

Alexander Bekovich – Cherkassky: Beginning of Russia’s Imperialistic Expansion in Central Asia

Samantha Rogers*

Abstract

This article attempts to identify the true reasons, outcomes, and outstanding legacy of Alexander Bekovich-Cherkassky. A Circassian aristocrat, a Muslim converted to Christianity, who would travel searching for a mythical river of gold in the name of Russia; this historical character’s life and ultimate death is investigated. The importance of his journey from Russia to Khiva will underline the substantial effect Russian imperialism had on central Asia. One of the first expeditions enforced by a Russian ruler, Peter the Great, Bekovich-Cherkassky’s story sheds light on the Circassian-Russian relations and provides a wealth of information about the institution of amanat or exchanging the children from aristocratic families for the purpose of forming political alliance. Finally, this article argues that by inspiring other explorers and travelers to the region, Bekovich-Cherkassky’s journey impacted the future of Russia’s exploration. The extremely limited information surrounding both Alexander and the journey are compiled with evidence here that his expedition held more weight than history has been able to testify.

Keywords: Russian History, Russian Imperialism, Circassian Relations, Alexander Bekovich-Cherkassky, Amanat

Özet

Bu makale, Aleksandr Bekoviç-Çerkasski'nin keşif gezisinin gerçek nedenlerini, sonuçlarını ve seçkin mirasını tanımlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bir Çerkes aristokrat, Hristiyan olan bir Müslüman, altın nehir mitinin peşinde Rusya adına seyahatlere çıkan bu tarihi karakterin yaşamı ve ölümü

* Samantha Rogers, PhD Student, University of Maryland. E-mail:
srogers3@umbc.edu

(Received: 15.04.2021; Accepted: 01.06.2022)

incelenmektedir. Çalışmada Rusya'dan Hiva'ya yolculuğunun önemi, Rus emperyalizminin Orta Asya üzerindeki etkisi ele alınmaktadır. Rus çarı Büyük Petro'nun talimatıyla Bekoviç-Çerkasski'nin gerçekleştirdiği ilk keşif gezisinin öyküsü, o dönemlerdeki Çerkes-Rus ilişkilerine ışık tutarken, amanatlık kurumu (politik işbirliği için soylu ailelerden çocukların değiştirilmesi) hakkında da zengin bilgi sunmaktadır. Sonuç itibarıyla, bu makale Bekoviç-Çerkasski'nin yolculuğunun daha sonraki keşif ve gezginlerin bölgeye ilgisine ilham vererek, Rusya'nın keşiflerinin geleceğini de etkilediğini savunmaktadır. Aleksandr ve yolculuğuyla ilgili son deede sınırlı bilgiler, keşif gezisinin tarihin tanıklık ettiğinden daha fazla ağırlığa sahip olduğunu gösteren kanıtlar olarak derlenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Rus Tarihi, Rus Emperyalizmi, Çerkes İlişkileri, Aleksandr Bekoviç-Çerkasski, Amanat

Russia's first expansive expedition was not led by a native Russian man. It was led by a Circassian aristocrat originally from the Princedom of Kabarda, a Muslim converted to Christianity, who would travel over 800 miles in the name of Russia to search for a mythical river of gold. His journey was filled with hardships such as religious betrayal, personal loss, and devastating deaths. He carried on his shoulders the first expansion of the Russian Empire that could place Russia on the map as a global power. To fail would mean a devastating impact on his heritage, his legacy, and ultimately bring an end to his life. This came to be when he and his troops were brutally murdered at the end of their journey. Yet, while the story of this man's failure would be hidden from Russian history, it cannot be forgotten the impact this man had regardless of his loss. This man was Alexander Bekovich-Cherkassky.

Though Russia has re-written their history many times in attempts to cover these failures, and erase contributions to Russia by non-native Russian men, it must be taken into consideration Bekovich-Cherkassky's significant impact on Russian history. His

influence in vastly expanding Russian territory, his role in the development of Circassian-Russian relations, his work toward the construction of new frontier forts, have all been overlooked in the historiography. Moreover, a study of Bekovich-Cherkasskii provides a lens on nation building, comparative empire, and identities in multiethnic empires. To examine these aspects of Bekovich-Cherkasskii’s effects on both Russian and world history, we will closely explore his origins, the background for his massive expedition into central Asia, the journey itself, the outcome of the horrific battle that would end the trip, and the numerous important legacies it left behind in his stead.

Before examining Bekovich-Cherkassky (hitherto referenced as Alexander) in depth, what is important to understand is that some Soviet and post-Soviet research about the history of Russian colonization is ideologically biased and reflects imperial nostalgia marked by Orientalism and such Russian imperial myths as the empire’s benevolence and peaceful acquisition of new territories. While certain contemporary resources are difficult to locate, two particularly wealthy sources, such as Wanner and Abdukarimovich which will be heavily referenced later, have provided some information regarding Alexander that aids to a more centrally Asian perspective, rather than solely outdated monarchist and pro-imperial texts. Still, based on limited, biased information, official imperial interpretations are pushed on scholars attempting to analyze the life of our main figure. It is also after Peter the Great that we see a blatant exclusion of notable people of Circassian origin to avoid the undermining of the Russian Empire. We do, however, have particular evidence surrounding Alexander’s birth and life as a Circassian Muslim that can better include his allegiances and double consciousness. With many insights into his background, we can also examine how his ethnicity, religion, and racial beginnings not only aid Russian history, but gives the opportunity for the history of his people to also be shared. While

Alexander's case does not include attention and resource material such as those decolonial cases like Guaman Poma de Ayala, first-hand accounts written by him still give insightful information regarding life in the amanat system and under the Russian Empire as a whole.

There are two notable Cherkasskys named in heavily utilized sources from Russian, Turkish, and Arabic sources who were responsible for the charting of new territories for the Russian Empire along with launching one of the most impressive royal families in history – the Romanoffs. One, Prince Boris Cherkassky established and embedded the Romanoff dynasty into Russian society through marriage, princely titles, and familial treaties. This sparked the first of the favorable mentions found in resources on Alexander's family. Many of these sources additionally emphasize the major actions taken in expanding the Russian sphere by Prince Boris's distant relative, Prince Alexander Bekovich-Cherkassky, the central figure of our research. Unfolding during the battle against the Swedish Empire in 18th century, gradually Prince Alexander's journey resulted in a massive trail-blazing adventure that would lay the groundwork for numerous governments' sanction of Russian explorers in the following centuries. While Alexander's journey would end in the unsuccessful acquisition of Khiva and the death of his men, the footing obtained for the country set Russia ahead as a multi-continental world power. Unfortunately, information is limited due to loss of data – most likely due to his ultimate failure leading to the mass erasure of his presence, translation errors, and more – yet the crucial element of his legacy, the primary research question for this essay, is the truly unmeasurable significance to Russian heritage.

The more central narrative for our research is Alexander's excursion to Khiva, a quest given to him by Tsar Peter I, the goal of which was to acquire the city as well as a very important river. Peter was very much interested in the trade relations that came

with both the Caucasus region as well as what he hoped to gain from Khiva. However, he also hoped that open trade with these areas would also allow him to be the first to openly expand the empire and succeed in achieving his imperialistic goals. Circassian bibliographies and library collections speak to this dual idea of trade and imperialistic endeavors:

At its zenith, Kabarda was so dominant that all powers with vested interests in the area, namely Moscow and the Ottoman Port, sought to court and bestow honours upon its princes in order to further their interests. This culminated in the betrothal of Tsar Ivan IV (1530-1584), nicknamed the Terrible, to Prince Temriuk Idarov’s (Yidar Teimriqwe) daughter, Gwascheney (Gwaschene, in some sources; later baptized Princess Maria), in 1561 AD. This marriage of alliance served to cement the so-called ‘Union’ between Russia and Kabarda...In this period, the Cherkasskys, Kabardian princes in the Russian court, as an aristocratic family formed whose descendants played a significant role in the Russian military and politics (Jaimoukha 190).

This duality from a Circassian perspective shows just a fraction of what it meant to merge Russian and Caucasus endeavors into a global ideology of religious alliances for empire expansion. Before examining the voyage to Central Asia and its impact on Russian and Asian history, we must first explore the system through which Alexander came, and its importance to our knowledge of him and Russian politics at the time.

The Caucasus and the Amanat System

Alexander, formally known as the Prince of Kabarda, was born a Circassian Muslim named Devlet Girey Mirza. His name was changed when he was converted to Christianity and joined the Russian service as an amanat in 1713. His last name Cherkassky in Russian was chosen for him to show his ethnic origin and Bekovich refers to “bek” (in Tatar language) meaning prince to emphasize

his aristocratic origin (Lobanov-Rostovsky 74). The amanat program, established in the late 17th and early 18th century, served the practical purpose of exchanging persons between princely or noble families to ensure an alliance between two states. This was a standard practice between Russia and the non-Christian peoples at the Russian frontier, and while education practices also occurred, schooling aspects developed later and were secondary to the larger purpose of securing alliances and treaties. The relationship between Russia and the Caucasus region sprang from the Kabardians, a large principedom ruled by a Great Prince of Kabarda, located between the Black and Caspian Sea, and who had resources Russia desperately needed such as ore (Nogmov 42). In turn, Russia set up an amanat position for cooperation, a program that would allow promising Muslim boys to stay with Russian nobles for a chance at higher education, royal training, princely titles, and primarily to secure alliances between both parties. Circassians made up a large percentage of the non-Russian elite, especially those in the amanat program who went on to become princes from the ranks of boyars (an old aristocratic Russian term used to denote a rank). This term extended to anyone involved in the royal families – Russians and Circassian amanats included.

These amanats, like Alexander, were forced into many of the lifestyle changes that came with becoming a Russian citizen. Transitioning from Muslim to Christianity, changing your name, and taking on a new culture were all mandatory factors of becoming an amanat. However, Peter the Great was much more lenient with the program than future rulers, and it is said that even though religious conversion was necessary, he allowed them to continue practicing their birth religions in private. This plays later into Alexander's story as he will later use his Muslim heritage and Kabardian blood to attempt an alliance with Khiva. His original traditions and customs were not lost upon conversion to Russian norms, and while he used his new name in correspondences to

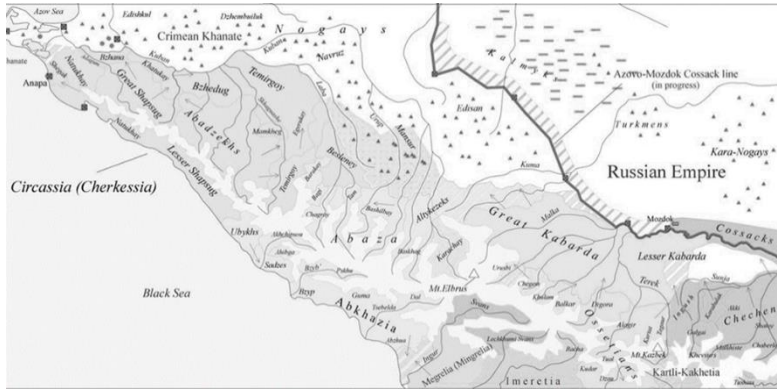
show his allegiance, he did not stray from his language, religion, customs, and lineage, and would even use them later to his political advantage.

Understanding this amanat program is important to our study of Alexander, as it outlines a new era of loyalty and alliances in Russian history. We will examine this theme more in-depth later, but an essential factor to the ideology of the amanat program is that we are switching into a new era of Russian history, one in which nationalism is beginning to emerge. Before, we would see groups of people pledging allegiance to new powers either through force and colonization, shared religion and common beliefs and practices, or location in a geographical and tribal sense. In the early eighteenth century however, Russia was moving from a single Christian domain into an expanding multiethnic empire. It is crucial to remind ourselves of this, as we will return to it later. For now, we will examine the Circassians. The region in which they resided is still in existence today, though historically it made up a larger territory ranging from the northern Caucasus to Kabarda. In the figure below, we can see the outline for what was considered “Circassia” in the 16th-18th centuries.¹ Shaded in dark gray, it becomes evident that vast numbers of smaller regions and groups identified themselves not only by their specific name, religion, or grouping but also as part of a larger being rooted in Circassia. We can also see the closeness, geographically, to the lines of the Russian Empire. This re-enforces the idea of the simplicity of the amanat program; sending young men to Russia did not mean sending them across the globe, but rather to a close, and more well-known, vicinity. It also embraces the idea that Russia needed to tie these groups to the center of power: the princes, which were involved in Russian politics of court. We can also see more clearly

¹ “North-West-Caucasus-Language.Jpg (1564×952)” n.d.)

Great Kabarda, the homeland of Alexander and one of the largest locations for boyars to be enlisted into the amanat program.

This is where we find Alexander, still known by his birth name Devlet. Devlet came from a long and confusing line of



North West Caucasus

Cherkasskii's, whose Circassian origin can be linked to the Romanov family from a distant relative: Prince Boris Cherkasskii. The lineage remains confusing to historians, as the name Cherkassky (Cherkasskii, Tcherkassky, Tcherkasskii) was a common household name relating to anyone from the Circassian region and is found in sources to reference numerous unrelated families and princely heritages. Nevertheless, the Cherkassky family can be linked to a history of powerful Kabardian households throughout the Caucasus history. In the second half of the sixteenth century, however, as the Russian presence in the North Caucasus increased, Kabarda's ruling princes' authority over the Cherkasskii family weakened. This included Devlet and his brothers (Bushkovitch 9-29).

One of the "only new Circassian prince[s] to come to Moscow" (Bushkovitch), Devlet's lineage is acknowledged as murky. Supposedly, he came to "Moscow on the invitation of Princess A.V.

Cherkasskaia, widow of Prince Petr El’ murzich” (Bushkovitch). However, we do know a bit of specific information linked explicitly to his immediate family. We know that Devlet had two brothers, one older, known as the “greater prince of Kabardia” named Tatar khan Bekmurzin. He also had a younger brother who would replace Devlet as amanat after his death, Elmurza Bekmurzin. Their surname, “murzin”, relates back to numerous European and Asian tribes who were part of a pro-Russian, pro-European group of youths named Bekmurzin. These similar groups would also be the beginning of the more nationalistic approach to state-building, though nationalism would not be officially established until the 19th century. This pro-Russian, pro-European youth is important to our understanding of Alexander’s background. In this period of history (based around the time of his birth in the mid-17th century), the identity of large groups was understood not yet by their ethnic nationality, but through their religious nationality. Their allegiance fell with those in their religious communities, who also happened to tie to them geographically. Before we examine Alexander’s move to Russia, and the basis it lays on, a crucial factor to witness here is that, seemingly for the first time in Russian history, we see two distinct religious identities (the Muslim Circassians and the Orthodox Christian Russians) putting aside their religious differences and coming together to unite under the umbrella of political power. This was a huge theme and major feature in contemporary multi-ethnic empires and their establishment.

We will discuss the idea of nationalism and the idea of creating a larger, multiethnic empire towards the end of the paper when we discuss Alexander’s lineage. For now, though, what is involved here is the path Devlet took in becoming Alexander, and his family lineage. Devlet, as we know him, came from a noble line of Kabardian princes named the Dzhambulatovs. After spending his childhood in the Muslim Caucasus, Devlet traveled to Russia as an amanat, where sources state he became a prominent statesman

under Peter the Great. He was then sent abroad by Peter to study maritime affairs, before returning and being granted the title “Captain of the Guard” and marrying Princess Maria Borisovna Golitsyna, - a wedding Peter the Great personally facilitated (Soymonov 8). This culmination of events allowed Devlet, now a converted Christian named Alexander, to grow extremely close to Peter, which would grant him the approval of leading the expedition into Khiva in the coming years. This journey had numerous reasons. One of them rested in the terms of Alexander’s civic duty, outlined by both the amanat program and the Russian nobility’s rules.

“Civic Service” and Social Structure

To understand the rise to power in the Cherkassky family, an important factor to explore is the title and legitimacy given to the noble families of the Russian court. Until the reign of Peter the Great in the 1680s, these families held their titles on a hereditary and lineal basis, meaning they gained automatic status based on their family name. That was until the emperor altered the criteria for achievement of titles to rank in State service. He implemented this with nobility already in power by adding mandatory participation in the civil service. Since their princely titles came from the province in which they governed (Lippman 654), they were now required to actively participate in their governing region by proving that they made a significant positive impact. This could be through military service, which a majority chose, or by participating in the amanat program, another significant choice. One family affected by this change was the Tcherkassky’s. Their lineage accordingly matched Prince Boris Tcherkassky to a close family relative of Czar Michael I, grandfather of Peter the Great, and forefather of the Romanov Dynasty. Prince Boris of the Tcherkassky’s lineage would eventually lead to Prince Alexander Bekovich-Cherkassky, who we will continue to examine in-depth,

commissioned to explore central Asia in their struggle against Sweden, and to combat Khiva (Lippman 655). After exploring the background of Alexander and seeing where he came from as well as understanding how he grew into being one of Peter I’s closest confidants, we can now explore the beginning of why Peter would send Alexander as a part of his service into Central Asia. The first part of the answer lies in the Great Northern War.

To understand why the Great Northern War is so important to this paper, we must study the relationship between Sweden and Russia at the time of the Cherkassky’s rise to prominence. As Russia transformed, it relied on wealth to support both the new expanding empire and the old country. However, Russian Czar Peter the Great was dealing with skirmishes in Sweden during the Great Northern War, which consumed portions of the money needed for his governmental changes. Even though the war would end with a victorious Russian Emperor, the lengthy and expensive war left Peter desperate for money, and he took it from anywhere it could be found (Frost 16). This would set the stage for Peter to commission Prince Alexander to travel with forces towards Khiva, as stories of their immense wealth and rumors of a river with gold sand piqued Peter’s interest in re-funding his state treasury after his expensive Swedish ventures. Peter was approached by a Turcoman chief, Hodja Nefes, who claimed that there was a river of gold in a Central Asian town called Khiva (Sutherland 5). After some time of devising a plan to confirm this story, Peter dispatched Alexander, along with numerous Russian troops, towards Khiva. Alexander arrived in the city in 1717, beginning one of the first Russian expeditions towards central Asia (Allworth 8-9) in the hopes of mapping unexplored territory and conquering it in the name of Russia.

Part of Alexander’s “civic service” related to military service. To retain his title would result in this trek southeast, past his Circassian homeland, to Khiva in modern day Uzbekistan. First,

though, Emperor Peter had sent Alexander to Turkmenistan, where Hodja Nefes resided, to confirm the rumors surrounding a river today known as the Amu Darya (known to the west since ancient times as the Oxus River) suggested that “copious gold dust awaited in an easily invaded Khiva populated with submissive Khivans” (Allworth 90). However, intelligence also noted that the Khivans were manually directing the flow of the river towards their particular city to obtain all the wealth. Alexander was sent to investigate the extent of wealth said to be held by Khiva and, upon inspection, redirect the flow of the river to India. Another convoy was sent to ally with the Indian rulers, establish trade networks, and allow the Russians to collect the river as it was closer geographically than Khiva. Assuming this would unfold with no major issues, Alexander was also instructed to erect fortifications along the Amu Darya coast to expand the Russian lines as well as establish the empire’s presence as a world power in both Europe and Asia (Daudov et al.). As Alexander would move from Russia down to Khiva, he would erect several forts and stone buildings in the name of Russian expansion. This would also lead, however, to the beginning of the skirmishes with Khiva, as word “from Ayúka, the Khan of the Kalmuks, and men who had been sent to Khiva, that there was dissatisfaction at his erecting a fort on Khivan territory, that the Khivans were armed...” (Schuyler 463). Next, we shall look at the most important and remaining fortifications erected along Alexander’s journey.

Travel and Fortifications

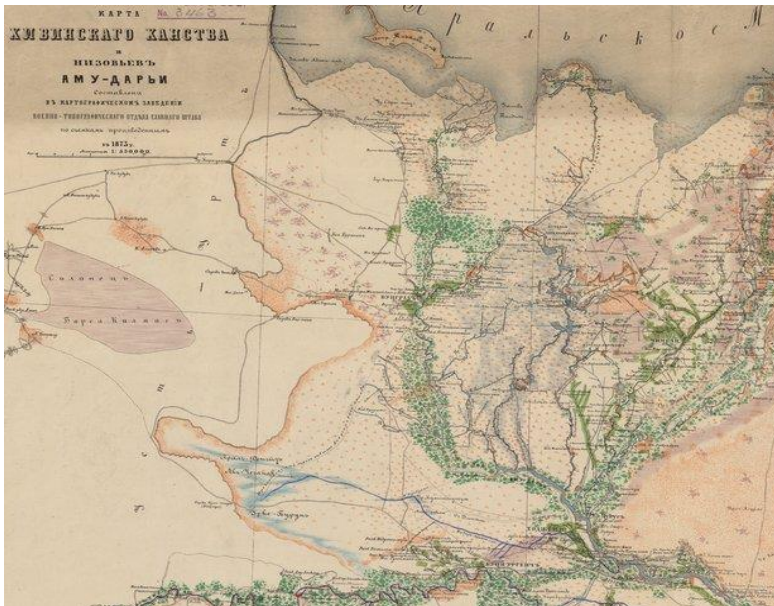
Alexander and his men launched the military expansion campaign in 1716, settling their fortresses along the river towards Khiva, commencing with “Sviataia Krepost” (“Holy Fortress”) on the Karagan pier, currently known as Sarytash Bay (Daudov et al.). Alexander then continued some 100 miles, where he dedicated the second fortress to himself, dubbing it “Alexandrova”

(“Alexander”). Russian historiography says this also laid the foundation of the future fortification, Novopetrovskoe (Fort Shevchenko), a prominent military base and administration center in modern Kazakhstan. However, archeological evidence for this is limited. Upon landing in “Cape Tuk-Karagan”, Alexander, to protect himself, immediately laid a fortress, which received the name “Tuk-Karagan” (Thietmar 170). From there, he went on to establish a number of forts, to which he left a handful of garrisons behind to defend them. They included: Alexander-bai, Alexander-Baeva, and Krasnaya Voda. The final days of their fortification campaign resulted in the establishment of two additional fortresses; “Krasnovodskaya” where Alexander’s reports indicate a large commemorative statue was built, and the most notable of the two, “Svyatoy Petr” (“St. Peter”). Although the first original map of the Caspian Sea, published by Russia and created by Alexander, was lost, the rest of the 1720s would see the production of as many recreations as possible. Even though most of these would be incorrect since they did not have access to the information listed in the original by Alexander, the closest map we have to the Caspian Sea and the erected fortifications at the time is shown in Figure 1.

In this map, a specific list of Alexander’s fortifications is pictured.² This map follows his journey from his starting place in Petersburg down to Kabarda. This was indicated by letters sent from Peter to Alexander to determine if Alexander could confirm an alliance with the Circassians of Kabarda before moving on. Once the *beks* (princes) of Kabarda swore loyalty to Russia, Alexander then continued on to Astrakhan, then traveled by sea to reach the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea in search of the Amu Darya. We are told that sea travel was limited here, however, as bad storms

² “Map of the Khanate of Khiva and the Lower Reaches of the Amu Darya River,” 1873, <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/15034/>.

and massive shipwrecks blocked their passage. They instead continued on foot past the Aral Sea, before returning back to Astrakhan (due to winter conditions) and on to Kozhin. It is here, we are told, that Alexander erected the fortress Krasnovodskaya, before finally moving onto Guryev. Before we move to examine the rest of Alexander's travels, an important component to this story is the reaction to these troops marching through territories and constructing massive fortifications along the coast of the Caspian (Thietmar 171). This remains up for debate, but continuing with this specific source from Peter to Alexander, as well as taking other sources into account, we catch a glimpse at not only the reaction to the buildings, but also to the atmosphere surrounding the relations in general.



Map of the Khanate of Khiva and the Lower Reaches of the Amu Darya River

Multiple sources argue that the relationship between Turkmen and the Russians was peaceful, with some suggesting that a non-aggression pact was enacted as there were examples of Turkmen of the Mangyshlak Peninsula providing aid by helping to build the coastal fortifications under Alexander. However, conclusive evidence on whether it was intentionally aggressive has not been found. All that is known is the negative reaction received from the Khivans, as Alexander was instructed by Peter the Great to redirect their wealth to Russia in aid for the Great Northern War against Sweden. Some historical narratives, such as Michal Wanner’s *Alexander Bekovich Cherkassky’s Campaign to Central Asia and India in 1714-1717* and Edwards Sutherland’s extremely imperialistic *Russian Projects Against India: From the Czar Peter to General Skobelev*, argue that Alexander’s mission was either to attempt to form an alliance, but force submission on them if a treaty did not work (Wanner 20) or enter under the premise of friendship then force subjugation (Sutherlands 9). There can be no argument, however, when inspecting the written instructions from Peter I.

The relationship with the Russians and the surrounding territories seemed to be peaceful on the surface, but specific information is not known as to whether or not Russia was forcing an alliance. In the case of Khiva, however, we have specific directions from Peter to Alexander; to put forth a peace treaty, see their conditions, provide troops, ask for assistance, and take the river. These instructions are laid out perfectly clear from Peter to Alexander in written form, word for word:

Persuade the Khan of Khiva into loyalty and allegiance [to Russia], by promising him [a guarantee for] hereditary [rights to his] lands; for that, give him a [Russian] guard into his service, so that in exchange, he would work for our interests. If he gladly accepts this offer and would desire the guard but wouldn’t do

anything without the guard, being afraid [to be overthrown by] his subjects – then, give him an adequate amount of guard, but with a condition that the guard would be on his payroll, and if he says that he cannot pay the guard, in the beginning, then [agree to] pay for the guard for one year, but tell him that he should pay after that. If the Khan of Khiva agrees [to our conditions] this or another way, then, ask him to send his people – with two of our people – by water up Syr Darya river to Erket’ (Erkenya) town, to look for gold. Also, ask him [the Khan] for vessels, and send a merchant by Amu Darya river to India, telling him [the merchant] to sail as far as the vessels can go, and from there, he should drive to India, registering rivers and lakes and describing the way of water and land, especially water way to India, by that (Amu Darya) or other rivers; and to return from India the same way; or if he learns, in India, of a better way to the Caspian Sea, then, return that [better] way and describe it. While [staying] at the Khan of Khiva, also learn about [the Khan] of Bukhara - if it would be possible to get him [Khan of Bukhara] into [Russian] allegiance, the same way [as Khan of Khiva came into allegiance to Russia], and if not, then, into friendship, because there [in Bukhara] Khans also suffer from their subjects. (Thietmar 175).

There can be no doubt that Alexander’s instructions were clear. He was not to force submission on them, but rather offer a fair alliance with them in return for access to their supposed river of gold. This was also another technique for empire expansion; occupation by treaty rather than force. This was not a new technique, however, as Russian history has included the present method of giving gifts, presents, and resources to foreign lands in exchange for alliances and oaths of allegiance. Even Alexander, in a later discovered letter to Peter about the reality of indigenous persons, says “these peoples [the Kabardinians] were independent and submitted to no one,” but argues that “the only way to attract the peoples of the North Caucasus to Russia was to provide them

with annuities and gifts” (Khodarkovsky 68). This method would be extended into Khiva, as Peter was well aware that, since people identified themselves according to their religion, he would have to rely on the use of treaties as a means of imperial expansion.

As the Russian expedition ended close to 1717, Alexander and his remaining men walked the rest of the distance (shipwrecks prevented a speedier journey by sea) to Khiva and continued their journey. Alexander then moved with his men to Guryev, a small city in Kazakhstan, where provisions had been sent for the small army to use before the attack. Approximately “4,000 regular infantry, 2,000 Cossacks, and 100 dragoons” were bequeathed to Alexander for taking the city (Sutherland 9). We should stop here for a moment and examine the importance of this army. First, this would not be all the men Alexander would take. This is simply the beginning number that was originally given to him directly from Peter while Alexander was still in Russia. Before Alexander went to Khiva, we know that he was instructed to erect a number of fortifications along the Caspian Sea to illuminate the Russian wealth and leave their mark on the area. What is skipped over, however, is that Alexander also went back to his homeland of Kabardia before leaving for Khiva. On this side mission, Peter instructed Alexander to recruit as many men as possible of their own volition, to travel in Russia’s name. These men were collected perhaps to loop them back into the expanding empire even if they could not make it via the amanat channel. Another idea is that they were also acquired so that, upon each fortification, Alexander would have men to leave behind at the new buildings to ensure their safety and keep a chain of communication open between Alexander, his men, and Peter.

Theories such as Wanner’s argue that these Kabardian civilians were not recruited in Alexander’s care to be left behind, however, but to take forward to capture Khiva. This in turn suggests that the city was to be taken by force, not through diplomatic relations or

through a Russian alliance. I disagree with this theory, as we have already discussed how expansion by force was not the main tactic and rather a peaceful alliance and acquisition of territory was favored. This hypothesis has been refuted by one letter from Peter to Alexander explicitly stating that it is only through peaceful negotiations that Khiva should be taken, this is again shown in the quote above. Even then, Khiva's loyalty to Russia ensured them protection under the new empire, in exchange for the sharing of this newfound river of gold. The importance of the labels for these men (Cossacks and Dragoons) does not seem to bear extreme significance, as Cossacks were plentiful and well versed in this region, and Dragoons, who were troops that could travel on horseback and on foot, were found anywhere, since it was a popular term for any educated man who could ride horseback (Sutherland 9). These were not necessarily fighting men, but rather guides to assist in Alexander's travels who were trained in arms in case of an attack, once again showing the theory of peace and not war. Now that we have expanded on their intention with this army we can return to their travels.

Their journey through the desert consisted of extreme heat and lack of proper food and water; due to this, countless squadrons were lost under Alexander. Nevertheless, he persisted with the remaining men after receiving word from Peter to carry on. From here they passed to the Irketsky mountains and over around 180 versts (about 120 miles) (Schubert 55) until closing in on their destination. Finally, after their long trek, Alexander and his men arrived at the small town of Khiva. The history of Khiva as a small, non-commercial city consists mainly of religious affairs with many different Muslim Khans, as well as a deep connection with the Cossacks of the area (a separate dwelling group of Russian origin) who they often fought against. Cossacks were "free men" who roamed the entirety of the Russian steppe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century and were widely used by the

Russian empire as warriors and border buffers. At this moment in the eighteenth century, they were utilized in central Asia particularly for fighting purposes. Even though this city seemed insignificant in all other aspects, Peter I sent Alexander to confirm the rumors of the Oxus River leading into the bed of the Caspian Sea. Even though numerous sources have also aided this idea by saying that Peter did, or did not, have intentions of completely taking over the city, the source on the Russian projects of Peter I, as we have previously examined, quotes that Alexander was to enter the city under peaceful terms, stating that Alexander was to create an alliance between Russia and the Khanate, but then to bring the entire city under his subjugation (Sutherland 9).

Onwards to Khiva

What is important to note, which will be examined more in depth later, are the major political and social implications that came from successfully allying with Khiva. It also adds to the theory that, as we have already discussed, Alexander's sub-mission was to document and map the undiscovered regions and territories he was entering, either by land or by sea. Nevertheless, Alexander's instructions were clear. So, he took his forces and moved to the city of Khiva, plan in hand, ready to take the city first by gifts and promises of an alliance, then by providing an alliance with Russian rule, to achieve his goal of capturing the Oxus River for his tsar.

It is also worth mentioning that, while Alexander's instructions from Peter are clear, these instructions are from a very specific compilation of sources surrounding the reasoning and purpose for the trip. Alexander has been vaguely mentioned in other sources, as most Russian historiography brush over the failure of Alexander and Peter's foolish ambition to send an amanat to a foreign city to redirect a river of gold. Other historians have mentioned Alexander in sources as only being a piece to a larger plot from Peter to capture India instead. While some argue the purpose was

simply to give Alexander a task to retain his princely title, Peter was not altogether concerned with what happened during or after. A handful of collections, however, theorize that Alexander had a private sub-mission of cataloging information, cultural and geographical, on the new lands he was discovering from Russia to Khiva. This seems to match the argument as primary documentation from Peter to Alexander supports this idea: "...apply your work... as possible a solicitor of genuine news...and when you return, if you please have a detailed note in it, and the drawing and us in your pleasant writings and in notifications" (Bekovich-Cherkassky 4). Thus, he continued, documenting as he went, until he arrived on the outskirts of his destination of Khiva.

Alexander, being a Muslim by birth, used his Circassian heritage as an advantage by sending a small convoy equipped with gifts to Khiva, a customary sign of good faith and friendship. While Khiva accepted the gifts and the convoy, they were forced to remain outside of the gates in fear of an attempt to gather information once allowed inside. Still, Alexander and the Russian troops took this as a sign of amicable relations, although sources cannot deduce if Alexander truly meant for an alliance or if he was to confirm the Khivan suspicion of secret intelligence collection. We do know that by taking seemingly friendly actions first, he attempted peaceful negotiations of wealth sharing. Other than refusing them entry, Khiva appeared to react positively, sending out their emissary with a return of gifts to discuss a treaty and non-aggression pact in Amu Darya's wealth. However, whether historians can confirm if Alexander knew or not, a Kalmyk (Mongol/Russian subgroup) named Baksha and a score of others staying with Alexander snuck over the city walls, demanding an audience with the Khan telling him that Alexander planned to destroy the Khivan caliphate and take it for himself in Russia's name. Hearing this, the Khan dispatched over 20,000 men to attack Alexander at his camp outside Khiva. As all hopes of a

friendly negotiation were abandoned, both sides prepared their men for the fight to determine the fate of massive glory in wealth, land, and possibly everlasting gold.

The Khivans marched towards Alexander’s camps, ambushing one small caravan fishing in a nearby pond when word reached Alexander of the attack. Several small skirmishes between the two sides commenced. Each encounter resulted in a substantial win by the Russians, losing only a handful of men while slaughtering thousands of Khivans. It was only a matter of time for the Khan to realize their struggle would outlast their troops and provisions to fight without aid, and he sent emissaries to Alexander for a peace treaty. Alexander, hoping all quarrels had been settled, ordered his men to collect “a hundred forty sacks of wheat and arzhan flour and...five camels and five horses” (Bekovich-Cherkassky 134), to be sent to the Khan as a gift and apology for the mistake. Explaining that the attack was a vulgar misunderstanding, the Khan invited Alexander and his troops into the city, dividing them into five factions to be spread across the city under claims that the entire army together posed a threat.

While this was an obvious trap, and with Alexander’s commanders begging not to agree, Alexander accepted. Before a peace treaty between him and the Khan could be signed, all five factions were brutally murdered, including Alexander, whom the Khan had “cut off the head and, removing the skin, ordered it [to be] fill[ed] with grass and set it at the gate” (Bekovich-Cherkassky 21). The head was then supposedly sent to the Khan of Bokhara as a gift (Bekovich-Cherkassky 21), and a warning not to trust the Russians. This gesture of goodwill, or perhaps warning, on behalf of the Khan of Khiva to the Khan of Bokhara, however, was not well received. Instead, it is said that “the Bukhara Khan was horrified by the villainy of his neighbor, and...he gave the order not to admit the barbarian, but to send to him only with the question: ‘Isn’t your bloodthirsty Khan a beast? Take your head back to him: I wash my

hands in this inhuman act” (Thietmar 188). This gave great confidence to Peter, back home in Russia, to continue his efforts of forming an alliance with the Bukhara Khan and with India, even though his main reason of redirecting the river to them had been lost.

India

Taking a step back and closely identifying the role India played in this mission is crucial to the understanding of Peter’s larger goal. Upon successfully allying with Khiva, Alexander was meant to redirect the flow of the water to India, where Peter had dispatched another group of men to a major religious and cultural center named Bokhara, whose Khan was supposed to yield control and submit his loyalty to Russia. Alexander was told specifically to request of the Khan of Khiva:

“To ask him for vessels and to send a merchant in them to India by the Amu-Daria, ordering the same to ascend the river as far as vessels can go, and thence to proceed to India, recording the rivers and lakes, and describing the way by land and water, and particularly the water-way to India the same way...and to describe it in writing” (Sutherland 12).

This quote is especially important, as it becomes clear that Peter did not send Alexander with a larger task of also taking over India, but rather to establish trade relations with the Mughals, learn of the region’s peoples and customs, and further compete with the encroaching expansion of Britain.

With limited information regarding the directionality and possession of the Amu-Darya, what can be discerned is how both the Khivans had manipulated the river’s flow and Alexander’s mission to correct it. According to notes taken by Alexander’s lieutenant general on the trip, the bed of the Amu-Darya laid in the Caspian Sea and traveled entirely across central Asia into Bukhara. The Khivans had diverted the water away from the Caspian and

towards the Aral Sea, for closer geographical access. Peter, however, had directed Alexander to make plans for a dam to block the flow from the Aral back to the Caspian (Schubert 53-55). Supposedly, this would allow their allied Turkmen to assist the Russians in channeling the river closer to a corner of the Russian Empire and to Greater Kabardia, not only allowing immediate access to panning the gold in the riverbed, but also to a body of water leading directly to India. Though Alexander would not surpass Khiva and none of his original plans would come to fruition, it would only temporarily thwart Peter’s plans for an alliance with India and his goal of transforming the empire into a profitable trade economy.

Death and Reasonings

Still, this devastating loss was the first response to a Russian expedition into Asia and proved as a substantial show of aggression towards any growing world military power. As Alexander and his troops were violently massacred, this would deter any other Asian invasion on Russia’s part for another century. They would only again attempt to conquer Khiva in the 19th century. Peter, who mourned the loss of his friend quietly by himself, did not let Alexander die in vain. Rather, he gathered the remaining troops from Alexander’s expedition and arrested all those who defied Alexander’s orders to split up the men and enter Khiva. Peter also sent more companies to India in hopes to confirm an alliance in Alexander’s name, as he believed it would carry on his legacy. Peter could not, however, take any more serious action against the injustice aimed towards Alexander, since the debt from the Swedish Wars still loomed heavy over his head. Another question then arises after the death of our Russian warrior though: why did this journey end so abruptly?

With the campaign coming to a tragic end, historians have often pondered why, with such an obvious trap on behalf of the

Khan of Khiva, Alexander agreed to split his men and enter the city. Numerous resources have given insight into the decision; some blaming a drinking problem never explicitly mentioned, others believe it was due to losing his wife, Princess Marya, and daughter only weeks before in a sea storm (Schubert 53). Perhaps the biggest issue, however, comes from the religious beliefs and identities that Alexander adhered to, growing up as Devlet, a Muslim Circassian. We are studying this expedition in a period of history defined not by one's patriotic loyalty to one country but rather to an adherence to a religious group and ideology. Alexander was first and foremost raised in a strict Muslim home, being taught the ways of Muhammed the prophet and the Quran. Upon hearing the Khan's swearing on the Quran to keep Alexander's men safe from any continuing abrupt attacks, Alexander agreed to meet after days of negotiations (Thietmar 186). This gave him the false sense of security in trusting the Khan and believing in his extended hospitality.

Peter the Great and Nationalism

Identity was not rooted at nationalism at all in this era, and still lied heavily in one's religious affiliation. The notion of "nationalism" instead referred to a sense of loyalty and identity to one ruler or country rather than religion. Nationalism as a widespread phenomenon did not successfully emerge until around the 19th century, on the heels of Alexander's death. Specifically, "Religion also marked the boundaries in the usage of the term "nation" (*natsiia*), which by the late 18th century was largely reserved for the Christian peoples within the Russian empire, while non-Christians were referred to as a people (*narod* or *liudi*) (Khodarkovsky 188-189). Yet while this is not the first example of a country expanding its borders, we see something specifically distinct here. In the past, most European territories spread not only their borders with movement, but also their ideologies. They

forced conversion, pushed their values and norms onto those they attempted to conquer. In Russian history, this is perhaps one of the first times we see a blatant expansion of power approached differently from the European model of imperialism. Alexander, who was in his own right a converted Christian, was not told by Peter to conquer the region in the name of Christianity. He was told, instead, to claim Khiva in the name of Russia, an expansion of both Christianity and civilization, but also as a fusion of *religion* with civilization (Khodarkovsky 186).

Heavily documented are the past Russian rulers who forced conversion to Christianity when acquiring new territories. Examples of Ivan IV argued that solely an oath of allegiance could not be trusted with certain groups, like Muslims, until there were transformed from their “wild” state (Khodarkovsky 191). Peter I, however, strayed from this ideology when allying with new lands. This is not to say all categories of people taken into the Russian Empire were treated equally or always allowed their ancestral rights to their religion and customs. However, we see a step in the direction of higher tolerance, and even separate documentation of non-Christian groups described in other terms besides “wild” or “savages (Khodarkovsky 187-189). For more than one sole purpose, though, Peter still seems taken with the belief that without threat of insurrection, non-Christian groups could remain fully in contact with their distinct convictions. Perhaps Peter I was taking the first steps into transition from an empire to a nation, unsuccessful in execution, yet still monumentally futuristic in implementation. United under the umbrella of Russia, not by one religion or geographical area, but under one ruler.

Peter I undertook these expansion missions to divert his rule over Russia from a tsardom to an empire, and borderline to a nation. In turn, it can be argued that he was attempting to build a nation reliant on *both* a shared religious affiliation and a common loyalty to one single empire. It is a shame it would not come to

fruition with Alexander, however, as his death would temporarily hinder this goal.

An excerpt from William Sunderland's, *Imperial Space: Territorial Thought and Practice in the Eighteenth Century*, describes the ways Peter's rule drastically transitioned the nature of the Russian state. From it, we can discern not only the overall changes, but one of the central aspects for Peter's tolerance of religious background and the larger search for knowledge:

This heightened territorial consciousness was reflected in a range of ideas and practices, which in turn both influenced and were influenced by far-reaching changes in Russian techniques of governance and in the national and imperial imaginings of the Russian elite. In the course of Russia's Westernizing century, geography became a scientific discipline; external borders became increasingly defined; internal lands and resources became increasingly surveyed, catalogued, and managed; and members of the Russian establishment became increasingly likely to think of their country in territorial terms. There were continuities with older ways, but there was also great innovation, foreign borrowing, and native adaptation, and the net result was the creation of a new territorial order that underscored as much as anything else the palpable differences between "medieval Muscovy" and "modern Russia" ... emphasizing the ways in which new ideas and practices of territory influenced both the nature and the aspirations of state power and the national/imperial belonging of state elites. (Sunderland 34)

A large extension of Peter's forbearance to these groups religious identity was for academic purposes. Conversely addressing his former rulers, Peter allows indigenous lifestyles to continue, so long as they remain non-threatening, so long as it could be documented in Russian archives. Alexander's quote regarding an alliance with the Kabardians mentioned earlier, carried on to advise the Russian government to "adopt a more

realistic view of the indigenous peoples” (Khodarkovsky 55). Although his plea would not be immediately taken, Alexander would inspire others less than forty years later to offer the same wisdom, and this time it would be taken. Resulting in alliances, allowance of customary living, and as we have seen, an increase in documentation for religions, territories, trade routes, geographic regions, and academic ventures overall. Education can be argued to be Peter’s main rationale for this shift towards a nationalistic, in a modern sense, view of Russia’s future.

To examine Peter’s movement of Russia from empire to nation, we can also juxtapose the amanat system, a program of elite hostages used for Russian goals, to the Ottoman’s *devshirme* system. We evaluated the fluidity of religion, seemingly easy for the Muslims living in the Caucasus, and notably not always forced, through the lens of the amanat program. This exchange of bodies proved a mostly peaceful offering of knowledge and glory for the Muslim boys in return for conversion and loyalty to the Russian state. The Ottomans, on the other hand, turned to a more forceful approach in their *Devshirme* system. In this process, young Christian men were removed from their home and evaluated both physically and mentally, on what services they could provide to the empire. Upon completion, they were entered in whichever category best suited them (academics, army training, or court/political life) and then circumcised and forced to convert to Islam (Kelley 61). Granted, many Christian families wished this for their sons as the same result came from the amanat system, and these *devshirme* participants could climb the ladder to ranks extremely high in the empire. Still, there are notable differences that set apart the Russian amanats and the Ottoman *devshirme*.

First, instead of Muslim to Christian conversion, the Ottomans converted Christians to Islam. This was also different from the British and Roman empires, who granted religious freedom in some cases, so long as they remained loyal to the motherland.

There are also cases we see with the amanats too that promote religious identity, citing that Kabardian men could chose to remain Muslim and would be transferred to an area of study or work that best suited their studies and knowledge. Second, the devshirme boys did not share in the same equality the amanats did. Even though they both ended up rising high in the political ranks, their path to powerful positions remained quite different. In the Ottoman Empire, these boys were essentially slaves to the Sultan, obliged to carry out whatever task was given, no matter how dangerous or low in status it placed them. This was done through the complete removal of religious and familial loyalties so ultimate authority lay in the Sultan. The Russian Empire treated the new converts with respect and equality under the umbrella of loyalty to the empire itself, rather than to a forced religious obligation or through the lens of discrimination. These two seemingly similar, but extremely different systems show the differences in the paths empires can take to becoming successful nations. These examples also show how the not new, but ever prevalent idea of, religious and political conversion during the mid-eighteenth century capitalizes on the idea that one's central station in life was easily transformed, either through religion or politics, force or choice.

When we turn our attention back to the central figure of this story, we should also remember that while his death was not in vain, it does seem to raise questions in a historical context. An interesting side piece being that while Russia would be deterred from entering Central Asia, they could come back in later centuries and even compete with the British over the regions we have mentioned: Khiva, Bukhara, and other territories. While we cannot change the unfortunate outcome of Alexander's failure, we can still ponder how different the outcome would have been both for him and for Russia if he had succeeded. The first question was whether this river of gold sand truly existed. Since Alexander was only allowed into the city for a few hours to ultimately be

beheaded, historians never had the opportunity to learn of the Amu Darya’s fate. If it had been real, the possibilities could have been endless for Russian history. They could have easily repaired financially from the Great Northern War, expanded exponentially into Europe and Asia with the currency to back massive armies and support smaller conquered territories, and even rebuilt the Russian empire internally to the liking of Peter and the tsars to come. This could have quite effectively put Russia on the map as a world leader and massive empire, with little and no one to stand in the way of their financial gains. Still though, the reality of Alexander’s death remained the same and hit hard for the history of Russia. Perhaps part of the reason it is so glossed over, it is still important to examine why he fell for such an obvious trap and move onto what it left behind for Russia.

Legacy and Conclusions

Many sources argue that it was Alexander’s naïve ambition in fighting for peace that led to the death of himself and thousands of his men. Others say it was his lack of diplomacy and intelligence of the land and customs; “[the] Russian state did not have sufficient intelligence, topography and hydrography data region, diplomatic, human and material resources for long-term holding the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea” (Daudov et al.). However, we viewed a show of Alexander’s diplomacy in attempting peaceful negotiations with Khiva, as well as his knowledge for the rituals with the correct sending of gifts and troops. Nevertheless, as Alexander failed in all projects placed on him by Peter the Great, historians say that the Cherkassky line and legacy ended with his death. Yet, we must not forget the trail Alexander blazed for the countless expeditions into the Middle East for centuries to come. Thanks to his detailed description and letters sent back home of the terrain, people, and country, explorers and military expansion

missions benefitted exponentially with more knowledge than ever before (Perovski 37).

Outside of the physical feats Alexander had to overcome, he also did an exceptional job carrying on his family legacy. We have, and will continue to, look at the powerful affect Alexander had for Russia, the academic world, and a new historic era of identity in flux, and what it meant to be of a certain religion or regional loyalty. Another key element in this is what he left behind for his Kabardian family. Though specific monetary inheritance or children's heritage is not listed, we do have information about his brothers carrying on his name in the amanat program, and in Peter's court. Alexander's younger brother, Prince General Elmurza Cherkassky, took over as amanat after Alexander's death, pledging himself to Peter, and spending his years volunteering himself to fight against the Persian invasion of Peter in 1722, as well as the campaign of Peter I to Astrakhan during the same year (Nogmov 418). Elmurza also traveled and created new maps for the Russian Empire as well as cataloged new opportunities to form lasting alliances with more Circassian tribes. Elmurza is said to have carried such high esteem that his supervisors wrote to the Russian nobles and asked for him to have an increase in salary, quoting, "he rendered many services to the benefit of the Russian Empire, and in order to further encourage, for the eva shown in the petition, Elmurza Cherkesky, reasons, of course, he should add his salary, so that he would add more bridles [troops] to himself..." (Dolgoruky 4-5). Elmurza did all this to carry the torch of fame for his late brother, as well as to carry on his legacy and the respectable name of the Cherkassky family.

It is also worth mentioning the hardships and pressures that Alexander and his men encountered on the trip itself. Before even mentioning his vast legacy and overlooked fame, we should first give recognition to the immense difficulties faced by these travelers. For starters, they traveled over 1,350 versts, the

equivalent of around 894 miles, in less than two months without any major delays, other than to confirm the spot to build new fortifications. The span of these miles could cover 1/5th of the Eurasian Steppe, the largest steppe in the world, stretching from Hungary to China. However, Alexander and his troops did not trek through a steppe; they instead faced large mountains and vastly deep rivers. Additionally, their expedition was riddled with the widest range of weather conditions, facing extreme summer heat and dangerously freezing winter temperatures. Upon their arrival to Khiva after this long and weary trip, they also fought off “24 thousand fresh horsemen” (Schubert 319), who still could not defeat Alexander and his army. Resilient in nature, these Russian and Circassian men were strong-willed to endure these hardships.

Outside of the realm of physical privations, Alexander also bore the weight of Russia’s first expansive expedition. If he were not to succeed, Russia would lose any credibility of being considered a world power, as well as failing in his part of a larger mission. Since Alexander was the first part of Peter’s endeavors, a failure on his end would result in the unsuccessful acquisition of the Amu Darya for Peter, as well as the portion needed for the other envoy in Bukhara to confirm an alliance with the Khan and then further into India. To fail meant Alexander had also failed himself, his princely title, his Muslim lineage, and family in Kabarda, and his loyalty to Peter the Great. Therefore, in the eyes of Alexander, disappointment was not an option, which may be one of the largest reasons his men were so successful in acquiring information for maps of the area as well as erecting a multitude of fortifications for both Peter and the Russian Empire. There is no pondering how heavy Alexander’s heart and mind must have weighed on this project. Unbeknownst to him, his legacy would far surpass his death and the failure to acquire Khiva. One largely noted success was the first map of the Caspian Sea to be sent back

to Peter in Russia, as well as the continuing advancement of the amanat program with his brothers succeeding him after his death.

Along with this, the multitude of fortresses erected along the Amu Darya, while not standing today, left a sense of Russian magnetism in a foreign land as described by non-native travelers. Alexander's legendary trek to Khiva while charting the new lands, establishing new fortitudes in Russia's name, and fighting valiantly against the Khivans should not be ignored or remembered in history as a massive loss. The map Alexander created of the Caspian Sea would open numerous trade channels for Russia, as they now had the geographical information of where to go. It also stood as the model for which other explorers and cartographers used for travel, trade, and future conquests in the name of Russia. Overall, the loss at Khiva was the first barrier broken towards expansion as a world power from Russia, as later pioneers would use Alexander as inspiration in achieving what had previously not been accomplished. It pushed other Russian excursions which became successful in marking Russia as a world power, and for that reason the Cherkasskys must be remembered as a strong line who set the global stage for imperialism and wealthy adventure.

Bibliography

Allworth, Edward. *Central Asia : 130 Years of Russian Dominance, a Historical Overview*. 3rd ed. Central Asia Book Series. Duke University Press, 1994. (Accessed September 12, 2020).

———. *The Modern Uzbeks : From the Fourteenth Century to the Present : A Cultural History*. Studies of Nationalities in the USSR. Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1990.

Bushkovitch, Paul. "Princes Cherkasskii or Circassian Murzas: The Kabardians in the Russian Boyar Elite, 1560-1700." *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 45, no. 1/2 (2004): 9–29. (Accessed October 31, 2020).

"Capt. Burnaby's Ride to Khiva." *The Literary World; a Monthly Review of Current Literature (1870-1904)*; Boston. Boston, United States, Boston: S.R. Crocker; E. H. Hames & co.; L. C. Page & company, April 1, 1877. (Accessed October 28, 2020).

“Circassian Bibliography and Library.” Адыгэ Библиографие Зэхуэзыхъэсар Жэмыхъуэ Мыхьмуд и Къуэ Амджэдщ (Амышщ), December 7, 2008.

<https://www.circassianworld.com/pdf/bibliography.pdf>

Daudov Abdullah K., Andreev Artyom A., Yanchenko Denis G., Shorohov Vladimir A., and Kibiń Aleksei S. “On the History of the First Russian Fortifications on the East Coast of the Caspian Sea.” <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=25659153>. (Accessed November 15, 2020).

Frost, Robert I. *The Northern Wars: War, State, and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558-1721*. Modern Wars in Perspective. Longman, 2000. (Accessed September 24, 2020).

Kabardino-Russkiie Otnosheniia v XVI-XVIII vv. (Кабардино-русские отношения в XVI-XVIII вв.), Volume 2 (1711-1739): Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1957. Prince Dolgoruky, *Донесение фельдмаршала князя В. В. Долгорукого в Коллегию иностранных дел о желательности прибавки жалованья Эльмурзе Черкасскому, за верную службу его Российской империи*. (Doneseniye fel'dmarshala knyazu V. V. Dolgorukogo v Kollegiyu inostrannykh del o zhelatel'nosti pribavki zhalovan'ya El'murze Cherkasskomu, za vernuyu sluzhbu yego Rossiyskoy imperii). November 28, 1730. http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Kavkaz/XVI/Russ_Kab_otn_2/41-60/41.htm. (Accessed November 22, 2020).

———. Lieutenant General Schubert, “Записки о поездках князя Александра Бековича-Черкасского к восточному берегу Каспийского моря и о сухопутной экспедиции его в Хиву”, (*Zapiski o poyezdkakh knyazu Aleksandra Bekovicha-Cherkasskogo k vostochnomu beregu Kaspiyskogo morya i o sukhoputnoy ekspeditsii yego v Khivu*). 1717. http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/M.Asien/XVIII/1700-1720/Russ_turkmen/21-40/25.htm. (Accessed November 19, 2020).

Kelley, Patrick A. *Imperial Secrets: Remapping the Mind of Empire*. Washington, DC :, 2008. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/msu.31293028916280>. (Accessed December 7, 2020).

Khodarkovsky, Michael. *Russia’s Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*. Indiana University Press, 2002. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com.proxy-

bc.researchport.umd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=696620&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Lippman, Walter. 1922. *Public Opinion: The Russian Nobility*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 654. (Accessed May 5, 2020).

Lobanov-Rostovsky, Andrei. *Russia and Asia*. New York 1933. [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b674795](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b674795). (Accessed October 31, 2020).

"Map of the Khanate of Khiva and the Lower Reaches of the Amu Darya River," 1873. <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/15034/>. (Accessed November 22, 2020).

Nogmov, Shora, История черкесского народа, (*Istoriia adygheiskogo naroda*), Tbilisi 1861, Nalchik 1994. <http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Kavkaz/XVIII/1700-1720/Nogmov/text3.htm>. (Accessed November 22, 2020).

"North-West-Caucasus-Language.jpg (1564×952)." <http://abkhazworld.com/aw/images/img/north-west-caucasus-language.jpg>. (Accessed November 14, 2020).

Perovski (General). *The Great Game: A Narrative of the Russian Military Expedition to Khiva in 1839*. Taylor & Francis, 2004. (Accessed September 24, 2020).

Schuyler, Eugene. *Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia; Study of Historical Biography*, London, 1884. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4727360>. (Accessed October 31, 2020).

Sutherland, Edwards H., *Russian Projects against India from the Czar Peter to General Skobelev*, (London, 1885), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044004452017>. (Accessed October 31, 2020).

Sunderland, William. "Imperial Space: Territorial Thought and Practice in the Eighteenth Century." *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, Indiana University Press, 2007.

Thietmar, editor. "Expedition of Prince Bekovich-Cherkassky to Khiva." *Journal for Reading by Pupils of Military Educational Institutions*, vol. 65, no. 262, 1847. http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/M.Asien/XVIII/1700-1720/Bekovic_Cerkasskij/text2.htm. (Accessed November 19, 2020).

Wanner, Michal. "Alexander Bekovich Cherkassky's Campaign to Central Asia and India in 1714-1717." *The Central and Eastern European Online Library* 1 (2014): 24. (Accessed October 13, 2020).

Zokirjon Abdugarimovich, Saidboboev. “CENTRAL ASIA ON THE RUSSIAN CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES IN XVIII CENTURY.” *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, April 28, 2020, 204–6. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra4342>. (Accessed November 11, 2020).

