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# **‘Proconsul of the Caucasus’: a Re-examination of Yermolov**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This article attempts to re-examine the activities of Yermolov and their results in two of his most important tasks in the Caucasus with the hope of starting a general re-evaluation of this important figure.*

*The structure of the human mind, it seems, causes us to see, or comprehend certain multi-dimensional phenomena from a single perspective only. In physics, for example, light can be understood, explained and calculated as either waves or particles. Both are correct, because light is a phenomenon that combines both in a way beyond our comprehension. In history, oceans of ink were wasted on the futile dispute whether individuals or processes were the main vehicles in the unfolding of events. Although we do understand now that both are similarly important and are able to explain past events by combining both factors, we are still unable to determine the relative importance of each. This article therefore follows the individual perspective without trying to combine it with the other.*

## **I**

In 1816 the Emperor Alexander I appointed his confidant, Aleksei Petrovich Yermolov<sup>1</sup> as Governor and Chief Administrator of Georgia and the Caucasus, Commander-in-Chief of the Separate Georgian Army Corps (soon to be renamed the ‘Independent Caucasian Infantry Corps’) and Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Fath `Ali Shah, the second Qajar ruler of what was known then

as 'Persia'. Enjoying the full confidence and backing of the *tsar*, Yermolov had, in fact, a free hand in the Caucasus and soon adopted the nickname 'Proconsul of the Caucasus' (Ermolov 1906, 12: 247; Borozdin 1890: 305). This article intends to re-examine some of Yermolov's activities in that capacity.

'Only forty years of age at the time of his Caucasian appointment', summed up a study, Yermolov

had already made a brilliant military career for himself. He had been decorated on the field by Suvorov while still in his teens; at twenty he was colonel. At the fall of Paris in 1814 he commanded both the Russian and Prussian Guards, and with the deaths of Kutuzov and Bagration he became the most illustrious and popular soldier in the Empire (Whitlock 1959: 54)<sup>2</sup>.

No wonder that an admiring Pushkin warned in his 'Caucasian Prisoner' (translation Layton 1994: 101):

Submit and bow your snowy head  
Oh Caucasus, Yermolov marches

Yermolov's main tasks were to secure Russia's hold over the Trans-Caucasus, only recently conquered in a hard war with both the Qajars (1805–1813) and the Ottomans (1807–1812), to occupy the Caucasus range separating the new territories from the rest of the Empire and to subdue the 'savage' and hostile Muslim tribes inhabiting it. But first he had another, most urgent task: Yermolov had to travel on a mission to Tehran, to evade the execution of Alexander I's promise to restore to Fath `Ali Shah part of the territories acquired by Russia in the Treaty of Gulistan of 1813 (Potto 1887: 14).

Seemingly successful he returned triumphantly to Tiflis, where he immediately set upon the conquest of the mountains.

Yermolov intended to deal first with the Chechens – 'a bold and dangerous race' – by establishing a new line along the (lower) Sunja and settling Cossacks between that river and the Terek. Once the line was completed, Yermolov wrote to the Emperor,

I shall offer the villains dwelling between the Terek and the Sunja, called pacified [*mirnye*], rules [to regulate their ways] of life and a few duties, which will make clear to them that they are subject to Your Imperial Majesty, and not allies, as they have hitherto deluded themselves. If they submit properly, I shall apportion

them the necessary amount of land according to their numbers, dividing the rest among the cramped Cossacks and the Kara-Nogays; if not, I shall propose to them to retire and join the other outlaws from whom they differ in name only, and in this case the whole of the land will be at our disposal.

In this way 'the Chechens will be constrained within their mountains' and have no choice but to submit to Russian rule (Berzhe 1904, II: 498–499). Planning to complete the task within a year, Yermolov intended to continue the line up to the Sulak river in Daghestan and to take possession of 'the rich salt lakes, which supply all the mountain people including the Chechens' (Gadzhiev and Ramazanov 1959: 23–26). This move would give the Russians a lever to press the mountaineers into submission. After that Yermolov suggested to move to Kabarda and the Western Caucasus.

Receiving the Emperor's approval, Yermolov moved to Chechnya and founded the fortress of Groznaia ('Menacing') on 22 June 1818<sup>3</sup>. The Chechens' attempt at resistance was crushed with cannon and grapeshot. 'The building of Groznaia, together with what was known of Yermolov's further intentions', alarmed not only the Chechens but their neighbours to the south and southeast (Baddeley 1909: 123). The rulers of Avaria, Kazi-Kumukh, Mekhtuli, Karakaytag and Tabasaran and the confederation of Akusha formed an alliance against the Russians. Colonel Pestel, the Commander of Daghestan,

advanced to Bashli, the chief town of Karakaytag [...] was there surrounded by the allies in vast numbers, and attacked in the narrow streets, where artillery could not operate. [He managed to] retreat to Derbend [...] with a loss of twelve officers and 500 men (Baddeley 1909: 124).

Yermolov had no choice but to move into the mountains in person. Bashli, Piri Aul and Jengutay were stormed and destroyed, the Khan of Mekhtuli fled and the Khanate was abolished. Part of it was given to the *Shamkhal* of Tarki as a reward for his loyalty, and the rest – annexed to the Empire. Yermolov then returned to complete Groznaia and in 1819 erected a fortress opposite Enderi – (Andreevskii aul in Russian) Vnezapnaia ('Sudden').

But the allies were not beaten yet. In the spring of 1819 they at-

tacked in two directions: In the north, the Khan of Avaria attacked in mid-September the Russian force building Vnezapnaia. He was routed, deposed and replaced by a nominee of Yermolov. In the south the Daghestanis cut off communications with Derbend and threatened Kura and Kuba. Madatov, Pestel's successor and a '*beau sabreur* [...] whose ideas of subordination were somewhat loose', (Baddeley 1909: 129) counter-attacked and cowed Tabasaran into submission<sup>4</sup>. In October he marched into Karakaytag, drove the *Utsmi* out and annexed the principality to the Empire.

Completing the construction of Vnezapnaia, Yermolov moved against the confederation of Akusha and on 31 December 1819 won a decisive battle near Lavashi. Accepting the confederation's submission, Yermolov appointed a new *qadi*, who 'was in the full meaning of the word our friend, and twenty four hostages from the most important families held in Derbend, were reliable pawns of its calm' (Volkonskii, fon Kliman, and Bublitskii 1866, X: 12).

In June 1820 Kazi-Kumukh was conquered, the Khan fled and the Khan of Kura – nominated in his stead. 'The subjugation of Daghestan', reported Yermolov to the *tsar*, 'begun last year is now complete; and this country, proud, warlike, and hitherto unconquered, has fallen at the sacred feet of Your Imperial Majesty' (Berzhe 1866–1904 VI, 2: 137–138). He was sure that the subjugation of the parts hitherto untouched by the Russians would follow suit without much effort and mainly by means of an economic blockade or 'siege'. In this belief, however, he was mistaken. 'He did not notice', wrote a Russian source, 'that although the crater of the volcano had been cleansed, the internal fire was far from extinguished' (Volkonskii, fon Kliman and Bublitskii 1866, X: 19). At the moment, however, everything seemed to progress well. In 1821 Yermolov completed the line by erecting Burnaia ('Stormy') near Tarki, and turned his attention to the central and western Caucasus. In 1822 he moved forward the line in Kabarda and in 1825 he started to do the same in the West.

That very year, an outburst in Chechnya demonstrated how powerful the volcano was. An uprising soon spread all over Chechnya and the Ingush, the Kabarda and the Aksay Kumyks, as well as some Ossets and a few hundred Daghestanis joined it. On the night of 20–21 July 1825 the rebels stormed and destroyed the

Russian fort at Amir-Hajji-Yurt. Of its 181 defenders, 98 were killed and 13 taken prisoner. They immediately exploited their success by a seven day long siege on the fort of Gerzel-Aul. Only on 27 July did Grekov, the Commander of the Sunja Line, and his immediate superior Lisanovich relieve the fort.

On the following day, 28 July 1825, the Russian generals invited 300 dignitaries into the fort, intending to arrest them. Lisanovich strongly insulted them in their own language. Then, threatening to punish them for treachery, Lisanovich ordered them to give up their *kinjals* (daggers) – an act equal in Caucasian etiquette to depriving them of their manhood. A certain Hajj Uchar Ya`qub refused to do so. Grekov lost his temper and slapped Uchar in the face. Within seconds Uchar killed Grekov and two other officers and dealt mortal wounds to Lisanovich. Before dying, however, the general managed to order to shoot all 300 dignitaries.

Yermolov upon receiving these news set out immediately to Vladikavkaz. Here he spent the rest of the year in relocating the line, destroying some forts and building others. Meanwhile, the rebellion spread and Russian forts and *stanitsas* (Cossack settlements) were attacked and some – taken. Only in January 1826 did Yermolov start his campaign. During January and February, and again in April and May he criss-crossed the country and

punished the rebellious Chechens, burning their villages, destroying their forces, beating them in skirmishes that never developed into battles, and, occasionally even seeking to win them over by an unwanted display of clemency.

'To outward appearance his success was complete', and Yermolov returned to Tiflis in what turned out to be his last triumphant entry to the city (Baddeley 1909: 153).

On 31 July 1826 `Abbas Mirza – the Qajar *wali`ahd* (successor to the throne)<sup>5</sup> – invaded the Caucasus. Yermolov, his frequent warnings of a possibility of war with the Qajars notwithstanding (*e.g.*: Fadeev 1960: 192), was caught completely unprepared. He reacted in total passivity while the Qajar troops conquered several Russian fortresses and laid siege to others.

The new Emperor (since December 1825), Nicholas I, who had been ill-disposed towards Yermolov for a long time, now accused him of idleness and appointed his confidant, Count (later promoted

to Prince) Paskevich to command the forces on the front. Naturally, this appointment was followed by a power struggle between the two accompanied by mutual accusations flying to St. Petersburg. Finally, after six months the Emperor sent Count Diebitsch, officially to investigate the relationship between the two, in fact to depose Yermolov (Veidenbaum 1901: 216–232). On 9 April 1827 Yermolov left the Caucasus and official service never to return. He stayed in his house in Moscow and on his estate for the last thirty four years of his life never being officially involved but always up to date on events in the Caucasus.

## II

Most of Yermolov's contemporaries, peers as well as juniors, disagreed with the *tsar's* verdict. They did not accept the Emperor's accusations as valid, but as a mere excuse to get rid of Yermolov for personal reasons. To all who knew him Yermolov remained a triumphant general and an admired hero. Particularly those who served under Yermolov kept alive his legend, so that his period as 'Proconsul of the Caucasus' had acquired the proportions of a 'golden age' in the collective memory of Russia.

Yermolov, thus, remained an admired hero in Russian pre-revolutionary historiography, and after a shift of the pendulum during the first decade and a half of the USSR's existence returned to the same status and even more in post 1944 Soviet historiography<sup>6</sup>. Soviet historians described him as a 'progressive', freedom loving hero; as the pacifier and enlightener of the Caucasus, who codified his regulations in a manner suiting the local population; and most important, as a friend, if not a member indeed of the *dekabristy*. It was this latter fact which was quoted as the reason for his dismissal by Nicholas I, one of the *bêtes noires* of Soviet (as well as Western) historiography. Thus, according to a leading Soviet historian, M. V. Nechkina,

Nicholas I considered a regular investigation of Yermolov to be too dangerous and led [therefore] the inquiry in a special, secret way. He had at his disposal more than sufficient evidence to detain and investigate Yermolov. But Yermolov's political and military stature was too great [...] Nicholas I developed [therefore] a plan to discredit Yermolov militarily and [than] to discharge him from his posts (Shishkov 2001: 177).

As late as 1977 Yermolov's biography was published in a series

entitled 'distinguished heroes of our land' (Kavtaradze 1977).

This seems to be also the view of Yermolov in post-Soviet historiography. In a recent book about Generals of the 'Caucasian War', the author starts the Chapter dealing with Yermolov by the following statement: 'Perhaps none of the military leaders of Russia's armies has left to posterity such contradictory judgements and appraisals than Aleksei Petrovich Yermolov' (Shishkov 2001: 135). Nevertheless, in the entire chapter none of the negative views is quoted, only the positive ones.

This description was reflected also in Western publications. An American writer, for example, described Yermolov in almost Soviet terms as a friend of the *dekabristy*, an enlightener of Georgia, etc. (Whittock 1959).

### III

According to a well-known saying, history is written by the victors. In our age, when image is many times more important than essence, one must be aware that those victors who wrote history (or rather about whom history was written) were not necessarily the winners at the negotiating table or on the battlefield: in many cases they were the winning contestants in the PR race. With this in mind one should approach also Yermolov and his activities in the Caucasus.

First, one seldom accomplishes things single handed. Yermolov could not have been an exception in that all the achievements (and usually none of the failures) have been attributed to him only. If one is allowed to paraphrase another well-known saying, behind a successful General there usually is a good Chief-of-Staff. Indeed, Yermolov had one, whose nomination he demanded before accepting his own appointment to the Caucasus:

One year younger than Yermolov, Vel'iaminov [... was a] man of great parts, assiduously cultivated, a zealous student of military history, who brought the teaching of the past to bear on problems of the day yet with a mind ever ready to profit by the circumstances of the moment and adapt tactics and strategy to immediate requirements; prompt to conceive and quick to strike, of an iron will and invincible determination; an able organizer; absolutely fearless in battle and no less richly endowed with moral courage, he possessed in a superlative de-

gree all the qualities that command the respect of soldiers, but few that excite enthusiasm, none that enlist their affection. Calm, cool, silent, impenetrable, he was inexorably severe to his own men, merciless to the foe, and he was feared, admired and hated by both (Baddeley 1909: 109 – 110)<sup>7</sup>.

As Chief-of-Staff of the Caucasian Corps Vel'iaminov's analytical and organisational skills were fully exploited. It was Vel'iaminov who as Chief-of-Staff carried out (and perhaps initiated) the reorganisation of the Caucasian Corps, given than its structure for the following quarter of a century, until after the Crimean War (1853–1856). The various regiments of the corps were allocated their permanent areas of deployment and headquarters and made economically productive – and in some respects self-sufficient<sup>8</sup>. No less important, the siege strategy vis-à-vis the Caucasus, usually called by Russian authors 'the Yermolov system', must have also been worked out by, if not originated with, Vel'iaminov. After all, Vel'iaminov (not Yermolov as many Russian authors mistakenly claim) gave it its famous (and prophetic) formulation in 1828, that is more than a year after Yermolov had left the Caucasus:

The Caucasus may be likened to a mighty fortress, marvelously strong by nature, artificially protected by military works, and defended by a numerous garrison. Only thoughtless men would attempt to escalate such a stronghold. A wise commander would see the necessity of having recourse to military art; would lay his parallels; advance by sap and mine, and so master the place. The Caucasus, in my opinion, must be treated in the same way, and even if the method of procedure is not drawn up beforehand, so that it may be continually referred to, the very nature of things will compel such action. But in this case success will be far slower, owing to frequent derivations from the right path (Volkonskii, fon Kliman, and Bublitskii 1894, XV: 524).

An in-depth examination will, no doubt, further substantiate Vel'iaminov's (possibly crucial) share in Yermolov's successes (as well as failures). This, however, should not detract from Yermolov's stature. After all, an able leader is not necessarily he who knows best what to do, but he who knows to choose the best aides.

Second, no one has only virtues and is clean of defects. If one moves away from the historical PR, one is able fairly quickly to discover another, unpleasant side of Yermolov. Yermolov's three

great vices seem to have been: (1) vanity – 'nothing has any influence on Yermolov', wrote the director of Nicholas I's secret police, 'except his own vanity' (Whittock 1959: 58); (2) extreme xenophobia of everything non-Russian which had already made him many enemies among the Germans surrounding the *tsar* – many sardonic remarks aimed at them had been attributed to Yermolov – but gained him the admiration and devotion of many Russians; and (3) cruelty towards the 'enemy' – 'he was', wrote a Russian author, 'at least as cruel as the natives themselves' (Baddeley 1909: 97).

Naturally, Yermolov's personality influenced his approach and conduct. In Tehran, he accomplished his mission by a combination of an amazing display of vanity, 'the grossest flattery' to the Shah and sheer bullying of his ministers. 'My grim visage', he wrote

always expressed pretty clearly what I felt, and when I spoke of war conveyed the impression of a man ready to set his teeth in their throats. Unluckily for them I noticed how little they liked this, and consequently, whenever more reasonable arguments were wanting, I relied on my wild beast's muzzle, gigantic and terrifying figure, and extensive throat; for they were convinced that any one who could shout so vociferously must have good and weighty reasons (Pogodin 1863: 241)<sup>9</sup>.

In the Caucasus, his vanity (and perhaps humour as well) was demonstrated in his self designation 'Proconsul of the Caucasus'. In his vanity Yermolov stated: 'I desire that the terror of my name should guard our frontiers more potently than chains or fortresses, that my word should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death' (Baddeley 1909: 97).

His xenophobia was expressed in his central idea that

the whole of the Caucasus must, and should become an integral part of the Russian Empire; that the existence of independent or semi-independent states or communities of any description, whether Christian, Musulman, or Pagan, in the mountains or in the plains, was incompatible with the dignity and honour of his master, the safety and welfare of his subjects (Baddeley 1909: 97).

Yermolov, therefore, 'set himself the aim of destroying any non-Russian nationality in the country' (Esadze, 1907: 35). He was so extremely merciless in the execution of this aim as to be re-

buked by both Alexander I and Nicholas I, but to no avail: Condescension was in the eyes of the Asiatics', he replied,

is a sign of weakness, and out of pure humanity I am inexorably severe. One execution saves hundreds of Russians from destruction and thousands of Muslims from treason (Baddeley 1909: 97).

Such 'executions', however, had nothing to do with law and justice. Rather they intended to strike terror among the population and cow it into submission. Thus, they were not necessarily confined to single persons. On at least one occasion, an entire family was killed when a suspect's house was blown up (Prushanovskii 1846: 175–177).

In Chechnya in particular, Yermolov conducted a policy of 'punitive expeditions', the gist of which was 'to destroy auls, hang hostages, and slaughter women and children' (Baddeley 1909, 147–148; Volkonskii, fon Kliman, and Publitskii 1866, X: 8–46). Usually captives of all sexes and ages were sold into slavery<sup>10</sup>, but on some occasions the captured men were pressed into military service inside Russia and the women distributed among the Russian officers, so that in winter quarters 'for the officers, at least, the Commander-in-Chief setting the example, the time passed pleasantly enough in the company of native wives' (Baddeley 1909: 145)<sup>11</sup>. Yet Yermolov's most striking deed was the wholesale slaughter of all the inhabitants, men, women and children of the village of Dadi Yurt on 27 September 1819<sup>12</sup>.

Even by the standards of those times, when the Russians believed that 'these people's only policy is force', Yermolov's brutality was excessive. 'Whatever the faults of the Chechens', wrote an English writer not unsympathetic to Russia, 'no impartial reader of the Russian accounts of this period – and we have no other – can doubt that they were cruelly oppressed' (Baddeley 1909: 148). No wonder that to the Chechens and Daghestanis – unlike to his Russian admirers – 'Yarmul' has remained to this very day a satanic figure<sup>13</sup>.

Third, everyone is judged by results. If one penetrates behind the historical PR, Yermolov's apparent successes seem to be more of Pyrrhic victories. The main reason for that seems to be the fact that by relying solely on the use of force, one can (to paraphrase

Abraham Lincoln) terrorise all the people part of the time, or part of the people all the time, but one cannot terrorise all the people all the time. This was clearly demonstrated in both Tehran and the Caucasus.

If in the immediate perspective Yermolov's mission to the Qajar court seemed to be successful – Russia did not cede any territory to Fath `Ali Shah – in the long run his vanity and bullying planted the seeds of the war of 1826–1828 and his own downfall. Obviously, the Qajars continued to demand that Alexander I live up to his promise. Yermolov's consistently provocative, arrogant and insulting replies, especially to `Abbas Mirza, watered and nourished that seed. Furthermore, `Abbas Mirza's attempts to get in touch directly with St. Petersburg were systematically blocked by Yermolov. The Qajar *wali `ahd* was, thus, left with no alternative to the military option, which he finally took in 1826.

Also in the Caucasus Yermolov's victories were short lived if not on paper only. He succeeded in subduing for a while the lower, more accessible and controllable parts of Daghestan, mainly by the extensive use of artillery, than first seen in the mountains<sup>15</sup>. But in Upper Daghestan and in Chechnya he was never able to go beyond 'punitive expeditions'. The price of these, however, was terrible for future generations of Caucasians and Russians who were to pay it. One of his legacies, perhaps even his main one, to which all Russian sources remained blind, proved to be very detrimental to his successors in their dealings with the Caucasian highlanders: His extreme brutality and cruelty had sown such a hatred to Russia in the hearts of the Chechens and the Daghestanis that any attempt at a peaceful accommodation was almost doomed to failure. At the same time Yermolov's activities achieved results opposite to his intentions and made the natives immune to terror. Experiencing the worst, they were no more afraid of the Russians, because they could expect nothing worse. One may say, therefore, that the thirty year long resistance of Chechnya and Daghestan (1829–1859) with the huge losses on both sides, was to a great extent (though not exclusively) the result of Yermolov's actions<sup>16</sup>.

Written within the historical tradition, this article does not attempt to draw theoretical conclusions. It has dealt only with a small part of Yermolov's activities throughout his career, but these were his two most important tasks in the apex of his biography. The

benefit of hindsight only confirms and magnifies the verdict of Nicholas I – although from completely different reasons and perspectives – that Yermolov failed in these two tasks. This should not detract, however, from his achievements in other fields. It is hoped, therefore, that this article will prompt a full-scale re-evaluation of Yermolov, which will examine all his activities and expose his role in history clean of historical PR. It is also hoped that such a re-evaluation and the establishing of the facts will help also scholars in other, more theoretical disciplines.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this article the phonetic spelling – Yermolov – has been preferred over the accurate transliteration from Russian – Ermolov. The latter form has been retained only in references quoting Russian sources.

<sup>2</sup> The shortest yet most comprehensive description of Yermolov is:

Yermolov impressed all who came near him as one born to command. Of gigantic stature and uncommon physical strength, with a round head set on mighty shoulders and framed in shaggy locks, there was something leonine in his whole appearance, which, coupled with unsurpassed courage, was well calculated to excite the admiration of his own men and strike terror into his semi-barbarous foes. Incorruptibly honest, simple, even rude in his habits, and of Spartan hardihood, his sword was ever at his side, and in city as in camp he slept wrapped only in his military cloak, and rose with the sun.

Careless of his life, a willing sharer in all privations, exacting to the uttermost at the call of duty, no commander was sparing his men when to spare them was consistent with success, none so thoughtful of their well being, none so regardless of formality, none ever so unfeignedly friendly... To him the humblest, raggedest soldier who did his duty cheerfully... was a friend and brother. Habitually he addressed them as comrades; habitually he entered into their feelings, sympathized with them in their troubles and hardships, visited them by day and by night as they huddled round campfire and kettle, joked, laughed and chaffed with them (Baddeley 1908: 94–95).

<sup>3</sup> All dates in this article are according to the Gregorian ('new style') calendar.

<sup>4</sup> For Madatov's biography, see *Zhizn' general-leitenanta kniazia Madatova* (St. Petersburg, 1837).

<sup>5</sup> As *wali`ahd`Abbas Mirza* was also governor of (Persian) Azerbaijan and in charge of foreign relations. For Russo-Persian relations during the Yermolov

Era from a Persian point of view, see Mahmoud Afschar (1973). For Abbas Mirza, see E. Pakravan, *Abbas Mirza prince reformateur* (Tehran 1958).

<sup>6</sup> Soviet changing attitudes to Yermolov were demonstrated by the fact that his statue in Grozny, erected in Tsarist times, and pulled down by the Bolsheviks, was re-erected in 1944. For a list of works on Yermolov, see appendix.

<sup>7</sup> For Vel'iaminov's biography, see N. Sh., 'General Vel'iaminov i ego znachenie dlia kavkazskoi voiny', *Kavkazskii sbornik*. Vol. III, pp. 1–77.

<sup>8</sup> During their long service in the Caucasus the soldiers specialized in different crafts (tailoring, shoemaking, etc.). They also grew vegetables and fruit at gardens located in and near their headquarters and forts and kept herds of cattle, sheep and goats.

<sup>9</sup> For Yermolov's mission to Tehran, see also, Berzhe, A. P. (1877); Kotzebue, M. von, (see Weimar, 1819).

<sup>10</sup> This sheds a rather cynical light on the Russian argument that one of the aims of their pacification of the Caucasus was to stop the slave trade.

<sup>11</sup> Yermolov himself fathered several children, among them a daughter who remained for all her life an object of curiosity and pilgrimage for Russian officers passing near her village.

<sup>12</sup> The Chechens' living memory of the massacre has been expressed *inter alia* in many songs and poems on the subject. For one of the more recent, see Umar Yarichev (1990), pp. 41–44.

<sup>13</sup> Suffice the fact that the first thing the Chechens did after their self proclaimed independence was to pull Yermolov's statue of its pedestal in Grozny.

<sup>14</sup> 'Such convincing proof of our rights', Yermolov wrote cynically, 'could not fail to give me the advantage. It is very interesting to see the first effect of this innocent means on the heart of man, and I learnt how useful it was to be possessed of the one when unable all at once to conquer the other' (Ermolov 1906: 247).

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Baddeley (1908: 132) wondered why 'Russian writers, so far, fail to see any connection between the vaunted "Yermolov system" and the Murid war'.

## APPENDIX: A YERMOLOV BIBLIOGRAPHY

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