Tus, 1340/1961); Hussein Makki, *Zindigani-yi Mirza Taqi Khan-i Amir-Kabir* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1337/1958); Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe*; idem, "The Downfall of Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir and the Problem of Ministerial Authority in Qajar Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1991): 577–99; idem, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003); Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969; idem, "Amir Kabir," in Yarshater, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1:959–63; John H. Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer of the 19th Century: An Analysis of Amir Kabir's Reforms," *Iranian Studies* 4 (1971): 85–103.

[18]Riza Quli Khan, *Rawzat al-Safa-yi Nasiri*, 10:8535.

[19]Paul Losensky, "Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat," in Yarshater, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 12:119–21.

[20]On Riza Quli Khan's historical writings, see Abbas Amanat, "Historiography: Qajar Period," in Yarshater, *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* 12:369–77; Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia,* vol. 4, *Modern Times, 1500–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930).

[21]"Dastur al-Amal-i Amir bi Riza Quli Khan Hidayat dar Mamuriyat-i Khvarazm," *Namaha-yi Amir-Kabir: Asnad, Namaha, Dastanha-yi Tarikhi*, ed. Sayyid ʿAli Davud (Tehran: Nashr-i Tarikh-i Iran, 2005), 238–39.

[22]On the history of the traverse survey and the mapping of imperial territory, see D. Graham Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[23]See Riza Quli Khan Hidayat, *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm* (Relation de l'Ambassade au Kharezm [Khiva] De Riza Qouly Khan. Texte Persan), ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1876). A French translation of this text was published in 1879. See Charles Schefer, *Relation de l'Ambassade au Kharezm* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1879). All citations refer to the Paris 1876 edition of the *nastaʿlīq* Persian text originally published by Bulaq.

[24]Perhaps the most well known of the 19th-century Persian travel accounts to the Central Eurasian frontier are the two *safarnāma* about Khurasan based on Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar's (1848–96) tours of the province in 1865 and in 1882. See ʿAli Quli Hakim al-Mamalik, *Safarnama-yi Khurasan* (1283/1865) (Tehran: Intisharat-i Farhang-i Iran-Zamin, 1356/1977); Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, *Safarnama-yi Duvvum-i Khurasan* (1300/1882) (Tehran: Intisharat-i Kavush, 1363/1984). There are, however, dozens of extant Persian frontier narratives about the steppes of Central Eurasia. See Mir ʿAbd al-Karim Bukhari, *Histoire de l'Asie Centrale. Texte Persan*, ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1876); Anonymous, *Safarnama-yi Bukhara* (1259–1260/1844), ed. Husayn Zamani (Tehran: Vizarat-i Farhang, 1373/1994); "Safarnama-yi Herat" (1267/1850), in *Sih Safarnama: Herat, Marv, Mashhad*, ed. Qudrat Allah Rushani Zafaranlu (Tehran: Danishgah-i Tehran, 1347/1968), 1–71; Sayyid Muhammad Lashkarnivis Nuri, "Safarnama-yi Marv" [1277/1859], in *Sih Safarnama: Herat, Marv,*

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Mashhad, 73–144; Mirza Ibrahim, *Safarnama-yi Astarabad* [1276–77/1859], ed. Masʿud Gulzari (Tehran: Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1355/1976); Mirza Mahmud Taqi Ashtiyani, *ʿIbratnama. Khatirati az Dawran-i Pas az Jangha-yi Herat va Marv* [c. 1278–88/1860–70], ed. Husayn ʿImadi Ashtiyani (Tehran, 1382/2003); Sarhang Ismaʿil Mirpanja, *Khatirat-i Asarat: Ruznama-yi Safar-i Khvarazm va Khiva* [1280/1862], ed. Safa al-Din Tabarrayan (Tehran: Muʿassasa-yi Pajhuhish va Mutalaʿat-i Farhangi, 1370/1991); Muhammad ʿAli Khan Ghafur, *Ruznama-yi Safar-i Khvarazm* [1257–58/1841–42], ed. Muhammad Hasan Kavusi and Muhammad Nadir Nasiri Muqaddam (Tehran, 1373/1994); ʿAbdallah Khan Qaragazlu, "Guzarish-i Sarakhs va Qalʿa-yi Nasriyya," *Majmuʿa-yi Asar*, ed. Inayatallah Majidi (Tehran: Miras-i Maktub, 1382/2003); idem, "Kitabchih-yi Marv," *Majmuʿa-yi Asar*; Muhammad ʿAli Munshi, *Safarnama-yi Rukn al-Mulk bih Sarakhs* [1299/1882], ed. Muhammad Gulbun (Tehran: Danishgah-i Tehran, 1356/1977); "Guzarish-i Muhammad Husayn Muhandis" [1310/1893], *Safarnama-yi Rukn al-Mulk bih Sarakhs*. In addition to travel books, Persian imperial histories, geographies, and gazetteers surveyed 19th-century Central Eurasia. See Lisan al-Mulk Sipihr, *Nasikh al-Tavarikh*, ed. Jamshid Kiyanfar (Tehran: Asatir, 1377/1998); Riza Quli Khan Hidayat, *Rawzat al-Safa-yi Nasiri*, ed. Jamshid Kiyanfar (Tehran: Asatir, 1380/2001); Muhammad Hasan Khan Iʿtimad al-Saltana, *Matlaʿ al-Shams: Dar Tarikh va Jughrafiyyih-i Balad va Amakin-i Khurasan* (Tehran: Farhangsara, 1301–1302/1883–84); Iʿtimad al-Saltana, *Mirʾat al-Buldan*, ed. ʿAbd al-Husayn Navaʾi, 3 vols. (Tehran: Danishgah-i Tehran, 1367/1988); Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Saniʿ al-Mulk Ghaffari, *Ruznama-yi Dawlat-i ʿAlliya-yi Iran (1281/1863)* (Tehran: National Library of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1370/1991); Government of Iran, *Ruznama-yi Vaqaʾiʿ-yi Ittifaqiya* (Tehran: National Library of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1373/1994).

[25]On the subject of print and "ink" in Mughal India, see Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). On printing in Qajar Iran, see Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen"; idem, "Among the Dissenters," *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 293–315.

[26]Riza Quli Khan, *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 6.

[27]Ibid., 102.

[28]Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter Golden, eds., "Introduction," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

[29]René Létolle, "Histoire de l'Ouzboi, cours fossile de l'Amou Darya," *Studia Iranica* 29 (2000): 195–240; idem, Philip Micklin, Nikolay Aladin, Igor Plotnikov, "Uzboy and the Aral Regressions: A Hydrological Approach," *Qauternary International* 173–74 (2007): 125–36.

[30]This article uses the terms "Persianate" and "Persianate world" to refer to the geographical area where Persian languages and cultures have historically thrived, including parts of West Asia, Central Asia, India, and the Indian Ocean region. It includes not only the Persians but also Iranian peoples speaking Persian languages—Afghan, Baluch, Tajik, Hazara—many of whom today live outside the boundaries of modern Iran. In this article, "Iran" refers to the imperial domain known in the West until 1935 as "Persia."

[31]G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 433. Also see Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 243.

[32]Crossing the Oxus was a difficult task and was not taken lightly. The 13th-century Muslim geographer Yaqut recounted in his voluminous geographical dictionary, *Muʿjam al-Buldan*, how on a journey from Marv he and his companions nearly died from the cold, snow, and ice they had endured on the river. See Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 444–45.

[33]See, for instance, the 16th-century illustrated manuscript page of Mirkhvand's *Rawzat al-Safa* showing Mirza Abul-Qasim crossing the Oxus with a sense of fear and caution. British Library, India Office, 15724, Or. 5736, folio 368.

[34]The map collection at the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran includes a number of 19th-century maps of the Eurasian frontier, from the Caspian to the Oxus.

[35]In the 1860s, these maps were commissioned by Sipahsalar-i Aʿzam and were made by Sartip Muhandis Muhammad Mirza and Monsieur Bohler, both of whom were affiliated with the Dar al-Funun. See Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Saniʿ al-Mulk Ghaffari, *Ruznama-yi Dawlat-i ʿAlliya-yi Iran*, 569, 8–9. In a similar cartographic project in the 1880s, Mirza Muhammad ʿAli Khan Sarhang Muhandis mapped the eastern borderlands of Qajar Persia from Sarakhs to the Tejend oasis. See Muhammad ʿAli Munshi, *Safarnama-yi Rukn al-Mulk bih Sarakhs*, 84.

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[36]Riza Quli Khan, *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 31.

[37]Ibid., 33–34.

[38]Ibid., 43.

[39]Ibid., 43.

[40]Ibid., 102.

[41]Ibid., 102–103. See also P. Kropotkin, "The Old Beds of the Amu-Daria," *Geographical Journal* 12 (1898): 306–10.

[42]Riza Quli Khan, *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 117–18.

[43]Ibid., 37.

[44]Ibid., 43.

[45]See William Cronen, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History* (1992): 1347–376; Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome*.

[46]Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome*, xi–xii.

[47]Such a view of the discovery of facts about nature has been presented in Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 5–7, 82–132.

[48]For some studies of the Turkmen and their history, see Amin Guli, *Tarikhi Siyasi va Ijtimaʿi-yi Turkmenha* (Tehran: n.p., 1366/1987); Muhammad Riza Baygdili, *Turkmenha-yi Iran* (Tehran: n.p., 1369/1991); Yuri Bregel, *Khorezmskie Turkmeny v XIX Veke* (Moscow: Vostochnaia Literatura); idem, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia: Papers on Inner Asia* (Bloomington, Ind.: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1996), 28; idem, *The Administration of Bukhara under the Manghits and Some Tashkent Manuscripts: Papers on Inner Asia* (Bloomington, Ind.: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2000), 34; idem, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003); idem, "Uzbeks, Qazaqs, and Turkmens," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter Golden (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); William Irons, *The Yomut Turkmen: A Study of Kinship in a Pastoral Society* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1975). On the material culture of the Turkmen, see V. G. Moshkova, *Die Teppiche der Volker Mittelasiens* (Hamburg, Germany: Reinhold Schletzer Verlag, 1977); Louise W. Mackie and John Thompson, *Turkmen: Tribal Carpets and Traditions* (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1980); Robert Pinner and Murray L. Eiland Jr., *Between the Black Desert and the Red: Turkmen Carpets from the Wiedersperg Collection* (San Francisco, Calif.: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1999); Robert Pinner and Franses Michael, *Turkoman Studies I* (London: Oghuz Press, 1980); Werner Loge, *Turkoman Tribal Rugs* (Munich, Germany: Humanities Press, 1980); L. Beresneva, *The Decorative and Applied Art of Turkmenia* (Leningrad, Russia: Aurora, 1976); Siawosch Azadi, *Turkoman Carpets and the Ethnographic Significance of Their Ornaments* (Fishguard, U.K.: Crosby Press, 1975); C. D. Reed, *Turkoman Rugs* (Boston: Fogg Art Museum, 1966).

[49]Mir ʿAbd al-Karim Bukhari, *Histoire de l'Asie Centrale*, 77.

[50]Population figures based on James Baillie Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan in 1821 and 1822* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825); Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara; Being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1834); *Safarnama-yi Bukhara*; Arminius Vambery, *Travels in Central Asia: Being the Account of a Journey from Teheran Across the Turkoman Desert on the Eastern Shore of the Caspian to Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarcand Performed in the Year 1863* (London: John Murray, 1864); British National Archives, FO 60/379, "Report by Ronald Thomson on the Toorkoman tribes occupying districts between the Caspian and the Oxus," Tehran, 29 February 1876; Charles Marvin, *Merv, the Queen of the World; and the Scourge of the Man-Stealing Turkomans* (London: W. H. Allen and Company, 1881); Henri Moser, *A Travers L'Asie Centrale* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1885). An anonymously written *safarnāma* from 1844 with the title *Safarnama-yi Bukhara* lists the names of the different Turkmen tribes and their populations, figures that need to be taken with a grain of salt. These included the Tekke, numbering 80,000 tents, the largest and most powerful of the Turkmen tribes, whose territory was around the oases of Marv and Akhal near the Murghab River as well as around Tejend and Sarakhs. Another group, the Ersari, was said to number 40,000 tents and dwelled on the edge of the Upper Oxus in an area known as Lab-i Ab ("Lip of the Water" or "Water Bank"). The Ersari were recognized as the most settled of the Turkmen and kept close commercial contacts with the city of Bukhara, where they traded their sought-after textiles and weavings. Joining the Tekke in the Qara Qum oasis of Marv were the Salur, numbering 8,000 tents, and the Sariq, numbering 12,000 tents. Westward near the Caspian Sea, the Yamut tribes migrated between the eastern Iranian

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province of Astarabad and the Oxus and numbered 30,000 tents. See Anonymous, *Safarnama-yi Bukhara*, 72–73.

[51]See *Safarnama-yi Bukhara*, 29, where the travelers meet a Tekke tribesman named Qalich with the skin of a tiger he had killed strung over the back of his camel near the border town of Sarakhs.

[52]Riza Quli Khan, *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 117–18.

[53]Ibid., 117.

[54]Martyros Davud Khanov's "Safarnama-yi Turkistan" (1861) is a Persian translation of the Russian travelogue by Peter Ivanovich Pashino, produced at the Qajar imperial school, Dar al-Funun. National Library, Tehran, Mss. 1368.

[55]Riza Quli Khan, *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 39–40.

[56]Ibid., 39–40.

[57]On transecological exchanges, see David Christian, "Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Road in World History," *Journal of World History* 11 (2000): 1–26. Writing in the 1920s, the pioneering scholar of Central Asia V. V. Barthold claimed to have come across only one reference to Turkmen merchants and traders, found in the history of Abul Ghazi. See V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia,* vol. 3, *A History of the Turkman People*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 154.

[58]For the classic articulation of this thesis, which was subsequently echoed in the works of others, see Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Recent studies have revealed the buoyancy of early modern Central Eurasian trade through the prism of South Asian trade diasporas. See Stephen Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Muzaffar Alam, "Trade, State Policy, and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal–Uzbek Commercial Relations, c. 1550–1750," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37 (1994): 202–27; Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, 1710–1780* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995); idem, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and High Roads to Empire, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 2002); Scott Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and Its Trade, 1550–1900* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002).

[59]In *Histoire de l'Asie Centrale*, Mir ʿAbd al-Karim Bukhari depicts these transecological ties on the overland caravan routes of Central Eurasia: "In the environs of Bukhara there are many nomadic tribes [*aḥshām-nishīnān*]: Arabs, Turkmen, Uzbak, Qaraqalpaq. . . . The number of nomads is equal to the number of townsfolk and from Bukhara to Samarqand one passes a succession of villages, towns, and nomadic encampments" (77).

[60]*Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 39–40.

[61]Ibid., 86.

[62]Ibid., 72.

[63]Ibid., 39–40.

[64]Qaragazlu, *Majmuʿa-yi Asar*, 128–29.

[65]Ibid., 129.

[66]Ibid., 133–34.

[67]For an account of the bazaar of Marv in the late 19th century, see Qaragazlu, "Kitabchih-yi Marv," *Majmuʿa-yi Asar*, 103–140; Edmund O'Donovan, *The Merv Oasis* (London: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1882), 2:321–37.

[68]In the 19th century, the Turkmen horse trade extended from Central Eurasia to the interior of Iran, spreading the Tekke Turkmen breed. See Iʿtimad al-Saltana, *Mirʾat al-Buldan*, 1:352.

[69]For some 19th-century sources on Turkmen slave raids, see Ashtiyani, *ʿIbratnama*; Mirpanja, *Khatirat-i Asarat: Ruznama-yi Safar-i Khvarazm va Khiva*; Shirazi, *Tarikh-i Zu-l-Qarnayn*; Sipihr, *Nasikh al-Tavarikh*; Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville, "Quatorze mois de captivite, chez les Turcomans aux frontieres du Turkestan et de la Perse, 1860–1861 (Frontières du Turkestan et de la Perse)," in *Le Tour du Monde*, ed. Edouard Charton (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1866), 225–72.

[70]Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Beloochistan* (London: John Murray, 1857), 1:87.

[71]Arthur Conolly, *Journey to the North of India, Overland from England, Through Russia, Persia, and Affghaunistaun* (London: Richard Bentley, n.d.), 1:181–82.

[72]Moser, *A Travers L'Asie Centrale*, 248.

[73]See Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara, in the Years 1843–1845* (London: John W. Parker, 1946), 176. For an estimate of the number of slaves in 19th-century Khiva, see Marvin, *Merv*, 181.

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[74]For some studies of the Naqshbandis in Central Asia, see Joseph Fletcher, "The Naqshbandiyya in Northwest China," *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate Variorum, 1995), 6. Jurgen Paul, *The Khwajagan/Naqshbandiya in the First Generation after Baha'uddin* (Berlin: Halle, 1998); Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order," in *Naqshbandis: Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mytique Musulman*, ed. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul and Paris: Editions Isis, 1990), 3–44; idem, "From Kashghar to Eyup: The Lineages and Legacy of Sheikh Abdullah Nidai," in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity*, ed. Elisabeth Ozdalga (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 1999), 1–16; Devin DeWeese, "Khojagani Origins and the Critique of Sufism: The Critique of Communal Uniqueness in the Manaqib of Khoja ʿAli ʿAzizan Ramitani," *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, ed. Frederick de Jong and Bernard Radtke (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 492–519; Jo-Ann Gross, "The Waqf of Khoja ʿUbayd Allah Ahrar in Nineteenth-Century Central Asia: A Preliminary Study of a Tsarist Record," in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*, 47–60; Alexandre Papas, *Soufisme et politique entre Chine, Tibet et Turkestan: Étude sur les Khwajas Naqshbandis du Turkestan orientale* (Paris: Librarie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 2005).

[75]*Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 96–101. Khvaja Baha al-Din Naqshband, a Tajik, preached the principles that a Sufi could live on earth "externally" (*z̤āhir*) while reserving an "inner" (*bāṭin*) closeness to God. An important element in Naqshbandi beliefs was the silent remembrance of the divine (*z̲ikr-i khafī*), a practice that could take place under any temporal circumstances.

[76]For discussion of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in Riza Quli Khan's travelogue, see *Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 98–99, 101, 133.

[77]Although he did not belong to a *tariqa*, Riza Quli Khan had an interest in Sufism and was the author of a biographical dictionary of saints. See *Tazkira-yi Riyaz al-ʿArifin* (Tehran: Kitabkhana-yi Mahdiyyih, 1316/1937).

[78]Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 150. This view has been challenged by Robert McChesney, who has questioned the notion of Safavid Iran as "a barrier of heterodoxy," suggesting instead the perseverance of social and cultural contacts between Safavid Iran and Central Eurasia. See McChesney, "'Barrier of Heterodoxy'? Rethinking the Ties between Iran and Central Asia in the Seventeenth Century," in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 231–67.

[79]*Sifaratnama-yi Khvarazm*, 98–99.

[80]Ibid., 101.

[81]Ibid., 101.

[82]Ibid., 41.

[83]Ibid., 132.

[84]Ibid., 78.

[85]Ibid., 135; Schefer, *Relation de l'Ambassade au Kharezm*, 206.

[86]Ibid., 115, 71–74.

[87]For a narrative of the disastrous Persian campaign on Marv in 1861, see de Blocqueville, "Quatorze mois de captivite, chez les Turcomans aux frontieres du Turkestan et de la Perse," 225–72.

[88]Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe*, 225–32.

[89]White, *The Middle Ground*, ix–93.

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