PHOTOGRAPHING, EXPLORING AND EXHIBITING RUSSIAN TURKESTAN

Central Asia on Display

ROUTLEDGE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

INESSA KOUTEINIKOVA

Photographing, Exploring and Exhibiting Russian Turkestan

This book illuminates the crucial role photography played from the very beginning of the Russian colonial presence in Central Asia and its entanglement with the orientalist legacy that followed.

Inessa Kouteinikova examines these under-studied materials while also addressing the photographic market and reception of photography in the Russian Empire, the position of the popular press, the place of public exhibitions and emergence of the first ethnographic museums that took pace from Moscow to Tashkent during the time of the Russian conquest. This book embraces the dominant mode for representing the new colonial territories in the mid-late-19th-century Russia, by outlining the technical, commercial and artistic milieus during the Golden Age of Russian orientalism.

The book will be of interest to scholars working in art history, history of photography and Russian studies.

Inessa Kouteinikova, PhD, is an independent art and architecture historian and curator. She studies colonial Central Asia, Russian and International Orientalism, and the development of the photographic industries in Russian Turkestan, Caucasus and the Crimea from 1860–1917.

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Inessa Kouteinikova

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Anyone understands the limits of own photographic power: until I departed on research over 19th-century photography I would not have recognised the victimhood of those who consented to their own use, abuse or misuse of the camera. The miseries and indignities that the early photographers accepted in Central Asia are enough, as their work claimed, to make anyone want to leave this parched land. The people who chose to stay were not necessarily hapless creatures, living in delusion by political and personal currents they did not comprehend. Intriguingly, their photographic and scientific fames are not entirely posthumous, but during their lives they were minor figures just as Central Asian photography was a minor page on the fringes of the international photographic scene. Often, they were idealists on a mission of making the blanc spots visible, the unknown known. Something beguiling and disturbing of their inventiveness is contained in photographic images they left us to decide whether Central Asia was a maverick, unclassifiable place of baffling history, and geographical divide. Anyone who visited it, had different experience, myself including. It never prepares a person for the possibility that it would leave him, but to preserve this vision photography offers a safety kit of imaginative, historical and modern layering. "Reading photography" is similar to the experience of going to an exhibition, pausing in awe, poring over an image, missing a detail, finding it again, checking the context, nodding to historical period: it is a constant marathon of knowledge. One is never alone in it – the people who embraced my work, who embedded themselves in my textual and visual stories about the 19th-century Russian and foreign scholars and educated amateurs, and who guided, supported and brighten up my life are my dear family, friends, collectors, curators around the world. I think and thank all of them, one by one, and discreetly dedicate this book to them.

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Introduction

This book seeks to add to the growing body of photographic documentation and the 19th-century Russian imperial projects concerned with early photographic practices in colonial Central Asia (1865–1910) by examining Russian and European photographic collections. There is hope that researching even an anonymous collection, whose photographers cannot be identified, brings us closer to a fuller understanding of the early developments in photography in Russia's largest Islamic territory. Writing on the history of photography of Central Asia, one requires to study the early history of Russian photography and the visual culture of Russian diplomacy, which itself has received modest attention from scholars,[1] but it offers rich material for exploring how Russian pan-Slavic visions of war and peace were constituted by the dogmas and momentous convictions of modern mass-media networks.

By the late 1860s, the camera had become an indispensable apparatus in the Russian colonial campaign in Central Asia. The implementation of this ambitious plan was problematic, and the medium was not systematically embraced at the Muslim territory. The most concerned attempts to use photography to promote Russian Central Asia during the early period of the campaign, albeit with some resistance from the local administration and the boundless doubts of St. Petersburg, were by independent photographers. The introduction of photography into the main function of the colonial administration, of the first Islamic collections in the Imperial Museums, and individual scientific practices presents an important case study of the complex imperial politics at that time. What makes this particular project distinctive is the convergence of historical research with the empirical assessment of photographic practices, which holds many possibilities for the historians of the 19th century Orientalism and photographic researchers in general.

Placing the region within a world cultural framework at the rapid development of photography, this research hopes to provide a new understanding of the internal and external dynamics of the political power, educational focuses and religious forces within Central Asia and shows how photography repeatedly revolutionised this ancient civilisation. It raises questions about how photography escalated the development of cultural identity in Central Asia during the Russian colonial regime. Through a photographic analysis of the on-going circulation of travellers, artists and scientists, missions and expeditions, the life of the Russian colonial society in Tashkent, Zaravshansk and Semirechie regions and its interaction with the local population, this study challenges the view that Central Asian culture defines itself in large part against an exotic, dangerous, always marginal East. Featuring the scientific and ethnographic photography, documentary and historical photographic material, some

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published for the first time, it provides an insight into the works of the late-19th- to early-20th-century Russian practitioners, next to their European counterparts.

By discussing the photographic development in Russian Central Asia, one cannot avoid the vast subject of the photographic market and reception of photography in the Russian Empire in general, the position of the popular press and the place of ethnographic and colonial exhibitions, which took place from Moscow to Tashkent during the time of the conquest. These developments are intimately linked. To discuss 19th-century Central Asian photography, this research embraces the dominant mode for representing Russia's new colonial territories by outlining the scientific, technical, commercial and artistic milieus during the Golden Age of Russian and International Orientalism.[2] By bringing in the peculiarities of the Russian Orientalism, and stepwise differences in technical and artistic education, which highlight Russian photographic training (and its European influences), this study wishes to understand how such processes claimed legitimacy to visual representations of Central Asia, first through the official commissions and scientific projects, and later through the stream of short-lived photographic studios and projects in Russian Turkestan.

The early Russian colonial photography is just beginning to be explored by scholars. It is a difficult field that has been many years in gestation. It rests on an immense range of events, people and objects with no relation to photography,[3] and it tackles large political, personal and scientific questions. The largest is nothing less than the development of scientific culture of the area as captivating tool for altering perception of reality, venturing Islamic and Asiatic collections in the Russian museums between 1870 and the First World War, and it raises uncomfortable questions about the Tsarist political authority on Central Asian cultural milieu. It invites information about photographer's intentions and assumptions, about the devices available to him in Central Asia, about the compatibility of "high" (Russian) and "law" (Asiatic) cultures, about the visual representation of secular and religious conflicts, and it gives limited answers.

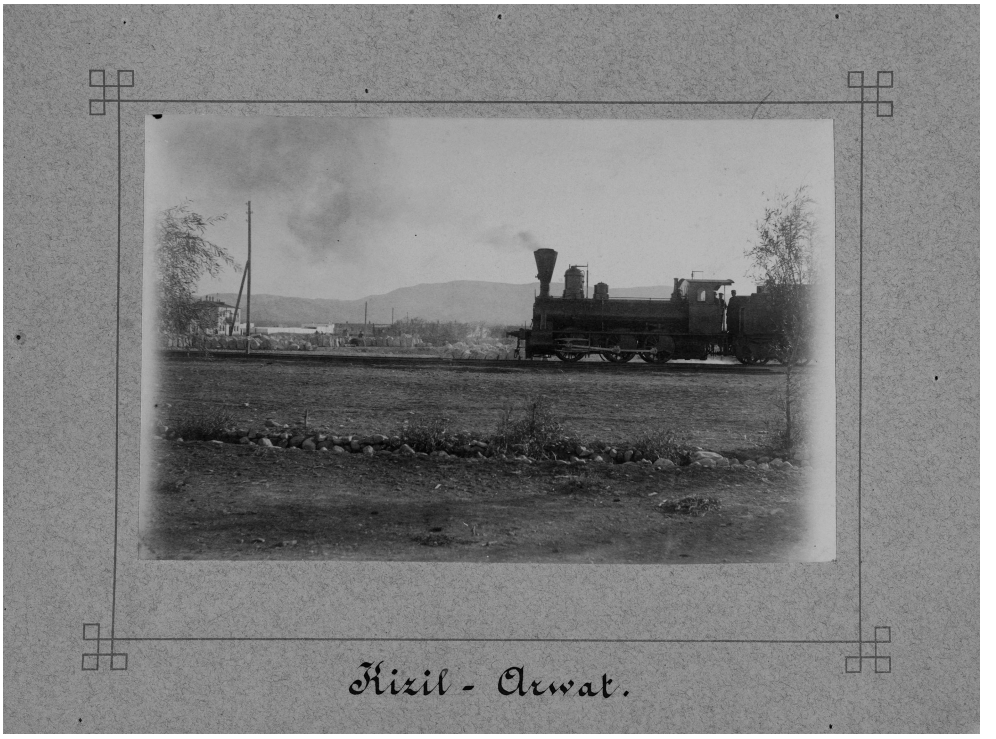
Photography arrived in Central Asia at the time when the Russians just began to rule the territory, the local powers were failing, foreign pressures thrusted to open the territories up further to European markets, the military and civil reforms ripen; engagement with the Russian legal codes propelled Central Asia to accept the vast interference with Russian affairs. External events such as the British victories in the Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860) in China, Crimean War (1853–1856) and the Russian–Turkish War (1877–1878) played the stereotypes of racial superiority integral to the imperial project, had made it clear to the Russian court that Western colonial expansion in Asia could pose a serious threat to Central Asian sovereignty and isolation, jeopardising the Russian grand plans. The beginning of industrialisation and the circulation of the Russian and Western technologies, goods, products and resources further complicate the process. Photography was just one of the many technologies imported to Central Asia during the colonial period, and it shared in equal measures the power, prestige and modernity that surrounded Russian and western knowledge. Exposure to these new forces had a wide range of effects on the Central Asian local population, inspiring an obsessive resistance, and in some cases, devotion to "catching up" with Russia and with the West. In some cases, it aroused violent xenophobia, fear of invasion from outside and sabotaging actions from inside, and a natural phobia against all things Russian. In this regard, the book explores the photographic history in Central Asian conquest as a technology: what factors

motivated the elaboration of specific forms of photographic practice through the social, artistic and scientific projects, what determined the success of their reception and further development. Other issues – no less important – are (1) photographic *imperavity* in organising knowledge around Turkestan; (2) framing the language of the Imperial science in conjunction with Central Asian photography[4]; (3) the expansion and exposure of ethnographic tropes and racial classification through photographic lenses.

For the first Governor-General of Russian Turkestan, Konstantin von Kaufman (1818–1882), photography was the way of understanding of the Central Asian world, and allowing the greater Russia to become familiarized with it. By shaping central dimensions of the "other" of being intentionally in the world; von Kaufman's "photographic team" recognized other dimensions which were all vital to Russian engagement with Central Asia, the potential socio-political impact of photography, Russia's trump card for a larger world.[5] It was the aim of von Kaufman to bring together people who examined photography's practical spectrum of Central Asian life and culture as "exhibiting culture", enabling and exploring how these cultures, people and images that they embodied have been fundamental for the construction of Central Asian and Russian relations and their future negotiations with the world. Now called interdisciplinary and international, von Kaufman's project was based on the belief in the importance of cultural exchangeby silencing the inner critic of potential racial implications.

Turkestan Album. Historical part, sheet 8 portrait of the General-Lieutenant K. P. von Kaufman, governor-general of Turkestan. Albumen print, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

The year 1867 came to a Russian world ready for a great beginning of many things, it also came as a desirable revival of many things that the Russians held dear. The torment and strife, which had overturned the faltering Russian Empire in the South, were far from ended, but the forces of order were decisively rallied, and great political figures and emblems of the colonial era, Mikhail Cherniaev[6] (1828–1898) and Konstantin von Kaufman were finding how, in the pattern of colonial life and through the ways in which the half Uzbek, half Tadjik, Tartars, Kazakhs, the Karakalpaks, Kipchaks and Kirghizians,[7] -the accumulated medieval world of Russian Turkestan could be organised. The establishment of the Turkestan Government-General conferred in 1867, when the General Konstantin von Kaufman was elected the first Governor-General of Russian Turkestan, the vast territory between the Caspian Sea and the Western Tibet. It is fair to say that the great triangle formed by the three khanates (Khiva, Bukhara and Kokand) never quiescent before, now put forward almost all the grand conceptions on which the new modernised world of government, social and political deeds, philosophy and military discipline, education and art was to be based. Cherniaev wished to create a pan-Slavic state[8] with an orderly political system, and enlarged the boundaries of Christendom by his conquests of Samarkand (1868), Kuldzha (1871) and Kokand (1876), and the construction of the Trans-Caspian railroad in 1880.[9] The story of the road is integral to this narrative and can be divided into four phases within the two historical periods (1865–1875 and



Henri Moser (1844–1923). Steam locomotive at Kisil-Arvat (today Serdar), Turkmenistan, 1883, albumen print, 18 × 24 cm, Bern Historical Museum, Ethnographic collection, inv. E/PH1.240.06485.

1893–1897).[10] The ambitious agenda pursued by the Imperial government in the Caspian region (including the Aral Sea) towards Orenburg, Tashkent and Samarkand turned into the project to connect Europe with India, Iran, Afghanistan and China through Central Asia. This line was tentatively named Paris–Calcutta. The most realistic and nuanced analysis of the railroad[11] in favour of adjoining line with Central Asia received the project of the railroad along the Caspian shores into the depth of Turkestan, but the fact that Turkmenia was not a part of the Russian Empire (and the Kara-Kum Desert was not navigable) forced the planners to switch the project to the line Orenburg–Tashkent as a political and military centre of Central Asia with a vast trading potential.[12] Russia claims that at that stage no country in the world had experience in construction the railroad through deserts.[13] The implications were further realised when von Kaufman's plans embraced not just the renewal of the territory but also its recording processes. His choice of photography confirmed that Central Asia was "moving rapidly" into modernity. By his care for photography, von Kaufman gave new impetus to that genre, which was perhaps the greatest single achievement, and by active favours to learning he made a beacon of his court in Tashkent.[14] His ideas, ideals and practices of modernisation of Central Asia have been explored together with the views of other scholars working on the Russian colonial enlightenment in Russian Turkestan as intellectual-historical and political-philosophical categories. Kaufman's resolution was characteristic when dealing in the times of crises, his plans had had to stir up his enthusiasm, eventually going beyond his intentions, demanding in effect (1) the regional frameworks for approaching the moderate enlightenment; (2) religious moderation, toleration and reformism in Central Asia; (3) prudence, self-restrain and civility in 19th-century Central Asian commercial society; (4) political moderation, pragmatism and bipartisanship; (5) frameworks of governance, discipline and control.

Samuil Dudin (1863–1929). Meeting of men to welcome a Russian district judge. Albumen print after glass negative, 18 × 24 cm, Semipalatinsk-Pavlodar region, 1899, Museum am Rothenbaum, Hamburg, photographic collection, inv. 2008.11:64.

Samuil Dudin (1863–1929). Marketplace in the steppes with Kyrgyzstanian yurts and a Russian wooden Church. Kazakhstan, 1908. 18 × 24 cm, Albumen print after glass negative, Museum am Rothenbaum, Hamburg, photographic collection, inv. 2008.11:111.

The absorption of the various Muslim groups into the Russian Empire was facilitated by the fact that they had not previously belonged to a clearly defined national state. Even in the urban centres such as Samarkand and Bukhara the loyalties of the population were predominantly local, and among the nomads they were tribal. The nature of these loyalties made for resistance to central control but not for unity between the various groups. The one factor which they had in common was Islam but this was not strong enough to overcome their local differences. It was not the nation which was felt to the threatened by the encroachment of Russia but the local community or the tribe, since nationality was largely associated with difference in religion it was natural that position to an infidel invader should be expressed in terms of Islam. Thus, the various movements of resistance, although they were often mainly social, were articulate din terms of Islam. This is not surprising. Islam was an all-inclusive concept which embraced all aspects of the believer's life.

There was however another aspect to the Russian conquest. It meant, as stated above, also the possibility of employment and advance in state service, and possibilities for increased trade and education. Further, although the Muslim population as a whole were brought into contact with Russian, mainly as colonising force, individuals among them came under the influence of movements for liberal reform. Russian circles were not the only, or perhaps even the main, source from which Muslim intellectuals drew their aspiration.

Ole Olufsen. Bukhara school class. 1898, Albumen, archives of the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.

In the last half of the 19th century, ideas from Central Asia and society permeated many forms of Russian cultural expression to a hitherto unprecedented extent. The literature, musical narrations, legends, arts and crafts from Central Asia found an audience in the Imperial Russia. People were familiar enough with Central Asian cultural elements in various genres, carpet weaving and textile production in particular; other Central Asian items of visual culture like painting and photography also permeated Russian (and Western) market places. Such visual objects had already begun to fuel the burgeoning tourism market to the ancient civilisations in Central Asia at the turn of the 20th century, and continued to create and reinforced Western images of the territory further.

Thus, this study explores modernity's implications and how technology affected the evolution of cultural forms, namely how photographic developments in Russian Central Asia facilitated the interest and its careful navigation (1) towards colony and its public display (i.e. production of the photographic albums and exhibitions), and (2) in formation of Islamic collections in Russian museums.

From 1860s onwards, photography tried to describe and translate the Asiatic Russia to a mass audience. The processes of modernisation unleashed by Russian Empire led to awkward juxtaposition. The Russian and (to lesser extend) local Asiatic photographers who appeared at work in Central Asia were under double pressure from the bulling mentality epitomised in the Russian authorities and the resistance of local population. My analysis suggests that Russians used the public display of the

colonial material through photographic component, to define themselves as a nation, because the organisers of such displays constructed them, as protean events with numerous meanings, even as they used it to disseminate liberal ideas about the Russian society, Russia's relationship with Islam and the rest of the world. Russian Turkestan was active and visible colony as representative of many trends that were occurring throughout the empire.

Current research follows my previous survey, first shown in the Groningen Museum's exhibition of 2010–2011, *Russia's Unknown Orient: 1850–1920*.[15] It examines in detail the particular moment in Russian visual history when the professional practice of painting and photography in Central Asia crystallised out of the experiments of the professionals and amateurs. It is (1) charged to excavate and map as much empirical information about the history of indigenously produced photography in Central Asia as possible; (2) it ventures to grapple with cultural and political Russian histories; (3) it proceeds with not a strict art history, but a study of the colonial science and museum histories; (4) it engages the formalistic and representational content of Central Asian photography to research its engagement with the larger history of Russia's Islamic collections, the ideological anxiety and effect of colonial photography on formation of early museums of such kind.

In navigating these vectors, I map and compare discourses on colonial photography as asset from various world localities, stressing the examples of British India, Scandinavia, and to a lesser extent, Austro-Hungary. Russian Empire was a powerful *gallery* of peoples and culture, its "photographic display" offers an immense spectrum of multifarious ethnographic types displayed on myriad universal and all-Russian exhibitions. Whether they were a by-product of the empire that contributed to its making, they showed the world of Russia and they globalised Russia to the world. This did not happen only through exhibitions: the learned societies, libraries and museums participated in the all-Russian mania of collecting the new "ethnographic species," displaying pictures of Asiatic people, plants, architecture, landscapes and artefacts. The intersection of photography and colonial scientific culture proves particularly rich because the first generation of photographers ushered in a new form of information and representation.[16]

Colonial photographic histories in Russia remain largely unchartered and deserving of serious scholarly attention. In an era of specialism, it must seem presumptuous for any scholar to take on the mantles of the historian of the 19thC colonialism, scientist and artist within one cover. But as the task evolves, it seems that a holistic approach to the subject might accomplish a little bridge-building between cultures and disciplines that woefully separated most of the time. Mindful of this, I try to compensate for my shortcomings by including extensive references to the primary literature, so that interested scholars and readers can follow up specific issues for themselves.

Brief Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 1 – Photography on Our Side

This chapter has taken two distinct approaches. The first emphasises the documentary dimension of photography. Focusing on the contents of photographs taken in Central Asia, historians and art historians explore them as valuable documents

about the Central Asian past under the Russians. The interest in photographs as historical documents has not been widely pursued in current Russian publications, but several museum-oriented studies have paid a tribute to specific photographic and ethnographical collections in Russia. The second approach explores how – through their choice of themes – Russian photographers in Turkestan reinforced and perpetuated stereotypes of Central Asia and its inhabitants. The invention of Turkestan through imagery is the departure point for several recent works on photography.[17] In the process of inventing and justifying the new looks of Central Asia through photographs and postcards played an important role. They entered Russian museums, spread through popular media, became cherished collectors' items and transformed into postcards[18] sent on occasion to the Russian homes.

In all the tangled history of the Turkestan subcontinent, nothing is more complex than this interweaving of the political achievement of the Russians and the creation of nation-states. Even a brief examination of the Central Asian bibliography including the scholarly and travel literature, written between 1860s and 1914, demonstrates the diverse and seemingly unrelated types of objects that the term "orient" conjured to the European imagination. Notwithstanding the variety of objects classified by the voyagers, scholars and scientists of the mid-19th to early 20th centuries as "orient," there is one corpus of images based on the human body, which, through their recurrent description and illustrations command particular attention, and thus relates more to "fetish" than to "orient." The European and Russian fascination with Asia is not only evident in the literature of the period, but in the illustrations included in popular press, travel books, memories, and to an impressive degree, in the ethnographic exhibitions, or other public spectacles. The wild, dangerous, potentially polluting and exotic qualities that European writers, travellers and colonial servants ascribed to Asia were not dissimilar to the distillation of the region's religious, intellectual or moral beliefs in the fetish figure – perhaps not surprising given that rebellious "fetishism" provided the intellectual model through which "colonial" behaviour could be related. In both cases what was important was not the notion, philosophy, or nature of the Orient itself, but the prejudices about motivations and understanding, intolerance and the reelection of sexual, aggressive and emotional instincts that had been denied and exiled from Russia and Europe to foreign territories. Anthropologists, historians and photographers alike recognised this proximity between historical and modern orient.

In connection to this, there is a modest photographic input produced by the missionaries in Central Asia, whose amateurishness and determination succeeded only at the turn of the 20th century, when "stations had been opened in the capital cities of 11 provinces and much of the remaining portions of the Empire."[19] Their painstakingly documented reports reveal a vast photographic lacuna. The truancy cannot be explained only by the legal (cultural and civilian) and religious issues around photographic act, nor by the fact that missionary work often did not reach the print. In a preparation that might well serve to conclude the missionary projects in Central Asia, one of the participant of the Kirghizian mission (1892–1899), a priest Efrem Eliseev stated in his notes: that when this is besmirched by misconstructions, rendition and unrestrained surveillance politics, the people of another race, religious domination and social traditions implicitly or explicitly withdraw support for the legitimate, admirable and essential activities of the governing body in pursuit of governance of their own.

Chapter 2 – Albumania à la Russe

1 The production of the costly imperial photographic albums was an act of diplomacy as well as the hyper-mediated affair, transforming the image of Russia's colony into the world. By researching early albums, one is especially struck by the dearth of information in scholarship about albums as a legitimate text worth investigation: albums have received practically no attention in any discipline, including art and architectural history, until very recently. This initial discussion on the history of the *Turkestan Album*, its manifestations and antecedents might contribute to the overall awareness and importance of such uniquely bound photographic collections not only about Central Asia, but also with respect to the Russian history of photography, art and sciences, encompassing an immense archive of the 19th-century colonial, ethnographic, expeditionary, missionary, documentary and travel photography. The albums uniquely expose a spatial history of conquest and encounter, resulting in a construction of what Edward Said initially called the "geographical imagination,"[20] merit of critical re-viewing of historical content which was used for illustrative purposes. With its new wealth (cotton was one and has been cultivated in the localities of Fergana, Samarkand, Syr-Daria and Transcaspia) Russian Turkestan attracted a number of skilled and armature photographers, willing to try their luck with this financially risky venture. Not only did they make pictures of people who came to their studios for likenesses, but they also took their cameras out of doors, into the streets, and to the countryside beyond.

2 The Album's Principal Commissioner. Turkestan chronicle as Album and Its Principal Gatherers. General von Kaufman's creation of himself: *Turkestanskii Al'bom*.

The question posed by Stephen Bann in his seminal analysis of album's developments: "What is an Album and what is a photographic album?"[21] takes this research into the origin of the Russian *albumania*. *Turkestanskii Albom* was not an original idea, thought its production is among the world's greatest colonial photography projects. Formally commissioned by Konstantin von Kaufman, the first governor-general of Turkestan, the album is routinely described by scholars and historians as a project consisting of six books, divided among four sections attending to the subjects of archaeology (two volumes), ethnography (two volumes), local industry and history. The appointed chief of photography was the well-known orientalist, Aleksey L. Kun, and the only formally noted local photographer was N. N. Nekhoroshev. The album is a rich cabinet of 1200 images, including 21 watercolours, 14 architectural plans and 13 military-topographical maps. The album opens up an historical world marked by the first systematic interest in image during the Russian colonial campaign, and counts myriad European and American prototypes through its creation.

Chapter 3 – Ethnographic Dissonance: Russia's First Colonial Exhibitions

This chapter focuses on the complex institutional world of exhibitions and museums in the mid- to late-19th-century Russia, presenting the relevant personalities, groups interests, conflicts and shifts in policy. By integrating the official with other kind of photography, and placing both in the context of international currents of colonialism and Orientalism, this section hopes to lay groundwork for a better understanding of the conditions under which the late-19th-century Russian exhibition and museum

landscape came into being with a photographic tool. Russian Empire saw the founding of the colonial institutions, geographical societies and orientalist collections; other, less permanent, organisations flourished, among them the ethnological and ethnographical collections, anthropological and archaeological societies and the Society of Artists and Scientists. These worked alongside the schools such as the Imperial Science and Art Academies and the Institute of Oriental languages. How did they generate their publics and redesigned the *colonial display*? What identities did they create? What practice of photography making, connoisseurship and spectatorship did they enshrine? Which values did they elucidate in association with the key institutions, colonial events and exhibitions and how did they describe the responses of the public and its adaptation over time to major political developments. Russian Turkestan photography, including ethnographic and travel branches, evolved in three distinct phases and can be described as – 1842 experimental and non-patent around 1842, focused on constructing views and imperial contracts between 1868 and 1872, and aiming at the technical knowledge, expeditions and scientific motivations in the period 1890–1910 – marked by historical events that varied significantly from one to the next. Louise McReynolds circled the reason why technology and public dissemination of the photographic media, influenced such uneven developments: "By 1880, technology had facilitated the spread of information and increased its attractiveness with illustrations, the higher the circulations, the greater the reach of influence."[22] Newspapers could physically relocate a considerable degree of the authority derived from information by taking it way from: "thick" journals, and the transfer of authority to which McReynolds referred had political implications for Russians. In the course if the decade, the drive towards hard news would be more sensational as it also brought in more readers. This would follow the intelligentsia's outburst, and signal their failure."[23] Russian Turkestan was slow to respond.

Throughout the 19th century it was emphasised worldwide that the industrial and ethnographic expositions were in the tradition of the colonial exhibitions, encouraging the relationship to fairs and markets and other commercial venues. Besides the idea of "progress" which distinguished these expositions, they have adopted the notion of the oriental spectacle stressing both the intellectual and commercial aspects of colonial production. The décor of these expositions was designed to place them in the context of the Orient.

Consequently, the Polytechnic Exhibition of 1872 was chosen as a presentation place for the *Turkestan Album*, an indispensable project of von Kaufman, seen as a network of political, cultural, economic and aesthetic relationships that crossed national and historical boundaries of Central Asian conquest. Tashkent's Industrial Fairs (1890–1910) echoed the Russian Fairs and employed photography's promise of new vision. Photographers working at the Turkestan fairs are not sober agents of realism but artists of the fantastic, figures of future, and the avatars of the new world.

Chapter 4 – Craftsman of Ethnography: Samuil M. Dudin

This chapter follows the path of a Russian William Henry Fox Talbot: Samuil Martynovich Dudin (1868–1929), an artist, traveller and curator, whose accomplishments and pre-eminence as one of the inventors of ethnographic photography

is insecure. However, he is credited with many discoveries: photogenic drawing, the calotype uses in the extreme climatic conditions, etc. Dudin attracted both strong admiration and intense criticism in his work, but has forever altered visual history and ethnographic science with his inventions. His collecting method combined with the depths of scientific photography is the first to explain the strategy behind the first ethnographic collections for the first Russian museums of which Dudin was in charge. In the late 1860s when he was active politically and spent several years in the Siberian exile, he learnt photographic skills and started practicing photography for scientists. Dudin received significant recognition in the early 1880s when he was invited to partake the role in the Russian Archaeological Commissions and the Imperial Geographic Society as a graphic artist and photographer. Although the geography of his travels brings together photographs taken in different Central Asian cultures, Dudin was able to judiciously intertwine photography with substantial material collections. His mastery was also to navigate and control the conversation with his sitters and to simplify the complexities of photographic processes without jeopardising its intensity. He often thought that the clarity of the light in his portraits and architectural prints must be closely associated with the luminosity of the Central Asian atmosphere, thus his viewpoint is impeccably chosen and calibrated.

For all of the various projects undertaken in his long career as a photographer, Dudin considered his work as an initial curator (*kollektor*) and keeper of Central Asian collection for the ethnographic museum the most important. By sorting the Islamic collections, he carefully numbered and devised the material passing through his hands. The criteria Dudin followed in the arrangement of this great compendium of images and objects remain to be studied in detail, but his intentions to place the photographs at the service of ethnographic and material history by compelling a visual record of the colonial heritage that he so admired and knew so well. Dudin had perspicuous reasons for choosing the ethnographic museum as a site for collecting and experimenting.

Chapter 5 – The Art of Photographic Ethnography: Vasilii Vereshchagin

This chapter sets forward a distinguished painter and unofficial agent of Russian Orientalism, Vasily Vereshchagin (1842–1904), who served as a artistic chronicler to the Russian colonial campaign in Central Asia and the whole issue of asymmetry of victimhood between Russian and Asian, or northerners and southerners. Vereshchagin's conception of himself as a universal worldly artist was supported and entertained accordingly vast cultural aspirations and traveller's ambitious: he was an accomplished painter, a collector of his travels, and a sponsor of his own exhibitions. He wrote prolifically about what he has done, seen or recorded on paper and canvas. As an artist, Vereshchagin was a storyteller, a pragmatic fabulist. Everything we know about his life can become a correcting exercise when looking or reading his work, as if he wanted the story he was telling in paint to take on a life of its own. In many instances it did. Narrating historical events was of prime political and aesthetic importance to the generation of orientalists. When in England it was aesthetics of the colonial gaze, demonstrated by the 19th-century English orientalist painters,[24] in Russia there was aesthetics of unexpired savagery, epitomised in Vereshchagin's art. The choice of the right moment to illustrate historical events was a particular talent

and a continuing subject of concern to Vereshchagin at the time of the Turkestan campaign (1865–1875).[25] His was an art of misery, ruins and blood, he wanted his spectators to understand the chosen moment as part of continuing narrative but also as the kernel of its historical meaning. In Vereshchagin's work the events are significant and often violent; they mark the vengefulness of the Asian khanates, the forceful line of the Russian Imperial politics towards its own orient with the war, siege, an uprising that followed together with its ferocious suppression. In this context, art was also evidence and more or less reliable according to its purpose: to illuminate the events in Central Asia during the period of almost two years of rapidly shifting political allegiances and events. It was also a period of radical imbalances of power and rivalry between the Russian and the British empires, in which the whole political spectrum of Russia was active and in contentions: Tsarists, Slavophiles, Westerners, Populists and Anarchists fought it out. In addition, Russia went to war with Turkey (1877–1878) providing crisis after crisis from the Black Sea in the South to Saint Petersburg in the North and to many other areas too. Vereshchagin went to the always dangerous Caucasus and participated in the defence of the Samarkand fortress.[26] As he responded to circumstance he moved between roles in a similar way to the ordinary Russian soldiers, "the human machine."[27] Sometimes recording what he saw in rapid sketches, which adorned some of his Turkestan letters when not sent to periodicals, or kept for his future exhibitions. He was acting like the reporter or news photographer of today. By becoming a soldier, he made an attempt to understand the suffering and violence from within, eventually designing paintings to form a focus of public loyalty, recognition and radical reform using the power of his art to help make or break the politics of the day.

As a restless individual, he spent 45 years of his life travelling, trying to stabilise, not experiment with his painting technique, artistic method and subject matter which is realism. His first canvases were painted with the academic technique of his immediate predecessors and teachers at the Art Academy in St. Petersburg, Paris and Munich: classicism, academism, disciplined modelling. But Vereshchagin was an inquisitive curious person, eager to discover new countries and free himself from the company of the critics and enemies. He took great interest in the political events inside and outside the Russian Empire, travelled frequently to the most remote corners of the world, and took part in the colonial campaigns. His greatest preoccupation, however, was himself. Evident here, is the artist's exquisite sensitivity in the organisation of his own monographic exhibitions, where he pursued almost wholly dissimilar visions of professional and artistic successes than his compatriots. In nearly every aspect of his art, from his sources of inspiration to the media he painted in and the themes he explored, he made choices of a markedly different character. His paintings were series, and from their very beginning in 1860, of exceptional mastery, which could hardly be improved by later artistic studies. In this process, a canvas was an integral part of a frame and vice versa, and the waves of indignation and inner struggle were exposed to the audience and linked to his personal and artistic reputation. In consequence, Vereshchagin's artistic calendar is a direct reflection of his life, convictions, strong opinions and uncompromising decisions. The men knew no doubts. His observations were diligently kept in diaries and artistic notebooks, and his work could be identified with reasonable accuracy. His financial affairs are more complicated. Although, he was born to the reasonably well to do family,[28] he could hardly be able to profit from his work in the field of politically engaged art and extensive travels that

were feeding it. He luxuriated in limelight, never missing a chance to exhibit and promote his work, and can be compared to Durer whose practical talents were equal to his artistry. Vereshchagin's anguish nature made many of his business efforts short-lived. Despite – or perhaps because of it – his many initiatives, awards and reviews among the Russian and international press, and his fame and reputation as one of the greatest Russian cosmopolitans, Vereshchagin's life was riddled with legal disputes, arguments and correspondence hunting and aiming at his real and fictitious foes. On March 31 (April 13) 1904, he died in the Russo–Japanese War at sea near Port Arthur.[29]

By trying to make use of many photographic sources, and provide a fair summary of the events, without neglecting two years of Vereshchagin's Central Asian accounts that followed him until his death, this study differs from the historical accounts of Russian colonial campaign. These draw on a huge documentation, stretching back to the officers' memories (manipulated or sincere), the *Turkestanskii sbornik* ("Turkestan compendium," 1867–1939) of 594 volumes, initiated by von Kaufman but likewise doctored by his editors. Photographic or visual art researchers of colonial campaigns seek to plumb the psychological depths of photography, above all the scientific, missionary, ethnographic and portraiture. They do not match the laconic realism of the Russian photographic diaries – some include comic stories of sorcery and miracles prescribed to photography – but they reveal the local perspectives, of which Russians (and Europeans), then and now, seem to have been largely unconscious. "Vereshchagin will be remembered not so much for his power in delineating Eastern scenery, mosques and tombs, Asiatic life, and the leading events of the Gospel History, as for his realistic portraiture of the movements of armies and the horrors of war, Havos and spoil, and tears and triumphing, The morning march that flashes in the sun, The feast of cultures when the day is done, And the strange tale of many slain for one."[30]

Chapter 6 – Perusing Different Goals in Central Asia: Russian and Foreign Explorers and Their Photographic Interests

Russian Geographical Society served as an important gathering point for a generation of liberals, many of whom went on shaping policy in the period of the Great Reforms under Alexander II.[31] The aim of this chapter is to address the interrelations between these different kinds of photographic knowledge. The emergence of the scientific languages has to be understood both in relation to traditions of visual scholarship within different cultures of Central Asia in addition to how the Russian scientists and photographers understood them, and to developments in other fields of scientific applications, namely in the exhibitions and museums. Diplomatic missions and scientific expeditions were very dexterous affairs. They often included highly skilled botanists, artists, journalists, technologists, geodesist, cartographers, industrialists and photographers. The imperial diplomacy and scientific interest in the second half of the 19th-century Russia was entangled with the photographic processes and mass-media products: the image-making was extremely important for its survival and self-defensive mechanism of its political actions.

Among his many achievements, Aleksey Fedchenko has been hailed as a *wunderkind* of Russian Geological and glaciological school,[32] looking for the "museum