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Sommario/riassunto	This study, written from the perspective of political sociology, represents the first comparative examination of Central Asian communal and political organisation before and after the tsarist conquest of the region. It covers Turkman, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and other tribal societies, analyses the patrimonial state structures of the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanates of Khiva and Khokand, and discusses the impacts of the established tsarist civil military administration on communal and political orientations of the Muslim population.