



VANISHED KHANS AND EMPTY STEPPES A HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN: From Pre-History to Post-Independence

Robert Wight

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This is a major new history of an increasingly important country in Central Asia.

The book opens with an outline of the history of Almaty, from its nineteenth-century origins as a remote outpost of the Russian empire, up to its present status as the thriving second city of modern-day Kazakhstan. The story then goes back to the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages, and the sensational discovery of the famous Golden Man of the Scythian empire. A succession of armies and empires, tribes and khanates, appeared and disappeared, before the siege and destruction in 1219 of the ancient Silk Road city of Otrar under the Mongol leader Genghis Khan. The emergence of the first identifiable Kazakh state in the sixteenth century was followed by early contacts with Russia, the country which came to be the dominant influence in Kazakhstan and Central Asia for three hundred years. The book shows how Kazakhstan has been inextricably caught up in the vast historical processes – of revolution, civil war, and the rise and fall of communism – which have extended out from Russia over the last century. In the process the country has changed dramatically, from a simple nomadic society of khans and clans, to a modern and outward-looking nation. The transition has been difficult and tumultuous for millions of people, but Vanished Khans and Empty Steppes illustrates how Kazakhstan has emerged as one of the world's most successful post-communist countries.

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