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# TARTARIA

Lost empire, or lost in translation?  
An open-minded, plain-English guide



Published by Clarity Guides · Cover: *Tartariae sive Magni Chami Regni typus*, from Abraham Ortelius's atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1603 edition).

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Preview – full guide coming soon – [goclarity.uk](https://goclarity.uk)

# ABOUT THIS GUIDE



**S**earch “Tartaria” online and you step into a world of wonder: ornate old buildings, star-shaped forts, maps with a vast country you were never taught about, and the idea that a great civilisation has been forgotten.

This guide takes that world seriously. We set out what people who believe in a lost Tartarian Empire actually say, as fairly as we can. Then we look at the maps, books, photographs and buildings themselves, and at what archives, archaeologists and historians have found. Because the idea first grew up in Russia, we read **Russian-language sources** as well as English ones.

Some of the answers are clear. Others are not, and we say so. The real history turns out to be full of things that **were** lost, buried, demolished or forgotten, and full of questions nobody can answer yet. We end with those.

**Our labels.** **CLAIM** is something people say, which has not been shown by records or independent evidence. **EVIDENCE** means what documents, archives, archaeology or measurement show. **HISTORY** means a documented historical event. **OPEN QUESTION** marks something genuinely unknown or still being discovered.

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# WHAT WE KNOW, AND WHAT'S STILL OPEN



*The maps are real, the buildings are real, and many of the photographs are real. What we test in this guide is the story that joins them together.*

|                        | WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS                                                                                                                                                                          | WHAT'S STILL OPEN                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THE NAME               | <b>EVIDENCE</b> “Tartary” or “Tartaria” was printed on European maps for about 600 years, from the 1200s to the early 1800s, across Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria and Central Asia.               | How much of the inner history of these lands is still missing from English-language books.                                                    |
| AN EMPIRE?             | <b>EVIDENCE</b> Maps split Tartary into Chinese, Muscovite (Russian) and Independent Tartary. No capital, coin or law code of one Tartarian state has been found.                                | Real cities in “Tartary” are still being found. Two lost Silk Road cities in Uzbekistan were mapped by drone, with results published in 2024. |
| THE 1771 BRITANNICA    | <b>EVIDENCE</b> Printed in Edinburgh. It calls Tartary “a vast country”, lists its many peoples, and its table gives “Muscovite Tartary” 3,056,000 square miles, with its chief city at Tobolsk. | Why outsiders kept one name for so many peoples for so long.                                                                                  |
| BURIED FLOORS          | <b>EVIDENCE</b> Real, and each one checked has a local, documented cause: cities raising their streets, building on top of old buildings, fires and floods.                                      | What still lies under our own cities. Edinburgh found whole streets beneath its Old Town.                                                     |
| FORTS AND FAIR PALACES | <b>EVIDENCE</b> Star forts are a well-recorded design for the age of cannon. Exhibition palaces, including Glasgow’s, were built to be temporary.                                                | How much fine architecture we have lost since, and whether we will build like that again.                                                     |
| ORPHAN TRAINS          | <b>HISTORY</b> A real child-welfare scheme in the United States (1854–1929). Britain sent over 100,000 “Home Children” to Canada.                                                                | Thousands of families are still tracing these children today.                                                                                 |
| OUR ADVICE             | Enjoy the mystery, and go and look for yourself. The old maps are free to view online, the buildings can be visited, and the real stories behind them are remarkable.                            |                                                                                                                                               |



THE STORY

# WHAT IS THE TARTARIA STORY?

**A**t its heart, the Tartaria story is about loss: the feeling that something beautiful and great once existed, and that it has been taken from us and written out of the history books.

**CLAIM** There are several versions, and believers often disagree with each other. Told as fairly as we can, the main ideas are these:

- **A forgotten empire.** Old European maps show a vast country called Tartaria or Great Tartary across northern and central Asia. Believers say this was a real, organised empire, perhaps the greatest in the world, and that historians have hidden it.
- **A worldwide civilisation.** In the version popular in English since about 2016, Tartaria was global. Its people built the grand domed and columned buildings found in cities everywhere, the star-shaped forts, and the great palaces of the World's Fairs.
- **Advanced technology.** Some say Tartarian spires, domes and towers drew “free energy” from the atmosphere, and that people were taller, even giants.
- **A catastrophe.** A “mud flood” in the 1700s or 1800s buried the ground floors of cities around the world. Wars and fires then destroyed what was left.
- **A reset.** Survivors were few, children were brought in on “orphan trains” to repopulate empty cities, and the history was rewritten so that later governments got the credit for Tartarian buildings.

## ✦ THE EVIDENCE BELIEVERS POINT TO

Old maps and flags; the 1771 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; star forts; windows and doors below street level; old photos of men digging; city streets in old photographs that look strangely empty; World's Fair palaces that were pulled down; and the striking fact that grand 19th-century buildings look so alike, from Glasgow to San Francisco to St Petersburg.

**Why it feels convincing.** Almost every piece of evidence is a real object. The maps exist, the buildings exist, streets really were raised and fine buildings really were demolished. An antique-map dealer who looked into the theory in 2026 put it well: the deception, if there is one, lies “not in the objects, but in the connections imposed upon them”. In the chapters that follow we look at each object, and at what is known about where it came from.

Sources: Geographicus Rare Antique Maps, “The Empire That Never Was” (Aug 2026); Wikipedia, “Tartarian Empire (conspiracy theory)”; Skeptoid #765 (2021); World Religions and Spirituality Project, “The Tartarian Empire” (2026).