## Contents

*List of Illustrations* vi

*Preface* viii

*Acknowledgments* ix

*Note on Transliteration* x

*Maps* xi

**Introduction** 1

Chapter 1. The Steppe Borderland 8

Chapter 2. Town and Gown 50

Chapter 3. A Province in Search of an Identity 92

Chapter 4. City, Empire, Nation 133

Chapter 5. To the “First Capital” and Back 174

Chapter 6. Post-Soviet Borderland 216

Chapter 7. The Front Line 254

Conclusions 291

Historical Timeline 297

Selected Bibliography 300

Index 307