

MONGOLS, TURKS, AND OTHERS

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MONGOLS, TURKS, AND OTHERS

Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World

EDITED BY

REUVEN AMITAI AND MICHAL BIRAN



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On the cover: Mongol horsemen in combat, from Rashīd al-Dīn's *Ḥāmi' al-tawārīkh*, MS Supp. Persan 1113, fol. 231v. © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

This volume is dedicated to the memory of our teacher

DAVID AYALON
(1914–1998)

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PREFACE

This volume is based on the work of a research group on “The Interaction of Nomadic Conquerors with Sedentary People in China and the Middle East,” which was active in the Spring of 2000 at the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. We are grateful to the current Director of the IAS, Prof. B.Z. Kedar, and the Executive Director, Ms. Pnina Feldmann, for their encouragement and assistance. We would also like to extend our thanks to the then Director, Prof. Alex Levitski, and Executive Director, Ms. Liebe Maimon, for all of their support, which enabled us to carry out our work. Special thanks are also due to our colleague Prof. David Shulman, who earlier served as Director of the IAS, and gave us sound advice and encouragement at a preliminary stage. We are also happy to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to the staff at the IAS for all of their assistance and good cheer: Shani Freiman, Batya Matalov, Dalia Aviely, Smadar Danziger, Annette Orrelle. Finally, it is a pleasant duty to thank several of our colleagues who read various sections of this work in manuscript and made valuable comments: Israel Eph'al, Steven Kaplan, Nimrod Luz, Yuri Pines, Gideon Shelach, Michael Zand and the anonymous reviewer for Brill.

Most papers collected here were given at the weekly seminars of the group or during the conference “Euroasian Nomads and the Outside World” that was held on 4–5 June 2000 at the IAS. Nicola Di Cosmo and Liu Yingsheng have replaced their original papers with new ones. Askold I. Ivantchik kindly answered our late invitation to contribute a paper, to help round out the volume. We are also thankful to Kenneth H. Shapiro, whom we have not met and who was neither at the research group nor conference, for co-authoring the paper with Anatoly Khazanov. All authors are to be thanked for their cooperation and good will at what was an unexpectedly lengthy editorial process.

*R.A. and M.B.
Jerusalem
Spring 2004*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AEME</i>	<i>Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Central Asiatic Journal</i>
<i>CHC</i>	<i>Cambridge History of China</i>
<i>CHAC</i>	<i>Cambridge History of Ancient China</i>
<i>EI1</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam, 1st edition</i>
<i>EI2</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd edition</i>
<i>Elr</i>	<i>Encyclopedia Iranica</i>
<i>FgrHist</i>	Jacoby, F. <i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i> . Leiden, 1923–.
<i>HJAS</i>	<i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal asiatique</i>
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of Asian History</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>JW</i>	<i>Jiu Wudai shi</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Liao shi</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Monumenta Serica</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
<i>PFEH</i>	<i>Papers in Far Eastern History</i>
<i>PSRL</i>	<i>Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>ROC</i>	<i>Revue de l'orient chrétien</i>
<i>SAA</i>	<i>State Archives of Assyria</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Zizhi tongjian</i>
<i>TP</i>	<i>T'oung Pao</i>
<i>WF</i>	Wittfogel, Karl A. and Feng Chia-sheng. <i>History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1125)</i> . Philadelphia, 1949.
<i>XW</i>	<i>Xin Wudai shi</i>
<i>YS</i>	<i>Yuan shi</i>

NOTES ON DATES AND TRANSLITERATIONS

1. Dates are generally given according to the Gregorian calendar. *Hijrī* and Chinese dates are given only when they have a special relevance in a particular article. When both *hijrī* and Gregorian dates are given, the *hijrī* comes first, followed by a slash and the Gregorian date. In Persian books, occasionally the *shamsī* year is given: if so, this is marked before the Gregorian date, and followed by the abbreviation S. and a slash.
2. Chinese names and terms have been transliterated according to the Pinyin system.
3. Arabic words, titles and names have been transliterated according to the system used in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Words and names of Persian origin have usually been transliterated as if they were Arabic (e.g., Juwaynī, not Juvaynī, nāmah, not nāme). Common words and place names, such as sultan, mamluk, Bukhara, Baghdad, are written without diacritical points. Well-known place names are given in their accepted English forms, e.g., Jerusalem, Damascus.
4. Russian has been transliterated according to the system of the Library of Congress, except for the letter ѣ, which is rendered as j.
5. Names and terms of Mongolian origin have been transliterated according to Antoine Mostaert's scheme as modified by F.W. Cleaves, except for these deviations: č is rendered as ch; š as sh; γ as gh; and, ǰ as j.

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INTRODUCTION

Just as there is no head without a cap, there is no Turk without a Tat
[= Iranian].

(Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī).¹

The words of the Chinese people have always been sweet and the materials of the Chinese people have always been soft. Having heard these words you unwise people went close to the Chinese and were killed in great numbers. If you go to those places, O Turkish People, you will die.

(From the Orkhon inscriptions)²

One phenomenon, which unites the history of the Middle East, Europe, South and East Asia is the role of nomadic peoples from the Eurasian steppe in the affairs of the sedentary peoples in the surrounding countries. From ancient times through the Middle Ages and into the modern period, pastoral nomads conducted complex contacts and exchanges, varying from symbiosis to open conflict with their sedentary neighbors. The nomads have affected the urban and agricultural populations not only through raiding, extortion and conquest, but also through the conduct of trade and the transfer and development of ideas, religions and other cultural elements. The sedentary populations were not the only ones to be influenced. The ongoing contact between steppe and sown in Eurasia deeply affected the nomads themselves: their economy, political frameworks, religious life, artistic expression and methods of warfare, to name some of the salient aspects. Current research is already aware of the fact that there is more in nomad-sedentary relations than the simplistic “trade or raid” formula or the barbarian paradigm.³ It is our hope that the articles in this volume will contribute to a deeper understanding

¹ Mahmud Kāshgharī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān lughāt al-Turk)*, tr. R. Dankoff with J. Kelly (Cambridge, MA, 1982–85), ii, p. 103.

² Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington, 1968), pp. 261–62.

³ For a discussion of the trade or raid formula see, e.g., S. Jagchid and V.J. Symons, *Peace, War and Trade along the Great Wall* (Bloomington, 1989), esp. pp. 24–51 and cf. Di Cosmo’s article in this volume. For the barbarian paradigm see, e.g., J.K. Fairbank, “Introduction” in J.K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge, MA, 1968) and cf. Pines’s article in this volume.

of the complex interaction between the different populations in Eurasia, and show that these relationships were not always cut from one cloth.

The papers presented here tackle several facets of sedentary-nomadic interaction from prehistoric times and up to the present-day in the region of the Eurasian steppe and its frontiers with China, Russia and the Middle East. Other areas, primarily the Indian sub-continent and Eastern Europe have been left for other volumes. The chronological span of the papers is over three millennia, from 1100 BCE up to a discussion of the remnants of Eurasian pastoral nomadism today. In spite of this attempt to look at the *longue durée*, the majority of the papers focus on the “age of the nomads,” that is the tenth to fifteenth centuries during which nomads conquered and ruled wide swaths of the territories of the sedentary civilizations, more than at any time in history. Most important of these conquerors were the Mongols, who created the largest continuous land empire in human history. It is perhaps not a surprise, that the Mongols have the greatest coverage in this volume.

The title chosen for this volume was deliberate. It gives pride of place to the two nomadic groups that had the greatest impact on the surrounding lands, the Mongol and Turkic speaking peoples. Between groups of people speaking these tongues, interesting and complex relations developed, to which some allusion is made in this volume. Besides the Mongols and Turks, other nomads have appeared on the steppe, which is hinted at by the title, and to whom some reference is made in several papers found in the volume. But the “Other” of the title also—and most importantly—refers to the non-nomadic population in the urban and agricultural lands to the south of the steppe.

In the introduction to an earlier volume of essays devoted to the Mongol empire, it was written: “The history of the Mongol world empire and its successor states is by nature both world history and comparative history.”⁴ This applies *a posteriori* to the history of Eurasian nomads in general, particularly with regard to their relations with the surrounding sedentary populations. It is world history since it deals with a large swath of the world, stretching from East Asia to Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean and involves thousands of

⁴ R. Amitai-Preiss and D.O. Morgan, *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1999), p. 2.

years of recorded contacts and confrontations through this huge area. It is also world history, since the nomads were so instrumental in conveying ideas, merchandise, technologies and cultural artifacts from one end of Eurasia to the other. Comparative history, an interesting and heuristically useful branch of the study of world history, is certainly found in the examination of the Eurasian nomads. We look at similar phenomena diachronically and synchronically, across vast region, including the relations to different sedentary civilizations. As a result, we can understand better a particular phenomenon in a specific historical and cultural context. The study of nomads, then, and by extension, the essays presented in this volume, can make a small—but hopefully not insignificant—contribution to the burgeoning literature on world history, for students, teachers and researchers in this important field.

Eurasian nomads and their interaction with the surrounding peoples and cultures have riveted learned people since time immemorial. In the Bible, the complex relations between farmers and herders are displayed already in the story of Cain and Abel; here we also learn of Gog and Magog, wild people from the north, who will erupt upon the civilized peoples at the end of days. Intellectuals, as disparate in time and place as Sima Qian (d. ca. 90 BCE), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 CE) and many others, as the papers of Pines, Frenkel and Gammer display, report on the nomads and attempt to understand and explain their way of life, as well as their relations with the outside world, though mostly from the sedentary perspective. In the last century, several scholars, informed by history, personal travel, ethnography and the insights of social sciences, have made cogent attempts to present generalizations on Eurasian nomadic society and their multifaceted connections with nearby sedentary populations. We might mention Owen Lattimore, Joseph Fletcher, Thomas Barfield and our colleagues Anatoly Khazanov and Nicola Di Cosmo.⁵ Perhaps the most important insight from the work of these scholars is that there is little nomadic autarky and rarely pure nomadism. As Lattimore put it, a pure nomad is a poor nomad.⁶

⁵ O. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York, 1940); J. Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *HJAS*, 46 (1986), pp. 1–43; T.J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford, 1989); A. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 2nd edn. (Madison, 1994); N. Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁶ Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers*, p. 522.

On the whole, it can be said that the nomads (and not only those of the Eurasian steppe) are largely dependent on their sedentary neighbors, possibly in ways that they are not happy to admit. Yet this dependence should not disguise the indigenous traditions of the nomads and their creative ability to borrow, adapt and innovate in their relations with their sedentary neighbors. Let us start with the economic dependence. Perhaps nomads can live without grains, raw materials, manufactured goods or just plain amenities, but it is a pretty miserable existence, one which they will attempt to ameliorate. This might be achieved through trade with nearby sedentary populations, exacting tribute, raids which resulted in booty, or conquest, which brought about the orderly extraction of surplus from the rich agricultural areas. It should be remembered, however, that the nomads can often supply their basic need for products of sedentary provenance from the small groups of sedentaries residing in their realm, or even by their own secondary agriculture.⁷ The dependence of nomads on sedentary societies is therefore less crucial than is sometimes thought.

Several scholars also stress the political dependence of the nomads on their sedentary neighbors, describing the creation of a nomadic empire or state as a secondary phenomenon, originating from the need to deal with more highly organized sedentary state societies. The presumption underlying this approach is that the tribal organization of the nomads usually suffices for conducting most aspects of their everyday life, including small-scale raiding into their neighbors' realm. The (often-attested historically) creation of super-tribal units, from confederations to nomadic empires, is therefore supposed to derive only from the need to cope with a sedentary rival, and the fact that the most complex nomadic empires originated in the vicinity of China is often taken as supportive evidence for this view.⁸ Di Cosmo, however, recently argued that the establishment of a nomadic empire can be a process originating from internal factors, mainly a result of crisis in the nomadic society.⁹ Even while taking the second view, however, the successful maintenance of a united nomadic empire is often dependent on the ability of its leader to secure a

⁷ N. Di Cosmo, "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and its Significance in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 53 (1994), pp. 1092–1126.

⁸ E.g., Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, pp. 6–7; see also, e.g., P.B. Golden, "Nomads and their Sedentary Neighbors in pre-Cinggisid Eurasia," *AEMA*, 7 (1987–91), pp. 41–81.

⁹ Di Cosmo, *Ancient China*, pp. 169ff.

beneficial relationship with its sedentary neighbors, which enables the leader to reward his followers and convince them that their submission to his authority is worthwhile. This can be done—as mentioned above—either by conducting trade on favorable terms (often enforced by force), by launching campaigns that bring booty, tribute and prestige, or by conquest. In founding their states and shaping their political relations with their sedentary subjects and neighbors the nomads, as shown clearly, e.g., in Standen’s article in this volume, displayed creative use of sedentary concepts and institutions, selectively borrowing and adapting them to their needs, often transforming and innovating them in due course.

The nomads usually secured the relationship with the sedentaries through the tremendous military advantage they had (up to the modern period) over most of their sedentary neighbors. This advantage was due to the combination of their horsemanship which brought mobility, their skill in archery and their ability to fight in a massed, disciplined way.¹⁰ At times, however, nomads could find their military prowess checked by sedentary states, often employing the military methods of the steppes or even soldiers of steppe origin, as in the Mamluk Sultanate or in Qing China. For this reason, or due to a realization that there were benefits to be obtained also from peace (such as trade), nomadic states often moved to a state of détente or even peace with former enemies. Indeed, while warfare was certainly an important part of the “foreign policy” of the nomadic states, their range of political action also included articulated forms of diplomatic and commercial means, as shown in the articles of Amitai, Liu and Di Cosmo.

Khazanov stresses that nomads depend on their sedentary neighbors not only for material and political needs but also in the realm of culture, stressing the adoption of the “sedentary” universal religions by the nomads.¹¹ It should be noted, however, that although Christianity, Buddhism, Manichaeism and even Judaism made inroads on the steppe, in the end, it was Islam which had the greatest impact on

¹⁰ For nomadic warfare, see N. Di Cosmo (ed.), *Warfare in Inner Asian History 500–1800* (Leiden, 2002), especially his introduction (pp. 1–29) and the article by P.B. Golden (pp. 105–72).

¹¹ A.M. Khazanov, “Nomads in the History of the Sedentary World,” in *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, eds. A.M. Khazanov and A. Wink (Richmond, Surrey, 2001), pp. 1–23.

the Eurasian nomads. Yet in the cultural realm as well, it will be misleading to display the nomads only as passive recipients of sedentary ideas. As shown in Shelach's article in this volume, from earliest times there was a distinct nomadic identity, which later displayed its own political culture, military ethos and methods, and religious functions. Whether or not parts or even most of this culture originated in the sedentary world (certainly China and Iran were influential), at least from the time of the Xiongnu (3rd century BCE), or, as seen in Ivanchik's article, from the earlier and more westerly Cimmerians, one can speak about an imperial nomadic worldview that saw the steppe as its center and distinguished itself from its sedentary neighbors. The nomadic empires developed an ideology, based on a heavenly mandate given to the nomads' royal clan by Tengri (the sky god of the steppe people). Up to the Mongols, the mandate appears to have been understood to have been limited to the steppe nomads themselves. The Mongols took it more seriously; perhaps propelled by their initial victories and conquests they understood this heavenly mission in a more literal sense: to conquer the world. This ideology legitimized the appearance and endurance of a super-tribal unit, and was fundamental in garnering legitimization among the nomadic leaders and tribesmen, and perhaps to a lesser degree among subject peoples. It acted as a unifying factor (backed up by wealth generated by raids, conquest and tribute, as well as raw military power) in what was normally a highly fissiparous society.¹² Even the tacit disavowal of this ideology might prove disastrous for a state of nomadic origin, as Amitai suggests in his article.

The nomads often supplemented their original Tengri religion with a universal sedentary religion, which was habitually also used as a unifying factor, either of the ruling nomads against their sedentary neighbors (as in the case of the adoption of Judaism by the Khazars

¹² P.B. Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-C'inggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *AEMA*, 2 (1982), pp. 37–76 (rpt. in P.B. Golden, *Nomads and their Neighbours in the Russian Steppe: Turks, Khazars and Qipchaqs* [Aldershot, 2003], art. I); for the ideology of the Mongols see, e.g., E. Voeglin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245–1255," *Byzantion*, 15 (1940–41), pp. 378–413; I. de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chingis Khan's Empire," *PFEH*, 7 (1973), pp. 21–36; K. Sagaster, "Herrschaftsideologie und Friedensgedanke bei den Mongolen," *CAJ*, 17 (1973), pp. 223–42. More studies are mentioned in R. Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. R. Amitai-Preiss, and D.O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), p. 62, n. 20.

or Manichaeism by the Uighurs) or of the nomads and their sedentary neighbors or subjects, mainly in the case of conversion to Islam.¹³ In either way, the nomads were not only passive transmitters: they played a key role in the spread of certain religions, most significantly Islam, and they retained elements of their indigenous religion even after their conversion, thereby creating various forms of syncretism.¹⁴ The articles of Jackson and Biran review some aspects of the relationship between nomads and religions.

Besides religion, other aspects of culture were developed and spread by the nomads: recent studies by Allsen have shown that nomads (in his case, the Mongols) were not just passive transmitters or consumers of cultural items (in the fields of, e.g., textiles, medicine, astronomy, cuisine), but modified and developed them to fit their own needs and taste.¹⁵

An important distinction, stressed by Barfield and Fletcher,¹⁶ is that between the nomads of the steppe, mainly Mongolia, where the ecological boundary between steppe and sown is the clearest, and the nomads of the frontier areas—Manchuria and north China in the east and the deserts nomads of Central Asia in the west—in which various forms of nomad-sedentary coexistence prevailed. Many of the articles in this volume deal with those mixed regions, which manifest complex relations between nomads and sedentary populations. Unlike most of the steppe nomadic empires (with the notable exception of the Mongols), the states established by nomads of the frontier zones conquered parts of the sedentary civilizations that bordered the steppe, thereby creating empires in which a nomadic (or semi-nomadic) minority, backed by a strong military machine, ruled over a multi-ethnic nomad and sedentary population. This demanded the acquisition of knowledge and administrative skills required to manage the government of the sedentary areas and new forms of

¹³ A. Khazanov, "The Spread of World Religions in the Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes," in *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic*, ed. M. Gervers and W. Schlepp, *Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia* 1 (Toronto, 1994), pp. 11–33.

¹⁴ See, e.g., N. Levtzion, "Towards a Comparative Study of Islamization," in *Conversion to Islam*, ed. N. Levtzion (New York and London, 1979), pp. 1–23; D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA, 1994).

¹⁵ T.T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge, 1997); *idem*, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001).

¹⁶ Barfield, pp. 16–20; Fletcher, pp. 1–43.

legitimization.¹⁷ In establishing those states, the rulers usually became closely associated with the sedentary traditions over parts of which they ruled, whether Chinese in the eastern steppe or Muslim in the western steppe (and in the case of Hungary even Christian).¹⁸ The sedentary influence played an important role in the shape of the royal institutions of these states and in their administration, which included the direct taxation of their sedentary population side by side with tribute from China (in the eastern steppe) or a variety of indirect means of revenue collection (in the western steppe). Yet those outside influences did not blot out the steppe past, which remained a major part of the elite identity and government.¹⁹ The articles of Biran, Manz, Shelach and Standen treat certain aspects of such mixed entities, while Morgan, Kim and Biran refer to certain aspects of nomadic culture in the aftermath of the establishment of nomadic rule over sedentary populations.

It seems as if part of the difference between the role of the nomads in the vicinity of China and the Muslim world also goes back to the ecological difference mentioned above: The sharp economical differentiation between China and Mongolia, now symbolized by the Great Wall, encouraged mutual hostility and a sharp distinction between “us” and “them.” In the vicinity of the Muslim world the ecological differentiation was less clear cut, encouraging symbiosis more than conflict. Moreover, the common religion that (from about 1000 CE) united nomads and sedentaries, managed to cross the boundaries between “us” and “them” and enabled sedentary populations to accept more willingly their nomadic rulers and to give them a place of honor in their scheme of government. No wonder that Ibn Khaldun defined the Turks as the saviors of Islam,²⁰ while in traditional Chinese historiography nomadic rule was usually described as an abnormal situation, threatening the state’s existence.²¹ Many articles in this volume—those of Amitai, Biran, Frenkel, Jackson and Manz—treat

¹⁷ Barfield, pp. 164ff.; N. Di Cosmo, “State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History,” *Journal of World History*, 10 (1999), p. 32.

¹⁸ Golden, “Imperial Ideology,” pp. 73–74.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; Di Cosmo, “Periodization,” pp. 32–33; D.O. Morgan, *Medieval Persia* (London, 1988), pp. 34–40.

²⁰ D. Ayalon, “Mamlūkiyyāt: A First Attempt to Evaluate the Mamlūk Military System,” *JSAI*, 2 (1979), pp. 321–49.

²¹ For a discussion of the different role of nomads in the Chinese and Muslim worlds see P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 89–91.

different facets in the relations between nomads and Islam, while Endicott, Pines, Shelach, Standen, Liu and Biran tackle the question of their relations with China.

Whether in the vicinity of China, the Muslim world or other areas of the steppe, after millennia of exploiting their military edge *vis-à-vis* the sedentary lands, the nomads found themselves in a changing world. With the development of gunpowder weapons, along with increasing demographic pressure and expansion of agriculture and agricultural technology, nomadic mobility was reduced and their incomparable “firepower” was gradually superseded. As early as the mid-eighteenth century the nomads were finished as a credible independent military force, and the advent of the machine gun, the airplane and the railroads pretty much brought the nomads of the steppe and elsewhere under the full control of sedentary states. The process of the gradual loss of independence of the nomads to the sedentary states is seen in the articles by Endicott, Gammer, and Khazanov and Shapiro.

Moreover, with the breaking of their military power and with the introduction of modern boundaries, the political force of the nomads was also broken.²² This leads to a huge change in the character of the tribe, which had been formerly built around the political power of its leader (often denoted in terms of invented genealogy), while in the modern period real kinship became the basic notion unifying the tribe.²³ The adaptation of contemporary nomads to modernization and its implications are certainly a topic worth of further inquiry.

Indeed, many themes touched upon in this collection deserve elaboration. We may note that the broad comparative approach employed in this volume, which makes use of different disciplines such as history, archaeology, philology, anthropology, ethnography and economics, seems to be an appropriate methodology to further pursue these themes. One major notion which invites further comparative inquiry is the idea of steppe identity: is there a steppe identity that can transcend local loyalties of kinship and ethnicity? Is this identity a direct reflection of the pastoral nomadic lifeway or is it an independent

²² P. Perdue, “Boundaries, Maps and Movement: Chinese, Russian and Mongolian Empires in Early Modern Central Eurasia,” *International History Review*, 20 (1998), pp. 263–86.

²³ R.P. Lindner, “What was a Nomadic Tribe,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24 (1982), pp. 689–711.

factor in their development? What are the effective range and the symbolic language of the steppe identity and to what extent do these change over time and across place? Those questions are closely related to the study of nomadic ideology, which is also a fruitful line for further research. Following key concepts and terms of the steppe indigenous political culture (e.g., Tengri, Khaqan/Qaghan/Qa'an, Khan, *törü*, *yasa*) as they evolve through time and space can be a good starting point for such a line.

Moving into the realm of nomad-sedentary relations, we would like to stress several fields worthy of further investigation. The first is a comparative study of sedentary efforts to co-opt nomads. This takes a variety of forms, such as ideological conversion (e.g., to Confucian norms or to Islamic belief); the recruitment of mercenaries and slave soldiers and, most particularly in China, the frequent attempts of indigenous rebels to acquire nomadic allies in their struggle with existing governments. Whether successful or not, these efforts often had important, and sometimes unpredicted, impact on the nomads which are worth exploring further.

The second field deals with adaptation of nomadic features in sedentary empires, often themselves of nomadic origin. The common Chinggisid background of such "gunpower empires" as the Safawids, Ottomans and Moguls as well as Tsarist Russia and Qing China, for example, has recently been pointed out by Perdue²⁴ and deserves further research. A comparative study, especially of the fields of military and law, stressing the common nomadic features and the way they were adapted in different nomadic and post-nomadic historical contexts (e.g., in Mamluk Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, Timurid Central Asia and India, Yuan, Ming and Qing China as well as in Muscovy and Russia) can also contribute to better understanding of nomad-sedentary interactions and of Eurasian and world history in general.

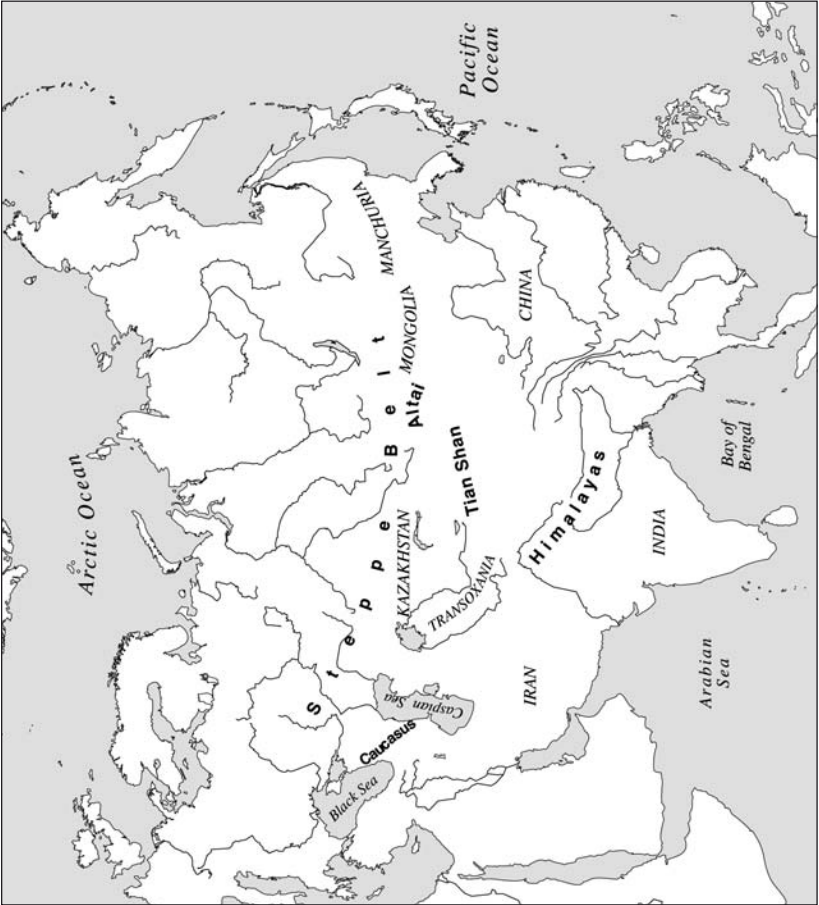
The last theme we would like to stress is a comparative study of the modern use of nomadic past. While the nomads lost their political and military strength, nostalgia to their golden age is still apparent in several regions of the steppe (notably in Central Asia and Mongolia), and nomadic heroes of the past are often appropriated and used for enhancing national or political agendas, notable examples

²⁴ P. Perdue, "Comparing Empires: Manchu Colonialism," *International History Review*, 20 (1998), pp. 255–62.

are, of course, the use of Tamerlane in Uzbekistan and of Chinggis Khan in both Mongolia and China.²⁵ Further inquiry into the roots, development and context of appropriating nomadic heroes or other elements of nomadic past and the changes these adaptations cause to historical figures and phenomena may help in understanding the forms in which the nomadic political tradition shaped sedentary concepts of rulership and remains relevant even in the contemporary world.

To conclude, the upshot of the papers in this volume is that the reality of nomadic-sedentary relations is apparently more varied than some of the models have led us to think. When we look at specific historical cases, we should be aware of the possibilities of variance, some more subtle than others. Generalizations help us think and organize vast bodies of evidence. They should not, however, blind us to concrete historical circumstances and reality. In this introduction, we have been able only to analyze certain salient features of the models suggested for steppe nomadism and its relationship with the sedentary world, and certainly not in the way they deserve. Yet we hope that even these brief summaries will indicate how the detailed studies found in this volume and the few directions depicted above might assist future scholarship in refining these insightful models and provide inspiration for both further conceptual thinking and research on more specialized topics.

²⁵ For a start see, e.g., B. Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and its Uses," *Journal of World History*, 13 (2002), pp. 1–25; Almaz Khan, "Chinggis Khan: From Imperial Ancestor to Ethnic Hero," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. S. Harrel (Seattle and London, 1995), pp. 248–77.



Map 1. Eurasia

PART I

EARLY CONTACTS

EARLY PASTORAL SOCIETIES OF NORTHEAST CHINA: LOCAL CHANGE AND INTERREGIONAL INTERACTION DURING C. 1100–600 BCE¹

Gideon Shelach

This paper focuses on the earliest pastoral societies of northeast China and on their interactions with sedentary and nomadic societies. The Chifeng area, from which most of my data is taken (Fig. 1), is clearly not in the heartland of the development and spread of pastoral-nomadism. Though for the most part of the last three millennia pastoralism has been the main economic base of the local population, it was never the only adaptive option. Agriculture, while not as productive as it can be in the basins of the large rivers of China, was always a viable economic option. Such conditions, I suspect, are typical of areas of contingency between pastoral and agricultural societies.

While this is clearly not a good area for research on the rise of pastoralism, it can be a good example for the early development of interactions not only among pastoral and agricultural populations but also among different types of pastoral societies. In my paper I examine these interregional interactions and look for the ways in which they affected, and were affected by, the development of pastoral economy and the rise of pastoral ideology and “steppe identity.”

Chronologically this paper focuses on the end of the second millennium and the first half of the first millennium BCE. It is during this period, named by Chinese archaeologists the Upper Xiajiadian culture, that we find the earliest indications of pastoral economy in northeast China. Through a comparison with the agricultural societies—known archaeologically as the Lower Xiajiadian culture—which inhabited this area during the late third and early second millennia BCE, I examine the meaning of the transition to pastoralism and the intensity and effects of interregional interactions.

Comparison of the Lower Xiajiadian and Upper Xiajiadian cultures raises fundamental questions about the society of the two periods

¹ This research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant no. 839/01–1).

and about socio-political and economic processes in the area. What can differences in the material remains of the two periods tell us about their societies? Why are they different and how did this change occur? Are the differences related to the ethnic makeup of the population and to human migration into the area? Why did pastoralism gain importance during the first millennium BCE?

I argue that rather than looking for determinative factors such as climatic changes or external influences we should try to explain the choices made by the local population. These choices are related to economic adaptations and to the conscious positions taken in the framework of interactions with other societies. The transition to pastoralism, which marks a major shift in economic adaptation, was coupled in this area with an ideological change as well as with a new definition of cultural affiliation.

The Geography and Climate of Northeast China

Northeast China is defined here as the area centered on the drainage system of the rivers flowing to the northern part of the Bohai bay. The main rivers in this area are the Xilamulun River in the north, the Liao, Daling, Xiaoling and Hun rivers in the east, and the Luan river in the south (Fig. 1). This area is situated between 39° and 44° north latitude, and between 114° and 122° east longitude. It is located within the boundaries of the modern Chinese provinces of Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Hebei and the municipalities of Beijing and Tainjin.²

Geographically the area is crossed by many mountain ranges. Broad flood plains are found mainly in the eastern part of the region, with smaller ones located along the main rivers. The highest mountain peaks, found at the western edges of the region, are 2000–2500 m. above sea level, but most of the region is in the range of 1000 m. or lower. The soil is mostly alluvial and loess. Basalt and other rocks are exposed at valley edges and at high elevations. Today intensive agriculture is practiced on valley floors and flood plains with more extensive agriculture, fruit orchards and pastoralism carried out at higher elevations. However, this may not be an accurate reflection of conditions during prehistoric periods. It has been suggested that

² The area so defined does not include the northernmost regions of northeast China—the modern provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang. Because of the unique geographical conditions and cultural sequence of this region it merits a separate discussion.

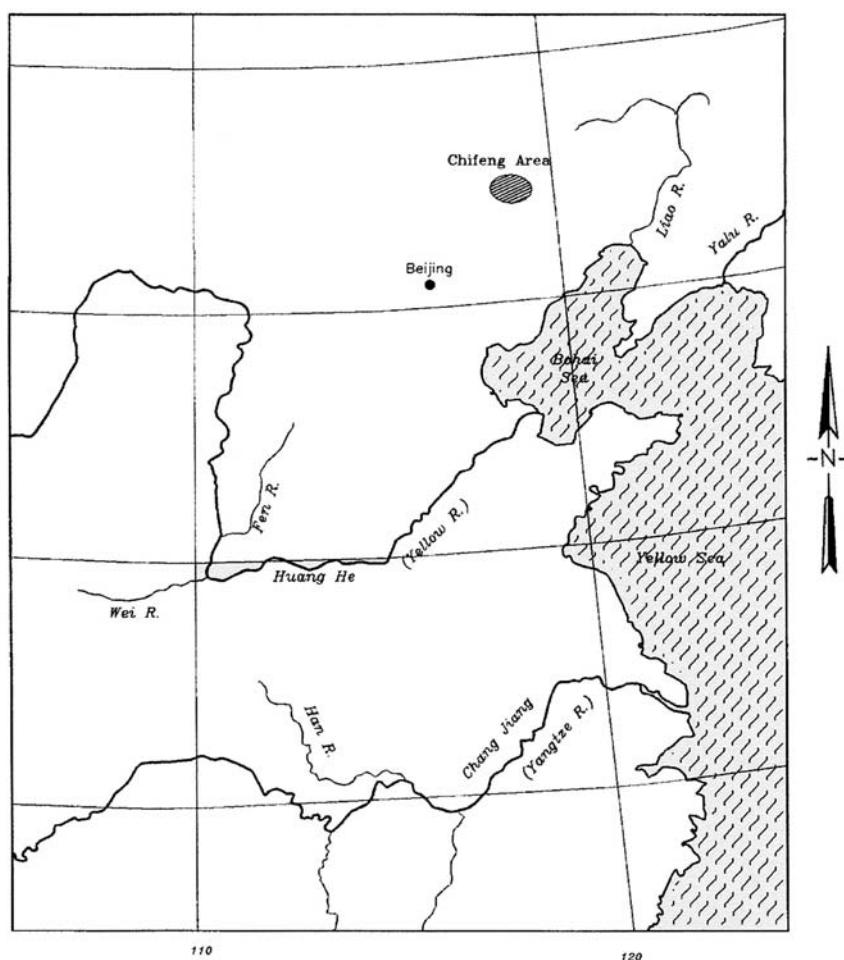


Fig. 1 (and Map 2). Northeast China and the location of the Chifeng Area.

at least until the second half of the first millennium BCE the valley floors were covered with swamps. If this was the case, the more humid environment and less developed agriculture technology would have rendered those lower elevations not suitable for agriculture. Agricultural fields, according to this model, were located in the flatter part of the highland areas (Shelach 1999).

The current local climate is cold and dry in the winter, dry and very windy in the spring. Summer is relatively short and hot, with temperatures dropping rapidly during the autumn. The average temperatures in the core of this area are between minus 11° to minus 15°C during

January and 20°–23°C in July (Kong *et al.* 1991). Most of the precipitation occurs during the summer season, with 70% of the average 250–450 mm. falling between June and August (Wang 1990; Kong *et al.* 1991). Generally speaking, areas north of the Xilamulun River are colder and drier compared to areas in the southern and eastern parts of the region. Fluctuations of up to 25% in yearly precipitation are common for all of the area (Tian and Shi 1995).

Research of palaeoclimate and palaeoenvironment—a relative novelty in China—points to meaningful changes. During the peak of the latest glacial age, between 21,000 and 11,500 BP, northeast China had a cold steppe environment. Bones of woolly mammoth and woolly rhinoceros have been discovered in more than 200 locations and permafrost soils, found today north of the 51 degrees north latitude line, extended in some parts as far south as 40 degrees north latitude (Winkler and Wang 1993). The climate improved between 8,500 and 6,000 BCE but was still dryer and colder than it is today. Local climate was in its optimal phase between 6000 to 1500 BCE. During this time it was 0.5–1.5°C warmer than at present and annual precipitation was higher by 50–100 mm (Kong *et al.* 1991:118). Wet climate is also suggested by stable carbon isotope ratios in plant remains from the Jinchuan peat in northeast China (Hong *et al.* 2001).

More relevant to this research are climatic conditions during the Lower and Upper Xiajiadian periods. While research is still in progress, recent palynological studies suggest that although average temperatures in north-east China remained high after 3000 BCE, there was a drop in mean annual precipitation (Hong *et al.* 2001; Winkler and Wang 1993). However, pollen collected from graves of the Lower Xiajiadian period at the Dadianzi site of Aohan area suggest that conditions did not significantly deteriorate. In some of the graves tree pollen accounted for up to 99% of the total pollen, while in others bush and grass pollen accounted for 95% of the pollen found. Among the trees, pine and other polipodia dominated the pollen collection (Kong and Du 1981; Kong *et al.* 1991). Different seasons may explain the differences between the pollen spectra from different graves. The authors reconstruct a wooded environment with patches of grassland and agricultural fields. On the basis of the types of plants identified and their relative quantities, an environment wetter than present is suggested (Kong and Du 1981; Kong *et al.* 1991).³

³ Kong and Du (1981:200) claim that the annual precipitation was higher than

A similar environment was reconstructed for areas south of Chifeng in eastern Hebei province, on the basis of pollen found in peat fields (Li and Liang 1985).

Botanic and zoological remains found at Neolithic and bronze-age sites of the Yellow River area also corroborate this conclusion. Domesticated rice was identified at the Jiahu site of the Huai River valley and dated to c. 6000–5000 BCE and from fifth-millennium BCE sites in the Yellow and Wei River (Higham and Lu 1998). Sites of the Dawenkou culture of Shandong (c. 4300–2600 BCE) yielded bones of Yangzi alligator (*Alligator sinensis*) and artifacts made from elephant ivory (Underhill 1997). This suggests that during the early and middle Neolithic periods the climate of the Yellow River basin was much more similar to that of the Yangzi River basin. Animal bones found in the late Shang (c. 1300–1050 BCE) site of Yinxu (Anyang) and animals names mentioned in oracle-bone records from the same site suggest that even during the second part of the second millennium BCE the climate of north China was warmer and moister (Chang 1986).

Crucial to the subject of this paper are questions concerning changes in the environmental conditions after c. 1500 BCE and their correlation with cultural changes from the Lower to the Upper Xiajiadian. Many scholars believe that the environmental conditions deteriorated with the drop in mean temperatures and annual precipitation. These scholars believe that this environmental deterioration was the prime mover behind economic and social change in the area (Qiao 1992; Tian 1993 and 1995; Yang and Suo 2000). Reasons underlying social change aside, most scholars agree that the area received less precipitation and that the environment was depleted after c. 1500 BCE (Kong *et al.* 1991; Li and Liang 1985; Shi 1991; Winkler and Wang 1993; Yang and Suo 2000).⁴ Increased aridity is suggested by layers of sands deposited in the Dashuinoer Lake of the Chifeng region (Yang and Suo 2000) as well as by the analysis of stable carbon isotope ratios in plant remains from the Jinchuan peat (Hong *et al.* 2001). Pollen found in Upper Xiajiadian graves at the Zhoujiadi site

500 mm. It should be noted, however, that pollen found in graves is not considered to be a very reliable source for the reconstruction of palaeoclimate.

⁴ This conclusion is not warranted by all research done in the area. For example, research done in deserts located in the northern part the Chifeng area and adjacent areas points to periods of low precipitation around 2000 BCE and around the beginning of the common era, with precipitation peaking around 1000 BCE (Qiu *et al.* 1992).

in the Aohan area points to the expansion of grassy areas replacing the woods which dominated the area during the Lower Xiajiadian period. This change was explained as resulting from a decrease in precipitation (Kong *et al.* 1991). It is not clear, however, how severe this change was. For example, Kong and his colleagues pointed out that large fresh-water clams found in Upper Xiajiadian graves suggest that the water level in the nearby Laoha River was higher than at the present time (Kong *et al.* 1991).⁵

It seems that although climatic change occurred, the environment of northeast China during the first half of the first millennium BCE was comparable to or even less arid than current conditions. On the other hand, we should perhaps be looking not at the overall climate of relatively long periods but at shorter climatic fluctuations. For example, the short drought periods which, according to Hong and his colleagues (2001), occurred during the second millennia BCE, could have caused economic stress and, more importantly perhaps, were source of uncertainty. It is possible that some of the socio-economic change that occurred during this period resulted from attempts of the local societies to cope with a less predictable environment.

The Archaeology of the Lower Xiajiadian and Upper Xiajiadian Cultures

Agriculture developed in northeast China at about the same time as in the Yellow River basin (Shelach 2000). By the end of the seventh millennium BCE agricultural communities were flourishing in this area. From these earlier farming communities, known as the Xinglongwa culture, evolved a series of agricultural societies with distinguishable local attributes. Though external input cannot be ruled out, it seems that the socio-political and economic processes were mainly local. These processes culminated during the late third millennium and the first half of the second millennium BCE with the Lower Xiajiadian culture.

The Lower Xiajiadian culture represents a dramatic zenith of the local sequence. The most notable features of this period are the dramatic increase in the number of sites, their large size and the appearance, for the first time in this area, of labor intensive public structures

⁵ However, since these shells were found in only a few relatively rich graves, they may have been imported from a more remote source.

(Shelach 1999). The distribution area of the Lower Xiajiadian culture is centered on the Chifeng area. Remains of this culture are found south of the Xilamulun River in the north and north of the Yan mountains area in the south, between the Yiwulü mountains in the east and the Yi River in the west.

Substantial defense systems erected in many Lower Xiajiadian sites are the most noticeable feature of this period. These systems include labor intensive stone walls, some of them as much as 10 m. wide. In large sites the defense system is usually made up of two such walls separated by a ditch and sometimes reinforced with semi-circular “watch towers” (Fig. 2) (Shelach 1999; Xu 1986). In lower Xiajiadian sites which have such defense systems, houses are usually located within the walls, but their organization within these sites or in the open sites is not yet clear. Lower Xiajiadian houses are in most cases

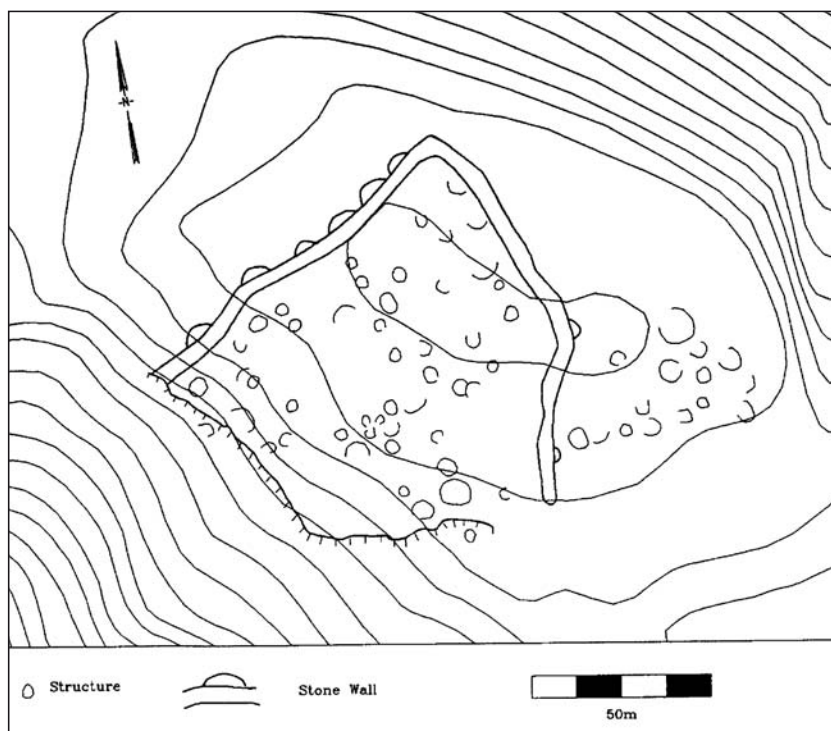


Fig. 2. Stone wall and structures at the Lower Xiajiadian site of Xindian, Chifeng area, Inner Mongolia (after Xu 1986:83).

semi-subterranean. Stone is the most common construction material, although mud-brick walls are also reported (Guo 1995b; Liaoning 1976; Liaoning 1977; Tian 1992; Xu 1986; Zhongguo 1974; Zhongguo 1979).

Regional surveys, which my colleagues and I have conducted in the Chifeng region over the last few years, indicate a strong population growth during the Lower Xiajiadian (Shelach 1999; Linduff *et al.* 2004). The largest single Lower Xiajiadian site so far discovered by our surveys covers 23 ha., and several groupings of large sites, probably representing sociologically meaningful communities better than individual sites, have also been identified. These site groupings tend to be very densely occupied areas on the low bluffs overlooking the prime agricultural lands of the valley floors. They are at least loosely associated with fortified hilltop sites well back in the upland zone.

Elsewhere, based on the analysis of settlement patterns, Lower Xiajiadian site sizes and the amount of labor investment at these sites, I have suggested that the organization of Lower Xiajiadian polities fits a three-tiered central-place model (Fig. 3) (Shelach 1997; Shelach 1999). Excavations of more than 700 graves at the Dadianzi site revealed important information which reinforces our understanding of social and economic stratification during the Lower Xiajiadian period. The layout of these graves in an area north of and outside the site's defense system displays a regular arrangement. All of the burials excavated at the Dadianzi cemetery are earth pit-graves, most of which contain a single adult skeleton in the extended supine position. Clear differences in grave size, construction methods and the number and quality of grave goods can be correlated with socio-political and economic factors. Painted ceramic vessels, probably made especially for use as grave goods, are among the most prominent furnishings of these and other Lower Xiajiadian graves (Zhongguo 1996).

The transition from the Lower to the Upper Xiajiadian period represents the most dramatic change in the archaeological sequence of northeast China. A superficial look may suggest that after more than 4,000 years of gradual growth the socio-political system suddenly collapsed. The three-tiered central place settlement hierarchy of the Lower Xiajiadian period all but disappears, and Upper Xiajiadian sites display no evidence of massive defensive works. The limited number of excavations at Upper Xiajiadian habitation sites found no traces for the construction of defense systems and even the investment in domestic structures is minimal. At sites such as the Xiajiadian type site and Nanshangen the only structures found were

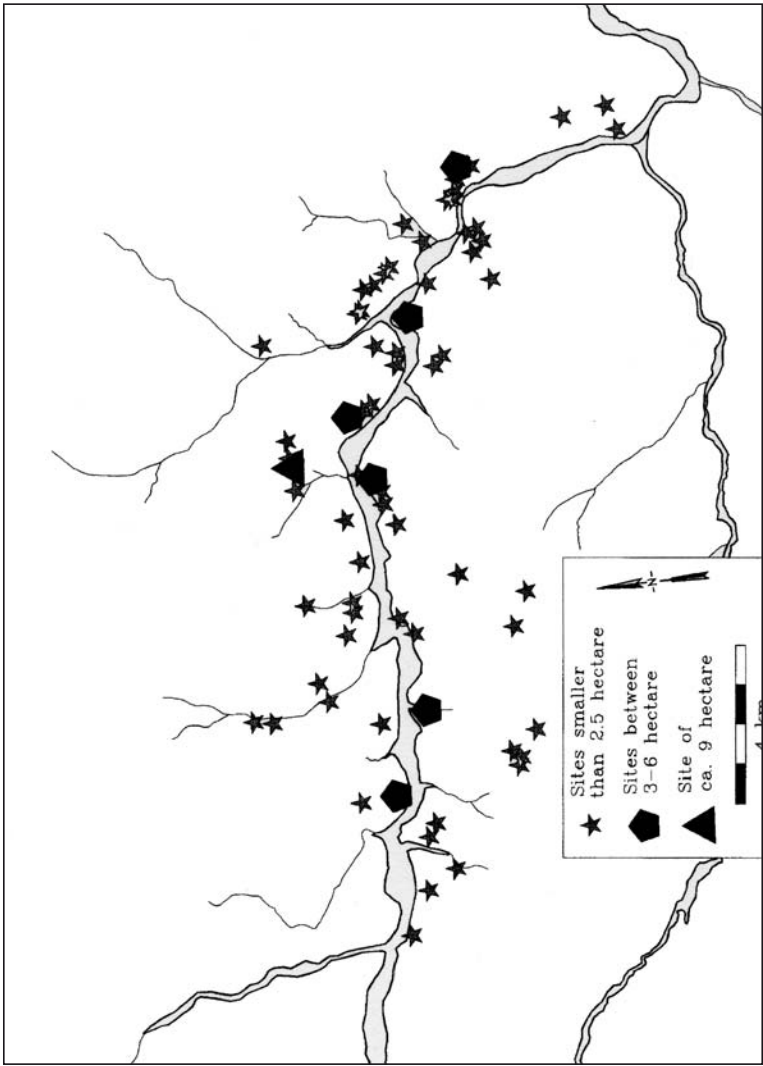


Fig. 3. Distribution of Lower Xiajiadian sites (positions relative to the Yinhe river).

domestic houses and storage pits. Upper Xiajiadian houses are built of mud-bricks and perishable materials and are semi-subterranean or built on ground level. These houses are between 2.5–4 m. in diameter. Most excavated houses had stamped earth floors with clear indications of post-holes and a fireplace marked by ash (Zhongguo 1974; Zhongguo 1975a). Compared to the Lower Xiajiadian period, Upper Xiajiadian ceramic is of low quality. The firing temperature of these vessels was probably low, producing soft and crumbly ceramics with a non-homogeneous color (Shelach 1999).

While this data can lend support to the commonly held view of the Upper Xiajiadian as a period of declining social complexity, other types of data can lead to an altogether different conclusion. In sharp contrast to the declining quality of ceramic vessels, a bronze industry flourished during this period on an unprecedented scale. In contrast to the insignificant number of small bronze ornaments excavated from Lower Xiajiadian sites, thousands of Upper Xiajiadian bronze artifacts have been found and published. Most of these artifacts have been excavated from Upper Xiajiadian graves, although some are found in domestic contexts.⁶ Many of these bronze artifacts are decorated with animal motifs or are shaped as animals. Their style is distinctly different from bronzes typical of contemporaneous Chinese states (Linduff 1997a; Linduff 1997b). The most common artifact types are tools, weapons, horse fittings and ornaments (Hebei 1977; Jianping 1983; Ningcheng 1985; Liaoning 1973; Xiang and Li 1995; Zhai 1994; Zhangjiakou 1987; Zhongguo 1974; Zhongguo 1975a; Zhongguo 1981; Zhongguo 1984; Zhu 1987). Typical tools include knives, axes and chisels, while the most common weapons include daggers, socketed axes and arrowheads (Fig. 4). Helmets, while not as common, are also typical of this area. Common ornaments include buttons, hooks and flat animal shaped disks (Fig. 5). Also found are locally produced bronze vessels (Fig. 6) (Xiang and Li 1995; Zhai 1994; Zhu 1987).

Upper Xiajiadian bronzes have not been subjected to chemical tests which could confirm their local origins. However, the large number of artifacts found at Upper Xiajiadian sites and in graves and the unique and coherent style of these objects suggest local production rather than import. This conclusion is supported by stone and ceramic molds of typical artifacts which have been found at Upper Xiajiadian

⁶ For Upper Xiajiadian bronzes found in domestic contexts, see for example Liaoning 1983b.



Fig. 4. Bronze knives, daggers and axes from Upper Xiajiadian period (Zhangjiakou 1987:46).

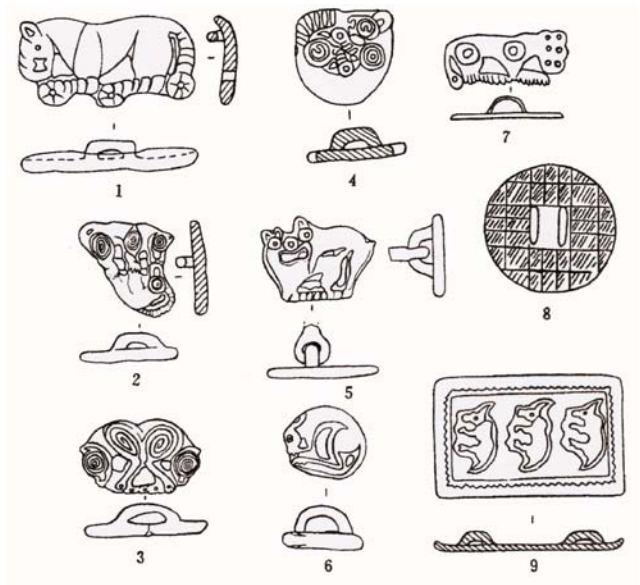


Fig. 5. Bronze plate with animal motifs and other decorative bronze artifacts from the Upper Xiajiadian period (Xiang and Li 1995:18).

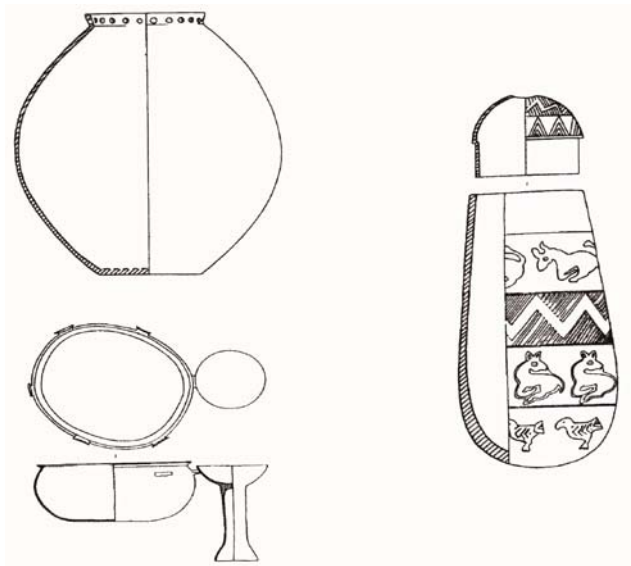


Fig. 6. Upper Xiajiadian bronze vessels from the large grave excavated at Xiaoheishigou site, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia (Xiang and Li 1995:8, 19).

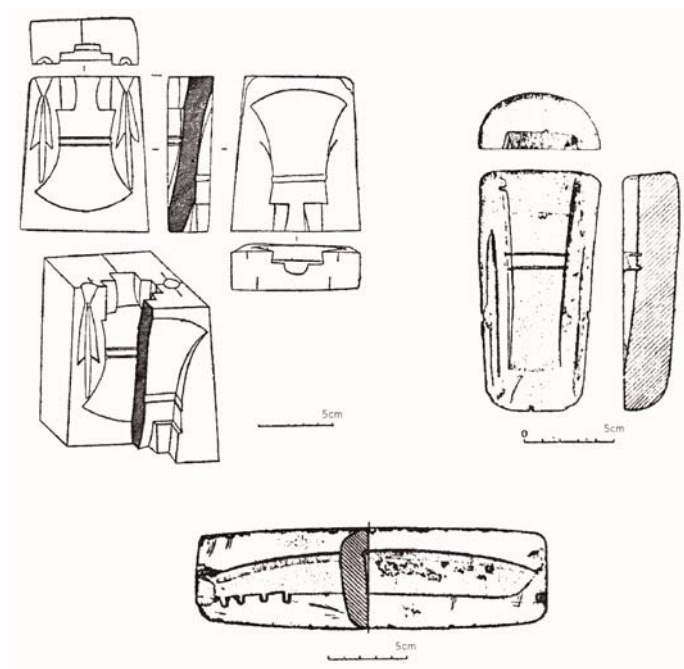


Fig. 7. Casting molds of the Upper Xiajiadian period (An 1954:83; Liaoyang 1977:303).

sites (Fig. 7) (Liaoyang 1977; Zhu 1987).⁷ The scale of the bronze industry is indicated by a few production sites dated to the Upper Xiajiadian period. For example, a large scale copper ore mine dated to the Upper Xiajiadian period was found at the Dajing site in Linxi county, some 8 km. north of the Xilamulun river. The site occupies an area of 2.5 sq. km. and includes 47 mining trenches. The largest of these trenches is 102 m. long and 8 m. deep. The excavation of one such trench yielded typical Upper Xiajiadian potsherds, bone and bronze artifacts, as well as more than 1,500 Upper Xiajiadian stone tools (Liaoning 1983a; Wang 1994). The site also yielded evidence of smelting and casting. Seven pieces of molds found at this site suggest that

⁷ Many additional molds, which have never been published, are displayed in Chinese museums. For example, a group of unpublished Upper Xiajiadian casting molds from the site of Xiaoheishigou were located in 1997 by the author during a trip to the museum of the Institute of Archaeology, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Huhhehoute.

tool production accompanied the large scale mining carried out at the Dajing site (Wang 1994; Zhu 1987).⁸ All this suggests that large scale production and distribution of bronze artifacts took place in northeast China. The Upper Xiajiadian bronze industry points to a developed system of craft specialization and division of labor.

Mortuary practices of the Upper Xiajiadian is another indication that social stratification did not decline, and may have even increased during this period. Upper Xiajiadian graves are usually earthen pits lined with stone slabs. Many of these graves are marked above ground and can be located by a surface survey. In comparison to the richest Lower Xiajiadian graves which contained no more than twenty ceramic vessels, a few bone and stone artifacts, bones of sacrificed animals (usually pigs and dogs), and an occasional small bronze artifact (Aohan 1976; Guo 1995b; Liu and Xu 1989; Zhongguo 1996), the richest Upper Xiajiadian grave, such as the one excavated at Xiaoheishigou, contained over a thousand artifacts including more than ninety large bronze artifacts along with imported Chinese bronze vessels (Liaoning 1973; Xiang and Li 1995). Even much smaller Upper Xiajiadian graves usually contain at least a few bronze artifacts and other grave goods.

A systematic comparison of Lower and Upper Xiajiadian burial data suggest that during the latter period sumptuary rules were much more rigid and hierarchical. Archaeologically such sumptuary rules are seen in the correlation of different aspects of labor investment, be it in the construction of the grave or the production of grave goods. Factor analysis, the method used to address these issues, is designed to find correlations among variables in a multi-variable sample. During both periods these aspects are correlated with each other, as can be seen in first column of Tables 1 and 2. However, during the Lower Xiajiadian this correlation is stronger and includes more variables. Moreover, while for the Lower Xiajiadian the first column of the factor analysis table explains only 30% of the variability of the sample, for the Upper Xiajiadian 52% is explained by this column.

Below I explore the differences between the Lower and Upper Xiajiadian cultures and try to explain them on three levels: 1. Economic changes; 2. Social and ideological changes; 3. Changes in patterns of interregional interaction and their effect on the local society.

⁸ Another area of large scale bronze production was found at the Niuheiliang site. The dating of this site to the Lower Xiajiadian period (Li *et al.* 1999) is, I believe, incorrect and it should have been attributed to the Upper Xiajiadian period.

The Beginning of Pastoralism in Northeast China

The ubiquitous animal motifs in the decoration of Upper Xiajiadian bronzes have prompted the suggestion that the bearers of this culture were pastoral nomads (Liu and Xu 1981).⁹ Results of our regional surveys in this area show a more complex picture. Large Upper Xiajiadian sites, some of them located on or near Lower Xiajiadian sites and in close proximity to water sources and arable land, suggest that agriculture was still an important economic resource (Linduff *et al.* forthcoming). In contrast to the argument made by some archaeologists (Liu and Xu 1981), the types of stone artifacts found at Upper Xiajiadian sites support the above reconstruction. Many large land-clearing and cultivating tools such as hoes and axes were found by our surveys and during previous excavations of Upper Xiajiadian sites. The same is true of reaping tools and grinding implements (Liaoning 1983b; Shelach 1999; Zhongguo 1974; Zhongguo 1975b; Zhongguo 1979). Storage pits excavated at many Upper Xiajiadian sites are the clearest indications of the high productivity achieved by Upper Xiajiadian agriculture. The fact that many more storage pits than houses were excavated at Upper Xiajiadian sites (Liaoning 1992; Zhongguo 1974; Zhongguo 1975b) suggests that a decreasing investment in permanent structures does not necessarily reflect a decrease in the importance of agriculture. However, the data available does suggest the increasing dependency on animal husbandry and a decrease in the overall importance of agriculture in the Upper Xiajiadian economy.

Animal bones excavated at Upper Xiajiadian sites are direct evidence for the greater importance of animal husbandry. Although bones of domestic animals have been excavated from Lower Xiajiadian sites, Upper Xiajiadian sites yielded a much larger number of such bones. Among the animals represented in the bone assemblages excavated from Upper Xiajiadian sites, sheep and goat bones seem to be the most numerous. Pig bones, which dominated the Lower Xiajiadian assemblages, are found in much smaller numbers at Upper Xiajiadian sites. Horse bones, not found at Lower Xiajiadian sites, were discovered at several Upper Xiajiadian sites. Bronze horse fittings found

⁹ In his recent book, Nicola Di Cosmo (2002), while agreeing that such motifs support the transition to pastoralism, suggests that because many wild beasts are also depicted on the bronzes, hunting was an important economic resource and highly valued cultural activity.

at many Upper Xiajiadian sites are further evidence for the increasing role horses played in the Upper Xiajiadian economic and social structure (Liu and Xu 1981; Ningcheng 1985; Zhai 1984; Zhai 1994; Zhangjiakou 1987). All of the above point to a mixed economy which was much more heavily dependent on grazing animals. It is this, rather than the formal attributes of the material culture, that suggests a much greater dependency on pastoral resources and the greater mobility of humans and animals which followed these resources.

Site location is a good indication of this economic shift. Table 3 compares the location of sites found during a survey I conducted in the Yinhe River basin of the Chifeng area. It shows that, on the average, Upper Xiajiadian sites are located at higher elevations in comparison to sites of both the Hongshan and the Lower Xiajiadian periods. Since the survey area slopes upward from east to west, site elevation above sea level is determined in part by its east-west location within the cluster. Therefore, distances from the river are an even better indication of the changes which occurred during the Upper Xiajiadian period. As can be seen, Upper Xiajiadian sites are on average much more distant from the main river than are Hongshan or Lower Xiajiadian sites. Upper Xiajiadian sites are also more remote from the closest water source than sites of the other two periods. The location of Upper Xiajiadian sites at higher elevations, far from the main river or its larger tributaries, indicates an intrusion into new ecological zones. This zone is more likely to have included little or no potential arable land. Its distance from a permanent water source is further indication that sites located in this zone could not have been permanent villages engaging in agriculture. I suggest that exploitation of this new zone was made possible by the development of a pastoral economy.

Clearly, increased emphasis on pastoralism can have a direct effect on the society and its material culture. For example, even though Upper Xiajiadian societies did not practice full-fledged pastoral-nomadism, the decrease in investment in permanent structures during this period can be related to the increased mobility of humans and their animals. A more complicated question is the source of this change. Why were people forced to substitute the age-old reliance on agriculture and a sedentary way of life for a more mobile pastoral way?

Population replacement and climatic change are two prime-movers commonly invoked to explain this change. The first model was relatively common during earlier years of archaeological research in

the area and it is still held by some scholars (Zhu 1987; Tian 1993). Unfortunately, anatomical, or better biological, comparison of human skeletons from both periods has not been done yet. In the absence of such research we must rely on the analysis of artifacts and cultural traits and search for a cultural break in the archaeological record. Such a fracture could indicate a wholesale replacement of the population. Based on the continuity from the Lower Xiajiadian to the Upper Xiajiadian culture in material attributes, such as ceramic vessel shapes, and the more or less identical regional distribution of the two cultures, most scholars now emphasize the cultural continuity between the two periods. This does not preclude external influences or even small-scale migrations (see, e.g., Di Cosmo 2002:67) but it does suggest that most of the population was indigenous to this area.

As pointed out above, in spite of minor disagreements, most scholars agree that the area received less precipitation and that the environment was depleted after c. 1500 BCE (Kong *et al.* 1991; Li and Liang 1985; Shi 1991; Yang and Suo 2000). This prompted a number of scholars to suggest that pastoralism developed in this area as an adaptive response to the environmental change (Liu 1987; Qiao 1992). I would like to suggest, however, that while climatic change can have some effect on people's economic decisions, in the Chifeng area at least it cannot be seen as the determining factor. The present archaeological record suggests that agriculture was practiced in the Chifeng area not only during the Upper Xiajiadian period but throughout the history of this region up until the present. Moreover, in some periods during this time span, such as the Liao period (tenth to twelfth century CE), intensive agricultural production was carried out in this area. This is known from historical texts and is corroborated by the number and density of Liao sites located by a systematic survey I conducted in the Chifeng area and by our ongoing survey in the same region (Shelach 1999; Linduff *et al.* 2004). Although climate fluctuations after 1500 BCE are suggested by some scholars (Shi 1991; Yang and Suo 2000), the prosperity of agricultural production at times when the area was under the control of strong polities suggests that climatic conditions are not the only factor determining the economic activity and lifestyle of people in the area.

I am arguing that in the Chifeng area—and presumably in other, similar areas—the degree of investment in agriculture or pastoralism is primarily determined by economic and political factors. In periods when the area is under strong unified control the regime will always

tend to force people to take on more intensive agriculture. The more sedentary the people are the easier it is to control and tax them.¹⁰ Increased pastoralism, on the other hand, seems to be a response both to economic opportunities and to political threats. Ethnographic and historic examples have shown pastoralism to be an active economic and political strategy. Because, as many scholars have argued, people cannot support themselves solely on pastoral products, (Cribb 1991:13–14; Khazanov 1983; Lees and Bates 1974:187), specialized pastoralism is almost always synonymous with interactions with grain-producing societies. The nature and intensity of such interactions can take many different forms.

As pointed out by Salzman (1980), most pastoral societies, even highly nomadic groups, engage in some agricultural production. This existing alternative allows pastoralists to make a relatively fast transition to full time agriculture as well as from agriculture back to pastoralism, according to current circumstances and available options. A similar conclusion was also reached by Di Cosmo (1994) in his study of cultures from north China. Pastoralism can be a strategy for better economic exploitation of marginal zones based on the opportunity to trade with a developed agricultural society (Gilbert 1983). During the Upper Xiajiadian period, improved livestock which may have been introduced to the Chifeng area from more western regions, and better opportunities to trade with the developed agricultural societies to its south, can partly explain the genesis of pastoralism in this region. On the other hand, it may also have been a political strategy for resisting the military pressure of powerful sedentary neighbors. Mobility, especially of the kind associated with pastoral nomadic groups, can be regarded as a form of political resistance. During later periods this was the strategy adopted by China's neighbors, such as the Xiongnu. Mobility was their main advantage in attacking the larger Chinese forces. In other cases the mobility of the entire population was their only way to avoid being controlled by the Chinese (Barfield 1981; Barfield 1989; Jagchid and Symons 1989). Though the mobility of the Upper Xiajiadian society is not comparable to that of the Xiongnu, for them as well it may have helped resist—politically or culturally—pressure from the south.

¹⁰ This indeed seems to be the policy taken by the current regime of China, even in areas less suitable to agriculture than Chifeng.

Local Identity and Interregional Interaction

Bronze casting was probably the most specialized and developed industry of the Upper Xiajiadian period and bronze artifacts are the most distinct remains of this culture. The most powerful and immediate impression these objects convey to the present-day observer is the close affiliation they have with similar artifacts excavated in other parts of the steppe. The most obvious comparison is to artifacts from northwestern China such as the Ordos region of southwestern Inner Mongolia. The large region of north China, from Liaoning and Eastern Inner Mongolia in the east to Western Inner Mongolia, Qinghai and Gansu in the west, is divided by experts into several local bronze casting traditions, each with its unique stylistic attributes (Linduff 1997a). However, I argue that the overall impression is of unity in the techniques used, the types of artifacts produced, the subject matter of the art and even the style. For example, the types, shapes and decoration of knives, daggers and axes found in the Ordos region are almost identical to those of northeast China (compare Figs. 4 and 8). Clear links can be found to other cultures which flourished during this period all over the steppe. Weapons very similar to those excavated in north China are found as far north as the Tagar culture of the Minusinsk basin of southern Siberia (Fig. 9, D) and as far west as the Scythian culture of southeastern Europe (Fig. 9, A). These similarities are not confined to weaponry. Interactions between east and west are suggested by other types of artifacts, styles, techniques and the usage of raw materials (Bunker 1998; Wagner 1999). As shown in Fig. 10, the motif of the stag with large antlers, to give just one example, decorates artifacts of cultures from northeast China to southeast Europe and from Siberia to the Black Sea. It is beyond doubt, that similarities in the composition and style of this motif are not accidental.

Clearly, the greater the distance between regions the smaller are the similarities among bronze artifacts. Not ignoring these differences, I argue that all these bronze industries have much more in common with each other than they have with their more immediate neighbors to the south. What can we learn from these similarities about the intensity and nature of interregional interaction? Certainly interaction took place and was maintained throughout this period. Who influenced whom, and in what direction influences flowed is a popular subject

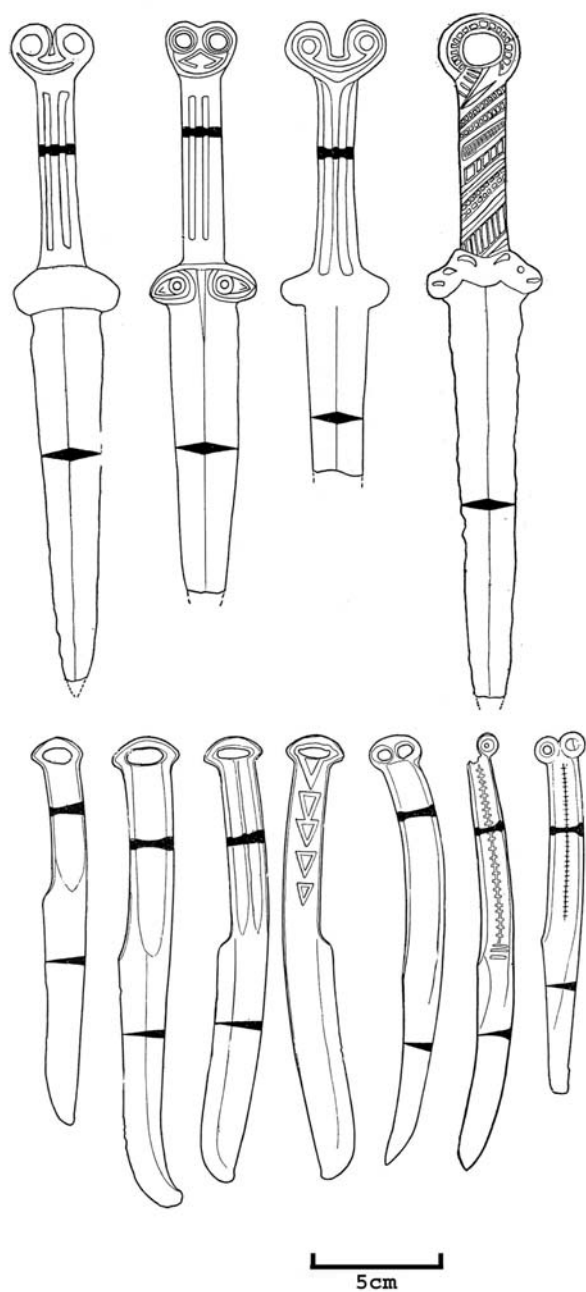


Fig. 8. Bronze knives, daggers and axes from the Ordos region (after Tian and Guo 1986:8, 24, 41).

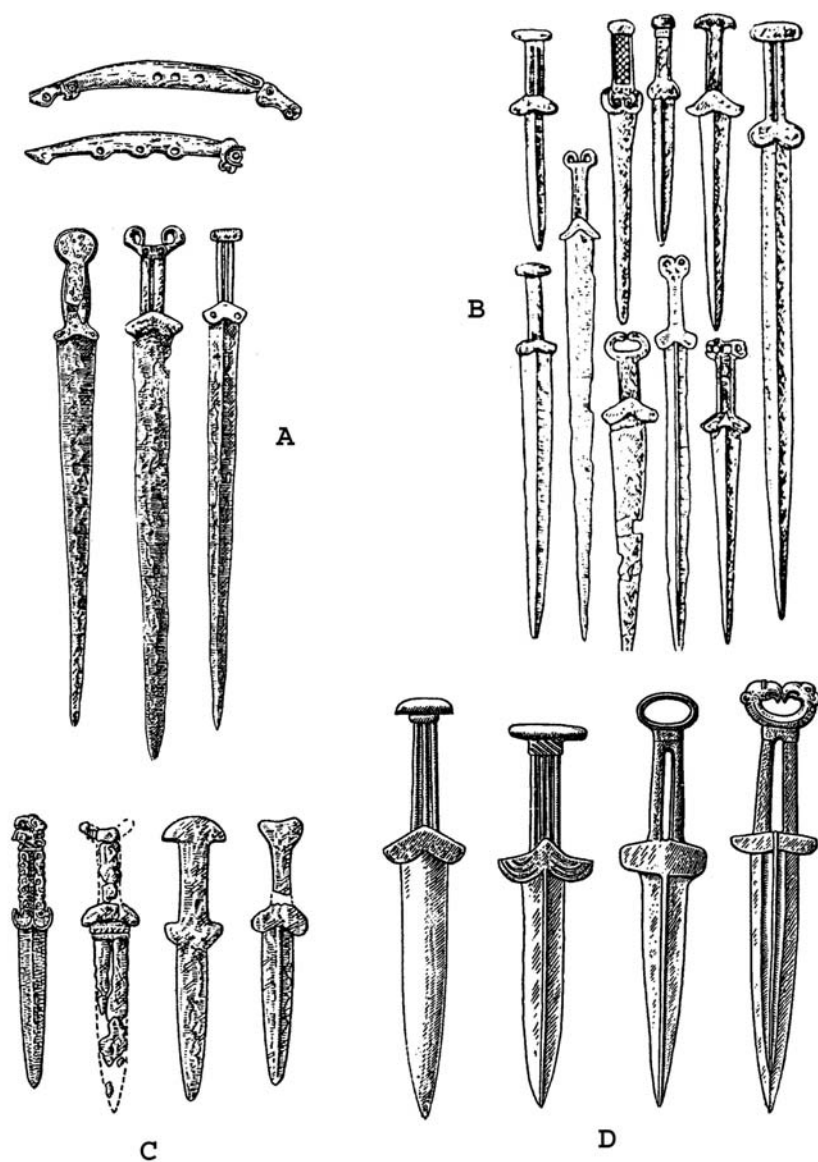


Fig. 9. Weapons from areas north and west of China. Group A: Scythian swords and knives of the 7th–5th centuries BCE (after Melyukova 1995:37, 40). Group B: Saurmatian weapons of the 7th–5th centuries BCE (after Dvornichenko 1995:108). Group C: Saka daggers from the Pamir mountains c. 8th–6th centuries BCE (after Yablonsky 1995:236) Group D: Daggers of the Tagar culture of the Minusinsk basin, c. 8th–5th centuries BCE (after Bokovenko 1995:304).

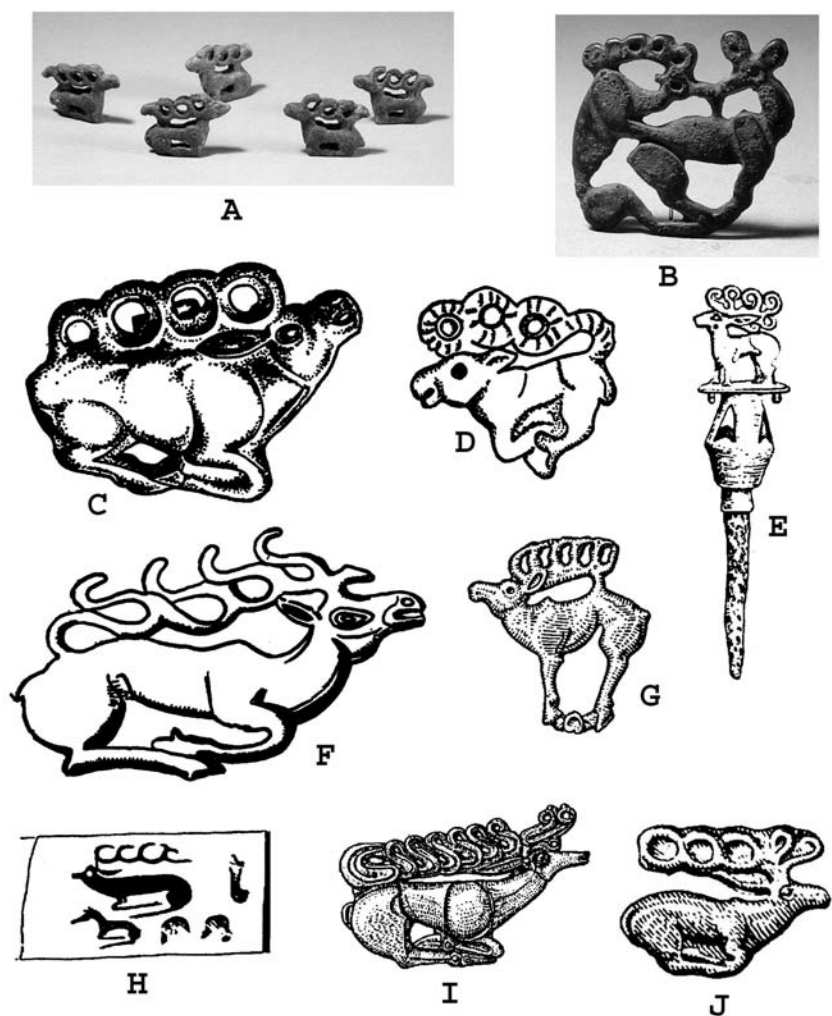


Fig. 10. Comparison of the Stag with Large Antlers motif from different regions of the steppe, c. 8th–6th centuries BCE. A: Bronze belt ornaments from Ganzibao, Hebei province (after Ma 1995:48). B: Bronze plaque from Xiaoheishigou, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia (after Ma 1995:51). C: Bronze plaque from the Huhehoute area, western Inner Mongolia (after Tian and Guo 1986:173). D: Bronze plaque from the Ordos (after Tian and Guo 1986:173). E: Scythian bronze pole finial from southeastern Europe (after Melyukova 1995:43). F: Bronze plaque from the Minusinsk basin, southern Siberia (after Tian and Guo 1986:173). G: Bronze plaque of the early Saka culture of the Aral Sea region (after Yablonsky 1995:222). H: Petroglyph from the Tuva region, southern Siberia (after Bokovenko 1995:272). I: Scythian gold plaque from the Kostromskaya Kurgan, northern Caucasus (after Petrenko 1995:18). J: Scythian bronze plaque from southeastern Europe (after Melyukova 1995:47).

not unrelated to current politics.¹¹ To my mind, this is less interesting than addressing the mode of interaction and the function it serves at the level of the local societies.

Exchange of artifacts must have existed as a channel through which ideas and designs could diffuse into such a large region. Such connections could include the exchange of gifts and a small number of artifacts in a down-the-line mode. It could have been part of a larger trade in materials such as food, hide and furs, not well preserved in the archaeological record. Although less plausible, it could have even been carried out by people traveling throughout the region. What seems to me important is that while artifacts clearly imported from one area to another are few, most seem to have been manufactured locally. The large scale of Upper Xiajiadian bronze industry supports this conclusion.

It seems that rather than discussing the intensity of the interactions, an issue that we cannot fully understand on the basis of presently available data, we should discuss the rise of a commonly shared "steppe identity." Although the term "animal style" (cf. Bunker *et al.* 1970) is now out of fashion, close similarities in the types of artifacts used by people all over the Eurasian steppe and in their style must have carried socio-political meaning. To understand this meaning we must observe the function of these bronze objects. One obvious function, derived from the archaeological context where most have been found, is as grave offerings. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Shelach 1999) the number and quality of these objects is dictated by the socio-political status of the deceased. Judging by the shape of most artifacts and by the way in which they are placed in graves, during their life time people wore these artifacts on their clothing or hung them from their belts. Many artifacts have holes or hooks by which they were attached to clothing. Others are belt buckles or belt decorations. Most knives and daggers have bronze pommels or cast loops from which they must have been attached to their owner's belt. This is clearly seen in many Upper Xiajiadian and Ordos graves (Fig. 11).

During lifetime activities and in mortuary ceremonies northern style bronzes were on display. It is as though during the first millennium

¹¹ Not surprisingly, Chinese archaeologists try to show that the earliest artifacts of the "northern style" have been found in China and argue that the whole phenomenon is, partly at least, derived from the east (e.g., Lin 1986; Wu 1986), while Soviet archaeologists have customarily argued for the Russian origins of the same phenomenon (e.g., Gryaznov 1969; Chernykh 1992).

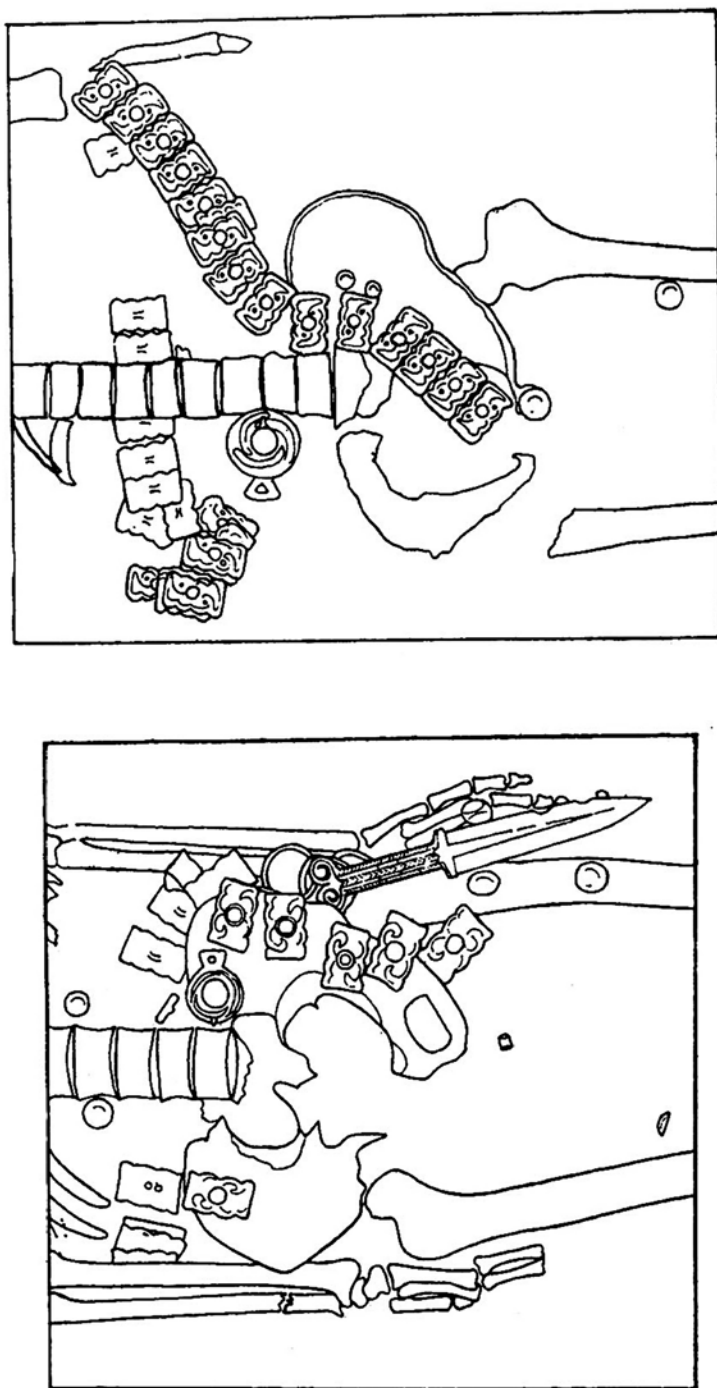


Fig. 11. Drawing of Ordos graves showing the position of bronze belt plaques and daggers that were hung on them. Early graves from the Maoqinggou cemetery, southwestern Inner Mongolia, (after Tian and Guo 1986:244, 248).

BCE people all over the steppe consciously chose to emphasize their common identity.¹² On the borders of China¹³ this can also be seen as a conscious decision not to display stylistic attributes associated with the more agricultural based societies to their south. In fact this “steppe style,” and by extension “steppe identity,” seem to predate the transition to pastoralism in this area. In northeast China this style seems to have developed gradually from a group of artifacts known collectively as “northern type” bronzes (Fig. 12). While most of these bronzes are accidental finds or found in caches without any archaeological context (Lin 1986; Guo 1995a; Wu 1985), a few excavated bronzes as well as “northern-type” bronzes found at the Shang dynasty site of Yinxu (Anyang) date this group to the second half of the second millennium BCE (Guo 1995a; Wu 1985). One possible early assemblage of northern bronzes found in an archaeological context was excavated from a tomb, dated to the Late Shang or Early Zhou, at the Changping Baifu site near present day Beijing (Beijing 1976). Very similar objects were found, for example, in the famous Fuhao tomb at Yinxu (Zhongguo 1980 photo 66).

As can be clearly seen, the shapes of the knives and daggers of the “northern type” group and especially their deer-, horse-, and ibex-headed pommels, are clear predecessors of the bronze artifacts of the Upper Xiajiadian period. The “northern type” bronzes are not the only evidence for the genesis of a unique steppe culture. During the second half of the second millennium BCE very similar bronze knives and daggers are known from the Zhukaigou culture of western Inner Mongolia (Linduff 1995). Further to the north and west similar artifacts are found in the eastern part of the steppe in Mongolia and Southern Siberia. Most famous among these are artifacts of the Karasuk culture of the Minusinsk basin and adjacent regions (Fig. 13) (Linduff 1997a, Wu 1986). Though the exact dates of all these cultures are still debated it seems that a common symbolic language, manifested first on bronze knives and daggers and then expanded to other types of bronze artifacts such as plaques and belt buckles, evolved simultaneously in different parts of the steppe.

¹² This does not contradict the fact that they also displayed their local identity in relation to each other.

¹³ No self-definition of China existed during the periods discussed in this paper. The terms China and Chinese are not used here to refer to such identity but as shorthand for cultures of the Yellow and Yangzi River basins and adjacent areas.

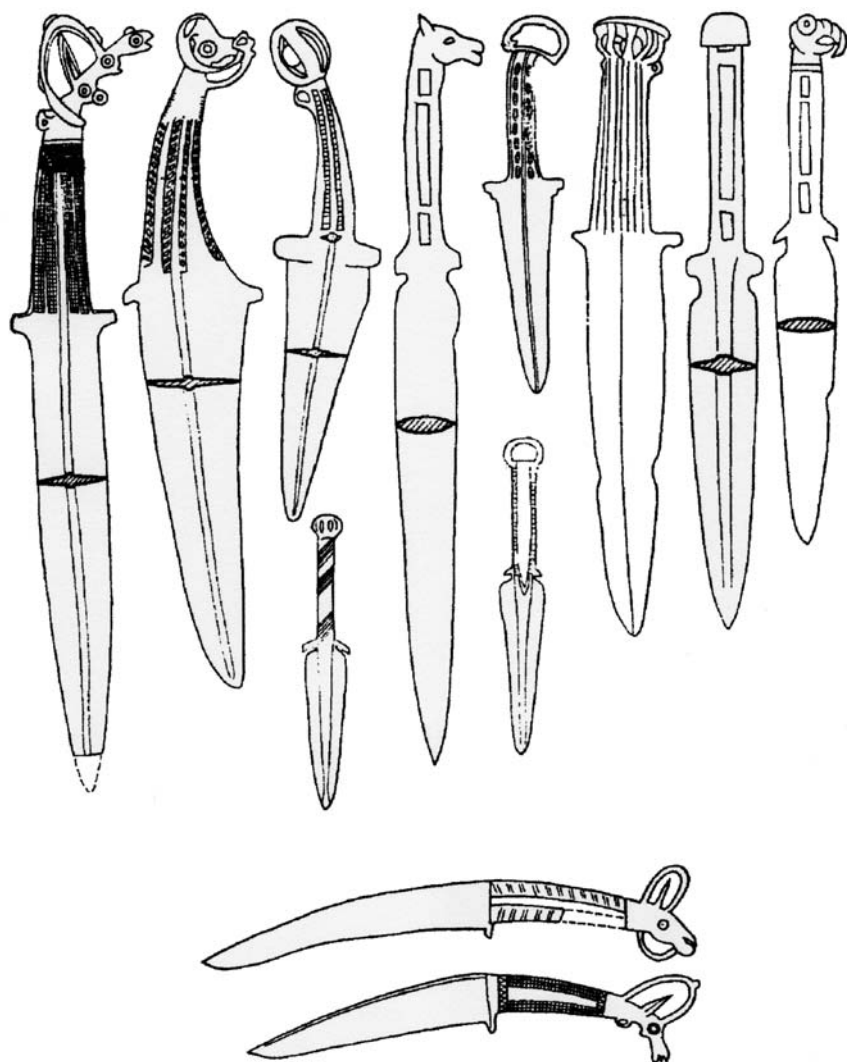


Fig. 12. "Northern-type" bronzes (Wu 1985:138-9).

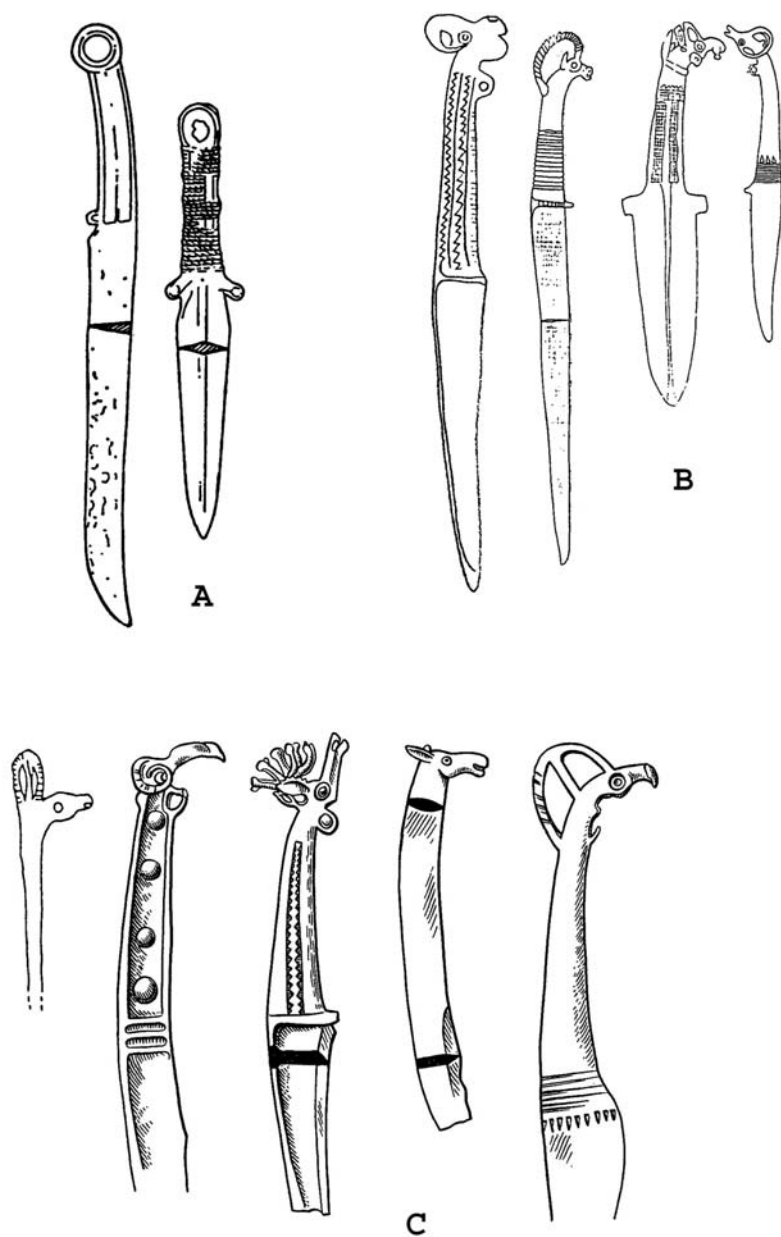


Fig. 13. Second millennium BCE bronze artifacts from northwestern China and southern Siberia. A: Zhukaigou culture, western Inner Mongolia (after Linduff 1997b:424). B: Karasuk culture, southern Siberia (after Linduff 1997:30). C: Mongolia (after Linduff 1997:29).

Interaction within the steppe, northeast China included, clearly intensified by the late second and early first millennia BCE. Interestingly, this was also a period when the mode and intensity of interaction between the Chifeng region and the Chinese states of the Yellow River changed. While not isolated during the Lower Xiajiadian period, evidence for interregional contacts are relatively limited (Shelach 1999: 200–12). During the second millennium BCE the Chinese steppe (northeast and northwest China) and areas to its south, including the Yellow River basin, were populated by chiefdom level polities. Each of these polities controlled a relatively small territory. Contacts among polities were confined mainly to down-the-line exchange networks without any evidence for conscious attempts of political leaders to control or boost the interaction. Although foreign artifacts and materials are more often found at the central nodes of the local political hierarchy, we possess no evidence to suggest that such artifacts played any major socio-political role. In fact, within each culture artifacts produced locally and clearly reflecting the local style, such as the Lower Xiajiadian polychrome ceramics, are the most conspicuous prestige objects.

As pointed out above, already during the late Shang period (c. 1300–1050 BCE) “northern type” artifacts were found in the Shang center of Yinxu. Although the origins of these artifacts have not been scientifically tested, their unique style, which is unrelated to typical Shang bronzes, could suggest that they were imported from the northeast. By the Western Zhou period (c. 1050–771 BCE) bronzes typical to the steppe are commonly found in Chinese graves and typical Chinese bronzes are found in the steppe. Shang and Western Zhou bronze vessels have been found as stray objects all over northeast China (cf. Kazuoxian 1977; Su 1982). A few Upper Xiajiadian graves contained bronze vessels and weapons similar in style and manufacturing technique to comparable objects found in Chinese graves and sites (Liaoning 1973; Xiang and Li 1995; Zhai 1994; Zhu 1987). These objects are very different in style and technique from locally produced bronze objects, which were also found in graves and domestic sites of the Upper Xiajiadian (Fig. 14). Although no chemical tests have been conducted in an attempt to confirm the Chinese origin of these bronze vessels and weapons, their shape, style and manufacturing technique all strongly suggest that they were indeed produced by one of the Chinese states. This hypothesis is supported by a Chinese inscription cast inside one of the vessels excavated

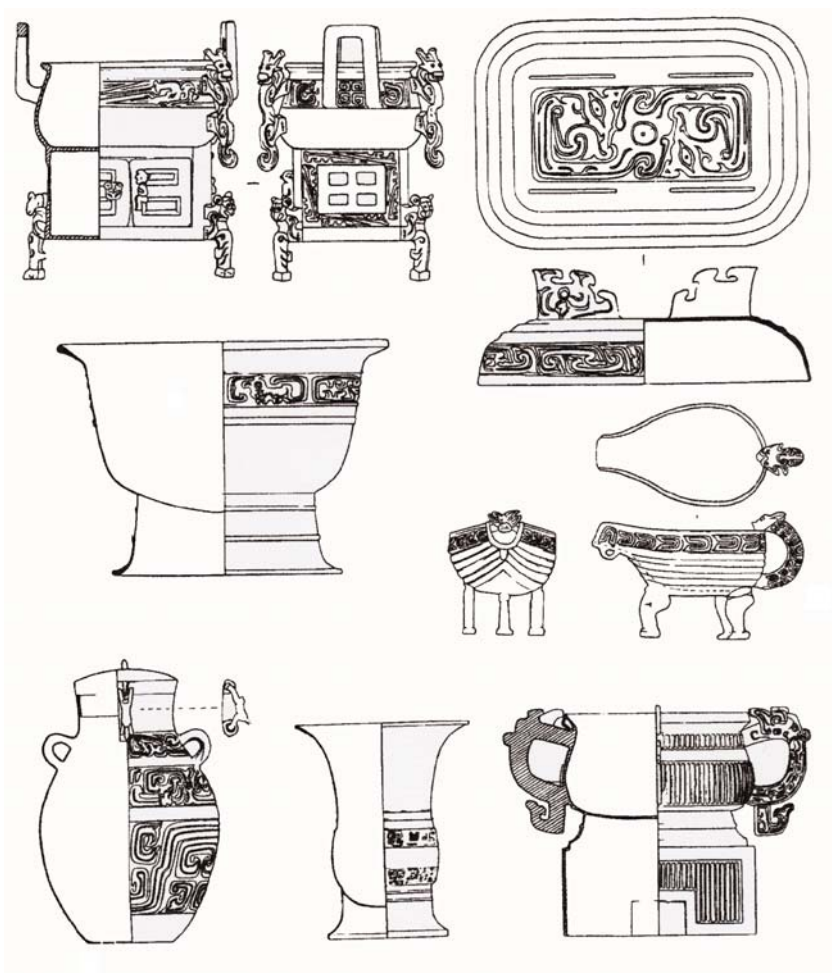


Fig. 14. Upper Xiajiadian bronze vessels from the large grave excavated at Xiaoheishigou site, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia (Xiang and Li 1995:8, 19).

from the rich grave at the Xiaoheishigou site. The inscription identifies the origin of this *gui* vessel as being the state of Xu in present day Henan province (Xiang and Li 1995:21) (Fig. 15).¹⁴ It is probable that all typical Chinese vessels and perhaps some of the Chinese style weapons found in graves of the Upper Xiajiadian culture must have made their way to the northeast through interaction between the Chinese states and their neighbors.

Close analysis of the context in which these Chinese bronzes were found shows that they were placed only in the richest graves. Among the 81 Upper Xiajiadian graves I analyzed, the two richest graves contained 30 out of 33 Chinese bronzes found in the entire sample (Table 4). These results suggest that unlike steppe style bronzes which are found in all but the poorest graves, imported Chinese bronzes as well as locally produced bronze vessels were the monopoly of the elite. This suggests the coexistence of two symbolic systems. Steppe bronzes, produced locally or imported from other regions of the steppe¹⁵ were displayed by people of all socio-political strata during their lifetime and interred with them in their graves. While people of higher status owned larger numbers of such artifacts, their symbolic quality was the same. These artifacts seem to symbolize the identity shared by all members of the political group and perhaps to a lesser degree the common identity of the steppe.

Chinese bronzes, and locally produced bronze vessels—an idea derived from China—seem to symbolize the powers of the elite. It is unclear what, if any, were the functions of these artifacts during the

¹⁴ The 15-character inscription indicates that this vessel was dedicated to a son or a daughter of the ruling Jiang clan of the state of Xu. According to the historical sources, the Jiang clan was enfeoffed by the Zhou at Xuchang during the 11th century BCE. Following that, the Jiang established the Xu state there. During the 6th century BCE the Xu state moved several times to new locations, all within the borders of present day Henan. It was finally conquered by the Chu state (or, according to another version, by the Wei state) during the Warring States period (Li 1985: 170–74). This inscription suggests that the *gui* on which it is inscribed was originally manufactured and used some one thousand km. south of the grave from which it was excavated. The inscription seems to have no historical or cultural connection to the owner of the rich Xiaoheishigou grave. Moreover, even if this grave owner and his Upper Xiajiadian peers could have read the inscription, it is doubtful that its content was meaningful to their use of this *gui* vessel.

¹⁵ During somewhat later periods there is evidence for steppe style metal artifacts produced as trade objects by the Chinese states to cater to the taste of the pastoral population (Linduff 1997:51–53). Though it is possible that some “steppe style” artifacts found in Upper Xiajiadian graves were produced in the south, no direct evidence for such exchange was found.



Fig. 15. A Chinese inscription cast inside a bronze vessel from the large Upper Xiajiadian grave excavated at the Xiaoheshigou site, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia (Xiang and Li 1995:10).

lifetime of their owners. As grave goods they clearly symbolized the ability not only to control external interaction but also to assert power in order to command the local production of labor intensive bronze vessels. The prestige assigned to these Chinese vessels may be associated with them being war booty, but it can also simply derive from the fact that they were rare objects very different from anything else.

Conclusions: The Effects of the Transition to Pastoralism and the Changes in Interregional Interaction

The transition to pastoralism, the intensification of interregional interaction, and the emergence of the steppe style are three dimensions of the same process. Rather than raise the chicken-and-egg question, which among these aspects is the prime mover of the process, a more useful approach is to examine the way in which they are intertwined with each other.

Interactions among people of the steppe and between them and their southern neighbors allow for an increasing flow of goods and ideas. More specialized pastoralism can be seen as a reaction to trading opportunities—within the steppe and with other regions. On the other hand, pastoralism can also be seen as an important reason for the increasing interactions. The increased mobility associated with this lifestyle and the improvements it catalyzed in means of transportation are two such factors.

In the same way, the rise of steppe identity, symbolized by movable bronze objects and a common artistic style, mirrors the transition to pastoralism and the increasing interactions among the societies of the steppe. Animal motifs decorating many of the Upper Xiajiadian bronze artifacts may reflect the actual importance of animals in the life of the population. Animals were increasingly both the life source—the livestock—and the threat to it—predators. This can be clearly seen in the art of the Upper Xiajiadian and other cultures of the steppe (Figs. 5, 6, 8, 9 & 10). Interaction among cultures of the steppe is, as argued above, the only possible explanation for the relative homogeneity of style and techniques of bronze casting in this large region.

On the other hand, the art of the steppe, as art always is, was not merely a mirror. It can be seen as an active force which elevated pastoralism from one—not always the preferable—economic strategy to a kind of ideology. This ideology, with its almost spiritual connection to animals and emphasis on pastoralism and not on agriculture, must

have also shaped the nature of interregional interactions within the steppe and, more importantly, with the Chinese states to the south. As pointed out above, both pastoralism itself and its art and ideology can be seen as a resistance to the pressure of the Chinese states. Such an ideology, based on a rejection of the Chinese way of life and emphasizing the uniqueness of the indigenous culture, would explain the display of local bronze artifacts on the bodies of people from all social strata. Though some of these objects, such as knives or belt buckles, serve utilitarian functions, their main capacity was as emblems of local identity.

In northeast China all these changes did not seem to affect the level of social complexity and of political integration. Contrary to the opinion held by some archaeologists, the socio-economic hierarchy attained in this area during the Lower Xiajiadian period did not collapse. On the other hand, no state level society comparable to that of contemporaneous Chinese states or any other form of regional political unity developed in this area. While the level of stratification remained the same, its symbolic focus shifted from public and domestic structures during the Lower Xiajiadian periods to movable objects used daily and consumed in burial ritual of the Upper Xiajiadian society.

This change is clearly related to the economic emphasis on pastoralism. For people leading a more mobile way of life investment in permanent structures makes less economic and strategic sense. However, it may also reflect an ideological change. Lower Xiajiadian leaders seem to have relied on a group-oriented ideology. Their position was both symbolized and justified through the construction of large-scale defensive systems and other public works. During the Upper Xiajiadian this was replaced by an ideology in which the position of the elite is personalized. Rich Upper Xiajiadian graves may be evidence of a society in which political power is personally associated with the leaders or upper social strata, rather than with the communal functions such leaders performed (Shelach 1999). In such an ideological environment "exotic" prestige objects obtained from the Chinese states to the south could have an important legitimating role. Because locally produced bronzes were widely used by people of all social strata, possession of objects such as Chinese bronze vessels was a much more visible prestige symbol than having larger amounts of local bronzes. Although we have no way of knowing if these artifacts reached northeast China via peaceful interaction such as trade or gift exchange, or through violent contacts such as conflicts or raids, it seems that the interaction channels were

controlled by the local elite. While interactions with groups from other parts of the steppe seem to have been more frequent and of greater economic importance, interactions with the Chinese states were of socio-political significance.

Table 1. Factor Analysis of Lower Xiajiadian Graves from the Dadianzi Cemetery*

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Grave Size	0.839	0.287	0.004	0.054
Painted Ceramic	0.770	0.287	0.004	0.054
Ceramic Vessels	0.741	0.414	-0.062	0.013
Total no. of Artifacts	0.647	-0.676	0.010	0.241
Sacrificial Animals	0.629	0.398	0.111	-0.134
Stone Artifacts	0.612	-0.696	0.015	0.262
Shells	0.494	-0.212	0.200	0.293
Bone Artifacts	0.446	-0.262	0.380	-0.213
Stone Axe	0.406	0.077	0.448	-0.451
Metal Artifacts	0.379	-0.309	-0.576	-0.342
Age	0.351	0.456	-0.114	0.294
Jades	0.219	-0.148	-0.707	-0.329
Spindle Whorl	0.069	0.271	-0.384	0.558

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Upper Xiajiadian Graves**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Large Bronzes	0.945	-0.273	0.029	0.132
Bronze Vessels	0.938	-0.289	0.041	0.139
Grave Size	0.926	0.133	-0.069	0.038
Bronze Tools	0.911	-0.297	0.059	0.126
All Bronzes	0.877	0.091	-0.173	0.205
Gold Artifacts	0.848	-0.322	0.082	0.118
Bronze Weapons	0.829	-0.178	-0.019	0.081
All Artifacts	0.658	0.662	-0.290	-0.064
Stone Coffin	0.649	0.229	0.382	-0.305
Ornaments and Small Artifacts	0.583	0.713	-0.309	-0.070
Stone Artifacts	0.435	-0.214	0.281	-0.488
Wooden Coffin	0.399	0.444	0.182	-0.269
Shells	0.011	0.381	0.840	0.145
Pottery	-0.203	0.351	0.203	0.752

* In each factor 1 and -1 represent respectively the highest positive and negative correlation and 0 the lowest. The table is based on data from Zhongguo 1996.

** In each factor 1 and -1 represent respectively the highest positive and nega-

Table 3. Comparison of Site Location in the Yinhe River Area

	Hongshan	Lower Xiajiadian	Upper Xiajiadian
Altitude above Sea Level (in meters)	Mean: 772 SD: 53	Mean: 768 SD: 60	Mean: 794 SD: 69
Distance from the Yinhe River (in km.)	Mean: 0.899 SD: 0.63	Mean: 0.887 SD: 0.88	Mean: 1.349 SD: 1.227
Distance from the Closest Water Source (in km.)*	Mean: 0.46 SD: 0.218	Mean: 0.516 SD: 0.489	Mean: 0.917 SD: 0.624

Table 4. Grouping of Upper Xiajiadian Graves

	Graves with no Artifacts	Graves with Artifacts but without Large Bronzes	Graves with 1-11 Large Bronzes	Graves with more than 11 Large Bronzes
No. of Graves	5	26	48	2
Average Grave Size (m ²)	0.75	1.36	1.68	7.75
Average Grave Depth	0.39	0.71	0.76	2.25
Wooden Coffin (%)	20%	23%	36%	100%
Stone Coffin (%)	0%	8%	21%	100%
Average no. of Artifacts	0	59	225	563
Average no. of Bronzes	0	39	39	510
Average no. of Bronze Vessels	0	0	0.02 (1)**	23 (46)
Average no. of Chinese Bronzes	0	0	0.06 (3)	15 (30)

tive correlation and 0 the lowest. The table is based on data collected from the following papers: Hebei 1977; Xiang and Li 1995; Jianpian 1983; Ningcheng 1985; Liaoning 1973; Zhangjiakou 1987; Zhongguo 1974; Zhongguo 1975b; Zhongguo 1981; Zhongguo 1984.

* Distance to the closest water source is the distance to the main river or to one of its larger tributaries, whichever is closest.

** Numbers in parenthesis are the total number of artifacts found.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

Bohai bay	渤海
Changping Baifu	昌平白浮
Chifeng	赤峰
Dadianzi site	大甸子
Dajing site	大井
Daling river	大凌河
Dashuinoer Lake	大水诺尔湖
Dawenkou culture	大汶口
<i>gui</i> vessel	簋
Hongshan culture	红山
Hun river	浑河
Laoha River	老哈河
Liao period	辽代
Liao river	辽河
Luan river	滦河
Lower Xiajiadian	夏家店下层
Upper Xiajiadian	夏家店上层
Xiaoheishigou site	小黑石沟
Xiaoling river	小凌河
Xinglongwa culture	兴隆洼
Xilamulun River	西拉木伦河
Xiongnu	匈奴
<i>Xu</i> state	许
Yan mountains	燕山
Yi River	伊河
Yin River	阴河
Yinxu (Anyang)	殷墟 (安阳)
Yiwulü mountains	医巫闾山
Zhoujiadi site	周家地
Zhukaigou culture	朱开沟

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BEASTS OR HUMANS: PRE-IMPERIAL ORIGINS OF THE “SINO-BARBARIAN” DICHOTOMY¹

Yuri Pines

Only a generation ago, it was common among scholars to conceive of pre-modern Chinese identity in terms of culturalism rather than nationalism. According to this paradigm, Chineseness was defined primarily as belonging to a universalizing civilization, and sharing common, predominantly Confucian culture. This identity was inclusive, as those foreigners who acquired, consciously or through diffusion, Chinese cultural values became “Chinese.”² A concept of national identity conceived in ethnic or racial terms was commonly considered a modern phenomenon, closely related to China’s entrance into the world of nation-states.³

Since the 1970s many scholars have questioned this paradigm. Rolf Trauzettel and Hoyt Tillman pointed at the evidence of a “modern,” exclusive kind of nationalism, which appeared as early as the

¹ I am indebted to the conference participants and to the volume editors, as well as to Miranda Brown, Poo Mu-chou and Haun Saussy for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

² Needless to say, the term “Chinese” itself is controversial, particularly as it lacks an exact equivalent in the Chinese language itself. Today it refers to two distinct entities: *Zhongguo ren*, which applies to all citizens of China, whatever their ethnic belong is, and the (more rarely used) *Hanzu*, which is used to distinguish “Chinese proper” from national minorities in the People’s Republic of China. In the past “Chinese” were frequently referred to as the people of the current or the previous dynasty (e.g. *Qin ren*—the people of Qin, *Tang ren*—the people of Tang and so on), or, alternatively, as members of the Hua, Xia or Huaxia cultural community; these (and other) appellations were constantly defined and re-defined in different political and cultural contexts (see brief notes scattered throughout Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* [Cambridge MA, 2000], pp. 95–96, 132, 707–10, 750–53 and his bibliography). For the current discussion the term “Chinese” is used largely for heuristic purposes; for its relevance to pre-imperial “Chinese” identity, see the discussion further in the text.

³ This view is best represented by Joseph R. Levenson in his *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (London, 1958), i, pp. 95–108. For a succinct and critical summary of the “culturalism to nationalism” paradigm, see James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 27 (1992), pp. 98–103.

Song period (960–1279).⁴ Later, scholars such as James Townsend and Prasenjit Duara questioned the validity of the culturalist paradigm altogether, suggesting its inadequacy in conveying the complicated nature of Chinese self-identification.⁵ Deconstructing universalistic pretensions of imperial ideology further contributed to the sense that exclusive, ethno-centric identity existed for centuries in traditional China. Inclusiveness, once considered the hallmark of Chinese civilization, was more and more deemed another myth that cannot withstand radical historical criticism. Finally, in a recent iconoclastic study Frank Dikötter suggested that in traditional China no real dichotomy between culture and race existed, and that ancient Chinese discourse was permeated by a feeling of racial, not only cultural superiority over the “barbarians.”⁶ Dikötter strongly argued for exclusive aspects of Chinese identity at the very beginning of its emergence.

Both inclusive and exclusive perceptions of Chinese identity are present in imperial discourse. Supporters of the culturalist paradigm would eagerly quote Chen An (ninth century), who claimed “the distinction between Hua [Chinese] and ‘barbarian’ rests in the heart,” while their opponents may cite a Song loyalist, Zheng Sixiao (1241–1318), or the early Qing thinker, Wang Fuzhi (1619–1692), who basically denied the “barbarians” any possibility of participating in Chinese culture.⁷ A full spectrum of opinions existed between

⁴ See R. Trauzettel, “Sung Patriotism as a First Step Toward Chinese Nationalism,” in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. J.W. Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 199–214; H. Tillman, “Proto-Nationalism in Twelfth-Century China? The Case of Ch’en Liang,” *HJAS*, 39 (1979), pp. 403–28.

⁵ See J. Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” pp. 97–130; P. Duara, “De-Constructing the Chinese Nation,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 30 (1993), pp. 1–26.

⁶ See F. Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, 1992), pp. 1–30ff. It should be mentioned, however, that not all scholars abandoned the culturalist paradigm; recently it was powerfully reinforced by Ch. Holcombe, in his “Re-Imagining China: The Chinese Identity Crisis at the Start of the Southern Dynasties Period,” *JAO*, 115 (1995), pp. 12–13 *et passim*. See also an insightful study by M. Fiskesjö about “the otherness” of Chinese southern neighbors as primarily a cultural construction (“On the ‘Raw’ and ‘Cooked’ Barbarians of Imperial China,” *Inner Asia*, 1/2 [1999], pp. 135–68).

⁷ For Chen An’s views, see Ch. Hartman, *Han Yü and the Tang Search for Unity* (Princeton, 1986), pp. 158–59; for Zheng Sixiao’s xenophobia, see his “Gu jin zheng-tong dalun,” in *Zheng Sixiao ji* (Shanghai, 1991), pp. 132–37 (for the possibility that this work was forged at the beginning of the Qing dynasty [1644–1911], see A. Mittag, “The Manchu Conquest and the Mission of the Loyal-Hearted Historiographer [*Xinshi*],” paper presented at the XIV European Association of Chinese Studies conference, Moscow, August 2002); for Wang Fuzhi’s views, see Tang Kailin and Zhang Huaicheng, *Liu jing ze wo kai sheng mian: Wang Chuanshan lunli sixiang yanjiu* (Changsha, 1992), pp. 282–91.

these extremes. Policy discussions about the proper way to treat the aliens, as well as behavioral choices of the elite members during the periods of alien rule were deeply influenced by conflicting premises about the possibility or even the desirability of assimilating the Other into “This Culture of Ours.” The question was by no means theoretical, and it often had far-reaching political consequences during both the zenith and nadir of dynastic power.

Distinct perceptions of “Sino-barbarian”⁸ dichotomy were thus of crucial importance for determining relations between Chinese and the aliens. These perceptions have been discussed in numerous studies. Yet, scholars usually focus on the last millennium of imperial history when discussing Chinese views of the Other; earlier origins of these views are given only cursory treatment.⁹ Particularly surprising is the apparent lack of interest in the evolution of the concepts of “us” and “them” during the Chunqiu (722–453 BCE)¹⁰ and Zhanguo (453–221) periods, discussions on which in Western languages amount to no more than a few pages. This brevity may be partly explained by the relative meagerness of deliberations about the aliens in pre-imperial texts. And yet we are talking about the formative period of Chinese political thought, the age that immensely

⁸ Some may dispute the legitimacy of using the term “barbarian” in Chinese context. Indeed, in many cases ethnical definitions such as Di or Yi had no pejorative meaning, and Nicola Di Cosmo is right when he argues that no single term in Chinese language equals precisely the term “barbarian” (see his *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* [Cambridge, 2002], p. 95 n. 7). Yet, as Mikhail Kriukov *et al.* have shown, in many instances names of alien tribes were used in a way clearly reminiscent of the Greek “barbarian” (see their *Drevnie Kitajtsy: Problemy Etnogeneza* [Moscow, 1978], pp. 274–76 and 287–89), and Di Cosmo insightfully points at the similarity of Chinese compounds such as Yi Di to the Western “barbarian” (*Ancient China and its Enemies*, p. 100). It is in this sense that I use the term “barbarian” in the following discussion.

⁹ See the studies mentioned in notes 2–5 above, and their respective bibliographies. This analysis focuses on Western scholarship only; for an example of Chinese studies, see Pu Muzhou [Poo Mu-chou], “Gudai Zhongguo, Aiji yu Lianghe liuyu dui yizhi taidi zhi bijiao yanjiu,” *Hanxue yanjiu*, 17/2 (1999), pp. 137–68 and his bibliography; for an example of Japanese approaches, see Ochi Shigeaki, “Ka-I shisô no seiritsu,” *Kurume Daigaku Hikaku Bunka Kenkyûjo kiyô*, 11 (1992), pp. 43–137. In the west the only significant discussion of pre-imperial views of Sino-alien relations was published long after my original paper, on which this article is based, was presented; see Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, pp. 93–126. Since Di Cosmo is interested primarily in the evolution of Chinese interactions with their Northern Zone neighbors, his discussion focuses exclusively on Chinese views of northern ethnic groups and their political implications; nevertheless our studies largely share the same perspective, which differs radically from that of Dikötter and other Western writers on the topic.

¹⁰ All dates hereafter are Before Common Era (BCE), unless indicated otherwise.

influenced the future course of Chinese history. Sketchy as they are, the references to aliens in pre-Qin philosophical and historical texts were of profound significance for generations of imperial thinkers who routinely resorted to sayings of Confucius (551–479) and Mencius (c. 379–304), or the books like the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Gongyang zhuan* as the repository of ancient wisdom. A detailed look at the pre-imperial legacy will therefore allow us a better understanding of major Chinese cultural premises concerning the aliens.

Most extant surveys of pre-imperial views of the aliens emphasize two closely related issues. First, the Chinese viewed themselves as superior, the dwellers of the Central States, surrounded by “barbarian” zones. Secondly, the Chinese tended to view their “barbarian” neighbors as insufficiently human, as creatures “with human face and beasts’ hearts.”¹¹ These premises convey a picture of a huge, probably unbridgeable gap between the proud heirs of the Xia (i.e. the Chinese) and the “barbarians of the four corners” (*si yi*). In this study I shall try to show that this monochromatic picture fails to do justice to the complexity of pre-imperial thought. I shall first survey views of the aliens as presented in major pre-Qin texts to show that despite their clear sense of superiority, ancient Chinese thinkers and statesmen conceived of the differences with the aliens as primarily cultural, and hence changeable; “Chineseness” referred mostly to the adherence to the common ritual norms of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256) and not to “race” or “ethnicity.” Hence, those radical thinkers who denied the importance of ritual, usually also downplayed the differences with the aliens and even questioned the paradigm of Chinese superiority altogether. Furthermore, in sharp distinction from the thinkers of the imperial age, none of the known pre-imperial thinkers questioned the premise of the changeability of the aliens. In the last part of the paper I shall try to show that the common belief in the transformability of one’s identity, which reflected the actual experience of Chunqiu and especially Zhanguo statesmen and thinkers was inimical to the development of the highly pronounced “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy in the pre-imperial age, and that it was only after the imperial unification and the fixation of China’s boundaries versus the steppe that the situation began to change.

Before we proceed to the discussion, three clarifications are needed.

¹¹ For standard depictions see, for instance, Kriukov *et al.*, *Drevnie Kitajtsy*, pp. 272–281; Dikötter, *The Discourse*, pp. 2–6.

First, to avoid terminological confusion surveyed by Townsend, I prefer to discuss pre-imperial “Chinese” identity in terms of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness and not in terms of culturalism versus nationalism. Secondly, the temporal framework for this presentation, namely the Chunqiu—Zhanguo periods, has been chosen primarily due to its unique standing in the history of Chinese thought. Concomitantly, I tried to avoid what may become a too speculative discussion about Shang (c. 1600–1046) and Western Zhou (1046–771) antecedents of the later views, because the sources for the earlier periods are both scarce and frequently enigmatic, allowing different interpretations.¹² Thirdly, the term “Chinese” used throughout this paper may be justifiably criticized as both anachronistic and misleading. “Chinese” of course is a Western term. Thinkers whose views I survey below referred to themselves as Xia, Hua, or dwellers of the “Central States” (*Zhongguo*). The term “Chinese” would be used hereafter merely as a heuristic convention.

Some critics may ask, whether or not it is justifiable to speak of the pre-imperial “Chinese” as a distinct entity? Recently, Michael Loewe insightfully pointed out the weaknesses of the fashionable view, which mechanically attributes distinct national or cultural cohesiveness, solidarity or sense of identity to the people who inhabited various states, unified in 221 BCE.¹³ This important observation is, however, not necessarily relevant to the present discussion. My paper deals with members of the educated elite from the states that inherited (or adopted at the later period) Zhou ritual norms, and hence sensed themselves as belonging to the distinct world from the uncivilized “barbarians” (and often from the equally uncivilized commoners as well). These elite members, as we shall see, clearly had a sense of distinct identity, and it is their “Chineseness” which concerns us here.

“Wolves and Jackals”—The Paradigm of Barbarian Inferiority

The following saying of Confucius is frequently cited as the *locus classicus* for traditional Chinese views of the Other. Confucius reportedly praised the great Chunqiu statesman, Guan Zhong (d. 645):

¹² For a tentative assessment of pre-Chunqiu views of the aliens, see Pu, “Gudai Zhongguo,” pp. 152–57.

¹³ See Loewe’s “The Heritage Left to Empires,” in *CHAC*, p. 1002.

Guan Zhong assisted Lord Huan [of Qi, r. 686–643] to become hegemon over the overlords, and to bring unity and order to All under Heaven; to these days the people enjoy the benefits [of these acts]. Were it not for Guan Zhong, we might be wearing our hair loose and folding our robes to the left.¹⁴

The last phrase refers to the cultural achievement of Guan Zhong: by repelling invaders of the Rong and Di stock, he presumably preserved the essence of Chinese culture, including the ritually proper clothing of the dwellers of the Central Plain. This contribution outweighed in Confucius' eyes other flaws in Guan Zhong's behavior, including his occasional transgression of ritual norms.¹⁵ Guan Zhong might have agreed to this definition, since he evidently viewed himself as the protector of the Zhou world against the barbarians. According to the *Zuo zhuan*, in 661 Guan Zhong convinced Lord Huan to assist the beleaguered state of Xing, the victim of the Di invasion, applying to the anti-barbarian solidarity:

Rong and Di are wolves and jackals who cannot be satiated. All the Xia are kin who cannot be abandoned.¹⁶

This is another of the stock sayings which are frequently used by proponents of "racial antagonism" in early Chinese history. A notion of what Dikötter calls "the bestiality" of the aliens¹⁷ evidently existed in Chunqiu discourse, and it was invoked both by proponents and opponents of military confrontation with the enemy. In 569, a leading Jin statesman, Wei Jiang, dissuaded his ruler from attacking the Rong tribesmen, claiming that the Rong are "birds and beasts," against whom attaining victory would be meaningless.¹⁸ Similar arguments were invoked by Fu Chen of the Zhou royal domain, who tried to dissuade King Xiang of Zhou (r. 651–619) from allying with the Di tribesmen against the state of Zheng:

¹⁴ Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* (Beijing, 1991), 14.17 ("Xian wen"), pp. 151–52. Hereafter all translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

¹⁵ For these transgressions, see *Lunyu*, 3.22 ("Ba yi"), p. 31.

¹⁶ Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1981, hereafter the *Zuo*), (Min 1), p. 256.

¹⁷ See Dikötter, *The Discourse*, pp. 3–5.

¹⁸ *Zuo*, (Xiang 4), p. 936; cf. *Guoyu* (Shanghai, 1990), 13.5 ("Jin yu 7"), p. 441. Ironically, Wei Jiang's intervention against the proposed aggression against the Rong might have been motivated by purely personal reasons: he was apparently bribed by a Rong envoy to act as an intermediary for the Rong at the Jin court (*Zuo*, [Xiang 4], pp. 935–36).

Ears that do not hear the harmony of the five sounds are deaf; eyes that do not distinguish the displays of the five colors are blind; hearts that are not patterned after the basics of virtue and propriety are obstinate; mouths that do not pronounce loyal and trustworthy words are raucous. The Di pattern all these [modes of behavior], their four perversities are complete.¹⁹

Fu Chen refrained from invoking the beast simile, as that might have infuriated the king who recently married a Di wife, but he left no doubts that the Di are significantly impaired in their humaneness. Lacking basic cultural virtues of the Xia, these uncouth tribesmen remained half way between beasts and humans. Sayings of Fu Chen and the above-cited speakers seem to support Dikötter's proposal of the exclusiveness of early Chinese identity. Can we ever expect of jackals, birds or deaf, blind and raucous creatures to become human?

To answer this question we should first consider the nature of "bestiality" in ancient Chinese discourse. While Dikötter strongly argues for the racial implications of this term, textual evidence suggests otherwise. Let us turn to Mencius, a leading follower of Confucius. In his polemics against two leading thinkers of his age, Yang Zhu (fl. fourth century) and Mozi (ca. 460–390), Mencius claims:

Mr. Yang advocates selfishness, which means having no ruler. Mr. Mo advocates universal love, which means having no father. Having neither ruler nor father means becoming birds and beasts.²⁰

Thus, bestiality seems to be a social condition, which can emerge even among the Chinese should the doctrines of Mencius' opponents prevail. Moreover, elsewhere Mencius suggests that bestiality already prevails among the lower strata of the populace:

There is only a tiny thing that distinguishes human beings from birds and beasts. Commoners cast it away, while superior men preserve it.²¹

It should be remembered that Mencius did not live in aristocratic society where impassable differences separated commoners from the elites. Rather, as the saying itself implies, the difference was conceived as that of moral behavior, not of pedigree. The commoners, who abandoned ritual norms and rules of morality obligatory of the

¹⁹ *Zuo*, (Xi 24), p. 425.

²⁰ Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu* (Beijing, 1992), 6.9 ("Teng Wen Gong xia"), p. 155.

²¹ *Mengzi*, 8.19 ("Li Lou xia"), p. 191.

superior men, sank into bestiality, and were basically indistinguishable from the barbarians, mentioned above. Clearly, these differences cannot be named “racial”; they referred to a behavioral pattern, which could be learned or modified with a proper upbringing.²² Later we shall return to this theme; but first, let us check whether other texts support my suggestion of behavioral rather than racial differences between Chinese and barbarians.

The *Guoyu*, a text that parallels the *Zuo zhuan*, although it was compiled more than a century later than the *Zuo*, contains several references to the bestiality of the aliens. One of these anecdotes tells of Shi Hui, an envoy of the powerful state of Jin, who arrived at the Zhou royal court and was dissatisfied with the small size of a serving of broth, served to him at the banquet. The king hastily explained that at the royal banquets ritual propriety and not the size of the meal matters. Not to understand this meant behaving in the loose manner of the Rong and Di envoys:

It is only Rong and Di who receive the entire corpse [of a sacrificial animal at the banquet]. Yet, Rong and Di enter hastily and despise order, they are greedy and unwilling to yield, their blood and breath is unmanageable, just like that of birds and beasts. When they arrive to submit tribute, they cannot wait for fragrance and fine taste; therefore we make them sit outside the gate and send the translator to give them the corpse [of the sacrificial animal].²³

The king invoked the beast simile, but he also clearly explained the reason for comparing the Rong and the Di to animals. Their outlook did not matter; what mattered was their uncivilized behavior, ignorance of rules of propriety, greediness and being unable to yield, the latter being an important feature of superior men.²⁴ These behavioral deficiencies degraded the Rong and the Di to the position of “impaired humaneness” as implied in Fu Chen’s speech cited above.

Ritual norms were indeed the major delineating line between Self and the Other in pre-imperial China.²⁵ The multi-state Zhou world

²² Another eminent Zhanguo thinker, Xunzi (c. 310–218), considered bestiality a regular behavioral pattern of the “petty men” (*xiao ren*), emphasizing that it emerges from their lack of learning (Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jiji* [Beijing, 1992], 4 [“Rong ru”], 61; 1 [“Quan xue”], p. 11).

²³ *Guoyu*, 2.6 (“Zhou yu”), p. 62.

²⁴ Unwillingness to yield (*bu rang*) was commonly mentioned as characteristic of barbarians in the *Zuo zhuan* ([Yin 9], pp. 65–66; [Ding 5], p. 1553).

²⁵ For the importance of ritual norms in pre-imperial China, see Y. Pines, “Disputers of the Li: Breakthroughs in the Concept of Ritual in Preimperial China,” *Asia Major*, Third Series, 13 (2000), pp. 1–41.

lost by the seventh century BCE the last semblance of political unity, and hereafter was engulfed in a bitter struggle of all against all. Its religious unity was also diminishing, as local cults in different states became more pronounced at the expense of the ancient worship of Heaven, which was the prerogative of the Zhou king. Yet, despite political and religious divisions, the common ritual system, inherited from the early Zhou period remained largely intact. Ritual norms were applied among others to the rules of inter-state diplomatic intercourse, and to a lesser extent even to warfare. The Rong, the Di and other “barbarian” tribes did not behave in accord with these norms, which sharply distinguished them from the members of the Zhou world. For centuries to come, ignorance of ritual was the most despised feature of the aliens. The mid-fourth century BCE “Tan Gong” chapter of the ritual compendium, the *Liji*, cites Confucius’ disciple, Zi You’s praise of the mourning rituals:

Ritual diminishes feelings, thereby elevating the [mourning] rules. To follow directly one’s real feelings is the way of the Rong and the Di. It is not the Way of Ritual.²⁶

Zhanguo ritualists considered unrestrained expressions of one’s feelings and spontaneity as the hallmark of savagery. Absence of ritual norms was, in their eyes, responsible for the woeful situation of the barbarians on the fringes of human society. It was this lack of ritual restraints that rendered aliens beasts. Another mid-fourth century BCE ritual text, the “Qu li” chapter of the *Liji*, states:

The Way and virtue, benevolence and propriety cannot be accomplished without ritual. Teaching, admonitions and proper customs cannot be prepared without ritual. Divisions, mutual strife and litigations cannot be resolved without ritual. [Positions] of ruler and subject, superior and inferior, father and son, elder and younger brother cannot be fixed without ritual. . . . Therefore, the superior man is respectful and reverent, self-restricting and yielding, thereby clarifying ritual norms. The parrot can speak, but it does not leave [the category of] flying birds, orangutan can speak, but it does not leave [the category of] birds and beasts. So, although a man who lacks ritual can speak, his heart is also one of a bird and a beast, is it not?²⁷

²⁶ Sun Xidan, *Liji jiji* (Beijing, 1996), 10 (“Tan Gong xia”), p. 271.

²⁷ *Liji jiji*, 1 (“Qu li shang”), pp. 8–11. For the dating of the “Tan Gong” and “Qu li” chapters of the *Liji*, see Yoshimoto Michimasa, “Dankyû kô,” *Kodai bunka*, 44/2 (1992), pp. 38–46; *idem*, “Kyôkurei kô,” in *Chûgoku kodai reisei kenkyû*, ed. Kominami Ichirô (Kyôto, 1995), pp. 117–63.

The above passage clarifies beyond doubt that the bestiality simile was applied for the aliens mostly due to their ritual deficiency. This view, popular among ritualists of the Zhanguo age, was not, however, unanimously endorsed. Later we shall see that some thinkers who questioned the validity of ritual norms rejected the paradigm of the Xia superiority altogether. Others, alternatively, sought political and social explanations for the aliens' deficient behavior. Authors of the late third century BCE compendium, the *Liushi chunqiu*, suggested that the barbarism of the aliens was merely a regrettable result of the surmounting social disorder in their lives:

When the way of treachery, deceit, banditry, calamity, avarice and cruelty prospers for a long time uninterrupted, the people internalize it as if it is their nature. Such is the case of the people of the Rong, Yi, Hu, Mo, Ba and Yue. Even heavy rewards and stern punishments cannot prohibit [their behavior].²⁸

This passage reflects a higher level of theoretical sophistication than previously quoted sayings. Inherent badness and moral deficiency of the barbarians is conceived of not as biological reality but as a consequence of inappropriate social conditions. Importantly, the authors mentioned that the people living in conditions of calamity internalize badness *as if* it were their inborn nature, while after all social conditions prevail in determining their fate. Does this mean that better social conditions would improve barbarians' nature? Later we shall return to this question.

Another significant passage in the *Liushi chunqiu* is more specific in suggesting the reasons for the aliens' badness. Namely, it is the lack of political authority that causes social disorder and deterioration:

To the east of Feibin there are the villages of Yi and Hui, and the dwellings of Dajie, Lingyu, Qi, Luye, Yaoshan, Yangdao and Daren, many of whom lack a ruler. To the south of Yang and the Han, there are the lands of Baiyue, the lands of Changkaizhu, Fufeng and Yumi, and the states of Fulou, Yangyu and Huandou, many of whom lack a ruler. To the west of Di and Qiang, Hutang and the Li River, there are the rivers of Boren, Yeren and Pianzuo, the villages of Zhouren, Songlong, and Turen, many of whom lack a ruler. To the north of the Yanmen, there are the states of Yangzhou, Suozhi and Xukui, the lands of Taotie and Qiongqi, the place of Shuni and the dwellings of Daner;

²⁸ Chen Qiyou, *Liushi chunqiu jiaoshi* (Shanghai, 1990), 14.4 ("Yi shang"), p. 779.

many of these lack a ruler. These are the rulerless of the four directions. Their people live like elks and deer, birds and beasts: the young give orders to the old, the old are afraid of the adults, the strong are considered the worthy and the haughty and violent are revered. Day and night they abuse each other having no time to rest, exterminating thereby their kind. The sages profoundly investigate this trouble.²⁹

The above passage is the most profound explanation for the barbarianism of the aliens in the received Zhanguo texts, and it is evidently based on the better acquaintance with the lives of the neighbors of the Xia. Their bestiality is not a matter of inborn nature, but rather the result—and also the depiction—of their living conditions. Lacking proper social and political institutions barbarians are doomed to live in a society of incessant struggle, calamity, and mutual oppression. These conditions were a nightmare for the authors of the *Lüshi chungiu* who sought the ways to perfect the social mechanism; they also served as a warning against ideas of anarchism, which gained prominence by the end of the Zhanguo period.³⁰ This may confirm David Schaberg's assertion, that pre-imperial historiography (and for this matter philosophical writings as well) treated "distant and peripheral groups less as ends in themselves than as foils for central culture."³¹

For the present discussion, however, what matters is how the above depiction of the aliens is relevant to the perception of their otherness. Indeed, if bestiality derives from the ignorance of ritual or from miserable political and social situation, then, would the change in these conditions induce transformation of beasts into human beings? Can barbarians be transformed to become Chinese and should they be transformed?

From Beasts to Humans—the Changeability of the Other

Let us return to the *Zuo zhuan*, which contains some of the harsh sayings cited above. This text, the longest pre-imperial historical

²⁹ *Lüshi chungiu*, 20.1 ("Shi jun"), p. 1322.

³⁰ See the detailed discussion of the above passage in Y. Pines and G. Shelach, "Using the Past to Serve the Present: Comparative Perspectives on Chinese and Western Theories of the Origins of the State" in *Genesis and Regeneration* (preliminary title), ed. S. Shaked et al. (Jerusalem, forthcoming).

³¹ D.C. Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge MA, 2001), p. 132.

compilation, reveals a complicated picture of the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy. Not only competition and enmity prevailed, there were many instances of cooperation and, of course, of acculturation. Perhaps the best example to the last-mentioned is a story told about the inter-state meeting of 559. Members of the so-called northern alliance, led by the state of Jin, gathered to discuss common strategy; Gouzhi, the leader of the Rong tribesmen, also attended the meeting. The Jin leader, Fan Xuanzi, suspected that the Rong incited other allies against Jin, and forbade Gouzhi from attending the meeting. In response, Gouzhi made a long speech in which he surveyed the Rong services to the state of Jin in the past, and claimed that treachery among the Jin allies was unconnected to the Rong. Then he continued:

The food, drink and clothing used by us, various Rong, are not the same as those of Chinese (Hua); gifts [presented at diplomatic meetings] do not pass back and forth; our languages are mutually incomprehensible. How could we do any evil? Yet, if you do not want us to participate in the meeting, we shall not be distressed. He recited the “Qing ying” [ode] and left.³²

Many scholars take Gouzhi’s speech at its face value as an important survey of the ethnic differences between Chinese and the aliens. Few pay attention to the irony of the *Zuo zhuan* account. Not only Gouzhi gave a speech (presumably in entirely comprehensible Chinese), which was constructed in the best tradition of Zhou rhetoric, but he also enhanced the effect of his speech by reciting the ode of the *Shi jing*, which implicitly criticized Fan Xuanzi for trusting the slanderers. This recitation was a hallmark of Gouzhi’s high diplomatic skill and of his profound adoption of the Zhou culture. The “uncouth barbarian” proved to be a highly civilized “Chinese,” and his declarations about his people’s savagery should not be taken too literally.³³ By including Gouzhi’s speech in his account of the 559 meeting, the *Zuo* author evidently ridiculed the notion of “Sino-barbarian” cleavage, expressed by some Chunqiu statesmen mentioned above.³⁴

³² *Zuo* (Xiang 14), pp. 1005–1007; I modify the translation of Schaberg (*Patterned Past*, p. 133).

³³ Self-deprecating language was common in Chunqiu diplomatic intercourse: even representatives of great powers routinely designated their states as “humble settlements” (*bi yi*).

³⁴ For more about complicated attitude of the *Zuo* toward the aliens, see Pu, “Gudai Zhongguo,” pp. 157–59.

Aside from the *Zuo zhuan*'s irony, Gouzhi's speech teaches us about the complexity of the process of acculturation by the aliens. While Gouzhi personally was deeply versed in Zhou culture, his people were denied the position of equality with other states of the Zhou realm. In the case of the Rong, who by then long lost their military vigor, such denial may be explained primarily by power considerations. Yet, cultural elements in the rejecting of the Rong equality cannot be easily dismissed. In the late Chunqiu period, as the "barbarian" superpower of Wu began dominating the Zhou world, many overlords succumbed to its military superiority, but denied it cultural equality. Even the Wu rulers' claims that their forefather was an elder scion of the Zhou ruling house, Taibo, were to no avail. Apparently, the major reason for negative views of Wu was the latter leaders' arrogant defiance of some of the Zhou ritual regulations. In 488, a Wu leader demanded of the head of the Lu government to attend an inter-state meeting; in particular, he argued that the head of the government's absence from the meeting would violate ritual norms. These claims, however, were rebuffed by the Lu envoy, Confucius' disciple, Zi Gong:

Do you consider fear of [your] great state as ritual? Your great state does not issue its commands to the overlords according to ritual; if [commands] are not issued according to ritual, how can we measure [our action]? . . . [Besides, the Wu founder,] Taibo wore official robes to cultivate Zhou ritual, but when [his younger brother] Zhongyong succeeded him, he cut his hair and tattooed his body, considering being naked [a proper] adornment. Is it really ritual?! This is another reason [for our defiance of yours orders].³⁵

Zi Gong, emboldened by Wu military setbacks, felt confident enough to openly ridicule the barbarian superpower, refusing it the right to invoke Zhou ritual rules.³⁶ Not only did the Wu leaders' adoption of the Zhou norms of inter-state intercourse remain superficial; it was their preservation of domestic clothing and hair-cut tradition that unequivocally rendered them "barbarians." Other texts similarly indicate that the process of acculturation was not an easy one; what seemed

³⁵ *Zuo* (Ai 7), p. 1641.

³⁶ These sentiments must have been shared by Zi Gong's teacher, Confucius, who reportedly referred to the state of Wu and its nemesis, another "barbarian" power of Yue, when he pronounced his controversial saying: "Xia without ruler are better than Yi and Di barbarians who have one." *Lunyu*, 3.5 ("Ba yi"), p. 34.

to be sufficiently civilized in one's eyes was still considered barbarian by others. This tension could create ironical situations, like those depicted above, or like the anecdote told in the *Guoyu*. In 474, the generation-long struggle between the two "barbarian" super-powers of the southeast, Wu and Yue, ended with the decisive victory of the Yue side. The Wu messenger begged for a mercy, urging the head of the Yue government, Fan Li, to spare his defeated state. Fan Li rejected these pleas; when the messenger persisted, Fan Li replied:

Long ago, our former rulers were sure that the Zhou dynasty would not grant them even the *zi* rank;³⁷ hence, they settled on the coastal line of the Eastern Sea, dwelling together with turtles, alligators, fish and tortoises, and spending the time at water margins with frogs and amphibians. Thus, to my shame although I have a human face, I am still a bird and a beast; how can I understand your refined words?³⁸

The irony, of course is explicit. Fan Li, a brilliant strategist and a highly intelligent statesman, became a legend by the time the cited above chapter of the *Guoyu* was compiled.³⁹ A paragon of political wisdom, he was the farthest possible removed from barbarianism. Yet, his resort to the self-deprecating beast simile was not merely a rhetorical device aimed to quell the Wu messenger's pleas. It may refer to the views, probably held by certain members of the educated elite, for whom a descendant from the "barbarian" tribe or country would remain barbarian forever, no matter how refined his behavior was.

The anecdotes surveyed above indicate that a process of crossing the boundaries between the savage and the civilized world was not entirely smooth, and that at least some heirs of the Zhou civilization were reluctant to welcome newcomers, conceiving of their identity in exclusive terms. Nonetheless, hints of cultural exclusionism remain extremely rare in Zhou texts, disappearing entirely from the middle Zhanguo period on. Much more frequent are stories of paragons of civilized behavior who came from alien origins. Such stories are abundant in the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Guoyu*,⁴⁰ as well as in many later

³⁷ *Zi*, the lowest rank due to the head of an autonomous polity in the early Zhou period.

³⁸ *Guoyu*, 21.7 ("Yue yu xia"), p. 657.

³⁹ About the role of Fan Li in Zhanguo discourse, see Zhou Xuegen, "Dui Fan Li zhixue sixiang yanjiu de yidian kanfa," *Zhongguo lishi wenxian yanjiu jikan*, 4 (1984), pp. 73–77.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, *Zuo* (Xiang 29), pp. 1161–67; (Zhao 17), pp. 1386–89; *Guoyu*, 15.2 ("Jin yu 9"), pp. 485–86.

compilations. They reflect a prevalent conviction of ancient Chinese statesmen and thinkers—any human being is transformable and changeable, and even the erstwhile barbarian can turn into a sage.

Confucius, at least insofar as the *Lunyu* may be trusted, rarely discussed the possibility of cultural transformation.⁴¹ Yet, some of his sayings indicate that he believed in the universal validity of ethical norms, which should be applied to barbarians just as to Chinese. Twice he is cited as saying that proper behavioral patterns should be observed “even in the barbarian country.”⁴² On another occasion, Confucius replied to those who criticized him for moving to live among the Yi tribesmen: “The place where superior man dwells, how can it be uncouth?”⁴³ These sayings do not amount to a coherent theory, but they strongly imply Confucius’ belief that under proper moral guidance uncouth aliens may become sufficiently civilized.

It was Confucius’ great follower, Mencius, who unequivocally indicated the possibility of cultural transformation of the aliens. Mencius believed that every human being possesses inborn good nature, which allows him to become a sage. By every human being, Mencius definitely implied aliens as well as Chinese. He clarified:

[The legendary sage ruler] Shun was born at Zhufeng, moved to Fuxia, died at Mingtiao—he was a man of the Eastern Yi. [The founder of the Zhou dynasty] King Wen was born at Qizhou, died at Bicheng—he was a man of the Western Yi. More than a thousand miles separated their lands, more than a thousand years separated their generations. But they fulfilled their aspirations in the Central States [in an identical way] as if they matched tallies. The former sage and the later sage, their principles were the same.⁴⁴

This frequently neglected passage is crucial for understanding Mencius’ views of the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy. Not only through the blessed influence of the Chinese could savages be transformed, but they could become in turn moral teachers of the Chinese. Shun and

⁴¹ The *Zuo* cites a rare case of Confucius’ admiration of the cultured ruler of a tiny and “semi-barbarian” state of Tan: “I have heard that ‘when the Son of Heaven has lost his officials [i.e. lost proper understanding of his duties], learning about the officials remains among the barbarians of the four quarters.’ I believe it.” (*Zuo* [Zhao 17], p. 1389; see also Schaberg, *Patterned Past*, p. 133); cf. a similar case in *Liji jiji*, 11 (“Tan Gong xia”), p. 294.

⁴² See *Lunyu*, 13.19 (“Zi Lu”), p. 140 and 15.6 (“Wei Ling Gong”), p. 162.

⁴³ *Lunyu*, 9.14 (“Zi han”), p. 91.

⁴⁴ *Mengzi*, 8.1 (“Li Lou xia”), p. 184.

King Wen—two of the most, perhaps *the* most, respected sages in Mencius' eyes—were of alien, “barbarian” origin. This did not prevent them from fulfilling their aspirations in the Central States (China), with blessed results for all Chinese. Mencius' passage epitomizes his belief in an equal opportunity for every human being, including erstwhile barbarians, to attain sagehood.

The idea of transformability of savageness into civilized behavior permeates Zhanguo Confucian thought. The late Zhanguo commentary on the Confucian classic of “Springs and Autumns” (*Chun qiu*), the *Gongyang zhuan*, is notorious for its strong emphasis on “Sino-barbarian” antagonism. Nevertheless, the *Gongyang zhuan* is similarly consistent in stressing the possibility of barbarians to “upgrade” their status by emulating the ritually correct behavior of the Chinese. Similar views are advocated by another commentary, the *Guliang zhuan*.⁴⁵

Late Zhanguo thinkers suggested more sophisticated explanations of the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy and its changeability. Xunzi (c. 310–218), for instance, argued:

At birth, sons of the Gan, the Yue, the Yi and the Mo cry identically, while when they grow up their customs differ from each other. This is because of [different] education.⁴⁶

This notion that education is the prime source of ethnic differences appears also in the *Lüshi chunqiu*.⁴⁷ The idea that the inborn nature of all human beings is common (or, at least, ethnically indistinguishable), while different behavioral patterns result from different socio-political conditions or different education permeates late Zhanguo thought. The *Lüshi chunqiu* elsewhere states:

The countries of the Man and the Yi have incomprehensible languages, distinct customs and different habits. They differ in all: in their clothing, caps and belts; in their palaces, living houses and places of dwellings;

⁴⁵ See He Xiu and Xu Yan, annot., *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu*, rpt. in *Shisanjing zhushu*, comp. Ruan Yuan (Beijing, 1991), 13 (Wen 9), p. 2270; 16 (Xuan 15), p. 2286; 25 (Ding 4), p. 2337; Fan Ning and Yang Shixun, annot., *Chunqiu Guliang zhuan zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 9 (Xi 18), p. 2399; 19 (Ding 4), p. 2444; 20 (Ai 13), p. 2451. For the tentative dating of the *Gongyang zhuan* to the later half of the Zhanguo period, see J. Gentz, *Das Gongyang zhuan: Auslegung und Kanonisierung der Frühlings und Herbstannalen (Chunqiu)* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 345–403.

⁴⁶ Xunzi, 1 (“Quan xue”), p. 2.

⁴⁷ “If you let a man of Chu to grow up among the Rong, or the man of Rong to grow up in Chu, then the man of Chu will speak the Rong language, while the man of Rong will speak the Chu language” (*Lüshi chunqiu*, 4.5 [“Yong zhong”], p. 232).

in their boats, chariots and utensils; in their sounds, colors, and tastes. Yet their desires are the same.⁴⁸

“Desires” here refer to the basic nature of the aliens, which remains the same despite external differences. Their nature does not differ, as the authors explain elsewhere, from that of the Chinese. Different behavioral patterns, thus, are not inborn qualities but result from different sociopolitical conditions and different education, and they unequivocally lack racial aspects, as suggested by Dikötter. Zhanguo philosophers firmly believed in transformability of the savages.⁴⁹ While the historical writings cited above indicate that the process of acculturation was never entirely smooth, this did not prevent the various thinkers from believing in the possibility and the desirability of transforming the aliens. Today they might have been beasts, tomorrow they could—and should—become humans.

Critics of the “Chinese Superiority” Paradigm

The discussion heretofore suggests that the pre-imperial discourse harbored two basic premises of “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy. First, Chinese were superior to the barbarians; secondly, the differences between the two groups were not inborn and hence changeable. Yet, most of the texts discussed above belong to what may be broadly defined as the “Confucian” (*Ru*) school of thought.⁵⁰ Did members of the contending schools share these premises? A brief survey suggests that while none of the known Zhanguo thinkers explicitly challenged the belief in transformability of the barbarians, some, to the contrary, questioned the premise of Chinese cultural superiority.

Not surprisingly, most challenges to the Chinese superiority paradigm came from those thinkers who disputed the pivotal role of ritual in social life. Mozi, for instance, was one of the most vociferous opponents

⁴⁸ *Lüshi chunqiu*, 19.6 (“Wei yu”), p. 1293.

⁴⁹ This optimistic belief in human transformability under the blessed influence of proper education led some radical thinkers to suggest that even the beasts can be somehow transformed under the sages’ impact. See the insightful discussion by R. Sterckx, “Transforming the Beasts: Animals and Music in Early China,” *TP*, 86 (2000) pp. 1–46.

⁵⁰ Hereafter I refer to the Zhanguo “schools” of thought for purely heuristic purposes; it is not my intention here to discuss whether or not such “schools” existed in reality.

of certain ritual norms, such as lavish funerals. During his polemics with traditional-minded supporters of rich funerals, Mozi suggested that the Tradition is not necessarily sacrosanct:

This [upholding the tradition] means considering habitual undertakings as proper, and customs as right. Yet, in the past to the east of Yue there was a state of Bimu; when the first son was born, they used to dissect his body and eat him, calling this “to behave appropriately towards the younger brother.” When the grandfather died, they would carry the grandmother and abandon her, saying: “it is impossible to dwell together with the ghost’s wife.” Superiors considered this proper government; inferiors considered this custom; they never stopped doing so, regarding this inexorable practice. But is it really the way of benevolence and propriety? This is what it means “to consider habitual undertakings as proper, and customs as right.” To the south of Chu there is a state of the Yan people. When a parent dies, they wait until his flesh is rotten, throw it away, and then bury his bones; thereby the son completes his filial obligation. To the west of Qin there is a state of Yiqu. When a parent dies, they gather firewood and burn down his body; and when the flame rises up they call it “ascending far off”; only then does the son complete his filial obligation. Superiors consider this proper government; inferiors consider this custom; they never stop doing so, regarding this inexorable practice. But is this really the way of benevolence and propriety? This is what it means “to consider habitual undertakings as proper, and customs as right.” If we examine [the funerals] from the point of view of comparing these three states, then they are too meager. If we examine them from the point of view of the superior men of the Central States, then they are too profuse. These are too profuse, those are too meager, but yet, each funeral has its regulations.⁵¹

Mozi’s depiction of the aliens’ customs is far from laudatory, and in this it does not differ much from the views expressed by other Chinese thinkers. Yet, unlike Confucians, Mozi did not regard Zhou rites as the criterion for proper behavior. Hence, his comparison conveys a sense of relativism: Chinese and aliens’ customs are equally wrong, and Chinese have no reason to emphasize their superiority. Elsewhere, Mozi emphatically rejected his opponents’ claim in favor of the aliens’ inferiority:

Yangwen, the ruler of Lu, said to Master Mozi: “To the south of Chu, there is a state of the Yan people; when the first son is born, they dissect his body and eat him, calling this ‘to behave appropriately

⁵¹ Wu Yujiang, *Mozi jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1994), 25 (“Jie zang xia”), pp. 267–68.

towards the younger brother.' When it is tasty, they leave [some flesh] to their ruler; the ruler is glad and then he rewards the father. Is it not an evil custom?"

Master Mozi said: "You have the same among the customs of the Central States. When a ruler executes the father and rewards his son, is it different from eating the son and rewarding his father? If one does not resort to benevolence and righteousness, how can he discard the Yi people eating their son?"⁵²

Mozi suggested moral rather than ritual criteria for evaluating proper behavior. Yet, these criteria did not imply automatically that Chinese are superior to their neighbors; to the contrary, both sides fell short of Mozi's rigid demands. Mozi's rejection of ritual eventually led him to a notion of basic equality between "us" and "them."

Other thinkers were usually less explicit when discussing the possible equality between Chinese and the aliens, although they might have shared this vision. Zhuangzi (d. ca. 286), for instance, argued for a basic equality of "all things" and ridiculed the pretensions of the "Central States" to be the pivot of the universe; he compared them to "a tiny grain in a storehouse."⁵³ Elsewhere Zhuangzi attributed to the progenitor of the Zhou, Tai Wang, a provocative saying: "Is there any difference in being my subject or the Di subject?"⁵⁴ Nonetheless, this thinker evidently found little interest in the lives of the aliens, and found better examples to appall his traditional-minded audience. Philosophical attacks on the paradigm of Chinese superiority generally were not pronounced in Zhanguo discourse.⁵⁵

Unlike philosophy, practical considerations might have been the main impetus for discarding the paradigm of Chinese superiority. To be sure, the process of cultural borrowing from the neighbors existed throughout the known history of China, and the examples are too abundant to be surveyed here. Usually such borrowing occurred through a long process of diffusion. Sometimes, however,

⁵² *Mozi*, 49 ("Lu wen"), p. 735.

⁵³ Chen Guying, *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* (Beijing, 1994), 17 ("Qiu shui"), p. 411. Cf. Zhuangzi's pejorative remark that "the gentlemen of the Central States are versed in ritual and propriety, but are boorish in understanding the man's heart" (*Zhuangzi*, 21 ["Tian Zifang"], p. 532).

⁵⁴ *Zhuangzi*, 28 ("Rang wang"), p. 747.

⁵⁵ An interesting story that hails the advantages of "barbarians'" simplicity over the excessiveness and artificiality of Chinese culture is present in the "Qin Annals" in the *Shiji* (5, pp. 192–93). If Sima Qian (ca. 145–90 BCE) had adopted this story from an earlier source, this may be another example of the Zhanguo thinkers' rejection of the paradigm of Chinese superiority.

it reflected a conscious choice of the decision makers. One such case, reported in the collection of the *Zhanguo* anecdotes, the *Zhanguo ce*, incited bitter controversy. King Wuling of Zhao (r. 325–299) reportedly decided in 307 to adopt “barbarian clothing” to facilitate the use of cavalry. This decision appalled many of the kings’ aides and led to extensive court debates. While few would doubt that the anecdote concerning the king’s decision is of dubious veracity,⁵⁶ it is nevertheless interesting evidence of conflicting approaches among the members of the educated elite regarding the adoption of the aliens’ ways. The king’s younger brother, Cheng, claimed:

I heard: Central States are the place where cleverness and wisdom dwell; myriad things and wealth are gathered; here sages and worthies are teaching, and benevolence and propriety are implemented; here the *Odes*, the *Documents*, rites and music are used, various skills are practiced; it is the place to be visited by those from afar, and this [Way] is what the Man and the Yi must implement. Now the king discards this and adopts the clothing of the distant regions, changes old teachings, modifies old ways, goes against the people’s heart, turns his back to the knowledgeable, abandons the Central States. I would like you, the Great King, to reconsider.⁵⁷

To this emphatic request the king replied by elucidating the practical advantages of his extraordinary decision:

Clothing must facilitate the use; rites must facilitate the undertakings. Therefore, the sages examine local [customs] and follow whatever is appropriate; rely on their undertakings and determine the rites; thereby they benefit the people and make their state wealthy. The people of the Ouyue cut their hair and tattoo the body; cross their arms and fold robes to the left. In the state of Great Wu, the people blacken their teeth and scar their forehead, wear caps made of scale and stitched crudely with an awl. Their rites and clothing are not the same, but their usefulness is identical. Thus, different localities require change in the use; different undertakings require modification of rites. Therefore, sages do not use a single thing if thereby they can benefit the people, and do not follow the same rites if thereby they can facilitate the undertakings.⁵⁸

King Wuling lived in the age of the collapse of Zhou ritual system, when the norms of antiquity were considered by the increasing num-

⁵⁶ For the strong possibility that the “barbarian clothes” anecdote was patterned after the first chapter of the *Shang jun shu*, see Zheng Liangshu, *Shang Yang ji qi xue-pai* (Shanghai, 1989), pp. 9–19.

⁵⁷ He Jianzhang, *Zhanguo ce zhushi* (Beijing, 1991), 19.4 (“Zhao ce”), p. 678.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 678.

ber of statesmen and thinkers as inadequate to cope with the pressing domestic and foreign problems. The need to ensure military successes was urgent enough to invalidate the desire to preserve “Chinese” ways. While authors of the anecdote were preoccupied with the concept of “changing with the times” rather than with the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy,⁵⁹ the king’s response is still highly relevant for our discussion. It befits Mozi’s cultural relativism, and may be representative of a significant intellectual undercurrent of the Zhanguo age. In the later generations only a few thinkers, most noteworthy some devoted Buddhists, would be so straightforward in their recommendation to adopt foreign ways.

The Reasons for Pre-Imperial Inclusiveness

Zhanguo thinkers laid foundations for Chinese political culture of the subsequent millennia; their views on different topics often became paradigmatic for the generations of imperial thinkers. Understandably, the premises of Chinese superiority and of changeability of the barbarians became part and parcel of imperial thought. However, on some issues imperial thinkers suggested radically new departures. For the matter of our discussion, the most significant is the exclusive view of the aliens, suggested first in the Han period. The leading Han historian, Ban Gu (32–92 CE), powerfully advocated this approach. After his lengthy survey of centuries-long futile attempts of the Han rulers to get rid of the Xiongnu menace, Ban Gu states:

Thus, when the former kings measured the land, they placed in its middle the royal domain, divided [the land] into nine provinces, arranged five circuits, fixed the tribute of [each] land, and regulated the internal and the external. They either adopted punitive and administrative measures, or illuminated civilian virtue—this is because the power of the distant and the near differ. Therefore, the *Chun qiu* treats all the Xia as insiders, while the Yi and Di as outsiders.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For the concept of “changing with the times” and its importance in late pre-imperial and early imperial discourse, see M. Kern, “Changing with the Times: The ‘Confucian’ Career of a ‘Legalist’ Dogma in Western Han Ritualism,” paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies annual meeting (San Diego, March 2000).

⁶⁰ Ban Gu refers here to the *Gongyang zhuan* interpretation of the *Chun qiu*; see the discussion below.

The people of the Yi and Di are greedy and seek profits; they wear their hair loose and fold the robe to the left; they have a human face and beasts' heart. Their badges and clothes are distinct and customs differ from that of the Central States; their food and drinks are not the same, and their language is incomprehensible. They flee to dwell in the northern borderlands, in the cold and wet wasteland. They follow their herds across the grasslands, and hunt for a living. They are separated [from us] by mountains and gorges, and barred by the desert: thereby Heaven and Earth sever the internal from the external. Therefore, the sage kings treated them as beasts and birds, did not make treaties with them and were not engaged in offensive expeditions: if you make a treaty with them, they spend the gifts and then deceive you; if you attack them, then the army is exhausted and you induce banditry. Their lands cannot be tilled for living; their people cannot be treated as subjects; therefore they must be regarded as external and not internal, as strangers and not as relatives. The cultivation through proper government does not reach these people, proper calendar cannot be given to their lands; when they arrive, we must block and repel them; when they leave we must make preparations and be on guard against them. When they admire rules of propriety and submit tribute, we should accept it in accordance with rules of ritual yielding; we should not sever the loose rein and leave for them the minute details. This is the constant Way applied by the sage kings to repel the *manyi* barbarians.⁶¹

Ban Gu resorted to the familiar Chunqiu-Zhanguo clichés in depicting the barbarians, but his conclusions differ markedly from that of the pre-imperial thinkers. Those, as the above survey suggests, shared the conviction that the boundaries separating savages from civilization can be crossed under proper conditions, and in fact, that many barbarians in the past have already crossed them. Bestiality of the Other was a temporary condition, to be taken into ad-hoc consideration only. For Ban Gu, to the contrary, this bestiality was an inalienable feature of the barbarians (at least of the Xiongnu and other northern nomads); hence any possible contact with them was profitless and self-defeating. For Ban Gu, "this culture of Ours" was a unique asset of the Central Kingdom, which should not be shared with the Other. Physical separation from the nomads, mandated by Heaven and Earth, was in his eyes a blessing.

Ban Gu's views were not representative of his age; and he admitted that his was a minority opinion.⁶² Yet, this minority was not negligible,

⁶¹ Ban Gu, *Han shu* (Beijing, 1997), 94, pp. 3833–34.

⁶² Limits of space prevent us here from dealing adequately with ideological and personal reasons which encouraged Ban Gu to adopt his isolationist view. It is inter-

as it comprised among others such an important thinker as Zheng Xuan (127–200 CE), who opined that the differences between Chinese and aliens are determined by their distinct habitat.⁶³ This view, aptly named by Dikötter “environmental determinism” inspired many late imperial thinkers to adopt exclusive approach towards the “immutable” barbarians.⁶⁴ Yet, none of the known Chunqiu-Zhanguo texts supports this view, and we may plausibly assume that an idea of the barbarians’ inborn or strictly environmentally determined savagery did not appear prior to dynastic unification. Why did the exclusive view remain unknown in pre-imperial discourse, and what spurred its appearance in the age of the unified empire?

The answer to this question is twofold: ideological and historical. Ideologically, Chinese statesmen and thinkers since the fifth century BCE unanimously arrived at the conclusion that the only solution to the continuous and increasingly devastating warfare was the unification of the realm under a single ruler. This principle, manifested by Mencius’ dictum “stability is in unity”⁶⁵ implied that no independent polity should remain within the civilized world, All under Heaven (*tianxia*). Elsewhere I discussed in greater detail the origins and genesis of the “Great Unity” (*da yitong*) paradigm, and its influence on Chinese political culture.⁶⁶ Here we should ask whether or not the would-be-unified *tianxia* comprised only the Zhou world, or included the alien realm as well.

The answer to this question is not easy. A survey of pre-imperial historical and philosophical literature clearly suggests that Chinese

esting to mention, however, that his brother, the renowned general and diplomat, Ban Chao (d. 102 CE), spent his life in pursuing exactly those aims to which Ban Gu so firmly opposed. It should also be noticed that Ban Gu was not as staunch an adherent of the notion of aliens’ bestiality as the above passage suggests. See for instance his extremely positive treatment of the Xiongnu leader, Jin Midi, who surrendered to the Han and later became a loyal and filial exemplar (*Han shu* 68, pp. 2959–67). For an interesting comparison between Ban Gu’s approach with that of Sima Qian, see Di Cosmo, *Ancient China*, pp. 271–72.

⁶³ See his glosses on the *Liji* in: Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, annot., *Liji zhengyi*, rpt. *Shisanjing zhushu*, 12 (“Wang zhi”), p. 1338. Generally, however, Han ritualists tended to emphasize the possibility of the aliens, such as the Xiongnu, to adopt civilized norms of behavior, particularly mourning rites (see M. Brown, “Men in Mourning: Ritual, Politics, and Human Nature in Warring States and Han China, 453 B.C.–A.D. 220” [Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2002], pp. 59–61).

⁶⁴ See Dikötter, *Discourse*, pp. 7–8; cf. H. Tillman, “Chen Liang,” 408 ff.

⁶⁵ *Mengzi*, 1.6 (“Liang Hui Wang shang”), p. 18.

⁶⁶ See Y. Pines, “‘The One that pervades All’ in Ancient Chinese Political Thought: Origins of ‘The Great Unity’ Paradigm,” *TP*, 86/4–5 (2000), pp. 280–324.

thinkers who sought unification of the realm concentrated on the political entities within the boundaries of the Zhou world. This was not a quest for the unity against a common enemy, as suggested by some scholars.⁶⁷ The reason for focusing on the Zhou world as the primary object of unification is that during the four centuries following the Rong and Di incursions into the Central Plain in the eighth-seventh centuries BCE, the major source of instability for the dwellers of the Zhou world were neighboring states, their “brethren” who shared common ritual and textual culture.⁶⁸ Aliens were a marginal player in Chinese politics of pre-unification centuries, and their place in pro-unification discussions is, accordingly, marginal as well. For many Chunqiu-Zhanguo statesmen All under Heaven was therefore more-or-less identical with the Zhou world.⁶⁹

This narrow definition of All under Heaven reflected political circumstances of the Chunqiu-Zhanguo age, but it was not philosophically stipulated. That most unification discussions did not focus on the aliens does not mean that the thinkers consciously wanted to leave them beyond the unified world. On the contrary, aliens were regarded as an inalienable, albeit marginal part of the future empire. This sentiment is strongly pronounced, for instance, in Mozi’s writings. Mozi’s vision of indiscriminating “universal love” (*jian’ai*) explicitly included the aliens as equal beneficiaries of this universal solution to social and political strife. Mozi emphasized that the paragon of universal love, the sage king Yu, benefited in his enterprise not only his Xia subjects, but the “barbarians” as well.⁷⁰ Those, just like the Chinese, were supposed to share the gains of universal fraternity.

Mozi was not alone in presenting the aliens as the ultimate object of the sage’s actions. The inclusiveness of Yu’s field of action was

⁶⁷ For this view, see, for instance, K. Büniger, “Concluding Remarks on Two Aspects of the Chinese Unitary State as Compared with the European State System,” in *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China*, ed. S.R. Schram (Hong Kong, 1987), pp. 321–22.

⁶⁸ A partial exception to this pattern may be the Wu and Yue dominance in the late sixth-early fifth centuries BCE. Yet, although ritual purists, as mentioned above, regarded these states as “barbarian,” this perspective was not necessarily shared by most statesmen of that age, including even the rulers of Confucius’ home state of Lu. Those viewed Wu and Yue as legitimate, albeit ritually deficient players in Zhou politics, not as the threat to the Zhou culture.

⁶⁹ For more about the boundaries of pre-imperial *tianxia*, see Y. Pines, “Changing Views of *tianxia* in Pre-imperial Discourse,” *Oriens Extremus*, 43.1–2 (2002), pp. 101–116.

⁷⁰ See *Mozi*, 15 (“*Jian’ai zhong*”), pp. 160–61.

emphasized also in the *Lüshi chunqiu*. Mencius mentioned several times the supposed desire of the aliens to be incorporated as swiftly as possible in the empire built by Tang, the founder of the Shang dynasty. Xunzi likewise stressed that although aliens may not be ruled directly, their lands should be nevertheless unequivocally incorporated into the unified empire. Thus, universal inclusiveness of the future empire became by the late Zhanguo one of the criteria for defining the true unification.⁷¹

While most thinkers despised the aliens' ritual inferiority, they never denied them a right to enjoy the sages' beneficent impact. The "Zhong yong" chapter of the *Liji*, emphasizes that the sage's fame "permeates the Central States and is implemented into the lands of the Man and Mo."⁷² Thus, the distant barbarian tribes were supposed to be embraced by the sage's universal munificence. This point is most unequivocally pronounced in the *Gongyang zhuan*. While the *Gongyang* is unique in pre-imperial texts because of its relatively strong emphasis on "Sino-barbarian" (*Hua-yi*) dichotomy, it is also the strongest proponent of the inclusive view.⁷³ The *Gongyang* authors postulated that "nothing is external" to the True King (*wang zhe*),⁷⁴ and made numerous efforts to combine this sense of inclusiveness with their contempt for the aliens. The solution is presented in the *Gongyang* explanation of the "great meaning" of the *Chun qiu*:

The *Chun qiu* treats its state [i.e. Lu] as internal, and All the Xia as external; it treats All the Xia as internal and the Yi and Di as external. The true king's desire is to unify All under Heaven. Why should he then use the words "external" and "internal"? It means that he begins with those who are near.⁷⁵

The *Gongyang* suggests, thus, that while the aliens are currently incompatible with the refined Xia, they would by no means remain beyond

⁷¹ See these instances respectively in *Lüshi chunqiu*, 22.5 ("Qiu ren"), p. 1514; *Mengzi*, 2.11 ("Liang Hui Wang xia"), p. 45, and 6.5 ("Teng Wen Gong xia"), p. 148; *Xunzi*, 18 ("Zheng lun"), pp. 328–29. Xunzi criticized the erroneous views according to which the Shang and Zhou founders failed to incorporate the southern lands of Chu and Yue under their rule: this failure would presumably seriously impair their sagehood and diminish their role as paragons of universal rule.

⁷² *Liji zhengyi*, 53 ("Zhong yong"), p. 1634.

⁷³ See the detailed discussion by Yanaka Shinji, "Sengoku jidai kôki ni okeru tai ittô shisô no tenkai," *Nihon Chûgoku gakkai gojû shûnen kinen ronbunshû* (Tôkyô, 1996), pp. 1306–9.

⁷⁴ *Gongyang zhuan*, 1 (Yin 6), p. 2199.

⁷⁵ *Gongyang zhuan*, 19 (Cheng 15), p. 2297.

the future unified world ruled by the True King. The aliens' inferior position is merely temporary. This explanation may be applicable to the entire body of pre-imperial texts: their apparent lack of interest in the aliens is not ideologically motivated but reflects a different set of priorities. The unification of the Zhou lands was only a prelude to the full unification of All under Heaven, all the known world.

The ideological emphasis on the universal inclusiveness of the future unified realm did not merely reflect wishful thinking of pre-imperial statesmen. Their assertion that the aliens could be ultimately incorporated into the civilized world relied on the actual political and cultural experience of the Chunqiu-Zhanguo age. History seemingly taught that the aliens were indeed changeable. After all, not only specific personalities successfully accomplished the process of acculturation; the entire ethnic groups similarly transferred their cultural affinities. The course of interaction with the aliens throughout the pre-imperial period was much less marked by the notion of "Sino-barbarian" dichotomy than is suggested by the ritual-oriented texts mentioned above.

The very geographical setting of Sino-alien interaction facilitated mutual cultural influences. *Pace* late Zhanguo ritual texts, which try to place the aliens at the fringes of Chinese world, this was not the case during most of the Zhou period.⁷⁶ The Man, the Yi, and since the eighth-seventh centuries BCE the Rong and the Di tribes often lived within the Zhou heartland, sometimes in close proximity to the Zhou states.⁷⁷ They were engaged in the diplomatic and military life of the Zhou world, their leaders intermarried with the ruling houses of the Zhou states, and their settlements occasionally served as a refuge for fugitive Zhou statesmen. Moreover, some statesmen of alien stock made brilliant careers in Zhou states.⁷⁸ In short, interactions among

⁷⁶ For examples of these texts, see the "Yu gong" chapter of the *Shang shu* (Kong Yingda, annot., *Shang shu zhengyi*, rpt. *Shisanjing* 6, pp. 146–53; and the "Wang zhi" chapter of the *Liji* (*Liji jiyue* 15, pp. 359–60).

⁷⁷ The *Zuo* reports, for instance, that in 478 the lord of Wei observed the Rong settlement from the Wei capital's wall, and was appalled by such proximity (*Zuo* [Ai 17], p. 1710). Wei was located in the heartland of the Central Plain, to the north of the Yellow River.

⁷⁸ All these may be exemplified by a single example. Lord Wen of Jin (r. 636–628) was born of a Rong woman, married (among others) a wife of the Di stock, and spent eleven years in exile among the Di. His maternal relative, Hu Yan, made a brilliant career at the Jin court after Lord Wen's ascendancy. Hu's Rong origin never seemed to hinder his career.

Chinese and aliens were much more multi-faceted than Ban Gu would like us to believe.

By the Zhanguo period, the Rong, Di and Yi statelets began disappearing from historical accounts. In all likelihood, Chinese states absorbed their neighbors.⁷⁹ It seems that the absorption was cultural and not only military, as by the age of the imperial unification we can no longer identify alien pockets on the Central Plain. We may plausibly assume, therefore, that the majority of the aliens living within the Zhou world were incorporated by the neighboring “Chinese” states, providing thereby a good example of successful acculturation.

Military subjugation by the Chinese was not the only pattern of acculturation of the aliens. Those non-Xia ethnic groups which succeeded in establishing powerful independent polities likewise underwent the process of integration into the Zhou ritual culture. This process might have been triggered by the necessity to facilitate diplomatic ties with the Zhou states, and also by the influx of statesmen from the Central Plain, whose role was often instrumental in the alien polities’ ascendancy. Three cases may exemplify this process: the “Sinification” (or, more correctly, the Zhou-fication) of the states of Wu, Yue, and Zhongshan.

The states of Wu and Yue were very different from the Zhou states, both in the outlook of their dwellers, as mentioned above, and in their material civilization, as suggested by archeological surveys.⁸⁰ The initial encroaches of Wu on the Chinese statelets since 584 upset ritual-minded Lu statesmen, whose laments about the *manyi* “barbarian” invasion are recorded in the *Zuo zhuan*.⁸¹ However, by the late Chunqiu period, as both Wu and Yue became increasingly engaged in power struggles within the Zhou world, this required the adoption of certain Zhou rites, as well as forging a favorable genealogy that connected Wu to the founders of the Zhou dynasty, and Yue to the legendary sage king Yu. The process of acculturation was speeded

⁷⁹ The *Zuo* suggests that the aliens’ statelets existed on the lands inappropriate for agricultural activities (see, for instance, *Zuo* [Xiang 14], pp. 1006–7). Perhaps, population growth and broad implementation of iron utensils since the fourth century BCE both necessitated and facilitated the Zhou states encroachment on the wastelands in their vicinity, resulting in the disappearance of aliens’ polities.

⁸⁰ For the Wu and Yue civilizations, see L. von Falkenhausen, “The Waning of the Bronze Age: Material Culture and Social Developments, 770–481 BC,” in *CHAC*, pp. 525–39.

⁸¹ See *Zuo* (Cheng 7), pp. 832–33; (Zhao 16), p. 1376.

up, we may assume, by the migration of many statesmen from different Chunqiu states to the newly ascending superpowers. The newcomers, who were naturally well-versed in Zhou rites, often made brilliant careers, reaching the apex of power in their new states.⁸² Although the discussion in the second section above indicates that the process of acculturation of the southeastern powers was not smooth, it was sufficiently successful to incorporate these states retroactively into Zhou history. Many Zhanguo texts eagerly tell anecdotes from Wu and Yue histories, and only rarely do these anecdotes convey a sense of dealing with exotic Others. On the contrary, Wu and Yue rulers and statesmen were absorbed into a common stock of model monarchs and ministers disregarding their distinct origin.⁸³

Both Wu and Yue disappeared from the Zhou world within a century after their ascendancy, and it may be argued that their acculturation was merely a post-factum construction by Zhanguo historians and thinkers. In the case of the third alien polity, the state of Zhongshan established in the sixth century BCE by the Di tribesmen in northern China, we may trace the process of its acculturation with greater clarity. After a brief occupation by the state of Wei, Zhongshan regained its independence in 377 and played an important role in Zhanguo politics until it was finally annexed by the state of Zhao in 295. Zhongshan figures less prominently than Wu and Yue in Zhanguo texts, and some texts make occasional references to its cultural backwardness. Yet, the same texts commonly convey a feeling that the state of Zhongshan, albeit improperly ruled, did not differ markedly from its Chinese neighbors.⁸⁴

⁸² The ascendancy of Wu is directly linked in the *Zuo* to the activities of an envoy from the state of Jin, a former Chu statesman, Qu Wuchen, who presumably introduced in 584 war chariots to the then underdeveloped Wu. All the leading figures of the state of Wu at the zenith of its power were of northern origin, while their immediate ancestors served at the Chu court (such as the brilliant strategist Wu Zixu and the Wu prime-minister, Bo Pi); the leading Yue statesmen Fan Li and Wen Zhong were also presumably of northern stock.

⁸³ See stories about these states scattered in late Zhanguo and early Han texts, such as *Liushi chunqiu*, *Han Feizi*, *Zhanguo ce*, *Shiji* and other texts.

⁸⁴ Zhanguo references to Zhongshan history were conveniently gathered by Wang Xianqian in *Xianyu Zhongshan Guoshi biao*, *Jiangyu tushuo bushi* (Shanghai, 1993). For the references to Zhongshan cultural “backwardness,” see, for instance, *Liushi chunqiu*, 16.1 (“Xian shi”), p. 946. Yet, in the same chapter Zhongshan is discussed as an albeit deficient, but entirely “Chinese” state, akin in its faults to the state of Qi. Several anecdotes about Zhongshan statesmen are collected in “Zhongshan ce” section of the *Zhanguo ce*. For more about Zhongshan history, see Goi Naohiro, *Zhongguo gudai shi lun gao*, trans. by Jiang Zhenqing and Li Delong (Beijing, 2001), pp. 216–50.

Luckily enough, we are not dependent exclusively on textual evidence when dealing with the state of Zhongshan. Archeological research, particularly the 1974–1978 discovery of the Zhongshan royal cemetery in Pingshan, Hebei, gives us a fascinating and unbiased look at the late Zhongshan culture. Not only the material culture of Zhongshan indicates its adoption of the Central Plain influences;⁸⁵ the same can be ascertained also with regard to its spiritual culture. In particular, a lengthy bronze inscription on the great cauldron named “Zhongshan Wang Cuo *da ding*” is perhaps the most Confucianized inscription currently available from pre-imperial China. Its content has been discussed in greater detail elsewhere,⁸⁶ and here I shall confine myself to only one point: this is the single pre-Qin inscription, which contains such pivotal terms of Chinese ethical discourse as *li* (ritual), *ren* (benevolence), and *zhong* (loyalty). Ironically, the “sinitized” state of Zhongshan was destroyed by the “Chinese” state of Zhao, which, as mentioned above, eagerly and successfully adopted “barbarian” clothes. Some astute Zhanguo political analysts, such as Han Feizi (d. 233), did not fail to notice that Zhongshan failure resulted from its radical Confucianization; in Han Feizi’s opinion, it was not the only instance in which the aliens’ adoption of Chinese ways led to their destruction.⁸⁷

Thus, Zhanguo statesmen did not lack examples of successful acculturation of the aliens. What is particularly interesting, however, is that the process was two-directional; namely, “barbarization” of the so-called Chinese occurred with no less frequency than “Sinification” of the barbarians. This crossing of cultural boundaries made them less rigid, and further narrowed the gap between the aliens and the Xia.

Zhanguo texts frequently convey a feeling that the peripheral states of Qin, Chu and possibly Yan were beyond the immediate boundaries of Chinese cultural realm. Mencius, for instance, ridiculed his Chu opponent, Xu Xing, saying that Xu was merely “a southern barbarian

⁸⁵ See N. Di Cosmo, “The Northern Frontier in Pre-imperial China,” in *CHAC*, pp. 949–50.

⁸⁶ See G.L. Mattos, “Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to Reading Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. E.L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 104–11.

⁸⁷ See Wang Xianshen, *Han Feizi jiji* (Beijing, 1998), 32 (“Wai chu shuo zuo shang”), p. 281; cf. *Zhanguo ce*, 33.7 (“Zhongshan ce”), p. 1246. For a similar story about the state of Xu, established by the Yi tribesmen, which was lost due to its eager following the path of “benevolence and propriety,” see *Han Feizi*, 49 (“Wu du”), p. 445.

who speaks a bird's tongue."⁸⁸ The *Gongyang zhuan* similarly conveys a strong sense of the Chu otherness, regarding this state as the major opponent of Chinese civilization.⁸⁹ The state of Qin is depicted in the *Zhanguo ce* as "having the common customs with Rong and Di; a state with a tiger's and wolf's heart; greedy, profit-seeking and untrustworthy, which knows nothing of ritual, propriety and virtuous behavior."⁹⁰ The same source cites the alleged sayings of the Yan statesmen who portray their state as *manyi* "barbarian."⁹¹ These examples can be easily multiplied.⁹² In light of these sayings, many modern scholars tended to believe that the peripheral states were late newcomers to the Zhou cultural realm, and dismissed as fictional stories of their early ties with Zhou, told by the Han historian Sima Qian (c. 145–90 BCE).⁹³

More recently, archeological studies suggested a different picture, which may partly support Sima Qian's narrative. The state of Chu, for instance, prior to the sixth century BCE essentially preserved Zhou ritual norms in its burial customs, and its material culture definitely belonged to the Zhou civilization. Furthermore, the *Zuo zhuan* never regards Chu as a barbarian country; the Lu statesmen, for instance, named it merely a country of a different clan, not a land of "barbarians" (*manyi*). Chu, albeit different from the states established by the descendants of the Ji clan, was never treated as the fearsome Other, as was the case with the early state of Wu, for instance. Chu's otherness, then, was mostly a Zhanguo phenomenon. In all likelihood, Chu's departure from the Zhou ritual norms since the sixth century BCE reflected a conscious decision by the Chu ruling elite to challenge the Zhou supremacy.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *Mengzi*, 5.4 ("Teng Wen Gong shang"), p. 125.

⁸⁹ See, for instance, the *Gongyang zhuan*, 11 (Xi 21), p. 2256; 23 (Zhao 16), p. 2324.

⁹⁰ *Zhanguo ce*, 24.8 ("Wei ce 3"), p. 907.

⁹¹ *Zhanguo ce*, 29.6, ("Yan ce 1"), p. 1095; 31.5 ("Yan ce 3"), p. 1194.

⁹² On Qin's alleged "barbarianism," see also *Liushi chunqiu*, 24.1 ("Bu gou"), p. 1584; *Gongyang zhuan*, 12 (Xi 33), p. 2264; 22 (Zhao 5), p. 2319; and Li Si's memorandum in the *Shiji* (87, p. 2544).

⁹³ For Sima Qian's accounts about the early ties of Qin, Chu and Yan with the Zhou house, see *Shiji* (Beijing, 1997), 5, pp. 173–79; 40, pp. 1689–94; 34, pp. 1549–51. For the most recent example of modern scholars' criticism of Sima Qian's account, see C.A. Cook and B.B. Blakeley, "Introduction," in *Defining Chu*, eds. C.A. Cook and J.S. Major (Honolulu, 1999), p. 2.

⁹⁴ For archeological analyses of the early Chu culture, see Falkenhausen, "The Waning of the Bronze Age," pp. 514–16ff.; Li Ling, trans. by L. Falkenhausen, "On the Typology of Chu Bronzes," *Beiträge zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Archäologie*, 11 (1991), pp. 57–113; Xu Shaohua, "Chu Culture," in *Defining Chu*, pp. 21–23ff.; Yang Quanki, *Chu wenhua* (Beijing, 2000), 12–32. The *Zuo* cites a Lu statesman who

The case of Qin is quite similar to that of Chu. While many Zhanguo and early Han sources routinely depict Qin as a “barbarian” state, this was definitely not the case during the Chunqiu period. Evidence from Qin graves suggests that during that period the Qin elite strongly adhered to Zhou ritual regulations, minor violations notwithstanding, and that Qin was an inseparable part of the Zhou ritual realm.⁹⁵ Qin leaders of that age may have even cherished hopes of becoming the leaders of the Zhou world: bronze and chime-stones inscriptions cast by the order of the Qin rulers from Lord Wu (r. 697–678) to Lord Jing (r. 576–537) consistently emphasize that the lords’ ancestors received Heaven’s mandate (*tian ming*), and that they would bring peace and stability to their state, “bring about the submission of all the many Man [tribes],”⁹⁶ “cautiously care for the Man and the Xia,”⁹⁷ and “broadly spread out over the Man and the Xia.”⁹⁸ The Qin rulers’ hubris and their firm belief that they received Heaven’s mandate aside,⁹⁹ these claims indicate that Qin considered itself a

dissuaded his ruler from allying with Chu: “They are not of our clan (*zulei*), and their heart must be different” (Cheng 4, p. 818). This saying is sometimes erroneously translated as referring to Chu’s distinct racial origin (see, for instance, Dikötter, *Discourse*, p. 3), which is wrong: in the *Zuo*, *zulei* refers exclusively to the lineal descent group (cf. *Zuo* [Xi 31], p. 487). Chu’s departure from the common Zhou norms may be explained both by its expansion into the non-Zhou south, where it might have been influenced by local ethnic groups, and also by the conscious decision of its assertive sixth century BCE rulers to establish themselves as an alternative locus of political legitimacy versus the house of Zhou.

⁹⁵ For a traditional view of Qin as a “barbarian other,” see e.g. D. Bodde, *China’s First Unifier: A Study of the Ch’in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssu* 李斯 280–208 B.C. (Hong Kong, 1967), p. 2ff. For a radically different interpretation of the recent archeological and epigraphic data, see M. Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven, 2000), p. 63ff.; for a similar reconstruction of Qin history based on the received texts, see Yoshimoto Michimasa, “Shinshi kenkyū jōsetsu,” *Shirin* 78/3 (1995), pp. 34–67. Qin material culture is thoroughly compared to that of the Zhou realm by L. von Falkenhausen in his “The Waning of the Bronze Age,” pp. 486–97; see also *idem*, “Diversity and Integration Along the Western Peripheries of Late Bronze Age China: Archaeological Perspectives on the State of Qin (771–209 BC),” (unpublished paper). Falkenhausen concludes that Qin culture definitely belonged to the Zhou civilization, despite certain local idiosyncrasies.

⁹⁶ The eight Qin bells, cited from Mattos, “Eastern Zhou,” p. 113; cf. Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, p. 85.

⁹⁷ Qin Gong-bo inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, p. 73; cf. Qin chime-stones inscription, Fragment 2, *ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁸ Qin-gui inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, p. 79.

⁹⁹ See a discussion of Qin’s concept of Heaven’s mandate by Zang Zhifei, “Qin ren de ‘shou ming’ yishi yu Qin guo de fazhan—Qin Gong-zhong mingwen tanwei,” in *Qin wenhua luncong*, ed. Qin Shi huang bingmayong bowuguan ‘luncong’ pianweihui, Vol. 8 (Xian, 2001), pp. 243–60.

part of the Zhou realm and the leader of the Xia. Significantly, the *Zuo zhuan*, unlike later texts, contains no hints about Qin's alleged barbarianism, although refined Lu statesmen apparently considered this state "uncouth."¹⁰⁰ Qin otherness appears to be largely a Zhanguo construction.¹⁰¹

The ease with which "peripheral" states changed their identity indicates the fluidity of cultural boundaries in the Zhou world; this fluidity might have increased as the disintegration of the Zhou ritual system speeded up in the early Zhanguo period. With the importance of ritual diminishing, the "Sino-barbarian" dichotomy became less pronounced and it was no longer an easy task to decide who belonged to "us" and who became the Other. Thus, the pejorative treatment of Qin and Chu did not prevent many leading thinkers, including Xunzi and Han Feizi, from traveling to these states with the hope of achieving an appointment; serving the so-called "barbarian" states was, therefore, entirely legitimate. In the rapidly changing Zhanguo world the cultural dichotomy paradigm apparently lost much of its appeal; even the use of self-appellations such as "Xia" or "Huaxia" is extremely rare in Zhanguo texts.¹⁰²

This situation began changing with the establishment of the unified empire in 221 and the subsequent emergence of the nomadic Xiongnu tribe as the major Other of the Chinese world. While Chinese encounters with the nomads might have already begun in the fourth century BCE, it was only after the imperial unification and the aggressive incursions of the Qin forces deep into nomadic territory that the centuries-long conflict began.¹⁰³ Qin territorial expansion and the concomitant establishment of the Xiongnu empire changed the nature of Sino-

¹⁰⁰ The *Zuo* mentions the surprise of a Lu statesman when the Qin's envoy to the Lu court behaved in accord with refined ritual norms (*Zuo*, [Wen 12], p. 589).

¹⁰¹ The possible reasons for these changes in Qin's image and self-perception are discussed by Y. Pines and G. Shelach in "Power, Identity and Ideology: Reflections on the Formation of the State of Qin (770–221 BC)," in *An Archaeology of Asia*, ed. M. Stark (Malden, forthcoming).

¹⁰² The term "Xia", the most common self-appellation of the "Chinese" is never mentioned in the *Shang jun shu* and *Han Feizi*; it appears only once in the *Lunyu* and the *Mozi*, twice in the *Mengzi*, *Gongyang zhuan*, *Guanzi* and the *Lüshi chunqiu* (where it is used as a geographic designation of the Central States), and five times in the *Xunzi*. The highest frequency of the appearance of the term "Xia" is in the *Zuo zhuan* (ten times), reflecting perhaps the relatively strong emphasis on "Chinese" identity in light of the alien incursions of the seventh-sixth centuries BCE.

¹⁰³ For the early stage of Sino-nomadic contacts, see Di Cosmo, "The Northern Frontier," pp. 960–66; see also his general discussion about the novelty of the nomadic factor in Chinese politics since the third century BCE in his *Ancient China and its Enemies*, p. 127ff.

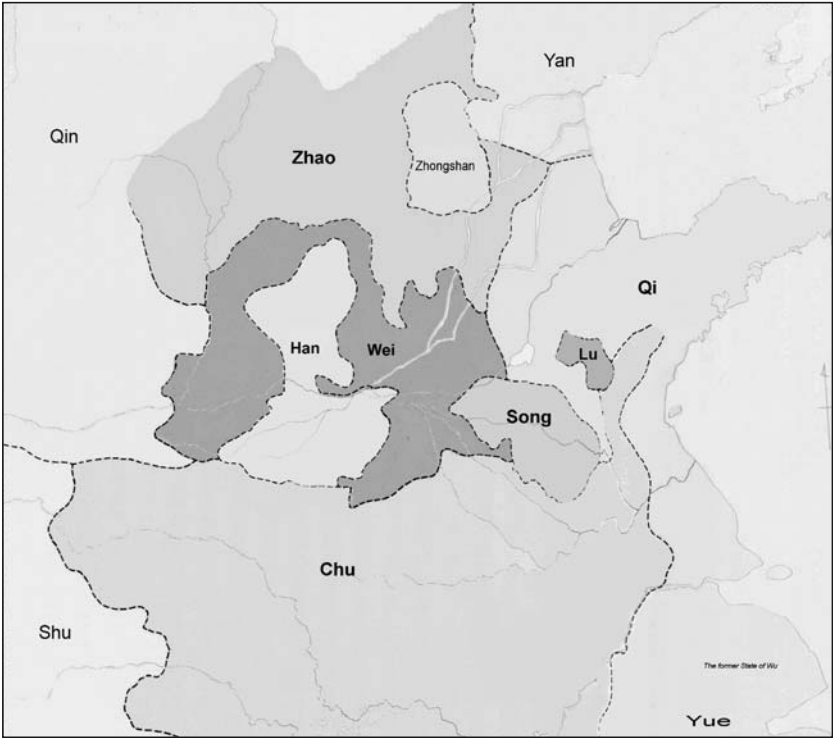
alien intercourse. The nomadic way of life placed formidable obstacles in front of possible Sinification, while nomadic grasslands were of little value for the Chinese. The establishment of the Qin Great Wall, later expanded and restored by the Han dynasty, marked the separation of the two worlds. It also marked, even if unintentionally, the end of Chinese pretensions to build a truly universal empire.¹⁰⁴ For centuries to come the Great Wall symbolized above all the limit to the civilized All under Heaven. While universalistic pretensions of the Chinese emperors did not easily fade away, they had to come to terms with a complex reality.¹⁰⁵ No longer were aliens easily transformed into Chinese; nor, for many Chinese statesmen, should they have been transformed. To the north of China, the threatening “anti-Chinese” *Gegenwelt* emerged.¹⁰⁶ Exclusiveness, albeit not the mainstream of Chinese political thought, was ever henceforth present in political discussions. The revival of the elaborate ritual system in the early empire further strengthened the sense of cultural distinction, reestablishing the imaginary, not only the physical boundary, with the steppe dwellers.

The pre-imperial legacy, however, cannot easily be neglected. Its universalistic approach continued to influence generations of Chinese thinkers. More importantly, the firm Chunqiu-Zhanguo belief in cultural/inclusive rather than ethnic/exclusive identity, and in the transformability of one’s cultural affiliation played a crucial role in facilitating the constant influx of the new ethnic groups into an ever expanding Chinese “nation,” contributing in no small measure to the establishment of the multi-ethnic Chinese identity current well into the present.

¹⁰⁴ Defensive walls existed, of course, long before the unification (see Di Cosmo, “The Northern Frontier,” pp. 961–62), while other walls separated various Chinese states. After the unification “internal” walls have been demolished (see *Shiji* 6, p. 251), while the external rebuilt and expanded following the Qin conquest of the Ordos region in 215–14 (*Shiji* 88, p. 2565). For an interesting interpretation of wall building being a result of Chinese expansion into the former nomadic zone, see Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, pp. 127–58. For the importance of the border-line fixation for creating conceptual demarcations between different groups and its consequent impact on individual allegiances later in Chinese history, see N. Standen, *Borders and Loyalties: Frontier Crossings from North China to Liao, c. 900–1005* (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁵ See the discussion in Loewe, “The Heritage,” pp. 998–1002.

¹⁰⁶ I borrow the notion of the threatening “anti-Chinese” *Gegenwelt* to the north (as distinguished from the “not yet Chinese” *Innenwelt* to the south and the distant *Aussenwelt* beyond the reach of Chinese civilization) from W. Bauer, “Einleitung,” in *China und die Fremden: 3000 Jahre Auseinandersetzung in Krieg und Frieden*, ed. W. Bauer (München, 1980), pp. 11–12.



Map 3. China in the Warring States Period (453–221 BCE).

Glossary of Chinese Characters

Ba	巴
“Ba yi”	八佾
Baiyue	百越
Ban Chao	班超
Ban Gu	班固
<i>bi yi</i>	鄙邑
Bicheng	畢郢
Bimu	𢇛沐
Bo Pi	伯嚭
Boren	樊人
“Bu gou”	不苟
<i>bu rang</i>	不讓
“Central States” (Zhongguo)	中國
Changkaizhu	敝凱諸
Chen An	陳黯
Cheng	成
Chu	楚
<i>Chun qiu</i>	春秋
Chunqiu	春秋
Confucius (Kongzi)	孔子
<i>da yitong</i>	大一統
Dajie	大解
Daner	儋耳
Daren	大人
Di (western ethnic group)	氐
Di (northern ethnic group)	狄
Fan Li	范蠡
Fan Xuanzi	范宣子
Feibin	非濱
Fu Chen	富辰
Fufeng	夫風
Fulou	縛婁
Fuxia	負夏
Gan	干
<i>Gongyang zhuan</i>	公羊傳
Gouzhi	駒支
Guan Zhong	管仲
<i>Guanzi</i>	管子
<i>Guliang zhuan</i>	穀梁傳
<i>Guoyu</i>	國語

Han (river, region and dynasty)	漢
Han Feizi	韓非子
<i>Hanzu</i>	漢族
Hu	胡
Hu Yan	狐偃
Hua	華
Huaxia	華夏
<i>Hua-yi</i>	華夷
Huandou	驩兜
Hui	穢
Hutang	呼唐
Ji	姬
<i>jian'ai</i>	兼愛
<i>"Jie zang xia"</i>	節葬下
Jin	晉
Jin Midi	金日磾
Jin Yu	晉語
King Xiang of Zhou	周襄王
King Wen of Zhou	周文王
King Wuling of Zhao	趙武靈王
<i>li</i> (ritual)	禮
Li River	離
"Li Lou xia"	離婁下
Li Si	李斯
"Lian Hui Wang shang"	梁惠王上
<i>Liji</i>	禮記
Lingyu	陵魚
Lord Huan of Qi	齊桓公
Lord Jing of Qin	秦景公
Lord Wen of Jin	晉文公
Lord Wu of Qin	秦武公
Lu	魯
"Lu wen"	魯問
<i>Lunyu</i>	論語
Luye	鹿野
<i>Lüshi chunqiu</i>	呂氏春秋
Man	蠻
<i>manyi</i>	蠻夷
Mencius (Mengzi)	孟子
Mingtiao	鳴條
Mo	貉

Mozi	墨子
Ouyue	甌越
Pianzuo	篇竿
Pingshan	平山
Qi (petty northern polity)	其
Qi (a major state)	齊
Qiang	羌
Qin (state and dynasty)	秦
<i>Qin ren</i>	秦人
Qing dynasty	清
“Qing ying”	青蠅
Qiongqi	窮奇
“Qiu ren”	求人
“Qiu shui”	秋水
Qizhou	岐周
“Qu li”	曲禮
Qu Wuchen	屈巫臣
“Quan xue”	勸學
“Rang wang”	讓王
<i>ren</i>	仁
Rong	戎
“Rong ru”	榮辱
<i>Ru</i>	儒
Shang	商
<i>Shang jun shu</i>	商君書
Shi Hui	士會
<i>Shi jing</i>	詩經
“Shi jun”	恃君
Shun	舜
Shuni	叔逆
<i>si yi</i>	四夷
Sima Qian	司馬遷
Song	宋
Songlong	送龍
Suozhi	所鷺
Tai Wang	太王
Taibo	太伯
Tan	鄰
“Tan Gong”	檀弓
Tang	湯
<i>Tang ren</i>	唐人

Taotie	饕餮
"Teng Wen Gong shang"	滕文公上
"Teng Wen Gong xia"	滕文公下
<i>tian ming</i>	天命
"Tian Zifang"	田子方
<i>tianxia</i>	天下
Turen	突人
"Wai chu shuo zuo shang"	外儲說左上
Wang Fuzhi	王夫之
<i>wang zhe</i>	王者
"Wang zhi"	王制
Wei (larger state)	魏
Wei (smaller state)	衛
"Wei ce"	魏策
Wei Jiang	魏降
"Wei Ling Gong"	衛靈公
"Wei yu"	為欲
Wen Zhong	文種
Western Zhou (Xi Zhou)	西周
Wu	吳
"Wu du"	五蠹
Wu Zixu	伍子胥
Xia	夏
"Xian shi"	先識
"Xian wen"	憲問
Xiongnu	匈奴
Xu	徐
Xu Xing	許行
Xukui	須窺
Xunzi	荀子
Yan (southern state)	炎 or 啖
Yan (northern state)	燕
"Yan ce"	燕策
Yang	揚
Yang Zhu	楊朱
Yangdao	揚島
Yangwen	陽文
Yangyu	陽禺
Yangzhou	鷹隼
Yanmen	鴈門

Yaoshan	搖山
Yeren	野人
Yi	夷
Yi Di	夷狄
“Yi shang”	義賞
<i>yì xìng</i>	異姓
Yiqu	儀渠
“Yong zhong”	用眾
Yu	禹
“Yu gong”	禹貢
Yue	越
“Yue yu xia”	越語下
Yumi	餘靡
Zhanguo	戰國
<i>Zhanguo ce</i>	戰國策
Zhao	趙
“Zhao ce”	趙策
Zheng	鄭
“Zheng lun”	正論
Zheng Sixiao	鄭思肖
Zheng Xuan	鄭玄
<i>zhong</i>	忠
“Zhong yong”	中庸
Zhongguo	中國
<i>Zhongguo ren</i>	中國人
Zhongshan	中山
“Zhongshan ce”	中山策
Zhongshan Wang Cuo <i>da ding</i>	中山王譽大鼎
Zhongyong	仲雍
Zhou	周
“Zhou yu”	周語
Zhouren	舟人
Zhuangzi	莊子
Zhufeng	諸馮
<i>zǐ</i>	子
Zi Gong	子貢
“Zi han”	子罕
“Zi Lu”	子路
Zi You	子游
<i>Zuo zhuan</i>	左傳

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EARLY EURASIAN NOMADS AND THE CIVILIZATIONS
OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST
(EIGHTH–SEVENTH CENTURIES BCE)

Askold I. Ivantchik

It appears that Eurasian nomads came into contact with the civilizations of the Near East for the first time at the end of the eighth century BCE. Not long before, among the population of the Eurasian steppes a new type of culture had evolved, based on nomadism and nomadic horse-breeding, previously unknown in the region. The settlements, which had earlier existed as pastoral economies, disappeared in the steppes (although they continued to exist in the forest-steppes); as a result, burial sites represent the only remains available for archaeological investigation. At the same time, a new military tactic developed due to improvement of horse-breeding and horse-riding methods on the one hand, and to perfection of the bow and arrow on the other. Mobile mounted archers formed the basis of the nomadic military power. It was at that time that Eurasian nomads apparently first mastered the art of shooting bows from a mounted position. Until that period, the attempts of other peoples to create units of mounted archers had failed. Efforts to use horsemen armed with bows were made, for example, by the Assyrians, but in that case the mounted archer had to be aided by a second rider who was mounted on a separate horse and drove the pair of horses.¹ It is obvious that such pairs of riders were not very maneuverable and could easily be hurt in the battle. The Eurasian nomads, on the other hand, were the first to learn to shoot a bow and ride a horse simultaneously.

Progress in riding was followed by progress in archery. Eurasian nomads started widely using sigma-shaped composite bows made

¹ Images of such horsemen are known for the epoch of Ashurnasirpal II and Salmanasar: E.A.W. Budge, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum. Reign of Ashurnasir-pal, 885–860 B.C.* (London, 1914), pl. XV, 1; L.W. King, *Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria B.C. 860–825* (London, 1915), pls. VII, XXXVIII, XXXIX, XLVIII, XLIX, LIII, LXXII; cf. Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (London, 1963), p. 384; U. Seidl, "Ein assyrisches Eimerchen," *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, 18 (1985), 46, fig. 1, pls. 23–27.

from wood, bone and horn.² These bows, though being smaller in size, were much more powerful than the arched bows common in the Near East, and had increased range and killing power. The small size of these bows made them easier to use for the riders shooting at full tilt. Small arrowheads with sockets, usually made of bronze, were used with these bows. These arrowheads had very good ballistic qualities and were easy to make; this was important for the quick replenishment of arrow supplies. All this gave Eurasian nomads military advantages over the settled peoples of the Near East, and they did not hesitate to profit by them.

The first Eurasian nomads to confront Near Eastern civilizations were called Cimmerians: their name is rendered in Akkadian texts as *Gī-mīr-a-a/Ga-mī/er-ra*, and in Greek texts as *Kimmerioi*.³ In Akkadian, this name was later attached to all the peoples belonging to the same ethno-cultural circle. In Babylonian texts of the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods, it designates the Sakas of Central Asia, and probably also the North Pontic Scythians (including the rendering of ancient Persian *Sakā* in parallel texts of Achaemenid royal inscriptions).⁴

The first known encounter of the Cimmerians with Near Eastern peoples is mentioned in four Assyrian letters addressed to the king Sargon II. Three of them were written by the crown prince Sennacherib, and the fourth one—by the governor Aššūr-rēšūwa.⁵ All four letters consist of summaries of intelligence reports about the events in neighboring Urartu. From these texts we learn that the king of Urartu, Rusa I, undertook a large campaign against the Cimmerians.

² About these bows, see A.M. Khazanov, "Slozhnye luki evrazijskikh stepej i Irana v skifo-sarmatskuiu epokhu," in *Material'naja kul'tura narodov Srednej Azii i Kazakhstana*, ed. N.A. Kislyakov and M.G. Vorob'eva (Moscow, 1966), pp. 29–44; E.V. Chernenko, *Skifskie luchniki* (Kiev, 1981). About other forms of bow, including the recurved and triangular composite bow used in the ancient Near East, see Ch. Zuttermann, "The Bow in the Ancient Near East, a Re-Evaluation of Archery from the Late 2nd Millennium to the End of the Achaemenid Empire," *Iranica Antiqua*, 38 (2003), pp. 119–65.

³ For the different forms of the name Cimmerians see: A.I. Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 127 (Fribourg Suisse and Göttingen, 1993), pp. 127–54. For Biblical mentions of the Cimmerians, see *ibid.*, pp. 141–49.

⁴ M.A. Dandamayev, "Data of the Babylonian Documents from the 6th to the 5th Centuries B.C. on the Sakas," in *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta (Budapest, 1979), pp. 95–109; *idem*, *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia*, "Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies," no. 6 (Costa Mesa and New York, 1992), pp. 159–62.

⁵ SAA, I, 30–32; SAA, V, 92.

We can estimate the size of the Urartian army participating in this campaign by the fact that the king himself participated in it and was accompanied by his commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), as well as at least thirteen governors. The campaign ended in a real catastrophe: the Urartians were crushed and had to retreat to their territory; the *turtānu* and two governors were captured; at least one other governor was killed; and the king, having abandoned his army, escaped to the capital. The letter written by Aššūrrešūwa allows us to locate these events: the Cimmerians were situated to the north of Urartu, most probably to the north of Lake Sevan, in the Southern part of Central Transcaucasia. Some details mentioned in these letters make it possible to date precisely the Cimmerian-Urartian clash: it took place in the spring or the beginning of summer 714 BCE. Sargon II, who was closely watching the course of events in Urartu, used the defeat of Rusa I as an opportunity to attack him. That same year, he launched his famous eighth campaign against Urartu, minutely described in his "Letter to the god Ashur."⁶

Two more Assyrian letters mentioning Cimmerians date to about the same time (a bit earlier than 714 BCE). One of them was written by an Assyrian official of high rank, whose name is not preserved, and is addressed to the Assyrian king. The second one was written by a certain Urda-Sîn, apparently an Assyrian spy, and is addressed to his superior, namely the palace herald (*nāgir ekalli*) of Assyria. The letters speak about an attack carried out by a Cimmerian unit on the south-eastern frontier of Urartu in the region of Uasi, to the south of the Lake Urmia.⁷ The Cimmerians, located at that time in the territories to the north of Urartu, could thus raid to the south and threaten Urartu not only from the north, but also from the south-east. Perhaps a group of Cimmerians had moved to the south and was active for a relatively long time in regions to the south-east of Lake Urmia, in the territory of Manna. It should be stressed that the Cimmerians, from the very moment they appeared in the region to the south of the Caucasus, represented a considerable military force, able to defeat almost the whole army of even a mighty state like Urartu.

⁶ For the text and translation, see W. Mayer, "Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu—714 v. Chr. Text und Übersetzung," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 115 (1983), 65–132.

⁷ SAA V, 144, 145.

The traces of penetration of the Cimmerians and probably also of other Eurasian nomads to Transcaucasia are also attested by the archaeological data. In the second half of the eighth – seventh centuries BCE, several settlements in Colchis perished in fires. This destruction have long been connected with incursions of the steppe nomads.⁸ This hypothesis has been recently confirmed by the excavation of a joint German-Georgian expedition on the site of Ciskaraant-Gora in Kakhetia (Eastern Georgia). The settlement was destroyed and burned at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century BCE as a result of an assault. Several bronze arrowheads connected with the assault were found in the destruction deposits. This form of arrowheads was typically used by Eurasian nomads and was not employed in Transcaucasia in the previous period. This fact convinces us that the destruction was caused by a raid of Eurasian nomads, most probably the Cimmerians.⁹

The first mention of the Cimmerians in Greek literature dates to the same time. In the beginning of Book XI of the *Odyssey* there is a description of Odysseus' journey over the sea to the Kingdom of the Dead, where he has to meet with the dead prophet Teiresias and learn from him how he can return home. The Cimmerians are mentioned in this context as a people living at the entrance to the Underworld on the coast of the Ocean. At present, it is widely accepted that the material of an earlier poem about the Argonauts had been used in the Homeric description of Odysseus' journey. The author of this poem was well acquainted with the Black Sea, especially with its southern and south-eastern coast.¹⁰ In a detailed analysis of this text, which I

⁸ See, e.g., D.A. Khakhutaishvili, "Jugo-zapadnaia Gruzii v VIII–VI vv. do n.e.," in *Demograficheskaiia situatsiia v Prichernomor'e v period Velikoj grecheskoj kolonizatsii*, ed. O.D. Lordkipanidze (Tbilisi, 1981), pp. 332, 373.

⁹ A. E. Furtwängler and F. Knauß, "Archäologische Expedition in Kachetien 1996," *Eurasia Antiqua*, 3 (1997), pp. 353–87; A.E. Furtwängler, F. Knauß and I. Motzenbäcker, "Archäologische Expedition in Kachetien 1997," *Eurasia Antiqua*, 4 (1998), pp. 309–64.

¹⁰ A. Kirchhoff, *Die homerische Odyssee*, 2nd edn. (Berlin, 1879), pp. 287–89; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Homerische Untersuchungen*, Philologische Untersuchungen 7 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 165–67; *idem*, *Die Ilias und Homer* (Berlin, 1916), pp. 361–63, 490–92; K. Meuli, *Odyssee und Argonautika* (Berlin, 1921); P. von der Mühl, "Odyssee," in *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Neue Bearbeitung*, begonnen von G. Wissowa, herausgegeben von W. Kroll, Suppl. VII (Stuttgart, 1940), p. 721; R. Merkelbach, *Untersuchungen zur Odyssee*, "Zetemata," no. 2 (München, 1951), p. 118ff., 201ff.; A. Lesky, "Homeros," in *Pauly's Realencyclopädie*, Suppl. XI (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 795–97; A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's "Odyssey"*,

have made elsewhere, it is shown that the name “Cimmerians” was known to the author of the *Odyssey* along with some details related to Colchis, which around this time, probably in the second half of the eighth century BCE, had been identified with Aia, the mythical destination of the Argonauts’ expedition. On the other hand, it seems that the Greeks in Homer’s time had as yet no information about the Cimmerians, apart from their name.¹¹

After having been mentioned in the Assyrian letters dating to 714 BCE, the Cimmerians disappear from the cuneiform sources for approximately 35 years. The explanation for this is probably not that Cimmerian raids into the Near East ceased, but rather that our sources are incomplete. We do not know, for example, of a single Assyrian letter from the time of Sennacherib.¹² Yet all mentions of the Cimmerians dated to the reign of Sargon II are preserved, as we have seen, precisely in this group of texts. So, if the letters from Sargon’s time had met the same fate as those of Sennacherib’s epoch, we would have known nothing about the presence of the Cimmerians in the Near East, not only in the first twenty years of the seventh century, but also in the period around 714 BCE. The Cimmerians are again mentioned in Assyrian sources dating to 679 BCE or recording the events of this year. These are two texts of completely different character. The first of them is a contract about the selling of a vegetable garden in Nineveh. This rather banal document gives an account of the conditions of the deal, followed by a list of eleven witnesses, indicating their professions (merchant, confectioner, cook, royal guardsman, and at least two commanders of military units). Among these witnesses there is a certain Ubru-Harrān, commander of a “Cimmerian unit.”¹³ The mere presence of a Cimmerian unit in the Assyrian capital proves that the contacts between the Assyrians and the Cimmerians did not stop after 714 BCE and that the silence of the cuneiform sources does not reflect the real situation but is a result of their fragmentary nature. Eurasian nomads were evidently

II, *Books IX–XVI* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 47–48; W. Kullmann, *Homerische Motive. Beiträge zur Entstehung, Eigenart und Wirkung von Ilias und Odyssee* (Stuttgart, 1992), pp. 125–31; P. Dräger, *Argo pasimelousa. Der Argonautenmythos in der griechischen und römischen Literatur*, I, *Theos aitios*, Palingenesia 43 (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 12–18.

¹¹ A.I. Ivantchik, *Am Vorabend der Kolonisation. Die eurasischen Nomaden des 8.–7. Jh.v.Chr. in griechischer Literaturtradition* (Moscow and Berlin), forthcoming.

¹² S. Parpola, “Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian Letters,” in *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions. New Horizons*, ed. F.M. Fales (Rome, 1981), p. 136.

¹³ SAA VI, 204.

well known to the Assyrians at that time. As far as Ubru-Harrān is concerned, one can hardly doubt that he was an Assyrian, not Cimmerian. This is proved both by his Assyrian name and his complete integration into the everyday life of the Assyrian capital, shown by his role as a witness at the signing of this contract. As for the “Cimmerian unit,” there are two alternatives for the term’s interpretation. It is possible that the unit consisted of ethnic Cimmerians serving in the Assyrian army, for example, as mercenaries, as we know about cases of foreign contingents being included in the Assyrian army.¹⁴ However, this unit could have also consisted of Assyrians armed in “Cimmerian” manner, i.e., the term “Cimmerian” points here not to the ethnicity of the warriors, but to the character of the troops. Similar use of this term is present in later cuneiform texts. In the Akkadian texts of the Achaemenids, as well as texts from Neo-Babylonian times, there are numerous mentions of “Cimmerian” bows and arrows, as well as of some “Cimmerian” belts (presumably, elements of horses’ harnesses), which had been adopted in Mesopotamian armies.¹⁵ Moreover, in one of the Neo-Assyrian inventory lists originating from the time of Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal, “Cimmerian foot-gear” is mentioned.¹⁶ No matter how we choose to explain the “Cimmerian unit” cited in this contract, the document certainly presents evidence of the Assyrian army’s borrowing of the battle tactics and corresponding weapons and military skills, which were first mastered by Eurasian nomads.

The borrowing of nomadic weapons, especially the bow and arrow, by all Near Eastern armies is well attested by the archaeological data. From the middle of the seventh century BCE, the use of bronze arrowheads of nomadic or, as they are often called in archaeological literature, “Scythian” type, spread widely over all the Near East. These arrowheads are found at virtually every excavated site and were apparently used by all the armies of that time. In this context, the case of Smyrna is quite revealing. During the siege of this city by the Lydians ca. 600 BCE, both its defenders and its assailants

¹⁴ S. Dalley, “Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II,” *Iraq*, 47 (1985), pp. 31–48; G.B. Lanfranchi, *I Cimmeri. Emergenza delle élites militari iraniche nel Vicino Oriente (VIII–VII sec. a. C.)* (Padova, 1990), p. 48.

¹⁵ E. Salonen, *Die Waffen der alten Mesopotamier* (Helsinki, 1965), pp. 42–43; Dandamayev, “Data of the Babylonian Documents,” pp. 95–109; *idem*, *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia*, pp. 159–62.

¹⁶ SAA, VII, 120 ii 7–8.

used arrows with bronze socket heads of the nomadic type.¹⁷ Clear evidence of Urartian adoption of nomadic weapons and horses' harnesses were discovered during the excavations of the Urartian fortress Teišebaini (modern Yerevan). A large quantity of bronze socket arrowheads of the "Scythian" type, which the garrison used along with traditional Urartian iron arrowheads with tangs, was found in the storerooms of the fortress. Two bridle sets of nomadic type, as well as swords identical to those used by Eurasian nomads (so called *akinakes*) were found in the same rooms. The enemies, who destroyed the fortress, used the arrows with the "Scythian" arrowheads just like its defenders.¹⁸ Thus, the new progressive forms of weapons, especially the bow and arrow, which originally assured the military advantage of Eurasian nomads over their neighbors, were soon borrowed by the latter and spread over vast territories. Hence, a find of nomadic-looking arrowheads should not be considered proof of the presence of nomads, as it often is in scholarly literature.¹⁹ Only the earliest finds of this type, dating before the middle of the seventh century BCE, after which their use became common and widespread, can be considered as such evidence. But even in this case, this type of evidence should be used very cautiously, because we do not know exactly when the nomadic bow and arrows were adopted by Near Eastern armies. The discussed contract from Nineveh suggests quite an early date, before 679 BCE. Thus, the arrowheads of the "Scythian" type can be considered as evidence of the presence of the Eurasian nomads only if they are accompanied by finds of other objects belonging to nomadic culture, such as horses' harnesses, swords or art

¹⁷ R.V. Nicholls, "Old Smyrna: The Iron Age Fortifications and Associated Remains on the City Perimeter," *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 53–54 (1958/1959), pp. 128–34.

¹⁸ A.I. Ivantchik, *Kimmerier und Skythen. Kulturhistorische und chronologische Probleme der Archäologie der osteuropäischen Steppen und Kaukasiens in vor- und frühskythischer Zeit*, Steppenvölker Eurasiens 2 (Moscow, 2001), pp. 58–66, with references to previous research and the publications of objects.

¹⁹ E.g., E.M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier. Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982), pp. 97–99; *idem*, "The Scythians: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 46 (1983), pp. 94–95. The fact that the arrowheads of nomadic type cannot be used as an ethnic marker was recently stressed in an article by Z. Derin and O.W. Muscarella, "Iron and Bronze Arrows," in *Ayanis. I. Ten Years' Excavations at Rusahinili Eiduru-kai, 1989–1998*, eds. A. Çilingiroğlu and M. Salvini, *Documenta Asiana* 6 (Rome, 2001), pp. 189–217. See there also for references on numerous cases of the misuse of these arrowheads found in the Near East.

objects of the “animal style.” The borrowing of these objects is also not excluded (as attested in Teišebaini), but this was much rarer and may reflect specific close contacts with Eurasian nomads.

The second record mentioning the Cimmerians in connection with the events of 679 BCE is found in texts of a completely different character, namely the royal inscriptions of Esarhaddon (on “prisms” and “cylinders,” as well as on a stele from Til-Barsib; cf. also a mention of the same events in the Babylonian “Esarhaddon Chronicle”).²⁰ These texts tell of a victory by the Assyrian army over a Cimmerian king or chieftain named Teušpâ and his forces in the region of Hubušna situated at the western frontier of Assyria in the country of Tabal. Thus, at that period the Cimmerians were present in the regions situated far to the west and to the south of Transcaucasia, and are attested there for the first time by our sources. The Cimmerian presence in Tabal in 679 BCE represents an additional confirmation of the fact that their contacts with the Near East had not been interrupted since 714 BCE.

The Cimmerians are mentioned subsequently many times in connection with the events at the north-western frontiers of Assyria, in the regions of Hilakku and Tabal (on the territory of later Cilicia). It seems that they had had rather close relations with local dynasts, and often allied with them to oppose Assyria. We also hear of their presence also in other parts of Asia Minor.²¹

Apparently, at about the same time, the Cimmerians attacked the Phrygian kingdom. This event is not attested by the cuneiform texts and is known to us only through the Greek sources, according to which the Cimmerians destroyed the Phrygian kingdom, whose king, Midas, was obliged to commit suicide (Strabo I, 34, 21; Eustath. *Ad Od.* XI, 14). Midas is a well known figure in the classical tradition, and many fabulous stories are connected with his name (the donkey-ears of the king, the story about his catching of a satyr, etc.). It is, however, impossible to identify him with a concrete historical figure. The king of Mušku (Phrygia) Mitā (Midas) is mentioned several times in the texts from the time of Sargon II,²² but it would be

²⁰ For the texts and their analysis, see Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 57–62, 180–84.

²¹ Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 65–76, 95–125, with references to the sources.

²² A.G. Lie, *The Inscriptions of Sargon II, King of Assyria. Part I. The Annals* (Paris,

rash to identify him with the Midas of the classical tradition as is often done in modern historical writing.²³ Indeed, a certain Midas is also mentioned in one of the texts dating back to the second half of the seventies of the seventh century BCE.²⁴ This text suggests that the name “Midas” belonged to several Phrygian kings. Apparently, the Midas of the classical tradition is a generalized figure, which conflated all the information concerning the Phrygian kingdom available to the Greeks. The existence of such generalized figures is typical of the Greek tradition. As far as the dating of the death of the Phrygian king is concerned, there are at least two traditions in classical literature. One of them is represented by Eusebius, who dates this event to 696/5 (Hier. 92a Helm) or 695/4 BCE (Euseb. 184 Karst). The second tradition goes back to Apollodorus, who dated it to 676/5 BCE, on the basis of an account of Hellanicus.²⁵ Both dates are based on late chronological calculations by Hellenistic philologists and are not reliable. The second date seems to be closer to historical reality.²⁶ In spite of the unreliability of the dates given by the classical tradition, we have no reason to doubt the very fact of the destruction of the Phrygian kingdom by the Cimmerians. The presence of the Cimmerians in the neighboring regions of eastern and central Anatolia and, starting from the reign of Ashurbanipal, also in the west, in Lydia, is well attested by Akkadian texts. The presence of the Cimmerians in Phrygia is attested by an account of Stephanus Byzantius (*s.v.* *Syassos*), originating from a local Phrygian tradition, that was independent of the account of Strabo about Midas’ death.²⁷ Moreover, there is an Akkadian text that mentions a joint action of the Phrygians and the Cimmerians against Assyria.²⁸ The text

1929), pp. 10–12: 72–76, 20: 118–20, 66–88, 444–53; J.N. Postgate, *The Governor’s Palace Archive. Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud II* (London, 1973), pp. 21–34; SAA I, 1; cf. G.B. Lanfranchi, “Sargons’s Letter to Aššur-šarru-ušur: an Interpretation,” *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*, 2 (1988), pp. 59–64.

²³ See, e.g., M.J. Mellink, *The Gordion Excavations. Final Reports. I* (Philadelphia, 1981), pp. 271–72; O.W. Muscarella, “King Midas of Phrygia and the Greeks,” in *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç*, eds. K. Emre, M.J. Mellink, B. Hrouda and N. Özgüç (Ankara, 1989), pp. 333–44.

²⁴ SAA IV, 13: 2, 9, rev. 2, 8.

²⁵ FGrHist 4, F 85.

²⁶ A.A. Mosshammer, “Phainias of Eresos and Chronology,” *Californian Studies in Classical Antiquity*, 10 (1978), pp. 105–32; Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 69–74.

²⁷ Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, p. 69.

²⁸ SAA IV, 1.

apparently dates to ca. 675 BCE and demonstrates that the relations between the Cimmerians and the Phrygians were not always hostile.

As for the archaeological data, they do not provide reliable information about the Cimmerian invasions in Phrygia. The burnt layer from the beginning of the seventh century BCE, discovered during the excavations in Gordion, has for a long time been related to the Cimmerian invasion.²⁹ There have recently arisen, however, serious doubts about the correctness of the dating of this layer, which the excavators of Gordion are now inclined to date earlier.³⁰ If this is the case, it is no longer possible to identify the layer with the destruction of the city by the Cimmerians. In any event, not a single object has been found in this layer, which could be related to Eurasian nomads; even the arrowheads of the "Scythian" type belong to later layers.

In the seventies of the seventh century BCE another group of Eurasian nomads appears in the cuneiform texts, the Scythians (*I/Aškuzaia*). In spite of their future fame, at that time the Scythians were less prominent in the Near East than the Cimmerians. All mentions of them are connected with the regions of Manna and Media, i.e., the north-eastern and eastern frontiers of Assyria, and unlike the Cimmerians, the Scythians are unknown in Asia Minor during this period. The first mention of the Scythians in the cuneiform texts has been preserved in the royal inscriptions of Esarhaddon (in the "prisms" and the stele from Til-Barsib; the mention of this event is omitted in "cylinders" and Babylonian chronicles).³¹ These texts relate that the Assyrian king defeated the Manneans and the Scythian king Išpakāia, "an ally that did not save them." This event dates to the first three years of Esarhaddon's reign, i.e., between 680/79 and

²⁹ Cf. for example G.R. Edwards, "The Gordion Campaign of 1958: Preliminary Report," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 63 (1959), pp. 263–64; R.S. Young, "The Gordion Campaign of 1959: Preliminary Report," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 64 (1960), p. 243; J.A. McClellan, "The Iron Objects from Gordion. A Typological and Functional Analysis," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1975), pp. 114–15; K. DeVries, "The Gordion Excavation Seasons of 1969–1973 and Subsequent Research," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 94 (1990), pp. 388–89; M.M. Voigt, "Excavations at Gordion 1988–89: the Yassihöyük Stratigraphic Sequence," in *Anatolian Iron Ages. 3. The Proceedings of the Third Anatolian Iron Ages Colloquium held at Van, 6–12 August 1990*, eds. D. French and A. Çilingiroğlu (Ankara, 1994), pp. 272–73.

³⁰ M.M. Voigt and T.C. Young, Jr., "From Phrygian Capital to Achaemenid Entrepot: Middle and Late Phrygian Gordion," *Iranica Antiqua*, 34 (1999), pp. 201, 202, n. 4.

³¹ For the texts and their analysis, see A.I. Ivanchik, *Kimmerijsy. Drevnevostochnye tsivilizatsii i stepnye kočevniki v VIII–VII vekakh do n.e* (Moscow, 1996), pp. 81–83, 185–88.

678/7 BCE. The Cimmerians are also present in Manna at this time.³² The presence of both the Cimmerians and the Scythians in Manna and Media is also attested by a series of other texts describing both the nomadic groups as a danger for the borderlands of Assyria and for the collectors of horse tribute in Media.³³ One of the texts of this series is of particular interest. This is a query by Esarhaddon to the oracle of the god Šamaš, containing information about the Scythian king B/Partatua seeking to marry of the Assyrian king's daughter.³⁴ B/Partatua is apparently identical with Protothyes mentioned by Herodotus (I, 103), who was the father of the famous Scythian king, Madyes. Esarhaddon asks the oracle whether B/Partatua will be his faithful ally should he send his daughter to him. The tablet also contains the report of divinations performed using the liver of a sacrificial animal, seeking an answer on this question. Two omens were unfavorable, but the rest were positive. The general result of the divination could hence be estimated as favorable, and it is probable that the marriage between the Scythian king and the Assyrian princess was contracted. Yet this fact alone does not prove the high status of the Scythian king: Assyrian kings had many daughters from different wives and in several attested cases they were given in marriage to minor vassal kings (see, for example, Ahāt-abīša given by Sargon II in marriage to the vassal king of Tabal Ambaridu, who was later dethroned for his revolt against Assyria).³⁵ In any case, the Scythians of Partatua seem to have become faithful allies of Assyria. Their hostile activities against it are no longer mentioned (yet any other mention of the Scythians in the later cuneiform texts is also lacking). In this connection the texts related to the uprising of Kaštaritu against Assyria (between 671 and 669 BCE), apparently resulting in Media's obtaining its independence, are significant. These texts mention the Cimmerians as a likely adversary of the Assyrians, taking the side of the rebels, while we hear nothing about the Scythians.³⁶

Thus, the Assyrian texts of the seventies of the seventh century BCE distinguish between two groups of Cimmerians. One of them is located at the Western frontiers of Assyria and takes part in anti-Assyrian operations together with the Mušku (Phrygians) and the inhabitants

³² SAA X, 111 (676 or 675 B.C.E.).

³³ SAA IV, 23, 24, 35, 36, 39, 40, 65, 66, 71, 80; SAA VIII, 418.

³⁴ SAA IV, 20.

³⁵ A.G. Lie, *The Inscriptions of Sargon II*, p. 33, 194–202.

³⁶ SAA IV, 43–45, 48, 50.

of Hilakku and Tabal. The attempts made by Esarhaddon to defeat the Cimmerians proved to be ineffective, and the victories mentioned by him evidently were but partial successes, because the Cimmerian threat continued to exist after them. The second group of Cimmerians was active on the eastern frontiers of Assyria, in Manna (where they are already mentioned in the epoch of Sargon II), Media and contiguous regions. At the same time a group of Scythians was also present here. Like the Cimmerians, the Scythians were hostile to Assyria in the first half of the seventies of the seventh century BCE, but later (presumably, about 672 BCE) their king B/Partatua married an Assyrian princess and changed his orientation to pro-Assyrian. In any case, in the period of the uprising of Kaštaritu, the Scythians were no longer among the enemies of Assyria.

At a later period, during the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–627 BCE), mention of Eurasian nomads located on the eastern frontier of Assyria disappears from the sources, as well as any echoes of the Scythians. This absence of evidence is probably connected not with the departure of the nomads from this region, but with the state of the sources. In any case, we know nothing about the presence of the Cimmerians and the Scythians to the east of Assyria at the time of Ashurbanipal. We are, however, well acquainted with the activities of the Cimmerians to the west of Assyria, in Asia Minor.

Royal inscriptions of Ashurbanipal, which are known to us in several versions, describe these events. At the beginning of the sixties of the seventh century BCE the Cimmerians attacked Lydia. The Lydian king Guggu (Gyges of the Greek texts) sent an embassy to Ashurbanipal hoping to receive Assyrian help in exchange for recognition of his vassalage to Assyria, including a promise to send tribute to Nineveh. We do not know whether this help was given, but Gyges managed to defeat the Cimmerians, some of whose chiefs were captured and sent to Assyria in fetters.³⁷ This defeat, however, did not undermine the military power of the Cimmerians. A letter of the astrologer Akkullanu to the king Ashurbanipal dating from 657 BCE spoke of the Cimmerian king as “the king of the universe” and gives us some grounds for suspecting that the Cimmerians managed to

³⁷ For the texts and translations of the sources see Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 254–66; Ivantchik, *Kimmerijtsy*, pp. 261–72, with references to previous publications. Cf. also H.U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, Ägypten und Altes Testament, 27 (Wiesbaden, 1994), i, pp. 110–11; ii, pp. 51–53, 84; R. Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1996), pp. 181–83, 217–18.

occupy a part of the western possessions of Assyria.³⁸ This case is unprecedented in an Assyrian text: usually the title “the king of the universe” (*šar kiššati*) denotes solely the Assyrian kings.

Soon after this, Gyges ceased his relations with Ashurbanipal and sent forces to help his enemy, the king of Egypt, Psammetichos. Lydia seems to have continued to suffer raids by the Cimmerians even after the victory of Gyges. In 644 BCE, the Cimmerians made a particularly devastating raid and managed to take Sardis and kill Gyges himself. At this very time the Cimmerians presumably also invaded Ionia and ravaged Magnesia; they also threatened the sanctuary of Artemis of Ephesus (Strabo I, 3, 21; XIII, 4, 8; XIV, 1, 40; Callim. *Ad Dian.* III, 251–258; fr. 75, 23 Pfeiffer; Hesych. *s.v.* *Lygdamis*). The invasion of the Cimmerians was well remembered in Ionia even many centuries later, as attested by a letter of Lysimachos to the people of Samos (283/2 BCE) devoted to the judgment of a suit between Samos and Priene concerning the ownership of the coastal region of Batinetis.³⁹ Both sides used the Cimmerian invasion as a historical argument in this territorial dispute, knowing even the precise number of years during which Batinetis remained under the control of the Cimmerians.

The king of the Cimmerians at the time of their invasions of Lydia and Ionia was Dugdammi—Lygdamis of the Greek tradition. According to Assyrian texts, he attempted several times to attack the western frontier of Assyria, before dying from a disease ca. 641 BCE. His heir, bearing the name Sandakšatru or Sandakurru, continued the confrontation with Assyria, as reported by an Assyrian text of 639 BCE.⁴⁰ This is the last Assyrian text mentioning the Cimmerians. The further development of the events remains unknown to us because of virtually the total disappearance of the cuneiform texts of a historical character in the later period.

³⁸ SAA X, 100; see detailed commentary in Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 97–102, 278–84.

³⁹ F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inscriptionen von Priene* (Berlin, 1906), p. 209, no. 500; C.B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (Rome, 1934), pp. 46–47, no. 7; S.L. Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations in the Greek World, 337–90 B.C.* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1996), pp. 89–90, no. 26, I; A. Magnetto, *Gli arbitrari interstatali greci. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione, commento e indici. Vol. II, dal 337 al 196 A.C.* (Pisa, 1997), pp. 124–27, N° 20, I; IG XII, 6, pars 1 (2000), pp. 115–19, N° 155.

⁴⁰ For the texts and translations of the sources see Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 266–75; Ivantchik, *Kimmeriysy*, pp. 272–80, and the references there. Cf. A. Fuchs, “Die Inschrift vom Ibtar-Tempel,” in Borger, *Beiträge*, pp. 258–96; Borger, *Beiträge*, p. 197, 251.

Archaeological data about the raids of Eurasian nomads in the Near East is rather scanty, which is very typical for archaeological remains of nomadic raids in general. The invasions by the Huns and the Magyars into Western Europe, for example, despite their large scale and enormous historical importance, left but a few isolated finds and several burial complexes, which are identified mainly thanks to the weapons and elements of horses' harnesses found in them.⁴¹ Material traces of the Eurasian nomads in the Near East are exactly of this type. In Asia Minor, we know of four burial complexes of Eurasian nomads in different degrees of preservation. Two of them were excavated on the acropolis of Norşuntepe,⁴² an intact grave containing skeletons of three horses (presumably, a cenotaph) and a completely plundered human tomb. The horses' burial complex contained, aside from a bridle and weapons typical of "Scythian" culture, objects characteristic of Transcaucasia, evidently reflecting the contacts of Eurasian nomads with the Transcaucasian settled population. The archaeological context of these burials allows us to date both of them to the first half or the middle of the seventh century BCE. One more tomb of a horseman (a man and at least one horse) was discovered in the course of illegal excavations near the village of İmirler in the vicinity of Amasya. The local archaeologists retrieved almost all of the finds.⁴³ The complex contained pieces of a horse's harness and weapons exclusively of the steppe type. Finally, one more burial site of a Eurasian horseman was probably plundered by illegal excavators in the region between Taşova and Ladik. The composition of the complex is unknown, the only item available for investigation being a quiver assemblage consisting of 250 arrowheads of the "Scythian" type.⁴⁴ All four graves apparently belonged to the

⁴¹ See H. Parzinger, "Vettersfelde–Mundolsheim–Après-les-Corps. Gedanken zu einem skythischen Fund im Lichte vergleichender Archäologie," in *Kulturen zwischen Ost und West. Das Ost-West-Verhältnis in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit und sein Einfluß auf Werden und Wandel des Kulturraums Mitteleuropa. Georg Kossack zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. A. Lang, H. Parzinger and H. Küster (Berlin, 1993), pp. 203ff.; *Idem*, "Stepnye kochevniki na vostoke Tsentral'noj Evropy. Nakhodki i pamiatniki v svete sravnitel'noj arkhologii," *Vestnik drevnej istorii*, 1998/2, pp. 104–15.

⁴² H. Hauptmann, "Neue Funde eurasischer Steppennomaden in Kleinasien," in *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde Kleinasien. Festschrift Kurt Bittel*, eds. R.M. Boehmer and H. Hauptmann (Mainz, 1983), i, pp. 251–70; Ivantchik, *Kimmerier und Skythen*, pp. 21–41.

⁴³ V. Ünal, "Zwei Gräber eurasischer Reiternomaden im nördlichen Zentralanatolien," *Beiträge zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Archäologie*, 4 (1983), pp. 65–81; Ivantchik, *Kimmerier und Skythen*, pp. 42–49.

⁴⁴ Ünal, "Zwei Gräber," pp. 70–78; Ivantchik, *Kimmerier und Skythen*, p. 49.

Cimmerians. Besides these burial complexes, numerous isolated finds of nomadic appearances are known in the Near East.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, it is rare that these finds are well dated and belong to a concrete archaeological complex or deposit. Among these rare cases, the most important is probably a bone sheath point found in the destruction deposit of Sardis, which seems to be related to the Cimmerian attack of 644 BCE. This object is decorated in characteristic “animal style” typical of the culture of the early Eurasian nomads and presumably belonged to one of the participants of this attack.⁴⁶

As to archaeological traces of the Eurasian nomads’ presence to the east of Assyria, the group of objects that is most frequently cited in this connection is the so-called “Ziwiye treasure.” It contains objects of very different origin, including those bearing features that are clearly of steppe provenance. Nevertheless, the use of this material is hampered by the fact that both the exact place and circumstances of its finding are unknown. We cannot be sure that these objects formed an assemblage, nor even that they were found at the same site.⁴⁷ Thus, “the Ziwiye treasure,” despite the spectacular character of the objects it comprises, does not provide much evidence pertinent to the matter discussed here. Apart from it, some isolated finds of the “Scythian” type have been discovered at other monuments of the seventh century BCE in this region, including in the third layer of Hasanlu and in Nush-i Jan.⁴⁸

The next known episode of the activities of Eurasian nomads in the Near East is from the following decade and is connected with the Scythians. These events are referred to in the classical tradition as “Scythian rule over Asia.”⁴⁹ Soon after 626 BCE, the Scythians, led by King Madyes, managed to inflict a defeat on Media. They then carried out some raids on remote regions and plundered some cities in Syria and Palestine, including Ashkelon. It was then that they first

⁴⁵ See Ivantchik, *Kimmerier und Skythen*, pp. 57–96.

⁴⁶ A.H. Detweiler, G.M.A. Hanfman and D.G. Mitten, “Excavations at Sardis, 1965,” *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi*, 14 (1967), p. 151; Ivantchik, *Kimmerier und Skythen*, pp. 73–79.

⁴⁷ O.W. Muscarella, “‘Ziwiye’ and Ziwiye: the Forgery of a Provenience,” *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 4 (1977), pp. 197–219.

⁴⁸ Hauptmann, *op. cit.*, fig. 5; O.W. Muscarella, “The Iron Age at Dinkha Tepe, Iran,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 9 (1974), p. 79, n. 16; J. Curtis, *Nush-i Jan*. III. *The Small Finds* (London, 1984), fig. 6, pp. 259–63; 16, p. 431.

⁴⁹ See A.I. Ivantchik, “The Scythian ‘Rule Over Asia’: the Classical Tradition and the Historical Reality,” in *Ancient Greeks West and East*, ed. G. Tsatskheladze (Leiden, 1999), pp. 499–520.

appeared also in Asia Minor and defeated the Cimmerians. The importance of these raids is strongly exaggerated in the classical tradition, perhaps under the influence of Scythian folklore. Soon after these events, the Cimmerian and Scythian raids into the countries of the Near East ceased. Cimmerian or Scythian groups that settled in these territories (if indeed there were any such groups) were quickly assimilated by the local population.

In conclusion, something should be said about the nature of the raids of Eurasian nomads into the Near East. Some evidence preserved in the classical tradition allows us to compare them with the archaic institution of *balc*, which existed in the traditional society of the Ossetians, remote descendants of the Iranian-speaking nomads of Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ This word designated plundering raids carried out in the territory of more-or-less remote neighbors by groups of youths and young men banded together especially for this purpose and called *bal*. Participation in such raids was a form of initiation for youths. They were not limited, however, to initiations and warriors of various ages took part in them. Their social prestige is stressed by the fact that precisely these raids represented the main subject of Ossetic heroic epics. The raids could be of varying duration, lasting up to seven years. The existence of a similar institution in Scythian society is attested by a series of direct indications in the sources.⁵¹ Thus, it is possible that the activities of Eurasian nomads in the Near East consisted of a series of raids made by such groups, who could have stayed in the Near East for a relatively long time (several years). We know for example that the group of Cimmerians led by Dugdammī/Lygdamis operated in the western part of Asia Minor for not less than three years and probably even more, if we take into account the remoteness of this territory from the Eurasian steppes. It seems, however, most probably that ultimately these groups returned to the East European steppes and did not settle in the Near East, although there may have been some exceptions.

The hypothesis that these nomadic groups did not break off their contacts with the western Eurasian steppes, where the main population of the Cimmerians and the Scythians dwelt, is confirmed in

⁵⁰ On this institution, see A.R. Chochiev, *Očerki istorii sotsial'noj kul'tury osetin (traditsii kochevnichestva i osedlosti v sotsial'noj kul'ture osetin)* (Tskhinvali, 1985), pp. 110–62.

⁵¹ See A.I. Ivantchik, "The Scythian 'Rule Over Asia'," pp. 503–505, with bibliography.

particular by the finds of Near Eastern objects in the seventh century BCE in tombs belonging to “Early Scythian” archaeological culture. These finds must be interpreted as booty carried back from the Near Eastern raids. Such finds are most frequent in Ciscaucasia. This is quite natural considering that the north Caucasus was the part of the territory occupied by the “Scythian culture” situated closer than others to the areas of the Near East, and that it was also the region that the nomads passed on their way to and from the Near East. Numerous objects originating from Assyria, Urartu and Asia Minor were discovered in the “royal” tumuli of the Kelermes burial ground.⁵² Near Eastern objects were also found at other, less sumptuous, monuments. The grave in tumulus 1 of the burial ground near the village Krasnoe Znamya contained a bronze plate for covering a chariot pole with an image of a goddess, presumably identified as Ištar.⁵³ This object was made by an Assyrian or Urartian craftsman. Golden earrings of the Assyrian type were found in three tumuli of the Nartan burial ground.⁵⁴ The population of other regions of the west Eurasian Steppe also participated in Near Eastern raids, as attested by finds of the Near Eastern objects in areas quite remote from the north Caucasus. The most impressive of them is the assemblage of Near Eastern objects from the “royal” grave in the Melgunov (Litoi) tumulus in the Dniepr region.⁵⁵ These objects are very close to those found in Kelermes and some of them (e.g., swords) were apparently produced in the same workshop, if not by the same craftsman.

Thus, Eurasian nomads carrying out raids into the Near East seemingly did not lose contact with the territory of their origins situated to the north of the Caucasian mountain range. This naturally does not preclude that during their raids, which could be numerous and could last for several years, the nomads came into close contact with the Near Eastern states, including contracting military alliances and dynastic marriages. The above-mentioned wooing of Esarhaddon's daughter by the Scythian king B/Partatua presents a good example of such contacts. If the interpretation of the name of the Cimmerian

⁵² L.K. Galanina, *Die Kurgane von Kelermes. “Königsgräber” der frühskythischen Zeit, Steppenvölker Eurasiens 1* (Moscow, 1997).

⁵³ V.G. Petrenko, “Izobrazhenie bogini Ishtar iz kurgana v Stavropol'e,” *Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta arkheologii AN SSSR*, 162 (1980), pp. 15–19.

⁵⁴ S.B. Makhortykh, *Skify na Severnom Kavkaze*, (Kiev, 1991), p. 76.

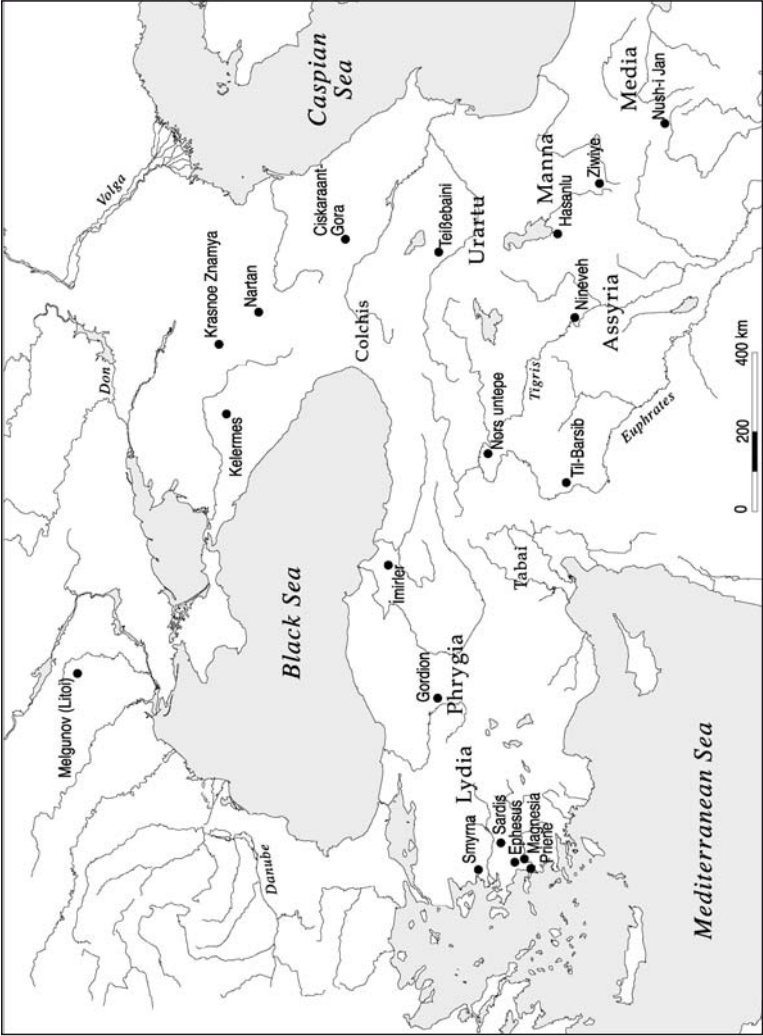
⁵⁵ E. Pridik, *Mel'gunovskij klad, (Materialy po arkheologii Rossii, 31)* (Petersburg, 1911); V.A. Il'inskaja and A.I. Terenozhkin, *Skifija VII–V vv. do n.e.* (Kiev, 1983), p. 104.

chieftain Sandakšatru/Sandakurru as a theophoric name containing the name of the god Sanda⁵⁶ is correct, then it also reflects the political and perhaps dynastic contacts between the Cimmerians and the people of Tabal and Hilakku.

In some cases we can follow the succession of the kings or chieftains who led nomadic raids. The Assyrian texts relate that after the death of Dugdammi, his son Sandakšatru/Sandakurru succeeded him. Earlier, this son participated in a raid together with his father. Another example concerns the Scythians. As was mentioned above, the Scythian king who asked for Esarhaddon's daughter in marriage not long before 672 BCE bore the name of B/Partatua. Approximately half a century later, his son Madyes led one of the most successful raids of the Scythians into the Near East, in the course of which they advanced as far as Palestine. This, clearly, cannot prove that the same group of the Scythians stayed in the Near East all this time. It shows, however, that among the Scythians there were ethnic or tribal groups for which participation in the raids into the Near East led by members of the same royal family became a kind of tradition. In any case, we do not have any evidence pointing to the fact that the Cimmerians or the Scythians set up any stable state structures in the Near East. Rather, they staged predatory raids of longer or shorter duration, which were more-or-less successful. It is exactly in these terms that Herodotus (I, 6,3) described the activities of the Cimmerians in Asia Minor, writing that they did not conquer territories, but carried out predatory raids. The only evidence that could be interpreted as an indication that the Cimmerians settled in the Near East and established something resembling stable administrative structures in this territory, is the report of the redaction A of Ashurbanipal's "annals" that the Lydians managed to capture some Cimmerian "heads of settlements" (*bēl ālāni*).⁵⁷ It is, however, unclear which historical reality is reflected in this Assyrian term. Thus, we can think that the invasions of the Cimmerians and the Scythians in the Near East were not a migration, but the raids of bands of warriors, who came to this area for a more-or-less limited periods and never broke off their contacts with their homeland.

⁵⁶ A.I. Ivantchik, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, pp. 120–24.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 103–104.



Map 4. The Near East and the Eastern European Steppe (8th–7th centuries BCE).

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PART II

THE PRE-MONGOL PERIOD

WHAT NOMADS WANT:
RAIDS, INVASIONS AND THE LIAO CONQUEST OF 947¹

Naomi Standen

On the first day of the Chinese year of 947, the Liao (907–1125) emperor Yelü Deguang (Liao Taizong, 926–47) entered the Later Jin (936–47) capital as a conqueror.² Over the next few weeks he did the things expected of a founding emperor in China: received the submission of the officials, declared a new dynasty, distributed titles, conducted administrative reorganisation, and so forth. But within five months the last of the Liao forces had departed from the Central Plains (*Zhongyuan*), and a homegrown emperor sat on the throne again.

The Liao conquest is widely regarded as pivotal in the Five Dynasties (907–960) and in the Tang-Song transition, but for such an important event it is remarkably little studied.³ It is still most

¹ I have decided not to withdraw my paper from this volume as part of the academic boycott of Israel proposed during 2002, since this would only hurt individual colleagues with whom I have no quarrel, rather than influence the institution for which they work or the state that funds it. However, in the sad belief that our academic endeavours cannot be held separate from the political context in which we all live, I must register a protest at the continuing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

On a more conventional note, this paper has of course benefited from the comments of those who attended the conference panel. More detailed discussion subsequently came from Reuven Amitai, Michal Biran, Nicola di Cosmo, and Bob Moore, and I am particularly grateful for their willingness to talk of other matters too.

² In this paper I shall use personal rather than posthumous names, and will favour “Liao” rather than “Khitan” (*Qidan*) as a designation for this regime, empire, and court. I will use “Khitan” for groups that may not be under court control.

³ It is, of course, treated in general studies of the period, including Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in the Five Dynasties* (Stanford, 1963); Lü Simian, *Sui Tang Wudai shi*, 2 vols. (Beijing, 1959); D. Twitchett and K.-P. Tietze, “The Liao,” in *CHC 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, ed. H. Franke and D. Twitchett (New York, 1994); F. Mote, *Imperial China 900–1800* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999); and in numerous articles that deal with Liao-Five Dynasties relations, including Ren Chongyue, “Lüelun Liaochao yu Wudai de guanxi,” *Shehui kexue jikan* (1984/4), pp. 109–15; Xing Yitian, “Qidan yu Wudai zhengquan gengdie zhi guanxi,” *Shihuo yuekan*, 1/6 (1971), pp. 296–307; Zhang Qifan, “Wudai zhengquan dishan zhi kaocha (jian Zhou Shizong de zheng jun),” *Huinan shifan daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* (1985/1), pp. 22–30, but I know of no detailed study of the conquest itself, either in European or East

often taken as evidence of an undying nomadic desire to conquer China and of an equally undying Chinese impulse to resist alien rule. As such it has been interpreted as a conquest that went wrong: the (non-Chinese) Khitan (*Qidan*) were simply not up to the job of governing China, especially in the face of local (Chinese) resistance.⁴ The problem with this is that if the Liao really were out to conquer China, they could have done so in 936, when a huge Liao army defeated the Later Tang (923–36), overthrew a dynasty already in turmoil, and enthroned a new emperor. They also received, as a gift, the Sixteen Prefectures, giving them a huge strategic advantage. If the Liao were perpetually looking for an opportunity to conquer, then in 936 they missed their chance. But what if the Liao had a different set of priorities? What if Deguang was less interested in conquest and more interested in something else?⁵

A further complication is that scholars of the Liao relationship with Later Zhou (951–60) and Song (960–1276) now agree that in this period the Liao—under at least three successive emperors—had no intention of conquering the Central Plains.⁶ This means that if we wish to see the events of 947 as a conquest that went wrong, we must explain a radical and permanent change in Liao attitudes and decide exactly when it happened. The alternative is to posit that Deguang's views were in keeping with those of his successors, suggesting that Liao rulers showed a consistent lack of interest in conquering north China.

This article proposes that the modern understanding of conquest—

Asian languages, except for a paper that addresses one particular aspect: Zhao Guangyuan, "Lüelun Qidan jundui zai Zhongyuan 'da caoyu'," *Zhongguo shehui kexue-yuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* (1986/6), pp. 67–71.

⁴ It should be noted, however, that the emperors of Later Tang, Jin and Han were of Shatuo Turk extraction, as acknowledged by Xing Yitian, "Zhengquan gengdie." See my "From Region of Frontiers to Frontier Region: The Political Uses of Ethnic Identity in Tenth-century North China," *Selected Papers of the 10th Biannual Conference, European Association for Chinese Studies* (Prague, 1996), unpaginated.

⁵ This article assumes that the crucial decision-maker was Deguang, since the survival of the young Liao state ultimately depended on his individual prowess as a leader. Further research is needed to establish the extent to which Deguang's views were shared or modified by others.

⁶ C. Lamouroux, "Geography and Politics: The Song-Liao Border Dispute of 1074/75," in *China and Her Neighbours: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy 10th to 19th Century*, ed. S. Dabringhaus and R. Ptak (Wiesbaden, 1997), pp. 1–28; Lau Nap-yin, "Waging war for peace?" in *Warfare in Chinese History*, ed. Hans Van de Ven (Leiden, 2000), pp. 180–221; P. Lorge, "War and the Creation of the Northern Song," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1996).

as the military seizure of permanent administrative control over a piece of territory—does not accurately describe Deguang's intentions. A reappraisal of the events in the light of military theory will allow us to separate territorial issues from those of rulership, and conclude that Deguang was much less interested in territorial acquisition than he was in his own status as a ruler in relation to his southern neighbour. We will see that the peoples of the north-China borderlands had similar understandings of certain crucial issues, and this will point us towards a better understanding of the differences between the Liao and the Central-Plains regimes.

Inconsistencies: Conquest as Territorial Control

Most writers on these two invasions explain them as results of the cultural differences between nomads and farmers. Pastoralists have ecologies and economies that are distinct from those of agriculturalists, resulting in cultures that are often diametrically opposed. Since nomads north of China could not supply all their own needs, they looked to China for the shortfall, obtaining it characteristically by raiding. Traditionally, historians placed raiding at one end of a continuum that would progress to conquest if that was at all possible,⁷ but more recent scholars have distinguished usefully between the two. Sechin Jagchid argues that nomads preferred to obtain goods through peaceful trading, but were forced to raid when denied access to markets, which happened often. Their goal here was purely to obtain booty, not territory or political advantage.⁸ By this view the two Liao invasions were no more than enormous plundering raids, but this does not adequately explain the *lack* of plundering in 936, while Jagchid's failure to address the issue of conquest means there is also no explanation here for the years of war between Liao and Jin that led up to 947.

Thomas Barfield also argues that most nomads did not seek territorial conquest, and indeed, that they actively avoided it.⁹ Instead,

⁷ The classic exponent of this view is R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, tr. N. Walford (New Brunswick, 1970).

⁸ S. Jagchid and V.J. Simmons, *Peace, War and Trade along the Great Wall: Nomadic-Chinese Interaction through Two Millenia* (Bloomington, 1989), esp. pp. 25 and 43.

⁹ T. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, 221 B.C. to A.D. 1757* (Oxford, 1989).

major steppe empires, such as the Xiongnu and Turks, employed an “outer frontier strategy,” using raids to extort subsidies from major dynasties such as the Han and Tang, with which they rewarded their followers and sustained a confederation with the military might to keep extracting more from China. This could help explain the 936 invasion, which resulted in annual subsidies for the Liao, but not the Liao-Jin war, when Deguang turned down three requests for peace, or the 947 conquest, which effectively ruled out further subsidies from the Central Plains.

In any case Barfield places the Liao in a different category, as a conservative Manchurian dynasty. These states scavenged on the remains of a Chinese empire that had experienced internal collapse, and *did* seek territorial control, but proved unable to conquer more than a portion of north China. Barfield thus agrees with the traditionalists that Liao invasions had territorial intentions, so that when, in 947, the Liao emperor was “forced . . . to withdraw north,”¹⁰ this constitutes a failure to achieve the goal of permanent occupation and direct exploitation. However, giving Deguang a vision of conquest makes it hard to explain why he did not follow up his victory in 936. Barfield sees this as evidence that the young Liao state needed to be relatively unaggressive in order to survive, and that the Liao were “moved to conquer north China only after the more militaristic warlord states had destroyed themselves.”¹¹ Yet it was precisely in 936 that the highly militaristic ‘warlord state’ of Li Siyuan (Tang Mingzong, 926–33) had been torn apart by his successors and their challengers, such that north China was never more open to Liao conquest, and perhaps even rule, if either was indeed desired. By 947, however, north China was no longer the ready opportunity it had been a decade before, because it took several years of war before Deguang reached the capital. And yet, after all that effort, military conquest did not lead to long-term Liao rule.

The convention that Deguang’s 947 withdrawal was an unwilling retreat from something he would have preferred to keep, still does not resolve the contradiction with what he did (or did not do) a decade earlier. In the 940s he fought a punishing war resulting in a conquest that did not last, when in 936 he marched with an invasion force and had an opportunity to conquer easily, but did not take it. If

¹⁰ Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, p. 173.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Deguang were motivated by sheer desire for the access to resources offered by territorial conquest, then he would surely have conquered in 936. If he was really a user of the outer frontier strategy he should have accepted a profitable peace when it was offered, and if he were merely out for easy pickings, as Jagchid suggests, he would surely not have put such effort into the hard-fought war of 943–7. Something else must be going on here.

To find out what, we need to return to the basic question: why did the Liao court attack the Central Plains in 936 and 943–7? Were the reasons the same for both times? What was most important to the Liao leadership? Was it territory, as still widely supposed? And if not territory, was it booty, subsidies, or something else?

In order to get a better sense of the extent to which territory was important to the Liao emperor Deguang, we need to clarify the factors involved. As noted above, the idea of *conquest* implies permanent occupation and governance of a new territory and its population, and is political rather than military in nature. The political act of conquest is typically associated with the military action of *invasion*, defined by the western military historian Archer Jones as a “temporary or permanent occupation of the territory invaded.” Jones contrasts invasions with *raids*, which are “temporary intrusions into a hostile country.”¹² It is important to point out here that the temporary nature of a military action does not alone define that action as a raid: invasions can be temporary too. The difference lies in strategy. Raids and invasions are associated with two types of strategy: raiding and “persisting.” These have different territorial implications, but also imply differing approaches to conflict: raiders usually try to avoid it, while persisting strategies envisage its possibility.

We can use these definitions as a more consistent measure of Deguang’s intentions. If he intended only to raid for booty or to encourage the payment of annual tribute, we would expect to see a raiding strategy of short, sharp, plundering attacks and a desire to make treaties from a position of strength. Forces might be large, but battle would be avoided, and although districts might be temporarily occupied, there would be no attempt to establish administrative control. To conclude that Deguang had a more persisting intent would require a willingness to join battle, some interest in the longer-term

¹² A. Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (New York, 1997), p. 55ff.

occupation of territory, and perhaps large invasion forces. Finally, if Deguang aimed to conquer the Central Plains, we should see a determination to apply overwhelming force to crush the defending armies, and the systematic installation of loyal administrators in captured territories. Once we have established the pattern of military events, we will go on to consider broader political issues.

The Liao Invasion of 936

If the conquest of 947 is often regarded as a highpoint of Chinese patriotism, then 936 is just as often regarded as a lowpoint of submission to foreigners, for in this year the rebel governor of Later Tang Hedong, Shi Jingtang, sought Liao help to overthrow the Later Tang dynasty, and “paid” his allies by giving them the Sixteen Prefectures: roughly the region north of the Juma River, from present-day Beijing to Datong.¹³

Invasion or normal relations?

We know from the *Jiu Wudai shi* (*Old History of the Five Dynasties*) that Khitan bands raided the northern borderlands of Later Tang throughout the regime, and it is usually assumed that this was at the instigation of the Liao court. There is an obvious precedent for such aggression in the aggrandizing activities of the first Liao ruler, Abaoji (Taizu, 907–26), who “pacified” his neighbours in the steppe and in 926 conquered the Bohai.¹⁴ With the encouragement of his empress, Shulü Ping (the Chunqin empress and Yingtian empress dowager),¹⁵ he sent regular plundering expeditions against Youzhou and demanded the handover of that province, and everything else north of the Yellow River, from a Later Tang envoy sent to report the death of Li Cunxu (Zhuangzong, 923–6) and succession of Li Siyuan.¹⁶

¹³ The exact territory involved is discussed in Wang Yuyi, “Shi Jin gelu Qidan di yu Song zhi Yan-Yun liang lu fanwei bu tongbian,” *Yugong banyuekan*, 3/9 (1935), pp. 10–12; and Zhao Tiehan, “Yan-Yun shiliu zhou de dili fenxi,” in *Song Liao Jin shi yanjiu lunji* (Taipei, 1960), pp. 53–62.

¹⁴ *LS*, 1/1–2/25.

¹⁵ Biography: *LS*, 71/1199–1200.

¹⁶ *JW*, 137/1830–2; *TJ*, 275/8989–90.

If Abaoji's successor, Deguang, shared these predilections, we would expect to find the results (if not necessarily the plans) set out in the *Liao shi* (*Liao History*). As an officially compiled dynastic history, this follows Chinese historiographical conventions, so the emperor, as possessor of the Mandate, is entirely justified in all his actions. These may, of course, include expansion by military means, usually under the name of "pacification," which is, accordingly, recorded without embarrassment, together with its attendant military brutalities. Thus, Abaoji's military exploits, from 901 until his death in 926, are recorded in the *Liao shi* annals, without which we would know much less about them. But under his successor the vast majority of the Khitan raids recorded in the Later Tang annals of the *Jiu Wudai shi* do not appear in its Liao counterpart, suggesting strongly that Deguang did not order these raids. In other words, this Liao emperor, unlike his predecessor, was not masterminding raids as part of a deliberate or long-term strategy, so that the actions reported were presumably localised adventures of one kind or another.¹⁷ This did not mean that Deguang was not interested in expanding his authority when opportunity arose, but it does mean we should be cautious about seeing such opportunism in his every action.

An illustrative case comes in 934. In the fourth month of that year a Later Tang prince, Li Congke, rebelled against his adoptive brother, Li Conghou (Tang Mindi, 933–4), and took the throne for himself. At this point, the former Liao heir apparent (Abaoji's oldest son, Yelü Bei), then in voluntary exile at the Later Tang court,¹⁸ sent a letter back to Liao requesting a punitive expedition against the usurper. In the autumn of 934, the Liao emperor, Deguang himself, led an expedition into the northwestern borderlands of Later Tang. According to the sources, Deguang reached (*ci*) Yunzhou₁ on 28 October, and took (*ba*) Heyin in Yingzhou₁ prefecture two days later. Heyin was just north of Daizhou and the Yanmen pass through the Wutai mountains, which was a standard north-south route across

¹⁷ See my "Raiding and Frontier Society in the Five Dynasties," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, ed. N. di Cosmo and D. Wyatt (London, 2003), pp. 160–91. That article and this one rely chiefly on the annalistic material from the *Jiu Wudai shi* and *Liao shi*, since, however problematical, this is least adulterated by later interpretation and the closest we can get to views from both sides. See N. Standen, "Frontier Crossings from North China to Liao, c. 900–1005," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Durham, 1994), pp. 6–12.

¹⁸ Where he was known as Li Zanhua.

this range. The Later Tang governor of this region, Shi Jingtang, was ordered to Daizhou with his army nearly a month later, on 20 November, but did not confront Deguang, who on 29 November “invaded the territory” (*lüe di*) of Lingqiu (between Shuozhou and Yizhou). He must then have turned north, because on 13 December he surrounded (*wei*) Yangcheng (north of Xinzhou₁). Its surrender was quickly followed by that of Wazhicheng (unidentified), from which the able-bodied were conscripted into the army. The Liao withdrew completely after Deguang’s empress—who was evidently travelling with the expedition—gave birth prematurely at the beginning of February and died two weeks later.¹⁹

These events invite the reading that at least three places fell to the Liao—more depending on how you interpret the vocabulary—and so can readily be seen as an example of Liao territorial expansionism,²⁰ cut short by the Tang response and the death of the empress. That Liao forces encircle one walled town may well suggest a certain determination with regard to taking territory, yet Deguang is not so committed to his “invasion” that he is prepared to expend large amounts of effort or resources, and neither are the Later Tang so worried that they seek battle. Furthermore, if Deguang was indeed “invading,” why did he move so slowly when resistance was non-existent? Having taken Heyin, it was over four weeks before local forces were mobilised and Deguang “invaded” Lingqiu, and another fortnight before he surrounded Yangcheng on his way home. The distances here are not great; the Liao forces appear to be operating in an area perhaps 150 by 280 km (95 by 175 miles),²¹ and they make no attempt to push further south. This was clearly nothing to do with decisive outcomes, territorial occupation or governance.

¹⁹ *JW*, 46/640; *LS*, 3/36.

²⁰ He Tianming, “Shilun Liaochao jieguan Yan-Yun diqu,” *Liao Jin Qidan Nüzhen shi yanjiu dongtai*, 1986/2, pp. 14–18, takes this view. The 934 venture appears only in the *Liao shi* and so is ignored by most Chinese scholars, who tend to use materials from only one side of the relationship. He Tianming uses the *Liao shi* annals, but these encourage a “reading of least resistance” that takes the events of 934–6 as the punishment that Yelü Bei requested for Li Congke. In the *LS*, the 934 venture is a “punitive expedition to the south” (*nan fa*), and Jingtang requests Liao assistance on the grounds that Li Congke is a rebel, having assassinated his lord, with Deguang the instrument who will “wreak the punishment of Heaven” and fulfil the Mandate. (*LS*, 3/36–8). The *JW* and *TJ* do not mention either Yelü Bei’s or Deguang’s role in the 934 expedition, treating it merely as a series of “Khitan raids,” followed by others in 935. (*JW*, 46/639, 640, 47/647, 648; *TJ*, 279/9124, 9126, 9130).

²¹ The area bounded roughly by Wuzhou, Yizhou, Shuozhou and Yunzhou₁.

Perhaps instead we can see it as an imperial version of routine “nomadising” that was an accepted part of life in the borderlands. The imperial household, including womenfolk—pregnant or otherwise—and probably accompanied by herds, spread over the northwestern edges of Later Tang territories for a period of weeks that coincided with the preferred season for military campaigning,²² foraging its livestock on the local pasture or crops. Quick rewards for Deguang’s followers came from a handful of walled towns that were willing to surrender briefly to encircling horsemen to minimise bloodshed and damage,²³ and to this extent the expedition resembles raiding. The situation seems to be one with which everyone is familiar, something like a regular annual event. It is highly likely that the population associated with the local towns knew that the nomads would be coming and responded accordingly, secreting property, and perhaps sending women and children into the hills. The governor of the region eventually mobilised local forces to keep an eye on the Liao and ensure they really did depart, but felt no desire to waste lives by engaging them in combat. The Liao took the arrival of troops as their cue to withdraw, but did not flee, and similarly avoided armed engagement.

The routine nature of such interactions can be seen in the regular remittance of three years’ taxes for the districts affected by the visitors’ “trampling” (*roujian*), and in the following summer’s reports from the northwestern border commands of Khitan raids—this time not under central direction—which hit the same places as Deguang’s expedition: Xinzhou₁, Zhenwu (Shuozhou) and Yingzhou. Furthermore, that autumn (935), the Tatars are reported to be peacefully settled at Lingqiu, only the year before subject to Deguang’s “invasion.” It is the governor Shi Jingtang who makes a matter-of-fact report, suggesting that he is at least tolerant of the situation, and maybe even that he has relations of some kind with the Tatars.²⁴ Perhaps this group had submitted to Tang authority, and had permission to do what Deguang had done without asking. After all this, it would be

²² Roughly the seventh or eighth to the second or third lunar months, that is, from the autumn to the spring.

²³ Cf. H. Franke, “Siege and Defense of Towns in Medieval China,” in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, ed. F.A. Kierman, Jr. and J.K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA, 1974), p. 176.

²⁴ *JW*, 47/647, 648, 652.

reckless to infer a connection between Yelü Bei's request for an invasion and Deguang's expedition. We might, perhaps, suppose that Deguang sought to turn routine nomadic activities and routine Later Tang responses to some political advantage, but given the absence of any envoy to tell his neighbour what he wanted, such a suggestion is unconvincing.

The account of the 934 incursion is unusually full because of the Liao emperor's personal participation. Bearing in mind its lessons, we can now consider subsequent raids and "invasions." Incidents described as raids continued, in both directions, some official and some unofficial. Apart from the unofficial Khitan raids of 935 (noted above), the most significant report for our purposes states that there were 20,000 Khitan cavalry at Heiyulin (near Shuozhou), which is easily taken as an indication of Liao intentions and Tang alarm.²⁵ However, the *Liao shi* gives no sign that Deguang ordered this and the *Jiu Wudai shi* report is too laconic to support an unequivocal reading. It could be merely an unpanicked record of unusual circumstances, perhaps needing more careful surveillance than usual but no more inherently worrisome than routine encounters. That same summer the Youzhou governor Zhao Dejun reported a "surprise attack" (that is, a raid) on a "Khitan camp" in Yizhou, while at the end of the year Deguang ordered several named persons to "take live prisoners from the enemy borders."²⁶ The last is clearly an official venture, with Deguang perhaps seeking information, prisoners for ransom, or simply looking to enlarge his population. It is easy to assume that the earlier Yizhou raid is also official—a "defence" against raiding in general—but the records do not make clear who instigated the attack.²⁷ It might have been Dejun, but equally he might be reporting events out of his control, and which have pecuniary motives rather than defensive ones.

Whatever the motives behind these interactions, nothing in the records of either side suggests that they represented any major threat. The Later Tang court was at least as much concerned about drought and famine in Hebei,²⁸ which may, of course, have prompted at least some of the raids, perhaps in both directions. The Tang court was

²⁵ *JW*, 47/648.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; *LS*, 3/36.

²⁷ An attack in Yizhou cannot be aimed at the 20,000 Khitan from Heiyulin, since the two places are at opposite ends of the Later Tang frontier.

²⁸ *JW*, 47/649.

even more concerned about the growing power of Shi Jingtang, because—not for the first or last time—the need to watch over pastoralists heading south enabled a border governor to augment his powerbase. Since 932 Jingtang had held four frontier governorships in addition to his main post as Hedong governor.²⁹ This appointment was intended to enable better handling of ongoing raiding (or perhaps of routine nomadising), but the effect was to give Jingtang control of the whole northwestern sector of Later Tang. In the middle of 935 reports came of Jingtang's acclamation as emperor by his own troops, and although Jingtang himself punished the ringleaders, the incident provoked serious concerns about him at court, together with attempts to reduce his power.³⁰

Shi Jingtang's rebellion

The Later Tang had good reason to fear Jingtang, for when he rebelled in the summer of 936, a long list of local officials, generals, and districts promptly went over to his side. The defections undercut the swift advance of the imperial army sent by the court under the leadership of Zhang Jingda, which arrived beneath the walls of Jingtang's seat of Taiyuan just a few days after the rebellion. Another army was sent to recover Yedu, in the heart of the Central Plains, from rebels who appear unrelated to Jingtang's actions. This recovery took until the seventh month. The regime's response did not prevent further defections, and there were reports that those Xi nomads who were clients of the Later Tang also planned to rebel.³¹

Despite the extent of his border commands, it seems that Jingtang had insufficient troops of his own, for he had repeatedly asked the Tang court for more troops during his tenure in the northwest. He now sought help from the Liao, offering in return gold, the Sixteen Pre-fectures, and subordination as subject and fictive son.³² This was by no means the first time in the Five Dynasties that north China leaders had sought mercenary help from the north or pledged their allegiance to a Liao ruler, but it was the first time that territory had been offered in payment.³³ Lü Simian suggests that Jingtang, as a

²⁹ Datong (Yunzhou₁), Zhenwu, Zhangguo (Yingzhou₁) and Weisai (Xinzhou₁).

³⁰ *JW*, 47/649–50, 75/983.

³¹ *JW*, 48/661–3, 75/983–4.

³² *JW*, 75/984; *TJ*, 280/9146–7; *LS*, 3/38.

³³ Provincial governors, prefects or generals with autonomous leanings frequently

Shatuo, did not care about giving away Chinese territory, but if this is the case not all Shatuo felt the same, since Jingtang's Shatuo follower Liu Zhiyuan argues strongly that the Liao should be paid with goods but not land.³⁴ While Jingtang presumably hoped that the Liao would be attracted by the offer of territory, what is important here is that Deguang does not, apparently, *seek* it. We should probably not be surprised that, offered it, he accepts.

Deguang himself led tens of thousands of troops south in the eighth month, taking the familiar route through the Yanmen pass, then going via Xinzhou₂ to confront the Tang armies at Taiyuan;³⁵ unlike the 934 expedition, this venture had a clear purpose, involved a large army, and the Liao emperor was more than willing to fight.

The Tang side took the initiative with two attacks on the Liao camp, one frontal and one covert, but in pitched battle it was the allied forces of Jingtang and the Liao which triumphed. The defeated Tang forces took refuge in the fortress of Jin'an, to which Deguang, confirming his persisting intent, laid siege. This cut off the Tang forces from the court at Luoyang, which despatched no fewer than four relief forces. Two, apparently totalling 30,000 troops, met near Taiyuan and were led by Zhao Dejun and Zhao Yanshou (father and adopted son); a third, numbering 20,000, remained some 40 km further east under the command of Fan Yanguang; and a reserve of some 30,000 was stationed on the Yellow River near the capital and led by the emperor himself. The court also ordered a general to collect militia forces from two prefectures southwest of Taiyuan.³⁶

While these forces assembled and moved into position, Deguang was ennobling Shi Jingtang as prince of Jin and subsequently, in the eleventh month, investing him formally as emperor of Great Jin.³⁷ At the same time, Tang resistance collapsed: the relief forces skirmished successfully but failed to advance, the emperor himself gave up hope, and the besieged Tang army in Jin'an was reduced to eat-

pledged their allegiance in return for Liao help in the early tenth century. See my *Borders and Loyalties*, ch. 2, in preparation. There were earlier precedents for the offering of territory, for instance, the Tang offer in 783 of three northwestern districts if the Tibetans helped recover Chang'an from rebels. See Pan Yihong, "Sino-Tibetan Treaties in the Tang dynasty," *TP*, 78 (1992), pp. 142–43.

³⁴ *TJ*, 280/9146.

³⁵ *JW*, 48/664, 75/984, 137/1833; *TJ*, 280/9148; *LS*, 3/38.

³⁶ *JW*, 48/664–5, 75/984–5; *LS*, 3/38–9.

³⁷ *JW*, 75/985–9, 137/1833; *TJ*, 280/9154; *LS*, 38–9.

ing roof-thatch and their dead horses. After some 80 days, Zhang Jingda's subordinate general Yang Guangyuan killed his commander and surrendered himself, the armies and 5,000 surviving horses to the Liao. The Tang troops were handed over to Jingtang, and possibly the horses as well. The troops commanded by the Zhao family were pursued and taken captive.³⁸ Li Congke's court seemed unable to respond to the emergency and, assuming the militia recruitment drive had come to anything at all, those troops would have been largely untrained. This left only Fan Yanguang's army intact, in training and under effective leadership, but he made no move to oppose the allies on his own initiative. There was nothing to stand between a conqueror and the Yellow River, beyond which lay the capital. The allies marched on to Luzhou, still some 150 km from the River.

Having won a comprehensive victory, the Liao generals did not clamour to advance further, but instead requested the withdrawal of the victorious troops, and Deguang ordered a first contingent to head home. At the same time, he despatched Jingtang south to take up his throne, providing him with gifts and an escort of just 5,000 cavalry. To see Jingtang off, Deguang held a banquet at which the two entered into a father-son relationship, and Deguang promised that he would "only await the resolution of disorder before Our return," meaning he would watch from a distance until Jingtang had secured his throne.³⁹ The Tang leadership, however, assumed that it was Deguang rather than Jingtang who was out to conquer, for according to the Later Tang annals, opinion was divided between those who believed the Liao would not dare to advance further south while a Tang relief force remained intact and those angrily demanding pulling back to defend the capital, and between those urging the emperor to make a stand on the River at Heyang and those arguing that no defence was possible.⁴⁰ The assumption of a takeover by Deguang was logical enough, since he was obviously the muscle behind Jingtang's rebellion, and from the Tang point of view what else was there to do once the way to the capital was open to you? The test of Liao intentions would have come if the Tang side had attacked Jingtang and his minimal escort. Would Deguang really have come to Jingtang's assistance, or would he have abandoned him? If he had marched

³⁸ *JW*, 48/664–68, 76/992; *LS*, 3/38–39.

³⁹ *LS*, 3/39. *JW*, 76/992 has slightly different wording.

⁴⁰ *JW*, 48/667–68.

further south, would he have withdrawn again? As it was, the Tang emperor committed suicide shortly after these discussions, and his ministers and surviving courtiers were presumably rather surprised when Jingtang arrived at the capital at the end of the year, while Deguang headed north. Furthermore, in the new year of 937, we see Deguang sending home more units—this time the Xi troops who had formed a significant portion of the army—and the following month ordering all the tribes (*bu*) to rest their soldiers.⁴¹

Deguang's intentions

By the end of 936 Deguang was ideally poised to conquer the Central Plains, but he did not. What then, *did* he want?

The most famous consequence of this expedition was the Liao acquisition of the Sixteen Prefectures. This is given great prominence by Song officials obsessed with recovering the lost lands and by western scholars seeing it as the top of a slippery slope down to the Mongol conquest. It may be surprising, then, that information on this matter is so slight and scattered. According to a single line in Jingtang's annals, annual payments and the transfer of territory were agreed on the same day as Jingtang's investiture, but the *Liao shi* annals make no reference to this until we hear of Jingtang's request for the return of the Sixteen Prefectures in the sixth month of 937, and it is not until the end of 938 that the maps and registers were handed over to the Liao.⁴² Nevertheless, already by the time he headed home, Deguang considered this territory to be his. At Yanmen he stopped to disburse captured troops, at Yingzhou he decided to keep on the governors of Jingtang's former provinces of Datong, Zhangguo and Zhenwu, and when a subordinate in one of them refused to submit, Deguang took troops to prompt their surrender.⁴³ We should note that Jingtang's annual payments supplemented the territorial gain rather than being preferred to it as they would in the "outer frontier strategy," and indeed Deguang refused to swap the Sixteen Prefectures for increased subsidies. Here he is very clear about what he wants, and it definitely involves taking over the territory he has been given and the officials who manage it.

⁴¹ *JW*, 48/668; *LS*, 3/39–40.

⁴² *LS*, 3/41 (request—refused), 44 (registers); *TJ*, 280/9146, 9154. There is a single line referring to the handover in the *LS*, *Dili zhi*, 37/437.

⁴³ *LS*, 3/40.

Nevertheless, for contemporaries the handover of territory may not have been the most significant aspect of the new situation. Sources from both sides give far more prominence to the new relationship between their rulers.⁴⁴ During the siege of Jin'an, the *Liao shi* annals apparently quote Deguang saying to Jingtang:

"Observing your great majesty, it is proper to grant you this southern territory, (where) your posterity will help (to protect) the frontier for Us." Then he ordered his officials to set up a sacrificial hall at Jinyang and to prepare the ceremonial for conferring the Mandate.⁴⁵

In other words, having seen Jingtang in action, Deguang reckons he will make a good ruler of the Central Plains, securing the Liao's southern border against incursions—official and perhaps unofficial too.

The *Jiu Wudai shi* account expands on this. It claims to quote Deguang's edict conferring the Mandate on Jingtang, as well as what Deguang said to Jingtang before the investiture ceremony. Both written instrument and personal comments highlight Jingtang's personal qualifications to be a ruler. Deguang tells him he has a "broad capacity for understanding" and the edict states that "heaven exalts [his] courage." The text refers to the Mandate as justification for changing the dynasty, and makes oblique reference to Deguang's complex relations with Jingtang's patron and father-in-law, Li Siyuan.⁴⁶ Harsh criticism of "the tyrant Li Congke" with his "awe-inspiring cruelty" acts to justify Jingtang's rebellion, but the overthrow of Congke, a base-born "rebel against Heaven," needed Deguang's heroic support.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ PRC scholars generally regard the territorial handover as merely symptomatic of the greater humiliation of ritual subordination to a foreigner, and read the eleventh-century sources as evidence for a widespread quasi-nationalistic resentment of this situation. See esp. Ren, "Liaochao yu Wudai de guanxi." Cf. Zhu Zifang, "Qidanzu jianli Liaochao ji qi kaifa jianshe woguo beibu bianjian de lishi zuoyong," *Liao Jin Qidan Nüzhen shi yanjiu dongtai*, 1987/1, pp. 5–9, who emphasises the territorial issue; and the dispassionate Yang Shusen, *Liao shi jianbian* (Shenyang, 1984), pp. 45–46.

⁴⁵ *LS*, 3/39.

⁴⁶ Deguang and Siyuan maintained an effective envoy relationship, despite continual unofficial Liao raids, and in 928 a large (though unsuccessful) Liao expedition in support of the Yiwu governor Wang Du. The relationship survived the detention of some fifty important Liao prisoners and the execution of many of the envoys sent to try to recover them. *JW*, 37/508 and chs. 38–44 *passim*; *LS*, 3/28–9, 32–5; and Standen, "Raiding and Frontier society."

⁴⁷ *JW*, 75/985–7. Note the continuation of Tang practice as described by H. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven, 1985).

We should recall here that Deguang had originally promised Jingtang his assistance in rebellion; there is no record that he promised him the throne. Deguang, like Abaoji before him, had given help to various north China leaders in their internecine struggles, and he would have been entirely justified in treating this as just another such occasion, in which success was by no means guaranteed. In 936 it is not until he sees the popularity of Jingtang's cause and Tang resistance collapses that Deguang might realistically imagine anything more than an attempt to help a provincial governor retain his autonomy. In other words, Deguang had not gone into this venture with the intention of installing Jingtang as emperor. Instead, the sources from both sides depict Deguang presenting Jingtang with a kingdom as a reward consequent upon the good impression Jingtang's virtue had made upon the Liao emperor.

But before telling Jingtang that he will make him emperor, Deguang observes that the fact that he gained victory in a single battle manifests the will of Heaven, plainly claiming the Mandate for himself—and not for Jingtang—by virtue of military merit or *gong*.⁴⁸ Deguang claims in the document quoted in the *Jiu Wudai shi* that he “originally had the intention of having you follow me (as a subject),” and the vocabulary of Jingtang's investiture (*ce ming*) is that used for conferring positions subordinate to the emperor. However, the edict goes on to suggest that Jingtang will be filling an essential role as ruler of a land that requires one, and that his virtue (*de*) demands that he accept “the rules binding the emperor.” The father-son relationship between Liao and Jin is specified, and the edict ends with a warning that hanging onto the throne will require continued expression of virtue, lack of which will manifest itself as trouble on the frontiers. It would probably have been unwise for Jingtang to read this as anything other than a warning to do as Deguang told him or face military consequences.

If these accounts bear any resemblance to what was actually said and written, then these events would have required a significant realignment of the conventional Chinese understanding of relations between neighbouring monarchs. Deguang's edict, as recorded, suggests that he (or his officials) were applying the terminology of the Mandate to the kinds of relationships familiar to him from the world

⁴⁸ See Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, esp. pp. 96–7.

of the steppe and, in all likelihood, the borderlands. There the most powerful military leader received the allegiance of those he defeated or who submitted rather than risk defeat, and thus allowed his charismatic, economic and military legitimacy to bolster the positions of his subordinates by association, receipt of titles, and a share in the profits.⁴⁹ Thus Deguang received “tribute” from Jürchens, Tanguts, Shiwei and others who accepted his superior position.⁵⁰ In 936, Shi Jingtang was formally subordinated to Deguang in much the same way as a Tangut or Jürchen leader, but is presented in the Chinese records as the Son of Heaven of the Later Jin dynasty. Despite his subordination in interstate terms, he would naturally have behaved towards the Later Jin population like any other contemporary Central Plains ruler claiming possession of the Mandate. The Mandate, however, was an indivisible office, and claiming it in these circumstances created a contradiction between the reality of accepting a subordinate role abroad and filling an indivisibly supreme position for domestic purposes. This contradiction was only emphasised by Jingtang’s total reliance on outside assistance in obtaining (and retaining) his throne.

What if Jingtang had proved unsatisfactory for elevation as a subordinate emperor? Would Deguang have been tempted to take the throne himself? Or would he simply have found someone else? There were certainly other candidates. Just a few days after Jingtang’s investiture as emperor, the Tang governor Zhao Dejun almost succeeded in persuading Deguang that he could offer more than Jingtang as emperor in the southern kingdom. Even though the investiture had already been performed, Deguang initially accepted Dejun’s offer on military grounds, and only with difficulty was Deguang persuaded to stand by Jingtang.⁵¹ It seems highly likely, therefore, that Deguang really did have no interest in ruling the southern kingdom in person. With governors falling over themselves to rule the Central Plains for him, there was no need to do it himself.

What happened in 936 was obviously different from earlier interactions between the Liao and the Central Plains regimes, but not

⁴⁹ Joseph Fletcher outlines how such leadership worked for the Mongols, “The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives,” *HJAS*, 46(1986), pp. 18–29.

⁵⁰ A Five Dynasties “emperor” ruled in much the same way: by virtue of his peers accepting his primacy. See my “The Five Dynasties, 907–960,” in *CHC*, vol. 5a: *The Five Dynasties and Sung China, 960–1279, Pt. 1*, eds. D. Twitchett and P. Smith (New York, forthcoming).

⁵¹ *JW*, 98/1309–10, 137/1833; *XW*, 29/319, 72/894; *TJ*, 280/9155; *LS*, 3/37.

because the Liao were gearing up for conquest. Two differences are significant. The first is that Deguang was more than happy to make an opportunistic territorial gain. By the 930s the Liao state was firmly established—evidently more firmly than its southern neighbour. Further development required more resources to fund central institutions and keep Deguang's pastoralist followers happy. These did not *have* to be in the form of territory, but there were obvious advantages to outright possession as against the precarious local “understandings”—such as the one described for 934—or the uncertainties of violent theft. The Sixteen Prefectures were exactly the lands where the Liao peoples habitually nomadised, although they appear to have accommodated agriculture too. They were familiar, and not too big to manage or defend. As a resource-base they were ideal for Deguang's purposes, but he did not set out deliberately to acquire them. Rather, he, along with all his fellow leaders in the north China borderlands, of whatever cultural persuasion, simply took advantage of any opportunity presented by any of his neighbours. That we hear about such events entirely in a context of nomad-sedentary antagonism is an accident of sources and historiography rather than an accurate reflection of reality.

The second difference from earlier events is that Deguang or his ministers borrow Central Plains terminology for an interstate relationship that contradicts fundamental principles of Chinese rulership, and so highlights the differences between this and steppe (or borderland) traditions. Deguang is very much in control of this situation, not just militarily, but also in his ability to manipulate old concepts in new situations. Taking the superior position in both steppe and Chinese traditions, Deguang experiences no contradiction; he is able to claim the Mandate convincingly and accordingly is able to confer subordinate office on Jingtang as if he were a steppe leader. For Deguang the language used is unimportant, although he does seem to recognise the usefulness of binding Jingtang by institutions recognisable to the population of the Central Plains. Deguang could hardly have planned any of this, but once again displays a tremendous capacity to make the most of the situations in which he finds himself. It is Jingtang who has to deal with the complications this produces in the Chinese realm, and it is the collapse of the ability to work the compromise after he dies that leads to the Liao-Jin war.

The Liao-Jin War and the Conquest of 947

The Liao-Jin alliance remained firm throughout Shi Jingtang's lifetime. When he died in the sixth month of 942, his son, Shi Chonggui (Jin Chudi, 942–7), accepted the familial designation of “grandson” to Deguang, but refused the subordinate status of “subject” that went with it.⁵² Deguang was not pleased. An envoy bore his chastisement south, and when he received the stubborn response that “the former emperor was set up by your sage court, [but] today's lord has received his title from our own country,” Deguang “started to consider a southern punitive expedition” (*shi you nan fa zhi yi*).⁵³ However, Deguang may have been reluctant to fight, since no expedition transpired, even though the timing was right for the campaign season and the 936 expedition had been organised on the same timescale. According to the *Liao shi*, the Jin continued to send the usual and frequent envoy missions until a Jin spy revealed “that the Jin were traitorous” near the end of the eleventh month of 943.⁵⁴ The following month the Liao marched in force, striking across at least three points on the northern border and reaching Beizhou,⁵⁵ which was halfway to the Yellow River and the last serious line of defence before the walls of the capital. The first casualty of war was the annual tribute from Jin to Liao, the non-arrival of which the *Liao shi* notes, presumably without irony, in 944.⁵⁶ The Liao did not receive Central Plains subsidies again until 951.⁵⁷

The Jin must have found the money useful, since they were pre-occupied with internal problems. Chief of these was a drought reported to have hit much of the country, so that by the late autumn famine deaths were being reported in the hundreds of thousands. On top of that, Yang Guangyuan, the governor of Qingzhou in what is now western Shandong, was suspected of rebelliousness. An external threat

⁵² Note that territory was not an issue. By contrast, Liu Zhiyuan had been worried about territory in 936, and more concerned about the fictive kinship than “subject” status. (*TJ*, 280/9146).

⁵³ *LS*, 4/52. He was reputedly encouraged by Zhao Yanshou, but also by clan-members such as Yelü Hou, who apparently felt that such a crime could not but require a punitive expedition. (*LS*, 77/1258).

⁵⁴ *LS*, 4/52–3; *JW*, 81/1074–5, 1076.

⁵⁵ *JW*, 82/1084–5; *LS*, 4/53.

⁵⁶ *LS*, 4/55.

⁵⁷ From the Northern Han, based in the northwest (*TJ*, 290/9460).

was added to this because Guangyuan was thought to be seeking Liao assistance. Jin military preparations in late 943—imperial armies stationed at Yunzhou₂, west of Shandong, and twenty-six palace officers patrolling the lower Yellow River—simultaneously guarded against Guangyuan and defended the River crossings against any assisting force from the north. In addition, seven provincial governors and officials were appointed as commissioners of inspection for their various districts, ostensibly “because the Khitan were coming to raid,” but with the exception of Beizhou, the focus was on the provinces around the capital, chiefly south of the River and protecting water communications.⁵⁸ If the Khitan reached these defences, the Jin would already be in serious trouble.

Yang Guangyuan rebelled as the Liao were marching south at the end of 943. Beizhou surrendered and Chonggui appointed commanders for an expeditionary army, then, pausing only to order famine relief, went in person to encamp by the River at Shanzhou. The Liao turned down an offer of peace, reportedly with the words, “A situation which is already a *fait accompli* cannot be altered,” and advanced to Liyang in preparation for crossing the Yellow River. The Jin court sent defenders to four points on the River, but even as they were moving into position, Bozhou, east of the Liao vanguard, surrendered. Yang Guangyuan led the invaders across the Yellow River, but their advance was halted in the second month of 944 by a resounding Jin victory at the battle of Majiakou, where the Liao vanguard was caught in the act of securing the river crossing, prompting the main force, apparently numbering “over 100,000,” to withdraw from the River back to their camp.⁵⁹

Despite this defeat the Liao forces must have remained largely intact because in the third month, the *Liao shi* reports a suggestion by Zhao Yanshou that a swift occupation of the bridge at Shanyuan would mean “the Jin will certainly fall.” However, an attempt to lead the Jin into an ambush was stymied by heavy rain, and the subsequent battle at Qicheng, although indecisive, ended campaigning for the season.⁶⁰ The Liao armies withdrew north the way they had come, leaving behind Zhao Yanzhao to defend Beizhou, and seizing Dezhou on the way. There seems to have been no attempt to hold

⁵⁸ *JW*, 81/1075–82/1084.

⁵⁹ *JW*, 82/1084–7; *LS*, 4/54.

⁶⁰ Skirmishes continued through the off-season.

Dezhou, and the garrison at Beizhou also headed north in the summer, having “move[d] the captured households into the interior.”⁶¹

The seizure and abandonment of Beizhou and Dezhou may remind us of the towns captured during the 934 expedition. Neither city was besieged, which means that somebody surrendered,⁶² and the booty served to reward Deguang’s forces. The Liao commitment to retaining Central Plains cities was not strong. The garrison at Beizhou could be construed as an attempt to maintain a territorial gain, but given its subsequent pullout, it could equally have been a sensible precaution to cover the withdrawal of large armies deep within enemy territory. Given that it was itself well behind enemy lines and cut off by any number of unsubdued towns and prefectures to the rear, it would have required an enormous commitment of troops and supplies to attempt to hold it. Deguang’s troops had better things to do in the summer than garrison towns deep within Jin territory, and the Khitans were famously intolerant of the summer heat of the Central Plains.

The 944–5 season

The Jin used the summer to raise a fresh militia levy, appoint a new set of fifteen generals for the following season, station an imperial army to defend the River crossing at Shanyuan, and track the continuing progress of the famine, which continued to kill by the tens of thousands and reduced some districts to cannibalism. The belligerent Jing Yanguang was posted away from court and the statesman Sang Weiha returned. Most importantly, perhaps, Chonggui was able to focus his attention on the rebel Yang Guangyuan, who submitted towards the end of the year and was pardoned, but then killed.⁶³ Chonggui also sent a second mission to ask the Liao for peace, but the envoy was detained.⁶⁴ When the campaign season came around, the “whole army” of Liao took nine counties in the vicinity of Hengzhou-Zhenzhou—at the very end of 944, and the vanguard reached Xingzhou before again heading for Liyang on the Yellow River. However, finding their approach blocked by an imperial army and the seemingly well defended city of Xiangzhou, the Liao turned back and began

⁶¹ *JW*, 82/1087–90; *LS*, 4/54.

⁶² At Beizhou the prefect died resisting the invaders, but one of his subordinates must have taken a different approach.

⁶³ *JW*, 82/1089–90, 83/1093–8.

⁶⁴ *LS*, 4/54.

to withdraw north.⁶⁵ Once again we see a large army making easy progress through poorly defended territory, but disinclined to spend time or effort on sieges. This was no recipe for territorial occupation.

The Jin now took the offensive, seeking a pitched battle to resolve the war, for without a peace Chonggui foresaw continual incursions north of the Yellow River.⁶⁶ Advancing through deep snow in the third month, the Jin took Shengzhou in Liao territory before turning back towards Shuozhou. The Jin too were using raiding tactics, since they do not appear to have tried to hold Shengzhou, and presumably just looted it. The Liao army headed north and took Qizhou, but Jin successes continued as they received the surrenders of Taizhou, Mancheng, and Suicheng. At this point the Jin forces heard from Liao deserters that the Liao armies had fallen back on Gubeikou and Youzhou, had defeated the Jin armies and forced them back to Taizhou, and were now heading south again with 50,000 cavalry.⁶⁷ The Liao forces here seem to be responding to losses of fortified cities, which may imply a concern with territory. But this was territory granted to the Liao by Shi Jingtang, and which had now been under Liao rule for nearly a decade. Defending what you regard as yours against enemy encroachment is surely not the same as fighting for territorial expansion.

The Jin advance had been effective in bringing the Liao to battle, and the Jin generals withdrew from their captured cities and fell back on Mancheng to prepare for what both sides hoped would be a decisive encounter: Chonggui's concern to resolve the war was now matched by Deguang's desire to meet the whole Jin army and "settle the *tianxia*." Battle was joined at Botuanweicun, near Dingzhou, where the Jin armies heavily defeated the Liao; this was the famous occasion when Deguang fled the battlefield on a camel.⁶⁸ Deguang's troops again went home for the summer, while the Jin collected horses, posted armies to guard the main Yellow River crossing at Shanzhou, and at Zhenzhou to defend a major line of access from the north.⁶⁹ The Jin had again won a pitched battle, but did not believe the war was yet over.

⁶⁵ *JW*, 83/1098–1100; *LS*, 4/55. In fact Xiangzhou was not well defended at all. See Standen, "Frontier crossings," p. 183.

⁶⁶ *JW*, 83/1100.

⁶⁷ *JW*, 83/1100–2; *LS*, 4/55.

⁶⁸ *JW*, 83/1102–4; *LS*, 4/55–6.

⁶⁹ *JW*, 84/1110–11.

In the autumn of 945 the Jin sought peace for a third time, but Deguang “replied citing former matters.” There was, however, no campaigning in the 945–6 season. Instead the Jin engaged in extensive border policing activities, including sending imperial armies to patrol the northern frontier or respond to raids, which were presumably unofficial, since none are reported in the *Liao shi*.⁷⁰ The costs of this produced much hardship for the populace, especially since Henan and Hebei were still suffering thousands of deaths from ongoing drought and famine, undoubtedly exacerbated by the military actions of the preceding years. In the spring and summer these difficulties are evidenced by bandit bands taking over county seats and sometimes defeating the policing troops sent against them, and border groups—from both steppe and north China—switching their allegiance to the Liao. When it finally began to rain in the autumn, riverbanks burst and floodwaters destroyed the harvest across Henan and Hebei, so banditry and raids remained problems in the borderlands as well as in the Jin hinterland.⁷¹ Jin defences in the north are thus perhaps as much a response to drought and its disorderly human consequences as to fear of major armies coming from the north. In any case, disaster management in the localities kept the Jin—and perhaps the Liao—fully occupied, and the war between the two courts was put on hold.

The 946–7 season and the fall of the capital

The Jin prepared for the 946–7 campaign season by inviting the Liao Chinese commander-in-chief, Zhao Yanshou, to change sides. They had approached him previously, and this time he said that he “would like to come home to the Middle Kingdom,” if an army was sent to meet him.⁷² This was eagerly arranged, and in the eleventh month a Jin expeditionary army, incorporating virtually the entire body of imperial forces, headed north under the command of Du Chongwei,⁷³ Li Shouzheng and others, while Zhao Yanshou marched south with the Liao armies. However, Yanshou did not come over to the Jin

⁷⁰ *JW*, 84/1111–14. *LS*, 4/56 reports an attack by a “Jin army” on Gaoyang, which was driven off.

⁷¹ *JW*, 1114–18; *LS*, 4/56–7.

⁷² See Standen, “Frontier crossings,” p. 184 for details.

⁷³ Also known as Du Wei.

side, and instead news arrived that Deguang, with more armies, was heading once again for the canal route through Beizhou. The Jin armies positioned themselves to guard the crossing of the Hutuo River near Zhenzhou, while the court despatched two reserve forces to defend against mounted advance units. Engaging with Jin forces at Zhongdu, the Liao won handsomely.⁷⁴ Chongwei, with most of the army, took refuge in the fortress at Zhongdu, much as the defeated Later Tang forces in 936 had holed up in Jin'an. As in 936, the Liao forces laid siege, and the troops in Zhongdu were swiftly starved into surrender, leaving the way clear to the capital at Bianzhou. The Jin general Zhang Yanze joined the Liao and, like Shi Jingtang before him, led an advance force which turned up unexpectedly at the capital's gates.⁷⁵ An attempt by Chonggui to commit suicide with his family was prevented by the presentation of a letter from the Liao emperor to the Jin empress dowager, and Chonggui replied with a letter of submission.⁷⁶

In 936 Deguang had turned down an opportunity to march on the capital (then at Luoyang) in almost identical circumstances. This time, Deguang followed the advance party to the capital. Chonggui wanted to meet him outside the city. This showed great respect, but was rejected by Deguang, who, the *Liao shi* reports, "could not bear to come within sight of" Chonggui, whose ingratitude the Liao emperor blamed for the war.⁷⁷ The *Jiu Wudai shi* records an imperial letter that apparently said,

You asked before for permission to have an audience with the Superior State, [but] the ministers and officials memorialised with their opinions, saying how can we have two of these Sons of Heaven meeting each other in the road! Now We bestow you with the knife of power that We have worn, in order to comfort your heart.⁷⁸

Although we should be sceptical about the exact wording, this more generous version of the story does suggest something about how Deguang was running his empire (or at least about Central Plains

⁷⁴ The earlier sources place the whole Jin army in this battle, but the *TJ* claims only a scouting force of 2,000 was involved. *JW*, 85/1123; *LS*, 4/57–8; *TJ*, 285/9317–18.

⁷⁵ Yanze led 2,000 cavalry as against Jingtang's 5,000.

⁷⁶ *JW*, 84/1118–85/1125; *LS*, 4/57–8. In 936 Li Congke had not received such a letter and had killed himself.

⁷⁷ *LS*, 4/58.

⁷⁸ *JW*, 85/1125.

perceptions of this). Deguang had taken advice from his north China ministers about ritual and behaviour in a political context—the imperial court of the Central Plains—still running according to Tang norms, and here he is trying to apply Chinese official mores in a Chinese official context.⁷⁹

Once in the capital, Deguang continued to borrow loosely from Central Plains protocol while taking his own line in significant respects.⁸⁰ He made his formal entry to the capital in an imperial carriage on the first day of the new year.⁸¹ He received the routine, ritual submission of the officials, and made the usual decree that they should retain their posts. Then he entered the inner palace, as would have been expected, but spent the night not there, but at Chigang outside the city.⁸² On the days following he held court and conducted the usual reshuffle of ministers, as well as meting out reward and retribution.⁸³ Among his actions was the demotion of Chonggui, which the *Jiu Wudai shi* carefully tells us was “according to the Khitan system.” This distinguishes Chonggui’s treatment from the Five Dynasties approach, where supplanted rulers who had not committed suicide were also demoted, but then subsequently murdered.⁸⁴ Chonggui was given lands on the borders of the old Bohai state, to which he proceeded with a large entourage and an escort of 300 Liao cavalry. He died there in 964.

⁷⁹ It may be that the bestowal of the knife should be seen as typically an act of the borderlands, in which case Deguang would here be combining Chinese theory and borderlands praxis. This topic has yet to be investigated, but Thomas Allsen’s remarks on Mongol bestowals of apparel in *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 84–85, may be suggestive.

⁸⁰ What follows is recorded at: *JW*, 85/1126, 137/1835; *TJ*, 286/9327–30; *LS*, 4/58–9.

⁸¹ Tang emperors changed the names of their reign-eras on this day (Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, p. 89). In the Five Dynasties this happened only in 954 (*JW*, 113/1500).

⁸² Hu Sanxing believes Deguang was too afraid of the conquered to stay in the palace. *TJ*, 286/9328. One wonders what normally happened to the imperial women on such occasions.

⁸³ All part of the Central Plains accession protocol; Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, p. 90.

⁸⁴ The last Tang emperor was demoted and kept under guard until he was poisoned in the second month of 908. Li Congke’s predecessor was demoted, and poisoned two days later. All but two of the Five Dynasties successions were irregular: three emperors were killed by their usurpers and two killed themselves as their successors’ armies approached.

Like a Central Plains emperor, Deguang held court regularly into the second month, beginning by declaring a new dynasty of Great Liao,⁸⁵ pronouncing a great amnesty, and changing the name of the reign era. At the same time Zhenzhou was redesignated as the Central Capital (Zhongjing), and titles were distributed generously to Jin and Liao servants alike. News came on 10 March that Liu Zhiyuan had declared himself emperor of Later Han, and subsequently three Liao Chinese of long standing were appointed to key governorships around the former Jin capital. Elsewhere, governors who offered their submission were left in place. In the third month, on 25 March, a member of the Liao consort clan, Xiao Han, was appointed as Xuanwu governor to run the province centred on Bianzhou, reviving the Later Tang name for the district.⁸⁶ The old Jin capital was thus downgraded, while the new Liao capital (Deguang already had three) was well to the north at Zhenzhou. Liao rulers were starting to make a habit of creating new capitals in newly gained territories,⁸⁷ so the establishment of the new Zhongjing may indicate an intention to retain control of the Central Plains. On the other hand, it is perhaps curious that the new capital was located so close to the southern border of the Liao-owned Sixteen Prefectures, rather than more centrally in the new lands.

One explanation for this could be military: Zhenzhou was familiar to the Liao from many campaigns and even peaceful coexistence, and had proven to be defensible.⁸⁸ A related explanation involves high strategy and politics: the choice of Zhenzhou as Central Capital could suggest a lack of commitment to excessive territorial acquisition. Deguang was surely conscious that he would have a hard time convincing his pastoralist followers of the benefits to them of a persisting strategy requiring the retention of Bianzhou. Zhenzhou, though, was not only defensible, but also provided the Liao with a forward line. The Sixteen Prefectures had given Liao the passes that allowed access north and south, but Zhenzhou pushed the military boundary down into the river valley below. This strengthened the Liao hold on the

⁸⁵ Cf. Tong Jiajiang, "Qidan shouci gai Liao niandai kao," *Minzu yanjiu*, 1983/4, pp. 142–44.

⁸⁶ *LS*, 4/59.

⁸⁷ Liaoyang (former Bohai territory) became the Eastern Capital (Dongjing) in 929, and Youzhou the Southern Capital (Nanjing) in 938.

⁸⁸ As capital of the autonomous principedom of Zhao, it had been defended stoutly against all comers from the late Tang until 922. See Standen, "Five Dynasties."

Sixteen Prefectures and, if Deguang retained control of the districts around Zhenzhou, would give him another chunk of taxable territory maybe as large as the Sixteen Prefectures, and perhaps equally manageable. If Deguang was looking for territorial enlargement at all, then this would have been the sensible way to do it.⁸⁹ The focus on Zhenzhou was in keeping with his previous expansion: avoiding over-extension, profitable, and not too difficult to consolidate.

Three weeks after he demoted Bianzhou, on 14 April, Deguang issued his famous order to remove all the valuables of the Jin court to the north, including

the functionaries of all the Jin offices, the female court attendants, the eunuch court, the diviners, the workmen, the maps and records, the calendric calculations, the classics carved on stone, bronze statues, the water clocks from the *Mingtang* (probably the imperial ancestral temple), the musical scores from the *Taichang* (Court of Imperial Sacrifices), the various musical instruments denoting rank, salt and silk, legal items, armour and weapons.⁹⁰

This was plunder on a grand scale: Deguang planned to take north not just the contents of the imperial storerooms, but the entire official body of the Jin capital, down to the last Editor in the Palace Library. It was not the action of someone intending to rule from a base in the Central Plains, but of one who, at most, meant to rule from the north and to enjoy his acquisitions there. The governance of the Central Plains, even as a subordinate region, would have required the efforts of most of the capital officials, as well as continuing lines of communication with the various districts. The plan to remove every last official suggests strongly that Deguang did not care how the Central Plains were administered after the bureaucrats were gone. If he were to profit from owning the Central Plains he needed to tax them, and he understood that effective taxation required significant administrative machinery.⁹¹ So if he had wanted to exploit the Central Plains for their tax revenues, he would have known he had to leave the officials in place. That he did not do this suggests that he never

⁸⁹ Later Liao emperors adopted a minutely incremental approach. See K. Tietze, "The Liao-Sung Border Conflict of 1074–1076," in *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift für Herbert Franke*, ed. W. Bauer (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 127–51.

⁹⁰ *LS*, 4/59–60.

⁹¹ Deguang had inherited Abaoji's administrative system, and expanded it by the acquisition of the Sixteen Prefectures.

intended to rule the whole of the Central Plains, while his concern to take possession of the human talent implies that he thought he could use it back home.⁹² Although most of the officials were eventually left behind at Zhenzhou, the major reorganisation of the Liao administration that followed the withdrawal⁹³ reinforces the impression that Deguang and his successor saw the Later Jin officials as a pool of talent with which they had hoped to fill the ranks of their own bureaucracy. It is this aspect of the conquest that offers most support to the idea that it was essentially a very large raid.⁹⁴

Having ordered this plunder, in the fourth month Deguang set off for home. In this he followed the usual Liao pattern of withdrawing north in the summer to escape the heat; every expedition discussed here did the same thing. The *Liao shi* annals apparently quote the text of Deguang's reply to his younger brother's query about how things had gone. Summing up the war, Deguang notes his military success, but then comments that the problems of the region are many, including administrative disorganisation and idleness, resentment of authority, banditry, and the resistance of Hedong (that is, Liu Zhiyuan's Later Han regime). He continues:

If it were not for the summer heat of Bianzhou and the difficulty of living in this terrain, it would only need one year and we could hope to govern in peace and then retire. I have also changed Zhenzhou to be the Central Capital in order to prepare for an imperial tour of inspection. I want to subjugate Hedong but for the time being we must wait . . .⁹⁵

This letter is frequently taken as proof that Deguang really had wanted to conquer the Central Plains, which would mean that his efforts had ended in failure. The strongest indication here of an intent to rule the south is perhaps the plan to make an imperial tour of inspection, which fitted the pattern of peripatetic Liao rulership and was also a legitimator in the Tang context.⁹⁶ However, a tour of inspection based on the new Central Capital would not necessarily involve the

⁹² All the north China regimes sought to enlarge their populations, sometimes by raiding, with skilled workers especially prized. See, e.g., *WF*, p. 143.

⁹³ Twitchett and Tietze, "Liao," pp. 76–80.

⁹⁴ The Liao forces also did not modify their habit of foraging in enemy territory, despite the destruction and resentment this could cause. For various views see *LS*, 34/397; *TJ*, 286/9334–5; and Zhao, "Lüelun 'da caoyu'."

⁹⁵ *LS*, 4/60.

⁹⁶ Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, pp. 161–69.

whole of what had been Later Jin. If we accept that Deguang's territorial ambitions were limited to what lay around Zhenzhou, then his tour of inspection would, presumably, extend only over that area. The letter by itself does not prove that Deguang's concern was chiefly with Zhenzhou, but nor does it show that he aimed to retain the whole of the Central Plains.

The letter could also be read as a realistic assessment of the situation when he found himself—unexpectedly—emperor in the Central Plains. While he comments on how easy it could be to consolidate his rule, his caveats on the climate and terrain are fundamental: these were not things over which Deguang or anyone else had any control. He seems to be saying that if it were simply a matter of military or political success, there would be little difficulty, but since one has to take the ecological factors into account, there is no way that the Liao could ever “hope to govern in peace.” A more realistic goal is to come back to “subjugate” Hedong. Even more defensible than Zhenzhou, it is far enough north for the climate to be tolerable, and it supports mixed farming and herding. It could be the next stage in incremental expansion, or may simply secure the Liao border against Hedong raiders or centrally directed Central Plains aggression. If Deguang can retain Zhenzhou, then Hedong would be the next obvious target. Far from being an admission of failure, the letter can be taken to refer to the present situation and future prospects, and not to the fulfilment of a long-cherished ambition of total conquest.

In Conclusion: Wider Issues

So what were the Liao fighting for? The account here suggests that the events of the beginning and end of the Later Jin dynasty are not susceptible to any explanation that conflates issues of territorial control with the question of rulership. The easy assumptions that invasion implies a desire for conquest and that conquest implies a desire for direct rule simply do not fit the cases examined here. We must separate out these two questions and ask, did Deguang want territory, and if so, how much? And, did Deguang want to rule directly as emperor in the Central Plains?

The answer to the question of whether Deguang wanted territorial control is clearly “Yes,” but this must be heavily qualified. Reporting on the Jin peace mission of 944, the *Liao shi* annals recount

that Deguang “ordered that they (the Jin) hand over all the prefectures north of the (Yellow) River, and send Sang Weihai and Jing Yanguang to come and discuss this.”⁹⁷ This does sound very much as if Deguang was using his military muscle to try to extract territorial concessions, but if this was what he wanted, it is odd that he did not later expend more effort to retain his conquests north of the River. In the light of everything else we have discussed regarding Deguang’s attitude to conquest, it seems likely that this was a case of Deguang “trying it on.”⁹⁸

Even if we assume that Deguang really did say something like this, we have seen that the concrete evidence—recorded captures of towns or districts—rarely reflects the intent of permanent occupation. These are usually temporary occupations to reward troops or, perhaps, cover a retreat. (Un)diplomatic declarations notwithstanding, the overall impression is that territory is not the highest priority for Deguang and his Liao followers. This is not to say that lands are *never* important—Deguang flatly refused to give up the Sixteen Prefectures once he held them from an ally who had no chance of getting them back, and dispatched forces to quell opposition there—but Deguang’s territorial ambitions were strictly limited. When he accepts or seizes control over territory it is opportunistic, and he plans to hold onto only what seems to be manageable: first the Sixteen Prefectures and then the region focused on Zhenzhou. He and his appointees are prepared to fight for control over these districts, but have no commitment beyond them. There is a definite limit to the effort they will expend on even desired districts like Zhenzhou. Here Mada tried to hang on, but by this time the chief concern of the Liao leadership was not retaining territory in north China, but their own domestic succession crisis.⁹⁹

So while territory could have its attractions, it was not Deguang’s *goal*. If he could acquire control of lands that could strengthen the resource base that funded his central institutions and pastoral followers, then that was all to the good, but he was uninterested in conquering territory for its own sake. Movable booty in the form of

⁹⁷ *LS*, 4/53.

⁹⁸ Cf. Abaoji’s similar request in 926, discussed by Mote, *Imperial China*, pp. 44–48, following Yao Congwu, “Abaoji yu Hou Tang shichen Yao Kun huijian tanhua jilu,” *Wenshi zhaxuebao*, 5 (1953), pp. 91–112, who both seem to me to take the texts too much at face value.

⁹⁹ *JW*, 100/1336, *TJ*, 287/9370–3. Would Deguang have acted more decisively to hold onto Zhenzhou than did his appointees? The post-conquest events are complicated, and deserve attention in their own right.

people and objects helped just as much to satisfy his need for resources, and did not have to be defended with expensive and vulnerable forward garrisons.

The crucial matter, then, is not territory, but authority and subordination, rulership and submission.¹⁰⁰ The issue Deguang is prepared to fight for, over several years if necessary, is the relative status of himself and the Jin emperor. Shi Chonggui is likewise prepared to provoke a war over the same issue. In repudiating his subject status Chonggui clearly expected that Jin would be invaded, as would any contemporary who challenged their overlord, whether they were a pastoral chieftain resisting the Liao or a provincial governor rebelling against a Central-Plains court. That in this case we have a nomadic overlord and a Central Plains subordinate does not alter the nature of the relationship, which was common coin throughout the north China borderlands.

Deguang definitely does want rulership, but again, his ambitions are carefully limited. His installation of a local governor as emperor in 936 is a fine illustration of this. Given the choice he had between two well-qualified candidates, there was certainly no need for him to rule himself, especially since with either one he would gain exactly the same beneficial relationship: a clear subordination to himself, a regular flow of material benefits, and security on his southern frontier.

Why then, did Deguang not install a surrogate ruler in 947? It may be that he planned to do just that. According to the *Zizhi tongjian*, way back in 943 Deguang had promised his minister Zhao Yanshou that he could be emperor in the south once the conquest was complete, which apparently prompted Yanshou's enthusiastic service.¹⁰¹ However, when Du Chongwei surrendered at Zhongdu, he had apparently been offered the southern emperorship in place of Yanshou. According to the *Tongjian*, Deguang said this was because Yanshou's "reputation and influence up to the present have been slight, [so] I fear he is not able to be emperor over the Middle Kingdom."¹⁰² These events parallel those of 936, but in this case we may wonder whether Deguang's offers were genuine. Both contenders were given red robes in which to go to the Jin camp, and Deguang handed the

¹⁰⁰ By contrast, the issue for Abaoji seemed to have been more to do with resourcing his new political structure.

¹⁰¹ *TJ*, 283/9256.

¹⁰² *TJ*, 285/9318–19.

defeated army over to Yanshou, saying, “They’re all yours,”¹⁰³ but it was surely odd that Deguang should simultaneously entertain two candidates for the throne.¹⁰⁴

Rejecting Yanshou and Chongwei as rulers can easily be seen as a pretext for Deguang retaining the throne for himself, but it is also in keeping with Deguang’s emphasis, in 936, upon the manifest virtue of Shi Jingtang, which alone, it is implied, has prompted Deguang to hand over the southern kingdom to Jingtang’s care. Yanshou’s life is well recorded, and what we know matches Deguang’s estimation of the man.¹⁰⁵ There is no doubt that in contemporary terms, he lacked the personal stature, charisma, and military and political skill to make an effective ruler. Du Chongwei is a more complicated case. In his early career he was promoted for military merit, and commanded the successful Taizhou campaign, but latterly he had faced complaints about excessive appropriations, and his leadership of the Zhongdu campaign lacked aggression. There were thus doubts about his Confucian virtue and his military merit. Furthermore, he is said to have initiated secret contact with Deguang, which led to the offer of the emperorship and thus his surrender.¹⁰⁶ Deguang, like his fellow rulers, welcomed enemy generals who wished to surrender, but when the submission is apparently made *in response to* an offer of reward, the implied or actual venality of Chongwei’s action seems to reduce his moral standing. Such a person could legitimately be regarded as unsuitable to rule. Even if Deguang were cynically manipulating one or both generals, he had a sound justification for his actions.

Turning to Deguang’s actions in the capital, these are usually taken to indicate that he had been intending to conquer—and thus rule—the Central Plains all along. Certainly he did the same as any Central Plains conqueror founding a new dynasty, but these actions are so routine in the context of irregular takeovers that they cannot be taken to represent anything meaningful about Deguang’s own intentions. Just because Deguang acted to consolidate his position (who would not?) does not necessarily mean that it was one he had long coveted and deliberately planned to get. Deguang had shown his

¹⁰³ *TJ*, 285/9319. Cf. *JW*, 98/1311; *LS*, 4/58 (which splits the surrendered army between Yanshou and Chongwei).

¹⁰⁴ Hu Sanxing thinks that Deguang was simply deceiving both men, *TJ*, 283/9256; 285/9318.

¹⁰⁵ See Standen, “Frontier crossings,” pp. 165–89.

¹⁰⁶ *JW*, 109/1433.

determination by fighting a four-year war, but the amount of deliberate decision involved in becoming emperor of the Central Plains may have been moderated by circumstances outside his control. Seven of the nine rulers since the fall of the Great Tang in 907 had come to power irregularly, and the ministers of the Jin court were well practised in the modes of such a succession, which must have helped to smooth the transitions for all concerned.¹⁰⁷ From their point of view, once Deguang reached the capital, there was no protocol available with which to receive him other than that which was generally recognised—at least in the Chinese context—as conferring the Mandate to rule the Central Plains. As a side effect, Deguang was not required to think very hard about whether he really wanted to become emperor in the southern kingdom, because the ritual of dynastic change had a momentum of its own: the victor becomes the Son of Heaven, whether he likes it or not. We should note, in addition, that Deguang quickly delegated his authority in the Central Plains to Xiao Han as Xuanwu governor, who in turn palmed it off on a scion of the Later Tang house, Li Congyi.¹⁰⁸ Personal rulership of the Central Plains was not a priority for Deguang in 947 any more than it had been in 936.

This is not to say that Deguang seriously objected to the Later Jin bureaucracy accepting him as their emperor—he was strong-minded enough to have acted differently if he had wanted to—but he may not have thought through the implications of his new position, or squared it with the theoretical position he had previously adopted, most notably in his edict enthroning Shi Jingtang. Becoming emperor in Bianzhou in 947 formalised, at least in terms of Central Plains theory, a position he had implicitly claimed in 936: to be Son of Heaven with the power to appoint vassals to parts of his realm. The nature of this formalisation may have had more resonance with the Central Plains population than the 936 edict, because in 947 the formal claim rested, in conventional Central Plains fashion, on a military triumph whereby the new emperor demonstrated his merit and thus his fitness for the throne. In 936 Shi Jingtang enjoyed only the reflected merit (*gong*) of conquest, which may explain why Deguang's edict emphasises only Jingtang's virtue (*de*). The significance of this

¹⁰⁷ Sima Guang has Feng Dao provide a useful statement on why one should surrender the capital to a new ruler in *TJ*, 279/9112–13.

¹⁰⁸ *JW*, 100/1331–2; *LS*, 113/1505 (where Li Congyi is given as Li Congmin).

may perhaps be seen in the many rebellions against Jingtang and his heavy reliance on his overlord as guarantor of his rule.¹⁰⁹

If status is the key and accordingly we take seriously the 936 edict of investiture, then the reason for opening hostilities in 943 may be very straightforward. As noted above, the edict contained a thinly veiled warning that any breach of the Liao-Jin relationship would mean military action, the precise aim of which was not specified.¹¹⁰ When military action came, it was, for Deguang, a punitive action intended to bring to heel the recalcitrant son of a faithful vassal. He was determined to fight because only a thorough defeat could restore the expected relationship of subordination. He could not afford to let the matter go because if he did his reputation among his other vassals would suffer. On the other side, having been, perhaps, 'bounced' into a war by his generals,¹¹¹ Shi Chonggui had to defend his regime because the only alternative was destruction. Both sides, then, were necessarily determined to seek a resolution of the nature of their relationship.

Chonggui shows several times that he would be willing to consider a negotiated settlement. The first two occasions were in the face of major Liao advances and would almost certainly have required Chonggui to return to some kind of subordinate status. The third time was from a position of greater strength, at the beginning of the campaign season following the Liao defeat at Botuanweicun. Deguang turns him down every time, making impossible demands or "citing former matters." But his purpose in doing so is not conquest but restoration of the political status quo. For Deguang, the Liao-Jin war is the necessary corollary of Chonggui's abjuration of the 936 agreement with his father.

Similarities and differences

This paper has tackled the question of the goals of these Liao invasions, and has concluded that the answer lies not with either extor-

¹⁰⁹ See Standen, "Five Dynasties."

¹¹⁰ A contemporary parallel may be with the PRC's position that any declaration of independence by Taiwan will lead to war. While it is assumed that this would be to bring Taiwan back into the PRC fold, it is not clear exactly what that would mean.

¹¹¹ This is what the sources suggest. Mote's interpretation—that Deguang was protecting Chonggui from rebels in the Later Jin regime—is hard to reconcile with the available materials (*Imperial China*, p. 65).

tion or mere plunder, and is more likely to lie in issues of relative status than in territorial ambition. What does this tell us about similarities and differences between the parties involved?

It is significant that at this point all the players in the borderlands apparently still share the view that power is more important than territory. Both sides in the Liao-Jin conflict seem to have a similar view of political relationships and an equal willingness to fight for the status they felt they deserved. There is also an important military similarity, since we can see that centrally directed Liao military actions under Deguang were rarely the stereotypical nomadic raids and were often, perhaps usually, major expeditions seeking decisive battle, even though the opponent was surely known to be an even match.

While it is important to emphasise the similarities and shared values of tenth-century frontier society,¹¹² there remain differences—though not the ones we usually hear about. First, while territory was not necessarily valued for its own sake, still the *disposition* of territory made a significant difference to strategic possibilities on each side. Like it or not, the Later Tang and Jin were in no position to conduct major expeditions into the steppe, so large-scale warfare was inevitably conducted across the same parts of north China, season after season, with the southerners more often on the defensive, and more liable to major internal disruption in the event of a decisive defeat and surrender. In fact, the Central Plains regimes could *never* get a decisive outcome to their liking because this was structurally impossible. Even if they had been able to project force into the steppe on the model of the Han and Tang, history showed that such ventures were too expensive to be sustained. By contrast, the Liao could just keep coming back to north China until they got the settlement they wanted.¹¹³ The problem is not that the nomads sought conquest but that the north-China regimes could never “win.” When forces on both sides were reasonably balanced, it was thus inevitable that the Central Plains rulers would eventually lose. The north China regimes undoubtedly recognised this, and were rightly concerned about it, but their later chroniclers and modern historians are not necessarily representing them accurately if they suppose that worries about strategic disadvantage and political status were equivalent to a concern for territorial integrity.

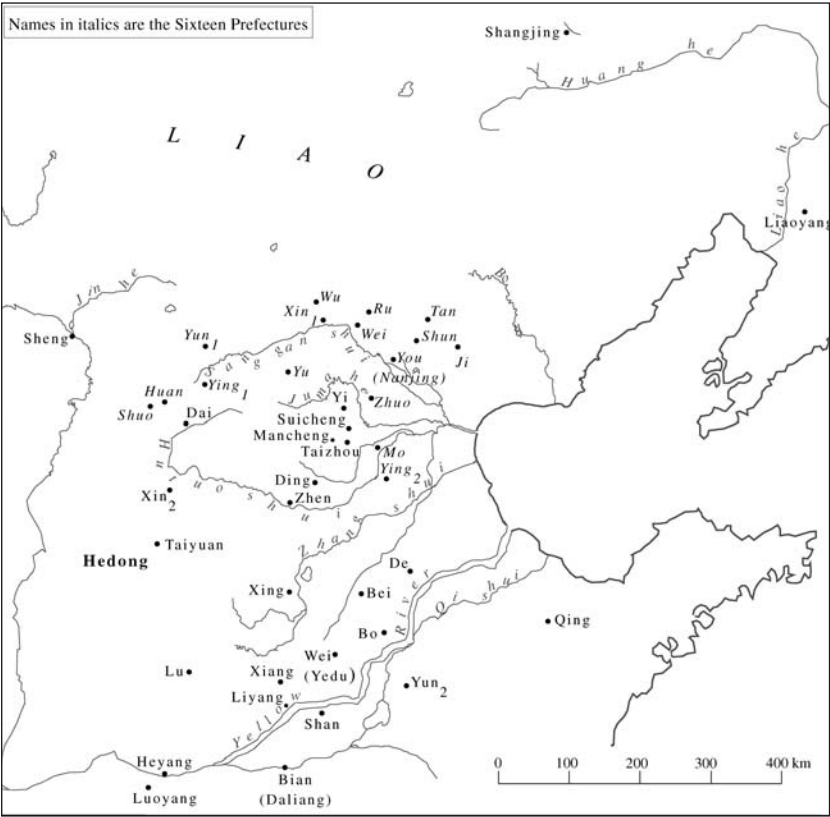
¹¹² See further: Standen, “Raiding and Frontier Society.”

¹¹³ This same circumstance is what enables Barfield’s “outer frontier strategy” to work, but the goal in this case had nothing to do with subsidies.

Secondly, while both sides had a shared understanding of political relationships, their views on how that was *expressed* seem to have differed. Southerners held that ultimate earthly authority resided with whoever held the Mandate as emperor, and the events suggest that they believed that authority was associated with a designated capital containing the institutions of central government. If you captured the capital, you might expect to receive the Mandate, no matter who you were. The Liao, by contrast, did not associate power with any particular position, let alone with any particular place, although they were certainly willing to use both if they enhanced the ruler's authority. Deguang held power by virtue of his own ability to subordinate others. He was happy to make Shi Jingtang emperor in the middle of a field in Hedong, and was equally happy to accept the Central Plains throne himself when it was offered, even though he seems to set no store by retaining the position.

Thirdly, in the Liao handling of their victories we see that they are not driven solely by ecological factors that dictate their every response, but are creatively trying to do what they can with their new state, borrowing, innovating, adapting; and surprising their contemporary neighbours as well as historians by bucking the stereotype of the conquering nomad. Deguang's actions are not the product of an inevitable cleavage between nomads and farmers, but of particular historical circumstances.

With the advent of the Later Zhou and then Song, relations between rulers in Liao and in the Central Plains began to even out. Zhou and Song rulers enhanced their military and governmental capacity until they were consistently able to fight the Liao to a stalemate, and defeat in the field did not lead to the unravelling of the entire Central Plains state. But while the military balance shifted, Liao attitudes towards political authority did not. The Liao disinclination to take over the Zhou or Song, now noted by several scholars, continues a longstanding orientation towards earlier Central Plains regimes, so that we are spared the necessity of trying to locate a major disjuncture in the few years between the 947 conquest and the Liao-Zhou wars. By ironic contrast, as Zhou and Song became stronger, it was *they* who sought territorial control. In this regard, then, Zhou and Song may have had something in common with the Jin and Mongol invaders who fought long and hard for territory and administrative control, while the Liao may be better understood as continuators of the Tang world in which they originated than as begetters of the new world of conquest.



Map 5. North China in the 930s and 940s.

Glossary

Abaoji	阿保機 (Liao Taizu 遼太祖, 907–26)
<i>ba</i>	拔 (took)
Beijing	北京
Beizhou	貝州
Bianzhou	汴州
Bohai	渤海
Botuanweicun	白團衛村
Bozhou	博州
<i>bu</i>	部 (tribes)
<i>ce ming</i>	冊命
Central Plains	(<i>Zhongyuan</i> 中原)
Chigang	赤岡
<i>ci</i>	次 (reached)
Daizhou	代州
Datong	大同
<i>de</i>	德 (virtue)
Dezhou	德州
<i>Dili zhi</i>	地理志
Dingzhou	定州
Dongjing	東京 (Eastern Capital)
Du Chongwei	杜重威 (Du Wei)
Du Wei	杜威 (Du Chongwei)
Fan Yanguang	范延光
Gaoyang	高陽
<i>gong</i>	功 (military merit)
Great Jin	大晉
Gubeikou	古北口
Hebei	河北
Hedong	河東
Heiyulin	黑榆林
Henan	河南
Hengzhou-Zhenzhou	恆州-鎮州
Heyang	河陽
Heyin	河陰
Hu Sanxing	胡三省
Hutuo River	滹沱水
Jin Chudi	晉出帝 (942–7)
Jinyang	晉陽

Jin'an	晉安
<i>Jiu Wudai shi</i>	舊五代史 (<i>Old history of the Five Dynasties</i>)
Juma River	拒馬河
Jürchen	女真
Khitan	(<i>Qidan</i> 契丹)
Later Han	後周 (947–50)
Later Jin	後漢 (936–47)
Later Zhou	後晉 (951–60)
Li Conghou	李從厚 (Tang Mindi 唐閔帝, 933–4)
Li Congmin (Li Congyi)	李從敏
Li Congyi (Li Congmin)	李從益
Li Cunxu	李存勖 (Tang Zhuangzong 唐莊宗, 923–6)
Li Shouzhen	李守貞
Li Zanhua	李贊華
Liao	遼 (907–1125)
<i>Liao shi</i>	遼史 (<i>Liao history</i>)
Liao Taizong	遼太宗 (926–47)
Liao Taizu	遼太祖 (907–26)
Liaoyang	遼陽
Lingqiu	靈丘
Liu Zhiyuan	劉知遠
Liyang	黎陽
Lü Simian	呂思勉
<i>lüe di</i>	略地 (invaded the territory)
Luoyang	洛陽
Luzhou	潞州
Mada	麻荅
Majiakou	麻家口
Mancheng	滿城
<i>Mingtang</i>	明堂
<i>nan fa</i>	南伐 (a punitive expedition to the south)
Nanjing	南京 (Southern Capital)
prince of Jin	晉王
Qicheng	戚城
Qingzhou	青州
Qizhou	祁州
<i>roujian</i>	蹂踐 (trampling)
Sang Weihuan	桑維翰
Shandong	山東
Shanyuan	澶淵

Shanzhou	澶州
Shatuo	沙陀
Shengzhou	勝州
<i>shi you nan fa zhi yi</i>	始有南伐之意 (started to consider a southern punitive expedition)
Shi Jingtang	石敬瑭 (Jin Gaozu 晉高祖, 936–42)
Shi Chonggui	石重貴 (Jin Chudi 晉出帝, 942–7)
Shiwei	室韋
Shulü Ping	述律平 (the Chunqin empress 淳欽后 and Yingtian empress dowager 應天太后)
Shuozhou	朔州
Song	宋 (960–1276)
Suicheng	遂城
<i>Taichang</i>	太常
Taiyuan	太原
Taizhou	泰州
Tang Mindi	唐閔帝 (933–4)
Tang Zhuangzong	唐莊宗 (923–6)
Tanguts	党項
Tatars	達靼
<i>tianxia</i>	天下
Wazhicheng	洺州城
<i>wei</i>	圍 (surrounded)
Weisai	威塞 (Xinzhou1)
Wutai mountains	五台山
Wuzhou	武州
Xi	奚
Xiangzhou	相州
Xiao Han	蕭翰
Xingzhou	邢州
Xinzhou1	新州
Xinzhou2	忻州
Xuanwu	宣武
Yang Guangyuan	楊光遠
Yangcheng	陽城
Yanmen	雁門
Yedu	鄴都
Yellow River	黃河
Yelü Bei	耶律倍
Yelü Deguang	耶律德光 (Liao Taizong 遼太宗, 926–47)

Yelü Hou	耶律吼
Yingzhou1	應州
Yizhou	易州
Youzhou	幽州
Yunzhou1	雲州
Yunzhou2	鄆州
Zhang Jingda	張敬達
Zhang Yanze	張彥澤
Zhangguo	彰國 (Yingzhou1)
Zhao	趙
Zhao Dejun	趙德鈞
Zhao Yanshou	趙延壽
Zhao Yanzhao	趙延昭
Zhenwu	振武 (Shuozhou)
Zhongdu	中渡
Zhongjing	中京

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TRUE TO THEIR WAYS: WHY THE QARA KHITAI DID NOT CONVERT TO ISLAM

Michal Biran

The Qara Khitai period is one of the least known in the history of Central Asia. It is also one of the most fascinating periods, and not only because it preceded the Mongol era. The rule of sinicized nomads over a mostly Muslim sedentary population created a unique multi-cultural environment, which enables one to get “a view from the edge” of both Chinese and Muslim civilizations and to assess their relative function for Inner Asian nomads.¹

This paper focuses on one aspect of the relationship between nomadic conquerors, as were the Qara Khitai, and their sedentary subjects, that of religious and cultural transformation, and more specifically, conversion to Islam. In the case of the Qara Khitai, however, what one has to explain is not why such a conversion took place, but why it never did. Other nomads who conquered Muslim lands either converted to Islam before the conquest, as had, for example, the Qarakhanids and the Seljuqs or, even if they conquered Muslim lands as “infidels,” after some decades in a mostly Muslim territory they eventually embraced Islam. The notable example here is that of the Mongols in Iran, South Russia and Central Asia. The Qara Khitai, however, never converted.

I would like to suggest that the main reason for the non-islamization of the Qara Khitai was their Chinese or Liao tradition, which provided them with the same functions that Islam provided for other nomads. But first, a short introduction about the Qara Khitai is required.

In 1124, when the Khitan Liao dynasty, which had ruled in Manchuria, Mongolia and parts of north China for more than 200 years

¹ This paper is based on sections of my dissertation entitled “China, Nomads and Islam: The Qara Khitai (Western Liao) dynasty 1124–1218,” which was submitted to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2000. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 7th ESCAS conference at Vienna in September 2000, and at the Institute of Advanced Study Historical Colloquium at Princeton NJ in March 2002. I thank Patricia Crone and Yuri Pines for their comments on earlier drafts, and Reuven Amitai for the title.

(907–1125), was overthrown by another wave of Manchurian invaders, the Jurchens, one Khitan prince, Yelü Dashi, chose not to submit to the new rulers. Instead, he led his few adherents westward, hoping to return subsequently to restore the Liao in its former domains. After spending six years at Kedun, Liao's western-most garrison post in Mongolia, aware of both his inability to challenge the Jurchen Jin dynasty and of the relative weakness of the Central Asian kingdoms, Dashi decided to continue further westward. In little more than a decade he succeeded in setting up a new empire in Central Asia that was known there as the Qara Khitai (the Black Khitans) and in China as the Xi Liao (Western Liao). Dashi and his successors bore the Inner Asian title *Gürkhan* (universal khan) but were also designated as Chinese emperors and have Chinese reign titles. The Western Liao is the only Central Asian dynasty that is considered a legitimate Chinese dynasty by traditional Chinese historiography. The dynasty existed for nearly 90 years, and was finally vanquished by the Mongols in 1218.²

After concluding their conquests in 1142 the Qara Khitai ruled over nearly the whole of Central Asia, from the Oxus to the Altai Mountains, and until 1175 even further eastward into the territory of the Naiman and the Yenisei Qirghiz. The southern territories of the Qara Khitai included Balkh (south of the Oxus), Khotan and Hami, and in the north it extended to Lake Balkash and until 1175 also to the further northern territories of the Qangli. This vast empire, roughly equivalent to most of modern Xinjiang, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and south Kazakhstan, more-or-less equaled the extent of the territory of the Jin or the Song in China.

Internally, the Qara Khitai empire was divided between the central territory, under the direct rule of the Qara Khitai, which was organized around their capital, Balāsāghūn, in the Chu valley of modern north Kyrgyzstan, and the territories of the subject kingdoms and tribes: the eastern Qarakhanids around Kashgar and Khotan; the Western Qarakhanids in Transoxania, the Gaochang Uighurs, and Khwārazm, a more outer vassal than the other kingdoms. It also included the realm of the subject tribes: the Qarluq principality of Qayaliq and

² For the political history of the Qara Khitai see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 36–176; see also Ji Zongan, *Xi Liao shi lun: Yelü Dashi yanjiu* (Urumchi, 1996); Wei Liangtao, *Xi Liao shi gao*, (Beijing, 1991); Wei Liangtao, *Xi Liao shi yanjiu* (Ningxia, 1987); G.G. Pikov, *Zapadnye Kidani* (Novosibirsk, 1989); WF, pp. 619–74; W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion* (4th edn., London, 1968), pp. 323–80.

Almalīq (perhaps in the process of turning from tribe to state), and, at least till 1175, the territories of the Naiman and the Qāngli.

The population of this vast empire was multi-ethnic and heterogeneous. Apart from the Khitans, who were a small minority in their empire, it was mainly composed of Turks (including Uighurs), Iranians, Mongols and a few Han Chinese.³ Most of the population was sedentary, though most of the Khitans, the Mongols and some Turkic tribes were nomads. In terms of religion, while the empire included flourishing Buddhist, Nestorian and even Jewish communities, most of its population, including a notable part of the people at the Qara Khitai central territory, were Muslims.⁴

Yet despite the important posts that Muslims held in the central and local administration of the Qara Khitai, their role in the empire's armies and trade, the marriage relations between the Qara Khitai and Muslim rulers, and the tolerant attitude of the Western Liao towards Islam (about which see below), throughout their rule the Qara Khitai did not embrace Islam. For explaining this phenomenon, one has first to understand why other nomadic people did convert to Islam.

Before discussing the complex subject of motives of islamization or conversion in general, I would like to present a medieval Muslim view on this subject, which is also related to the eastern Islamic world's relations with the fringes of China on the eve of the Qara Khitai's accession.

The book of treasures and luxury articles (Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir wa'l-tuḥaf) by Ibn Zubayr, written c. 1070 in Egypt, includes a report about an alleged embassy from the emperor⁵ of China to the Samanid *amīr* Naṣr b. Aḥmad that arrived in Bukhara in 939. Encouraged by an Iranian turncoat who became his vizier, the "emperor of China"

³ For the Han Chinese in Western Liao's realm see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," p. 190, n. 23; cf. Wei Liangtao, *Xi Liao shi yanjiu*, pp. 181–83.

⁴ For a description of the different religious communities see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 350–56.

⁵ The text has *malik al-ṣīn*, i.e. the king of China, which usually refers to a subordinate ruler and not to the emperor himself. (For the devaluation of the title *malik* in Islamic literature and its meaning as the subject of a supreme ruler see A. Ayalon, "Malik," *EI2*, vi, p. 261). However, in this book Ibn Zubayr uses the term *malik al-ṣīn* as referring to the Chinese emperor, e.g., while quoting al-Mas'ūdī's report on the letter and gifts sent from China to the Sassanian monarch Khusraw, he substitutes al-Mas'ūdī's *Faḡhūr* by the term *malik al-ṣīn* (Ibn Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir wa'l-tuḥaf*, ed. M. Ḥamīdallāh [Kuwait, 1959], p. 3; see also p. 9). I therefore follow Bosworth's translation (see next note for reference).

sent a mission of four senior scholars and forty cavalymen, demanding that Naṣr publicly acknowledge Chinese suzerainty and pay tribute for twenty seven years. If refused, he threatened that both Naṣr and his overlord, the 'Abbāsid Caliph, would be attacked. Learning about the embassy and its mission from the governor of his eastern-most province of Farghāna, Naṣr ordered him to treat the mission hospitably, and began to make preparations. He ordered his governors to gather their troops, volunteers and military slaves, in Bukhara. There he summoned goldsmiths to make him a new crown as well as gold and silver scepters, and ordered the houses of Bukhara to be decked out in various colors. Gilded weapons and armor were collected throughout the country, and the *amīr*'s treasury supplied volunteers with mounts, weapons and banners. When the ambassadors arrived, the city of Bukhara was adorned from one end to the other with brocade, silk and precious fabrics. The ambassadors paraded along a road lined with ranks of cavalry and infantry with gilded cuirasses and helmets. Entering the city, they viewed lines of generals, each leading a thousand military slaves wearing satin brocade robes and caps of sable fur, the first ten of each group holding gold swords, belts and gilded maces. Then they passed between two lines of shaykhs wearing black robes with silver belts. Upon entering the *amīr*'s court, they found him sitting on his ceremonial throne, wearing a quilted coverlet of pheasant plumes embroidered with gold thread, adorned with jewels, wearing his new crown, and even surrounded by tamed lions. After this overawing reception, the emissaries were led to an official residence for ambassadors. Only forty days later did the *amīr* give them an audience, proudly rejecting their demands. He then sent them back to their ruler, but not before stressing that with all his might and wealth he was only one of the Caliph's servants. The narrator's final comment on this story is that "all this was the reason why the emperor of China became a Muslim."⁶

As is well known, the emperor of China did not become a Muslim, nor, probably, was he involved in this mission. Yet what is important for our purposes is not the historical background of this anecdote.

⁶ Ibn Zubayr, pp. 139–50; C.E. Bosworth, "An Alleged Embassy from the Emperor of China to the Amir Nasr b. Ahmad: a Contribution to Samanid Military History," in *Yad-name-ye irāni-ye Minorsky* [sic], eds. I. Afshar and M. Minovi (Tehran, 1969), pp. 1–7.

dote,⁷ but the motives for Islamization mentioned in the episode and their relevance for the Qara Khitai.

The first motive apparent in this story is the Muslim show of extraordinary military and political power. Yet the Qara Khitai won their fame in the Muslim world and beyond in 1141, by crushing the until-then-undefeatable Sultan Sanjar, by far the most powerful Muslim leader of his time.⁸ During most of their reign the Qara Khitai continued to enjoy military superiority over their Muslim neighbors, thereby minimizing the attraction of Islamization. Furthermore, if the Qara Khitai had to choose between either China or the Muslim world for shaping their identity, the military power of the Jin, which the Qara Khitai were unable to vanquish, must have been more impressive than the fragmented Muslim world of the mid-to-late twelfth century. In this period the 'Abbāsid caliphate, the declining Seljuqs, the rising Khwārazm Shāhs (accompanied by many minor rulers) contested the leadership of the Muslim world.⁹ It was much more fragmented than China at this stage.

The role of political power in determining the orientation of nomadic acculturation is indeed apparent in the last years of the Qara Khitai. When the dynasty collapsed and Islamization was the means to retain a leading position in Muslim Khwārazm, several noble Khitans were quick to adopt the new faith, the most famous among them was Baraq Ḥājib, who subsequently founded the Muslim Qara Khitai dynasty of Kirmān, in south Persia, which existed until the early fourteenth century (1222/3–1306).¹⁰

The second motive apparent in the episode is the desire to participate in the affluence of Islamic civilization, which the Sāmānid *amīr* was so anxious to demonstrate. The lure of civilization was certainly

⁷ The conversion might reflect that of the Qarakhanids in the later decades of the tenth century, while the embassy is probably identical to that of "the King of China Qalīn b. Shākīr" to the same Samanid *amīr*, recorded in other sources and identified as originating in the Yellow Uighurs. Bosworth, "Embassy," p. 8, and see Abū Dulaf's description of that Chinese embassy as cited in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut, 1955–8), iii, pp. 440ff.

⁸ See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 84–95.

⁹ For Jin military organization see, e.g., H. Franke, "The Chin," in *CHC*, vol. 6: *Alien Regimes and Border States 907–1368*, eds. D. Twitchett and H. Franke (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 263–67; Wang Cengyu, *Jin chao jun zhi* (Hebei, 1996), *passim*.

¹⁰ For the fall of the Qara Khitai see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 121–76. For Baraq Ḥājib and the Kirmānid dynasty, see *ibid.*, pp. 178–81.

attractive to the Inner Asian tribes.¹¹ Yet, being closely acquainted with the not-less-impressive civilization of China, the lure of Muslim wealth and splendor was of lesser significance for the Qara Khitai.

Beyond the motives apparent in this episode, anthropologists and historians have explained the conversion of Inner Asian nomads as closely related to the process of state formation. When advanced tribal unions were in the process of transforming themselves into a polity, a new religion could function as a unifying force, a means of ideological distancing, and a sign of independence, all of which aided the process of state formation.¹² In the case of conversion to Islam, DeWeese and Khazanov have stressed the role of the new religion in giving the Islamized group a more cohesive communal identity, differentiating between us, Muslims, and them, infidels. This new identity was often consolidated by means of war (*jihād*) against a common non-Muslim enemy, often a former rival faction.¹³ Thus, when Saljūq embraced Islam, one of his first actions was to turn against his former overlord, an infidel, and the first action of Satuq Bughra Khan, the first Muslim Qarakhanid ruler, was to gain a legal opinion (*fatwā*) that allowed him to kill his infidel father. He performed this act without delay, thereby eliminating the most severe threat to his leadership.¹⁴

In the case of the Qara Khitai, however, those functions were fulfilled by their Chinese-Liao tradition. Though not religious in its character, this tradition gave them, as the Western Liao, a separate and cohesive identity that distinguished them from their subjects.

Despite the paucity of sources about this dynasty, and the fact that nearly none of them was written by members of the dynasty itself, literary and archaeological evidence reveals that throughout its reign the Western Liao retained several Chinese features, such as reign titles and temple names for its emperors,¹⁵ and Chinese honorary

¹¹ P.B. Golden, "The Karakhanids and Early Islam," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor (Cambridge, 1990), p. 353.

¹² P.B. Golden, "Religion among the Qipchaqs of Medieval Eurasia," *CAJ*, 42 (1998), p. 237; A.M. Khazanov, "The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes," in *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic*, eds. M. Gervers and W. Schlepp (Toronto, 1994), p. 16.

¹³ D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park, PA, 1993), pp. 17–27; Khazanov, "World Religions," p. 25.

¹⁴ Golden, "Karakhanids," pp. 357, 362; Ibn al-Ṭīqtaqā, *al-Fakhri fī al-adāb al-sultāniyya wa'l-duwal al-islāmiyya* (Paris, 1895), p. 393.

¹⁵ *LS*, 30/357–8; Liu You, *Bei shi ji*, in Wang Guowei, *Wang Guowei yi shu* (Shanghai, 1983), xiii, p. 5692.

and administrative titles for its nobility and officials.¹⁶ In the central territory of the Qara Khitai, administrative measures such as the census or taxation of households rather than individuals are apparent,¹⁷ and local rulers who submitted to the Qara Khitai received seals and tablets of authority, and had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Western Liao in certain rites.¹⁸ The Chinese language was used on the Chinese-type coins of the dynasty.¹⁹ Throughout its reign the Western Liao retained a unique Khitan dress that distinguished it from its Muslim subjects,²⁰ and at least in the case of the Western Liao emperor, this dress was made exclusively of Chinese silk.²¹

In the manner of the northern Chinese tradition, however, these symbols of "Chineseness" were by no means exclusive: The Western Liao emperor also bore the Inner Asian title *Gürkhan*, and Khitan, Turkic and Arabo-Persian titles coexisted with the Chinese ones. Moreover, Khitan, Uighur and Persian were used together with Chinese in writing. Yet, the symbols sufficed to assure the Qara Khitai rulers the designation of "Chinese" both in the Muslim world and in Yuan China, where the *Liao shi* was written. It therefore gave them an identity distinct from that of their subjects, nomads and sedentary alike.

Part of this identity was the enduring aspiration to restore the original Liao in its former domain. Soon after his first achievements in Central Asia, after his coronation at Emil in 1131/2 and the conquest of Balāsāghūn in 1134, Yelü Dashi, probably motivated by his home-sick Khitan subjects, organized an allegedly grand campaign against the Jin. The campaign, which Dashi prudently did not lead in person, was a great fiasco, a fact that convinced the Qara Khitai to devote their energies to Central Asia. But although most of the Qara Khitai military activity was directed westwards, they did not

¹⁶ *LS*, 30/357–8; Yelü Chucai, *Zhan ran ju shi wenji* (Rpt., Shanghai, 1983), p. 109. Some Chinese titles are recorded also in the Muslim literature e.g. *Fūmā* (= *fuma*, imperial son in law) or *Shawgam* (= *shaogian*, junior supervisor); WF, pp. 665–66.

¹⁷ *LS*, 30/357; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* (Beirut, 1966), xi, p. 84.

¹⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, xi, p. 84; Tuo Tuo, *Jin shi* (Rpt., Beijing, 1975), 121/2637–8; ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M.M. Qazwīnī (London, 1912–1937), ii, pp. 18, 75; translation in J.A. Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror* (Manchester, 1958), i, pp. 290, 342; Tattawī *et al.*, *Tārīkh-i alfī*, MS. India Office 3291, iii, fol. 198.

¹⁹ Wei Yuewang, "Liao qian tu lu," *China Numismatics*, 4 (1984), p. 69; WF, p. 673.

²⁰ Juwaynī, i, p. 49; ii, p. 84; tr. Boyle, i, pp. 65, 352.

²¹ Ibn al-Athīr, xi, p. 86.

neglect their connection with the East. They proudly refused to acknowledge Jin's sovereignty in 1146, and there is evidence of their continued interest in the Jin borders in their dispatch of scouts, spies, or even small scale military forces in 1136, 1156, 1177, and perhaps also in 1185–6 and in 1188–1190.²² The vision of restoring the "Great Liao" clearly pulled the Qara Khitai eastward, away from the Muslim lands, and defined their common enemy, the Jurchen Jin dynasty, in ethnic rather than in religious terms.

Moreover, the Liao imperial framework included certain means of centralization, notably the elevated position of the Gürkhan/emperor and the nomination of successors, which facilitated the establishment and consolidation of the Qara Khitai empire.²³ Islam, therefore, was not needed for those functions. In their central territory, the Qara Khitai practiced an Inner Asian type of government, characterized by a personal relationship between the ruler and his officials, the importance of the ruler's personal retinue, the dominance of military positions and the overlapping of civil and military duties. Yet most officials of this administration bore Chinese titles, and the symbols of rulership and vassalage (e.g. reign titles; tables of authority; tribute; rites acknowledging the supremacy of the Western Liao) were Chinese. Moreover, the considerable autonomy given by the Qara Khitai to their subject kingdoms and tribes, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, spared them the need to create a systematic unified administration throughout their empire.²⁴ Islam, therefore, was not needed for this function either.

Another major motive which drove Inner Asian peoples to adopt Islam was their desire to win legitimacy among their Muslim subjects and neighbors and to legitimize their conquests.²⁵ But the Qara Khitai were able to gain legitimacy in the Muslim world without being Muslims themselves. The Qara Khitai conquest resulted in the subjection of the whole of Islamic Central Asia, including important religious centers like Bukhara and Samarkand, to non-Muslim rule for the first time since the rise of Islam. Yet the relations between the Qara Khitai rulers and their Muslim subjects were mainly harmonious, and in retrospect Muslim sources even described the Qara

²² See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 36–184.

²³ See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 248–50.

²⁴ See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," Ch. 4.

²⁵ Khazanov, "World Religions," p. 21.

Khitai as a mighty wall or dam that defended Islam from its eastern enemies.²⁶ Thus, in the same period in which Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn mobilized tens of thousands of Muslims in the name of the *Jihād* in Syria and Palestine, in Central Asia the “infidel” Qara Khitai were portrayed as defenders of Islam.

How did the Qara Khitai gain legitimacy despite their unbelief? Since the subject of legitimation is important, and also closely connected to the Qara Khitai policies towards their sedentary subjects, I will discuss it at some length below. Again, their ability to gain legitimation had much to do with their Chinese and nomadic background.

First, the Chinese tradition retained by the Qara Khitai contributed to their legitimation even among their Muslim subjects: In Muslim Central Asia, China, though vaguely known, was closely connected with notions of grandeur and prestige. It was conceived as a mysterious, well-populated kingdom, in the eastern fringes of the world, whose emperor was one of the five great kings of the world (together with the rulers of India, Byzantium, the Arabs and the Turks). The Chinese were known as idol worshippers, but had a reputation of tolerance towards other religions and of justice in general. The Muslims recognized the peculiarity of the Chinese script, and admired Chinese artisanship.²⁷ Moreover, one of the most prestigious titles among the Qarakhanid dynasty, to whose realm the Western Liao succeeded, was the title Tamghaj Khan (Turkic: The Khan of China),²⁸ and the memory of former Chinese sovereignty was still alive even in the Western Liao westernmost province, Transoxania.²⁹ No doubt the legitimating factor of those Chinese trappings contributed to the preservation of these aspects of Liao culture in the Qara Khitai empire, despite the fact that it was far from China proper and included only a few ethnic Chinese.³⁰

But aside from being Chinese emperors, the Qara Khitai were also Gürkhans, the allegedly universal rulers of the nomads. Identified by Muslim sources not only as Chinese but also as another kind of

²⁶ See Biran, “China, Nomads and Islam,” ch. 6; M. Biran, “Like a Mighty Wall: The Armies of the Qara Khitai,” *JSAI*, 25 (2001), pp. 44–91.

²⁷ A. Miquel, “L’Inde et la Chine vues du côté de l’Islam,” in *As Others See Us*, eds. B. Lewis *et al.* (New York, 1985), pp. 284–301.

²⁸ Biran, “China, Nomads and Islam,” ch. 4, pp. 196–99.

²⁹ Sharaf al-Zamān Marwazī, *Ṭabāʾiʿ al-ḥayawān* (*Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marwazī on China, Turks and India*), ed. and tr. V. Minorsky (London, 1942), pp. 6 (text), 18 (tr.).

³⁰ See, in general, Biran, “China, Nomads and Islam,” ch. 4.

Turks, the Qara Khitai indeed had much in common with Central Asian nomads and formerly nomadic Turks, and with the partly turkicized sedentary population in their realm.³¹ First of all, they shared the coexistence of nomad and sedentary populations in the same state, a typical situation in both Liao China and Central Asia.³² Moreover, the Qara Khitai shared with the Central Asian Turks social values, such as the important role of warfare in everyday life; the high position of women; and the high position of merchants.³³ They shared certain aspects of political culture, such as the importance of marriage alliances, the policy of holding subjects' hostages, and the practice of hunting as a royal sport as well as certain features of military organization.³⁴ Despite their different geographical, ethnic and religious background, they were not complete strangers to the Central Asian scene.

The common nomadic background, however, could have benefited any dynasty of nomadic origin which arrived in Central Asia, and not specifically the Qara Khitai. Yet, originating in Manchuria, a region in which nomadic and sedentary population coexisted, and coming into Central Asia after more than two hundred years of ruling in north China, with its multiple rural and urban population, the Qara Khitai were no strangers to "the rules of the cities." They had much a stronger awareness of the relationship between the welfare of their sedentary subjects and the stability and flourishing of their empire than other contemporary nomads, notably the Mongols. This awareness, manifested in a relatively non-destructive conquest and in reasonable financial demands (at least until the last decades of the dynasty), together with their ability to control the nomads in

³¹ For the turkicization of the Central Asian sedentary population at this stage, see P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic People* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 228–29.

³² See the famous example of the Western Qarakhanid ruler Shams al-Mulk (1068–80), who continued to lead a nomadic existence, erecting his tents in the neighborhood of his capital, Bukhara, only in winter. Like the Qara Khitai, he did not let his nomadic preferences disrupt his caring for the interests of his sedentary subjects. His accompanying troops, for example, were kept under strict discipline, and he ordered the soldiers to keep to their tents lest they disturb the city population. 'Awfi, *Jawāmi' al-hikāyat*, in V.V. Barthold, *Turkestan v epokhu 'mongol'skogo nash-estiva* (St. Petersburg, 1900), i (texts), p. 85; Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 315; O. Karaev, *Istoriia Karakhanidskogo kaganata* (Frunze, 1983), p. 204; WF, p. 663.

³³ See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," ch. 5.

³⁴ For details see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," ch. 5.

their realm for most of their reign period, resulted in relative political stability and economic prosperity. This certainly contributed to the acceptance of the Qara Khitai as legitimate rulers in Central Asia.

Another major factor that allowed the Qara Khitai to gain legitimation was the broad religious tolerance they gave their subjects. The Qara Khitai conquest did not originate in religious zeal, nor did the Qara Khitai have anything against Islam. They retained the Inner Asian policy of religious tolerance. Originating in the concept that each religion is an effective means of communication between the divinity and men, this policy certainly fitted a situation in which the conquerors were a small minority in a multi-religious empire.³⁵ The Qara Khitai therefore assured their subjects freedom of worship, and many references attest to the uninterrupted continuation of Muslim religious life under the Qara Khitai, both in the central territory and in the subject kingdoms.³⁶

For Islam, however, religious freedom means not only the freedom of worship but also the right to exercise authority.³⁷ One of the main criteria for differentiating the abode of Islam from the abode of war was that the government would be in Muslim hands: Muslim rulers would have the power to enforce their rule, and the judges would be able to enforce Muslim law.³⁸ While remaining overlords, the Qara Khitai enabled the Muslims in their subject kingdoms to enjoy far greater authority than contemporary and later non-Muslim conquerors.

Muslim freedom to exercise authority under the Qara Khitai was obvious first of all in that most Muslim (and other) subject rulers retained their kingdoms intact. They were subject to financial and military obligations, but they usually maintained their titles and their armies. No permanent Qara Khitai army was stationed in the conquered states, and the commissioners that the Qara Khitai sent to their Muslim subject kingdoms were always Muslims by deliberate

³⁵ Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i nāṣiri*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Kabul, 1963–64), ii, p. 95; in general see J.P. Roux, "La tolérance religieuse dans les empires Turco-Mongols," *RHR*, 203 (1986), pp. 131–68.

³⁶ Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 359–61.

³⁷ B. Lewis, "Legal and Historical Reflections on the Position of Muslim Populations under Non-Muslim rule," *Journal, Institute of Muslim Minorities' Affairs*, 13 (1992), p. 10.

³⁸ M.Kh. Haykal, *al-jihād wa'l-qitāl fī al-siyāsa al-shar'iyya* (Beirut, 1993), i, p. 669; M. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, 1955), p. 155; K. Abou el Fadl, "Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities," *Islamic Law and Society*, 1 (1994), p. 161.

choice.³⁹ In the same fashion they nominated a Buddhist monk to serve as their commissioner in the mostly Buddhist Gaochang.⁴⁰

Moreover, as noted earlier, the Qara Khitai customarily did not use the Muslim symbols of submission, namely they usually did not require the subject rulers to mention their name in the Friday sermon (*khutba*) at the mosque, or on the vassal's coins (*sikka*).⁴¹ Instead they gave their vassals a silver tablet of authority to hang on their palace. But this was not taken as a sign of submission in the Muslim world, and perhaps even enhanced the subject rulers' prestige. Therefore, there were hardly any external signs of the rulers' submission to the Qara Khitai. Looking at the pompous titles that the Qarakhanid rulers bore under the Qara Khitai, one could hardly guess they were not independent rulers.⁴²

The only authority besides that of the Qarakhanids themselves mentioned in the Qarakhanid inscriptions and books is that of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph: The Qarakhanid rulers of Transoxania⁴³ and Farghāna⁴⁴ are described as his assistants (*nāṣirs*), and the *ṣadr*, the religious-administrative ruler, of Bukhara, who worked in close cooperation with the Gürkhan, is defined as "the backbone of the Caliphate" (*ẓahr al-khilāfa*).⁴⁵ Those references to the Caliphate, though probably without practical meaning, imply that the sense of being under Islamic

³⁹ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rikh dawlat āl saljūq* (Cairo, 1900), p. 255; al-Faṭḥ b. 'Alī al-Bundārī, *Ẓubdat al-nuṣra wa-nukhbat al-ṣuṣra*, ed. M.T. Houtsma in *Recueil de textes relatifs à l'histoire des Seljoucides* (Leiden, 1886), i, p. 278; see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 250–52 for further examples.

⁴⁰ YS, 124/3049; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, *Sibu congkan* ed., 11/5a.

⁴¹ See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 248–50 for those terms, as well as for the rare examples of inscribing the Gürkhan's name on Qarakhanid coins.

⁴² Sultan 'Uthmān (1200–1213), the last of the Western Qarakhanids, who paid tribute to the Gürkhan and begged in vain to marry the latter's daughter, was called on his coins *sultān al-salāṭin*, the Sultan of the Sultans (B.D. Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety* [Moscow, 1993], p. 32). In an 1152 inscription on the Uzgend mausoleum, the local Qarakhanid ruler is called the just and greatest Khaqan (*al-Khāqān al-'ādil al-a'ẓam*) (A.Iu. Iakubovski, "Dva nadpisi na severnom mavzolee 1152g v Uzgende," *Epigrafiika Vostoka*, 1 [1947], p. 29); and al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, who in 1160 dedicated his *Sindbād nāmah* to the Western Qarakhanid ruler Mas'ūd b. Ḥasan, praised his patron as "the greatest and just Khaqan," adding a string of titles such as "the most noble Sultan," "the crown of the kings of the Turks," "the aider of Islam and of the Muslims" and "God's shadow on earth." Al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād nāmah* (Istanbul, 1948), pp. 8ff.

⁴³ *Sindbād nāmah*, pp. 8, 431.

⁴⁴ Iakubovski, p. 29.

⁴⁵ Muḥammad Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i bukhārā*, ed. Ch. Schefer (Paris, 1892), p. 3; R.N. Frye (tr.), *History of Bukhara* (Cambridge MA, 1954), p. 4.

sovereignty was retained in Transoxania and Farghāna even under the Qara Khitai. It is impossible to know whether the Qara Khitai were simply unaware of such titles or consciously chose to ignore them.

Another manifestation of the strength of Islam under the Qara Khitai was the undamaged authority of the Muslim scholars, the *‘ulamā’*.⁴⁶ Their religious activity was unharmed, and at least in Transoxania religious offices (*muftī*, chief preacher, judge, *shaykh al-Islām*) continued to be manned.⁴⁷ The *‘ulamā’* also retained their political authority and social prestige. This is especially evident by the fate of the Burhān family from Bukhara. The Burhānid were the leaders of Bukhara’s Ḥanafī school and the persons in charge of its administration since the early 12th century. They retained their authority also under the Qara Khitai, and eventually the Gürkhan even made them his sole representatives in Bukhara, where they were responsible for collecting the taxes.⁴⁸ This enhanced their economic and social position even further.⁴⁹ The respect in which these and other scholars were held by the Qara Khitai also increased their prestige elsewhere in the Muslim world. Interestingly, there is no mention of criticism of scholars who enjoyed the “infidels”’ favors.⁵⁰

Another way in which Islam was able to display its authority was by monumental building.⁵¹ Unlike other contemporary conquerors, the Qara Khitai did not seem ever to have damaged Muslim sanctuaries.⁵² They did not turn mosques into churches, like the Franks,

⁴⁶ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 95.

⁴⁷ ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sam‘ānī, *Kitāb al-ansāb*, ed. ‘A. ‘A. al-Bārūdī (Beirut, 1988), ii, pp. 429, 483; iii, pp. 198–99; ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Taḥbīr fī al-mu‘jam al-kabīr*, ed. M.N. Sālim (Baghdad, 1975), ii, pp. 225–26, 235–36, 261–62; ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī, *al-Jawāhīr al-Muḍīyya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīyya*, ed. ‘A.M. al-Hilw (Cairo, 1993), ii, p. 314.

⁴⁸ For details see Biran, “China, Nomads and Islam,” pp. 229–48.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Muḥammad Nasawī, *Sīrat al-sultān jalāl al-dīn mankubirtī*, ed. H.A. Hamdī (Cairo, 1953), p. 68. Another manifestation of the political stand of the Burhānids is that when the Khwārazm Shāh conquered Transoxania in 1209–10 he treated the *ṣadrs* just like other local rulers, i.e., exiled them to Khwārazm. (Nasawī, pp. 68, 94). For the continued appreciation of Burhānid scholarship see, e.g., al-Tamīmī al-Dārī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-sunniyya* (Cairo, 1970), i, p. 439; al-Qurashī, *al-Jawāhīr al-muḍīyya*, ii, p. 259; al-Sam‘ānī, *Kitāb al-ansāb*, iii, pp. 198–9; V.N. Nastits and V.D. Goriacheva, “Epigrafičeskie pamiatniki Safid-Bulana XII–XIV vv.,” *Epigrafička Vostoka*, 22 (1984), p. 66.

⁵⁰ ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar Balkhī, *Faḍā’il-i Balkh*, ed. ‘A. Ḥabībī (Tehran, 1972), p. 372; Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr*, ed. M. Iqbāl (London, 1921), p. 18.

⁵¹ Lewis, “Legal and Historical Reflections,” p. 10.

⁵² Cf. al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, *Aṣṣāḍ al-siyāsa fī aghrād al-r’āsa*, MS Leiden Cod.

nor did they turn mosques into stables, as Chinggis Khan did in Bukhara. The Qara Khitai also allowed their subjects to erect new religious buildings, including an enormous monument such as the minaret of Vabkent in the Bukhara oasis. Initiated by the Burhānid *ṣadr* in 1196/7 and completed in 1198/9, this minaret is almost 39 meters high with a bottom diameter of 6.2 meters and is beautifully designed.⁵³ Under the Qara Khitai the Burhānid *ṣadrs* also built mosques in Bukhara;⁵⁴ the Friday mosque (*jāmiʿ*) in Samarqand was restored;⁵⁵ and lofty mausoleums for the Qarakhanid rulers in Samarqand and Uzgend were built.⁵⁶

A telling proof of the freedom and authority given to Islam by the Qara Khitai is that contemporary visitors and travelers completely ignored them. Benjamin of Tudela and al-Gharnāṭī, both of them twelfth century travelers who visited Transoxania or at least Iran, do not mention the Qara Khitai at all in their references to Central Asia.⁵⁷ Even more revealing is al-Samʿānī's evidence. Al-Samʿānī stayed in Transoxania in 1153/4–1156/7, a period for which there is rare hard proof, that of coins, for the region's submission to the Qara Khitai.⁵⁸ Yet in his description of the cities which were subject to the Qara Khitai (e.g., Bukhara, Balāsāghūn, Talas, Kashgar, Khotan), al-Samʿānī never mentions that they were under non-Muslim

904 Warn, fol. 214a and Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāt, *Namāhkhā-i rashīd al-dīn waṭwāt*, ed. Q. Tawṣīrkanī (Tehran, 1959), p. 19 on the Oghuz invasion of Khurasan in 1153 in which they destroyed mosques, pulpits, *madrasas* and Islamic sanctuaries and harmed Muslim dignitaries; Juwaynī, i, pp. 80–81; tr. Boyle, i, pp. 103–4 for Chinggis Khan's turning Bukhara's *jāmiʿ* into a stable; B.Z. Kedar, "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," in *Muslims under Latin Rule*, ed. J.M. Powell, (Princeton, 1990), pp. 161–62, for the Crusaders turning mosques into churches.

⁵³ L.Iu. Man'kovskaia and T. Pulatov, *Bukhara: Muzej pod otkrytym nebom* (Tashkent, 1991), p. 83; B. O'Kane, "The Minaret of Vābkent," in *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (Costa Mesa, 1994), pp. 46–58.

⁵⁴ Muʿīn al-Fuqarāʾ, *Taʾrikh-i Mullāzādah*, (Tehran, 1960), p. 46.

⁵⁵ Iu.F. Buriakov and Sh.S. Tashkhodzhaev, "Istoricheskaia topografiia Samarkanda XI-nachala XIII vv.," *Afrasiyab*, 4 (1975), p. 12; Iu. F. Buriakov *et al.*, "Sobornaia mechet' Samarkanda v XI-nachale XIII vv.," *Afrasiyab*, 4 (1975), p. 98. A more comprehensive restoration took place under the Khwārazm Shāh Muḥammad after he had turned Samarqand into his capital in 1213.

⁵⁶ V.D. Goriacheva, *Srednevekovye gorodskie tselntsy i arkhitekturnye ansambli Kirgizii (Burana, Uzen, Safid-Bulan)* (Frunze, 1983), pp. 88ff.; G.A. Pugachenkova and E.V. Rtveladze, "Afrāsiyāb," *ELr*, i, pp. 577–78.

⁵⁷ *WF*, p. 667 for Benjamin; Abū Hamīd al-Gharnāṭī, *Tuhfat al-albāb*. ed. G. Ferrand. *JA*, 207 (1925), pp. 86–91, 145–47, 202.

⁵⁸ Kochnev, p. 31.

rule, but only enumerates the Muslim scholars who originated there.⁵⁹ In sharp contrast to that, however, when writing about Jerusalem and also about smaller places in Syria and Palestine, such as Antioch, Nablūs or Banyās, the first thing he stresses is that they were under the infidel Franks at that time.⁶⁰

The examples adduced so far refer mostly to Transoxania and Farghāna, about which the information is relatively ample. However, even in the Qara Khitai central territory, where the former Muslim ruler of Balāsāghūn was degraded and relocated following the Qara Khitai conquest,⁶¹ and where their presence was stronger than in Transoxania, talented Muslims could reach high, authoritative posts. The vizier of the last Gürkhan, for example, was a Muslim merchant called Maḥmūd Tāi;⁶² and the Gürkhan's court doctor was the Muslim judge (*qāḍī*) Shams al-Dīn Maṣṣūr b. Maḥmūd al-Uzgandī.⁶³ Unlike the Qarakhanids, who ruined and profaned Turkic and Buddhist religious sanctuaries, the Qara Khitai left the imposing minaret of Balāsāghūn intact, thereby preserving a symbol of Islamic authority.⁶⁴

The broad religious tolerance and political autonomy the Qara Khitai gave their subjects, combined with a relatively benign conquest and initially reasonable financial demands, all gave the Qara Khitai a firm reputation as just rulers.⁶⁵ This reputation was not only helpful in attracting their subjects' support, but also had religious meaning, since it could have legitimized Qara Khitai rule even if they did not embrace Islam. In medieval Muslim political theory, justice was the basic foundation of righteous government.⁶⁶ One of the literary means

⁵⁹ See, e.g., *Kitāb al-ansāb*, i, pp. 293 (Bukhara), 424 (Balasaghun); ii, pp. 324–25 (Khotan); iv, pp. 55–56 (Taraz); v, pp. 17–18 (Kashgar). Even in connection with Qatwān, al-Samʿānī only said that there was a great battle of the Muslims there, without mentioning against whom (*ibid.*, iv, p. 525).

⁶⁰ *Kitāb al-ansāb*, i, pp. 220, 273; v, pp. 363ff.

⁶¹ See Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 70–83, 229–48.

⁶² Juwaynī, ii, p. 89; tr. i, p. 357.

⁶³ Muḥammad ʿAwfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, ed. Saʿīd Nafīsī (Tehran, 1954), pp. 165–66.

⁶⁴ For the Balāsāghūn (Burana) minaret see, e.g., Goriacheva, *Ansamblī*, pp. 29ff.

⁶⁵ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 96; Juwaynī, ii, p. 90 and tr. i, p. 358; Nizāmī ʿArūḍī, *Chahār maqāla*. (ed. M. Qazwīnī and M. Muʿīn. Tehran, 1954), p. 22; tr. E.G. Browne (Gibb Memorial Series, XI, no. 2. London, 1921), p. 24; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (ed. B. ʿA. Maʿrūf. Beirut, 1988), lxii, p. 330.

⁶⁶ A.K.S. Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," *Studia Islamica*, 17 (1962), pp. 92, 119. See also the emphasis on justice in the titles and panegyrics of the Western Qarakhanids under the Qara Khitai and before them,

to stress the importance of justice for the Muslim government was the maxim "Kingship remains with the unbelievers but not with injustice," known also in a variant, "a just infidel is preferable to an unjust Muslim ruler." The maxim was often quoted in Muslim *adab* works and from the eleventh century onward even attributed to the Prophet.⁶⁷ Originally, the maxim did not have legal meaning, yet it acquired one when non-Muslim rulers proliferated. This is clear, for example, from Hülegü Khan's use of this maxim: after Hülegü conquered Baghdad and extinguished the 'Abbāsid Caliphate in 1258, he asked the local 'ulamā' for a legal opinion on the question who is preferable, an infidel ruler who is righteous or a Muslim ruler who is unjust. After some hesitation, Ibn Ṭā'ūs, a leading Shi'ite scholar, signed the *fatwā*, confirming the preference of a just infidel over an unjust Muslim, and he was followed by the other scholars.⁶⁸ The maxim that legitimated Hülegü's rule at Baghdad was most probably known in the Qara Khitai realm,⁶⁹ and was much more applicable to them than to Hülegü, thus it is quite possible that it was used to justify their rule as well,⁷⁰ if the need ever arose (e.g., in the central territory). Due to the Qara Khitai's loose notion of sovereignty and their tolerant attitude towards Islam, however, it was easier to ignore their presence altogether instead of coping with the legal and reli-

e.g. *Sindbād nāmah*, p. 8; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, pp. 147–49; Iakubovski, p. 29; Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadghu bilig)*, ed. and tr. R. Dankoff (Chicago, 1983), pp. 64–69.

⁶⁷ Lewis, p. 4; Lambton, "Justice," p. 104; J. Sadan, "Community and Extra-Community as a Legal and Literary Problem," *Israel Oriental Studies*, 10 (1980), pp. 102–15. The most common Arabic form is *al-mulk yabqā ma'a al-kufr wa-la yabqā ma'a al-zulm*.

⁶⁸ Ibn al-Ṭiṭṭaqā, p. 21; cited in Sadan, pp. 114–15.

⁶⁹ It appears, for example, in the *Tadhkira* of Ibn Khamdūn (d. 1169), who wrote in Khwārazm, as well as in other twelfth-thirteenth century compositions; Sadan, p. 109.

⁷⁰ This suggestion, however, is purely theoretical. In the few legal works originating in the Qara Khitai empire I was able to check (e.g. *al-Hidāya*; *Fatāwā qādī khān*), there is no reference to the Qara Khitai rule at all. This, however, characterizes the twelfth century's legal literature even in places where the conquerors were more strongly felt, e.g., under the Franks (E. Sivan, *L'Islam et le Croisade* [Paris, 1968], pp. 191–2). Abou el Fadl, who studied the problem of Muslims under non-Muslim rule, explained that the extent of this problem became significant only from the twelfth century onward, and it took several centuries before the law schools fully developed and systematized their responses (Abou el Fadl, "Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities," pp. 150, 153). The most extensive discussion of this issue in the twelfth century took place in Spain after the *reconquista*, mainly in the Maliki school. See Abou el Fadl, pp. 151–57.

gious meaning of the subjugation of Islamic territories to infidel rule.

But leaving legal discussions aside, as long as the Qara Khitai fulfilled the ruler's basic functions, i.e., maintaining order and preventing oppression, and as long as they did not interfere with their subjects' religious practices, they enjoyed the support of their Muslim (and non-Muslims) subjects. Due to these policies, the Muslims sometimes preferred to side with the Qara Khitai against a harsher Muslim ruler.⁷¹ The Khwārazm Shāh, who in 1182 raided Bukhara, complained that its allegedly renegade population preferred "the net of unbelief" over his pious forces.⁷² Only in the last years of the Qara Khitai, when they were weakened and their local commissioners manipulated this weakness and oppressed the population, did the political, social and economic protest appear in religious guise, and the *jihādi* terminology came to the fore.⁷³

In sum, the combination of the Qara Khitai's "just" policies, their affinities to the Turkic rulers and the Turkic and Turkicized population and the prestige of China enabled the Qara Khitai to achieve legitimation in the Muslim world even though they remained "infidels." They therefore did not need Islam for gaining legitimacy.

So far the discussion has dealt only with mundane motives, not with spiritual ones, as indeed political, economic and social considerations stood behind most of the medieval Inner Asian conversions.⁷⁴ Yet one should bear in mind that the Qara Khitai came to Central Asia equipped not only with their ethnic-tribal Khitan religion, but also with their own universal religion, Buddhism. The sources do not allow us to assess the importance of Buddhism for the Qara Khitai.⁷⁵ But whatever it meant for them, their adherence to this religion suggests that their spiritual stimulation to adopt Islam was also weaker than that of nomads who had not adapted a universal religion.

In sum: why did the Qara Khitai not embrace Islam? Within their heterogeneous empire in Central Asia, there were no political or

⁷¹ Ibn al-Athīr, xii, pp. 137–38; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj... commonly known as Bar Hebraeus*, tr. E.A.W. Budge (London, 1932), i, pp. 346–47.

⁷² Muḥammad b. Mu'ayyad al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-tawassul ilā al-tarassul* (Tehran, 1936), pp. 125–27.

⁷³ Ibn al-Athīr, xii, p. 259; Juwaynī, ii, pp. 74, 123 and tr. Boyle, i, p. 341; ii, pp. 393–94; see Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," ch. 3.

⁷⁴ Khazanov, "World Religions," pp. 11–15; J.H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 7–8; Golden, "Qipchaqs," p. 227.

⁷⁵ See the discussion in Biran, "China, Nomads and Islam," pp. 344–48, 352–53.

social pressures that encouraged the Qara Khitai to islamize. Nor was there any specific interest that encouraged them to voluntarily associate themselves with Islam. While a certain amount of acculturation, induced by the frequent contact with the Muslims, was natural, and facilitated by the affinities between the Qara Khitai and the partly Muslim nomadic Turks, the multi-religious character of the empire, the relatively short time of their rule and, above all, their adherence to the Chinese-Liao tradition did not favor acculturation.⁷⁶

Islam did not manage to conquer the Qara Khitai as it did other nomads in Central Asia. This was mostly because the Chinese-Liao tradition adhered to by the Qara Khitai fulfilled the same functions that Islam provided other nomads with, namely, communal identity, means of statehood and legitimation.

⁷⁶ The distinction between the three different mechanisms of conversion (1) through political and social pressures; (2) through voluntary association; and (3) through acculturation is based on Bentley, pp. 5–20, esp. pp. 7–8, although he used the term assimilation whereas I prefer acculturation.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

<i>Fuma</i>	駙馬
Jin	金
Kedun	可敦
Liao	遼
<i>Shaojian</i>	少監
Xi Liao	西遼
Yelü Dashi	耶律大石

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THE TURKS OF THE EURASIAN STEPPES IN MEDIEVAL ARABIC WRITING

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Arabic travelogues, geographical compendiums and other works of the eighth through eleventh centuries show great interest in the lands inhabited by Turkic people, their customs and their manners.¹ These works relate to a vast area that no single term completely encompasses. Consequently, the present study will refer to three different geographical definitions that, while distinct from one another, partly overlap.

The first term, Central Asia, refers to the territories that are today occupied by the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, along with nearby areas of Asiatic Russia, and parts of north-western China; in short, this is the area north and north-east of the province of Khurāsān.² The second term, Inner Asia (sometimes referred to as Inner Eurasia) is employed in a wider sense, designating the vast area covered by the countries of Central Asia, as well as Mongolia, north-western and north-eastern China, Afghanistan and Tibet. The area referred to by the third term—the Eurasian Steppes—is bordered by western Hungary in the west, Manchuria in the east, and the Siberian forest belt in the north. In the south, it is delimited by the Himalayan Mountains, Transoxania, the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus mountain range and the Black Sea.

The aim of this essay is to explore the image of the Turks of the Eurasian Steppe as portrayed in early medieval Arabic literature, with emphasis on the geographic works. Following these introductory comments, the article will be divided into three sections. The first section will present the Turkic lands and peoples addressed in the

¹ Although Persian, Hebrew and Greek sources were examined, nevertheless—as the title indicates—Arabic sources are the backbone of this study.

² Khurāsān or eastern Iran/Eran in Pahlavi texts. Most of historic Persia is included in the Islamic Republic of Iran, although some portions are ruled by the neighbouring states of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. H.W. Bailey, “To the Zamasp Namak,” *BSOAS*, 6 (1930), p. 586 (note 58); B. Utas, “Non-Religious Book Pahlavi Literature as a Source on the History of Central-Asia,” *Studies in the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta (Budapest, 1979), pp. 119–28.

geographical writings through an ethno-historical approach. The second section will focus on the image of the Turks portrayed by these sources, and the third will attempt to assess the forces that shaped the attitudes of the Arab authors towards the Turks.

The Steppes, Sasanid Persia and the Byzantine Empire

In the western regions of the Eurasian Steppes the Turks reached the position of governing power in the sixth century. Two brothers, Bumin and Ishtemi, successfully consolidated a steppe empire.³ Like other steppe empires, that of the Turks was ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous,⁴ with the foundation of the empire having more to do with political institutions than with ethnicity or language.⁵ This steppe empire controlled the regions bordering the northern limits of the Byzantine and Iranian empires.⁶

It was during this period that the Turks first came to the attention of authors living in Western Asia. Sasanid Iran exchanged diplomatic missions with China,⁷ and agents of the Hephthalites (the White Huns, or Hayāṭila in Arabic sources)⁸ accompanied several Persian ambassadors who reached the Chinese court. The Byzantine Empire established relations with nomad herdsmen in the Trans-Caucasian Steppes.⁹

³ The name was borrowed from R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, tr. N. Walford (New Brunswick, 1970).

⁴ Greek sources identify the people of the steppe as Turks; C. Mango, and R. Scott (tr.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, 284–813 A.D.* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 362 (note 11), 392, 394, 446–47.

⁵ This assertion is also supported by Byzantine sources that attest to the fact that the term “Turks” referred to a variety of peoples that roamed the Eurasian Steppes. Cf. G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica: Sprachreste der Turkvölker in den Byzantinischen Quellen* (Berlin, 1983), ii, pp. 319–28.

⁶ The Oxus River (Jayhūn or Amā Darya) became the frontier between the Persian Empire and the land ruled by the Turks. This is reflected in early Arabic geographical works, e.g., Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-naḥḥiyya*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1861), p. 92 (ll. 13–14).

⁷ I. Ecsedy, “Early Persian Envoys in the Chinese Courts (fifth–sixth centuries A.D.),” in J. Harmatta (ed.), *Studies in the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia* (Budapest, 1979), pp. 153–62.

⁸ Al-Khwārazmī, *Majmūʿat al-ʿulūm*, ed. G. Van Vloten (reprint 1968 of Leiden, 1895), p. 119; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥṣan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1906), pp. 286, 291 (l. 10).

⁹ By 559, the armies of the western qaghanate reached the Volga. The Basileus paid them in order to achieve peace in his northern frontier.

Another force that encouraged close relations between the people of the Eurasian Steppe and the great empires of Western Asia was economics. Nomads of the Eurasian steppes were in need of the agricultural and craft products of the sedentary world, and they were able to acquire these products through commerce with welcoming partners in the affluent urban centres of Iran and Byzantium. This urban population was willing to invest large sums of money in purchasing goods—such as furs, for example—that the nomads were able to supply.¹⁰

These forces endowed the Turks with a dual image in the lands that would soon be incorporated into the emerging Islamic caliphate:¹¹ that of a threat to Byzantine and Persian interests on one hand, and, simultaneously, that of warriors for the two empires. This dual image of the Turks is also applicable to a later period, after the Islamic Caliphate replaced the Byzantine and Sasanid empires.¹²

¹⁰ R.C. Blockley (ed. and tr.), *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985), p. 111; M. and M. Whitby (tr. and ed.), *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford, 1997), p. 81; Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, p. 340 (note 14).

¹¹ The governing courts in Constantinople and Ctesiphon began observing developments in Inner Asia due to political and economic concerns. Officials in both capitals monitored the population of this vast area. It is possible that these developments are what caused several Greek and Persian authors to incorporate information on the Turks into their writings. The same forces motivated Arab and Persian writers to preserve the interest of earlier generations in the people of Central Asia; R.N. Frye, "Islamic Sources for the Pre-Islamic History of Central Asia," in *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta (Budapest, 1979), pp. 224–29.

¹² On cooperation between the sedentary empires and Turkic tribes, see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, tr. R.J.H. Jenkins, (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), pp. 51–52, 53, 57; W. Kaegi, "Some reconsideration on the Themes," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, 16 (1967), p. 45. The Sasanian emperor (*Shāh-an-Shāh*, or King of Kings), Khusrav I Anushirvan (531–579), considered the Turks to be an effective ally and looked for ways to form an alliance with the qaghans. The King of Kings married the daughter of the leader of the Turks, which was common practice among allied forces in antiquity. This however did not eliminate completely the danger of nomads' incursions to his lands. Blockley, *Menander the Guardsman*, p. 45 (and note 112). M. Whitby and Mary Whitby (tr. and ed.), *Chronicon Paschale* (Liverpool University Press, 1989), pp. 106–7 where he is named *Žilighbis*. Al-Ṭabarā, *Ta'rikh al-rusūl wa'l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (rpt., Leiden, 1964), vol. i, pp. 895–96, 899, 991–92. Cf. the discussion by C.E. Bosworth (tr.), *The History of al-Ṭabarā*, vol. v: *The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids and Yemen* (Albany, 1999), p. 153 (note 394); and by M. Grignaschi, "La Chute de l'empire Hephthalite dans les sources Byzantines et Perse et le probleme des Avar," in *From Hecateaeus to al-Huwarizmi: Bactrian, Pahlavi, Soghdian, Persian Sanskrit, Syriac, Arabic, Chinese, Greek and Latin Sources for the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta (Budapest, 1984), pp. 219–21, 233–46; and the works of W.T. Treadgold and J.F. Haldon that are mentioned further below.

Islam in Eurasia: The Early Phase

At the time the Prophet Muḥammad was solidifying his newly born community, Turkic tribesmen associated with the Gök (blue [sky]) Turkic Empire governed the large Eurasian Steppes. Simultaneously the struggle between the two empires that had ruled Western Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean ended with a Byzantine victory and a Sasanid defeat.¹³

Only two decades after Heraclius' victory over the *Shāh-an-Shāh*, however, Arab forces overran the Sasanid (Iranian) empire and reached the north-eastern edge of the Iranian plateau and stood at the gate of the vast Eurasian Steppe (in the 650s).¹⁴ Under Qutayba b. Muslim al-Bāhilī (governor of Khurāsān, 86–96/705–715), the armies of the Caliphate reached the Jaxartes River. This success started the systematic conquest of Transoxiana by Islam.¹⁵ While fighting their way across the Iranian Plateau and across the Oxus River into Transoxania (called in Arabic *mā warā' al-nahar*, "what is behind the river"), the Arabs encountered a large variety of peoples, some of whom were of Steppe origin. Later Arabic sources refer to some of these Eurasian people using the vague terminology "Turks."¹⁶

It should be emphasised that although Arab sources commonly used the term "Turks" as a generic term designating people living in the Eurasian Steppes,¹⁷ not all Eurasian peoples referred to in Arabic

¹³ The presence of Turkic power in the western portion of the steppes as early as the second half of the sixth century is reflected in the ancient Turkic Orkhon inscriptions; S. Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 13–56 (based upon a recent unpublished re-translation by D. Sinor).

¹⁴ These political conditions can at least partially explain the success of Islam in gaining believers in lands so remote from Arabia and the Fertile Crescent; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1974), i, p. 115 (§ 223).

¹⁵ The story of the advance of Qutayba b. Muslim during the early decades of the eighth century provides information on conditions in the Eurasian Steppe regions on the frontier and adjacent to the expanding Islamic empire. This information was presented in a mixture of reports and narrative, and therefore serves not only to help reconstruct the history of the steppes but to trace the evolution of the image of this region and its population in medieval Arabic sources.

¹⁶ This paragraph is based on D. Sinor, "The Establishment and Dissolution of the Turk Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 285–316; C.E. Bosworth, *The History of the Saffarids of Sistan and the Maliks of Nimruz (247/861 to 959/1542–3)* (Costa Mesa, 1994), pp. 86–87.

¹⁷ D. Ayalon, "The European-Asiatic Steppe: A Major Reservoir of Power for the Islamic World," in *The Proceedings of the 25th Congress of Orientalists, Moscow 1960* (Moscow, 1963), ii, pp. 47–52. [rpt. in D. Ayalon, *The Mamluk Military Society: Collected Studies* (London, 1979), article VIII]; Fukuzo Amabe, *The Emergence of the Abbasid Autocracy: The Abbasid Army, Khurasan and Adharbayjan* (Kyoto, 1995), pp. 129,

sources as Turks were members of the Turkic linguistic or ethnic group.¹⁸ Yet, it is clear that Turkic groupings constituted a considerable proportion of the population. On a practical level, this term referred to the tribes that were once subordinate to the supreme Turk ruler (*qaghan*).¹⁹ This helps explain why Muslim geographers and travelers, both writers of Arabic and Persian, sometimes included various Iranians elements from Farghāna, Ushrushana and the great oasis cities of Sughd (Sogdiana), Bukhara and Samarqand in their accounts of the Turks.

The establishment of the Caliphate did not alter profoundly the geopolitical reality of Inner Asia, except for in one way: the Caliph, a new force in the region, replaced the Shāh, an old force. This continuity can be explained by political and economic drives.²⁰ Along what was regarded as the visual dividing line between Turan and Iran,²¹ a frontier zone between the Muslim newcomers and the steppes was created. One side was regarded as *Dār al-Islām* (the abode of Islam) and the other as *Dār al-Ḥarb* (the abode of war). This frontier was not a concrete boundary, but a virtual line of division between cultures and religions, and not against an alien people. Rival political and legal systems governed the two sides of the frontier.²²

148; A.M.H. Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and his World: A Muslim Humanist and his interest in non-Muslims* (London, 1979), p. 164. For the multi-dimensional usage of the term Turk in India, cf. P. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 326.

¹⁸ Still, al-Iṣṭakhrī (*Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik*, ed. M.J. de Goeje [rpt., Leiden, 1967], pp. 9 [l. 3]–10 [l. 3]) claims that “all the Turkic people—i.e., the Toghuzghuzz, Kirgiz, Kaymak, Ghuzz and Qarluq (Kharlukh)—speak one language and they understand each other”; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J.H. Kramer (Leiden, 1873), p. 14 (ll. 8–10); al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1892), p. 295 (ll. 5–6).

¹⁹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1894), p. 83 (l. 17); *idem*, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādin al-jawāhir*, ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1974), p. 155 (§ 313).

²⁰ Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, pp. 388 (ll. 9–10), 481 (l. 22). On Muslim merchants that entered the steppes and even involved themselves in confrontations among the Turks, see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, i, p. 237 (§ 495).

²¹ The description of enduring hostility between the Turks and the Persians seems to be a common topos in writings that were recorded in the sedentary centres bordering Eurasia. Blockley, *Menander the Guardsman*, p. 115. Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmāh*, ed. I. Smirnova (Moscow, 1965), ii, p. 46 (l. 686: “... because this Turk is a bad and wicked villain.”). Ibn Ḥaṣṣūl, *Kitāb tafḍīl al-atrāk 'alā sār al-qjñād*, in *Belleten*, 4 (1940), p. 37.

²² Al-Tabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, p. 834 (ll. 9–10): al-Ba'īth recites the story of Umayyah b. Khālid's battles with the Turks, under the command of the son of the khāqān (= qaghan).

With the passing of time, however, the military achievements of the Muslim armies had a long-term impact on the Eurasian Steppes. From the *ribāḥāt* Muslim armies carried out seasonal cross-border raids against the Steppes.²³ Islamic sources depicted this type of fighting as holy war (*ghazw*) against infidels.²⁴ Muslims living within this frontier zone raided sites and districts inside the regions that were governed by the pagans.²⁵ Promising lucrative business opportunities in the Steppes encouraged Muslim rulers to be active among the peoples of Central Asia, as did the importance of the Steppes as a crossing route to China.

Military activity along the Islamic-Turkic frontier was followed by political and missionary activities. Expeditions were thus dispatched from “civilized” peoples to the wild world of the steppes,²⁶ crossing the Turks’ encampments on their way. Islam’s entrance into the Eurasian Steppe benefited from the political conditions that governed relations between the various peoples that inhabited this area. Periodically tense relations among various tribes were advantageous for the rulers of the empires bordering the Steppes, who concluded separate treaties with individual Turkic tribes, playing off one against the other.²⁷

During the period investigated in this study, Turks from the Eurasian Steppes were charged with military responsibilities in both the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic Caliphate. They are recorded as having served in the Byzantine palace in Constantinople²⁸ and were depicted as

²³ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, i, p. 116 (§ 225); *idem*, *Tanbīh*, p. 65; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, iii, p. 1305; translation in C.E. Bosworth, *Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the Abbasid Caliphate* (Albany, 1991), p. 181; Anon., *Kitāb al-ʿuyūn waʾl-ḥadāʾiq fī akhbār al-ḥaqāʾiq*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1871), p. 296; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-aḍ*, pp. 445, 467–68; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, pp. 273–74; *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, ed. M. Sotodeh (Teheran, 1962), p. 121 (§ 26.12); V. Minorsky (tr.), *Hudūd al-ʿālam “The Regions of the World”*, 2nd edn., ed. C.E. Bosworth (London, 1970), p. 120.

²⁴ Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 275 (ll. 10, 16); Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, in F. Saʿd and T. Majdhūb, *Tahqīq al-makhṭūʾāt bayna al-naẓariyya waʾl-taṭbīq* (Beirut, 1993), p. 120 (l. 6).

²⁵ *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, pp. 86 (§ 19, l. 17), 113 (§ 25.56), 114 (§ 25.62), 117 (§ 25.87) (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 100–101, 116, 117, 118, 119).

²⁶ Ibn Khurdadhbīh, *Kitāb al-masālik waʾl-mamālik*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1889), p. 164.

²⁷ Ibn al-Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-aḍ*, p. 489 (ll. 1–3).

²⁸ On the Turks in the Byzantine armies, see W.T. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army 284–1081* (Palo Alto, 1995), p. 110. On the Khazar in Heraclius’s days, see J.F. Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550–950: A Study of the Origins of the Stratiotika Ktemata* (Vienna, 1979), p. 36 (note 48).

holding bows, round shields and gilded lances, and as marching in processions dressed in striped waistcoats.²⁹

Local governors in the periphery of the Islamic Empire could not achieve effective government without using soldiers recruited from the pagan side of the border. Turks crossed the border in order to play a part in the struggle between the various competitors deep in the heartland of Islam,³⁰ and were involved in internal Islamic affairs.³¹ The Turks' potential role in Islamic politics is vividly described in accounts of the struggle for the Caliphate that erupted between the brothers al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn in 195/812.³² The latter claimant is said to have panicked and to have declared:

Khurāsān has been stirred up. Its inhabited lands and wastelands are in a state of disturbance. The leader (*jabghū*) of the [Qarluq] Turks has abandoned obedience. The Khāqān (ruler) of Tibet is causing losses . . . I see nothing else to do but to abandon my position and join the Khāqān, the king of the Turks, and ask him for protection in his country.³³

This policy was also followed by al-Ma'mūn's brother and heir, al-Mu'taṣim (218–27/833–42). The conspicuous presence of the Turks in the ranks of the Caliphate armies is painted by the Arabic sources, which report on the new battalions that were stationed in the garrison city of Samarra. In consequence of this constant demand for fresh manpower, the Muslims made inroads into Central Asia, including the Turkic regions (*bilād al-ghuzzīyya*).³⁴ From the reports on the period of unrest that rocked the 'Abbāsīd dynasty in the second half of the third/ninth century it is safe to deduce that the number of Turkic horsemen amounted to several thousands. A century later they were practically the masters of Baghdad. The strong links between

²⁹ Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-naḥīsa*, pp. 121 (ll. 3–4), 124 (ll. 7–8).

³⁰ For example, see the appeal by anti-'Abbāsīd rebels to the king of the Khazars in al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, ed. M.T. Houtsma (Leiden, 1969) ii, p. 568.

³¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, iii, pp. 775 (ll. 9–11), 799 (l. 16), 815 (ll. 9–10). Also see the account of the revolt of Ustādhīs (ca. 770), in which Ghuzz (Oghuz) Turk tribesmen are said to have assisted, and al-Muqanna's rebellion, which included many Turks. Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhīr al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-ta'rikh* (Paris, 1916), vi, p. 86; E.L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule 747–820* (Minneapolis, 1979), pp. 134, 139.

³² On the background of these, see Daniel, *Khurasan*, pp. 178–79.

³³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, iii, pp. 815–16; translation in M. Fishbein, *The War between Brothers* (Albany, 1992), p. 72.

³⁴ For a concise and clear presentation, see H. Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London, 2001), pp. 118–67.

the Steppes and the Central Islamic Lands did not wither with the emergence of local semi-independent dynasties in Iran. The Sāmānid state (875–1005) that was deeply rooted in Iranian culture of Transoxania took control of Khurāsān. Members of this royal house did not refrain from involvement in Inner Asia. Their decline accelerated the Turkicization of northern Iranian zones. These developments reached a decisive stage with the conversion of the Seljuqs around the year 1000. Tughril Beg's entrance into Baghdad in 1055 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the Turks, Iranians, Eurasia and the central Islamic lands.

Arabic Sources on the Eurasian Steppes

Due to the historical developments narrated above, demands for information regarding the frontier zone increased in the central Islamic lands. It was crucial for rulers of the northern edges of Muslim territory to monitor developments along the Steppe frontiers. The need for such information explains to a certain degree the interest in the Steppes reflected occasionally in the Arabic sources. Both the initiatives of frontier district governors and the needs of the Caliphate administration encouraged Arab and Persian authors to compose manuals and travelogues containing detailed descriptions of the Turks.³⁵ The 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Manṣūr (754–775 AD) promoted the composition of works that contained data on Central Asia,³⁶ and the first traveler's reports were soon written.³⁷ Muslim travellers and observers paid great attention to Turks roaming the Steppes in the regions adjoining *Dār al-Islām*.³⁸

One of the earliest travelogues was written by Tamīm b. Baḥr, a famous traveller who traversed the Steppes during the days of the

³⁵ See the conclusion in A. Miquel, *La Géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11^e siècle: Géographie et géographie humaine dans la littérature arabe des origines à 1050* (Paris, 1967–73), i, p. 132.

³⁶ Aḥmad al-Ya'qūbī, *Mushakalat al-nās li-zamānihim*, ed. W. Millward (Beirut, 1962), p. 23 (translation of Ptolemy); M. Maroth, "Die arabische geographische Literatur als Quelle zur Kenntnis Zentral-Asien," in *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta (Budapest, 1979), pp. 249–55.

³⁷ For a general review of Arabic geographical literature and authors, see S.M. Ahmad, *A History of Arab-Islamic Geography* (Amman, 1995).

³⁸ Miquel provides a general description and analysis of this literary genre in *La Géographie Humaine du Monde Musulman*, i, pp. 113–89.

Caliph al-Ma'mūn (ca. 821) and reached as far as the then capital of the Uyghurs (in Mongolia of today).³⁹ A few years later (ca. 838), 'Alī b. Zayd, a clerk in the service of al-Mazyar b. Qārīn, the ruler of Ṭabaristān, wrote a description of a Turkic settlement in the Steppe.⁴⁰ Soon afterwards, the caliph al-Wāthiq (842–847) sent his chief translator Sallām al-Turjumān (the translator) from the royal headquarters in Samarra to the Trans-Caucasian steppes; his account was copied and preserved.⁴¹

The famous Ibn Faḍlān embarked on a journey to the Eurasian Steppes in 309/921, and a year later he reached the land of the Bulgars in the Trans-Caucasian steppes.⁴² Abū Dulaf Miṣ'ar was a poet and mineralogist that served a number of Iranian dynasties. He wrote two epistles, one in the style of a travel report presumed to have been composed in 331/943.⁴³ Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī claimed to have crossed the border to the land of the Turks three times between the years 525–545/1131–1150.⁴⁴

The systematic writing of Islamic geographical manuals was launched during the second half of the ninth century, and this meant that Arab geographers began narrating the ethnography and topography of the Eurasian Steppes after approximately 300 years of multi-dimensional contacts between Islamic forces and the Turks of Inner Asia. This

³⁹ V. Minorsky, "Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey to the Uyghurs," *BSOAS*, 12 (1948), pp. 275–305 [rpt. in V. Minorsky, *The Turks, Iran, and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages* (London, 1978)].

⁴⁰ Ibn al-Faḍl al-Hamadḥānī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. Y. 'Abd al-Hādī (Beirut, 1996), pp. 635–36.

⁴¹ Ibn Khurdadbiḥ, *Masālik*, pp. 162–70; Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-naḥṣa*, pp. 98, 149; Ibn al-Faḍl, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 595 (l. 21)–600; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 362; al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushṭaq* (Leiden, 1970–78), pp. 934–38; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb 'ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (1848, rpt. Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 128; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 597–98.

⁴² *Risalat ibn faḍlān*, ed. S. Dahhān (Damascus, 1959).

⁴³ Abū Dulaf, *Al-Risāla al-ūlā*, pp. 119, 135–36; *al-Risāla al-thāniya*, in V. Minorsky, *Abu Dulaf Miṣ'ar ibn Muḥallil's Travels in Iran (circa A.D. 950): Arabic text with a Translation and Commentary* (Cairo, 1955), p. 263 (Arabic); p. 35 (English) [rpt. in F. Sezgin (ed.), *Studies on the Travel Account of Ibn Fadlan and Abu Dulaf (first half 10th century)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994)].

⁴⁴ Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī in G. Ferrand (ed.), "Le *Tuḥfat al-albāb* de Abū Ḥāmid al-Andalusī al-Garnāṭī édité d'après les mss. 2167, 2168, 2170 de la Bibliothèque Nationale, et le ms. d'Alger," *JĀ*, 207 (1925), pp. 87, 113, 116 [rpt. in F. Sezgin (ed.), *Islamic Geography*, vol. 184: *Studies on Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994)]; Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī in C.E. Dubler (ed. and tr.), *Abu Hamid el-Granadino relacion de viaje y su relacion de viaje por tierras eurasiaticas* (Madrid, 1953), p. 44.

legacy played an important role in shaping the image of the Eurasian peoples.

Muslim authors and officials expressed an awareness of the state of affairs in the frontier zone and beyond it,⁴⁵ and it is therefore not surprising to discover that travelogues and geographical accounts contain valuable information on the Steppes and the Turks. Both genres of descriptive writings comprise reports on the political and social institutions of Inner Asia, as well as information on the relations between that region and the Islamic empires. Among other details, they provide names of Turkic principalities and territories. They therefore provide a rich source for the study of the people and societies in the Steppes, albeit incomplete.

In these cases, distinguishing between a traveller and a geographer can be difficult, as some people were often both. Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Mas‘ūdī (presumed to have lived 283–346/895–957) was a traveler and historian,⁴⁶ and two of his surviving works contain anecdotes and information regarding the Turks.⁴⁷ The tenth century composers of geographical compendiums included in their descriptions of the world reports on the abode of Islam as well as on the lands inhabited by infidels. Among these writers were: Ibn Khurdadhbīh (d. 317/916), Ibn Ḥawqal (wrote ca. 367/978) and al-Muqaddasī (completed his book 375–378/985–988). Special attention should be paid to the anonymous Persian author of the important geographical lexicon “The Borders of the World” (*Ḥudūd al-‘ālam*). To these works one can add the important Turkic dictionary by Maḥmūd al-Kāshgarī (written ca. 466/1074).

Although the travelers whose works were consulted for this study did not have a common origin, it is safe to assume that they shared some aims. In addition to producing an informative text popular with their reading public, authors had other aspirations as well. It appears that those who emphasise their dangerous route wished to explain their motives in entering such a hazardous land. They claimed to have set out for the benefit of Islam, and this may explain their emphasis on the fact that the region that they had crossed was a thriving target for the Muslims. Reports in travelogues and geographical manuals report on the lands inhabited by the Turks and transmit a

⁴⁵ On languages spoken in Steppes, see al-Gharnāṭī in Dubler, pp. 3–4.

⁴⁶ Shboul, *Al-Mas‘ūdī and his World*, pp. 163–71.

⁴⁷ Al-Mas‘ūdī wrote the sections on the Turks in 332/943; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, i, pp. 155, 236 (§ 312, § 495).

genuine picture of the people of the Steppes. Yet, these reports often contain fantastic accounts—a mixture of a political report to the court and belletristic literature. Some features of the reports strongly support the conclusion that the presentation of the image of the Turk provided elements of stories about exotic people and even entertainment.⁴⁸

The Turks and Turkic Lands

The Eurasian Steppes is a vast area, and medieval writings reflect a vision of the Steppes as a vast uninhabited territory characterised by extreme climate and difficult terrain.⁴⁹ The harsh ecology of the semi-arid grasslands, however, was not inhospitable to pastoral nomads, as these nomadic herdsmen focused on the care of livestock.⁵⁰ Indeed, nomads and horses played a significant role in shaping the history of Inner Asia. Human groups based on kinship moved from location to location in accordance with season, vegetation, grazing prospects and hunting potential.⁵¹ Ecological conditions and power-struggles propelled successive waves of nomadic people to wander, most often from east to west. Turkic horses, sheep and camels tended to finish grazing vegetation quickly, and this forced the nomads to move on to new pastures. Travelers' accounts describe the Turks as pastoral nomads roaming through the grassland of Eurasia on horseback, tending their animals on the grassy plains and mountainsides.⁵²

⁴⁸ Abu Dulaf argues in the introduction to his second epistle that: "I shall mention some of the marvels that I came across while travelling the steppes from Bukhara to China and back by way of India." Abu Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-thāniya*, pp. 30 (l. 1), 43 (l. 5).

⁴⁹ R.I. Meserve, "The Inhospitable Land of the Barbarian," *JAH*, 16 (1982), pp. 51–53.

⁵⁰ *Hudud al-ʿālam*, pp. 57, 76 (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 82, 94).

⁵¹ *Hudud al-ʿālam*, pp. 76 (ll. 9–10), 86 (l. 4) (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 94, 100). As was noted by Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, ed. and tr. J.C. Rolfe (London, 1964), iii, pp. 385, 387: "None of their offspring can tell you where he comes from, since he was conceived in one place, born far from there and brought up still farther away." See also D. Sinor, "Horse and Pasture in Inner Asia History," *Oriens Extremus*, 19 (1972), pp. 171–184. [reprinted in D. Sinor, *Inner Asia and Its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London, 1977), art. II.]

⁵² Ibn Faḍlān in *Risāla*, ed. Dahhān, pp. 91, 105; R.N. Frye, "Notes on the *Risāla* of Ibn Faḍlān," in *Bizantina Metabyzantina*, 1 (1949), p. 14. Also see the note on Ibn Faḍlān in M. Canard, "La relation du voyage d'Ibn Fadlan chez les Bulgares de la Volga," *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger*, 16 (1958), p. 81 (153).

Regarding the Turks, al-Thaʿalibī (d. 1038), a well-known man of letters, notes: “They prefer a nomadic life (*ṣafar*) to a settled one and dwelling in hair tents (*wabar*) to mud-built houses (*madar*). Their main item of food is horseflesh (*birdhawūn*, pl. *barādhīn*).”⁵³ A report on the Kimak from the *Hudud al-ʿālam* enhances and reinforces this image of the Steppes:

In this country [i.e. the Kimak country] there is only one town, but many tribes. Its people live in felt-huts and both in summer and winter wander along the grazing grounds, waters and meadows. Their commodities are sables (*sammūr*) and sheep. Their food in summer is milk, and in winter preserved meat.⁵⁴

There appears to be no reason to reject this description,⁵⁵ and its contents is echoed in a description provided by the Jewish traveller, Rabbi Petachyah from Ratisbon (Regensburg), who visited the Turks (*Kedar*) in the land east of the Dnieper River in the thirteenth century.⁵⁶

The visitors described the Eurasian nomads as dwelling in Turkic tents (*kharkāh*, pl. *kharkāhāt*; *qibāb turkiyya*; *khiyam*) woven from wool, or in huts made of mud, covered with felt and fastened with lashes made from horse or cow leather.⁵⁷ According to authors from highly urbanised societies, the population of the steppes did not make use of houses or fortifications.⁵⁸ Muslim travellers were struck by how

⁵³ C.E. Bosworth, “Thaʿalibī’s Information on the Turks,” in *Ṣafar Name: Memorial Volume of Felix Tauer*, editors R. Vesely and E. Gomber (Prague, 1996), p. 63 (Arabic) and p. 64 (English translation).

⁵⁴ *Hudud al-ʿālam*, p. 87 (= tr. Minorsky, p. 101).

⁵⁵ V.V. Bartold, *Ṣawāʾif Vorlesungen über die Geschichte des Türken Mittelasiens* (Hildesheim, 1962), p. 33.

⁵⁶ A. Benisch (ed.), *Travels of Rabbi Petachia of Ratisbon* (London, 1861), p. 2 (Hebrew), p. 3 (English): “On the other side of the river he commenced his travels in the land of the Turks (*Kedar*). They have no ships, but sew together ten extended horse-hides, and a thong on the border round. They then seat themselves on the hides, placing there also the wagons and all luggage. They then tie the thong, on the border of the hides, to the tails of the horses, which swim, and thus they pass over the water.” Cf. D. Sinor, “On Water-Transport in Central Eurasia,” *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, 33 (1961), pp. 156–179. [rpt. in D. Sinor, *Inner Asia and Its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London, 1977), art. IV.]

⁵⁷ Ibn Faḍlān, *Rihla*, ed. Dahhān, p. 101 (l. 7); Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik*, p. 220 (ll. 5–6); Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, p. 396 (l. 19); al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 295 (ll. 7–8); *Hudud al-ʿālam*, pp. 77 (§ 9), 83 (l. 17) (tr. Minorsky, pp. 95, 99); also see *Travels of Rabbi Petachia*, p. 4 (Hebrew).

⁵⁸ A comprehensive description of the steppe society, albeit at a much later date, is provided in *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*, tr. and ed. P. Jackson, with D. Morgan (London, 1990).

different Turkic clothing was from what they were accustomed to. Arab and non-Arab authors alike commonly described the Turks as people who wear animal hides and cover their bodies with furs.⁵⁹

Another subject addressed extensively by medieval travellers, historians and geographers was the diet of the Turks.⁶⁰ The eating habits of these pastoral nomads were based on their livestock and on the vegetation of their lands.⁶¹ In his narration of the fighting between the Muslims and the Turks in the eighth century, al-Ṭabari describes the *khaqan*'s preparation for war. Just before setting out, he ordered that a ewe that had been hanging by leather straps be cut up. He took some salt, put a piece of the meat in a bag and attached it to his belt. Commanding each Turk to do likewise, he said: This is your ration until you meet the Arabs in al-Khuttal."⁶²

A twelfth-century Hebrew author says that the Turkic infidels (*kufār-turk*) "eat no bread and drink no wine, but devour the meat raw and quite unprepared as it is in nature. [They] eat all sorts of meat, whether from allowed (clean) or proscribed (unclean) beasts".⁶³ According to another Hebrew report:

They eat no bread in the land of the Turks (*Kedar*), but rice and millet boiled in milk, as well as milk and cheese. Under the saddle of a horse that they ride, they also put pieces of flesh and, urging on the animal, cause it to sweat. The flesh getting warm, they eat it.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, p. 126 (l. 11). Gardīzī, *Ẓayn al-akhbār*, ed. A. Ḥabībī (Teheran, 1968), p. 262 (ll. 15, 17): "All their necessities are made from animal leather; their robes are made from animal leather"; Abū Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī, *Sunan* (Beirut, 1414/1994), iv, p. 160 (*kitāb al-malāḥim*, tradition 4304). This amusing portrayal of the nomads of the steppes, instead of a more in-depth assessment of their habits and dress, was in line with Roman and Byzantine writing. Ammianus Marcellinus, iii, p. 383; *Theophanes' Chronographia*, p. 340.

⁶⁰ Iṣṭakhrī, pp. 221–22. I am sceptical about the report in this source on the consumption of rice in the Trans-Caucasian steppes. Several authors suggest that some Turks practised cannibalism. Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 647 (ll. 1–4); *Hudūd al-ālam*, p. 80 (§ 14.1 the Qurī Mongols) (= tr. Minorsky, p. 97).

⁶¹ Ammianus Marcellinus (iii, pp. 381–83) argued that the people of Eurasia: have the form of men, however ugly. They are so hardly in their mode of life that they have no need of fire nor of savoury food, but eat roots of wild plants and the half-raw flesh of any kind of animal whatever, which they put between their thighs and the backs of their horses, and thus warm it a little.

⁶² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, ii, p. 1594 (ll. 5–8).

⁶³ M.N. Alder (ed. and tr.), *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin* (London, 1907), pp. 83 (ll. 16–19)–84 (ll. 2–3); p. 130 (English).

⁶⁴ *Travels of Rabbi Petachia of Ratisbon*, pp. 2–4 (Hebrew), 3–5 (English).

Data on the economic potential of the Steppes is woven into the travellers' descriptions of the region and its geography, climate and population. Pastoral nomads wandering the steppes raised a variety of domestic livestock, including horses, camels and sheep. The herds-men consumed meat, as well as a variety of dairy products, including mare's milk.⁶⁵ The hair and wool of livestock was used to construct and maintain shelter, and leather was also instrumental in producing a variety of goods. Similar to other steppe populations, many tribal Turk groupings were nomads (*ʿarab al-atrāk; al-badawī*) relying to a great extent on their animals for a livelihood.⁶⁶ Some nomads supplemented their diet by hunting (*ṣayd*),⁶⁷ fishing and trading.⁶⁸ Presumably, they supplemented their diet by gathering and agricultural cultivation.

For the nomads, long distance trade constituted a form of supplementary income. Despite the fact that Inner Asia was relatively distant from the heart of the Caliphate, economic ties linked these regions (as did other ties, like that of common religion). Musk and a variety of animal furs (foxes, weasels, squirrel, ermine, beavers, etc.) reached the central lands of the Caliphate from the land of the Turks.⁶⁹ Another important type of merchandise was Turkic slaves,⁷⁰ as they were extremely popular in the markets of major Islamic cities.⁷¹

According to the observations of Arab travelers, despite its remoteness and frozen nature, Inner Asia was a land rich with exotic mer-

⁶⁵ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 295 (ll. 9–10); V. Minorsky (ed. and tr.), *Sharaf al-Ẓamān Ṭāhir Marvazī on China, the Turks and India* (London, 1942), pp. 19–20 (Arabic), 32 (English).

⁶⁶ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, pp. 634 (l. 12), 635 (10–11), 643 (11–13); Tamīm b. Baḥr, ed. Minorsky, p. 281.

⁶⁷ D. Sinor, "Some Remarks on the Economic aspects of Hunting in Central Asia," *Asiatische Forschungen*, 26 (1968) [= "Die Jagd bei den altaischen Völkern"], pp. 119–27 [rpt. in D. Sinor, *Inner Asia and Its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London, 1977), art. III].

⁶⁸ Maḥmūd al-Kāshgarī, *Kitāb dīwān lughāt al-turk*, i. p. 58; R. Dankoff (ed. and tr.), *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects*, i. p. 103 (Cambridge, MA, 1982–5); *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, pp. 79 (l. 2), 84 (§ 17), 85 (§ 18) (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 95, 99); *Sharaf al-Ẓamān Ṭāhir Marvazī*, ed. Minorsky, pp. 18 (ll. 7–9; Arabic), 29 (translation) [This text describes the Turks during the period after the rise of the Saljuqs].

⁶⁹ *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, pp. 76, 80 (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 94, 96). Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī, *Tuhfat al-albāb*, new edn., ed. ʿA. ʿUmar (Port Said, 2003), p. 81.

⁷⁰ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, pp. 636 (l. 20), 643 (13–15); al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Dubler, p. 18.

⁷¹ *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, p. 190 (= tr. Minorsky, p. 160); Muqadassī, *Aḥsan*, p. 286; al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Dubler, p. 23.

chandise. They depict a vast area that, albeit barely populated, was enormously affluent and offered lucrative purchases.⁷² In order to stress the prosperity of the Eurasian Steppes, travellers added to their descriptions what can be described as super-natural features of these lands. One traveler reported:

It is said that in the land of the Turks a ewe does not deliver less than four [lambs] and sometimes, like a she-dog, even as much as five or six. The delivery of two or three is rare.⁷³

Trade with Inner Asia was also lucrative due to the commercial ties with China that crossed Turkic regions.⁷⁴ The significance of these commercial ties, however, goes beyond economics. Long distance communication enabled people of Inner Asia to establish some sort of relationship with the civilisations that would later have such a profound impact on their history. This helps explain the Muslim world's evolving curiosity regarding the Turks and also sheds light on one of the forces that were crucial in shaping the image of the Turks. Due to commercial relations, diplomacy and war, cultural and religious practices that originated amongst the sedentary populations of Byzantium, Iran and China were introduced to the Steppes.⁷⁵

Another common topic in accounts of the Turks is the description of their sexual habits.⁷⁶ Permissive sexual behaviour was described as characteristic of males and females alike. Some elements of their marriage customs also appear to have been odd, as one description depicts the Turkic man as all but hunting down his choice for marriage.⁷⁷ This image of the Turks is visibly reflected in the following description:

⁷² For instance the report on a golden tent on the roof of the palace that can hold 900 people and is visible from a distance of 5 parasangs (*farsakh*). Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 627; Tamīm b. Baḥr, ed. Minorsky, pp. 278, 279; *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, p. 190 (§ 46) (= tr. Minorsky, p. 160). See also the Byzantine writings: Menander, pp. 119, 121. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, p. 53. For later period, see T.T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 74–75.

⁷³ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, pp. 633 (ll. 16–18), 634 (l. 3), 636 (ll. 6–8), 637 (ll. 17–18).

⁷⁴ Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 365; Ibn Khurdadhbih, *Masālik*, p. 31; al-Idrīsī, *Nuḥḥat al-mushṭāq*, p. 491 (l. 7).

⁷⁵ See the story of the merchants of Baykand, who had gone to the land of China during the time of Qutayba b. Muslim's governorship (88/706, in Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 43 (ll. 8–9); R.N. Frye (tr.), *The History of Bukhara* (Cambridge, MA, 1954), pp. 44, 133 (note 175). Cf. further below on the Khazars.

⁷⁶ Gardīzī, *Ẓayn al-akhbār*, pp. 256 (l. 23), 262 (l. 20).

⁷⁷ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 636 (ll. 21–23), 643–44, 645.

The Pechenegs have long beards and moustaches, and are savage (*hamaj*), freely attacking each other. A man will sleep [publicly] with a woman, [even] on the side of the road . . . [Among the Chigil], a man will marry his daughter, sister or any other unmarriageable taboo (*maḥārim*) . . . [The Kirgiz,] injustice and oppression is a common feature among them, [savagely] they attack each other. Prostitution is not prohibited and is a widespread phenomenon. They bet. They gamble on their wives, daughters and sisters. Their women are beautiful and immorality prevails among them. When a caravan reaches their settlement, the women, even a leader's wife, daughter or sister would approach it with uncovered face. If it turned out that she likes one of the traveling men, she leads him to her house. He dwells with her and she treats him favourably. She forces her husband, son or brother to serve him in all his wishes. As long as the man she had chosen stays in her house, her husband will approach only to perform his duties and will then go away, while she and the man chosen by her are busy eating and drinking. Her husband will not correct or deprecate her.⁷⁸

The way of life of Eurasian nomads created a need for social institutions that would reduce violence and bring about conditions suitable for commerce and negotiations. According to Arabic and Persian records, the salient feature of the social regime of the Eurasian population was its organisation into small clans (*budun* in Turkic; *qawm*, *tā'ifa* or *qabila* in Arabic).⁷⁹ These groupings coalesced into larger groups and then into tribal confederations.⁸⁰ This is corroborated by the Turkic names of the steppe's clans: Kirk-iz (forty), On-Oq (ten arrows),⁸¹ and Tughuz-Ghuzz (<Toghuz-Oghuz; *dokuz* means "nine").⁸²

⁷⁸ Abu Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, pp. 121 (ll. 3–11), 128–29, 130; al-Qazwīnī, *Kutāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 580–82, 584.

⁷⁹ Kāshgarī, *Dīwān*, i p. 429 (l. 11) (tr. Dankoff, i, p. 383); R. Dankoff, "Kashgari on the Tribal and Kinship Organization of the Turks," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 4 (1972), pp. 25–27, 29.

⁸⁰ The name Oghuz conveys the meaning of tribal union. P.B. Golden, "The Migrations of the Oğuz," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 4 (1972), p. 47.

⁸¹ This is most likely the source of efforts of Jewish authors to identify the Turkic people in the Black Sea steppes (the area of the Danube and Itil [Atil; Volga] rivers) with the ten sons of Tograhmah, the son of Gomer, the son of Japheth. These three ancestors are named in the Bible (Genesis, 10, 2–3). The anonymous Hebrew author of the Book of Yosippon holds that the Turkic people are composed of ten tribal groups (families), dwelling in lands that bear their name stretching from the Danube River in the west, across the Volga, to the northern region of the Steppe. D. Flusser (ed.), *The Josippon [Josephus Gorionides]* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 4–5 (in Hebrew).

⁸² Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kutāb al-buldān*, p. 637; Tamīm ibn Baḥr, ed. Minorsky, pp. 278 (§ 1 in Arabic), 283 (English translation), 296 (commentary). *Hudūd al-'ālam*, p. 76 (§ 12) (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 94, 263–68); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, iii, p. 1044 (l. 14) [on their arrival in 205/820–21 to Ushrusana].

It has been claimed that the combination of nature and society induced the construction of social institutions to make life more comfortable in Turkic lands. Arab geographers describe the Turk social institution with great approval, and illustrate a picture of hospitality and generosity (*samaḥa*).⁸³ An example of this is the description of pacts to provide security while traveling:

When the Turks wish to pledge their faith to another, they show an idol of copper. Then, they present a sizeable dish and fill it up with water. They place it in front of the idol. In the dish they put a gold scrap and a spoon of millet. Wide trousers of a woman are arranged under the dish. They say, swear that if you break the pact, deceive or betray, may God transform you into a woman that will wear these trousers, and may someone betake you and cut you into small slices the size of these millet seeds. Your colour will change and become yellow, resembling the colour of the gold. After taking the oath they drink the water. No one among them swindles unless he is beaten by death or calamity.⁸⁴

Two centuries later, the Jewish traveler Rabbi Petakhya echoed this report:

They only travel in the land of the Kedar (*Turks*) escorted by a journey companion. This is the manner in which the sons of Kedar pledge their faith to their companion. He thrusts a needle into his finger, and invites the intended companion of his journey to swallow the blood of the wounded finger. He then becomes, with that person, as if they were of the same blood and flesh. There is also another mode of taking an oath. They fill a vessel of cast copper of the shape of a human face, than the travel guide and his escort companion drink out of it, after which one never proves faithless to the other.⁸⁵

In accordance with many medieval narratives, the writings of Arab visitors give the impression that the practices and habits of the Inner Asians were peculiar and odd. The reader gets the feeling that the “civilised” authors disdained Turkic manners. Their appraisal was peppered with amazement regarding the entire spectrum of subjects, from raising children to burying the dead.⁸⁶ The Turks were said to have brought up their sons to become skilled hunters. It was believed

⁸³ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kūṭāb al-masālik wal-mamālik*, pp. 289 (l. 1)–290 (l. 2); Ibn Hawqal, *Kūṭāb ṣūrat al-aṭṭ*, pp. 465 (l. 15)–466 (16) (= J.H. Kramers, and G. Wiet (tr.), *Ibn Hawqal—Configuration de la Terre* (Paris, 1964), pp. 448–49.

⁸⁴ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Kūṭāb al-buldān*, p. 636 (ll. 9–15); cf. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, p. 55.

⁸⁵ *Travels of Rabbi Petachia of Ratisbon*, pp. 4 (Hebrew), 5 (English).

⁸⁶ Not all reports by foreign observers, however, regarded the etiquette of the Turks as bizarre or contemptible. In fact, a degree of respect was expressed on several

that males were endowed with considerable military talents due to the manner in which they were educated.⁸⁷ They were regarded as the world's best archers, gifted horsemen and as the nation most capable of hollowing out fortress walls.⁸⁸

Both the nomads and the sedentary population of the Eurasian Steppes in the sixth-eleventh centuries are held to have believed in a variety of cults and faiths.⁸⁹ Arab travellers noted that some people of the Steppes worshiped idols (*awthān* or *aṣnām*) and wood.⁹⁰ "Among the Kirgiz," wrote Gardīzī, "some worship cow (*gāw*), some the wind (*bād*), some the hedgehog (*khār-pusht*), some the magpie (*ʿaqʿaq*), some the falcon (*bāz*) and some the tree that looks beautiful."⁹¹ As they believed in spirits,⁹² it is not surprising that Turks were said to adore the sun (*shams*).⁹³ In his alleged travel account, Abū Dulaf reports the following regarding the Jikil (Chigil):

They are not followers of Magi, few of them are Christians (*naṣārā*). They worship the stars: Canopus (*suhayl*), Saturn (*suhāl*), Gemini (*jawzaʿ*), Ursa Major and Minor and the Polar star (*judayy*). They call Sirius (*shīʿra*) the supreme god, master of masters.⁹⁴

occasions for the exotic habits of the Steppes. For example, a Byzantine manual mentions a Turkic bath (*loutron*). Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (Emperor of the East, 905–95), *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. and tr. J. Haldon (Vienna, 1990), p. 105. G. Moravcsik (*Byzantinoturcica: Sprachreste der Türkvölker in den Byzantinischen Quellen* [Berlin, 1983]), ii, p. 312) explained this shape as a wooden barracks.

⁸⁷ Tamīm b. Baḥr, ed. Minorsky, p. 280.

⁸⁸ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 183 (l. 5): "Yaḥyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī said: There are five types of kings. The king of the riding animals is the king of the Turks"; 635 (ll. 22–23), 636 (ll. 16–19); Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, pp. 122 (ll. 15–16), 126 (12–13); Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Zuhrī, *Kitāb al-Jughrāfiyā* (reprinted, Port Said, n.d.), p. 65.

⁸⁹ The fact that Muslim authors regarded their own religion and civilisation as the most sophisticated made them quick to judge other cultures that they encountered and to relate to them in a patronising manner.

⁹⁰ Tamīm b. Baḥr, ed. Minorsky, p. 280; *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, pp. 390 (describing the Khazars), 393 (l. 19), 394 (17). Also see the description of al-Muʿtaṣim's move to the eastern bank of the Tigris in the year 218/833; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, pp. 255 (l. 19) ["With him was a band of Turks that were pagans (*ʿajam*) in those days."], 256 (l. 7); al-Gharnāfi, ed. Dubler, p. 25.

⁹¹ Gardīzī, pp. 262 (l. 23)–263 (l. 2).

⁹² According to Rabbi Benjamin, the Turks living in the desert "adore the wind"; *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin*, p. 83.

⁹³ See *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, p. 99 (§ 16): "Some of the [Chigil] worship the sun and the stars".

⁹⁴ Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, pp. 121, 127; A. von Rohr-Sauer, *Das Abu Dulaf Bericht über seine Reise nach Turkestan, China und Indien* (Stuttgart, 1939), p. 19; also see al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-buldān*, p. 583.

Based on these stories, one can deduce that the majority of Turks practiced shamanism: a religion in which all good and evil in the world are thought to be brought about by spirits and stones that can be influenced by a priest-magician.⁹⁵ The shaman mediated between the human and spirit worlds and was able to forecast the climate. His rituals aimed at shielding his fellow tribesmen from the powers of evil.⁹⁶ One observer claimed: "They have special pebbles that they use to cause rain and snow whenever they wish." Other stones were used for healing. Muslim authors related the rain ritual of the shaman to biblical legends, as they have done regarding other elements of Turkic manners and history.⁹⁷ According to al-Thaʿalibī's account of the Steppe people: "The [Turks] arrive at their most important decisions by studying the shoulder bones of sheep (*aktāf al-shāʾ*), and these, indeed, are the equivalents of astrolabes for them." Gardīzī relates this custom of the steppes to the story of Noah, his three sons, the Ark and division of the world after the flood:

And Noah made a plea (*dūʿā*) and asked the Lord that he might teach Japheth the Name, which, when he would say the name, rain will pour . . . and Japheth wrote it on a stone (*sang*) . . . The Turks, Slavs and Gog and Magog as far as China fell to Japheth. He named these zones *Turk*.⁹⁸

In the seventh century, when our narrative begins, Inner Asia was surrounded by four civilisations: the Greek-Byzantine empire to the west, the Sasanid empire and short-lived Tibetan empire to the south and the Chinese empire of the Tang to the east. Agents of these civilisations—messengers, merchants, ambassadors and others—penetrated the vast continental region.⁹⁹ Hence, the population of Inner Asia was not unfamiliar with world religions. Believers in the major religions of the early medieval world are reported to have lived in the Land beyond the River (Transoxiana).¹⁰⁰ An account on a group

⁹⁵ W. Heissig, *The Religions of Mongolia* (London, 1980), pp. 6, 9. For a Byzantine observation of the shaman's ritual, see *Menander the Guardsman*, p. 119.

⁹⁶ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 639 (ll. 14–17: Tamīm b. Baḥr); Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, pp. 120 (l. 15), 124, 125, 126 (l. 1), 128 (11–13), 130; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 515, 590; Gardīzī, *Ẓayn al-akḥbār*, p. 263 (ll. 3–6).

⁹⁷ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 640 (10–11), 642–43; Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, pp. 126 (ll. 7–8, 14–15), 128 (2–3).

⁹⁸ Gardīzī, *Ẓayn al-akḥbār*, p. 256 (ll. 1–14, 18–19).

⁹⁹ On the marriage of the Byzantine emperor Leon with the *qaghan* of Khazaria, see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁰ See Tamīm ibn Baḥr's account of the territory of the Toquz-Oghuz in Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 635 (l. 7), 637 (ll. 9, 13); Tamīm ibn Baḥr, ed. Minorsky,

that revered cows (*baqr*) suggests that some tribes had been influenced by Hindu practices.¹⁰¹ Other reports identify Buddhists (*samana*),¹⁰² Zoroastrians (fire worshippers)¹⁰³ or Manichaeans (*Magusha* or *Majūs*)¹⁰⁴ and Christians (*tarsayan*).¹⁰⁵

Some traveler reports also related the existence of Jewish communities living in the steppes.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps the most remarkable story attesting to the impact of Bible oriented cultures on the people of Inner Asia concerned the conversion of the leading clan in the Khazar state to Judaism.¹⁰⁷ In addition, vestiges of the adoption of biblical beliefs by inhabitants of the steppes can be identified among the Oghuz. The sons of Saljuq bore biblical names, such as Mikhāʾīl (Michael), Mūsā (Moses) and Isrāʾīl (Israel).¹⁰⁸ This may be due to Saljuq's connection to the Khazars. The sedentary and nomadic populations of Central Asia were familiar with Islam as well, due to links with the Caliphate.¹⁰⁹ It is interesting to note that several Steppes communities converted to unorthodox Islamic creeds (i.e. non-Sunni

pp. 278, 279 (§ 1; Arabic), 282–91 (English translation), 296 (commentary); *Hudud al-ʿālam*, p. 77 (§ 7) (= tr. Minorsky p. 95).

¹⁰¹ Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, p. 120 (l. 10); al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 580.

¹⁰² Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-aʿlāq al-naʿīsa*, p. 139 (ll. 12–14); Ibn Faḍlān, ed. Dahhān, p. 139; Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭahīr *Marvazī*, pp. 18, 20 (Arabic), 29–30, 32 (English).

¹⁰³ Al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushtaq*, p. 511.

¹⁰⁴ Followers of the Iranian seer Mani (or Manichaeus) who were depicted as dualists (*thanawī*; *Zindiqs* or *Zanādiqa*). J.B. Chabot (ed.), *Chronicon pseudo-Dionysianum* (Louvain, 1952), ii, p. 169 (l. 1); A. Harrak (tr.), *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, parts 3 and 4: A.D. 488–775 (Toronto, 1999), p. 159; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, i, pp. 161–62 (§ 326) [“The Toquz-Oghuz were dualistic. Everything in their universe was composed of two rival elements;” Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārs-nāmah* ed. Y. al-Hādī (Cairo, 1999), p. 67.

¹⁰⁵ See Gardāizī's notes on the Toghuz-Ghuz, p. 267 (ll. 8–9), and Khotan, p. 270 (10); Ibn al-Nadīm, in B. Dodge (tr.), *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (New York, 1970), ii, pp. 801–802, 834.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-aʿlāq al-naʿīsa*, pp. 139–40 (description of the Khazars); Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 593 (l. 3: *waʾl-khazar kulluhum yahūd*); Ibn Khurdadhbīh, *Masālik*, p. 164; Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 275; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 587, 588 (on Christianity among the Oghuz in 548/1153); al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushtaq*, pp. 518, 706.

¹⁰⁷ The conversion of the Khazar in the Volga steppes is the topic of extensive discussion in the sources. See e.g., Iṣṭakhrī, pp. 220 (ll. 11–15), 221 (7), 222 (15)–223 (1, 12–13). See also V. Minorsky, “A New Book on the Khazars,” *Oriens*, 11 (1958), p. 122.

¹⁰⁸ Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla al-saljūqiyyah*, ed. M. Iqbāl (Beirut, 1984), p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, pp. 274 (l. 8), 275 (ll. 12–13, 16); al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Dubler, pp. 5, 11–12; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 612. Gardāizī, p. 270 (l. 14) mentions *gūristān-i muslimān* (the burying ground of the Muslim).

or pseudo-Shīʿite). One of the communities belonged to the followers of the *Imām* Yaḥyā b. Zayd who were known in the mountains near Kāshgar as the “wearers of the white raiment” (*mubayyida* in Arabic; *saḡīd-jāmagān* in Persian).¹¹⁰ These creeds were another element that isolated the people in the Steppe and prevented their full integration into the Islamic mainstream.

We cannot rule out the possibility that the external appearance of these strangers caused Muslim authors to regard the Turks as an odd race with bizarre manners.¹¹¹ Such an attitude towards foreigners, and the depiction of strangers as barbarians, was a known phenomenon in many civilizations and a common feature of migrant societies. It would have been psychologically difficult for Muslims to change their view of the Turks even after many of them converted to Islam,¹¹² due to the wide gap between what Muslims regarded as normative Islam and the religious practices of the nomads. The population of the central Islamic lands did not necessarily accept the Turkic nomads of the Steppes as co-religionists. Ibn Faḍlān, for example, was motivated by a deep belief in the superiority of orthodox Islam when he described the Turks as “[people that] resemble an ass that had gone astray,” and concluded that “they have no religious bonds with Allah,” despite the fact that they pronounce the *shahāda*.¹¹³

The topics of death and burial are closely related to the topic of religion. One narrative described the people of Bāb al-Abwāb (Derbent) as pickling the flesh of the dead in an underground room and serving the flesh to ravens and kites.¹¹⁴ Some Eurasian people cremated their dead, based on the belief that fire cleansed impurity.¹¹⁵ “The Kirgiz people,” reported Gardīzī “burn the dead, like the Hindus, saying

¹¹⁰ Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-ūlā*, p. 123 (ll. 1–10); von Rohr-Sauer, *Das Abū Dulaf Bericht*, pp. 47–48 (an adoption of Marquart’s view); Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-thāniya*, p. 15; Barthold’s preface to *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 34; Minorsky’s commentary on *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 356. For the adoration of this person among the *Bughrāj*, see al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 580–81.

¹¹¹ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 647; Ibn Faḍlān, ed. Dahhān, p. 92.

¹¹² *Kitāb al-‘uyūn wa’l-ḥadā’iq*, p. 381.

¹¹³ Ibn Faḍlān, ed. Dahhān, p. 122; Frye, “Notes on the *Risāla* of Ibn Faḍlān,” p. 14 (note 20).

¹¹⁴ Al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Ferrand, p. 84; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 525; H.T. Norris, “From Asia to Africa,” *BSOAS*, 57 (1994), pp. 180–82.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-a’lāq al-naḡsa*, p. 142 (l. 18) [Like the Magyars (or Hungarians), who were said to be fire worshippers]; *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 80 (l. 8) (= tr. Minorsky, p. 96).

that the fire is the utmost purifying thing, and that whatever falls into it is purified. The corpse thus is purified from impurity and sin.”

Others were said to have buried their dead, and some people of the steppes were believed to entomb the slaves and servants of a dead man with him.¹¹⁶ Ibn Faḍlān describes this custom in detail:

If any man of the Turks dies, they dig for him a great pit in the form of a house. They go to him, dress him with his tunic [*qurtaq*], with his belt and his bow. They put a drinking cup of wood in his hand with intoxicating drink [*nabīdh*; most probably kumis].¹¹⁷ In addition, they leave in front of him a wooden vessel full with *nabīdh*. Then they come with his entire possessions and put them with him in this house. Then they set him down in it and close it by building a cover over him, and make a kind of cupola over him. Then they take his riding beasts and slaughter them all, whatsoever they number, even if they numbered one or two hundred down to the last one. Then they eat the horses' flesh down to the head, the hooves the hide and the tail, for they hang these parts up on wooden poles, and say these are his steeds on which he rides to paradise.¹¹⁸

According to Rabbi Petakhya:

There it is customary for women the whole day and night to bemoan and lament their deceased fathers and mothers. This they continue until any of their sons or daughters or other members of the family die, and the later lament those that preceded them in death. They teach their daughters lamentations. In the night they groan and howl. The dogs also whine and bark at their voice.¹¹⁹

One of the issues that most occupied the travelers was the physiognomy of the Turks.¹²⁰ Both mentally and physically, Turks appeared to the Arab authors as very different from themselves.¹²¹ The shape

¹¹⁶ Bosworth, “Thaʿālibī's Information on the Turks,” p. 63 (Arabic), 64 (translation). It is argued that Arab authors reiterated Byzantine accounts of burial practices performed by the people of Inner Asia; Procopius, *History of the Wars* (Book I, 3, 7). According to this account, rich men amongst the Ephthalitae had companions who shared their property, and, upon their death, it was customary that the companions would be placed alive into the tomb with their patron. See also *Menander the Guardsman*, pp. 117–19, 177.

¹¹⁷ *Nabīdh* is a common name of an intoxicating drink made from fruit or cereal, while *kumis* is a mildly alcoholic drink made from fermented mare's milk.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Faḍlān, ed. Dahhān, p. 99; Frye, “Notes on the *Risāla* of Ibn Faḍlān,” pp. 17–18; Canard, “La relation du voyage d'Ibn Fadlan,” p. 75.

¹¹⁹ *Travels of Rabbi Petachia*, pp. 4 (l. 8)–6 (l. 2) (Hebrew), 5–7 (English).

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 61–62 (the Turks have plump faces).

¹²¹ Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 286.

of these “broad faced people with small eyes” and their physique impressed the travelers crossing the Eurasian lands. In their accounts, they presented the Turks as people with an alien physical appearance.¹²² The anonymous author of *Hudūd al-‘ālam* asserted that, “The Ghuzz have arrogant faces and are quarrelsome, malevolent and malicious.”¹²³ Since the look of the Turks played a significant role in the apocalyptic literature, I shall return to this topic below.

Muslim authors believed that the physical appearances of the Turks resulted from the latitude of Turkic territory and the harsh climate in their lands of origin. According to this explanation:

Because of the Turks’ distance from the course of the sun and from the sun’s rising and descending, the snow in their lands is abundant and coldness and humidity dominate it. This caused the bodies of this land’s inhabitants to become mellow and their epidermis thick.¹²⁴ Their sleek hair is spare and its colour is pale with an inclination to red. Due to the cold weather of their surroundings, coldness dominates their temper. In effect, the cold climate breeds abundant flesh. The arctic temperature compresses the heat and makes it visible. This gives them their pink skin. It is noticeable among the people who have bulky bodies and pale colour. Whilst a chilly wind hits them, their faces, lips, fingers and legs became red. This is because while they were warm their blood expanded, and then the cold temperature caused it to amass. The characteristic temperament of the inhabitants of these cool regions is their rudeness, mercilessness and lack of confidence.¹²⁵

The Image of the Turks in Arabic Sources

According to the structure of the universe adopted by the authors of geographical manuals and travel reports, the Earth was partitioned into seven latitudinal bands,¹²⁶ running from the south (the equator) to the north (the north pole). Bands number three and four—which

¹²² From their early encounters with the Eurasian people Byzantine and Arab authors were occupied with their looks. In addition to the notes above, see the late thirteenth-century Ibn al-Nafīs, *al-Risāla al-kāmilīyya*, eds. and tr. M. Meyerhof and J. Schacht (Oxford, 1968), p. 42.

¹²³ *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 86 (§ 19, l. 10) (= tr. Minorsky, p. 100).

¹²⁴ See *ghilāḡ al-turk* in al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Ferrand, p. 214.

¹²⁵ Ibn Rustah, *Kūtāb al-a‘lāq al-naḥīsa*, pp. 101 (l. 22)–102; see also the information in al-Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 24; al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Dubler, p. 19.

¹²⁶ On the measures and nature of this division, see *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 57 (§ 8.1). This paragraph is an adaptation of Minorsky’s translation, p. 82.

included countries of the land of Islam—were perfect. Islamic geography depicted the northern strips five, six and seven as regions populated by human and non-human beings.¹²⁷

Within this Islamic geographical construct of the universe, the Turks inhabited the northernmost parts of Eurasia, outside the areas of cultivated civilisations and alongside inhuman and mythical creatures. Monsters and mysterious beings were believed to dwell in these northern parts of Eurasia, located outside the civilized regions of the world.¹²⁸ The inhospitable nature of the weather and terrain in the region also helps explain why Muslim authors believed it to be the land of the perpetual Barbarian.¹²⁹

The traditional Islamic version of the history of the universe and humankind combined two narratives. One was the biblical story of the people of the world in the post-diluvian era. The second was the tale of the progenitors of mankind, in which each human group was the offspring of a hero-father. The combination of these two sagas aimed to explain the ethno-linguistic division of humanity, emphasising diversity while at the same creating common roots for the entire human race.

Muslim authors also used the imaginative genealogy of humankind to place the Turks among the rest of humanity. This lineage (*nasab*) served to create a sense of blood relations, but also explained the differences between the two peoples.¹³⁰ Arabic and Persian medieval literature identified three legendary figures involved with bringing the Eurasian people into the Islamic construct of the history of mankind: the biblical patriarch Abraham, the Qur'anic prophet Hūd¹³¹ and

¹²⁷ Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-naḥṣa*, p. 98. Al-Gharnāṭī claimed that he had sailed the Caspian Sea close to an island inhabited by genies (*jinn* in singular). In another anecdote, he held that the canals in the Trans-Caucasian steppes had been dug by demons; al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Ferrand, p. 113; ed. Dubler, pp. 8, 26. This information was repeated by al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb 'ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*, p. 128.

¹²⁸ *Hudūd al-'ālam*, pp. 80 (ll. 1–2), 87 (10) (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 96, 101). This region was referred to as the uninhabited lands of the north. See the description of fish in the Volga in al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Dubler, pp. 6–7, 19 (on the pseudo-female creature and the influence of humans on climate).

¹²⁹ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik*, p. 9 (l. 16); Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, p. 12 (§ 8) (*qafr*^{um} *kharab*^{um} means deserted and arid). Several Arab authors argued that these barbarians were identical to the imaginative Yājūj (Gog) and Mājūj (Magog) tribes. On these legendary people see further below.

¹³⁰ Al-Muqaddasī. *Aḥsan*, p. 285 (ll. 4–12: the story of Khwārazm).

¹³¹ Al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Ferrand, pp. 237–238; ed. Dubler, pp. 10–11, 35–38; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 613.

Alexander the Great (Dhū al-Qarnayn).¹³² Another pseudo-historical narrative that aimed to explain the Islamic view of the Turks was related to the story of Japheth (cf. Genesis, 10:2), who is attributed to be their ancestor.¹³³

The Arab-Islamic ethnic imagination created a myth of origin, which effectively served to bridge the wide gap between the Arabian Desert and the Inner Asian Steppes. By means of this myth, Turks and Arabs were linked by the three figures identified above. Authors argued that the distance between the two groups was not that great, and that the Turks and Arabs were not total strangers. The result was an imaginative genealogy linking two distinct ethnic groups: the Turks who dwelled in the Abode of Islam (Khurāsān) were said to be related to the Arabs because both peoples descended from a common ancestor: Abraham.

According to this narrative, Abraham, the father of Ishmael and the patriarch of the Arabs, had married an Arab woman (*min al-ʿarab al-ʿāriba*) named Qanṭūra, the daughter of Maṭṭūr (Keturah in Genesis, 25:1), after Sarah's death. Three of her sons were expelled from Arabia to Khurāsān, where they intermarried with the Khazar Turks, the sons of Japheth, whose king is the *qaghan*.¹³⁴

By circulating this story, the narrator linked the Turks to the Arabs. Both peoples became members of the same ethnic group that claimed Abraham to be its ancestor.¹³⁵ Abraham, the father of the Arabs, was also the father of the Turks, albeit not from a noble wife, rather from a concubine. This explains the status of the Turks within the world of Islam, as well as their physiognomy. The wide faces and narrow eyes of the Banū Qanṭūra distinguished them from the Arabs, despite their common ancestor.¹³⁶ It should also be noted that Abraham played a similar role in origin narratives of other races.

¹³² For the story of this kingly activity on the edge of the steppes, see A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Enclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA, 1932); al-Zuhrī, *Kitāb al-Jughrāfiyā*, p. 93; al-Gharnāṭī, ed. Umar, p. 46.

¹³³ Al-Masʿūdī summarised opinions of other scholars regarding the origin of the Turks, and concluded that most would consider them the descendants of the Biblical figure Japheth; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, i, p. 154 (§ 311).

¹³⁴ Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, ed. E. Mittwoch (Leiden, 1905), i, pp. 18, 22. For a different genealogy of the Turks, see Ibn Khurdadhbih, *Masālik*, pp. 15–16.

¹³⁵ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 639–40 (citing Tamīm b. Baḥr and a tradition attributed to al-Kalbī, d. 819).

¹³⁶ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Mukhabbar* (Haydarābād, 1942), p. 394; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrikh*, i, p. 348; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 581.

He is said to be the father of Isaac, the ancestor of the Persians, and the husband of Hagar, the mother of the Copts of Egypt.¹³⁷

The second and perhaps most detailed historical legend is the combined story of Alexander and the mysterious northern Gog and Magog peoples. The popular Islamic interpretation of the saga is based on exegesis of the Qurʾān: "They said: O Dhū al-Qarnayn! Lo Gog and Magog are spoiling the land. So we will pay thee tribute on condition that thou set a barrier between us and them."¹³⁸ The narrative of Gog and Magog possesses legendary significance as well as a social function; not only does it help explain the history of humanity, but it is also useful in interpreting human geography. The narrative constructs a universe and a story of mankind, and the mystifying peoples of Gog and Magog play a role in the events that would occur on earth during the day of judgement.¹³⁹ Gog and Magog are characterised by violence, restless wandering, and recklessness and wildness. This identification of the Turks with eternal enemies of mankind conflicts with the narrative of Keturah discussed above, which was circulated in order to link the Turks with the Arabs by identifying Abraham as a common ancestor.¹⁴⁰

Gog and Magog should be regarded as an epithet for the population of Eurasia. The narrative of this imaginary people is a common topic in pre-Islamic as well as medieval Islamic discourse.¹⁴¹ Reports from journeys to locate their land clearly reflect a trend of attempting to actualise historical legends. They transformed the story of the confined people from an imaginary literary idea into a pseudo-scientific subject. Such stories reflect a belief that the people of the steppes were a constant threat. The story of Gog and Magog was a literary device that served as a vehicle to convey the negative image of the Turks.

¹³⁷ S. Bashear, *Arabs and Others in Early Islam* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 67–73, 104.

¹³⁸ The story of the person with two horns is found in the Qurʾān, 18:83–98; 21:96.

¹³⁹ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. M.I.A. al-Ṣāwī (Beirut, 1970), p. 13; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kūṭāb ṣūrat al-ard*, p. 482.

¹⁴⁰ The story of a people who had been banished to a remote corner of the earth or found shelter in a remote region is not an Islamic invention. Other civilizations were familiar with it as well. See, for example, the story of the Sabbatic River and the lost tribes of Israel. U. Rubin, *Between Bible and Qurʾān: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 26–29.

¹⁴¹ See the story transmitted by Ibn ʿAsākir, on the aspiration of a *ḥadīth* (prophetic tradition) scholar from Damascus to have an Alexander-style barrier between Iraq and Syria. P.M. Cobb, *White Banners: Contention in ʿAbbasid Syria 750–880* (Albany, 2001), p. 54.

It appears that the threatening image of the Steppes had not vanished. Rather, only the destructive forces had changed. This real people—the Turks—was said to resemble the two imaginary nations and to be an outcast people, just like them. A historical tradition reads:

The Turks are a raiding party (*sariyya*) that came out from Gog (*Yājūj*) and Magog (*Mājūj*) and attacked mankind. Alexander (Dhū al-Qarnayn) had driven them back and locked them behind the barrier (*radm*). Al-Muqātil¹⁴² explained that they had been called Turk because they were left (*turikū*) behind the barrier.¹⁴³

The theme of a barrier and barred people was widely addressed by historians, geographers and commentators.¹⁴⁴ According to traditions related by them, Alexander the Great confined “the barbarians Gog and Magog” further to the north behind the mythological wall, in the Eurasian steppes. The motives behind his construction of the barrier are said to be the obstruction of the people of the trans-Caucasian steppes from reaching the people of the Iranian Plateau.¹⁴⁵ By the time of the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate it was widely accepted by the population of Iran that a defence system protected their land against the steppes.¹⁴⁶ The story of Anūshirwān, the Khazar king and the Gate of the Gates (Derbent) supports this assertion.¹⁴⁷ According to other historical-geographical traditions, the Sasanid Shah Anūshirwān had constructed a wall as an obstacle to prevent Turkic raids on Ṭabaristān.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. A.M. Shakhata (Cairo, 1984), iii, p. 52.

¹⁴³ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 594 (ll. 6–8).

¹⁴⁴ Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 26; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, pp. 108 (ll. 12–14), 593–97; al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushṭaq*, pp. 930, 933, 934; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 596, 618.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Meserve, “The Inhospitable Land of the Barbarian,” pp. 69–89.

¹⁴⁶ The Turks communicated with the Sasanians through the narrow pass of Derbent (the Caspian gates, the *Bāb al-Abwāb* of the Arab Geographers). See Procopius of Caesarea, *History of the Wars*, Book 1, 10, 3–9; see also the account of Maslama’s wars (ca. A.D. 730) in the anonymous Syriac work *Chronicon pseudo-Dionysianum*, ii, pp. 168–69; *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, p. 159. And cf. the narrative on the building of a lighthouse (*manāra*) by Peroz (Fayrāz) in the border between the land of the Turks and the Sasanian Empire following his victory over *khāqān al-turk*; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, i, pp. 864, 878.

¹⁴⁷ Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, *Kitāb al-kharāj wa-ṣināʿat al-kitāba*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1889/1967), p. 361; al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 65.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-aʿlāq al-naḥṣa*, p. 150 (ll. 4–6); al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, i, p. 900; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb ʿajāʾib al-makhlūqāt*, p. 129; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, pp. 506–8.

For our discussion, the primary value of Muslim accounts about the efforts of the great Macedonian king is the image of the people of the Steppes that it presents.¹⁴⁹ These authors tended to locate this barrier on the northern edges of the Caliphate. Thus, the caliph al-Wāthiq (842–847) had a dream in which he saw that Alexander's barrier had collapsed. This sparked him to send an official mission to the land of the Turks in the steppes north of the Caspian Sea in order to investigate the territory.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, al-Faḍl al-Barmakī is said to have built another gate to stop Turkic incursions,¹⁵¹ and the Sāmānids are reported to have built a barrier to halt the Oghuz.¹⁵² The historical narrative was designed so as to disguise visible evidence with a mythological coat. The description of shielding walls was in line with this geographical imagination.

Some narratives combined an ancient Turkic fable with an Islamic creation tale. According to a myth of the people of the steppes, the Turks, or *Turuk* (presumably meaning strength), were originally the offspring of a young boy raised by a she-wolf.¹⁵³ An elaborate version of this legend claims that:

As for the scarcity of hair and thinness of flesh that [characterise] them, [this is a result] of [Japheth's] childhood illness. He accepted no treatment whatsoever until an old wise woman told his mother: [give] him a certain amount of small ant eggs and wolf's milk, and this will enable him to recover from his illness. Accordingly, his mother continued to give him both of these [substances] for one month until he recovered from his disease. [However], when he grew a beard, it turned out to be sparse. This same thing befell his sons. Their hair was scarce because of the small ant eggs, and they were ill tempered because of the wolf's milk.¹⁵⁴

The Turks' homeland was located in the remote parts of the world, and this fact enabled medieval Islamic ethnography and geography

¹⁴⁹ Associating the Turks of the Eurasian steppes with Gog and Magog was not solely an Islamic tradition. Christian authors were familiar with it as well. See a discourse on Alexander composed by Mar Jacob [of Seruj, d. 521], *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac Version*, tr. E.A.W. Budge (Cambridge, 1889), pp. 176–78; *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, tr. E.A.W. Budge (London, 1933), p. 226; Kāshgarī, *Dīwān*, iii, pp. 304–7 (= tr. Dankoff, ii, pp. 362–63).

¹⁵⁰ *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, p. 225.

¹⁵¹ Ibn Khurdadhbīh, *Masālik*, p. 34 (ll. 5–7).

¹⁵² Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥṣan*, p. 240 (l. 9).

¹⁵³ See Minorsky's comments in *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, p. 264; P.B. Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of the Political Unity amongst the Pre-Cinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *AEMA*, 2 (1982), pp. 42–45.

¹⁵⁴ Gardāzī, *Ẓayn al-akhbār*, p. 256 (ll. 15–18).

to explain the name “Turk.” The Arabic verb *taraka* means to abandon, dump or leave. Muslim travelers used popular etymology to conclude that the Turks received their name because they were expelled to a distant corner of the Earth, and that they should remain there. As will be discussed further below, this explanation played a significant role in Islamic apocalyptic literature.

*The Forces that Shaped the Attitudes of
Arab Authors towards the Turks*

Based on the sources examined to this point, it is possible to assert that Islamic medieval literature presented conflicting images of the Turks. On one hand, the people of the Steppes were depicted as infidels—a vicious, violent, savage nation. On the other hand, some writers depicted the Turks in the Central Islamic lands as nobles, faithful, loyal and obedient.¹⁵⁵ Although the people of the Steppes were represented as non-believers, restless, shameless and a grim menace that threatened Islam, the Turks that served in the central Islamic lands were represented by their advocates as submissive creatures that staffed the backbone of the military and administrative apparatuses of the Caliphate. It should also be noted that the image of the Turkic population in Inner Asian was not detached from the stereotype of Turks in the central Islamic lands.

This brings us to the last question of the chapter: what were the forces that shaped the image of the Turks in Arabic geographical writings? In various Arab documents at our disposal two contradictory forces were seemingly at play in shaping the conflicting images of the Turks. One was the great threat posed by Turkic forces, and the other was the lack of human resources that caused the Arabs to recruit growing numbers from the periphery of the Caliphate into the Islamic armies.

Several violent incidents that involved the Turks might very well have been a major force that influenced the perception of the Turks. The Muslim urban public was distressed by reports that Turks had

¹⁵⁵ Al-Qazwīnī, *Kutāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 580 (“As lions violently assault, so they attack each other”) and pp. 514, 581, 589–90; Gardīzī, *Ẓayn al-akhbār*, p. 258 (l. 15) (“All the Kimak people are vicious, stingy and hate strangers.”), 262 (14, 15) (“*mardumān-i wakhsh; wukhāsh-i adamīyān*”).

either mutinied or killed their patrons, and such incidents branded a stereotype of the vicious Turk into the collective memory. They were also presented as a threat to the safety of Baghdad's populace and even portrayed as an anti-Islamic force, and as slaves that would bring down the reigning family.¹⁵⁶ The Turks' behaviour was severely criticised in reports concerning the fourth civil war, during the fighting between al-Ma'mūn and al-Amīn in Baghdad. A poetic verse recounting the events read: "Horses are prancing in the lanes carrying Turks with sharpened daggers. Naphtha bombs and fire burned in the streets of Baghdad. Its inhabitants are fleeing because of the smoke."¹⁵⁷ They were portrayed as professional thieves and looters of caravans, and as people with an arrogant look.¹⁵⁸

On the one hand, there was the legend of the Turks as a banished nation, and on the other hand, they were widely perceived as an enduring threat and a source of lasting danger.¹⁵⁹ For this last reason, they were represented as a primeval force that must be isolated from civilized nations and carefully observed. Some apocalyptic traditions even presented the Turks as a source of danger jeopardising the very existence of Islam.¹⁶⁰ They were described as "lawless and merciless, [but] good fighters and warlike. They are at war (*jang*) and on hostile terms with all the people living round them."¹⁶¹ Muslim authors associated the distinctive look of the people of the Steppes with apocalyptic traditions, and strong animosity towards the Turks emerges in these in these works.¹⁶²

Although dated by the historian to the sixth century, but actually timeless, the next tale elucidates the horror that the image of the Eurasian people induced in the minds of some Muslim writers. According to this report, prior to the era of Anūshirwān there were

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī, *Akhbār al-duwal al-Munqaf'a* (Irbid, 1999), ii, p. 271.

¹⁵⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, iii, p. 877 (ll. 14–15). This translation is adapted from Fishbein, *The War between the Brothers*, p. 146.

¹⁵⁸ *Hudūd al-'ālam*, p. 120 (§ 26.10, § 26.11) (= tr. Minorsky, p. 120).

¹⁵⁹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kutāb al-buldān*, pp. 279 (ll. 12–14), 292 (11), 295 (12); al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 294 (11); al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, p. 356.

¹⁶⁰ D. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihad," *JSAI*, 20 (1996), pp. 96–101; Bashear, *Arabs and Others*, pp. 104–111.

¹⁶¹ *Hudūd al-'ālam*, pp. 80 (ll. 5–7), 82 (l. 17: *mardumāni dilawarān* means "valiant people") (= tr. Minorsky, pp. 96, 98 (§ 15.10).

¹⁶² It seems that the Turks were portrayed as the everlasting enemies of Iran as early as the sixth century. R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writing on Early Islam* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 321–23.

no jackals in the land of Iran. Unexpectedly, in his days some jackals infiltrated to Persia from the land of the Turks. The King of Kings summoned the chief priest and inquired of him with regard to the reasons why these wild beasts were distressing his subjects. The priest interpreted the episode as a bad omen. In the times that evil and injustice prevailed, a punishment would devastate Iran. The enemy would encroach upon the Sasanian land. The jackals impersonate that evil force that arrived at the prosperous country from the land of the vicious Turks.¹⁶³

With the growing number of Turks in the central lands of Caliphate, that is to say early 'Abbāsid period, disdain for and caution of the Turks were transmitted. A common tradition attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad prophesised that "The Turks will take control of Kūfa in southern Iraq and the Khazar of the province of al-Jazīra in northern Iraq." In another tradition, the Prophet is reported to have said: "The Turks will drive the people of Iraq out of their country." A widespread *ḥadīth* (attributed to Muḥammad through Abū Hurayra) presented the pending struggle: "Doomsday shall not come until broad faced people with small eyes and flat noses will fasten their horses on the Tigris river banks."¹⁶⁴ The solution suggested by Islamic tradition (*ḥadīth*) to the permanent threat posed by the Turks was straightforward: "Leave the Turks alone as long as they leave you alone (*utrūkū al-turka ma tarakūkum*)."¹⁶⁵ This saying of the Prophet, in turn, supported the standard explanation of the Turks' name in Arabic dictionaries.

Early Arabic apocalyptic writings contain several phrases that portray the Turks as an alien force threatening the very existence of Islam (*malḥamat al-turk*).¹⁶⁶ Apocalyptic traditions finished the work started by the travellers' accounts, as they fortified the negative image that was instrumental in shaping Islam's approach to the population of the Steppes.

¹⁶³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, i, pp. 965–66.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 581. For an earlier transmission of this particular tradition, see Bashear, *Arabs and Others in Early Islam*, pp. 106–108.

¹⁶⁵ Ibn al-Faḥrī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 633; al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, p. 515; Qudāma b. Ja'far, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, p. 262 (l. 18). Byzantine sources depicted Turks (Pechenegs) as a powerful people who could potentially cause trouble, such as carrying out raids on the neighbours. It was therefore preferable to watch them carefully and to maintain friendly relations with them, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁶ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, ed. S. Zakkār (Beirut, 1414/1993), p. 333.

The image of the population of the Steppes, however, resulted not only from the conditions within Central Asia, but from the capture of a large number of Eurasians during the fighting on the Central Asian front. The negative image of Turks not only conveyed ethnographic and social values, but had legal aims as well. Muslim jurists defined the Turks as polytheists (*mushrikūn*) and their country as the land of the infidels (*bilād al-shirk/kufr*).¹⁶⁷ The practical consequence of this classification was that the Eurasian people did not belong to one of the three “legitimate” monotheistic creeds (*ahl al-kitāb*), and were therefore not entitled to the status of “protected people” (*ahl al-dhimma*). For this reason, the human trafficking of Turks was deemed as legal.

The caliphs and Muslim soldiers shared the spoils of war, and many prisoners were transported to the central lands of the Caliphate. In this way, Turks became an extremely visible element in the Islamic army, and this development is clearly reflected in legal works from the second half of the eighth century.¹⁶⁸ The “infidel barbarians” from Inner Asia served the cause of Islam due to the prevalent demand for skilled soldiers.¹⁶⁹

Extensive study of the Turks’ role in the armies of the Caliphate reveals that people of Central Asian origin served as the core of the new ‘Abbāsīd army that emerged from the destruction of the war between al-Amīn and al-Ma’mūn. Increasing numbers of slaves were used as soldiers and to staff the rank and file of the government from the days of the successors of these two brothers.¹⁷⁰ The ruling elite of the caliphate possessed a great respect for the military talents of the Turks, an assessment clearly reflected in accounts analysed throughout this article. In so doing, they helped facilitate conditions conducive to the military recruitment of the Turks. It should also be kept in mind, however, that despite the praise, the Turks were still depicted as unrestrained creatures whose men are quarrelsome.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Al-Ya’qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 295 (l. 4); Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-ard*, pp. 445, 467–68, 444 (l. 8).

¹⁶⁸ J.E. Brockopp, *Early Maliki Law: Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam and his Major Compendium of Jurisprudence* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 147–58.

¹⁶⁹ D. Sinor, “The Inner Asian Warriors,” *JAOS*, 101 (1981), pp. 133–44. [rpt. in D. Sinor *Studies in Medieval Inner Asia* (Aldershot, 1997), art. XIII.]

¹⁷⁰ D. Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven, 1981); M.S. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Community of Samarra (200–275/815–889)* (Albany, 2001); H. Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, pp. 151–52.

¹⁷¹ *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 86 (= tr. Minorsky, p. 100).

Conclusion

The analysis of the sources examined reveals that stories regarding the Steppes circulated across a vast area and were transmitted from generation to generation. As a result of this diffusion, a prevalent image of the Turks became deeply rooted among the urban population of the Middle East. The works in question were written according to strict standards of style and content, and the strong resemblance to *adab* literature possessed by some sources helps explain why fantasy stories (*ʿajāʾib*) constitute such a salient feature of the travelogues.¹⁷²

Arab travel accounts are extremely valuable in helping us assess the image of the Eurasian people in the eyes of Muslim authors living in Islamic lands controlled by the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphs or their subordinates.¹⁷³ The aim of these writings went beyond that of the stated intention of providing officials and educated readers with reliable information. They also attempted to create a concept of the Other. The authors and their readers positioned the image of the people of the steppes as a reverse mirror, as a tool of self-definition, to distinguish themselves from the outsider. In addition to their fantastic elements, then, these writings contain a reflection both of the image of the other and stereotypes of the Turk. The geographical works, therefore, would have to be in line with then prevalent interpretations of history, as well as with the dominant style of depicting the stranger and the Other.

Writings on the Steppes abounded with stories of monsters, imaginative geography and supernatural powers. Such were the legends describing the land that harboured the Jews exiled after the destruction of the Temple, as well as the saga of Alexander and Gog and Magog. Regardless, the Turks were placed within the Muslim order of humanity in a manner that was not completely detached from Islam and civilized society. The ethnographic and geographic information provided in the sources examined in this study, however, incorporates various motifs from earlier sources. It is also clear that these writings supply a plethora of other valuable information as well.¹⁷⁴ The information that they supply—on geography, political organisation, people

¹⁷² Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, i, p. 116 (§ 224). Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-thāniya*, p. 37 (l. 2) [*ʿwa-min ʿajāʾib*], p. 38; Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 58 (l. 9).

¹⁷³ See Abū Dulaf, *al-Risāla al-thāniya*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁷⁴ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik*, p. 47.

and customs—contributes to our knowledge of the ethnology and history of Inner Asia.¹⁷⁵

The discourse examined from these sources support the hypothesis that the image of Turks in Arabic writings transformed over time. During the early stage of contacts (ca. 650–830) between Muslims and Turks, the people of the Steppes were perceived as barbarians and as a menace causing great anxiety, as is reflected in the apocalyptic traditions.¹⁷⁶ During the later periods (ca. 830–1055) addressed by the article, their image evolved into that of the noble savage. Turks were regarded as highly skilled, and the civilian population of the Caliphate's heartland admired their military talents.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Turks' role as soldiers was evaluated by contemporaries as vital to the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate and the security of its institutions. Soon they became rulers of vast parts of the Islamic world.

¹⁷⁵ *Hudūd al-ʿālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 313, 443.

¹⁷⁶ See al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, p. 256 (ll. 6–9); al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 41 (l. 1).

¹⁷⁷ Al-Ghamāṭī, ed. Ferrand, p. 200 (*turkiyyūn fī maʿūnat al-ḥurūb*).

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PART III

THE MONGOL EMPIRE AND ITS SUCCESSORS

THE MONGOLS AND THE FAITH OF THE CONQUERED¹

Peter Jackson

This paper aims to examine various questions relating to the Mongols' attitude towards religious matters: specifically, the way in which the Mongols exploited the religious allegiances of their unsubdued enemies, their much-vaunted "religious toleration," their attitude towards the "religious classes" within their conquests, and the possible contexts for their eventual conversion to Islam or Buddhism. Further discussion of these questions is important, not least in order to reach a fuller explanation of the failure of Latin missionaries from Western Europe to win over the Mongol rulers: in a recent article, Professor James Ryan lays the blame for this squarely at the door of the missionaries themselves.² The scope of the paper will largely be confined to the thirteenth century.

Sources and Problems

We owe our acquaintance with the ancestral cultic practices of the thirteenth-century Mongols³ to a number of foreign observers. The Persian historian Juwaynī gives a short account, and some data can be gleaned from the narrative of the journey of the Daoist patriarch Chang Chun to Chinggis Khan's headquarters in 1222.⁴ But the most detailed accounts of Mongol religion emanate from visitors from

¹ I am most grateful to Professors Reuven Amitai and Anatoly Khazanov for reading an earlier draft and making invaluable suggestions. Any errors that have survived their criticism spring from my own recalcitrance.

² J.D. Ryan, "Christian Wives of Mongol Khans: Tartar Queens and Missionary Expectations in Asia," *JRAS*, 3rd series, 8 (1998), p. 421.

³ See generally W. Heissig, *The Religions of Mongolia*, tr. Geoffrey Samuel (London, 1980), chs. 1–2; J.-P. Roux, *La religion des Turcs et Mongols* (Paris, 1984).

⁴ Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M.M. Qazwīnī, GMS, n.s., XVI (Leiden and London, 1912–37), i, pp. 43–44; tr. John Andrew Boyle, *The History of the World-conqueror* (rpt. 1997, of Manchester, 1958), i, p. 59. Li Zhichang, *Xi you ji*, tr. A. Waley, *The Travels of an Alchemist. The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-ch'un from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan* (London, 1931).

Latin Europe. The majority of them formed part of the embassies which Pope Innocent IV despatched to the Mongols in 1245: the Franciscan friar John of Plano Carpini, who took the northerly route through the Pontic steppe and travelled as far as the court of the Qa'an (< Qaghan) Güyüg (1246–1248); and the Dominicans Andrew of Longjumeau and Ascelin, whose respective missions took them to the Mongol forces quartered south of the Caucasus. In addition to Carpini's own report, which exists in two recensions, an account of the Mongols based on his experiences—the so-called “Tartar Relation”—had been drafted a few months earlier in eastern Europe on the basis of information supplied by his companion Benedict, who also dictated another, very brief report later in Cologne. Although the report of Ascelin's mission, written by one of his companions, Simon of Saint-Quentin, is lost, much of it was fortunately preserved in the encyclopaedic work of Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1255). Andrew of Longjumeau's account survives only in an abstract incorporated in the chronicle of the English Benedictine Matthew Paris.⁵ Special mention should also be made of the data furnished by the Franciscan William of Rubruck, who left the crusading army of King Louis IX of France in Palestine in 1253 to travel as a missionary to the court of the Qa'an Möngke (1251–1259), and provides us with the fullest account of Mongol religious practices that we possess, especially of the activities of the shamans.⁶

Western authors, of course, arrived in Asia with their own pre-conceptions,⁷ and the picture they draw of Mongol ideas on religious matters may well be skewed on occasions by their monotheistic vision.

⁵ For these embassies, see I. de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (London, 1971); G.A. Bezzola, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht [1220–1270]. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Völkerbegegnungen* (Berne and Munich, 1974), pp. 118–49; also P. Jackson, “Early Missions to the Mongols: Carpini and his Contemporaries,” *Hakluyt Society. Annual Report for 1994*, pp. 14–32.

⁶ For a picture of shamanistic practices, as drawn by Western European observers, see J.A. Boyle, “Turkish and Mongol Shamanism in the Middle Ages,” *Folklore*, 83 (1972), pp. 177–93 (rpt. in J.A. Boyle, *The Mongol World-empire 1206–1370* [London, 1977]); P. Vitebsky, “Some Medieval European Views of Mongolian Shamanism,” *Journal of the Anglo-Mongolian Society*, 1 (1974), pp. 24–42. Of the sources not used in these articles, Simon of Saint-Quentin, *Historia Tartarorum*, ed. J. Richard, *Simon de Saint-Quentin. Histoire des Tartares*, Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades 8 (Paris, 1965), p. 34 (= Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, ed. J. Mentelin [Straßburg, 1473], 30.74), provides a brief account.

⁷ See P. Jackson, “Christians, Barbarians and Monsters: The European Discovery of the World beyond Islam,” in *The Medieval World*, eds. P. Linehan and J. Nelson (London, 2001), pp. 93–110.

A more obviously tendentious image is to be derived from a number of eastern Christian sources. Rubruck writes scathingly about the propensity of the Nestorians to 'create big rumours out of nothing' (like the legend of Prester John).⁸ In addition, for Christian authors writing in the Ilkhanate after 1296 the conversion to Islam of the Mongols of Iran gave earlier decades the complexion of a golden age, in which the Mongols seemed more pro-Christian than they really were.⁹ And all the Armenian authors are concerned to stress the influence the Christian kingdom of Lesser Armenia enjoyed with its Mongol overlords.¹⁰ More particularly, it is clear that two Armenian writers, Hayton and Step'anos Orbelean, each sought to glorify the memory of a close kinsman—respectively the Armenian king Het'um I and the prince Smbat Orbelean—by inflating his credit with the Mongols. Thus Hayton claims that King Het'um during his visit to Mongolia in 1254 made seven requests of the Qa'an, including Möngke's own baptism and the restoration of the Holy Land to Christian possession, all of which requests Möngke is said to have granted.¹¹ This quite false information is found in no earlier source, even an Armenian one.¹² Symptomatic, too, is the assurance of Step'anos Orbelean that Möngke had conferred on his uncle Smbat in 1251 an edict for the enfranchisement of all the priests and churches of Greater Armenia and that the prince enjoyed the particular

⁸ Rubruck, "Itinerarium," 17.2, in A. Van den Wyngaert (ed.), *Sinica Franciscana*, i. *Itinera et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV* (Quaracchi-Firenze, 1929), p. 206; tr. P. Jackson and D. Morgan, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck. His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, 173 (London, 1990), p. 122.

⁹ E.g. Step'anos Orbelean, *Patmut'wn nahangin Sisakan*, tr. M.-F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie* (St. Petersburg, 1864–6, 2 vols), i, p. 226.

¹⁰ See the comments of J.J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (London, 1971), p. 229, n. 62, and of B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit, 1220–1350*, 4th edn. (Leiden, 1985), p. 192.

¹¹ Hayton of Gorighos, "La flor des estoires de la terre d'orient," 3.16–18, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades, documents arméniens*, ii (Paris, 1906), French text, pp. 164–67 (Latin text, pp. 297–99); and for Het'um's visit to Möngke, see J.A. Boyle, "The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke," *CAJ*, 9 (1964), pp. 175–89 (rpt. in Boyle, *Mongol World-empire*). One Armenian source says that Het'um returned laden with honours and with the grant of "several provinces": Vahram, "Chronique rimée des rois de la Petite Arménie," *Recueil des historiens des croisades, documents arméniens*, i (Paris, 1869), p. 519.

¹² Kirakos Ganjakec'i says merely that King Het'um obtained a diploma from Möngke "for the freedom of the church everywhere": *Patmut'wn Hayoc'*, tr. R. Bedrosian, *Kirakos Ganjakec'i's History of the Armenians*, Sources of the Armenian Tradition (New York, 1986), p. 304; see also Boyle, "Journey of Het'um I," p. 181.

affection and esteem of Hülegü, who often entrusted him with the conduct of his affairs.¹³

There is no doubt that the Mongols did rely upon servitors from a wide range of geographical and confessional backgrounds, among them Christians from the Kereyid and Önggüd tribes;¹⁴ but this had much less to do with their rulers' religious sympathies than with an eclecticism that made use of whatever talents were available.¹⁵ Nor did it have any bearing on foreign policy. The origins of the Mongols' ideology of world-domination are uncertain; but, although Chinese influence cannot be discounted, Chinggis Khan most probably derived his concept of empire, rather, from the Mongols' nomadic precursors like the eighth-century Turks: the initial formulae of Mongol diplomatic documents were in Turkish.¹⁶ This is not to deny, of course, that the Turks in turn may have drawn some of their ideas from the Middle Kingdom.¹⁷ The difference between the Mongols and the Turks seems to have lain in the fact that, whereas the latter conceived of sovereignty only over the steppe peoples, the Mongols thought in terms of the reduction of the entire world.¹⁸ By the late 1230s this took the highest priority,¹⁹ and the fact that the Qa'an Güyüg had Nestorian Christian advisers did not prevent him from planning a new expedition (which in the event did not materialize) against Christian Europe.²⁰

¹³ Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, pp. 231, 233.

¹⁴ P. Pelliot, "Chrétiens d'Asie centrale et d'extrême-orient," *TP*, 15 (1914), pp. 627–36.

¹⁵ D.O. Morgan, "Who Ran the Mongol Empire?," *JRAS* (1982), pp. 124–36.

¹⁶ P. Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté" [part 1], *ROC*, 23 (1922–3), pp. 24–25.

¹⁷ See the comments of Thomas T. Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," in *CHC*, vi, pp. 347–48. Peter B. Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity amongst the Pre-Činggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *AEMA*, 2 (1982), p. 48, points out that the borrowing of imperial ideas from China goes back at least as far as the Xiongnu. A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, tr. Julia Crookenden, 2nd edn. (Madison, 1994), pp. 238–39, doubts whether Chinggis Khan knew much about the earlier Turkish qaghanates.

¹⁸ A.M. Khazanov, "Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan Compared: The Religious Factor in World Empire Building," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35 (1993), p. 465. For the same distinction, see also J.-P. Roux, "Sacerdoce et empire universels chez les Turco-Mongols," *RHR*, 204 (1987), pp. 167–68.

¹⁹ E. Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245–1255," *Byzantion*, 15 (1940–1), pp. 378–413. I. de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chingis Khan's Empire," *PFEH*, 7 (1973), pp. 21–36. R. Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. R. Amitai-Preiss and D.O. Morgan, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts 24 (Leiden, 1999), pp. 57–72.

²⁰ P. Jackson, "The Mongols and Europe," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 5: c. 1198–c. 1300, ed. D. Abulafia (Cambridge, 1999), p. 713.

Mongol Diplomacy

We are also likely to be misled, no less than were contemporaries, by the behaviour of the Mongols themselves during their military campaigns and in their correspondence with independent foreign rulers, namely the way in which they deliberately exploited the religious sensitivities of their enemies. It is known that during the 1221–3 campaign by Jebe and Sübētei in the Caucasus and the Pontic steppe the Mongols made efforts, prior to battle, to detach separate elements from a heterogeneous opposition. They first induced the Qipchaq/Polovtsy to desert their Alan confederates on the grounds of their common nomadic heritage; they essayed a similar tactic, though unsuccessfully, in order to separate the Rus' from their Polovtsian allies prior to the engagement on the Kalka River in 1223.²¹ What is not generally known is that the appeal was also made to a shared religion.

When news of the campaign of Jebe and Sübētei reached the Fifth Crusade in Egypt, the Mongols were taken to be the long-awaited army of Prester John or (in view of the Christian priest-king's improbable age by this time) his grandson, "King David."²² Although in some degree the fulfilment of Western European wishful thinking, the identification of the Mongols with a Christian host was possibly reinforced by the invaders' own tactics. The Georgian Constable Ivané later complained to Pope Honorius III that the Mongols had tricked his people by having a cross carried in front of their army.²³ According to the Armenian chronicler Kirakos Ganjakec'i, rumours had preceded the Mongols to the effect that they were "magi" or Christians, bringing with them both a portable tent-church and a miracle-working cross, and had come to avenge the injuries inflicted on the Christians by the Muslims. The people were thus deceived and made no preparations for defence, while one priest and his flock

²¹ Golden, "Imperial Ideology," p. 71, citing Ibn al-Athīr. *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471*, tr. R. Michell and N. Forbes, Camden Society, 3rd series, 25 (London, 1914), p. 65. J. Fennell, *The Crisis of Medieval Russia 1200–1304* (London, 1983), p. 65.

²² See generally J. Richard, "The *Relatio de Davide* as a Source for Mongol History and the Legend of Prester John," in *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, eds. C.F. Beckingham and B. Hamilton (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 139–58.

²³ *MGH Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum selectae*, ed. C. Rodenberg (Berlin, 1883–94, 3 vols), i, p. 179 (no. 252). Hansgerd Göckenjan, "Frühe Nachrichten über Zentralasien und die Seidenstraßen in der 'Relatio de Davide Rege,'" *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, n.F., 8 (1988), pp. 113–14, sees behind this only the wishful thinking of eastern Christians.

even went to meet the invaders holding crosses aloft; they were massacred.²⁴ This episode, which may have found its way into a western European chronicle,²⁵ seems to have been repeated not long afterwards hundreds of miles further north. A Galician chronicle transmits an account of the Mongol capture in 1223 of the small town of Novgorod Sviatopolch, on the west bank of the Dnieper. On this occasion nothing is said directly of the Mongols' carrying a cross or pretending to be Christians, but we read that the people "were not aware of their treachery and came out to meet them with crosses in their hands, but the Tatars slaughtered all of them."²⁶ Such episodes must have given rise to the statements in the documents circulating within the Fifth Crusade that the forty divisions of King David's army were each preceded by a cross.²⁷ As far as the Georgians were concerned, the subterfuge was highly effective. "We did not take precautions against them," the Georgian Queen Rusudan told the Pope, "because we believed them to be Christians."²⁸ If we are to take these accounts seriously (and it is always conceivable that the defeated peoples sought to rationalize their humiliation *ex post facto*), then we are perhaps dealing with yet another instance of the

²⁴ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, p. 166.

²⁵ Aubry of Trois-Fontaines, "Chronica. . . a monacho novi monasterii Hoiensis interpolate," in *MGH Scriptores*, eds. G.H. Pertz *et al.* (Hanover etc., 1826–1934, 32 vols), xxiii, pp. 943–44.

²⁶ *PSRL*, ii/3. *Ipatievskaja letopis'* (St. Petersburg, 1843), p. 165 = *PSRL*, ii, 2nd edn. (St. Petersburg, 1908), col. 745; tr. G.A. Perfecky, *The Hypatian Codex, Part Two: The Galician-Volynian chronicle*, Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies, 16/2 (Munich, 1973), p. 30. The sixteenth-century Nikon chronicle doubtless preserves a distorted version of some similar gambit when it depicts the Mongol envoys, prior to the battle on the Kalka earlier in 1223, trying to detach the Rus' princes from the Polovtsy by claiming that they and the Rus' were "alike of the stock of Adam": *PSRL*, x. *Patriarshaia ili Nikonovskaia letopis'* (St. Petersburg, 1885, repr. Moscow, 1965), p. 90: *все есмя челоуѣци, и вси Адамова племѧ, почто всеу и туе кровь свою проливаемъ, которающеся и бѣющеся . . .*; tr. S.A. Zenkovsky and B.J. Zenkovsky, *The Nikonian Chronicle* (Princeton, 1984–9, 5 vols), ii, p. 286. Cf. G. Vernadskii, "K voprosu o veroispovedanii mongol'skikh posol 1223 g.," *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, 3 (1929), pp. 145–47 (English abstract, "Were the Mongol envoys of 1223 Christians?," p. 148), who ignores the possibility of subterfuge. The Nikonian testimony is roundly dismissed by J. Fennell, "The Tatar Invasion of 1223: Source Problems," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 27 (1980), pp. 29–30, and cf. also p. 21.

²⁷ F. Zarncke, "Der Priester Johannes" [part 2], *Abhandlungen der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse*, 8 (1876), p. 59; other references cited in Bezzola, *Die Mongolen*, p. 51. Cf. also Richard of San Germano, "Chronica," *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, new edn. C. Garufi *et al.* (Bologna etc., 1934–), vii/2, p. 111.

²⁸ *MGH Epistolae*, i, p. 179 (no. 251): *non cavebamus ab ipsis quia credebamus eos Christianos esse.*

Mongols' excellent intelligence. They would have learned, for example, of the Georgian army's practice of carrying the cross before it on campaign;²⁹ they must also have heard of the reverence in which the cross was held among the Caucasian Alans, to the extent that anyone bearing a cross tied to a spear could allegedly travel in security even among pagans.³⁰

It is possible that the same tactic had already been successful with the Muslims of the Qara-Khitai empire further east. At the onset of Chinggis Khan's seven-year expedition to the West, Jebe had sent heralds proclaiming religious freedom in Kashgar, prior to the final destruction of the Qara-Khitai ruler, the conqueror's old enemy Güchülüg, a noted oppressor of Muslims. A few decades later, says Juwaynī, the local Muslims still saw the Mongols as deliverers.³¹ But the conditional nature of Mongol religious toleration would have emerged clearly from the treatment meted out subsequently to those Muslim subjects of the Khwārazm-shāh who resisted the invaders.

Over subsequent decades, the Mongols deployed more subtle tactics, notably in the embassy which the general Eljigidei in 1248 despatched to the crusading King Louis IX of France. Its ostensible purpose was to urge the French king to secure equitable treatment for eastern Christians living under Latin rule in the Levant and thus—it should be noted—to comply with a prescription (*yasa*) of Chinggis Khan himself. But it was the oral statements of Eljigidei's envoys that attracted the greatest attention. They reported that the Qa'an Güyüg had been baptized and that Eljigidei was planning to attack the 'Abbāsid Caliph, and asked Louis to direct his own expedition against Egypt, to prevent the two Muslim powers from assisting one another; and in a manner reminiscent of the rumours that had

²⁹ Richard, "Relatio de Davide," p. 145; his ultimate source is Bar Hebraeus, tr. E.A.W. Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj . . . commonly known as Bar Hebraeus* (Oxford and London, 1932), i (tr.), p. 287. For recent examples, from the reign of Queen Tamara (1184–1212), see *Kartlis Chovreba* (the Georgian Chronicle), tr. M.-F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie, 1^{re} partie. Histoire ancienne, jusqu'en 1469 de J.-C.* (St. Petersburg, 1849–50), pp. 440, 442, 459.

³⁰ According to a Dominican report of 1236: H. Dörrie (ed.), *Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen: die Missionsreisen des fr. Iulianus O.P. ins Ural-Gebiet (1234/5) und nach Rußland (1237) und der Bericht des Erzbischofs Peter über die Tartaren*, Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, phil.-hist. Klasse 6 (Göttingen, 1956), no. 6, p. 154.

³¹ Juwaynī, i, pp. 49–50 (tr. Boyle, i, pp. 66–67). D. Morgan, "Prester John and the Mongols," in *Prester John*, eds. Beckingham and Hamilton, p. 162.

reached Armenia in the early 1220s, they spoke of “avenging the injuries done to the Christian faith,” in this case the Khwārazmian sack of Jerusalem in 1244.³² Simon of Saint-Quentin (or possibly Vincent of Beauvais, commenting in parentheses on Simon’s report) had this embassy in mind when he spoke of the Mongols’ concern to deflect the crusading army from territories, like Aleppo and Anatolia, which lay within the penumbra of their control; he accused them of seeking to dupe the Franks by pretending to be Christians and therefore allies.³³ Carpini, too, had drawn attention to Mongol deviousness of this kind: the Mongols, he says, dealt more mildly with peoples who lay at some distance, or who bordered on others with whom they were at war, so that these distant rulers might not attack them and others might not be deterred from submitting.³⁴ When Pope Alexander IV spoke in 1260, therefore, of the Mongols’ habit of feigning friendship towards Christians,³⁵ he was referring to a well-established practice that seemingly went back to the time of Chinggis Khan himself. The Ilkhans’ efforts to secure Western European military collaboration against the Mamlūks after 1262, following the disintegration of the Mongol empire into a number of discrete and often rival khanates, belong in the same context: here too, as in 1248, the oral statements of the envoys regarding the Ilkhans’ Christian sympathies sometimes went much further than the text of the letters they carried.³⁶

³² L. d’Achéry (ed.), *Spicilegium sive collectio veterum aliquot scriptorum qui in Galliae bibliothecis delituerant*, new edn., eds. Baluze et al. (Paris, 1723), iii, coll. 625b, for Eljigidei’s request, and 627b for the envoys’ statement; I have checked the text against BN, Paris, ms. latin 3768, fos. 77v–78r, 80r. See J. Richard, “Ultimatums mongols et lettres apocryphes,” *CAJ*, 17 (1973), pp. 217–18 (rpt. in his *Orient et Occident au Moyen Age: contacts et relations (XII^e–XV^e s.)* [London, 1976]). F. Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 16 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 80–83, suggests that eastern Christians rather than the Mongols themselves may have been behind the distortion.

³³ Simon of Saint-Quentin, pp. 97–98 (= Vincent of Beauvais, 32.41).

³⁴ Carpini, *Ystoria Mongalorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus*, 7.8, ed. E. Menestò et al., *Giovanni di Pian di Carpino. Storia dei Mongoli* (Spoleto, 1989), pp. 288–89; tr. in C. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in China and Mongolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New York, 1955), p. 41.

³⁵ “Annales monasterii de Burton,” in *Annales monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls Series (London, 1864–9), i, p. 497.

³⁶ See generally Schmieder, *Europa*, pp. 93–95; J. Richard, “D’Ālğigidāi à Ġazan: la continuité d’une politique franque chez les Mongols d’Iran,” in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. D. Aigle, Bibliothèque Iranienne, 45 (Tehran, 1997), pp. 57–69; Jackson, “Mongols and Europe,” pp. 713–17.

The Mongols and Religion

Before we turn to the Mongols' beliefs and their attitudes towards the religions of others, some general observations are in order. We cannot take it for granted that the motives for, or indeed character of, "conversion" in the thirteenth century will be identical with those we would recognize today—or certainly those which would meet with the approval of the purist. In particular, such motives might have more to do with political, diplomatic or economic considerations than with inner conviction. We should be wrong to emphasize the individualistic over against the communal, the internal over against the outward form of law or cultic practice, and the profoundly personal transformation over against the adoption of additional cultural norms.³⁷ For instance, the Uighur conversion to Manichaeism in the late eighth century had owed something to economic relations with Sogdian merchants, and it has also been called—like the Khazar qaghans' adoption of Judaism—"a declaration of ideological independence."³⁸

Like earlier steppe rulers, the Mongol qa'ans presided over public debates between representatives of different faiths. The impulse behind these events is unclear. In a recent article, Richard Foltz points out that the effect of the whole policy was to make mischief, but he stops short of suggesting that the aim was to divide and rule.³⁹ It has been proposed that a debate took place at the point when the sovereign meditated a change of religious allegiance.⁴⁰ There may be some truth in this: Juwaynī's account of the conversion of the Uighurs some

³⁷ J.H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters. Cross-cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-modern Times* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 6–20. D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde. Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA, 1994), pp. 22–27. P.B. Golden, "Religion among the Qipčaq of Medieval Eurasia," *CAJ*, 42 (1998), pp. 226–29.

³⁸ A. Khazanov, "World Religions in the Eurasian Steppes: Some Regularities of Dissemination," in *Altaic Religious Beliefs and Practices. Proceedings of the 33rd Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Budapest June 24–29, 1990*, ed. Géza Bethlenfalvy et al. (Budapest, 1992), p. 199. *Idem*, "The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes," in *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic*, eds. M. Gervers and W. Schlepp, Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia 1 (Toronto, 1994), pp. 16–21. Golden, "Religion among the Qipčaq," pp. 230–31. On the Khazars, see *idem*, "Khazaria and Judaism," *AEMA*, 3 (1983), p. 137.

³⁹ R. Foltz, "Ecumenical Mischief under the Mongols," *CAJ*, 43 (1999), pp. 42–69.

⁴⁰ See generally J.-P. Roux, "La tolérance religieuse dans les empires turco-mongols," *RHR*, 203 (1986), pp. 146–51.

centuries previously, indeed, appears to be based upon the idea that such debates were always the means of bringing the ruler to a new faith.⁴¹ But we cannot discount the possibility that one purpose was entertainment—that the public religious disputation, in other words, was the intellectual counterpart of the bloody gladiatorial conflicts which the Mongols staged between captured enemy soldiers.⁴²

Lastly, the frontiers between different faiths were not impermeable. “Shamanism” was itself an amalgam, and we occupy no vantage-point that enables us to distinguish some pristine model from accretions that might have attached themselves to the Mongols’ beliefs in the few centuries preceding the rise of Chinggis Khan. (I shall employ the traditional label “Shamanism,” even though it is a misnomer because it ignores the daily practices of all but the minority who were religious specialists.)⁴³ A syncretistic approach had long been the hallmark of the nomads’ religious beliefs; it is reflected in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, where elements from the mythical history of the early Turks, the Khitans and other steppe and forest peoples are appropriated and integrated into the Mongols’ own origin myths.⁴⁴

Intent as the Mongols may have been on sharing the world only with subjects, they were also compelled to share it with a plethora of spirits, often malevolently inclined and in any case termed “demons” by Western European writers. When Rubruck’s little group in 1253 passed through a difficult stretch in the Tarbaghatai range, his guide asked the friars to chant a prayer that would put the demons to flight.⁴⁵ Diagnosis of the activity of these invisible powers, and if possible their harnessing for good purposes, was the job of the shamans; and there

⁴¹ Juwaynī, i, p. 44 (tr. Boyle, i, pp. 59–60), erroneously making Buddhism rather than Manichaeism their new faith.

⁴² On which see Simon of Saint-Quentin, pp. 73–74 (= Vincent of Beauvais, 31.146).

⁴³ DeWeese, *Islamization*, pp. 33–39. C. Humphrey, “Shamanic Practices and the State in Northern Asia: Views from the Centre and Periphery,” in *Shamanism, History and the State*, eds. N. Thomas and C. Humphrey (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 191–228 (esp. pp. 198–201).

⁴⁴ K. Uray-Kóhalmi, “Synkretismus im Staatskult der frühen Dschinggisiden,” in *Synkretismus in den Religionen Zentralasiens*, ed. W. Heissig and H.J. Klimkeit, *Studies in Oriental Religions*, 13 (Wiesbaden, 1987), pp. 136–58. On the syncretistic approach of Inner Asian peoples, see J.-P. Roux, “Les religions dans les sociétés turco-mongoles,” *RHR*, 201 (1984), pp. 406–12.

⁴⁵ Rubruck, 27.4, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 240 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 166). For other references to demons, see *ibid.*, 8.5 and 35.12–13, ed. Van den Wyngaert, pp. 187, 305 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 96, 245). Chang Chun was told of demons in this same region: Waley, *Travels of an Alchemist*, pp. 75–76.

is no dearth of testimony that by the middle decades of the thirteenth century Mongol rulers manifested a heavy dependence upon shamans and fortune-tellers.⁴⁶ As Carpini noticed, shamanistic activities are geared to influencing conditions in this life, not to securing an after-life.⁴⁷ The Mongols' ancestral beliefs and practices and the great world religions, in other words, were valid for different spheres: hence the "tolerant" policy of the Mongol qa'ans,⁴⁸ to which we shall return. So it was not at all incongruous that a Mongol sovereign or prince should make some formal gesture towards, say, Christianity or Islam while continuing to observe the "shamanistic" practices of his forebears: Rubruck saw even those of Möngke's wives who had no knowledge of the Christian faith venerating the cross.⁴⁹ We do not have to see this as some kind of celestial insurance, as if any of the several faiths with which the Mongols were confronted might embody the Truth and so it was advisable to court them all,⁵⁰ although the idea finds support in a speech ascribed to Qubilai by Marco Polo.⁵¹

⁴⁶ E. Endicott-West, "Notes on Shamans, Fortune-tellers and *yin-yang* Practitioners and Civil Administration in Yüan China," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. Amitai-Preiss and Morgan, pp. 226–28.

⁴⁷ Carpini, 3.9, ed. Menestò, p. 240 (tr. Dawson, p. 12). "Tartar Relation," § 42, ed. A. Önerfors, *Hystoria Tartarorum C. de Bridia monachi*, *Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen*, 186 (Berlin, 1967), p. 28. See Heissig, *Religions of Mongolia*, pp. 11, 16; D. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986), p. 44.

⁴⁸ S. Jagchid, "Why the Mongolian Khans Adopted Tibetan Buddhism as their Faith," in *Proceedings of the 3rd East Asian Altaistic Conference* (Taipei, 1969), p. 109 (rpt. in his *Essays in Mongolian Studies*, Monograph Series of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University [Provo, UT, 1988], pp. 83–93); see also S. Jagchid and P. Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Boulder, 1979), pp. 172–73.

⁴⁹ Rubruck, 29.31, 35, 40, ed. Van den Wyngaert, pp. 263, 264, 266 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 195, 196, 198).

⁵⁰ See, e.g. Morgan, *Mongols*, pp. 41, 44.

⁵¹ Marco Polo, *Le divisament dou monde*, eds. and trs. A.C. Moule and P. Pelliot, *The Description of the World* (London, 1938, 2 vols), i, p. 201. See the translation by R. Latham, *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Harmondsworth, 1958), p. 119: "There are four prophets who are worshipped and to whom all the world does reverence. The Christians say that their God was Jesus Christ, the Saracens Mahomet, the Jews Moses, and the idolaters Sakyamuni Burkhan, . . . And I do honour and reverence to all four, so that I may be sure of doing it to him who is greatest in heaven and truest." It will be noticed that the Polo account does not betray any marked theological refinement. Certainly, if the Qa'an is quoted with any degree of accuracy, his understanding of the nature of Islam and Judaism, at least, was decidedly imperfect. The passage is cited also by P. Demiéville, "La situation religieuse en Chine au temps de Marco Polo," in *Oriente Poliano. Studi e conferenze tenute all'Is.M.E.O. in occasione del VII. centenario della nascita di Marco Polo (1254–1954)* (Rome, 1957), p. 196.

On leaving the camp of the Mongol prince Sartaq, Rubruck was told, "Do not call our master a Christian: he is not a Christian; he is a Mongol." Although he goes on to say that "they regard the term Christendom as the name of a people" (i.e. presumably the Franks of Europe), it is doubtful whether this necessarily supports DeWeese's contention that religion in Inner Asia was a communal affair.⁵² It may well have been so; but Rubruck (whose interpreter was proverbially inadequate) could easily have misunderstood the reason for the warning, and a different explanation comes to mind. We should notice that on several occasions the Mongol terms for religious specialists seem to have been interpreted as denoting the religious community as a whole. Rubruck, for instance, employs the Mongol word *toyin* (Chinese *daoren*, "man of the path," i.e. Buddhist priest) as a designation for the Buddhists ("idolators") in general.⁵³ And the use of *erke'ün* ("Christian priest") betrays a similar confusion in the thirteenth-century sources.⁵⁴ This might explain the apparent bewilderment of the Qa'an Güyüg at Innocent IV's request that he become a Christian, and the anger in the camp of the Mongol general Baiju over the same injunction on the part of Ascelin.⁵⁵ The Qa'an Möngke, too, objected when Rubruck was misrepresented as having called him a *toyin*.⁵⁶ It is possible that with one exception the Mongolian lexicon recognized only religious *specialists* and contained no word for the respective religious community *en masse*. The exception was the

⁵² Rubruck, 16.5, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 205 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 120). See DeWeese, *Islamization*, pp. 100–1, n. 73.

⁵³ Rubruck, 26.14 and 28.12, ed. Van den Wyngaert, pp. 238, 248 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 164, 176). For *toyin*, see G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur: Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission, 16, 19–21 (Wiesbaden, 1963–75, 4 vols), ii, pp. 648–51 (no. 993).

⁵⁴ For *erke'ün*, see *ibid.*, i, pp. 123–25 (no. 15). For the equation of *erke'ün* and "Christian," see below; also J. Richard, "La lettre du Connétable Smbat et les rapports entre Chrétiens et Mongols au milieu du XIII^{ème} siècle," in *Études arméniennes in memoriam Haig Berbérian*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian (Lisbon, 1986), p. 691; Juwaynī, iii, p. 77 (tr. Boyle, ii, p. 599); N. Poppe, *The Mongolian Monuments in hPags-pa script*, 2nd edn. by J.R. Krueger, Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen 8 (Wiesbaden, 1957), pp. 82–83; J. Hamilton, "Le texte turc en caractères syriaques du grand sceau cruciforme de Mär Yahballāhā III," *J4*, 260 (1972), pp. 163–64. Examples from Chinese sources are listed in A.C. Moule, *Christians in China before the year 1550* (London, 1930), pp. 218–25 (and notes).

⁵⁵ Persian text of Güyüg's letter in Pelliot, "Mongols et la papauté," p. 17 (tr., p. 22). Simon of Saint-Quentin, pp. 100–1 (= Vincent of Beauvais, 32.43).

⁵⁶ Rubruck, 34.1, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 297 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 236); cf. 33.6, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 292 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 229).

Muslims who confronted Chinggis Khan in the shape of the powerful Khwārazmian empire. Here two words were available: *sarta'ul*, employed in the *Secret History* to designate the Khwārazm-shāh's subjects, and *dashman* (from Persian *dānishmand*, literally "learned man"), which denoted the Muslim religious class. But to the best of our knowledge the language contained no word for "Christian" or "Buddhist," as opposed to *erke'ün* or *toyin* for priest/monk. Even in the late thirteenth century Persian authors in the Mongol empire equated "Christian" (Persian: *tarsā*) with "Uighur" on account of the large number of Christians among that people.⁵⁷

At what juncture "Shamanism" merits being called a religion, it is difficult to say. It has been proposed that in any consideration of the religious beliefs and practices of Inner Asian peoples we need to distinguish between "popular" cultic practice—"folk religion," as Heissig calls it⁵⁸—and what has been termed "Tenggerism," centred on the sky-god, i.e. those beliefs and practices associated with a monarchy based on divine sanction.⁵⁹ DeWeese is sceptical, and sees the dichotomy as between, not two competing levels of religious thought and ritual, but "imperial" and "domestic" styles of evoking essentially the same system of religious values and practices.⁶⁰ A clash between the aspiring steppe emperor and the representative of popular traditions might, nevertheless, provide a framework within which we can locate the downfall of Teb Tenggeri (Kököchü), the shaman who had been instrumental in Chinggis Khan's enthronement but had then got above himself and was eliminated.⁶¹ Rashīd al-Dīn seems to suggest

⁵⁷ Pelliot, "Chrétiens d'Asie centrale," p. 636. By the late twelfth century, the term "Tarse" in Western Europe denoted the land of the Three Magi: see U. Monneret de Villard, *Le leggende orientali sui Magi evangelici*, Studi e Testi 163 (Vatican City, 1952), esp. pp. 163–64; Bezzola, *Mongolen*, pp. 35–36; D. Sinor, "Le Mongol vu par l'Occident," in 1274, *année charnière. Mutations et continuités*, Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique 558 (Paris, 1977), pp. 58–59 (rpt. in D. Sinor, *Studies in Medieval Inner Asia* [Aldershot, 1997]). These important links are not discussed in L.H. Hornstein, "The Historical Background of *The King of Tars*," *Speculum*, 16 (1941), pp. 405–6.

⁵⁸ Heissig, *Religions of Mongolia*, pp. 46–47.

⁵⁹ E.g. A. Róna-Tas, "Materialien zur alten Religion der Türken," in *Synkretismus*, eds. Heissig and Klimkeit, p. 34; J.-P. Roux, "La religion des peuples de la steppe," in *Popoli delle steppe: Unni, Avari, Ungari, 23–29 aprile 1987*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo (Spoleto, 1988, 2 vols), ii, pp. 514–15; L. Bazin, "Manichéisme et syncrétisme chez les Ouïgours," *Turcica*, 21–23 (1991), p. 24.

⁶⁰ DeWeese, *Islamization*, pp. 38–39; and cf. also pp. 521–22.

⁶¹ L. Hambis, "Un épisode mal connu de l'histoire de Gengis-Khan," *Journal des Savants* (1975), pp. 3–46. Roux, "Sacerdoce," p. 155. P. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*.

that Teb Tenggeri had a following among the ordinary Mongols, who were ready to believe in his spiritual accomplishments.⁶² The difficulty with this scenario is that it was Teb Tenggeri who invoked Heaven's mandate and Chinggis Khan who disregarded it.

The notion that the early thirteenth-century Mongols worshipped the supreme sky-god, Tengri (Tenggeri), has been challenged on the basis of the way in which the term *tenggeri* is used in the *Secret History*, the only Mongolian narrative source that has come down to us.⁶³ But Anatoly Khazanov makes the plausible suggestion that the Mongols were experiencing the pull of monotheism, as Tengri took on more of the attributes of the omnipotent God.⁶⁴ Indeed, a shift is visible during the early decades of the conquest period, to judge from the comments of contemporary observers (while bearing in mind the possible distortion that I mentioned earlier). Carpini noticed that the Mongols believed in one God, creator of all things visible and invisible, though they did not worship Him, as was fitting, reverencing idols instead.⁶⁵ Subsequent observers, at any rate, were ready to class the Mongols as monotheistic. Rubruck assumed that they had acquired monotheism from the Uighurs.⁶⁶ "You are not a polytheist," Qadi Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sābiq Samarqandī told Qubilai Qa'an during the clampdown on Islamic observance in China in the 1280s, "because you write the name of the great God at the head of your edicts (*yarlighs*)."⁶⁷ This development, of course, made it easier for representatives of the different confessional groups to claim the Qa'an as one of their own.

His Life and Legacy, tr. T.N. Haining (Oxford, 1991), pp. 98–101. Humphrey, "Shamanic practices," pp. 202–5.

⁶² Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, i/1, ed. A.A. Romaskevich *et al.* (Moscow, 1965), p. 419; tr. W.M. Thackston, *Jāmi'u'l-Tawarikh. Compendium of Chronicles* (Cambridge, MA, 1998–9), i, p. 90. Teb Tenggeri's role in Chinggis Khan's enthronement is not mentioned in the *Secret History*: the earliest reference to it is in Juwaynī, i, pp. 28–29 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 39).

⁶³ M.-L. Beffa, "Le concept de *tänggäri*, «ciel», dans l'*Histoire Secrète des Mongols*," *Études Mongoles et Sibériennes*, 24 (1993), pp. 215–36.

⁶⁴ Khazanov, "Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan," pp. 465–66. Cf. also W. Hage, "Christentum und Schamanismus: zur Krise des Nestorianertums in Zentralasien," in *Tradition-Krisis-Renovatio aus theologischer Sicht. Festschrift Winfried Zeller zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. B. Jasper and R. Mohr (Mainz, 1976), p. 121; Beffa, "Concept de *tänggäri*," pp. 226–27; and (in the Khazar context) Golden, "Khazaria and Judaism," pp. 136–37.

⁶⁵ "Tartar Relation," § 39, ed. Önnersfors, p. 25. Carpini, 3.2, ed. Menestò, p. 236 (tr. Dawson, p. 9).

⁶⁶ Rubruck, 25.9, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 232 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 156).

⁶⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ii, ed. E. Blochet, *Djami el-Tévarikh. Histoire générale du monde par Fadl-Allah Rashid ed-Din*, GMS, 18 (Leiden and London, 1911), p. 524 (tr. Thackston, p. 452).

The Question of Toleration

The idea that Mongol rulers were indifferent to the religious practices of their (non-Mongol) subjects has been remarkably longlived,⁶⁸ and certainly appears to be well-grounded in the sources. Take Marco Polo:

These Tartars do not care what God is worshipped in their lands. If only all are faithful to the lord Kaan, and quite obedient, and give therefore of the appointed tribute, and justice is well kept, thou mayest do what pleaseth thee with thy soul.⁶⁹

Or Simon of Saint-Quentin:

They allow Christian religious observances (*ritus*) and [those of] every sect whatsoever, and worship by men of every kind to be practised amongst them in safety and freedom, and wherever they hold power, moreover, they do not bother about the customs of anyone whatsoever, provided they are given service just as they command.⁷⁰

Carpini's party formed a similar opinion about Mongol tolerance⁷¹ (though Carpini himself—or whoever reworked his report—added a rider in the second redaction of his *Ystoria Mongalorum*, expressing the fear that it would be jettisoned once the Mongols were secure in their mastery).⁷² Testimony of this sort, which is further corroborated by Juwaynī and by the Jacobite Christian ecclesiastic Bar Hebraeus,⁷³ has helped to entrench the idea of Mongol religious toleration.

Benedict and Andrew of Longjumeau were well aware, however, that, even if the Mongols did not persecute their subjects on the grounds of religion *per se*, they cared only too much about some practices; and since they intervened in these as a means of giving visible and tangible imprint to their political domination, certain of the subject groups at various times experienced Mongol rule as markedly intolerant.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ See, for instance, Roux, "Tolérance."

⁶⁹ Marco Polo, ed. Moule and Pelliot, i, p. 96 (the Z text).

⁷⁰ Simon of Saint-Quentin, p. 47 (= Vincent of Beauvais, 30.84).

⁷¹ "Tartar Relation," § 42, ed. Önnertfors, p. 28.

⁷² Carpini, 3.5, ed. Menestò, p. 238 (tr. Dawson, p. 10). See D. Ostrowski, "Second-redaction Additions in Carpini's *Ystoria Mongalorum*," in *Adelphotos. A Tribute to Omeljan Pritsak by His Students* (Cambridge, MA, 1990 = *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 14/3–4 [1990]), p. 539.

⁷³ Juwaynī, i, p. 18 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 26). Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 490.

⁷⁴ "Tartar Relation," § 42, ed. Önnertfors, p. 28. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls series (London, 1872–83), vi, p. 114. For objections to "indifference," see Hage, "Christentum und Schamanismus," p. 121, and his "Religiöse Toleranz in der nestorianischen Asienmission," in *Glaube und Toleranz. Das theologische Erbe der Aufklärung*, ed. T. Rendtorff (Gütersloh, 1982), pp. 110–12; DeWeese,

One instance is veneration of the image of Chinggis Khan, an obligation which, we are told, the Mongols especially imposed on foreign grandees who visited them.⁷⁵ Another example was the institution of the levirate, which meant that a Christian Rus' prince was forced to marry his brother's widow, despite the repugnance of both parties,⁷⁶ while in the early Yuan era the levirate was made obligatory for the Han population of China from 1272, though with less rigour after 1276.⁷⁷ Christians could also find themselves obliged to enter into bigamous unions, so that the Armenian Constable, Smbat, whom his brother King Het'um sent as ambassador to Güyüg's court in 1248–9, was given a Mongol princess in marriage, even though his first wife was almost certainly still alive.⁷⁸ The Mongol *coiffure* may also have been imposed on sections of the conquered populations, though the evidence is tenuous.⁷⁹

In addition, the Mongols tried to abolish those practices that conflicted with the customary law of the steppe. In this regard the taboos of which we are told particularly affected Muslims, for whom the day-to-day observance of their faith entailed the infringement of important Mongol customs. Thus they were forbidden to wash in running water in the spring and summer or to slaughter animals in the manner required by the Shari'a.⁸⁰ Either of these practices, incidentally,

Islamization, pp. 100–1, n. 73. For further remarks about Mongol intolerance, see Endicott-West, "Notes on Shamans," p. 236.

⁷⁵ Carpini, 3.3–4, ed. Menestò, pp. 237–38 (tr. Dawson, pp. 9–10). "Tartar Relation," §§ 39–40, ed. Önnersfors, pp. 25–26.

⁷⁶ Carpini, 3.6, ed. Menestò, p. 239 (tr. Dawson, p. 11). More briefly in "Tartar Relation," § 42, ed. Önnersfors, p. 28.

⁷⁷ J. Holmgren, "Observations on Marriage and Inheritances Practices in Early Mongol and Yuan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate," *JAH*, 20/2 (1986), pp. 179–83. B. Birge, "Levirate Marriage and the Revival of Widow Chastity in Yuan China," *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 8/2 (1995), pp. 120–28.

⁷⁸ Richard, "Lettre du Connétable Smbat," p. 696, n. 59.

⁷⁹ Former officials of the Chin regime in North China: Xu Ting, *Heda shilue* (1237), in *Meng-Ta pei-lu und Hei-Ta shih-lieh. Chinesische Gesandtenberichte über die frühen Mongolen (1221 und 1237)*, tr. W. Olbricht and E. Pinks, Asiatische Forschungen, 56 (Wiesbaden, 1980), pp. 155 and 157, n.9. Polovtsy and even Muslims: Simon of Saint-Quentin, p. 31 (= Vincent of Beauvais, 30.71). Qangli in Transoxiana: P.B. Golden, "'I will give the people unto thee': The Cinggisid Conquests and their Aftermath in the Turkic World," *JRAS*, 3rd series, 10 (2000), p. 31, citing Rashīd al-Dīn (cf. Thackston tr., i, pp. 248–49); but the corresponding passage in Juwaynī, i, p. 95 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 121), makes it clear that the aim was to lull these Qangli into a false sense of security prior to their massacre.

⁸⁰ Juwaynī, i, pp. 161–63, 227 (tr. Boyle, i, pp. 204–6, 272). Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i Nāsiri*, ed. 'Abd al-Hayy Ḥabībī, 2nd edn. (Kabul, 1342–3 Shamsī/1963–4, 2 vols),

may lie at the root of objections later raised against the conversion to Islam of individual Mongol khans by those who claimed to uphold “the *yasa* (regulation) of Chinggis Khan”; though to my knowledge such objections are not framed in specific terms in our sources.

That Chinggis Khan had indeed issued an edict prohibiting the Muslim slaughter ritual is confirmed by what is perhaps the best-known instance of such cultural oppression, namely Qubilai’s edict (1280) forbidding Muslims in China and, allegedly, Jews also to slaughter animals in their accustomed fashion and adding a prohibition against circumcision for good measure. This episode was allegedly sparked off by the refusal of some Muslim guests to eat the meat Qubilai offered them, which had not been slaughtered in the appropriate manner.⁸¹ Qubilai’s edict asserts that Chinggis Khan’s prohibition had been discontinued under Ögödei. Such a cavalier attitude towards the great man’s edicts (by no means easy to imagine) is not confirmed elsewhere, but it is doubtless linked with the numerous anecdotes concerning Ögödei’s mild and generous treatment of Muslims recounted by Juwaynī. It may also explain a story told by the Armenian chronicler Kirakos from the 1230s about a Georgian prince who refused to taste the selection of clean and unclean food and fermented mare’s milk (*qumis*) which the Mongol general Chormaghun set before him and his entourage, on the grounds that much of it was forbidden to Christians. In response, far from exploding

ii, pp. 152–53, 167; tr. H.G. Raverty, *Ṭabaḳāt-i Nāṣirī. A General History of the Mohammedan Dynasties of Asia*, Bibliotheca Indica (London, 1872–81, 2 vols with continuous pagination), ii, pp. 1107–9, 1146. That the prohibition of washing the body and drying laundry applied only in spring and summer is clear from Juwaynī, i, p. 161 (tr. Boyle, i, pp. 204–5), and Waley, *Travels of an Alchemist*, p. 115, n. 3. See generally Ratchnevsky, “Die Rechtsverhältnisse bei den Mongolen im 12.–13. Jahrhundert,” *CAJ*, 31 (1987), pp. 78–79. The prohibition of the Muslim slaughter-ritual is the only (in its effect) anti-Muslim measure on Chinggis Khan’s part noticed by Morris Rossabi, “The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty,” in *China under Mongol Rule*, ed. J.D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton, NJ, 1981), pp. 257–95 (see esp. p. 261).

⁸¹ P. Ratchnevsky, “Rašīd ad-Dīn über die Mohammedaner-Verfolgungen in China unter Qubilai,” *CAJ*, 14 (1970), pp. 163–80; a better translation of the edict in F.W. Cleaves, “The Rescript of Qubilai Prohibiting the Slaughtering of Animals by Slitting the Throat,” in *Richard Nelson Frye Festschrift I. Essays Presented to Richard Nelson Frye on his Seventieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (Cambridge, MA, 1992 = *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 16 [1992]), pp. 67–89 (I am indebted to Dr. Michal Biran for this reference). For a briefer account of the episode, see M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan. His Life and Times* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), pp. 199–203, and his “Muslims in the Early Yüan dynasty,” pp. 291–95. The principal non-Chinese source is Rashīd al-Dīn, ii, ed. Blochet, pp. 521–23 (tr. Thackston, ii, pp. 451–52).

with rage, Chormaghun simply had them provided with food that was acceptable to them.⁸²

Yet despite the enforcement of certain steppe customs and taboos (and we cannot be at all sure that they were enforced outside the principal centres of Mongol power), there is no doubt that in different regions different religious groups gained from the qa'ans' rule a freedom of action that they had not enjoyed before the advent of the Mongols. This applied to Muslims, of whom Simon of Saint-Quentin complained that they were now able to proselytize all the more freely among the Mongol troops.⁸³ But it is most conspicuously true of Christians living in territories that had previously been under Muslim rule. In the 1230s the Nestorian monk Simeon Rabban-ata was able, with the approval of the Mongol military, to build Christian churches and erect crosses in Muslim Azerbaijan.⁸⁴ A *qaṣīda* lamenting the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 speaks (figuratively, perhaps) of the cross raised over the *minbars* and of authority in the hands of those who used to wear the *zunnār* (girdle, i.e. the *dhimmīs*).⁸⁵ And during the brief Mongol occupation of Damascus in 1260, the Christians there were able to assert themselves at the expense of their Muslim fellow citizens, for which they paid dearly once the news arrived of the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt and the Mongols' expulsion from Syria in September.⁸⁶

The Status of the "Religious Classes"

In particular, the "religious class" within each confessional group received significant privileges. The background to this is disputed. Caroline Humphrey's view is that, after the murder of Teb Tenggeri, Chinggis Khan took care to avoid giving clear precedence to any

⁸² Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, pp. 219–20.

⁸³ Simon of Saint-Quentin, p. 47 = Vincent of Beauvais, 30.84.

⁸⁴ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, pp. 237–39. See generally Pelliot, "Mongols et la papauté" [part 2], *ROC*, 24 (1924), pp. 225–62.

⁸⁵ J. de Somogyi, "A *Qaṣīda* on the destruction of Baghdād by the Mongols," *BSOS*, 7 (1933–5), pp. 41–48 (text at p. 44, tr. p. 45). The verses are preserved in al-Dhahabī (d. 1348), *Ta'rikh al-islām*, 651–660, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1419/1999), p. 38. *Dhimmī* is a member of one of the non-Muslim groups (mainly Christians or Jews) protected under Islamic sovereignty.

⁸⁶ D. Soudel, "Bohémond et les chrétiens à Damas sous l'occupation mongole," in *Dei gesta per Francos. Études sur les croisades dédiées à Jean Richard*, eds. M. Balard et al. (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 295–99.

particular religious practitioners.⁸⁷ At one level, it is clear that the Mongols recognized how useful religious leaders could be in securing the submission of the local population. "Have you won over the common people?" Chinggis Khan wrote to the Daoist patriarch Chang Chun in 1223.⁸⁸ It is not too far-fetched, perhaps, to view the Ilkhans' subsequent correspondence with the Papacy partly in this same light. In his letter of 1262 to Louis IX of France, Hülegü says that the Mongols used to think that the Pope was the over-king of the Franks but had now realised that he was "a holy man who prays unceasingly to God for all peoples, . . . the vicegerent on earth of Mishiqua Tenggeri [i.e. Jesus Christ], and the head of all who believe in and pray to Christ."⁸⁹ If handled properly, the Pope could surely bring over people in even larger numbers than the Daoist patriarch.

Mongol rulers had another, more personal interest in supporting the "religious." Chinggis Khan's eagerness to meet Chang Chun, who was reputed to be three hundred years old, and the privileges he granted to the Daoists, sprang from a straightforwardly biological understanding of immortality. In his summons to the Daoist patriarch, he expressed his hope of learning the means of preserving life, and one of the first questions he put to Chang Chun was what medicine of long life he had brought with him.⁹⁰ From the decree issued to Chang Chun in April 1223, it is clear the conqueror was under the impression that the Daoists were praying for his longevity—to

⁸⁷ Humphrey, "Shamanic practices," p. 206; cf. also R.F. Young, "*Deus unus or Dei plures sunt?* The Function of Inclusivism in the Buddhist Defense of Mongol Folk Religion against William of Rubruck (1254)," in *Universality and Uniqueness in the Context of Religious Pluralism* (Philadelphia, 1989 = *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 26/1), p. 106; more generally, Roux, "Tolérance," pp. 151–56, 159–63.

⁸⁸ Demiéville, "La situation religieuse," p. 195. See more generally Paul Ratchnevsky, "Die mongolischen Großkhane und die buddhistische Kirche," in *Asiatica. Festschrift Friedrich Weller zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet von seinen Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*, eds. J. Schubert and U. Schneider (Leipzig, 1954), pp. 489–90. I. de Rachewiltz and T. Russell, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi (1148–1227)," *PFEH*, 29 (March 1984), p. 11; also in *In the Service of the Khan. Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period*, ed. I. de Rachewiltz, Asiatische Forschungen 121 (Wiesbaden, 1993), p. 214. For a good overview of Chinggis Khan's "religious policy," see Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, pp. 197–98.

⁸⁹ P. Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France," *Viator*, 11 (1980), p. 258: *intelleximus ipsum esse virum sanctum deum iugiter orantem pro nationibus universis ipsius Misicatengrin. . . . locum in terris tenentem et caput omnium in Christo credentium et precantium.*

⁹⁰ Tao-chung Yao, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi and Chinggis Khan," *HJAS*, 46 (1986), pp. 205–7, 211.

the tune of one hundred million years.⁹¹ This was highly ironic in view of the fact that the sect had abandoned the earlier ideas about physical immortality propagated by its founder, Wang Zhe.⁹² Chang Chun's denial of his power to prolong life did not prevent the Mongols in subsequent generations from seeking the prayers of other holy men for this purpose. "They like one to pray for their lives," says Rubruck,⁹³ who at Mongol encampments was frequently asked whether the Pope was five hundred years old.⁹⁴ To put it more broadly, the Mongol rulers wished to avail themselves of the technical expertise of the religious leaders, in much the same way as they and ordinary Mongols had been accustomed to make use of the expertise of the shaman: it will be proposed below that the requisite talents related above all to magic, healing and foretelling the future.

The Mongols' need for religious specialists, among others, was reflected in the privileges they conferred upon them. Chinggis Khan's Khitan adviser, Yelü Chucai, who accompanied him on his Western campaign, observes that "all those who cultivate goodness" in the far west, whether Buddhists or others, were exempted from taxes and labour services.⁹⁵ Only two relevant documents have come down to us from the conqueror's own era, however: an order to his general Muqali to provide subsistence for the Buddhist monk Haiyun (1202–1257) and his master, to put them in authority over their confrères, and to allot them *darqan* (*tarkhan*) status, i.e. exemption from the poll-tax and labour services,⁹⁶ and the subsequent edict in favour of Chang Chun, dated April 1223 and granting exemption from all requisitions and taxes.⁹⁷ The two privileges are difficult to reconcile,

⁹¹ Yelü Chucai, *Xi you lu*, tr. I. de Rachewiltz, "The *Hsi-yu lu* by Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai," *MS*, 21 (1962), p. 25. Éd. Chavannes, "Inscriptions et pièces des chancellerie chinoises de l'époque mongole," *TP*, 5 (1904), p. 369.

⁹² Demiéville, "Situation religieuse," pp. 197–98. De Rachewiltz and Russell, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi," pp. 15–19 (in *In the service of the Khan*, pp. 218–21).

⁹³ Rubruck, 28.16, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 250 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 179); see also 22.2 and 27.6, ed. Van den Wyngaert, pp. 221–22, 241 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 141, 167–68); and more generally Roux, "Tolérance," pp. 163–65.

⁹⁴ Rubruck, 22.2, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 222 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 142).

⁹⁵ Yelü Chucai, *Xi you lu*, tr. De Rachewiltz, pp. 28–29.

⁹⁶ Demiéville, "Situation religieuse," p. 202; also I. de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," *JESHO*, 9 (1966), p. 133, n. 1; garbled in S. Jagchid, "Chinese Buddhism and Taoism during the Mongolian Rule of China," *Mongolian Studies*, 6 (1980), p. 63 (rpt. in Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies*, pp. 94–95). Y.H. Jan, "Hai-yün (1203–1257)," in *In the Service of the Khan*, p. 227.

⁹⁷ Chavannes, "Inscriptions," *TP*, 5 (1904), pp. 368–71 (a second edict, p. 372, dated October 1223, makes no mention of exemptions). Jagchid and Hyer, p. 173.

and gave rise to bitter conflict between the Daoists and the Buddhists.⁹⁸

In later tradition the conqueror was credited with nothing less than making the "religious" a distinct caste. According to Juwaynī, Chinggis Khan had issued a *yasa* that the pious and learned of every sect were to be honoured and to be treated equally.⁹⁹ Later the same author asserts that both Chinggis Khan and Ögödei had promulgated a *yarligh* granting exemption from contributions (*mu'an*) to "great sayyids and shaykhs and excellent imams, . . . *erke'üns*, priests, monks and rabbis (*aḥbār*), . . . and *toyins* . . ." It was renewed by Möngke, although he expressly excepted the rabbis, for reasons that are not given.¹⁰⁰ Legislation from the eastern reaches of the Mongol empire tells the same tale. All the relevant fourteenth-century Yuan edicts that have survived speak of exemption from all taxation of whatever kind, in return for praying to Heaven and pronouncing benedictions.¹⁰¹ And the earliest *yarligh* from the Golden Horde in favour of the Rus' church similarly attributes to Chinggis Khan an edict granting immunity to the religious class in return for prayers.¹⁰² Privileges for the Confucians seem to have come relatively late: it was Ögödei who, at Haiyun's instigation, restored the ranks of Confucius's descendants and extended to them exemption from services.¹⁰³ Otherwise, the overall impression created by these documents is that the founder of the Mongol empire had exempted all the "religious" not only from forced labour and the provision of services but from taxation of any kind.

The privileges extended to Christian priests and monks find mention also in Mongol diplomatic correspondence with Western European

⁹⁸ J. Thiel, "Der Streit der Buddhisten und Taoisten zur Mongolenzeit," *MS*, 20 (1961), pp. 1–81.

⁹⁹ Juwaynī, i, pp. 18–19 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 26).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 77–78 (tr. Boyle, ii, p. 599, reads "scholars" for *aḥbār*). Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 418.

¹⁰¹ Edict of 1311: Chavannes, "Inscriptions," *TP*, 5 (1904), pp. 419–21. Edict of 1314: Poppe, *Mongolian Monuments*, pp. 49–50. Edict of 1321: *ibid.*, p. 55. Edict of 1324: Chavannes, "Inscriptions," *TP*, 6 (1905), pp. 40–42. Edict of 1335: *ibid.*, *TP*, 5 (1904), pp. 438–41. See also the reference to a document of 1294 in Jagchid, "Chinese Buddhism," p. 80 (in Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies*, pp. 105–6). With the exception of the 1324 edict, these documents restrict exempt status to Buddhist, Christian and Daoist clergy and omit the Muslims.

¹⁰² H.F. Schurmann, "Mongolian Tributary Practices of the Thirteenth Century," *HJAS*, 19 (1956), pp. 343–44.

¹⁰³ H. Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God. The Legitimation of the Yuan Dynasty*, Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse 2 (Munich, 1978), pp. 34–35, repr. in his *China under Mongol Rule* (Aldershot, 1994). Jagchid, "Chinese Buddhism," pp. 75–76 (in Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies*, pp. 103–4). Jan, "Hai-yün," p. 232.

rulers. Eljigidei's letter of 1248 to Louis IX stresses the Mongols' favour towards Christians in general, and not just towards the "religious" (although there may be a genuine confusion here, again, between "Christian" and "Christian priest," *erke'ün*: see above). But the letter also speaks of the immunity granted to them without mentioning that the same privileges were enjoyed also by Muslim clerics and Buddhist priests.¹⁰⁴ The same misleading picture emerges from the correspondence of the Ilkhans Abagha and Arghun with the Popes, designed to bring about assistance for the Mongols in the shape of a new crusade. Arghun's letter to Honorius IV, dated May 1285, expressly credits Chinggis Khan with having issued an order that "all Christians should not yield tribute and should be free [*franchi*] in their own land."¹⁰⁵

Now the immunity mentioned in Chinggis Khan's decree to Chang Chun in April 1223 can be discounted. Its authenticity was being challenged at a very early date: Chinggis Khan's Khitan adviser Yelü Chucai, writing his *Xi you lu* in 1229, would claim that the Daoists themselves drafted the document, in the absence of the relevant imperial official.¹⁰⁶ In an article more often cited than read, moreover, Ratchnevsky suggested in 1954 that the later traditions that speak of comprehensive tax exemptions for the "religious" are all likewise suspect. References in edicts of the later Yuan emperors sought to justify, by means of Chinggis Khan's sanction, practices that had in fact grown up since his time, while mention of the exemption of Christian clergy in Ilkhanid diplomatic correspondence was merely a ploy to secure an alliance with the Catholic West.¹⁰⁷

The fact is that Chinggis Khan had exempted (and on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than as part of some general concession) only those who had abandoned the world completely. Even in the edicts issued to Chang Chun in 1223, it is those who have *left the world* to devote

¹⁰⁴ D'Achéry, *Spicilegium*, iii, col. 625b (BN ms. latin 3768, fo. 77v).

¹⁰⁵ K.-E. Lupprian (ed.), *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels*, Studi e Testi, 291 (Vatican City, 1981), pp. 229, 239, 246.

¹⁰⁶ Yelü Chucai, *Xi you lu*, tr. de Rachewiltz, pp. 29–31, 82–83, n. 215; for the date of this work, see *ibid.*, pp. 3, 13, n. 20. De Rachewiltz and Russell, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi," p. 12 (*In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 214–15). Jagchid, "Chinese Buddhism," pp. 65–67 (in Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies*, pp. 96–97).

¹⁰⁷ Ratchnevsky, "Die mongolischen Großkhane," pp. 489–90, n. 1.

themselves to religion who are to enjoy immunity from taxation and forced labour and who are to be subject to the Daoist patriarch.¹⁰⁸ Yelü Chucai's phrase "all who cultivate goodness" (i.e. ascetics) obviously denotes this same class.¹⁰⁹ In time this entailed drawing a sharp distinction between the different occupations of one and the same "religious," i.e. his spiritual pursuits and any economic activity in which he might engage, since the *Yuan shi* demonstrates that under Ögödei Buddhist and Daoist monks were exempt from the poll tax (*qubchur*) but nevertheless paid tax on their landed property.¹¹⁰ It was only in Güyüg's reign that fiscal immunity was extended to cover all those religious who engaged in agriculture and commerce.¹¹¹ An Armenian source dating from 1248 appears to describe this situation when it states that churches and their attendants were exempt from the heavy demands for both people and animals to which the rest of the population were subjected.¹¹² Güyüg's policy was maintained even under his reform-minded successor Möngke, since Kirakos tells us that in the early 1250s the agents of the fiscal administrator Arghun Aqa spared ecclesiastics and demanded no tax from them, because it would have run counter to their orders from the Qa'an.¹¹³

Not until 1264, during Qubilai's reign, was the old distinction re-asserted between those religious who remained active in the world and those who did not.¹¹⁴ This differentiation is also manifest in the specific imposts from which the religious secured release. An edict of Qubilai's son Manggala, dated 1276 and written in the new *'phags-pa*

¹⁰⁸ Chavannes, "Inscriptions," *TP*, 5 (1904), pp. 368–70, 372.

¹⁰⁹ Yelü Chucai, *Xi you lu*, tr. De Rachewiltz, pp. 28–29.

¹¹⁰ *YS*, ch. 95, cited in Ratchnevsky, "Die mongolischen Großkhane," p. 491. E. Haenisch, *Steuergerechtsame der chinesischen Klöster unter der Mongolenherrschaft: eine kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung mit Beigabe dreier noch unveröffentlichter Phagspa-Inschriften*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, XCII, no. 2 (Leipzig, 1940), p. 14 (year 1236).

¹¹¹ *Yuan dianzhong*, cited in Paul Ratchnevsky, *Un code des Yuan*, i, Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, IV (Paris, 1937), p. 209; also Haenisch, *Steuergerechtsame*, p. 23.

¹¹² A.G. Galstian, *Armianskie istochniki o Mongolakh izvlecheniia iz rukopisei XIII–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1962), p. 47.

¹¹³ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, p. 300.

¹¹⁴ Ratchnevsky, *Un code des Yuan*, pp. 208–10. Haenisch, *Steuergerechtsame*, pp. 23–24; cf. also pp. 45–46. J.M. Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Mongols (Il-khanat de Perse, XIII^e–XIV^e s.)*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia, 44 (Louvain, 1975), p. 15.

Mongolian script, ascribes to Chinggis Khan and Ögödei edicts exempting Buddhist, Christian, Daoist and Muslim "clergy" from tribute and taxes, other than land and commercial taxes, in return for praying to Heaven and pronouncing benedictions (the fact that the Chinese version of this document speaks, rather, of total exemption might well indicate that Chinese officials were endeavouring on the quiet to broaden Daoist privileges).¹¹⁵ There is no reason, however, why this edict should have been enforced elsewhere in the Mongol world, since by this time the Qa'an's writ was scarcely effective outside China and Mongolia. It doubtless still carried some weight in the territories of his ally the Ilkhan, and there are signs that here a similar principle was observed: a treatise on fiscal matters from Iran, dating from the 1260s, assumes that the religious have *tarkhan* status, i.e. enjoy dispensation from the poll-tax (*qubchur*) but not from other incidents.¹¹⁶ By contrast, in the Golden Horde, which did not currently acknowledge Qubilai, an almost contemporaneous edict of the khan Möngke Temür (1267) clearly envisages that Rus' ecclesiastics will possess landed property and exempts them from the plough tax.¹¹⁷ It is not unduly cynical to see here one of the reasons for the readiness of the Russian Church to encourage princely acceptance of the "Tatar Yoke."¹¹⁸

The Attitudes of Individual Princes

Turning now to the religious inclinations of individual Mongol rulers, we cannot always be sure to what extent we are dealing with personal conviction or with political favoritism or simply with the wishful thinking of our highly partisan sources. I suggest that we need to distinguish between: (a) personal affiliation with one or other of the "world" religions; (b) marked favour to the adherents of one religion or sect; and (c) active persecution, or at the very least downgrading,

¹¹⁵ Chavannes, "Inscriptions," *TP*, 9 (1908), pp. 376–81. Poppe, *Mongolian Monuments*, p. 47 (and notes at pp. 83–85).

¹¹⁶ M. Minovi and V. Minorsky, "Naṣīr al-dīn Ṭūsī on Finance," in Minorsky, *Iranica. Twenty Articles*, University of Tehran Publications 775 (Tehran, 1964), p. 73 (and notes at pp. 79–80).

¹¹⁷ Schurmann, "Mongolian Tributary Practices," pp. 342–46.

¹¹⁸ J.T. Fuhrmann, "Metropolitan Cyril II (1242–1281) and the Politics of Accommodation," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 24 (1976), pp. 161–72.

of the rival faiths (in the case of conversion to Islam, this would necessitate, for instance, imposition of the *jūz̄ya* [poll tax] on Christians and Jews).

We can dismiss statements by the Muslim Jūz̄jānī that both Ögödei and Batu favoured the Muslims and converted secretly to Islam:¹¹⁹ in Ögödei's case, at least, the reason may be his disregard for Chinggis Khan's *yasa* on slaughtering animals (see above). With the religious allegiance of Batu's brother Berke, later ruler of the Golden Horde (1256–67), to Islam we are, however, on firmer ground. Here there is evidence both for a public affiliation to Islam and for observance in practice; Rubruck was told that Berke did not allow pork to be eaten in his encampment (*ordo*).¹²⁰ Nor is there any shortage of sources claiming that Batu's son Sartaq was a Christian: this includes our principal Muslim sources, though they supply no further details.¹²¹ Of the Christian writers, Kirakos tells us that Sartaq was reared by a Christian nurse and was then baptized by "Syrians" (i.e. Nestorians) as an adult;¹²² his death was allegedly "a great blow" to all Christians.¹²³ According to the Armenian Vardan, Sartaq was a "true Christian" who won over many to his faith.¹²⁴ Bar Hebraeus even claims that the prince was a deacon, though this may have derived from the Nestorian practice of ordaining all male children in the course of extremely infrequent visitations by the bishop.¹²⁵ Yet Kirakos mentions a decree of enfranchisement for Christian churches and priests promulgated

¹¹⁹ Jūz̄jānī, ii, pp. 151, 157, 176 (tr. Raverty, ii, pp. 1106–7, 1115, 1172–73).

¹²⁰ Rubruck, 18.2, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 209 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 127). See J. Richard, "La conversion de Berke et les débuts de l'islamisation de la Horde d'Or," *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 35 (1967), pp. 173–84 (rpt. in Richard, *Orient et Occident*); I. Vásáry, "'History and Legend' in Berke Khan's Conversion to Islam," in *Aspects of Altaic Civilization III. Proceedings of the 30th meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, June 19–25, 1987*, ed. D. Sinor, Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series 145 (Bloomington, 1990), pp. 230–52; DeWeese, *Islamization*, pp. 83–86.

¹²¹ Juwaynī, i, p. 223 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 268). Jūz̄jānī, ii, p. 217 (tr. Raverty, ii, p. 1291).

¹²² Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, p. 295; briefer references to his faith at pp. 303 (also in Boyle, "Journey of Het'um I," p. 180), 309. Pope Innocent IV was told that Sartaq had been baptized by an Armenian cleric: F. Pagnotti, "Niccolò da Calvi e la sua vita d'Innocenzo IV," *Archivio della Reale Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 21 (1898), pp. 114–15.

¹²³ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, p. 310. See also Galstian, *Armenianskie istochniki*, p. 27.

¹²⁴ Vardan Arewelc'i, *Hawak'umn patmut'ean*, tr. R.W. Thomson, "The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 43 (1989), p. 217.

¹²⁵ Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 398. Cf. Rubruck, 26.13, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 238 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 163–64).

by Sartaq, but embracing also mosques and their personnel, as being issued “with the acquiescence of his father.”¹²⁶ Either Batu had intervened so as to counter his son’s partiality or (more probably) Sartaq was careful, in the traditional Mongol fashion, to avoid giving preferential treatment to any one faith.

The courts of the Qa’ans Güyüg and Möngke were rife with optimistic speculation about the imminent conversion of the monarch, as representatives of rival faiths jostled for influence and privilege. The Christians of Güyüg’s household assured Carpini that the Qa’an was about to embrace the faith, on the grounds that he supported Christian clerics and maintained a portable chapel in front of his tent.¹²⁷ Only a few years later, Nestorian priests told Rubruck that Möngke had been baptized that very day, though the friar did not believe them since he had not been present at the event.¹²⁸ The same claims and counter-claims reverberate through our other written sources. Even the Muslim Juwaynī alleges that Güyüg had been reared by the Nestorian Christian Qadaq and accordingly favoured Christians and denounced the Islamic faith.¹²⁹ He is followed by Bar Hebraeus, who (though brief) says that Güyüg was “a true Christian” and that in his time “the position of many followers of Christ was exalted.”¹³⁰ Jūzjānī, on the other hand, had not heard that Güyüg was a Christian, but suggests instead that he was surrounded by—among others—Buddhist priests (*toyins*), who encouraged him to oppress Muslims.¹³¹ This is corroborated by the *Yuan shi*, which says that Güyüg took as his teacher the Kashmiri Buddhist monk Namo,¹³² who subsequently played a key role in the eventual acceptance of Lamaism by the Mongol court. It may be significant that Armenian sources—so impressed by Sartaq’s Christianity—are silent regarding Güyüg’s Christian sympathies.

¹²⁶ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, p. 295.

¹²⁷ Carpini, 9.43, ed. Menestò, p. 327 (tr. Dawson, p. 68).

¹²⁸ Rubruck, 29.14–16, ed. Van den Wyngaert, pp. 256–57 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 187–88).

¹²⁹ Juwaynī, i, pp. 213–14 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 259). W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 3rd edn. with new chapter tr. T. Minorsky, GMS, n.s., 5 (London, 1968), p. 477, follows this testimony.

¹³⁰ Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 411: Budge translates as “horn” the word *ḵam* which I have rendered as “position.”

¹³¹ Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 171–75 (tr. Raverty, ii, pp. 1157–63).

¹³² *YS*, ch. 125, cited in Jagchid and Hyer, p. 178.

Möngke's inclinations are even more opaque than those of his predecessor. Jagchid proposes that initially, as a result of the influence of his Christian mother Sorqaqtani, he was "much partial to Nestorianism," but that he was "offended by the apparent arrogance of Christian doctrine" and "its assumption of superiority over all other doctrines and gods"; he ordered the great debate of 1254 in which Rubruck participated, so the argument runs, because he was already contemplating the adoption of Buddhism, and that between Buddhists and Daoists in 1256 for the same reason (see above).¹³³ But we should note, firstly, that Sorqaqtani's case was not at all straightforward. Despite her attachment to Christianity and the fact that she was buried in a Christian church in the Gansu circuit,¹³⁴ Juwaynī makes great play of her benefactions to colleges (*madrasas*) and gifts to needy Muslims.¹³⁵ Her attitude is closely paralleled by her contemporary, the princess Orqina, who governed the Chaghadayid *ulus* during the 1250s and early 1260s, since although she was an "idolator" she too is praised for patronizing Muslims.¹³⁶

Secondly, as far as Möngke himself is concerned, the evidence is far from homogeneous. It goes almost without saying that according to the *Yuan shi* the Qa'an remained attached to his ancestral shamanism,¹³⁷ and that Rubruck witnessed Möngke's use of the old technique of scapulimancy prior to reaching decisions on important matters.¹³⁸ Muslim authors speak of his favour to their coreligionists. Juwaynī says that he showed most honour and respect to Muslims, who received the largest gifts.¹³⁹ Jūzjānī at one point claims even that the

¹³³ L.W. Moses, *The Political Role of Mongol Buddhism* (Bloomington, 1977), pp. 57–62, 73.

¹³⁴ G. Devéria, "Notes d'épigraphie mongole-chinoise," *JA*, 9e série, 8/2 (1896), pp. 419–20, citing *TS*, ch. 38.

¹³⁵ Juwaynī, iii, pp. 8–9 (tr. Boyle, ii, pp. 552–53); see also i, p. 84 (tr. Boyle, i, p. 108), for her construction of the Madrasa-yi Khānī in Bukhārā.

¹³⁶ Waṣṣāf, *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tajziyat al-aṣṣār*, lithograph edn. (Bombay, 1269/1853, rpt. Tehran, 1338 S/1959), pp. 14–15: *Hurghana har chand buti kl'ud parast būd bā dīn-i islām maylī-yi tamām dāshī-u paywasta ta'aṣṣub-i musulmānān kardī*. But Jamāl al-Qarshī, *Mulḥaqāt al-ṣurāḥ* (c. 1303), nevertheless calls her a Muslim: V.V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan v epokhu mongol'skogo nashestiia*, i. *Teksty* (St. Petersburg, 1898), p. 138.

¹³⁷ Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 481. W. Abramowski, "Die chinesischen Annalen des Möngke: Übersetzung des 3. Kapitels des Yüan-Shih," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, 13 (1979), p. 33.

¹³⁸ Rubruck, 29.26, 41, 54, ed. Van den Wyngaert, pp. 261, 267, 272–73 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, pp. 192–93, 198, 205).

¹³⁹ Juwaynī, iii, pp. 79–80 (tr. Boyle, ii, pp. 600–1).

Qa'an recited the Islamic profession of faith (*shahāda*) prior to his enthronement; but we might suspect, given his use of the conventional phrase "went to hell" when he describes Möngke's death, that for Jūzjānī this did not amount to a conversion to Islam.¹⁴⁰ In his final interview with Rubruck, Möngke compared the different faiths open to humankind with the different fingers of the hand.¹⁴¹ A Chinese Buddhist source preserves a different version of the Qa'an's sentiments, in which Buddhism is likened to the palm and the other faiths to the fingers:¹⁴² this may, of course, reflect Buddhist distortion, or it could be, alternatively, that Rubruck heard the same formula but misunderstood it. We are surely nearest the true state of affairs with the friar's remark that Möngke wanted representatives of the different religious communities to pray for him, and that they all believed he shared their faith and all "follow his court as flies do honey."¹⁴³ Rubruck, though prepared to concede that they showed greater favour to Christians, was dismissive of the Christian convictions of Güyüg, Möngke and Sartaq alike.¹⁴⁴

We could be forgiven for thinking that the Qa'ans—with the possible exception of Güyüg, who allowed free rein to his anti-Muslim sentiments—fought a rearguard action to avoid being associated too closely with any particular faith; and certainly this is the strong impression given by Qubilai's behaviour in China. The clampdown on Muslims, which lasted for seven years or so, appears to have represented in part a reaction against the undue influence that Muslims had wielded hitherto in the fiscal affairs of the Middle Kingdom.¹⁴⁵ But even after his alleged conversion to Buddhism, Qubilai refused to preside over the ceremony of sacrifices to the ancestors, conducted in the Chinese manner; so too did most of his successors.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 179, 218 (tr. Raverty, ii, pp. 1181, 1292).

¹⁴¹ Rubruck, 34.2, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 298 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 236).

¹⁴² Xiangmai, *Bian wei lu* (1291), tr. in P.Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, 2nd edn. (Tokyo, 1951), p. 495, app. XV(A); on this work, see Thiel, "Der Streit," pp. 6–8. Demiéville, "Situation religieuse," p. 195, sees in the difference between the two quotations a genuine shift on the Qa'an's part.

¹⁴³ Rubruck, 29.15, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 256 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 187). See Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 481, for a similar verdict.

¹⁴⁴ Rubruck, 17.2, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 206 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 122).

¹⁴⁵ Rossabi, "Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty," pp. 271, 292.

¹⁴⁶ P. Ratchnevsky, "Über den mongolischen Kult am Hofe der Großkhane in China," in *Mongolian Studies*, ed. L. Ligeti, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica 14 (Budapest, 1970), p. 425.

The same reluctance to abandon the position laid down by Chinggis Khan seems to characterize the Ilkhans prior to Ghazan's accession and perhaps even down to his death. They exhibit the same bewildering variety of attachments. Hülegü and his Nestorian wife, Doquz Khatun, were hailed in Armenian sources as the equals in piety of Constantine and Helena.¹⁴⁷ But despite intimate conversations in which he claimed to have been a Christian since birth and expressed his desire for baptism,¹⁴⁸ Armenian writers acknowledge that Hülegü by the time of his death was greatly attached to astrologers and Buddhist priests (*toyins*).¹⁴⁹ Both Abagha (1265–1282) and his son Arghun (1284–1291) struck coins with Christian legends—and not just in those subject territories that were Christian, like Georgia.¹⁵⁰ Abagha was baptized immediately prior to his marriage to a Byzantine princess,¹⁵¹ and attended Easter service in a Christian church in Hamadān in 1282, shortly before his death.¹⁵² Arghun, described by the Dominican missionary Ricoldo of Montecroce in the 1290s as “the friend of Christians,” nevertheless made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Abū Yazīd at Bisṭām and numbered among his courtiers Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīnawārī.¹⁵³ For Hayton, the Ilkhan Baidu was “a good Christian”;¹⁵⁴ and according to Rashīd al-Dīn, it was Baidu's excessive favour towards “Christians, [namely] the Catholicus, the priests and the monks” which pushed Shaykh Maḥmūd into the camp of Arghun's son, the Muslim Ghazan, in 1295.¹⁵⁵ Yet more than one Christian source depicts Baidu too as a late convert to Islam.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁷ Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, pp. 234, 235. J.M. Fiey, “Iconographie syriacque: Hulagu, Doquz Khatun . . . et six ambons?”, *Le Muséon*, 88 (1975), pp. 59–64.

¹⁴⁸ Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste*, p. 229. Vardan, tr. Thomson, pp. 220–21.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 222. Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, pp. 333–34. See further P. Jackson, “Hülegü Khan and the Christians: the Making of a Myth,” in *The Experience of Crusading*, ii. *Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, eds. J. Phillips and P. Edbury (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 196–213.

¹⁵⁰ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 178 and n. 71.

¹⁵¹ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, p. 335. Vardan, tr. Thomson, p. 222, reports merely a rumour to this effect.

¹⁵² Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 466.

¹⁵³ Ricoldo of Montecroce, “Itinerarium,” in *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor*, ed. J.C.M. Laurent, 2nd edn. (Leipzig, 1873), p. 121. Rashīd al-Dīn, iii, ed. ‘A.‘A. ‘Alizādah, *Dzhami-at-Tawarikh*, iii (Baku, 1957), pp. 182, 607 (tr. Thackston, iii, pp. 554, 622).

¹⁵⁴ Hayton, 3.37–38, French text, pp. 189–90 (Latin text, p. 315).

¹⁵⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, iii, ed. ‘Alizādah, p. 608 (tr. Thackston, iii, p. 622).

¹⁵⁶ Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, p. 260. Continuator of Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 505, saying that he became a Muslim to please the large number of Muslim Mongols, but did not participate in worship and secretly remained a Christian.

Aḥmad Tegüder (1282–1284) is always assumed to have been the first Ilkhan to embrace Islam. Adel Allouche has shown that his diplomatic approach to Mamluk Egypt in 1283–4 was not, as previously held, a pacific move: it represented yet another ultimatum demanding submission, but on the new grounds that the Ilkhan's conversion rendered continued resistance unnecessary.¹⁵⁷ Aḥmad had in mind the same goal as his father and elder brother before him, but was dispensing with European aid. The Egyptians professed not to believe in his conversion; it comes as a greater surprise, however, to discover that, in the eyes of the Ilkhanid minister and historian Rashīd al-Dīn, too, the Ilkhan only “claimed to be a Muslim.”¹⁵⁸ It was naturally important to Rashīd al-Dīn to distinguish Aḥmad from the contemporary monarch, his master Ghazan: he had not merely to gloss over the fact that Ghazan's pagan father had overthrown the Muslim Aḥmad, but also to cast into relief Ghazan's own credentials as the first Muslim Ilkhan, who, as Rashīd al-Dīn expressly tells us, “compelled the people to practise good conduct and . . . avoid evil.”¹⁵⁹ But his phrasing may also owe something to the fact that Aḥmad is described in Christian sources as especially merciful to Christian churchmen, writing patents which freed all the churches, religious houses, priests and monks from taxation and imposts¹⁶⁰—in other words, business as usual.

At first sight, developments early in Ghazan's reign (1295–1304) seem to be of a quite different order. But in fact the drive behind the persecution of Christians was the work of the Muslim Mongol amir Nawrūz, who had been instrumental in Ghazan's enthronement and of whom the young Ilkhan initially stood in some awe; it did not last beyond Nawrūz's downfall in 697/1297.¹⁶¹ After that year

¹⁵⁷ A. Allouche, “Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22 (1990), pp. 437–46. See further R. Amitai, “The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam,” *JSAI*, 25 (2001), pp. 30–33.

¹⁵⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, iii, ed. ‘Alizādah, p. 170: *da’wā-yi musulmānī mīkard*; the sense is perhaps deliberately ambiguous (tr. Thackston, iii, p. 549).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 616 (tr. Thackston, iii, p. 628). See more generally D. Morgan, “Rašīd al-dīn and Gazan Khan,” in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. Aigle, p. 186.

¹⁶⁰ Notably Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, p. 467. The contradictory information in the sources regarding Aḥmad's attitude towards the *dhimmīs* is discussed in Amitai, “Conversion of Tegüder,” pp. 27–30.

¹⁶¹ This is very much the picture drawn by Hayton, 3.39, French text, p. 191 (Latin text, p. 316), though without naming Nawrūz. But he then tries to make out that Ghazan became pro-Christian and anti-Muslim—a clear confusion of domestic with foreign policy.

the *jizya* was no longer being levied on Christians at least; their situation thus contrasts sharply with that of the Buddhists, whose lamas were given the choice between Islam and emigration from Persia.¹⁶² Only in the reign of Ghazan's brother and successor Öljeitü (1304–1316) does the poll-tax seem to have been imposed on Christians (other than ecclesiastics);¹⁶³ and indeed eastern Christian sources give the impression that the reign of Öljeitü (described as having “a kind of hatred of the Christians”) witnessed a marked deterioration in their condition.¹⁶⁴ The longer-term treatment of the *dhimmīs* during Ghazan's reign constitutes reasonable grounds for challenging his status, like that of his precursor Aḥmad Tegüder, as a wholeheartedly Muslim ruler, and serves to cast further doubt on the fullness of his conversion to his new faith.¹⁶⁵

The Appeal of Magic

Rubruck doubtless hit the nail on the head when he observed that had he been able to work miracles the Qa'an Möngke might have humbled himself;¹⁶⁶ he told the English Franciscan Roger Bacon, apparently, that he would have fared better had he been conversant with astronomy.¹⁶⁷ This possibly represents an interpolation by Bacon himself, who was fascinated by astronomy and magic.¹⁶⁸ But there

¹⁶² C. Melville, “*Pādshāh-i Islām: the Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān*,” in *Pembroke Papers*, vol. 1. *Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P.W. Avery*, ed. C. Melville (Cambridge, 1990), p. 170, and J. Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation*, *Studia Iranica*, Cahier 15 (Paris, 1995), pp. 61–62, 64, 65–66, make sense of the various tergiversations. The main Christian sources are Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, pp. 506–7; Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, pp. 261–63.

¹⁶³ Life of Mar Yahballaha III, tr. E.A.W. Budge, *The Monks of Küblāi Khān, Emperor of China* (London, 1928), pp. 258–60. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 183.

¹⁶⁴ D. Bundy, “The Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses to the Islamification of the Mongols,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. J.V. Tolan (New York and London, 1996), pp. 40–1. For the hatred, see Budge, *Monks of Küblāi Khan*, 255–56.

¹⁶⁵ R. Amitai-Preiss, “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamlūk Sultanate,” *BSOAS*, 59 (1996), pp. 1–10.

¹⁶⁶ Rubruck, 34.7, ed. Van den Wyngaert, p. 300 (tr. Jackson and Morgan, p. 239).

¹⁶⁷ Roger Bacon, *Opus majus*, ed. J.H. Bridges, *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon* (Oxford and London, 1897–1900), i, p. 400. This statement, which is nowhere to be found in the written report, must be based on Rubruck's oral testimony: see J. Charpentier, “William of Rubruck and Roger Bacon,” in *Hyllningskrift tillägnad Sven Hedin på hans 70-årsdag den 19. Febr. 1935* (Stockholm, 1935), pp. 255–67.

¹⁶⁸ Bezzola, *Die Mongolen*, pp. 202–5.

is no shortage of evidence to support the view that the talents the Mongols especially prized were related to magic, astrology and the healing arts (see above). Simon of Saint-Quentin may well have been correct when he ascribed the influence of the Nestorian monk Rabban-ata in the 1240s to his skill in divination.¹⁶⁹ It was because of their familiarity with magic, above all, that Tibetan Buddhist priests appealed to the Mongol Qa'ans in the east and that Qubilai decided in 1258 to favour them over the Daoists, who proved unable to perform such impressive feats.¹⁷⁰ Qubilai's Buddhist counsellor, Liu Pingzhong, was well versed in astronomy and divination; and at his death in 1274 the Qa'an spoke warmly of Liu's understanding of the occult and his ability to predict the future.¹⁷¹ Hūlegū was similarly susceptible. His favour to the Shī'ī astronomer Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī is well known;¹⁷² another Muslim astronomer, Muḥyī al-Dīn, was the only member of the entourage of the Ayyūbid Sultan of Aleppo to be spared by Hūlegū's men in 1260; and the Nestorian bishop of Gāzartā (Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar) secured a reprieve for his town by assuring Hūlegū that he was conversant with alchemy.¹⁷³ According to Armenian sources, the reason for Hūlegū's addiction to the company of Buddhist priests was that they held out the promise of immortality.¹⁷⁴ Arghun actually died as the result of a life-prolonging drug administered by a Buddhist priest (*bakhshī*).¹⁷⁵ When the Qa'an Möngke demanded of the Confucians what use they were for magic and healing,¹⁷⁶ he was posing a question that might have been put by any other member of the imperial dynasty.

Now Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the confidant of Aḥmad Tegüder and the man credited with introducing him to the Islamic faith, is

¹⁶⁹ Simon of Saint-Quentin, p. 30 (= Vincent of Beauvais, 30.70).

¹⁷⁰ Demiéville, "Situation religieuse," p. 206. Young, "*Deus unus*," pp. 118–19, 122–23. Cf. also Sh. Bira, "Qubilai Qa'an and 'Phags-pa bLa-ma," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. Amitai-Preiss and Morgan, p. 242. Roux, "Tolérance," pp. 163–64, makes a tentative link between magic and prayers for the sovereign.

¹⁷¹ *IS*, ch. 157, cited in Demiéville, "Situation religieuse," pp. 203–4. Hok-lam Chan, "Liu Ping-chung (1216–1274): a Buddhist-Taoist statesman at the court of Khubilai Khan," *TP*, 53 (1967), p. 142; see also pp. 117, 141.

¹⁷² J. Calmard, "Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans," in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. Aigle, p. 274.

¹⁷³ Rashīd al-Dīn, iii, ed. 'Alizade, p. 76 (tr. Thackston, iii, p. 506). Bar Hebraeus, tr. Budge, pp. 438, 443.

¹⁷⁴ Kirakos, tr. Bedrosian, pp. 333–34. Cf. Vardan, tr. Thomson, p. 221.

¹⁷⁵ P. Jackson, "Argūn," *Elr*, ii, p. 404.

¹⁷⁶ *IS*, ch. 125, cited in Demiéville, "Situation religieuse," p. 217.

depicted by Mamlūk authors as dabbling in sorcery (*sihr*) and natural magic (*ṣimīyyā*); he had earlier gained influence over Abagha by claiming knowledge of alchemy and then duping the Ilkhan with conjuring tricks (*shaʿbadha*).¹⁷⁷ Aḥmad Tegüder's brief reign was the heyday of sufis (dervishes) of the less respectable sort,¹⁷⁸ and what we are told of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān fits well into the context of the known interests of Mongol rulers. Rashīd al-Dīn is at pains to stress that Ghazan, on the other hand, did not come to Islam through any urging or encouragement on the part of amirs or shaykhs.¹⁷⁹ This is a tendentious image of the conversion of Ghazan, who seems to have received Islam at the hands of the moderate Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamūyī (d. 722/1321–2).¹⁸⁰ We know little of Ṣadr al-Dīn, though it has been suggested that his influence on Ghazan and the Mongols derived in some measure from the reputation and accomplishments of his father Saʿd al-Dīn Muḥammad, who had had a propensity for mystical trances.¹⁸¹

Conclusion

The “tolerance” of Mongol rulers has been overstated, and such even-handedness as they displayed in religious matters was not the product merely of a natural inclination towards syncretism. It sprang from the same roots, namely *Realpolitik*, as their habit of exploiting the religious susceptibilities of independent powers for diplomatic and strategic purposes. The privileges conferred upon holy men of all persuasions were at first rather restricted; only later did they expand to embrace economic activity by monks and clerics, and under Qubilai in China a sustained effort was made to curtail them once more.

¹⁷⁷ Allouche, “Tegüder’s Ultimatum,” p. 443: of the sources he does not quote, see al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi’l-wafayāt*, xviii, ed. Ayman Fuʾad Sayyid, Bibliotheca Islamica 6r (Stuttgart, 1988), p. 314 (citing al-Jazarī). The most detailed non-Mamlūk account is in *al-Ḥawāḍith al-jāmiʿa* (early fourteenth century; attributed to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī), ed. Muṣṭafā Jawād (Baghdad, 1351/1932), pp. 431–32.

¹⁷⁸ R. Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols of the Ilkhanate,” *JESHO*, 42 (1999), pp. 30–32.

¹⁷⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, iii, ed. ʿAlizādah, pp. 374, 376 (tr. Thackston, iii, pp. 664, 665).

¹⁸⁰ Melville, “*Pādshāh-i Islām*,” pp. 160–69. Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans,” pp. 32–34.

¹⁸¹ J.J. Elias, “The Sufi lords of Bahrabad: Saʿd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi,” *Iranian Studies*, 27 (1994), pp. 53–75 (esp. pp. 60, 68).

The respect in which religious specialists were held was related not just to the efficacy of their prayers but to (perceived) expertise in magic, healing and the prolongation of life. In explaining why Mongol rulers appeared to lean towards particular faiths during the thirteenth century, I suggest that we may need to look harder in the direction of these skills than at the exigencies of foreign policy or even matters of doctrine.

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THE “GREAT *YASA* OF CHINGGIS KHAN” REVISITED

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In 1986, in a number of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* that formed a Festschrift for Professor A.K.S. Lambton, I published an article entitled “The ‘Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khān’ and Mongol law in the Īlkhānate,”¹ and I summarised its conclusions in my book *The Mongols*,² which came out later in the same year. In this discussion of Chinggis Khan’s celebrated code of laws, I parted company with the previous scholarly consensus on the subject, and, building on a remarkable series of articles by the late Professor David Ayalon, published in *Studia Islamica* during the 1970s,³ presented what might perhaps have been seen as a somewhat destructive argument and conclusion. Since 1986, the subject has been considered at some length by Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz, in an important article,⁴ and aspects of the subject have also been examined by Professor Reuven Amitai⁵ and Mr. Robert Irwin.⁶ In addition, the substance of the views of one of the most important earlier students of the *Yasa*, the late Professor Paul Ratchnevsky, became in 1991 more widely available through the publication of Thomas Haining’s admirable English translation of Ratchnevsky’s biography of Chinggis Khan (first published, in German, in 1983).⁷ And the question of the later significance of the *Yasa*, especially in Central Asia, has begun to arouse interest, as may be seen in

¹ *BSOAS*, 49/1 (1986), pp. 163–76.

² Oxford, 1986.

³ “The Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khān. A Re-examination”, *Studia Islamica*, 33 (1971), pp. 97–140 [A]; 34 (1971), pp. 151–80 [B]; 36 (1972), pp. 113–58 [C1]; 38 (1973), pp. 107–56 [C2].

⁴ “Some reflections on Činggis Qan’s *ǰasaγ*,” *East Asian History*, 6 (December 1993), pp. 91–103.

⁵ R. Amitai-Preiss, “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamlūk Sultanate”, *BSOAS*, 59/1 (1996), pp. 1–10.

⁶ “What the Partridge Told the Eagle: A Neglected Arabic Source on Chinggis Khan and the Early History of the Mongols,” in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds R. Amitai-Preiss and D.O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), pp. 5–11.

⁷ *Činggis-khan sein Leben und Wirken* (Wiesbaden, 1983); tr. and ed. T.N. Haining, *Genghis Khan. His Life and Legacy* (Oxford, 1991).

Professor Robert McChesney's 1996 book, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*.⁸ The time therefore seems ripe for another look at this fascinating, if singularly elusive, Mongol imperial institution.

The traditional view of the Great *Yasa* may briefly be summarised as follows. At some stage during Chinggis Khan's reign, and perhaps at the *quriltai*, the assembly of princes and notables, that was held in 1206 on the eve of his campaigns of world conquest, Chinggis laid down a code of law that was to be regarded as permanently binding on his descendants and their subjects for ever. No complete copy of this code has survived, but it may to a large extent be reconstructed from fragments which are to be found in a wide variety of sources, eastern and western. My impression is that the first formulation of this view was by Petis de la Croix, who in 1710 published, in French, the first modern biography of Chinggis Khan,⁹ this being based on the materials, mainly in Persian, which he found in the library of Louis XIV. An English translation followed in 1722, and the view of the *Yasa* which that book contained received its classical formulation in Riasanovsky's *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law* of 1937.¹⁰

That was how matters stood until David Ayalon, in the course of an examination of the place of the *Yasa* in the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria of which he was the leading historian, decided to look into the question of the contents of this much-revered code of law. What he found was devastating. One of the main sources of "fragments" of the Great *Yasa* had always been the fifteenth-century Mamluk historian al-Maqrīzī: it was especially his arguments about the significance of the *Yasa* in the Mamluk realm that Ayalon was concerned to investigate. Ayalon showed, first, that al-Maqrīzī had not, as had been supposed, had an informant, Ibn al-Burhān, who had actually seen a copy of the *Yasa* in Baghdad. Then, more radically, he proceeded to demonstrate that of the main supposedly independent sources of "fragments," al-Maqrīzī had obtained his material, without acknowledgement, from the fourteenth-century Mamluk author al-ʿUmarī; and that both al-ʿUmarī and another alleged source, the Syriac chronicler Bar Hebraeus, had obtained the bulk of their information (with acknowledgement) from the famous thirteenth-century

⁸ Princeton, 1996.

⁹ F. Petis de la Croix, *Histoire du grand Genghizcan* (Paris, 1710); English translation in *The History of Genghizcan the Great* (London, 1722).

¹⁰ V.A. Riasanovsky, *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law* (Tientsin, 1937).

Persian historian of the Mongols, Juwaynī. While odds and ends of information about bits of the *Yasa* are certainly to be found elsewhere, Ayalon had demonstrated that most of the major sources for the *Yasa* boiled down to just one, Juwaynī. One should, however, add that Robert Irwin, in an article to be discussed later in this paper, has pointed out¹¹ that some of the Mongol ordinances which al-ʿUmarī lists are not to be found in Juwaynī, and that indeed we do not, so far, know where he got them from. One consequence of Ayalon's research was that the process of collecting and classifying "fragments" in the hope of reconstructing the overall shape and scope of the Great *Yasa*, as attempted for example in Riasanovsky's book, would need to be abandoned forthwith, should Ayalon's conclusions be accepted. There was, in fact, no alternative to accepting those conclusions, since they were demonstrably right. No subsequent research, so far as I am aware, has cast any doubt on them.

It is therefore regrettable that Ayalon's conclusions were ignored by Paul Ratchnevsky, even in his last relevant publication, the 1991 English translation of his 1983 biography of Chinggis Khan. This is incomparably the best study of Chinggis ever published, and more is the pity that its readers will obtain from it a view of the *Yasa* that, at least in that respect, is badly flawed. The first of Ayalon's articles appears in the book's bibliography, but there is no evidence in the text that Ratchnevsky had read it: there are no references to it, and throughout he cites al-Maqrīzī, al-ʿUmarī and Juwaynī as though they could still be regarded as independent sources for the contents of the *Yasa*. That Ratchnevsky was thus seriously out of date is confirmed by his references to "fragments" of the *Yasa*, and his citations of Riasanovsky's book, the classic example of the kind of *Yasa*-contents methodology which Ayalon had shown was untenable.

In other ways Ratchnevsky's pages on the *Yasa* are valuable, and often appropriately cautious. For example, he remarks that the *Yasa* "does not represent a legal code drawn up at one particular point in time and it is not a systematic work. It is a collection of orders and decrees which Genghis Khan issued, as circumstances required, over a period of time." He goes on to add, on the evidence of the principal Chinese source, the *Yuan shi*, that "this collection would have been edited into its final form when, on the occasion of his coronation,

¹¹ Irwin, "What the Partridge Told the Eagle," pp. 7–8.

Ögödei Qa'an introduced the ceremony of the presentation of Genghis Khan's *Yasa*."¹² This is an important idea to which I shall return.

Chronologically speaking, the next contribution to which I should make some reference is my own article of 1986. I first of all discussed the question of whether the Great *Yasa* could have been laid down at the *quriltai* of 1206. I argued that there was no serious evidence for this: in particular, that whatever may have been the significance of Chinggis Khan's grant, on that occasion, of certain judicial functions to his adopted brother Shigi-Qutuqu, as recorded in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, this was not an account of the institution of the Great *Yasa*. Indeed, the word *yasa* (Mongolian *jasā* or *jasaq*) is not used here at all, though it appears elsewhere in the *Secret History*: I shall refer later to the question of what the word may mean in those other contexts. As neither Ratchnevsky nor de Rachewiltz, though believing in the existence of a written Great *Yasa*, would wish to date it to 1206 (though Ayalon seems to have assumed this), that issue may perhaps be regarded as settled, at least for the moment.

On the question of the *Yasa*'s contents, while accepting Ayalon's conclusions regarding the sources, and the unique status of Juwaynī's evidence, I took issue with his view of Juwaynī and what that historian had elected to discuss in the chapter on Chinggis Khan's *yasas* in his *Ta'rikh-i jahān gushā*, "The History of the World Conqueror." Ayalon argued that while Juwaynī was indeed the only source of consequence on the Great *Yasa*'s contents, he was both highly partisan and thoroughly disorganised. The argument for his partisanship is documented at length, with particular reference to his highly favourable account of how the provisions of the *Yasa* were scrupulously observed by one branch of the Mongol royal family, the descendants of Chinggis Khan's youngest son, Tolui. It was the house of Tolui, backed by Batu, son of Chinggis's eldest son Jochi, which had emerged triumphant over the houses of the two middle sons, Chaghadai and Ögödei, in 1251, and which had subsequently provided the rulers of China and Mongolia, in the person of the Great Khan Qubilai, and the Ilkhanate in Persia, Iraq and Anatolia, in the person of Qubilai's brother Hülegü and his descendants. Juwaynī was a high Ilkhanid official, that is, he worked for the Toluids, and the reason for his partisanship is hence not far to seek: what we have here is a classic example of history

¹² Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 188.

being written by the winners. While Ayalon's choice of adjectives to describe Juwaynī—"nauseating," "servile" and so forth—is perhaps a little over-colourful, the general point he is making seems perfectly fair, and I had no quarrel with that part of Ayalon's case. My problem was rather with the accusation of, in effect, incompetence which Ayalon levelled against Juwaynī. Ayalon considered Juwaynī's chapter on the *Yasa*, and noted that it was largely concerned with matters which had nothing to do with any kind of law—with military organisation, with the hunt, with the postal courier system. Ayalon's comment on this was that "[t]he fact that according to the title, the chapter deals with 'the Laws Chingiz Khān framed and the *Yāsas* which he Promulgated,' cannot serve at all as a guarantee that al-Juwaynī would literally adhere to it."¹³

Now let me make it quite clear how much of a debt I owed to Ayalon. If at this point I thought it necessary to dissent from his views, it should be emphasised that without Ayalon's work it would almost certainly never have occurred to me to question at all the traditional view of the *Yasa*. All students of the subject since 1971 (with the unfortunate and rather unexpected exception, as I have indicated, of Ratchnevsky) have worked in Ayalon's shadow. In the articles he made frequent reference to an unpublished "full version" of them, which he intended should in due course see the light of day. While the works of many historians might perhaps benefit from ruthless abridgement, in this instance it is a matter for considerable regret that, although Ayalon's *Yasa* articles are very substantial as they stand, he never published that promised longer version of them.

It seemed to me that Ayalon's criticism of Juwaynī was at that point predicated on a series of unproven (not to say unprovable) assumptions about what the Great *Yasa* was, and what it could have been expected to have contained. For all that he had so effectively demolished the process of fragment collecting and classifying so beloved of Riasanovsky and even, to an extent, of Ratchnevsky, he was still expecting Juwaynī to talk about that kind of law, and not about how to organise the army, the hunt or the horse-post. The question I asked was: what is the result if we assume, instead, that Juwaynī did in fact know what he was doing? First, we should note that Ayalon, no Persianist, relied on Boyle's English translation of Juwaynī. Boyle was a good translator,

¹³ Ayalon, "The 'Great *Yāsa*,'" A, p. 135.

and usually reliance on his work would be safe enough. But in this instance the word he had translated as “Laws” in the title of Juwaynī’s chapter was *qawā’id*, the plural of *qā’ida*. *Qā’ida* is of course, like a very high proportion of classical Persian vocabulary, a borrowed Arabic word, and had Ayalon not trusted Boyle he would immediately have seen that whatever it meant, it could not mean “law.” Steingass in his *Persian-English Dictionary* offers his usual generous range of possible meanings—base, basis, foundation, ground-work; a pedestal; capital of a column; a metropolis, capital, seat of government; rule, custom, institution, mode, manner, style, etiquette; regulation; a rule of grammar; first reader, primer. As always, the meaning has to be deduced from the context: in this instance, presumably, “rule” or “regulation.” But “law” is not an available option.

So, I argued, what Juwaynī said his chapter would contain was Chinggis Khan’s regulations and *yasas*: “This,” I suggested, “is precisely what it does contain. Juwaynī never promises to give an account of the ‘Great *Yasa*’, and he is hardly to be blamed because we may consider that that is what he ought to have been doing.”¹⁴ *Yasa* may indeed be a proper noun, referring to a code of laws. But often in the Persian sources—and in Juwaynī and elsewhere, more often than not—it clearly means, from the context, an individual regulation, decree or order. The explanatory couplings of words make this beyond doubt: *qawā’id wa yāsāhā*, presumably “regulations,” *aḥkām wa yāsāhā*, “decrees” or “orders,” *yāsā wa ḥukmī*, “a decree,” not conceivably “the *Yasa*.” So it is not surprising that the chapter contains a discussion of Chinggis Khan’s decrees and regulations on matters military and administrative: that is what one would expect (on this, at least, de Rachewiltz was to agree with me in his 1993 article to be discussed later). Juwaynī was not wandering from the point at all: we have simply misunderstood what his point was. Nor is it odd that Chinggis Khan’s regulations on these matters should have been written down in what Juwaynī calls, not “The Book of the Great *Yasa*” but “The Great Book of *Yasas*” (*yāsā-nāma-yi buzurg*), and that they should have been taken out and consulted on great occasions. I concluded that “Ayalon has done away with all the sources on the Great *Yāsā*’s contents with the exception of Juwaynī. It is my contention that, so far as information on the Great *Yāsā*’s contents is concerned, the next step is to discard Juwaynī’s chapter too.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Morgan, “The ‘Great *Yāsā*’,” p. 168.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

This inevitably led to the rather radical question of whether a written Great *Yasa* had in fact existed at all. There were many indications that no text was available for consultation, even by such highly placed officials as Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, and that no one was very sure quite what was in the Great *Yasa*. Ayalon speculated that this might be because the text was in some sense taboo, like the now lost Mongolian chronicle, the *Altan Debter*. But it seemed singularly self-defeating for the Mongols to expect their subjects to obey a legal code whose requirements they were not permitted to know. Ignorance of the law may be no excuse, but the Mongols were not, I think, so unreasonable as to take that principle to such extreme lengths. To cut a long story short, though I went on to discuss what legal and judicial machinery I thought may in fact have existed in the Mongol Empire, and specifically in the Ilkhanate, on the Great *Yasa* itself I wound up with the following hypothesis: "[T]here was probably believed to be a 'Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khān', derived in part from Chingiz himself and perhaps in part from earlier Mongol custom. But this was not written down in any coherent form, and it was therefore possible to attribute to it a wide variety of provisions, as was thought necessary or desirable. In practice it may very well have been a gradually evolving body of custom, not only beginning before the time of Chingiz Khān but continuing after him."¹⁶

Other scholars have proved reluctant to accompany me down this road. It was certainly one demolition too many for Ayalon, who in the introduction to the Variorum volume in which his *Yasa* articles were reprinted, commented that "I do not agree . . . with the view of some scholars" [presumably he had me in mind, though he does not say so] . . . "that in the reign of Chingiz Khān there seems to have been no Mongol law embodied in a written code. For such a view much stronger proof must be found."¹⁷ I was not the only reviewer of the volume to point out that the onus of proof lies not on those who doubt that there is convincing evidence for the existence of a written *Yasa*, but on those who believe in it: one can hardly expect, or be expected, to prove a negative.

Ayalon did not return to the subject, but the challenge was taken up by Dr Igor de Rachewiltz, in his 1993 article, "Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's *ǰasay*." This was particularly valuable because of de

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁷ D. Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs* (London, 1988), p. x.

Rachewiltz's expertise in Chinese and Mongolian—expertise which neither Ayalon nor I possessed. Indeed, de Rachewiltz refers to this deficiency in a characteristically courteous way, remarking that “In Ayalon's and Morgan's studies attention is focused primarily on the Islamic sources and, to a lesser extent, on the *Secret History*. Very little attention is paid to the Chinese sources of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, no doubt because they are poor in specific references to the *ḡasay* of Činggis Qan.”¹⁸ I rather suspect that Dr de Rachewiltz was in fact aware that, had he wished, he could justifiably rather have written something like: “no doubt because neither of them knows a word of Chinese”!

De Rachewiltz considers the contributions to the discussion that I have mentioned above, and additionally what Professor Paul Ch'en had to say on the subject in his more wide-ranging 1979 book, *Chinese Legal Tradition under the Mongols. The Code of 1291 as Reconstructed*.¹⁹ De Rachewiltz first summarises Ratchnevsky's arguments, and then goes on to Ayalon (whose conclusions regarding the Islamic sources he does not dispute), Morgan, and Ch'en. Of Ch'en's material he attaches particular significance to a reference in the *Yuan shi*, the official dynastic history of the Mongols in China, according to which the Great Khan Ögödei, at the time of his enthronement in 1229, promulgated the Great *Yasa*.²⁰ As he points out (and I had also drawn attention to this, though I had formed a different conclusion on the basis of it), Juwaynī tells us something similar about Ögödei's declaration at his enthronement regarding the immutability of Chinggis Khan's *yasas*. De Rachewiltz believes that although the information provided in this and other Chinese sources is scant, nevertheless “what they tell us is significant, particularly if we analyze it in conjunction with the evidence provided by the *Secret History*, a source which, in my opinion, deserves also closer scrutiny.”²¹

To recall, all that I had said about the nine instances in which the term *jasag* occurs in the *Secret History* was that “although the term is found a number of times in the *Secret History*, it generally seems to mean “order” or “command.” It never refers to a legal code of any kind.”²² De Rachewiltz takes a very different view, and since he is the

¹⁸ De Rachewiltz, “Some Reflections,” pp. 93–94.

¹⁹ Princeton, 1979.

²⁰ De Rachewiltz, “Some reflections,” p. 94.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²² Morgan, “The ‘Great *Yāsā*’,” p. 164.

greatest living authority on the *Secret History*, as well as its finest translator and annotator, we would be well advised to look rather carefully at what he says. He points out that in every case but one, the Chinese gloss gives the meaning *fa-tu* [*fadu* in Pinyin], "regulation, ordinance, law," but adds that since the glosses are a late fourteenth-century addition to the early thirteenth-century Mongolian text, it is more important to examine the context in each case if the precise meaning is to be established. This seems to me to be clearly right. The first four cases are as follows.

1 and 2: *yasas* in 1202, to the effect that in a battle the Mongol soldiers shall not stop to plunder.

3: the *yasa* of Gürbesü the Naiman has become harsh: synonymous here, de Rachewiltz suggests, with "rule, government," the meaning in modern Mongolian.

4: a *yasa* of 1204, in which Chinggis Khan orders his soldiers to light fires in order to deceive the Naiman enemy. In de Rachewiltz's opinion, the usual interpretation, that this means simply "an order," is wrong: he considers that what Chinggis Khan did "was to issue the order and proclaim it as *jasay*, i.e. as if it were a law, or with the full force of the law."²³

This gives some impression of how de Rachewiltz thinks the references in the *Secret History* should be understood. The remaining five instances are similarly interpreted. They are all specific, dealing with military matters arising out of particular incidents, the organisation of the guards, and so on. But de Rachewiltz's view is that, for all that they may have seemed to me and others to be individual decrees, they are generally to be understood as having the force of "normative law."

He goes on to concede that "[i]n the *Secret History* we also notice the absence of any reference to the Great *Ĵasay*, or to any written *Ĵasay*."²⁴ He thinks that "[i]t is reasonable to assume that Činggis's 'laws' were set down in some form, but we cannot prove it."²⁵ He adduces further evidence from later, however, placing particular stress on the Great Khan Güyüg's famous letter to Pope Innocent IV, an incontestably authentic document, straight from the horse's mouth, in which the Great Khan says: "And if you keep your word, thou,

²³ De Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections," p. 97.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

who art the great Pope, together with all the kings, must come in person to do homage to Us. We shall then cause you to hear every command (*farmān*) that there is of the *Yāsā*.”²⁶ According to de Rachewiltz, these remarks of Güyüg “ought to dispel any lingering doubt in our minds about the existence of the *Ḥasay* as a code of laws.”²⁷ As we shall see, they have not had quite that effect on me.

To summarise (at the risk of over-simplification) de Rachewiltz’s own summary of his conclusions, they are as follows. The *Yasa* dates from the time of Chinggis Khan, and its injunctions were especially concerned with matters of government, the military, justice, and the division of spoils. The *Yasa*’s elaboration was spread over a number of years, and in its original form was closed with Chinggis Khan’s death in 1227. Its provisions were fundamental and permanent, to be distinguished from *ad hoc* decrees (*yarlıghs*). While there is no direct evidence that the *Yasa* was a written code, it is a reasonable if not a necessary assumption, though it may well not have been arranged very systematically. After Chinggis Khan’s death it became known as the Great *Yasa*, and Chinggis Khan’s son and successor Ögödei began in 1229 the custom of having it proclaimed at each Great Khan’s enthronement. As time passed it underwent some modifications to deal with changing circumstances, but these changes were by no means radical.

What are we to make of this? I have devoted a good deal of thought to Dr de Rachewiltz’s arguments. There is no historian of the Mongol Empire for whom I have greater respect: in 1986, in the Preface to my *The Mongols*, I remarked that “of historians not known to me personally, I have learned most from the writings of Dr Igor de Rachewiltz,”²⁸ and I am very conscious too that he has linguistic expertise far beyond mine, and therefore acquaintance with a range of sources that are available to me, if at all, only in translation. Yet I am not entirely convinced by his arguments.

I think my principal difficulty is over de Rachewiltz’s interpretation of the evidence to be found in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, and in particular on the question of the use of terminology. To quote him, “Now, the rather loose use of the term *yāsā* when an ‘order’ or ‘decree’

²⁶ For the text of the letter, see P. Pelliot, “Les Mongols et la Papauté,” part 1, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 23 (1922–3), pp. 3–30 (at pp. 12–23).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 100–101.

²⁸ Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. ix.

(*farmān*) is meant in the Islamic sources is well documented, but the Chinese and Mongol sources distinguish clearly the two terms, as shown by the consistency of the Chinese renderings (*fa-ling* . . . /*fa-tu* for *ḡasay* and *sheng-chih* . . . for *ḡarliḡ*), and by their regular usage in all the Mongol documents (epigraphics, edicts) of the Yuan in Uighur and 'Phags-pa scripts," (though he goes on immediately to say that "[i]n our passage,"—one of those from the *Secret History*—"ḡarliḡ is also glossed as *fa-tu* 'law' in the Chinese interlinear version", and in the accompanying note 41 he adds that "[t]he term *ḡasay* does not occur in any 'Phags-pa inscription that I know of.")²⁹

The first point I would wish to make is that it is, surely, inherently unlikely that this kind of standard technical terminology should have been used, and used consistently, in a quite different way in two linguistically different categories of source material for the history of the Mongol Empire. It is not easy to explain why the term "*yasa*" should quite regularly mean "order" or "decree" as well as "law" in the Persian and Arabic sources—and as de Rachewiltz says, there is no possible doubt that this was indeed the usage—but never in those in Mongolian or Chinese. It is not as though such a divergence could be accounted for by suggesting that the former class of sources were concerned with the western half of the empire, the latter with the eastern, and that there were hence geographical variations in usage. Persian historians like Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn knew and wrote a great deal about Mongol activities in Mongolia itself and China. If this is conceded, then the next step must be to ask what the context of the use of *yasa* in the Mongolian and Chinese sources indicates about meaning. This is of course what de Rachewiltz did, and he concluded that *yasa* in those sources never meant "decree" or "order," but always "law."

I really cannot see that this is right. It appears to me that most of the *yasa* references in the *Secret History* quite clearly, if we are not presupposing "law," are references, in their immediate context, to individual decrees, not to fundamental law (though in the case of those ascribed to Chinggis Khan himself, they may well, once recorded, have subsequently acquired what one might call "the force of law.") The most conspicuous example of this is de Rachewiltz's no. 4, where Chinggis Khan issues a *yasa* that his soldiers on a particular battlefield should light fires so as to deceive the enemy. De Rachewiltz

²⁹ De Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections," p. 97.

comments: "In my opinion, this passage has been misunderstood by previous translators, who have incorrectly assumed that *ḡasaγ* here means simply 'order'."³⁰ De Rachewiltz's authority as a translator is of course paramount, but as an interpretation of the context, I simply cannot follow his reasoning at all at this point: this is quite patently an "order." Nor, it seems to me, can we place much reliance on the Chinese glosses, which translate *yasa* by a term clearly meaning "law." As I have already quoted de Rachewiltz as pointing out, these are late fourteenth-century interpretations of an early thirteenth-century text, and there has never been any doubt that by the late fourteenth century there was a very widespread belief in the existence of what one might call the "traditional," written, Great *Yasa* of Chinggis Khan. But that tells us nothing, necessarily, about what was actually in existence in the early thirteenth century, or what terminology meant at that date.

I am not, then, persuaded that the *Secret History* has anything to tell us about the Great *Yasa*. In my 1986 article, I wrote that "we must conclude that the *Secret History of the Mongols* is innocent of any information whatever on the establishment of a 'Great *Yāsā*' at the *quriltai* of 1206 or at any other time."³¹ I do not myself think that Dr de Rachewiltz has shown that I was mistaken, though others may think I have not given his interpretations the weight they deserve.

Where it is possible, I am happy to concede, that I may have been unduly iconoclastic in taking insufficient notice of what we are told of the Great Khan Ögödei's actions at the time of his enthronement. To recapitulate, Ögödei is recorded in the *Yuan shi* as having, on that occasion in 1229, promulgated the Great *Yasa*. De Rachewiltz writes of this:³² "The expression 'Great *ḡasa(γ)*' (*Ta cha-sa*) is glossed in this text as *ta fa-ling* . . . 'the Great Code'." While this gloss is another late fourteenth-century interpretation which we might well be wise to resist attaching too much significance to, there was clearly something going on here, a fact which is confirmed by Juwaynī. As quoted by de Rachewiltz,³³ he recorded that when Ögödei had been elected, "first of all he made a *yasa* that such ordinances and commands as had previously been issued by Chingiz-Khan should be maintained,

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Morgan, "The 'Great *Yāsā*,'" p. 165.

³² De Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections," p. 94.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

and secured, and protected against the evils of change, and alteration, and confusion." He also decreed that "if from henceforth any man shall set foot to an action that contravenes [better: is not conformable to] the old and new ordinances [*aḥkām*] and *yasas*, the prosecution and punishment of that man shall be proportionate to his crime." De Rachewiltz also cites a passage in Juwaynī about the accession of Ögödei's own son and successor, Güyüg, which I had also quoted: Güyüg "made a *yasa* that just as Qa'an [Ögödei], at the time of his accession, had upheld the *yasas* of his father [Chinggis Khan] and no change or alteration occurred in the commands (*aḥkām*) of those (*yasas*), so too the *yasas* and commands (*aḥkām*) of his own father should be immune from the contingencies of redundancy and deficiency, and free from the corruption of alteration."³⁴

On the basis of these references, de Rachewiltz deduces that "[f]rom these accounts, it would seem to me that, as part of the enthronement ceremony, Ögödei not only pledged continued observance of his father's *ḡasays* (*yāsās*), but that he also promulgated them formally, i.e. that he proclaimed them at the *quriltai*."³⁵ Very possibly: but there are several other important points to note about these passages. First, that whatever was proclaimed did not attribute finality, or even unique status, to Chinggis Khan's *yasas*: Güyüg seems, to judge from this account, to equate the *yasas* of his own father, Ögödei, with those of his grandfather, Chinggis Khan. If this is right, there may have been a Great *Yasa*, but it would appear to have been as I described it,³⁶ "not only beginning before the time of Chingiz Khan but continuing after him." Secondly, we are quite explicitly dealing here not with a systematised code, but with *yasas*, individual orders or decrees. There is no ambiguity at all about the terminology used, though Güyüg's letter to Pope Innocent IV does, it is true, speak of "every command (*farmān*) that there is of the *Yāsā*"—presumably the evolving *Yasa* which included his father's and his own *yasas* as well as those of Chinggis Khan (if that is how the passage should be translated: the Persian, of course, has no capital "Y," and the word "Great" is not there). Still, there does seem to have been something special, and ceremonial, about these *yasa*-reinforcing actions on the part of Ögödei and Güyüg at the time of their accession to the imperial throne, and

³⁴ Morgan, "The 'Great *Yāsā*,'" p. 171.

³⁵ De Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections," p. 95.

³⁶ Morgan, "The 'Great *Yāsā*,'" p. 170.

I think I probably underestimated this in my enthusiasm for demonstrating the non-existence of an early, written “Great *Yasa* of Chinggis Khan.” I still find no convincing evidence for what de Rachewiltz calls “actually a *written* document [singular],”³⁷ though it may be that there was in fact more written down at an early date than I thought likely, in terms of the Great Khans’ orders and decrees as well as the kinds of administrative and military *yasas* discussed by Juwaynī in his chapter and Chinggis Khan’s *biligs* or maxims, which are so extensively recorded by Rashīd al-Dīn.

Whatever may be the truth regarding the nature or even the existence of a “Great *Yasa*” in the early days of the Mongol Empire, there is no possible doubt that it was, later, universally believed to exist, though there is no evidence known to me or to any of the other scholars whose works on the subject I have read that anyone claimed to have seen and read a document in which that *Yasa* was coherently embodied. There is a sense in which the *Yasa*, at least symbolically, seems to have become increasingly important as the time of its supposed promulgation became more remote, even though—or perhaps because—conflict between it and the Muslim *Sharīʿa* was increasingly proving to present problems. It is difficult—indeed, impossible—to resist the temptation to quote again the remarks recorded by Qāshānī of the eminent Ilkhanid general Qutlugh-shāh, at the time of a dispute at the court of Öljeitü between Ḥanafīs and Shāfiʿīs, this being around twelve years after the Mongols in Persia are supposed to have gone over to Islam: “What is this that we have done, abandoning the new *yāsāq* and *yūsūn* [from the Mongolian *josun*, “custom”] of Chingiz Khān, and taking up the ancient religion of the Arabs, which is divided into seventy-odd parts? The choice of either of these two rites (*madhhab*) would be a disgrace and a dishonourable act, since in the one, marriage with a daughter is permitted, and in the other, relations with one’s mother or sister. We seek refuge in God from both of them! Let us return to the *yāsāq* and *yūsūn* of Chingiz Khān.”³⁸ This passage certainly raises questions in one’s mind about the character and profundity of the Mongols’ conversion to, or even knowledge of, Islam. But it also illustrates, perhaps, the continuing

³⁷ De Rachewiltz, “Some Reflections,” p. 104.

³⁸ Qāshānī, *Taʾrīkh-i ūljāytū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran, 1969), p. 98. The word translated “new,” missing from the edition, is from the unique MS, Aya Sofya 3019, fol. 178a.

significance of the *Yasa* in the minds of leading Mongols, and their awareness that there was at least a potential conflict looming between its demands and those of the *Shari'a* which they were now under some sort of obligation to observe.

In his 1996 article, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamlūk Sultanate," Professor Reuven Amitai has shown how writers in Mamluk Egypt, and in particular the biographer al-Ṣafadī, confirm what we already knew from Rashīd al-Dīn about the Ilkhan Ghazan, namely that although he was the first of the uninterrupted line of Muslim Ilkhans, he was from his childhood, and remained even after his conversion to Islam, a firm supporter and upholder of the *Yasa*—whatever he may have meant by his use of the term. Ṣafadī's phrase is *al-yāsā al-mughūliyya*, "the Mongol *Yasa*." It is, incidentally, interesting that, as Amitai points out of Ṣafadī,³⁹ "[t]he term *yasa* is subsequently used in the biography in a meaning different from a corpus of laws, but rather as an individual command."

Robert Irwin's "What the Partridge Told the Eagle: A Neglected Arabic Source on Chinggis Khan and the Early History of the Mongols," a paper first given at a conference in London in 1991, but not published until 1999, provides an intriguing specimen of later Middle Eastern views on the nature and contents of the Great *Yasa*. His source is the *Fākihat al-khulafā' wa-muḥākahat al-zurafā'*, which Irwin translates as "Fruits of the Caliphs and Jokes of the Witty," by Ibn 'Arabshāh, the celebrated hostile biographer of Tamerlane. Ayalon, as it happens, had already drawn attention to Ibn 'Arabshāh's *Yasa* material in the *Fākiha*, though he had not discussed it at all. The book dates from 1448, and is, in Irwin's description "a work in the mirrors-for-princes genre, a political treatise whose arguments are lightly disguised as animal fables."⁴⁰ In the book's final chapter, the author "leaves off telling edifying fables and treats of the unedifying rise of Chinggis Khan and the history of the Mongol peoples in some detail"⁴¹—much of the material having been borrowed, apparently directly, from Juwaynī.

Ibn 'Arabshāh includes in his account a quite lengthy discussion of the *Yasa* (which he, like many later writers on Mongol law, calls the *Tura*, from the Turkish *törü*). He dates it to the period around

³⁹ Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition," p. 5, n. 30.

⁴⁰ Irwin, "What the Partridge Told the Eagle," p. 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

1204/5, i.e. it would fit the 1206 *quriltai*. And he was quite clear that he knew what was in it. Irwin lists what Ibn ‘Arabshāh says were some of its provisions, and a strange collection they are, too—many of them smacking, insofar as they should be taken seriously, more of Mongol custom, *yosun*, than of likely legislation on the part of Chinggis Khan. Here are two examples: “The evidence of slave-girls and boys can be accepted against their elders and betters”; “The family as a group (including the women) are held accountable for any crime committed by a member of that group.”⁴² The most bizarre of the lot reads as follows: “[I]f a man steals a camel from their encampment, or even a louse from a robe but then returns it, there is no penalty or fine, and if he wishes to crush it, or, alternatively puts it down. And sometimes he chooses to return it to its original place, but, if he kills that creature, then the owner can go to law, claiming that he had raised the creature and nourished it with his own blood. Then the *ḥākim* may award the complainant blood money.” These “menacing snippets,” as Irwin calls them, are alleged to have been written on scrolls, wrapped in silk and stored in the royal treasury—which sounds like another echo of Juwaynī. Irwin’s conclusion is surely right: “Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s aim was not to give a systematic account of Mongol legal practice, but to single out areas where it differed disgracefully from the *Sharī‘a*.”⁴³ He was commenting on what he understood to be unislamic practices in the Central Asian world of his own day.

Irwin adds that his author evidently believed that there was a written Mongol code of law, and that “[o]bviously Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s testimony, which comes late, is not strong evidence for this code, but it is evidence—another straw in the wind.”⁴⁴ I have to say: no, it is nothing of the sort—not, that is, to invent a modern parallel, unless something written today about the 1780s should be regarded as a primary source on the framing of the American Constitution. I have argued elsewhere⁴⁵ that historians of the Middle East need to be more careful than they sometimes are in distinguishing between primary sources and very old secondary sources that happen to be written

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ See my “Rašīd al-dīn and Ġazan Khan,” in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. D. Aigle (Tehran, 1997), esp. pp. 180–82.

in Arabic, Persian or Turkish. Ibn 'Arabshāh's account is evidence for what was going on in the mid fifteenth century, not the early thirteenth.

The fate of the *Yasa* in the fifteenth century and later is indeed a subject of great interest, as it was at the time. The perennial problem was of course that addressed by Ibn 'Arabshāh: how could the inescapably pagan *Yasa* or *Tura* be reconciled with the Muslim *Sharī'a*, now that the Turks and Mongols of Central Asia had for the most part gone over to Islam? To take an example from Ibn 'Arabshāh's own time, Timur's son and successor Shāhrukh is supposed to have officially foresworn the old pagan Mongol laws in 1411, as is well known.⁴⁶ But the issue was by no means settled there and then. His successor Ulugh Beg is said to have taken an unhealthy interest in the old ways, and as Professor Robert McChesney has interestingly shown in his *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*, the issue was a very live one from the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Timurids had disappeared from the scene (except in Babur's India) and Central Asia experienced, with the arrival of the Uzbek regime, what McChesney would like us to think of as a "neo-Chingizid" revival. He tells us⁴⁷ that many aspects of life—ceremonial matters as well as regulation of political affairs and punishment of criminal offences—continued to be regarded as falling within the proper sphere of the *Yasa*, while the authority of the *Sharī'a* was recognised in terms of its jurisdiction over "the cult, personal status, and contracts."

This is an area of *Yasa* studies into which I have myself hardly penetrated. But I think it is in all probability a very promising one. My suspicion is that we are unlikely to make much further progress in investigating the origins, nature and contents of Chinggis Khan's "Great *Yasa*" unless some new source should come to light. But the place of the *Yasa*, as it was then understood, in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Central Asia is a very different matter. As McChesney observes, for this period, "[w]hether Chingiz Khan himself actually authored such a code is immaterial; the politicians of later times believed that he had and justified their actions accordingly."⁴⁸ Here, I strongly suspect, there is a potentially very rewarding field for further research.

⁴⁶ R. McChesney, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change* (Princeton, 1996), p. 129.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

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A REAPPRAISAL OF GÜYÜG KHAN¹

Hodong Kim

Introduction: The Historical Image of Güyüg Khan

In the summer of 1246 Güyüg succeeded his father Ögödei (d. 1241) as the third ruler of the Mongol Empire after five years of interregnum marked by political disintegration. His reign lasted only one year and a half because of his sudden death in the spring of 1248 at the age of forty one. Due to the brevity of his reign, the centrifugal tendency prevalent during the preceding five years of interregnum was hardly interrupted and he was unable to accomplish any military campaign comparable to those launched by his father Ögödei or his successor Möngke. It is natural that his reign appears to be one of disorder and of little importance in contrast to the other reigns of brilliant achievements in conquest and expansion.

This contrast certainly contributed to the formation of a negative image of Güyüg. A late Qing scholar Wei Yuan (1794–1856) did not even assign him an independent section of annals (*benji*) which any emperor would be entitled to have, and explained the reason as follows: “[I]t is impossible to clarify his achievements because of the scarcity of materials, so I appended him at the end of the annals of Taizong [i.e. Ögödei] and demonstrated that he is not entitled to have [independent] annals. I am sure that there were only ‘three cardinal emperors’ (*sanzhong*) before the unification by Yuan.”² By the three emperors, of course, he meant Chinggis Khan, Ögödei and Möngke.

Although modern historians would not readily agree with what Wei Yuan claims, many of them would concur with his critical, sometimes even harsh evaluation of Güyüg’s reign. For example d’Ohsson in his classical work asserted that Güyüg suffered chronic pain of rheumatism and that his health was completely destroyed because of heavy

¹ I would like to thank B. Manz, R. Amitai, and M. Biran who carefully read the draft and gave me many valuable comments.

² Wei Yuan, *Yuan shi xinbian* (Jiangsu Guangling Guji Keyinshe facsimile ed., 1990), i, fol. 15a.

drinking and sexual excesses.³ W. Barthold also wrote, “Güyük did not possess the same generous nature as his father. Like him, he indulged in excesses of wine and women, but where Ögedey . . . endeavoured to live and let live, Güyük’s licentiousness made him a gloomy man, diseased in body and in mind.”⁴ A recent study also concurs with this view: “In general, under Güyük’s stewardship the imperial government lacked vigor and exhibited a pronounced tendency toward decentralization, if not fragmentation. . . . The erosion of central authority was due in part to the Jochids’ intransigence, but the situation was aggravated by Güyük’s own failings as a leader.”⁵

This negative image of Güyük seems to have its origin in various reports written during the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Muslim historians especially expressed almost unanimous criticism. For instance, Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318), a famous Persian historian under the Ilkhans, wrote, “Güyük had by nature a weak constitution, and most of the time he was not free from some kind of illness. Nevertheless, he was, on most days, engaged from morning till evening and from dawn to dusk with the quaffing of cups of wine and the contemplation of perifaced, sweet-limbed maidens. These habits had the effect of aggravating his malady, but he would not abandon them.”⁶ A writer in the Mamluk sultanate, al-‘Umarī (1301–1349), stated that “Ögödei, Chinggis Khan’s successor, was followed by his son Güyük, a malicious, authoritarian, despotic and violent man, who practiced oppressive and tyrannical rule over the Chinggisids.”⁷ Another Muslim author, Jūzjānī (b. 1193) who wrote in India, called Güyük “the Accursed” in whose mind “tyranny and barbarity” took root.⁸

This kind of criticism is also found in contemporary Chinese and Mongolian sources. The compilers of the *Yuan shi* in the early Ming period assessed the conditions under Güyük’s rule as seriously degenerated compared to that of Ögödei: “In this year [of Güyük’s death]

³ A.C.M. d’Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols, depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu’à Timour bey ou Tamerlan* (La Haye, 1834–35), ii, p. 234.

⁴ W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th edn. (London, 1977), p. 476.

⁵ T. Allsen, “The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China,” in CHC, vol. 6: *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, eds. D. Twitchett and H. Franke (Cambridge, 1994), p. 387.

⁶ J.A. Boyle (tr.), *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (New York, 1971), p. 188.

⁷ Cf. K. Lech (ed. and tr.), *Das mongolische Weltreich: al-‘Umarī’s Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-absār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Wiesbaden, 1968), p. 100.

⁸ H.G. Raverty (tr.), *Ṭabakāt-i-Nāṣirī* (rpt. 1970, of Calcutta, 1881), ii, pp. 1158–60.

there was a great drought, so rivers were all dried up and pastures were burnt out. Horses and cows died in the rate of eight or nine out of ten, and people could not live in ease. . . . From the year of the Tiger [i.e. 1242, a year after the death of Ögödei] law and justice fell in disorder and public sentiments drifted away throughout the country, so the rule of Ögödei came to decline.”⁹ According to the *Secret History of the Mongols*, Güyüg was so arrogant that he quarrelled with Batu during the western campaign, so his father Ögödei summoned and rebuked him, “Do you believe that the Orusut people have submitted out of fear of your anger and fury? And thinking as if you alone have brought the Orusut people under submission do you *now* go on, with pride in your heart, rebelling against a person who is senior to you?”¹⁰ In the edicts issued by the Yuan emperors, Güyüg’s name was almost never mentioned when they enumerated the names of preceding emperors,¹¹ which indicates that they did not regard him as a legitimate emperor. This is hardly surprising in view of the animosity between the Toluids and the Ögödeids.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note that there are other contemporary sources depicting Güyüg from quite a different angle. First of all, Carpini, a Franciscan friar who visited his court in 1246, observed that “The present Emperor may be forty or forty-five years old or more; he is of medium height, very intelligent and extremely shrewd, and most serious and grave in his manner. He is never seen to laugh for a slight cause nor to indulge in any frivolity, so we were told by the Christians who are constantly with him.”¹² According to an Armenian historian, Grigor of Akner (1250–1335), he was called “Sayin Gan, who was very pro-Christian and virtue-loving. Because of this his people called him Sayin Gan, which in their language means the good and fine Gan.”¹³

Considering the remarks of these Christian writers, one might put forward a hypothesis that the unfavourable impression left to the Muslim authors could have stemmed from Güyüg’s pro-Christian stance. In

⁹ *IS*, 2/39–40.

¹⁰ I. de Rachewiltz (tr.), “The Secret History of the Mongols,” *PFEH*, 31 (1985), par. 277, p. 33. In this article the passages of the *Secret History of the Mongols* will be quoted from his translation (the italics in quotation are in the original translation).

¹¹ For example, see Cai Meibiao’s *Yuandai baihuabei jilu* (Shanghai, 1955).

¹² C. Dawson (ed.), *Mission to Asia* (rpt., Toronto, 1966), p. 68.

¹³ R.P. Blake & R.N. Frye (eds. and tr.), “History of the Nation of the Archers (the Mongols) by Grigor of Akanc’,” *HJAS*, 12/3–4 (1949), pp. 313–15.

fact, Qadaq, a Christian from the Naiman tribe, had been in attendance on him as *atabeg* (“guardian”), so Güyüg was brought up in Christian surroundings. Naturally he maintained a favorable attitude toward that religion.¹⁴ Another of his ministers, Chinqai, who performed important roles in his court, was also a Christian.¹⁵ One Christian writer even asserted that Güyüg himself was “a true Christian,”¹⁶ which could not be true. It is no wonder that Jūzjānī poured his curse on him. However, we should not forget Güyüg was not the only Mongol ruler who maintained friendly relations with Christians. Möngke and Hülegü did not discriminate against them either.¹⁷ Their mother Sorqaqtani Beki was known to be a Christian, and some of their wives were Christian too.¹⁸ Nonetheless, they did not receive such harsh criticism from Muslim writers. So the hypothesis that Güyüg’s religious attitude alone was a major reason for his negative image cannot be maintained.

In this sense, the portrayal by Juwaynī, a devout Muslim, is significant. Juwaynī visited Qara Qorum only a few years after Güyüg’s death and pointed out his pro-Christian stance: “[C]onsequently the cause of the Christians flourished during his reign, and no Moslem dared to raise his voice to them.”¹⁹ Yet he wrote as follows:

But of all the sons of Qa’an Güyük was most renowned for his might, and ruthlessness, and intrepidity, and dominion; he was the eldest of the brothers and had had most practice in the handling of difficult matters and most experience of weal and woe.²⁰

¹⁴ ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, tr. J.A. Boyle (rpt., Manchester, 1997), p. 251.

¹⁵ On Chinqai see P.D. Buell’s “Činqai,” *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)*, eds. I. de Rachewiltz et al. (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 95–111. On Nestorian Christians in the Mongol ruling group, see I. Gillman and H.J. Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Ann Arbor, 1999), pp. 287–90.

¹⁶ E.A.W. Budge (tr.), *The Chronography of Gregory Abū’l Faraj Bar Hebraeus* (London, 1932), p. 411.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that Christians, Muslims and Buddhists claimed that Möngke was the follower of their own religion (A.M. Khazanov, “Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan Compared,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35[1993], p. 468). In the meantime, Hülegü’s friendly attitude toward the Christians, influenced by his Christian mother and wife, did not prevent him from acting as a patron of a Tibetan Buddhist sect. See E. Sperling, “Hülegü and Tibet,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 44 (1990), pp. 145–57.

¹⁸ Saeiki Yoshirō, *Keikyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 562–63; E.A.W. Budge (tr.), *The Monks of Küblai Khan, Emperor of China* (London, 1928), pp. 106–9.

¹⁹ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 259.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

In his book there is no mention of Güyüg's drinking habit or moral debauchery; what can be found there is a statement that because of his "languid nature he had entrusted the binding and loosening, the tying and untying of affairs to Qadaq and Chinqai."²¹

From the examples cited above we can conclude that there are actually two conflicting historical images of Güyüg; an irresponsible and incompetent person utterly addicted to alcohol and debauchery on the one side, and a stern, overpowering and serious ruler on the other. What, if not a religious reason, produced these conflicting images? I think that it has to do with different political inclinations embedded in the sources. The *Secret History of the Mongols* and *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* were written or edited under the Toluid dynasties of the Ilkhanate and the Yuan Empire, while the *Yuan shi* was based on the materials compiled during the Yuan period. It would not be surprising even if the ideology of Toluid rulers, who hoped to legitimize their seizure of imperial power from the family of Ögödei, is reflected in these materials.

It was David Ayalon who for the first time seriously called our attention to the discrepancy between the Toluid and the non-Toluid perspectives. He pointed out how Juwaynī tried to portray the Toluids as strictly abiding by Chinggis Khan's *Yasa*, and thus to insinuate the legitimacy of the Toluid assumption of power.²² His idea was further developed by Peter Jackson who utilized the non-Toluid sources and provided a new perspective on the fundamental cause of the conflicts between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde.²³ Thomas Allsen also pointed out the problem of the legitimation after the accession of Möngke.²⁴ Based on this line of studies, it is quite natural that one poses a question if the negative image of Güyüg was the product of the Toluid ideology. To my knowledge, however, there has been no attempt to review this question and to reassess the reign of Güyüg from a non-Toluid perspective. In this paper, I am going to re-examine important events in Güyüg's career such as his quarrel with Batu, his accession to power, and his abortive campaign to the west, which, I hope, will correct some of the distortion of his image.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

²² D. Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination," pt. B, *Studia Islamica*, 34 (1971), pp. 151–80.

²³ P. Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *CAJ*, 22 (1978), pp. 186–244.

²⁴ T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 34–44.

Güyük and Batu

Let us look first at the quarrel between Güyük and Batu, an incident that greatly affected the later course of history. In the spring of 1235 Ögödei decided to dispatch a large-scale expeditionary army to conquer the Qipchaqs, Alans, Bulghars, and Russians.²⁵ This army consisted of soldiers conscripted from the families of Chinggis Khan's four sons and each family was represented by the eldest sons. Thus this expedition included, besides Batu and the family of Jochi,²⁶ Güyük from the Ögödeids, Büri from the Chaghadaids, and Möngke from the Toluids. The entire army, led by the so-called "eldest sons," was put under the charge of Batu who was the eldest of all, but his role as commander-in-chief was considerably limited for two reasons. First, from the structural point of view, this army consisted of two divisions: one was the left-wing from the Ögödeids and the Toluids, i.e. those who were conscripted from the "center" (*ghol*) of the *Yeke Mongghol Ulus* (the great Mongol empire), commanded by Güyük, and the other was the right-wing from the Jöchids and the Chaghadaids commanded by Batu.²⁷ These two wings usually operated separately, except on a few occasions. Another factor that made Batu a nominal chief was the presence of Sübētei who had defeated the Russians already in 1223 and was one of the most experienced generals at that time. Ögödei ordered him to accompany the campaign so that he could control and coordinate the whole operation.

Güyük and Batu quarreled during the campaign, and Güyük returned to Mongolia where he was enthroned supreme khan after his father's death. However, when Güyük died shortly after his accession, Batu, because of the old rancor with him, opposed the Ögöeid candidates and supported Möngke, Tolui's son, as a new ruler of

²⁵ For a general description on this campaign, see G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven, 1953), pp. 49–58; L.V. Cherepin, "Mongolo-Tatary na Rusy (XIII v.)," *Tataro-Mongoly v Azii i Evrope* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 186–209; I. Zimonyi, "The First Mongol Raid against the Volga-Bulgars," *Altaic Studies. Papers at the 25th Meeting of the PLAC at Uppsala, 1982*, eds. G. Jarring and S. Rosén (Stockholm, 1985), pp. 197–204; T. Allsen, "The Mongols and North Caucasia," *AEME*, 7 (1987–91), pp. 5–39.

²⁶ Batu had an elder brother named Orda, but it was Batu who succeeded his father Jöchi's status and took the role of the eldest son. See Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 99–100.

²⁷ See *The Secret History of the Mongols*, par. 270; Tu Qī, *Mengwu'er shiji*, in *Yuan shi erzong*, ii (Shanghai, 1989), 35/309 (Biography of Batu). But I do not agree with Tu Qī who denies the fact that Batu was the chief commander.

the empire. His election was followed by brutal persecution against the Ögödeids and the Chaghadaids, and Batu and his *ulus* achieved virtual independence from the imperial court.²⁸ In this sense we may say that the quarrel between Güyüg and Batu was a significant incident that affected the course of early Mongol history.

However, it is strange that Juwaynī did not mention anything about this important event, while Rashīd al-Dīn simply wrote that Batu did not go to the *quriltai*, convened to enthrone Güyüg, because of “the alarming nature of the past events,”²⁹ thus vaguely hinting at some unpleasant incidents. At present, the *Secret History* seems to be the only source giving us detailed information about the quarrel between these two princes.³⁰ In paragraph 275 it reads:

From the Kibchaq campaign Batu sent, through messengers, the following report to Ögödei-qahan: “*Relying* on the strength of Eternal Heaven and the good fortune of *my* uncle the Qahan, I have destroyed the city of Meget, I have ravaged the Orusut people and brought eleven countries and peoples duly to submission. When we turned back, pulling in the golden reins, we decided to hold a parting feast. A large tent was set up and, as we began feasting, since I was quite the eldest among those princes who were present, I was the first to drink one or two bowls of ceremonial wine. Büri and Güyük got angry with me *because of that*, they refused to join the feast and rode off.”³¹

This passage suggests that the quarrel took place when a feast for parting was held after the subjugation of “Meget” and that it was triggered by Güyüg and Büri’s insult to Batu. The *Secret History* continues, recounting that Ögödei, having received the report of this incident, summoned Güyüg and Büri to Mongolia. He was so angry at first that he would not even allow them to have an audience, but persuaded by Möngke—which means not only Güyüg and Büri but also Möngke were in Mongolia—and others he called them into his presence. Then, after having reprimanded them severely, he let them go back to the Russian front.

However, if we compare this story with other materials, we must doubt its reliability. First of all, we should take into consideration

²⁸ For a more detailed description, see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 18–44. Also cf. D.O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 116–17.

²⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 120, 180.

³⁰ This was already pointed out by Lech; see *Das mongolische Weltreich*, note 106 on pp. 221–22.

³¹ *The Secret History of the Mongols*, tr. I. de Rachewiltz, *PFEH*, 31 (1985), p. 31.

the statement that the feast was held after they had destroyed “Meget” and plundered the “Orusut” people, i.e. the Russians. According to the *Yuan shi*, a Mongol army led by Güyüg and Möngke besieged a place called “Mieqiesi” (= Meges) in the winter of 1239, corresponding to the year of the Pig, and, after three months of assault, they took the fort in the first month of 1240, the year of the Rat.³² Meges, Meget, or Magas was the capital of the Alans, situated in the northern Caucasus around the Kuban River.³³ Rashīd al-Dīn also stated that, in the same year of the Pig, Güyüg, Möngke, Büri and Qadan proceeded against the town of Magas and, after a siege of one month and fifteen days, took it that winter.³⁴ So it is beyond doubt that the town was conquered at the beginning of 1240, and that the “parting feast” mentioned in the *Secret History* could not have been held prior to that date. Güyüg’s visit to Mongolia, if it had ever happened, should have occurred only after that.

In fact, Rashīd al-Dīn seems to confirm this theory. He states that shortly after Magas was captured, the Mongol princes dispatched a unit to capture the towns and regions of Temür Qahalqa, i.e. Derbend, while Güyüg and Möngke turned back to Mongolia in the autumn of the year of the Rat (= 1240) following the edict of Ögödei and “alighted in their own *ordos*” in the year of Ox (= 1241).³⁵ However, his statement cannot be accepted because there is more convincing evidence showing Güyüg’s continued presence in Russia. First, there is a Russian chronicle unequivocally attesting that Güyüg was engaged in the operation against Kiev at the end of 1240. A Mongol prisoner, captured by the Russians during the attack of Kiev, named the Mongol generals who participated in the operation: Batyi (= Batu), Urdu (= Orda), Bardar (= Baidar), Bichiur (= Berkecher), Kaidan (= Qadan), Bechon (= Böček), Mengui (= Möngke), and Koiuk (= Güyüg). The prisoner even described “Koiuk” as the “first military commander” (*pr’vyi voevoda*) of Batu.³⁶ If this Russian record can be

³² *YS*, 2/36 (Annals of Taizong), 122/3010 (Biography of Xiliqianbu).

³³ On this identification, see T.T. Allsen’s “Mongols and North Caucasia,” *AEMA*, 7 (1991), p. 19. Also cf. V. Minorsky, “Caucasia III: The Alan Capital Magas and the Mongol Campaigns,” *BSOAS*, 14 (1952), pp. 221–38; P. Pelliot, *Notes sur l’histoire de la Horde d’Or* (Paris, 1949), p. 124.

³⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, p. 60. Juwaynī did not specify when the town of Magas fell, but he asserted that when it fell two hundred and seventy thousand people (!) were killed. See Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 269–70.

³⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 61, 69.

³⁶ *Pamiatniki literatury drevnei Rusi: XIII veka* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 172–73. Also see

trusted, Güyüg's departure cannot be dated before the fall of Kiev which occurred on December 6, 1240. Secondly, according to the *Yuan shi*, Ögödei issued an edict summoning Güyüg to return with the army under his command, i.e., the left-wing of the campaign troops including Möngke's unit, only in the twelfth month of 1240 which corresponds to January-February of 1241 in the solar calendar.³⁷

We do not know exactly when Güyüg left for Mongolia but I suggest that his departure was not earlier than the summer of 1241 for two reasons. First, several months would be needed for Ögödei's edict to be transmitted to Güyüg, who was stationed on the Russian front, almost 1,500 km from Qara Qorum.³⁸ Secondly, when Güyüg heard the news of Ögödei's death³⁹ around the beginning of 1242, he was still somewhere in present-day Kazakhstan.⁴⁰ If he had started earlier, for example at the beginning of 1241, he would have reached farther east.

Therefore, it is apparent that Güyüg and Möngke had no time to visit Mongolia and come back in the middle of the campaign and that the statement in the paragraphs 275, 276 and 277 of the *Secret History* about Ögödei's summons and rebuke of Güyüg cannot be true. This strongly suggests the possibility of a later interpolation. Nonetheless, I do not think that all the contents of these three paragraphs were fabricated. The hostile relations between Güyüg and Batu were widely known and their conflict during the campaign was probably factual as described in the *Secret History*. According to this source, Güyüg and Büri, insolently reviling Batu, challenged his seniority. Their insolence might have stemmed from the allegedly illegitimate birth of Jöchi, Batu's father.

However, Güyüg's accusation seems to have had another basis: Batu's incompetence as commander-in-chief. While the *Secret History*, which

V.T. Pashuto, "Mongol'skii pokhod v gluv' Evropy," *Tataro-Mongoly v Aziü i Evropy*, p. 216.

³⁷ *YŠ*, 2/37 (Annals of Taizong).

³⁸ Franciscan friars in the thirteenth century, travelling fast with the help of the Mongol *jam* system, needed 3–4 months to go from the Volga to Qara Qorum. However, it was an exceptionally fast march. The *Yuan shi* (117/2906), describing the domain of Jöchi, wrote: "[i]ts land is located extremely far, about several tens of thousand *lis* from the capital [i.e. Khanbaliq, present Beijing]. If one marches, speedily by postal horses, more than two hundred days, one could reach the capital."

³⁹ The date of his death is the *dinghai* day of the 11th month of 1241. See *YŠ*, 2/37.

⁴⁰ *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 248. Only after he heard the news of his father's death, he hastened his move to the east until he reached Emil, north of the Tianshan.

depicts Batu as an innocent victim abused by Güyüg, naturally does not give any hint of this matter, the *Yuan shi* in its very detailed description of the campaigns against the Qipchaqs and the Russians shows that Batu made repeated blunders during these campaigns. For instance, Batu had attempted to take the fortress of Torzhok but failed. When Sübētei arrived on the scene, however, he took it with a much smaller army in only “three days” and “one battle.”⁴¹ Batu made another grave mistake when he fought against the Hungarians. In April of 1241 the Mongol advance corps fought the famous battle of Liegnitz. Around the same time the main army passed over the Carpathian Mountains, and having divided the troops into five columns, led by Batu, Orda, Shiban, Qadan, and Sübētei,⁴² they were going to cross the Sayo River. The two armies were facing each other across the river. According to the *Yuan shi*, Batu and other princes were averse to marching forward on the assumption that “the enemy’s power is too strong.” Then Sübētei proposed a “clever stratagem” to divide the army into five columns each of which would cross the river at different points. Four columns commanded by princes should cross the river through the upper and the middle streams either on foot or using bridges. Sübētei was to lead the last unit through the lower course of the river. Since the Hungarians thought that the water was too deep for the Mongols to cross on horseback, they did not place their guards there. Of course, they did not realize that the Mongols were skillful in making rafts of animal skins or woods. It was Sübētei’s idea to cross the river with rafts and strike the rear of the enemy by surprise.

For the success of his “stratagem” the attacks against the enemy needed to be orchestrated, and the timing was the most important factor. However, Batu made a serious blunder by ordering his army to move much earlier than expected. This gave too little time for Sübētei’s army to cross the river. Even after the Mongol armies were gathered on the other side of the river, Batu wanted to withdraw arguing that “the number of the enemy is too many.” Thereupon Sübētei declared that “If you, sire, want to return, go back alone! I will not turn my back until I reach the Tuna [= Donau] river and the

⁴¹ *YS*, 121/2978 (Biography of Sübētei).

⁴² *YS* lists the Mongol princes who participated in this campaign: “Badu,” “Wuliwu,” “Xiban,” “Hadan.” “Wuliwu” was identified with Ordu by Pelliot (*Notes sur l’Histoire de la Horde d’Or*, pp. 30–32). The names of Güyüg and Möngke are not found, and I presume that at that time they were operating somewhere else.

Macha [= Magyar] fort,” and then he galloped forward. Disheartened by this move, so the *Yuan shi* continues, Batu joined the attack.⁴³

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, after having defeated the Hungarians, Mongol generals rested by the Tisza and Danube rivers that summer.⁴⁴ The *Yuan shi* also shows that in that year the Mongol army crossed the Huoning (= Sayo) river and “later they held a great assembly (*dahui*), drinking mare’s milk and wine.”⁴⁵ These sources indicate a great gathering somewhere around the river of Sayo, Tisza, or Danube, during the summer of 1241 after the victory over the Hungarians. At this meeting Batu complained of what had happened at the Huoning river, blaming Sübētei that his late arrival had caused many casualties among the soldiers under Batu’s command. Sübētei explained that it was Batu’s premature move that caused his delay. “Thereupon, Batu himself acknowledged that it was his own mistake.”⁴⁶

This gathering and the accusation against Batu recorded in the *Yuan shi* evokes the scene in paragraph 275 of the *Secret History*, where Güyüg and Büri were furious about Batu’s drinking the first cup even though they were “equal” and called him and his followers “the old women with beards” (*saqaltan emeged*) and “those old women with bows” (*tede qortan emeged*). It is interesting to note that the plurals are used here, which makes it clear that Batu was not the only target of their disparagement. As Ozawa Shigeo pointed out, “the old women” were no other than “Batu and the army under his command.”⁴⁷ Although we do not have a positive proof to show that the feast described in the *Secret History* is the same as that in the *Yuan shi*, circumstantial evidences, e.g., that Güyüg departed in the late summer, that it was a “parting feast,” and that Batu was the target of criticisms, lead us to assume that those two were actually the same.

Whatever the validity of this hypothesis is, the preceding discussions make the following two points clear. First, the statement in paragraphs 275, 276 and 277 of the *Secret History* that Güyüg visited Mongolia in the middle of the campaign and went back to the Russian front cannot be true. The chronology shows that he simply did not have enough time for that, so it is highly probable that the relevant

⁴³ RS, 121/2978 (Biography of Sübētei).

⁴⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, p. 70.

⁴⁵ RS, 121/2978 (Biography of Sübētei). Cf. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia*, pp. 55–56.

⁴⁶ RS, 121/2977–8 (Biography of Sübētei).

⁴⁷ Ozawa Shigeo, *Genchō Hishi zenshaku zokkō*, iii (Tokyo, 1989), pp. 487–88.

passages are later interpolations. Secondly, the severe quarrel between Güyüg and Batu during the Western campaign was not caused merely by personal animosity or ambition but rather by the repeated blunders of Batu, which put his competence as a chief commander in serious doubt. Bearing these points in mind, now let us examine why such false statements were inserted into the *Secret History* and what the consequences of the falling out between the princes were. As will be seen, these two questions are closely related.

The Question of Legitimacy

Güyüg and Möngke heard the news of Ögödei's death on their way back to Mongolia. Töregene, the deceased khan's wife, took the regency and in 1245 convened a *quriltai* at the place called Dalan Dabas to discuss the matter of succession.⁴⁸ There the Mongol princes decided to select Güyüg as a new khan, and, in August 1246, he was formally enthroned at another *quriltai* held at Köke Na'ur.⁴⁹ In every respect his election and enthronement appeared to be legitimate: all the princes and nobles attended the meeting except for Batu who, "excusing himself on the grounds of his feeble condition and an attack of gout," sent his brothers on his behalf.⁵⁰ Juwaynī's descriptions indicate that the enthronement proceeded according to all the necessary formalities and that the participants "gave declarations in writing that they would not change his word or command."⁵¹

⁴⁸ *IS*, 2/38 (Annals of Dingzong).

⁴⁹ The Mongols usually held two separate *quriltais*, one to decide on a new khan and the other for the enthronement ceremony. For a detailed analysis of the institution of *quriltai*, see Yanai Watari's *Mōkoshī kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1930), pp. 361–449. The correct date of Güyüg's accession is found in Carpini's report (*Mission to Asia*, pp. 62, 63) and in *IS*, 2/39 (Annals of Dingzong). Rashīd al-Dīn's date (*Successors*, pp. 181–82) is wrong. As for the name of the place, the above-mentioned three sources give different names: the Golden Orda, the land of Wangji xiumietuli, and Köke Na'ur. All three probably denote the same area in the vicinity of Qara Qorum around the southern range of the Khanghai Mountains. W. Abramowski renders Wangji xiumietuli as Onqin Sumitur ("Die chinesischen Annalen von Ögödei und Güyüg—Übersetzung des 2. Kapitels des Yüan-shih," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, 10 [1976], pp. 153–54).

⁵⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, p. 180. Cf. *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj*, p. 411.

⁵¹ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 252–54. However, the late Professor Fletcher considered Güyüg an illegitimate khan because he did not fully attain the succession due to his death before the impending succession war with Batu ("The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *HJAS*, 46 [1986], pp. 33, 37). Although

However, Güyüg's legitimacy was seriously questioned after his death when the Mongol princes gathered again to elect his successor. In that *quriltai*, heated debates took place between the supporters of Möngke and the Ögödeids.⁵² Bala, who was representing Güyüg's wife Oghul Qaimish, criticized the supporters of Möngke and said, "Earlier, when Taizong [= Ögödei] had ordered Shiremün to be his successor, all the princes and officials heard it. Now, while Shiremün is still alive, peoples are arguing to hand over [the throne] to the other."⁵³ Against this contention, Möge, son of Tolui, argued, "It is true that Taizong gave such an order, and who can dare to contravene it? However, it was Empress Töregene and your party who had argued and enthroned Dingzong [= Güyüg]. It means that those who contravened Taizong's order were no other than you. Now, whom are you blaming?"⁵⁴ These verbal exchanges demonstrate that the discussion at the *quriltai* electing a new khan was focused rather on the legitimacy of an already deceased khan than on the search for the most suitable candidate. Is it really true that Güyüg's accession was carried out against the will of Ögödei? And why did the Toluid princes make an issue of the legitimacy of Güyüg after his death?

There are several sources that mention Ögödei's potential heir. First, Peng Daya, who was an envoy of the Southern Song dispatched to the court of Ögödei, asserted that "Qashidai," i.e., Qashi, the fifth son of Ögödei, was made heir apparent (*taizi*). However, his assertion, as Wang Guowei pointed out long ago, was probably based on false information. Qashi was completely addicted to alcohol and had ruined his health already in his youth, so his appointment as an heir is extremely doubtful.⁵⁵ According to the report of Jamāl Qarshī written in the first years of the fourteenth century, Ögödei also gave his

Batu may not have conceded the enthronement of Güyüg, it seems to be an overstatement to say that he could not be recognized as a legitimate ruler.

⁵² Juwaynī, without any mention of such a debate, writes that "everyone that was present in that assembly acclaimed [Mengü Qa'an] as sovereign, and they arranged to hold the great *quriltai* in Onan-Kelüren in the new year." However, there is no doubt that Juwaynī knew what happened at the *quriltai*, since he mentions about "those who spoke evasively and postponed [a decision] on this matter fabricating tales and inventing stories." See *History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 558–62.

⁵³ *YŠ*, 3/44 (Annals of Xianzong), 124/3055 (Biography of Menggeser).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Peng Daya and Xu Ting, *Heida shilue*, ed. Wang Guowei, in *Menggu shiliao sizhong* (Taipei, 1962), p. 467; *Meng-ta pei-lu und Hei-ta shih-lüeh*, tr. P. Olbricht and E. Pinks (Wiesbaden, 1980), pp. 90–91.

blessing to Qashi's son, Qaidu, saying "Would that my young son will succeed me."⁵⁶ Moreover, the *Yuan shi* recorded that "In earlier times Taizong issued an edict (*zhi*) to make Shiremün his heir."⁵⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn wrote that Ögödei had chosen his third son Köchü as his heir, but, since he died early, Ögödei brought up Köchü's son Shiremün at his own *ordu* and later issued a decree (*yarligh*) that Shiremün should be his successor.⁵⁸ So the two last mentioned sources explicitly assert that there was a formal decree designating Shiremün as an heir.

However, some other references call for caution about that assertion. First of all, Juwaynī wrote,

Köten aspired to this honour because his grandfather [= Chinggis Khan] had once made a reference to him. Others were of the opinion that Siremün, when he came of age, might be a suitable person to charge with the affairs of the Kingdom. . . . Köten, on the other hand, was somewhat sickly, and Siremün was but a child.⁵⁹

Juwaynī started to write his work around 1252 or 1253 in Qara Qorum, just after the accession of Möngke, and his account is regarded "as a sort of political pamphlet written to justify the change in the line of the dynasty";⁶⁰ he had very little reason to omit the mention about existence of such a decree that would smash Güyüg's legitimacy.

Another piece of evidence, which makes us doubt the existence of a formal decree, is found in Qubilai's edict nominating Jingim as his successor. In that edict he stated that Chinggis Khan had issued a decree nominating Ögödei as his heir among the legitimate sons but after that there was no such apparent nomination, which caused the continuous succession struggles. That was why, Qubilai emphasized, he formally nominated his successor.⁶¹ Nonetheless, I am not asserting that the case for Shiremün was something entirely groundless. In this sense a passage in the *Yuan shi* is illuminating.

⁵⁶ See M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, 1997), p. 19.

⁵⁷ *TS*, 2/38 (Annals of Dingzong).

⁵⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 21, 180, 201.

⁵⁹ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 251. However, we can find significant changes in Rashīd al-Dīn: "Since Köten, whom Chingiz-Khan had appointed to be successor to Qa'an, is somewhat sickly, and Shiremün, Qa'an's heir, has not yet reached maturity . . ." (*Successors*, p. 181).

⁶⁰ Boyle, "Translator's Introduction" in *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. xxxvii; *idem*, "Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn as Sources on the History of the Mongols," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis and P.M. Holt (London, 1962), p. 137 (rpt. in J.A. Boyle, *The Mongol World Empire. 1206-1370* [London, 1977]).

⁶¹ *TS*, 115/2889 (Biography of Yuzong).

When Xianzong [= Möngke] was a juvenile, Taizong [= Ögödei] deeply loved him. One day he [= Taizong] went out and met a great storm. He entered into his *ordu* and ordered Xianzong to sit under his knee. Caressing his head, he said: "This can be a ruler of the world." On the other day, as he fed a tiger with a cow, his grandson Shiremün, still in his juvenility, said, "If you fed a tiger with a cow, how can the calf be raised?" Considering his benevolent mind, Taizong also said, "This can be a ruler of the world." After Taizong had died, the Sixth Empress [= Töregene] took the regency and finally enthroned Dingzong [= Güyüg]. Therefore, at this [*quriltai*], both of them are arguing based on those words.⁶²

This passage is included in the "Biography of Menggeser," who was a staunch advocate for Möngke, so the statement certainly reflects the standpoint of Möngke's party. The passage contains several points, which deserve our attention. First of all, it does not sound quite natural that Ögödei made Möngke, who was already over 20 years old when Ögödei became khan, sit "under his knee" and that he "caressed his head." This kind of expression is generally applied to small children. Considering this point, a Chinese scholar suggested that this passage might be a "forgery" to strengthen the arguments of Möngke's party.⁶³ Even if we concede that it is not a "forgery," Ögödei's word is far from being a formal proclamation of his heir. It can be a proof that Ögödei had deep affection for Möngke and Shiremün. But when he said "this can be a ruler of the world," it was just a praise of their virtue of sympathy and generosity being worthy of a ruler. It is highly possible that Ögödei sometimes mentioned Shiremün as his possible heir, but it is far from a formal decree of nomination.⁶⁴

Whatever the truth, the history of nomadic states shows innumerable cases when nominated successors were driven out by more powerful candidates. It was not the will of preceding rulers but one's own charisma that gave legitimacy to a new leader. The rule of the game was none other than the "bloody tanistry" as aptly termed by J. Fletcher.⁶⁵ In this sense, Güyüg's accession could not be regarded

⁶² *YS*, 124/3055–56 (Biography of Menggeser).

⁶³ Bailadugeji, "Guiyou Han jiwei qianqian houhou," *Yuan shi luncong*, 3 (1986), p. 48.

⁶⁴ On the close relationship between Ögödei and Möngke, see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 27–28. Biran also pointed out that Ögödei's praise for Shiremün's virtue as recorded in *Yuan shi* is nothing but "a general statement" acknowledging his talent for a future ruler (*Qaidu*, p. 137, n. 69).

⁶⁵ "Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire," in *Eucharisterion*:

as illegitimate. Most of the Mongol nobles also did not think in that way and, when he ascended the throne, they submitted a written oath (*khatt*) that they would be loyal to him and his family.⁶⁶ He had three decisive advantages, which other candidates lacked: competence (experience and bravery), seniority, and the support of Töregene.⁶⁷

After the death of Güyüg the question of the supposed nomination of Shiremün was brought up afresh. The Ögödeids probably thought that it would help them to keep the throne within their family, but the Toluids utilized it to knock down their opponents' argument. That was exactly what Möge said against Bala. Then the question suddenly shifted to another, more crucial, point—whether the family of Ögödei had the exclusive claim to the khanship. In this sense, the following address by Eljigidei, a powerful general from the Jalayir tribe during Ögödei's reign, touched the essence of the matter:

You have all sworn and pledged that as long as there remained of the sons of Ögödei Qa'an "a piece of flesh a cow wouldn't eat if it were wrapped in grass and a dog wouldn't look at if it were wrapped in fat," you would accept him as emperor rather than place another on the throne. How is it that now you act otherwise?⁶⁸

In other words, Eljigidei reminded the Toluid princes of the oath (*möchelge*)⁶⁹ not to place someone on the throne other than the seed of Ögödei. This was probably the most compelling argument against the Toluids and, Qubilai, who was arguing with Eljigidei could not but acknowledge that "that was the stipulation."⁷⁰ Waṣṣāf also states that Chinggis Khan stressed in his *Yāsā nāmah-i buzurg* that people should entrust the throne to the Ögödeids as long as they found a sibling in his family.⁷¹

Essays presented to Omeljan Pritsak, eds. I. Ševčenko and F.E. Sysyn, (Cambridge, MA, 1979–80), pp. 236–51 (rpt. in his *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, ed. B.F. Manz [Aldershot, 1995]).

⁶⁶ Honda Minobu, "Monggoru no seishu," *Monggoru jidaishi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1991), pp. 54, 59.

⁶⁷ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 251.

⁶⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn in W.M. Thackston (tr.), *Jami'u't-tawarikh. Compendium of Chronicles* (Harvard University, 1998), i, p. 39. When I quoted from his translation, I made a slight change in the transcription of Mongolian names. Cf. *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* (MS. Revan Köşkū [Istanbul] 1518), fol. 14a–15a.

⁶⁹ On the custom of Mongolian oath, see Honda "Monggoru no seishu," pp. 53–67.

⁷⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami'u't-tawarikh*, tr. Thackston, i, p. 39.

⁷¹ J. Hammer-Purgstall (tr.), *Geschichte Wassaf's*, i (Wien, 1856), p. 126; for text, see *Tā'rikh-i Waṣṣāf* (Bombay, lithograph ed. 1269/1852–53), p. 66. According to Waṣṣāf, Qaidu justified his defiance of Qubilai based on this statement of Chinggis Khan (see Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 35).

Thus Möngke's party needed a justification against this evident and widely acknowledged fact. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Qubilai insisted,

That was the stipulation, but you acted contrary to the conditions of the pledge and the ancient *Yasa* before we did. First, Chinggis Khan commanded that if anyone from his family acted contrary to the *Yasa*, he and his elder and younger brothers were not to be molested unless a council was convened. Why did you kill Altaluqan? Second, Ögödei Qa'an said that Shiremün should be emperor. How then did you make room in your hearts for Güyüg Khan to be emperor?⁷²

There are two points in the statement of Qubilai: the violation of Chinggis Khan's *Yasa* and disobedience to Ögödei's edict. Because of these violations, he claimed, the original oath ceased to be binding. Now, it is clear why the Toluids took on the issue of Güyüg's legitimacy after his death. Rashīd al-Dīn adds that Eljigidei responded to the argument of Qubilai: "On this account, you are right."

In this sense, Chinggis Khan's words reported in paragraph 255 of the *Secret History* are most interesting. It is almost a verbatim repetition of what Eljigidei said, but with a slight change it came to have a completely opposite meaning.

Supposing that the descendants of Ögödei are *all* born *so worthless* that
Even if one wrapped them in fresh grass,
They would not be eaten by an ox;
Even if one wrapped them in fat,
They would not be eaten by a dog,
is it *possible* that among my descendants not *even* a single one will be
born who is good?⁷³

The veracity of this passage has been questioned by many scholars.⁷⁴ Considering the debates after the death of Güyüg, I cannot but agree with them: if Chinggis Khan actually had said this, why did Qubilai not raise this point and why did he acknowledge the existence of the "oath"? He did not even have to argue about the case of Altaluqan or the legitimacy of Güyüg. He could have just quoted Chinggis Khan's words that his offspring rather than the house of Ögödei could take the khanship if Ögödei's descendants proved to be incompetent. Of

⁷² Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jamī'u't-tawarikh*, tr. Thackston, i, p. 39.

⁷³ "The Secret History of the Mongols," *PFEH*, 30 (1984), p. 95.

⁷⁴ For instance, R. Grousset's *L'Empire mongol* (Paris, 1941), pp. 230, 303; W. Hung, "The Transmission of the Book Known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*," *HJAS*, 14 (1951), pp. 487–88; I. de Rachewiltz, "The Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," *MS*, 24 (1965), p. 190; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 40–41.

course, he could not do that because Chinggis Khan had not said so. Later, however, the Toluids modified the words of their great ancestor to give an aura of legitimacy to their rule.

Güyük's Reign and His Death

Güyük's direct rule started right after the death of his mother Töregene, but it lasted only a year and a half. His reign, because of its brevity, has not attracted due attention from scholars. It is true that during his reign Batu showed a somewhat intransigent attitude, which resulted in "the erosion of central authority" and "the tendency toward centralization."⁷⁵ However, what I would like to stress is the fact that Güyük was not a feeble ruler overwhelmed by centrifugal forces. If we carefully investigate some of the important measures he undertook, we can realize how he worked for centralization. Now let us examine his major policies in detail.

Chinggis Khan's successor Ögödei had endeavored very hard to prevent the intervention of Mongol princes in the conquered areas, and so he appointed officials directly responsible to him. In North China, Yelü Chucai was replaced by 'Abd al-Raḥmān in 1240, but around the end of 1241 Maḥmūd Yalavach took the office. Ögödei sent Mas'ūd Beg to Central Asia and Chin Temür, later being replaced by Körgüz, to West Asia. Then he made Chinqai "imperial minister" (*wazīr-i buzurg*)⁷⁶ and put him in charge of the administration of the central government as well as supervision of those three regions.⁷⁷

As soon as Ögödei died, however, his wife Töregene began to eliminate these officials one by one. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, she favored a Persian woman named Fāṭima and gave an order to arrest Chinqai and Yalavach. Both of them fled to Kōten, Güyük's half brother, who did not submit to Töregene's tenacious request to hand

⁷⁵ Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire," p. 387.

⁷⁶ His title is found in the works of Juwaynī and of Rashīd al-Dīn. The Persian word *buzurg* used in many titles at that time did not necessarily mean "great" or "big," but rather in reference to the emperor or the imperial court. The Chinese words of *ta* and *tai*, all meaning literally "great" or "grand," were used with the same connotation. See Shimo Hirotoishi's discussion in his book *Mongoru Teikokushi kenkyū josetsu: Iru Kankoku no chūkaku buzoku* (Tokyo, 1995), pp. 451–76, and I. de Rachewiltz, "Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's *Ĵasaγ*," *East Asian History*, 6 (1993), p. 93.

⁷⁷ On the careers of these officials see de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan*, pp. 95–111, 122–30.

them over. Mas'ūd, Yalavach's son, realized the gravity of the situation and took asylum in the domain of Batu. Körgüz, however, was arrested in Khurāsān and brought to Mongolia where he was executed.⁷⁸

Thus, when Güyüg ascended the throne and his mother died shortly afterwards, he had to take some drastic measures. If we draw a list of those measures based on the report of Juwaynī, it is as follows.

- (1) The nullification of *yarlighs* and *paizas* issued after Ögödei's death
- (2) The appointment of high officials in the central and local governments
- (3) The execution of Odchigin Noyan, the youngest brother of Chinggis Khan
- (4) The nomination of a new ruler to the ulus of Chaghadai
- (5) The dispatch of expeditionary armies to China and West Asia

These measures show Güyüg's determination to carry on his father's policy to curb the power of Mongol princes and strengthen the central government. His first measure right after he assumed direct rule was to recall all the *yarlighs* and *paizas* issued after the death of Ögödei. This meant the nullification of all the appointments of officials and bestowal of privileges by his regent mother and princes during the interregnum. On the other hand, those edicts issued with the seal (*tamgha*) of his father were to be renewed without reconfirmation.⁷⁹

The continuity with Ögödei's reign is unmistakably evidenced by Güyüg's rehabilitation of high officials persecuted by his mother. First of all, he ordered the execution of Fāṭima who had wielded strong influence over his mother and he also put to death 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the Muslim governor in North China. Then he reinstated those who had worked for Ögödei, such as Chinqai, Yalavach, and Mas'ūd.⁸⁰ These measures were apparently aimed at reversing the decentralizing tendency prevalent during his mother's regency. To strengthen the control over the conquered regions, he divided them into three large realms and appointed governors: Yalavach over North China, his son

⁷⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 176–77; *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (MS. Revan Kōshkū 1518), fol. 182b.

⁷⁹ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 255–60; Rashīd al-Dīn *Successors*, pp. 182–83.

⁸⁰ According to *Ys* Güyüg appointed Chinqai “Right Minister of Central Secretariat” (*zhongshu youchengxiang*) because he was “an old minister of the preceding reign” (*xianchao jiu chen*). See *Ys*, 120/2964 (Biography of Chinqai). Cf. Buell, “Chinqai.”

Mas'ūd over Central Asia, and Arghun over West Asia.⁸¹ This tripartite system had been introduced originally during the time of Ögödei and was designed to strengthen the emperor's control over these areas, *vis-à-vis* the princes. This system was eventually perfected by Güyüg's successor Möngke.

Güyüg was anxious to bring influential princes under his control. At that time one of the most powerful princes in the eastern realm of the empire was Chinggis Khan's youngest brother Temüge Odchigin. When Chinggis Khan allotted the Mongols among his sons and brothers, Temüge received the second largest share: 10,000 according to the *Secret History* (together with his mother's share). If we believe Rashīd al-Dīn, his share was second only to that of Tolui to whom supposedly 101,000 were given. Odchigin's influence was especially strong in Manchuria, where his appanage was located, in the Korean peninsula and in north China.⁸² He was so powerful that after Ögödei's death he marched to Qara Qorum with his troops to seize the throne. The execution of Odchigin after the enthronement of Güyüg, probably with his approval, can be understood not merely as a reprisal but also as an expression of his wish to tame powerful local princes.⁸³

Güyüg's nomination of Yesü Möngke as the ruler of the Chaghadaid Ulus can be understood as the same line of policy. Chaghadaid had named his grandson Qara Hülegü, whose father Mö'tüken had been killed at the battle of Bamiyan. However, Güyüg ignored his great uncle Chaghadaid's will and, saying "How can a grandson be heir when there is a son?" set up Yesü Möngke.⁸⁴ However, what mattered to Güyüg most was probably not the succession principle based on seniority but political considerations: he wanted to keep the Ulus of Chaghadaid under his control by naming a person who was more friendly to him and more docile.

There was no doubt that, among all the princes, Batu posed the most serious challenge to central authority. Güyüg had every reason to get rid of him: Batu had had a fierce quarrel with him and refused to take part in the election *quriltai*, and he possessed an enormous

⁸¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, p. 183.

⁸² On the so-called "Eastern" or "Right Wing" *uluses*, especially that of Odchigin, see Tetsuo Ebisawa's "Mongoru Teikoku no tōhō san ōka ni kansuru tei mondai," *Saitama Daigaku Kiyō (Jinbun Shakai Kagaku)*, 21 (1972), pp. 31–46.

⁸³ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 178, 182.

⁸⁴ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 255; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, p. 182.

territory, which was located far to the west.⁸⁵ Thus Güyüg's campaign to the west in 1247 has been universally interpreted as aimed against Batu.⁸⁶ We can find considerable documentary evidences supporting this interpretation. Rashīd al-Dīn wrote that Sorqaqtani Beki, Möngke's mother, sent a secret message to Batu and warned him of the Khan's real intention. So Batu "made ready for battle with him."⁸⁷ Al-'Umarī also wrote that when Güyüg moved to the west with six hundred thousand soldiers, Batu marched eastward to contend against him.⁸⁸ One Chinese source composed in the 1290s confirms this suggestion: "In the past the emperor Dingzong [i.e. Güyüg] prepared an expedition to King Batu."⁸⁹ These pieces of evidence reflect the heightened tension between Güyüg and Batu and strongly suggest Güyüg's hostile intention against Batu when he marched westward. However, it would be a mistake if we regard it as if war had been proclaimed between these two adversaries. If it had been so, Sorqaqtani would have had no reason to send a "secret" message to Batu. Of course, most of the Mongol nobles suspected Güyüg's intention and expected a military clash.

What, then, was the justification of Güyüg's march? We should remember that at the *quriltai* where Güyüg ascended the throne, he consulted with princes and decided to dispatch troops "to all parts of the world." He sent Sübētei and Chaghan to China, some other generals to the regions of Tangut and Solanga, and Eljigidei to subjugate the Assassins. He also sent "angry messages" to the Caliph, and an edict was issued to Mongols as well as Tajiks ordering the conscription of two persons out of ten. Güyüg entrusted Eljigidei with the affairs of Rum, Georgia, Aleppo, Mosul and Takavor (= Lesser Armenia). Juwaynī added that "it was agreed that he [= Güyüg] himself should follow after."⁹⁰ The *Yuan shi* also records that in the eighth month

⁸⁵ Kirakos of Ganjak, an Armenian historian, went so far as to call him "the great general . . . who ruled over everyone such that not even the Khan sat on his throne without [Batu's] order." This mention occurs in the reign of Güyüg, but it seems to reflect the situation after Batu's nomination of Möngke as a new ruler. See *Kirakos Gandzakets'i's History of the Armenians*, tr. R. Bedrosian (New York, 1986), pp. 262–63. Cf. the same passage in *Istoriia mongolov po Armianskim istochnikam*, tr. K.P. Patkanov (St. Petersburg, 1874), ii, pp. 66–67.

⁸⁶ Especially Yang Zhijiu proved the point quite persuasively. See his "Dingzong zheng Badu" in *Yuan shi sanlun* (Beijing, 1985), pp. 67–76.

⁸⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 120, 170, 185.

⁸⁸ 'Umarī, *Das mongolische Weltreich*, ed. Lech, p. 101.

⁸⁹ "Baizhu yuanshuai chushi shishi," *Qingrong jushi ji* (*Sibu congkan chubian* ed.), 34/6b.

⁹⁰ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 256–58; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 183–84.

of 1247 Güyüg ordered Eljigidei to command the troops and to lead the campaign to the west. In the same month an edict was issued to conscript “a *batur* [i.e. warrior] from every one hundred Mongol households.”⁹¹ It is worthwhile to note a similar mention in the work of Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, a Timurid historian of the early fifteenth century. In the “Prolegomena” (*Muqaddima*) of his celebrated work *Ẓafar-nāmah* he wrote that Güyüg Khan marched to the west with the intention of conquering Iran.⁹²

In relation to Güyüg’s western march, we have another extremely valuable testimony by Carpini, a Franciscan friar who visited Qara Qorum just when the decision for a grand campaign was made. He writes:

Our Tatars took us to the Emperor. When he heard from them that we had come to him he ordered us to go back to his mother, the reason being that he wished on the following day to raise his banner against the whole of the Western world—we were told this definitely by men who knew, as I have mentioned above—and he wanted us to be kept in ignorance of this.⁹³

This passage shows how Carpini understood the nature of that campaign. He perceived that Güyüg was going to attack “the whole of the Western world,” i.e. Europe, but feared lest the plan would be disclosed to Carpini in advance. It was the reason, according to Carpini, why Güyüg denied him an audience and sent him back to Töregene. On this point another contemporary report, the *Tartar Relation*, composed by Carpini’s companion Benedict the Pole, writes unequivocally as follows.

As soon as he was elected, he raised a triumphal standard against the church of God and the dominion of the Christians and all the kingdom of the West, and allocated a *third* of all his force for the conflict.⁹⁴

The above-mentioned evidence found in Chinese, Muslim and European sources seem to indicate the fact that the Güyüg’s campaign was

⁹¹ TS, 2/39 (Annal of Dingzong).

⁹² *Ẓafar-nāmah*, ed. A. Urumbaev (Tashkent, 1972), fol. 64a. Of course, his assertion does not carry the same weight as that of Juwaynī or Rashīd al-Dīn, but it certainly shows how the Ulus Chaghatay in the early fifteenth century perceived the expedition of Güyüg.

⁹³ Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. 65.

⁹⁴ *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation*, eds. and trs. R.A. Skelton *et al.* (New Haven, 1965), p. 84.

aimed, or at least proclaimed, to subjugate “the western world” which included not only Muslim powers in Middle East like the ‘Abbāsids and the Assassins but also the Christian countries of Europe. As is well known, a letter was sent to the Pope Innocent IV, and the dreary expressions in its Persian original, now preserved in the Vatican,⁹⁵ make us imagine how the “angry messages” sent to the Caliph would have been.

Now, the overall picture of Güyüg’s campaign may be reconstructed in the following way. When he mounted the throne, he publicly announced his intention to continue the illustrious feats of Chinggis Khan and Ögödei Qa’an and to conquer the rest of the world. For that purpose, he sent generals to every direction; he himself was to take charge of the western campaign. First, he sent Eljigidei and then ordered a general conscription of soldiers. He also sent letters to the Caliph and the Pope to submit without delay. Having completed all the necessary preparations, he started his march to the west in the autumn of 1247. However, for successful completion of his plan, Güyüg needed Batu’s absolute submission or, at least, whole-hearted cooperation, which he could hardly expect to get. The options open to Batu were very limited too: whatever he might do or promise, there was no guarantee that he would be safe. He already heard how Temüge Odchigin had been executed. It was natural that he was apprehensive when Güyüg was marching towards the west with huge armies. Batu, moving eastward at Güyüg’s “request and entreaty,”⁹⁶ sent in advance his brother Shiban to Güyüg to find out his real intention.

Then, suddenly in the spring of 1248, Güyüg died at a place called Qum Senggir on the bank of the Urungghu river, about a week’s journey west of Beshbaliq.⁹⁷ About the cause of his death Rubruck transmits two different accounts circulating at that time: he was either

⁹⁵ P. Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la papauté* (Paris, 1923), pp. 17–18; K.E. Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* (Vatican, 1981), pp. 182–89.

⁹⁶ Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 267.

⁹⁷ It is strange that all the Muslim sources write that he died in the vicinity of Samarqand, “a week’s journey to Beshbaliq.” Cf. Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 261; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi’ at-tawārikh*, ed. M. Rawshan (Tehran, 1995), i, p. 735; *Successors*, p. 121; *Ta’rikh-i waṣṣāf*, p. 576; Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāmah*, fol. 64b. However, in the *YS* the place of his death was recorded as Hengxiangyier. Pelliot thought it as the transcription of Qum Senggir and regarded “Samarqand” in Muslim sources as a scribal error. See his *Les Mongols et la papauté*, pp. 196–97; Juwaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 261, note 42. As a matter of fact, Samarqand is located much farther than a week’s journey from Beshbaliq.

poisoned, probably by Batu, or killed by Shiban in the middle of fierce fighting.⁹⁸ Whatever version we accept, one intentional and the other accidental, Güyüg's demise was evidently caused by Batu's partisans, or at least it was perceived by people as such. Of course, Batu could not acknowledge it, but he must have felt an urgent need to defend himself from such an accusation. What better excuse could he have than that Güyüg was going to attack him? It is not surprising at all that Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn and the *Yuan shi* all kept silent about the cause of Güyüg's death, as if he had died a natural death.

Regardless of its cause, when the news of Güyüg's death was reported, it was not only Batu who rejoiced. Many princes who had felt strong pressure under his rule, especially the princes of the left wing, also wanted to utilize the opportunity to improve their status. They could in no way support the candidates from the family of Ögödei, so they backed up the claim of the Toluids who appeared less threatening than the Ögödeids. With the accession of Ögödei, Tolui had lost his control over the entire army belonging to the central *ulus* as well as the imperial guards, and after Tolui's "mysterious" death Ögödei confiscated the army of three thousand from his widow Sorqaqtani Beki.⁹⁹ Thus when the princes gathered to elect a new khan after Güyüg, the power of the Toluids was probably the weakest among the families of Chinggis Khan's four sons.

The sources provide vivid descriptions about what happened after Möngke's enthronement. With the support of Batu, he massacred the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid princes. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, seventy-seven princes and generals were executed, which was truly a purge of unprecedented scale. Some of them met extremely cruel ends. Two sons of Eljigidei were killed with their mouths stuffed with stone. Oghul Qaimish, Güyüg's wife, was interrogated with her hands stitched together in a raw hide and her clothes stripped off, and finally she was flung into water wrapped in felt.¹⁰⁰ The new regime

⁹⁸ Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. 147; P. Jackson and D. Morgan (tr. and eds.), *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255* (London, 1990), pp. 167–68. The suspicion that Güyüg was poisoned was raised not by Rubruck but by Friar Andrew.

⁹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi'ut tawārīkh*, tr. Thackston, ii, p. 282. These three thousand soldiers were of the Süldüs and Sönit tribes and Ögödei ordered them to be given to his son Köten.

¹⁰⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, pp. 212–15. Marco Polo also notes the punishment of stitching hands in a hide. See *The Description of the World*, tr. and annot. A.C. Moule and P. Pelliot (London, 1938), i, pp. 362–63.

had to justify and legitimize its seizure of power and, for that, Güyüg had to be portrayed as an illegitimate and incompetent ruler who ignored the edict of Ögödei and usurped the throne.

However, when we carefully read relevant sources casting off the Toluid bias, we cannot but feel that Güyüg's historical image is far from the reality. First, there is no compelling reason to doubt the legitimacy of his accession to the throne. Secondly, paragraphs 275, 276 and 277 of the *Secret History* describing the quarrel between Güyüg and Batu during the Qipchaq campaign as well as Ögödei's summon and severe reprimand of Güyüg, seem to be a later interpolation by the Toluids. Thirdly, in spite of his chronic disease, Güyüg was not a feeble and irresponsible ruler as depicted in various sources. He attempted to continue his father's policy to strengthen the power of central government *vis-à-vis* the regional princes. Lastly, his campaign to the west was not merely aimed at subjugating Batu but its ultimate goal was to eliminate adversaries in the Islamic world and Western Europe, and thus to achieve the conquest of the world.

The significance of his sudden death and the rise of Möngke were not limited to political changes, i.e., the shift of the qa'anate from the Ögödeids to the Toluids, the virtual independence of Batu and the disintegration of the empire. We should note also the ideological changes. To legitimize the Toluid revolution, history had to be re-interpreted, and consequently historical writings and compilations had to be accommodated to the new ideology. Therefore, to approach the historical reality of the Mongol empire we have to re-read those written sources from non-Toluid perspective. The image of the Mongol empire could be quite different from what we have hitherto known.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

Badu	拔都
<i>benji</i>	本紀
dahui	大會
Dingzong	定宗
Hadan	哈丹
Huoning	遼寧
Macha	馬茶
Mieqiesi	蔑怯思
sanzong	三宗
Taizi	太子
Taizong	太宗
Tuna	禿納
Wangji xiumietuli	汪吉宿滅禿里
Wuliwu	吁里兀
Xiban	昔班
Xiliqianbu	昔里鈴部
<i>Xianchao jiuchen</i>	先朝舊臣
xianzong	憲宗
<i>Yuan shi</i>	元史
<i>zhi</i>	旨
<i>Zhongshu youchengxiang</i>	中書右丞相

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WAR AND PEACE BETWEEN THE YUAN DYNASTY AND THE CHAGHADAID KHANATE (1312–1323)¹

Liu Yingsheng

Among the different phases of nomad-sedentary relations along the frontiers of China, the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century is a unique period. During this time, China and Central Asia were governed by branches of the Chinggisid family, whose relations shifted from brotherhood to conflict, from peace to war. Based on Chinese and Persian sources, this article reconstructs the relations between the Yuan dynasty and the Chaghadaid khanate, as well as the other Chinggisid states, in the mid-Yuan period, during the reigns of Yuan Renzong (Ayurbarwada, 1311–20) and his son, Yuan Yingzong (Shidbala, 1321–23), highlighting the characteristics of China-Inner Asia relations during late Mongol rule.

The period in question is significant for two reasons. First, it follows the final surrender of the Ögödeids, descendants of Chinggis Khan's third son and successor and their Chaghadaid allies and then rivals in Central Asia, to the Yuan dynasty in 1310. This surrender, as will be discussed below, changed the balance between China and the Central Asian Mongols. Secondly, while Chinese sources on Central Asia in this period are less ample than those that deal with earlier periods, there are still significant. The most important among them is Yuan Jue's *Baizhu yuanshuai chushi shishi* (*The Narrative of the Missions of the Marshal Baiju*), which recounts the journey of Baiju, Renzong's envoy, who had been sent to Iran in 1313, but was detained in Central Asia by the Chaghadaids. Baiju spent eight years in Chaghadaid captivity, being an eye-witness to the deterioration of the relations between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan that culminated in a wide scale military conflict. In the early 1320s he also

¹ This is a revised and concise version of my article "Huangqing, Zhizhi nianjian Yuan chao yu Chahatai hanguo hezhan shimo," originally published in *Yuanshi luncong*, 5 (1993), pp. 13–49. I would like to thank Dr. Yi Zheng who translated the original version from Chinese into English, and Dr. Michal Biran for her thorough editing.

played a leading role in reestablishing the peace between the two states.² His evidence is therefore of special value. Juxtaposing Chinese and Persian sources, among which the most significant is by far Qāshānī's *Ta'rikh-i uljāytū*, enables us to get a clearer picture of this turbulent period, which is not often discussed in the research literature.³

Background

In 1304 the Yuan dynasty and the Chaghadaid Khanate concluded a peace treaty, initiated by the Chaghadaid Khan Du'a (1282–1307). The peace, which included also the settlement of other inter-Mongol conflicts (e.g., the one between the Ilkhans in Iran and the Golden Horde in Russia) put an end to a long period of struggle between the Yuan and the Central Asian Mongols, led mostly by Qaidu, a grandson of Ögödei who from 1271 managed to bring the Chaghadaids under his rule. Qaidu's death in 1301 enabled Du'a, formerly Qaidu's right hand, to reestablish the independence of the Chaghadaid Khanate and to pursue peace with the Yuan.

In Central Asia, however, the peace actually started a period of fierce struggle between the Chaghadaids and the remnants of the Ögödeids. Only with the help of Yuan forces were the Chaghadaids finally able to destroy the Ögödeids. In 1306 they defeated Chapar, Qaidu's son and successor, in the battlefield, and this setback led to his final submission to the Yuan in 1310. The Ögödeid lands south and west of the Altai mountains (*Jin shan*) were taken by the Yuan dynasty, whereas most of the remaining Ögödeid territory was annexed to the Chaghadaid Khanate.⁴

² *Baizhu yuanshuai jushi shishi*, also known as *Zhedong yuanshuai chushi shishi*, is included in Yuan Jue, *Qingrong jushi ji* (Yuan edition, facsimile published by Shang wu ying shuguan, n.d.), ch. 34. Other important Chinese sources include Yu Ji's *Jurong junwang shiji bei* in his *Daoyuan xue gu lu* (Shanghai, 1937), ch. 23 and the biography of Tutuha in *Yuan shi* ch. 128.

³ For earlier treatment of this period in the literature see V.V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* (rpt., Leiden, 1962), i, pp. 51, 132–33; Kato Kazuhide, "Kebeku to Yasawaru (Kebek and Yasawur)," *Toyoshi kenkiu*, 40/4 (1982), pp. 58–84; Kato mainly summarizes the different Muslim sources on this period. See also the English version of his article: Kazuhide, "Kebek and Yasawur—The Establishment of the Chaghatai Khanate," *Memoires of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 49 (1991), pp. 97–118.

⁴ On this period, see Liu Yingsheng, "Yuandai Menggu zhuhanguo de yuehe ji Wokuotai hanguo de miwang," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao*, 1985, pp. 31–43; *idem*, "Shiji's

*The Deterioration of the Relations between the
Yuan and the Chaghadaid Khanate*

The elimination of the Ögödeid Khanate turned out to be the main reason for the deterioration of the relations between the Yuan and the Chaghadaids around 1312–13. After its first victory over Chapar's troops in 1306, the Yuan established strong garrisons in the area south of the Altai. Their aim was to inspect Chapar's army and to supervise the many nomads (estimated at more than a million!) who migrated into the area between Qara Qorum and the Altai, now under Yuan sovereignty.⁵ After Chapar's submission, the only target of these garrisons remained the Chaghadaid troops, who were stationed opposite them "like fingers connecting one after another, like teeth of a comb."⁶ The same situation was also apparent along the south-western border of the two khanates near Uighuristan.⁷

This proximity led to ample possibilities for conflicts between the two armies. Moreover, the situation was exacerbated since the distribution of the Ögödeid territories had not been discussed between the Yuan and Chaghadaids before Chapar's submission. The new borders therefore created a situation in which the winter and summer pastures of several Chaghadaid forces were now under Yuan control. To solve the problem of the pasture lands, around 1312 Esen Boqa, the reigning Chaghadaid khan (c. 1310–18), had sent envoys and gifts to Tūghājī Jīnsānk (Tuohuozi *chengxiang*), the grand marshal of the Yuan garrisons, asking to re-adjust the summer and winter pastures. Tūghājī, an old hand in Yuan border warfare, who on Renzong's accession was promoted to the post of the highest commander of the Qipchaq royal guard troops (*Qincha qinjun duzhi huishi*), headed twelve *tümens* of Yuan soldiers. He was stationed on the Esen Müren, one of the upper reaches of the Irtysh river, and in Qobaq, the center of the original Ögödeid appanage over which he took after Chapar's surrender. This place was later a major station for the commercial

Wokuotai hanguo monian jishi buzheng," *Yuanshi ji beifang minzu shi yanjiu*, 10 (1986), pp. 48–59; M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, Surrey, 1997), esp. pp. 69–80.

⁵ Su Tianjue, *Yuan chao mingchen shilue* (Beijing, 1996), p. 46.

⁶ Qāshānī, *Ta'rikh-i āljāyū* (Tehran, 1969), p. 202 (and see there for a detailed description of the border commanders; Yuan troops on both fronts numbered more than 29 *tümens*!).

⁷ Qāshānī, pp. 202–3.

embassies going from Central Asia to China.⁸ The negotiations, however, did not go well. Tūghājī cut the Chaghadaid envoys short when they cited Esen Boqa's *yarligh* (decree), saying that only imperial orders issued by the Qa'an, namely the Yuan emperor, could be called *yarlighs*. Orders issued by princes, on the other hand, should be called *Līnkjī* (Chinese: *lingzhi*, an order issued by a prince). The Chaghadaid envoy answered: "since Esen Boqa is from the clan [of Chinggis Khan], for us he is in lieu of the Qa'an." an answer that provoked further hostility between the two sides.⁹

This incident shows that apart from the concrete tension between the Yuan and the Chaghadaids, the status of the different khanates was still a bone of contention. While nominally the peace agreement of 1304 included Chaghadaid recognition of Yuan authority (at least according to Yuan sources), practically the Chaghadaids saw themselves as independent.¹⁰ Tūghājī's insult put the negotiations on hold, and they ended without results.¹¹

Another reason that probably stood at the root of the Yuan-Chaghadaid tension was the volume of trade between the two khanates and its implications on the border commanders. Since the concluding of the peace treaty in 1304, the two states maintained close relations, not only in the political and military spheres but also in the commercial one. Indeed the *Yuan shi* reports that during 1312–13 Esen Boqa sent several tributes of jewelry, furs, horses, camels, jade and wine to the Yuan court, and was generously rewarded.¹² Yet while this information implies Chaghadaid recognition of Yuan superiority and close relations between the two rulers, the full picture was more complex. A report from 1312 of the Yuan investigating censor (*jiancha yushi*) Ḥasan Shāh (*Hasansha*) suggests that the traffic to and from Central Asia and the Central Asian embassies in particular became quite a burden on the Yuan court at that time:

⁸ *Ibid.*; for Tūghājī (Touhuochi) see YS, 25/571, 138/3325; Liu Mingzhong, *Zhongnan ji* (Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan ed., n.d.), 4/298–300; *Jing shi dadian-zhan zhi*, in *Yongle da dian* (Beijing, 1960), 19420/16–17; Liu, "Peace Agreement," pp. 48–59; Zhou Qingshu, "Wanggubu tongzhi jiazu," in *idem*, *Yuan-Meng Shizna* (Hohhot, 2001), pp. 78–81. Tūghājī shared his title as the Qipchaq commander with Chunqur, son of Tutuha; see below.

⁹ Qāshānī, p. 203. For *lingzhi*, which is mentioned in the Persian sources solely in this place, a fact that adds to the reliability of Qāshānī's report, see G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963–75), iv, p. 306.

¹⁰ Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 73 and p. 163 n. 49.

¹¹ Qāshānī, p. 203.

¹² YS, 24/550, 551, 555; *Yongle Dadian*, 19420/2.

The only purposes of those persons going to the Huihui (= Muslim) areas to take camels, western horses, tigers and leopards, and medicine herbs was taking credit and seeking rewards for their own achievements, earning money from private trades based on the free costs of government sponsored transportation tools and caravanserais. The proper solution should be to stop these, and not to allow them to go there. Additionally, those who arrive here to pay tribute of tigers and leopards, were given horses, hosted in guest houses and granted rewards. Some of them linger on here for one or two years and do not leave. We should send them back. Renzong approved of this suggestion.¹³

Yuan officials were therefore concerned with the mistreatment of the tribute terms by the Central Asian missions, certainly not a new phenomenon in China's relations with its north-western neighbors.¹⁴ The ongoing movement on the land routes to China also placed a heavy burden on Yuan garrisons, since their soldiers had to maintain the post stations (*jam*), in which the missions lodged on their way. This is attested by the complaint of Temür Boqa, a military official (*shu-miyuan guan*) of the central secretariat, who in 1312 claimed that the troops could not finance the thirty *jam* stations leading from the Tūghājī's post to the center of the Yuan realm. He suggested that at least part of the maintenance (notably the 200 sheep required for each station) should be supplied by civilians at the court's expense.¹⁵

The problem of maintaining the Central Asian missions continued to occupy the court the next year as well. In 1313 two inspectors of stages (*tuotuo hesun* < Mongolian **todqosun*) were appointed to Yuan garrisons that bordered Central Asia, one in Tūghājī's camp (guarding the northern silk road) and the other in the garrison of Kōnchek that held Hami (i.e., on the southern silk road). The new commissioners, each aided by a deputy and two low-ranking officials who could read and write, were to set up check points at the borders and to regulate the traffic of envoys and traders according to the quotas allotted to the northwestern princes.¹⁶ There is no evidence that shows if the quotas were actually imposed or how meaningful they were, but certainly an attempt to limit the volume of trade did not improve the relations between Esen Boqa and the Yuan commanders.

¹³ *Yongle da dian*, 19420/14.

¹⁴ See, e.g., T.T. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier* (Oxford, 1989), for several examples, especially from late Tang times.

¹⁵ *Yongle da dian*, 14920/14.

¹⁶ *Yongle da dian*, 14920/16–17; for the office of **todqosun* see D.M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule: A Reference Guide* (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 418.

Another major reason for the deterioration of the relations between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan at this stage was the Chaghadaids' fear of a joint Yuan-Ilkhanate attack. The idea was raised by Abishqa (*Abishiha*), Yuan emissary to the Ilkhanate. While passing through the Chaghadaid domains, Abishqa, perhaps out of drunkenness, claimed he knew secrets that would interest Esen Boqa. The latter sent one of his leading commanders to hear the news, and Abishqa said that "the White-bearded *taishi* (grand preceptor)" told him that the Qa'an had ordered that the Ilkhanate and the Yuan would simultaneously attack the Chaghadaids from east and west and together would "clear Tūrān (i.e., the steppe region of Central Asia) from the filth of treason."¹⁷ According to Chinese sources, Abishqa also indicated that Yuan forces had already begun to move towards the Chaghadaids.¹⁸

The exact timing of Abishqa's embassy is not easy to determine: Qāshānī only says it took place before the failed negotiation with Tūghājī.¹⁹ If, however, we assume that the "white bearded *taishi*" was *Yochicar (Yuechichaer), the only leading Yuan border commander who bore the title *taishi*, Abishqa must have arrived earlier, since *Yochicar died in 1311.²⁰ In any case, a recent conflict between the Chaghadaids and the Ilkhanate, whether in response to Abishqa's evidence or independent of it, certainly made his information more credible. In 1312, Dā'ūd Khwāja, Esen Boqa's nephew and the commander of the Chaghadaid Qara'unas troops, invaded Khurāsān, but was badly defeated by the Ilkhanid troops, aided by several Chaghadaid commanders. Deserted by many of his followers, in 1313 the vanquished Dā'ūd Khwāja crossed back over the Oxus, and asked Esen Boqa to help him take revenge on the Ilkhan Öljeitü.²¹

Whether the Dā'ūd Khwāja incident, which Qāshānī mentioned as another reason for the tension between the Yuan and the Chaghadaids,²² was initiated by Abishqa's information or not, the Chaghadaids certainly took his words seriously. In order to break up the alleged

¹⁷ Qāshānī, p. 205. This Abishqa might have been one of the members of the delegation of the Ilkhanate sent to the Yuan court to ask for Princess Kōkchin and who left for Iran accompanied by Marco Polo.

¹⁸ Yuan Jue, 34/512–13.

¹⁹ Qāshānī, p. 205.

²⁰ On Yuechechar, see YS, 24/540 (where Renzong reaffirms his title of *taishi*); 119/2951ff.

²¹ Qāshānī, p. 202.

²² Qāshānī, pp. 201–2.

united front between the Yuan and the Ilkhanate (and perhaps to compensate himself for the trade limits), Esen Boqa decided to detain the passing envoys for questioning and confiscate their belongings.²³ The first victim of this policy was Baiju, who in 1313 was sent by Renzong to bestow a gold seal upon Bolad *chengxiang*, Yuan representative at the Ilkhanate, and to hold consultations with Öljeitü.²⁴

When he passed through the Chaghadaid domains, Baiju was arrested for spying and interrogated about Yuan intentions. Although he denied any knowledge of Yuan plans of attack, and the imperial documents he carried with him did not reveal any connection to the alleged war, Esen Boqa detained Baiju in his own appanage near Issyk Kūl and confiscated the seal.²⁵ Esen Boqa continued to block the diplomatic traffic between China and Iran, detaining three groups of envoys during 1313–14. The messengers were sent to Kashgar, and their horses and property were confiscated.²⁶ Even though none of the emissaries confirmed his suspicions, Esen Boqa decided to act first, saying “I would rather step on the thorns and walk with serpents around my feet than be trapped unaware.”²⁷

Esen Boqa chose to believe Abishqa, despite the other envoys’ repeated refutations of his information, because of Abishqa’s leading position—he was a commander of nine *tümens*²⁸ and because the Ilkhan was “a close relative” of the Yuan emperor,²⁹ a reference to the common Toluid lineage of the Mongols in China and Iran. Indeed a joint action of the Mongol khanates against the Chaghadaid khanate was always a frightening scenario for the Central Asian Mongols.³⁰ Yet the disagreements regarding pasture and trade seemed to have played an important role in Esen Boqa’s decision to breach the peace and turn to fight the Yuan.

²³ Qāshānī, pp. 204–5.

²⁴ Yuan Jue, 34/512–13. Bolad died on April 1313 (Qāshānī, 147), but the news about his death did not reach the Yuan court by the time Baiju was sent westward. On Bolad see T.T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 60–82 and *passim*. Baiju apparently had already been in the west in 1296 as an envoy of Temür Qa’an (1294–1307), though the Persian sources never mention his mission (Yuan Jue, 34/512).

²⁵ Yuan Jue, 34/513.

²⁶ Qāshānī, pp. 205–8; none of these is mentioned in the Chinese sources.

²⁷ Qāshānī, p. 205.

²⁸ Yuan Jue, 34/513.

²⁹ Yuan Jue, 34/513.

³⁰ For earlier rumors of such a united front (which, however, never materialized) see Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 50.

Another measure that Esen Boqa took around this stage was trying to ally with Özbeg, the newly enthroned khan of the Golden Horde (1313–41), as a counterweight against the alleged Yuan-Ilkhanate coalition and a replacement for the former Chaghadaid alliance with the Ögödeids. In his message to Özbeg, Esen Boqa claimed that the Qa'an found Özbeg unsuitable for ruling the Qipchaq khanate; he therefore planned to dethrone Özbeg and set another prince on the Jochid throne. Esen Boqa therefore urged Özbeg to join him in rebelling against the Qa'an. Özbeg nearly agreed, but his advisor convinced him not to rebel, claiming that the Qa'an is "the blessing of the creator" (*sāyah-i āfridgār*), and that by obeying him Özbeg would have the power to rule over the whole *ulus* (state), avoid disasters, misfortunes and enemies, and enjoy peace and stability. The advisor therefore suggested cutting off relations with the Chaghadaids. Özbeg accepted his view and sent messengers to the Qa'an and to Öljeitü, asking to secure peace and trade relations.³¹ Later on, on 1315, Esen Boqa tried to exploit the tension between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate to convince Özbeg once more to rebel against the Qa'an on the same background but again without success.³²

Those incidents reveal the relations between the different khanates: the Yuan emperor was still acknowledged as nominally superior to the other khans and had to confirm the enthronement of the leaders of the other *uluses*; his support still had legitimizing value. Part of the Chaghadaid enmity might have been directed against this nominal Yuan superiority.

The Beginning of the War

After sending the envoys to Kashgar, Esen Boqa began to assemble five *tümens*, planning to launch a surprise attack by night on Tūghājī's force. One of Esen Boqa's officials, Qūljūq, the commissioner (*shihna*) of the border city of Pūlād, however, escaped to Tūghājī's camp,

³¹ Qāshānī, pp. 145–46 (dated to 712/1312 but taking place later, probably upon Özbeg's enthronement).

³² Qāshānī, pp. 174–76. The reason for the tension was the desertion of several princes originally from Qaidu's troops who had submitted to the Golden Horde to the ranks of the Ilkhanate. Qāshānī wrongly refers to Temür (r. 1294–1307) as the ruling Qa'an, though the latter died long before Özbeg's accession.

informing him about the Chaghadaid intentions.³³ This suggests that not all the Chaghadaid elite backed Esen Boqa's aggressive policy.

Upon hearing the news, Tūghājī ordered his troops and their families to withdraw to the north-east, beyond the Irtysh river, while he himself waited for the attackers on the margins of his summer camp with a *tūmen* of his crack troops.³⁴ When Esen Boqa's forces came to attack, probably in spring 1314, they were badly defeated. The loss of the surprise factor certainly harmed the Chaghadaid army, but the main cause of their defeat was the weather: the extremely harsh winter inflicted great losses on the Chaghadaid horses.³⁵

After this defeat and following the advice of his courtiers (perhaps the pro-peace faction) and of the detained Yuan envoys, Esen Boqa contacted the Qa'an and asked for peace. In his message he claimed that his action was defensive: without any provocation on his part, Tūghājī had insulted him and moved his troops against him. In order to prevent his *ulus* from destruction, Esen Boqa had had to act against him. Yet he stressed his willingness to obey the Qa'an's orders and his aspiration for peace.³⁶

The call for peace found a certain support among Yuan border commanders. In spring 1314, Chūnqūr (Zhuangwuer), son of Tūnqāq (Tutuha), another experienced Qipchaq general who led the Yuan garrison adjacent to Tūghājī's and succeeded to his father's title of the highest commander of the Qipchaq royal guard troops, sent a message to Esen Boqa, asking him to ignore Tūghājī's words and restore the former friendship.³⁷ Esen Boqa sent back an envoy to check Chūnqūr's sincerity. The messenger confirmed that Chūnqūr would not attack the Chaghadaids, and that their only opponent was Tūghājī.³⁸ Esen Boqa therefore concluded that he could settle his account with Tūghājī without affecting the overall relations between the Yuan and the Chaghadaids. He therefore reverted from his peace

³³ Qāshānī, p. 205. On Pūlād, see Liu Mingzhong, ch. 4; J.A. Boyle, "The Journey of He'tum I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke," *CAJ*, 9 (1964), p.183, n. 55. The Chinese map of the 1330s located the city between Almaliq and Emil.

³⁴ Qāshānī, p. 205.

³⁵ Qāshānī, pp. 205–6; Yuan Jue, ch. 34/513.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Qāshānī, pp. 206–7, 202. On Chuangwuer and his family, which had played a leading role in the fight against the Central Asian Mongols since the late 1280s, see YS, 128/3133–37; *Daoyuan*, 23/390–92; Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 91.

³⁸ Qāshānī, p. 207.

proposals and made preparations to attack Tūghājī's troops. His vanguard, a thousand from the *tümen* of his brothers Ebügen and Kebek, was, however, taken by surprise by "the forest of spears and the rains of arrows" of Tūghājī's troops, and was badly defeated; only seven of the thousand survived.³⁹ When Esen Boqa learnt about the fate of his troops, he reacted by robbing an embassy loaded with precious gifts sent from Öljeitü's court to the Qa'an, and by escalating the conflict, preparing an army that would go against both Tūghājī's and Chūnqūr's troops.⁴⁰

Before war broke out again, however, Esen Boqa's peace proposals managed to calm down the Yuan-Chaghadaï border for a while. This is attested by the 1314 report of prince Könçek, the commander of the Yuan garrison near Uighuristan, to the central supervising bureau. Könçek requested the improvement of the horse supply to the *jam* stations in order for him to be able to receive Ilkhanid messengers with all due respect.⁴¹ Könçek's appeal suggests that he believed that the land traffic between the Yuan and the Ilkhanate would resume soon due to the temporary peace.

Esen Boqa's attack against Tūghājī, however, changed the scene completely. The fierce battle, which erupted in late 1314,⁴² ended without decision, according to Qāshānī, or in a Yuan victory, according to Chinese sources.⁴³ By this time the Yuan emperor was fully aware of the situation on the border and decided to punish Esen Boqa. He ordered his troops to spread the war into Chaghadaï territory and to take over the Chaghadaïds' winter and summer pastures. At that stage, all of the Yuan garrisons took part in the warfare, and they pushed deep into the Chaghadaï territory. Tūghājī's troops drove the enemy three month's distance away, while the southern Yuan garrison under Könçek advanced 40 days' distance and took over Hami.⁴⁴ The restoration of the Uighur Idiqu in 1316 at Qara Khojo,

³⁹ Qāshānī, pp. 207–8.

⁴⁰ Qāshānī, pp. 207–8 (the detained embassy is one of the three mentioned above).

⁴¹ *Jingshi da dian*, in *Yongle dadian*, 19421/2.

⁴² *Daoyuan*, 23/394.

⁴³ Qāshānī, p. 208; *Daoyuan*, 23/394, which places the battle at the (unidentified) Yitehaimishi. See also the garbled account of Naṭanzī (*Muntakhab al-tawārikh-i mu'ini*, ed. J. Aubin [Tehran, 1957], pp. 109–111), which probably relates to the same battle; W. Barthold, *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens* (Berlin, 1935), pp. 202–3.

⁴⁴ Qāshānī, p. 208; *Daoyuan*, 23/394. See Tu Ji, *Mengxiuer shiji* (Changzhou, 1934), 32/8 and Kato 1982, p. 82 n. 26, for discussing the different Chinese place

initiated by Yuan Renzong, was probably a result of this last victory.⁴⁵

Esen Boqa was certainly aware of the overwhelming power of the Yuan army, saying: “If the enemy drove us so, our territory and *yurt* (grazing lands) would become narrower than the vision of the blind man or an ant hill, we would no longer have any *yurt* or cattle.” To make up for the lost land, he decided to invade Khurāsān, estimating that the Ilkhanate was much weaker than the Yuan at that stage. He also wanted to retaliate for their expulsion of Dā’ūd Khwāja.⁴⁶ The Chaghadaid invasion is dated to 713/1313 by all the Muslim sources,⁴⁷ yet if indeed it came to make up for Esen Boqa’s loss in the East as Qāshānī claims, then it could only have happened after 1315. The invading force seemed to have been rather large: 60,000 men or even more than ten *tūmens*, and it managed to inflict great havoc on the Ilkhanid troops in Khurāsān.⁴⁸

Esen Boqa’s ability to send a large part of his troops to attack the Ilkhanate suggests that Yuan frontier troops were recuperating after their victories. Yet six months afterwards, they returned to accomplish their mission—taking over the core areas of the Chaghadaid Khanate. While Esen Boqa was in Khurāsān, messengers informed him that the Qa’an’s army took over the Chaghadaid summer pasture at Talas and their winter pasture near the Issyk Kūl and looted their wives and children. Most of the Chaghadaid force, which already faced internal problems in Khurāsān due to the antagonism between several princes, the weariness of their horses, and the exhausting of their provisions, quickly retreated back to Turkestan to save their families.⁴⁹ The Yuan attack is also recorded in Chinese sources,⁵⁰

names mentioned in the *Daoyuan* text. Yet their suggestions that Yuan troops reached Samarqand and Darband seem rather exaggerated. Renzong’s order and the battle at Hami are mentioned only in Qāshānī’s text.

⁴⁵ T.T. Allsen, “The Yuan Dynasty and the Uighurs in Turfan in the 13th Century,” in *China Among Equals*, ed. M. Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 243–80; YS, 108/2745, 89/2273; see also Kahar Barat and Liu Yingsheng, “Yiduhu Gaochang wang shixun bei Huihu bei wen zhi jiaokan yu yanjiu,” *Yuanshi ji beifang minzu shi yanjiu jikan*, 8 (1984), pp. 57–106; cf. *Yongle dadian*, 19420/14, where the Idiqt of Gaochang is mentioned in 1312.

⁴⁶ Qāshānī, p. 208. For earlier Chaghadaid invasions into Khurāsān, see Biran, *Qaidu*, pp. 57–62; Qāshānī, p. 201.

⁴⁷ Kato 1982, pp. 68, 82 n. 25.

⁴⁸ Qāshānī, pp. 209–10; Sayf-i Harawī, *Ta’rikh-nāmah-i harāt* (Calcuta, 1944), p. 630 cited in Kato 1991, p. 105.

⁴⁹ Qāshānī, pp. 210–11; Qāshānī’s *īsnkūk* is obviously a misreading of *īsiq kūl*, i.e. Issyk Kūl.

⁵⁰ *Daoyuan*, 23/394.

and its success is reflected in the titles conferred upon the Yuan border commanders Tūghājī and Chūnqūr in 1315 and 1317 respectively.⁵¹ While the extensive military conflict ended in a Yuan victory, sporadic warfare might have continued afterwards as well: the “rebels” who in 1319 invaded the Woduan area (Khotan of Xinjiang), and were repulsed by Yuan troops probably belonged to the Chaghadaid forces.⁵² Judging by the location of the Chaghadaid troops in 1317, Yuan troops did not stay in Talas or the Issyk Kūl,⁵³ rather, they probably improved their positions on the borders.

Another aspect of the continued hostility between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan at this stage is the defection of a contender to the Yuan throne, Qoshila, (Heshila, the future Mingzong, r. 1329) son of the former Yuan emperor Qaishan (Wuzong, 1308–11), to the Chaghadaid ranks. As part of Renzong’s attempts to secure the peaceful succession of his own son, Shidebala, in 1316 Qoshila was entitled the prince of Zhou and received a vast appanage in Yunnan in south-west China. Qoshila, however, never reached Yunnan. In late 1316 he arrived at Yan’an in north Shanxi, where a few former officials of his father persuaded him to rebel against Renzong. After the collapse of the abortive uprising, Qoshila escaped westwards with a significant group of supporters. With the cooperation of the border commanders, most of whom served under his father, he managed to reach the Chaghadaid domain west of the Altai and was warmly welcomed by Esen Boqa. The Chaghadaids assigned him summer and winter pastures as well as a place to plant field crops in the Tarbagatai region. He stayed there for more than ten years, bringing tribute to the Yuan court in 1327 with the ruling Chaghadaid Khan, Eljigidei, and emerging again as a candidate to the Yuan throne in 1328.⁵⁴ The surrender of Qaidu’s son, Orus (Woluosi), to the Yuan in 1320 might have also been connected to the Yuan victory over the Chaghadaids.⁵⁵

⁵¹ YS, 25/571, 26/579.

⁵² YS, 26/588.

⁵³ See below the details of Qoshila’s defection. The Chaghadaid territory is defined as west of the Altai, and the appanage he was assigned at the Tarbagatai region is eastward of both Talas and the Issyk Kūl.

⁵⁴ YS, 30/680, 31/694–95, 108/2741; Tu Ji, 14/1b; see also J.W. Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians* (New York, 1973), pp. 19–20, 26–29; P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris, 1959–1973), i, p. 254.

⁵⁵ YS, 27/610; for a different interpretation, see Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 78.

The Restoration of Peace

The peace between the Yuan and the Chaghadaid was restored only after the change of rulers in the two domains. Kebek succeeded his brother Esen Boqa around early 1320 or slightly earlier,⁵⁶ and soon afterwards Shidabala replaced his father on the Yuan throne to be later known as Yingzong (r. 1321–3). Kebek immediately set out to mend the relations with both the Yuan and the Ilkhanate, where Abū Saʿīd had succeeded Öljeitü already in 1316.

The improvement of the relations between the Chaghadaids and the Ilkhanate came out of their cooperation against Yasawur. Yasawur, a Chaghadaid prince, joined the Ilkhanid ranks in 1316, but rebelled against his new lords in 1319. In summer 1320, the Ilkhanate asked Kebek to assist in quelling this rebellion. Kebek who was on bad terms with Yasawur since 1313, was glad to cooperate. The significant Chaghadaid troops that went against Yasawur convinced most of his senior *amūrs* to abandon him, and he was killed at Herat in late 1320.⁵⁷

Kebek's attempt to restore the peace with the Yuan started by sending back the long-detained messenger, Baiju, a measure that Esen Boqa had also considered but refrained from taking due to the opposition of the Chaghadaid aristocracy. Baiju's message to Yingzong called for stopping all hostile activities. The new Yuan emperor was glad to agree to Kebek's plea, saying:

Taizu [Chinggis Khan] worked hard to establish the empire. The most important thing then was to remain friends and maintain harmony, so that all branches of his descendants could enjoy peace and tranquility.

⁵⁶ Kebek organized the attack on the Chaghadaid Khan Naliqu'a in 1308–9, and reigned for a short while in 1309 before arranging the *quiltai*, which enthroned Esen Boqa in 1310. Throughout his brother's reign he was one of most prominent Chaghadaid generals, acting mainly on the Khurāsāni front. The date of beginning of the Kebek's second reign is open to questions: Barthold placed it in 1318 (Barthold, *Four Studies*, i, pp. 51, 132, based on the fact that Kebek died in 1326 and ruled for 8 years); *The Mission of Marshal Baiju* however, placed his accession in 1320 (the 7th year of Yanyou). Kebek's first appearance in the *Yuan shi* is in late 1321, when it records that the envoys of Kebek khan came to pay tribute several times (YS, 27/615), thereby implying that he must have been established for sometime by this date. The earliest coins inscribed with Kebek's name are from 722/1322–3 (E.E. Oliver, "The Coins of the Chaghatai Mughals," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, 1 [1891], p. 11; M.E. Masson, "Istoricheskaia etiud po numizmatika Djagataiov," *Trudy SAGU*, new series, 111 [1957], pp. 47–49; both quoted in Kato 1991, pp. 117–18.). Naṭanzī claims that Kebek rose to power before the annihilation of Yasawur, which, according to Harawī took place in the summer 720/1320 (Kato 1982, pp. 77–78).

⁵⁷ On Yasawur see Kato 1982, Kato 1991, *passim*.

Yingzong promoted Baiju to the rank of marshal and sent him back to the Chaghadaids to convey Yuan willingness for peace. Kebek was very pleased upon receiving Yingzong's decree, and solemnly declared: "from now on the territories are going to be in peace."⁵⁸

On his way back to Central Asia, however, Baiju heard rumors about a planned Chaghadaid rebellion. He was also aware of an increased presence of the Chaghadaid army near the border. He warned Kebek not to take action or let others spread rumors that might result in losing Yuan favor, and stressed the importance of harmony between the different branches of the Chinggisid family.⁵⁹ In response, Kebek sent loyal generals to govern the border areas, yet his warning to Baiju before the latter's return to China implies that he was aware of the fact that the journey between the Chaghadaid court and the Yuan remained dangerous. Baiju managed to reach Yingzong's palace in the third month of 1321 accompanied by Kebek's envoys.⁶⁰ The Yuan agreed to the peace and welcomed Kebek's tribute missions in the next years, although they also reinforced their guards on the northern frontiers.⁶¹ All this suggests that not all the Chaghadaids shared Kebek's appeasement policy and that his control of the eastern parts of his kingdom was far from perfect. Tension and suspicion on the border continued until 1323, when, after his border troops harassed Yuan frontiers several times, Kebek sent an envoy expressing his wish to surrender. The Yuan emperor was very pleased, declaring:

It is not that I desire their [= the Chaghadaids] land and people, but my subjects were weary of the border unrest and my troops taxed to exhaustion. It was unfortunate. Now that he [Kebek] came to surrender, he should be generously bestowed and put at ease.⁶²

Yingzong therefore made it clear that despite the rumors spread by Abishqa, the Yuan had no intention of swallowing up the Chaghadaid khanate. It recognized its right to exist, but was certainly interested in the pacification of the common borders, which would also lighten the economic burden of the frontier defense. Indeed from 1323 onwards Kebek's envoys arrived annually to bring tribute to the Yuan (mostly domesticated leopards and western horses) and were generously

⁵⁸ Yuan Jue, 34/513.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Yuan Jue, 34/514.

⁶¹ YS, 27/615, 620, 629.

⁶² YS, 28/631–2.

rewarded. In 1325, Kebek also received two ladies of the court to marry.⁶³ These peaceful tributary relations continued also under Kebek's successors.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The main reason for the deterioration of the relations between the Yuan and the Chaghadaids in the decade reviewed above was the contest over the pasturelands in the Yuan-Chaghadai border region. Combined with the rumors about a joint Yuan-Ilkhanate front against the Chaghadaids, and with opposing commercial interests, these reasons led to a broad-scale military conflict on the Yuan-Chaghadai border. In the battlefield, however, the Chaghadaids were quickly defeated by the Yuan border troops. The unequivocal victory of the Yuan forces and their ability to enter deep into the steppe—both very different from the managing of its former conflicts with Central Asia in Qaidu's time⁶⁵—were among the main reasons that convinced Kebek to restore the peace. It seems, however, that in the Chaghadai ranks there was no consensus about the peaceful line, which probably meant acknowledging some of the Yuan territorial gains. This resulted in a few years of small-scale border warfare that continued despite Kebek's efforts for peace, and ended only in 1323. It might be added that Kebek's choice of settling in the western part of his kingdom in Transoxania, might have been connected to the internal opposition of his eastern troops.

The events of the decade reviewed above show that the balance of power between China and Central Asia had changed drastically after the collapse of the Ögödeids in 1310. The migration of a significant amount of nomads from the Ögödeid *ulus* into the Yuan realm and their subjugation to the experienced (mostly Qipchaq) Yuan border commanders, certainly helped the Yuan to defeat the Chaghadaids. Yet, throughout the evolving relations between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan, the two of them, as well as the two other

⁶³ YS, 29/640–644, 648, 653, 658, 669–673.

⁶⁴ See M. Biran, "The Chaghadaids and Islam: The Conversion of Tarmashirin Khan," *JAO* 122/4 (2002), 742–52.

⁶⁵ See Biran, *Qaidu*, ch. 3; Liu Yingsheng, *Xibei minzu shi yu Chahatai Hanguo shi yanjiu* (Nanjing, 1994), pp. 142–98.

Mongol khanates, the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde, continued to see themselves as brother states. The rhetoric of both sides praised the achievements of Chinggis Khan and his heirs and the ideal of retaining Mongol unity and harmony,⁶⁶ though lineage kinship (e.g. the one between Yuan and the Ilkhanate) was still a factor in inter-Mongol relations. Nominally at least, the Yuan still preserved its supremacy as the representative of the great khan *vis-à-vis* the other khanates. The nominal recognition of China's supremacy was not very different from what was often demanded from Central Asia before and after the Mongol period. In Yuan times, however, this supremacy was defined not only in the framework of the tribute system but mainly in the Mongolian-Chinggisid terminology.

Not unlike other periods in Chinese history, in order to get Central Asian acknowledgment, the Yuan first had to prove its supremacy on the field. In the second and third decades of the fourteenth century, Yuan garrisons were skilled enough in nomadic warfare to convince the Central Asian Mongols to seek peace.

⁶⁶ E.g., Yuan Jue, ch. 34/513–4.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

Abishiha (Abishqa)	阿必失哈
Antai shan	按台山 (see also Jin shan)
Aiyulibalibada (Ayurbarwada)	爱育黎拔力八达 (see also Yuan Renzong)
Baiju	拜住
Boluo <i>chengxiang</i>	孛罗丞相
Chabaer (Chapar)	察八兒
Duwa (Du'a)	都哇
Hasan sha	哈散沙
Haidu (Qaidu)	海都
Haishan (Qaishan)	海山 (see also Yuan Wuzhong)
Heshila/lai (Qoshila)	和世剌/琰 (see also Yuan Mingzong)
Hutan (Khotan)	忽炭 (see also Woduan)
Huobo (Qobaq)	霍博、火孛
Huihui	回回
<i>jiancha yushi</i>	監察御史
Jin shan	金山
Keshihaer (Kashgar)	可失哈儿
Kuanjie (Könchek)	宽彻
<i>lingzhi</i>	令旨
Pula (Pulad)	卜剌
Qiebie (Kebek)	怯别
<i>Qincha qinjun duzhi huishi</i>	欽察親軍都指揮使
Renzhong	仁宗 (see also Yuan Renzhong)
Shanxi	陝西
Shidebala	碩德八剌 (see also Yuan Yingzong)
<i>shumiyuan guan</i>	樞密院官
Su Tianjue	苏天爵
<i>Taishi</i>	太师
Taizu	太祖
Talasi (Talas)	塔剌思
Taerbahatai	塔尔巴哈台
Tiemuer Buhua (Temür Boqa)	鉄木兒不花
Tuohuoqi <i>chengxiang</i>	脱火赤丞相
<i>tuotuohe sun</i>	脱脱禾孙
Tutuha	土土哈
Wuluosi (Orus)	斡罗思
Wulusi (Ulus)	兀鲁思

Woduan (Khotan)	斡端
Wuzong	武宗 (see Yuan Wuzhong)
Yan'an	延安
Yanzhijitai (Eljigidei)	燕只吉台
Yebugan (Ebügan)	也不干
Yeerdeshi (Irtish)	也儿的石
Yeli (Herat)	也里
Yesun molian (Esen Müren)	野孫漠連
Yexian buhua (Esen Buqa)	也先不花
Yisiku (Issyk küi)	亦思宽
Yitchaimishi	亦忒海迷失
Yuan	元
Yuan Jue	袁桷
Yuan Mingzong	元明宗
Yuan Renzong	元仁宗
Yuan Wuzhong	元武宗
Yuan Yingzong	元英宗
Yuechichaer	月赤察兒
Yuejibie (Özbeg)	月即別
Yunnan	云南
Zhuangwuer	床兀兒

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THE RESOLUTION OF THE MONGOL-MAMLUK WAR¹

Reuven Amitai

In the year A.D. 1320, a series of negotiations commenced which resulted some three years later in the resolution of the 60 plus year war between the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria and the Ilkhanid kingdom, the Mongol state which ruled over the territory covered by present day Iran and Iraq, most of modern Turkey, the Caucasus region, northern Afghanistan and all of Turkmenistan. This war had commenced in 1260 with the Mamluk victory over the Mongols at 'Ayn Jālūt in Palestine. The Mongol force which actually fought at this battle was a relatively small part of the army of Hülegü, grandson of Chinggis Khan, brother of the Great Khan Möngke and the Mongol commander in south-western Asia. The psychological effects of the victory were great, and it provided much legitimacy to the fledgling Mamluk regime, as well as enabling it to gain possession over most of geographic Syria.

The Mamluk leadership correctly surmised that it was only a question of time before the Mongol offensive was renewed in greater force and thus the real test was yet to come. In 1260, however, the Mamluks could not know that it would take the Ilkhanids, as Hülegü (d. 1265) and his successors were known, twenty one years to renew their offensive in force. The Mamluks, under the vigorous leadership of the sultan Baybars (1260–77), were to put this time to good use by enlarging and training their army, putting in order fortifications, erecting an espionage system, instituting a more efficient civilian

¹ This paper has been some time in gestation: it began as a few pages in my 1985 M.A. thesis, written at the Hebrew University under the supervision of the late Prof. David Ayalon. Later, and somewhat different versions, were presented at the Central and Inner Asian Seminar of the University of Toronto in Sept. 1995, and the Oriental Institute at the University of Oxford, in November 1996. I would like to express my thanks to Dr. George Lane (London) who read an earlier draft; his criticisms helped me to clarify some of my arguments. I am also grateful to Dr. Michal Biran, both for her many useful comments and for having encouraged me to finish the paper.

administration and establishing a wide range of diplomatic relations, not the least with the Mongol khans of the Golden Horde in southern Russia, the cousins and enemies of the Ilkhanids.

From time to time during this three score year long conflict, large-scale battles were fought, generally in the aftermath of a Mongol invasion into Syria. Between these major confrontations, the conflict continued in a form that I have called elsewhere a "cold war." I think that the anachronism is appropriate. The characteristics of this struggle were border raids and counter-raids—at times quite frequent; the wide-spread use of espionage and secret warfare—what in today's parlance would be referred to as "dirty tricks"; propaganda and ideological justification; economic warfare; diplomatic *démarches* to isolate the enemy and bring into play a second front; and finally, the use and manipulation of satellites and minor proxies for tactical gain.

In order to understand better the resolution of the Mamluk-Mongol war, it would be useful to review briefly the main stages of the military and diplomatic aspects of this conflict. The first would be the period from 'Ayn Jālūt to the battle of Homs in 1281 A.D., in which all of the features mentioned above were particularly strong. In general, the Mamluks held the upper hand in both border warfare and in the realm of espionage. The battle of Homs, in which the Mamluks achieved another victory, was the true test that the Mamluk military machine built by Baybars was capable of taking on a large Mongol army.² After the death of Abagha Ilkhan (1265–82), there was a brief hiatus in hostility. Through the initiative of the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder, who reigned for two years and was a convert to Islam, negotiations were opened to end the conflict, but these were to come to naught, not least due to the short reign of this Ilkhan.³ During the reign of Arghun Ilkhan, who ruled from 1284 to 1291, there was little open conflict, but this belies the hostile intentions of the Mongol ruler, who dispatched four missions to the Latin West in an ultimately futile attempt to effect a joint campaign against the common Mamluk enemy.⁴

² For this initial period see R. Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995).

³ See P.M. Holt, "The *Ilkhān* Aḥmad's Embassies to Qalāwūn: Two Contemporary Accounts," *BSOAS*, 49 (1986), pp. 128–32; A. Allouche, "Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (1990), pp. 437–46; R. Amitai, "The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam," *JSAI*, 25 (2001), pp. 15–43.

⁴ On these missions, see J.A. Boyle, "The Il-Khans of Persia and the Princes of Europe," *CAJ*, 20 (1976), pp. 31–37. For the earlier missions of Hülegü and Abagha to the West, see Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, pp. 94–105.

From the early 1290s, the border war began to heat up again, as did the rhetoric of the letters exchanged by the leaders, for instance between Geikhatu Ilkhan (1291–5) and sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl (1290–3).⁵ This trend reached a peak with the three offensives of the Ilkhan Ghazan (1295–1304) into Syria, in 1299, 1300 and 1303. The first resulted in a smashing Mongol victory at Wādī al-Khaznadār near Homs, their only success in a major battle against the Mamluks. In spite of this victory, for reasons which we will not go into here, Ghazan was unable to remain in Syria and after about a hundred days withdrew with his army back to his kingdom. In the winter of 1300, Ghazan tried again to invade Syria, but was driven back by extremely inclement weather. In his last attempt in 1303, in which the Ilkhan himself did not participate, the Mongols were soundly trounced at the battle of Marj al-Şuffar south of Damascus. Ghazan died before he was able to launch a fourth projected campaign. He certainly cannot be faulted for not trying to defeat the Mamluks. It should be mentioned that parallel to his military efforts, this Ilkhan sent several embassies to the West to interest the Latin leaders in a two-fronted attack against their common enemy. Little of substance was to result from his diplomatic efforts.⁶

Ghazan was succeeded in 1304 by his brother Öljeitü, who dispatched conciliatory messages to the Mamluk Sultan. These, however, appear to have been a ruse to gain time, since concurrently the Ilkhan was busy sending embassies to the West to find support for a joint venture against the Mamluks. Be that as it may, at the end of 1312, Öljeitü led an army on an ill-fated invasion attempt of Syria, which floundered on an extended siege of al-Raḥba, a Mamluk border fortress on the Euphrates River. Öljeitü died in 1316 without having achieved his desired assistance from the West or having launched another campaign into Syria.⁷

⁵ Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. M.M. Ziyāda et al. (Cairo, 1934–74), i, p. 786; This information is not found in the entry for A.H. 692 in Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh al-duwal wa’l-mulūk*, vol. viii, ed. Q. Zurayk and N. ‘Izz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1939).

⁶ On these campaigns, see: J.A. Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, ed. J.A. Boyle (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 387–94; R. Amitai, “Whither the Ilkhanid Army? Ghazan’s First Campaign into Syria (1299–1300),” in *Warfare in Inner Asian History*, ed. N. Di Cosmo (Leiden, 2002), pp. 221–64; D. Morgan, in “The Mongols in Syria, 1260–1300,” in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. P. Edbury (Cardiff, 1984), pp. 231–35.

⁷ Boyle, “The Īl-Khāns of Persia and the Princes of Europe,” pp. 38–40.

It was during the reign of his son Abū Saʿīd that peace negotiations were undertaken in 1320, which led to the conclusion of a Mamluk-Ilkhanid peace treaty in 1323. These negotiations are the first focus of the present paper. In the following I shall touch upon three topics: First, I will briefly review the actual events of the peace process itself. This will facilitate the exposition of the second topic: the reasons for this passage from a state of war to one of true peace based on mutual recognition and the renunciation of violence. Finally, I will suggest what appear to me to be the main repercussions of this radical transformation in the nature of relations between the two states on both the Mamluk and Ilkhanid regimes.

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The period immediately after Öljeitü's misconceived attack against al-Rah̄ba in late 1312–early 1313 was one of quiet on the border. After about two years, however, the frontier began to warm up again. In the early spring of 715/1315, the Mamluk army of Syria, reinforced by an expeditionary force from Egypt, attacked and sacked Malatya in Eastern Anatolia.⁸ Also this year, Mamluk troops from Aleppo raided in the Jazīra, although there is some disagreement about the size of the forces involved, the target and time; conceivably more than one could have taken place.⁹ The Mamluk Sultan al-Malik al-

⁸ Bektash al-Fakhrī, in K. Zetterstéen (ed.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlükensultane* (Leiden, 1919), p. 162; Abū Bakr b. ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar*, vol. ix: *al-Kanz al-fākhīr fī sirat al-malik al-nāṣir*, ed. H.R. Roemer (Cairo, 1960), pp. 284–85; Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī taʾrīkh al-bashar* (Istanbul, 1286/1869–70), iv, pp. 77–78 [= P.M. Holt (tr. and ed.), *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abu'l-Fidaʾ, Sultan of Hamāh (672–732/1273–1331)* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 67–68]; Mufaḍḍal ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, *al-Nahj al-sadiḍ waʾl-durr al-farīd fī mā baʿd ibn al-ʿamīd (Histoire des sultans mamlouks)*, ed. and tr. E. Blochet (in “Patrologia orientalis,” vols. 12, 14, 20) (Paris, 1919–28), pp. 749–54 (of continuous pagination); Abū al-Fidāʾ ʿAbdallāh ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya waʾl-nihāya fī al-taʾrīkh* (rpt., Beirut, 1977), xiv, p. 73; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 1923–97), xxxii, pp. 217–19; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, pp. 139, 143–44. See also C. Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger: The Role of the Ismaʿilis in Mamlūk-Mongol Relations in the 8th/14th Century,” in *Medieval Ismaʿili History and Thought*, ed. F. Daftary (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 251–52.

⁹ Ibn Kathīr, xiv, p. 74, reports that in Shaʿbān (Nov. 1315), 5,000 troops raided area of Āmid; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb duwal al-islām* (Haydarābād, 1364–5/1964–6), ii, p. 168, notes briefly an attack on a castle in this area; al-Nuwayrī, xxxii, 225, reports a Mamluk attack against a castle near Malaytā; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 147, notes that a force of 600 horsemen raided in the area of Mārdīn and Dunaysir; Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, ed. Blochet, pp. 745–46, recounts a raid *s.a.* 714 against Dunaysir. Blochet, the editor of Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil

Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalawun had taken advantage of Öljeitü's pre-occupations on his northeastern frontier with the Chaghadaid Khanate, which had commenced in 1314 and continued almost until this Ilkhan's death in late 1316.¹⁰

The Mongols too were interested in keeping the frontier unsettled. Just before the Ilkhan's demise in 716/1316, the Mongols launched a raid of their own into northern Syria, when a thousand of their horsemen attacked the fringes of the province of Aleppo; these raiders were, however, repulsed by the local Turcomen.¹¹ This same year, a Mongol force penetrated to the vicinity of the border fortress of al-Bīra in pursuit of another group of Turcomen, who joined up with the garrison of al-Bīra and inflicted a defeat on the Mongols.¹² More importantly, Öljeitü was able to exploit the growing rift between sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Bedouin leader of northern Syria, Muḥannā b. ʿĪsā of the Āl Faḍl, thus helping to increase the instability in the critical frontier region to the west of the Euphrates.¹³ Finally, the Ilkhan even attempted to send an expeditionary force to Mecca, in order to intervene on the side of one of the claimants to the throne there from among the local ruling family, the Banū Qatāda. Nothing came of this expedition, as it disbanded when news reached it of Öljeitü's death in December 1316.¹⁴ Taken all together, there is no indication that the last years of Öljeitü's reign represented a softening

(p. 745, note 4), expresses astonishment that the Mamluks attacked since they were "in full peace" (*en pleine paix*) with the Mongols. This statement is wrong for two reasons: 1) Theoretically the Mamluk-Mongol war was still continuing in full force; and 2) just three years previously, the Mamluks had suffered a full-scale attack against their border.

¹⁰ Boyle, "History of the Īl-Khāns," pp. 404–5; R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, tr. N. Walford (New Brunswick, 1970), p. 386; for distorted reports of these developments in the Mamluk sources, see: Ibn al-Dawādārī, ix, pp. 250–1; Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, ed. Blochet, p. 740.

¹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 162. Al-Nuwayrī, xxxii, p. 225, reported that Bedouins and Mongols raided north Syria at the end of 715/1316.

¹² Abū al-Fidāʾ, iv, p. 84 [= tr. Holt, p. 73].

¹³ These events are described ever so briefly in A.S. Tritton, "The Tribes of Syria in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *BSOAS*, 12 (1948), pp. 568–69; M.A. Hiyari, "The Origins and Development of the Amirate of the Arabs during the Seventh/Thirteenth and Eighth/Fourteenth Centuries," *BSOAS*, 28 (1975), pp. 518–19. For a general discussion of the importance of the north Syrian Bedouins (*al-ʿarab* or *al-ʿurbān*) in the defense of the Euphrates frontier, see D. Ayalon, "The Auxiliary Forces of the Mamlūk Sultanate," *Der Islam*, 65 (1988), pp. 23–28, 33–35; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, pp. 64–69.

¹⁴ C. Melville, "The Year of the Elephant: Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abū Saʿīd (1317–1335)," *Studia Iranica*, 21 (1992), pp. 199–201.

of the belligerency towards the Mamluks, although it is clear that he himself was incapable of planning and executing an effective offensive against these enemies.¹⁵

Öljeitü's son and successor, the 12 year old Abū Saʿīd, together with his guardian Chūpān—the strongman of the regime—soon had to deal with a series of troubles. In 718/1318, they faced a rebellion of a governor in Khurasan (the Chaghadaid Yasaʿur), while almost simultaneously they were confronted by an invasion via the Darband in the Caucasus from the Golden Horde. The invaders were repulsed and the rebellion was put down, but later this year the young Ilkhan and Chūpān were faced with an out and out mutiny among many of the senior Mongol officers. This uprising was defeated only with great difficulty. One of its results was the emergence of Chūpān as the undisputed strongman of the kingdom.¹⁶ These difficulties, together with the problems inherent in a change of rulers, might well explain why there were no Mongol-inspired activities along the borders during these years. It was, however, also possible that a new wind was blowing among some of the Mongol leadership and it was already beginning to make its effects felt. I will return to this point below.

From the Mamluk perspective, however, there is at first glance little to indicate that a change was in the offing. In June 1317 (early Rabīʿ II 717), a Mamluk force from Aleppo raided Āmid, or present-day Diyarbakir, wreaking great havoc.¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī writes *sub anno* A.H. 718 (1318), that when the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad learnt of the troubles that his neighbors were facing he was overjoyed since this

¹⁵ Öljeitü, however, was capable of restraint on the Mamluk front: in 715, he met the Mamluk renegade Qara Sunqur (see below for him) in Baghdad. The latter wanted to take an army to raid Syria, but the Ilkhan did not grant him permission to do so.

¹⁶ Boyle, "History of the Īl-Khāns," pp. 408–9; C. Melville, "Wolf or Shepherd? Amir Choban's Attitude to Government," in *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290–1340* (= *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art*, XII), ed. J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (Oxford, 1996), pp. 79–93; *idem*, "Abū Saʿīd and the Revolt of the Amirs in 1319," in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. D. Aigle (Teheran, 1997), pp. 89–120.

¹⁷ Abū al-Fidāʾ, iv, 84 [= tr. Holt, pp. 73–74]. As will be seen below, several Persian sources note that in 718/1318–9 the Mamluks launched an attack against Diyār Bakr. This may be referring the same Mamluk raid against Āmid in 1317 mentioned by Abū al-Fidāʾ. Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, in S. Kortantamer (ed. and tr.), *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341 in der Chronik des Mufaḍḍal b. Abū l-Faḍāʾil* (Freiburg, 1973), p. 10, also mentions that as late as 720/1320–1 there were plans to send a raid against Sinjār, but this was called off because of a lack of cooperation with the Syrian Bedouins.

would lead to their weakening.¹⁸ The Mamluks took advantage of the preoccupation of their traditional enemies in order to widen their influence beyond their borders. Mamluk authority was at least formally recognized, not for the first time, by the Karamanid Turcomen of southeastern Anatolia around October 1318 (Shaʿbān 718).¹⁹ In May–June 1320 (Rabīʿ II 720), the Mamluk army of Syria launched yet another raid into Lesser Armenia, whose king was still a loyal ally of the Ilkhans, and in spite of some initial setbacks, caused much damage.²⁰

Yet in spite of this evidence of continued hostilities, some indication of an early thaw in the relations between these two traditional enemies may be found in some evidence related by al-Maqrīzī. The first is *sub anno* A.H. 716 (1316–17): among the eight different foreign embassies which visited the Mamluk court that year were those of Chūpān and Abū Saʿīd, which are listed as two separate missions. Like the other embassies, they expressed their “obedience” (*tāʿa*) to the Sultan.²¹ This evidence is not without its problems: firstly, there is the lack of any mention of this embassy in a contemporary source. Secondly, the “expression of obedience” is a sort of standard phrase found in the Mamluk sources when foreign envoys show up at court.²² Thirdly, it is difficult to imagine that all those mentioned in the list—which included envoys of the Byzantine emperor and the ruler of Barcelona—were expressing obedience to the Sultan. This same author brings additional information from the annal of the next year, when the international slave merchant al-Majd al-Sallāmī—about whom more will be said presently—sent a letter containing information of an “announcement for peace” (*adhān . . . liʿl-ṣulḥ*) from Abū Saʿīd, the wazīr ʿAlī Shāh, Chūpān and other senior Mongol officers; in addition, Rashīd al-Dīn—the other wazīr—who appears to have

¹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 184. The internal conflicts mentioned above were probably the reason behind the arrival (end of Shaʿbān 717/November 1317) of another group of Mongol refugees (*wāfidiyya*) led by Tatai (Ṭāṭāy), numbering some 100 families (*ibid.*, ii, p. 174; al-Nuwayrī, xxxii, p. 254). In 718/1318–9, the governor of Khartput in Mongol controlled territory arrived in Cairo and was made an officer (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 185).

¹⁹ Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, ed. Kortantamer, p. 6; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, pp. 185–86.

²⁰ Abū al-Fidaʾ, iv, pp. 90–91 [tr. Holt, p. 79]; Ibn Kathīr, xiv, p. 96; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 203 (cf. *ibid.*, ii, p. 185, where a raid to Lesser Armenia is mentioned s.a. 718).

²¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, 163–64.

²² See the comments in D. Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān. A Reexamination,” part C1, *Studia Islamica*, 36 (1972), p. 140 [rpt. in D. Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam* (London, 1988), article no. IV].

been in disfavor at this point, sent a present. In return, a splendid gift was dispatched by the Sultan, but no mention is made of an answer to this path-breaking expression by the Mongol leadership.²³ Again, as far I can tell, no other source, contemporary or otherwise provides us with corroborating evidence. Given this fact, as well as al-Maqrīzī's occasional lapses of accuracy—intentionally or out of carelessness²⁴—I am reluctant to accept this information at face value. One of two possibilities remains: either al-Maqrīzī has mixed up his chronology and facts here, or we have here a reflection, perhaps inaccurately conveyed, of the early stirrings of a peace movement among various sectors of the elite of the Ilkhanid state, or at least the opening of communications between the two ostensibly hostile powers. Worthy of mention in this connection is the arrival of pilgrims from Iraq to the *hajj* of A.H. 718 and 719 (1318 and 1319). There had been cases of pilgrims coming from Mongol controlled territory before, but the *hajj* caravan of 1319 included Mongols themselves, a first time occurrence as far as I am aware. These were presented to the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who was himself making his second pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁵ This incident is certainly indicative of a softening of hostility between the two long-standing enemies, and may have contributed to the strengthening of this trend.

In what appears to be the first real diplomatic *démarche* by the Ilkhanids, the international slave merchant al-Majd al-Sallāmī arrived at the Mamluk court at the end of 720/beginning of 1321 bringing splendid gifts and a detailed proposal for a peace agreement (*ṣulḥ*) between the two kingdoms. The position of al-Sallāmī, a purveyor of young mamluks for the Mamluk sultan, was unique. Plying his trade across the Euphrates, he maintained warm relations with the elites of both the Mamluk and Ilkhanid state.²⁶ There is information

²³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 175; this mission is mentioned by Melville, "Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz," p. 202. For Rashīd al-Dīn's fall from grace at this time, see R. Amitai-Preiss, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources for the Biography of Rashīd al-Dīn," in *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290–1340*, eds. Raby and Fitzherbert, pp. 23–37.

²⁴ For this matter, see R. Amitai, "Al-Maqrizi as a Historian of the Early Mamluk Sultanate (or: Is al-Maqrizi an Unrecognized Historiographical Villain?)," *Mamluk Studies Review*, 7/2 (2003), pp. 99–118; D. Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān. A Reexamination," part C2, *Studia Islamica*, 38 (1973), pp. 107–23.

²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, pp. 190, 197; Dhahabī, ii, p. 172. For earlier pilgrims from the Ilkhanate, see Ibn Kathīr, xiv, pp. 69, 84; Ibn Abū al-Faḍā'il, ed. Blochet p. 791; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, pp. 212–13.

²⁶ On him, see D. Ayalon, *L'esclavage du mamlouk* (Jerusalem, 1951), p. 3 [rpt. in D. Ayalon, *The Mamlūk Military Society* (London, 1979), article no. Ij].

that he had “fostered friendly contacts between ‘Alī Shāh [the Ilkhanid wazir] and the [Mamluk] *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* [director of the Sultan’s private fisc], Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr.”²⁷ He was thus eminently suited to act as a mediator in the initial contacts between the Sultan and the Ilkhan. It might be added, however, that al-Sallāmī’s role was more complex: there is some evidence in the Mamluk sources that his trips and missions served as covers for assassins dispatched by the Sultan to attack the Mamluk renegade Qara Sunqur,²⁸ and he knew of and abetted at least some of these activities.²⁹

Upon arriving in Cairo in early 1321, al-Sallāmī related that Chūpān and the notables of the Mongol kingdom wanted peace, thus indicating both the lack of an important role played by the young khan in this major decision and the collective nature of this move. There is some confusion in the sources whether al-Sallāmī brought the letter himself, or if it arrived separately with another envoy or envoys.³⁰ In any event, the important point is that it appears that the leadership of the Ilkhanate had embarked on a peace initiative, calling on the Mamluk Sultan to establish normal relations. According to al-Maqrīzī, the proposal sent in the name of Abū Saʿīd contained the following points:

1. No more assassins (*fidāwiyya*) would be dispatched from the Mamluk state, presumably to attack the Mamluk renegade Qara Sunqur.

²⁷ Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” p. 252, citing Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī al-‘Aynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān fī taʾrīkh ahl al-zamān*, MS. Topkapı Sarayı (Istanbul), Ahmet III, 2912/4, fols. 329b–330a. For Karīm al-Dīn, see D.P. Little, “Notes on the Early *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, eds. T. Philipp and U. Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 242–47. On pp. 244–45, Little cites al-‘Aynī, fol. 344a, who states that Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was instrumental in bringing peace between the Mongols and the Mamluks.

²⁸ On this colorful and important personality, see G. Wiet, “Un réfugié mam-louk à la cour mongole de Perse,” in *Mélanges d’orientalisme offerts à Henri Massé à l’oc-casion de son 75^{ème} anniversaire* (Teheran, 1963), pp. 388–404; D.P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography* (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 114–25.

²⁹ See Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” pp. 252–55. It is suggested by these sources that the various attempts to kill Qara Sunqur were decisive in convincing the Mongols to seek a peace treaty, although why this is so is not made explicit. In any event, Qara Sunqur’s importance at the Ilkhan’s court is made clear by the prominence with which he is made in the Mongol peace proposal, as will be soon seen.

³⁰ First version: Zetterstéen, p. 171; Abū al-Fidāʾ, iv, pp. 92–93 [= tr. Holt, p. 81]; Ibn Kathīr, xiv, p. 97. Second version: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 209. The last men-tioned source adds that this Mongol envoy was robbed on the way by one of the Bedouin leaders of the Āl Muḥannā of north Syria; cf. Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, ed. Kortantamer, pp. 11–12.

2. There would be no demands to extradite those who had fled from Egypt, i.e. again the reference was to Qara Sunqur along with his associates.
3. Likewise, all those who had left the Ilkhanate for the Sultanate would not have to return unless they so desired.
4. No more raids of Bedouin (*al-ʿarab*) or Turcomen would be launched against Mongol territory.
5. The roads between the two kingdoms would be opened and merchants would travel without restriction.
6. A *ḥajj* caravan, carrying a *maḥmal* (decorated, ceremonial litter), would come from Iraq every year to the Hejaz, under the flags of both the king of Egypt and Abū Saʿīd.
7. Again, for good measure, it is mentioned explicitly that there would be no request to extradite Qara Sunqur.³¹

This proposal was accepted by the Sultan, after he had consulted with his senior amirs. It is likely that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had evidence, possibly from al-Majd al-Sallāmī himself, that the Mongols meant what they said and this was not a ploy to get the Mamluks to lower their guard. It would appear that the readiness of the Mamluk leadership to accept this proposal, was due to its perception that the Mongols were willing to discard their age-old demands for unconditional Mamluk surrender, as expressed in the many letters which they had sent to the Sultans during the preceding years.³² In other words, after 60 years of hostility, the Mongols were ready to accept the *status quo*. According to al-Maqrīzī, the Mongol envoys were returned with lavish gifts, which cost 40,000 dinars, while al-Sallāmī was sent on ahead via postal horses to announce the return of these envoys.³³

Although a couple of years were to pass until this agreement was finally ratified by both sides, its effects were soon felt. The number

³¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, pp. 209–10. A more detailed version of this is given in al-ʿAynī, fol. 328b, cited by Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” pp. 254–55.

³² For earlier Ilkhanid missions to the Mamluks, see Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, ch. 5; *idem*, “An Exchange of Letters in Arabic between Abaya Īlkhān and Sultan Baybars (A.H. 667/A.D. 1268–9),” *CAJ*, 38 (1994), pp. 11–33; Allouche, “Tegüder’s Ultimatum to Qalawun”; H. Horst, “Eine Gesandtschaft des Mamlken al-Malik al-Nāṣir im Īlḫānhof in Persien,” in *Der Orient in der Forschung: Festschrift für Otto Spies*, ed. W. Hoenerbach (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 348–70.

³³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 210. Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” p. 254, shows that al-Sallāmī continued to assist al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s assassins in their attempt to kill Qara Sunqur.

of visitors from the “eastern country” (*bilād al-sharq*), i.e., territory controlled by the Ilkhan, increased dramatically. The *hajj* caravan bringing pilgrims from Iraq and western Iran, which arrived this year, requested and received a sultanic banner to carry with them.³⁴ In early 1321 (Ṣafar 721), an important Mongol named Shubuĵi (?) arrived in Cairo. This personality, a relative (perhaps an uncle) of Abū Saʿīd, was well received and then returned home.³⁵ Around that same time, another gift arrived from Abū Saʿīd. About half a year later, the Sultan sent expensive presents to the Ilkhan, via al-Sallāmī who had meanwhile managed to return to Egypt since his dispatch to Iran at the end of the previous year.³⁶ This same year envoys arrived from Chūpān, asking for the grant of an abandoned estate, which he wished to revitalize in order to turn it into *waqf* for the sake of the Ḥaram in Mecca. This request was answered in the affirmative, and the necessary documents were sent off to him.³⁷

These examples of the growing contact between the two states show how quickly relations warmed up once the sides had embarked on a course of peace making. It appears, then, that the end of hostilities and its formalization in a peace treaty was something whose time had finally come. It is interesting to note that the *de facto* end of hostilities did not bring about the cessation of Mongols leaving the Ilkhanate to immigrate to the Sultanate: in 721/1321, Bawur b. Baraju, a Mongol officer arrived in Cairo, and was well-received and made an amir (officer) of 40 in the Mamluk army.³⁸

³⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 211; Ibn Kathīr, xiv, pp. 97–98.

³⁵ Zetterstéen, p. 171.

³⁶ Ibn Kathīr, xiv, pp. 98–99; Ibn Abū al-Faḍāʾil, ed. Kortantamer, p. 15.

³⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 230; cf. the comments in Melville, “Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz,” p. 205. It can be noted at this juncture that the contemporary and well placed al-Nuwayrī (xxxiii, 12) provides only a general description of these events. In the entry of A.H. 721, he notes that al-Sallāmī arrives at the Mamluk courts with a letter from Abū Saʿīd (no details are given of its contents). Afterwards, on the 29th of Muḥarram (28 Feb. 1321), luxurious presents arrived from that quarter. The Sultan sent appropriate gifts back. Elsewhere (*ibid.*, xxvii, p. 420), in the section devoted to the Mongols, al-Nuwayrī while briefly describing the early reign of Abū Saʿīd, that the latter’s envoys brought presents to al-Nāṣir, who returned the gesture. Peace and agreement thus came about. Al-Nuwayrī then adds an interesting comment: “This is what came down to use on the information of the Mongols at the time of the writing of this composition. Whatever news regarding them comes to us after this, we will bring to the information of the reign of al-Nāṣir in Egypt, at the end of this book . . .”.

³⁸ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʿyān al-miʿa al-thāmina* (Ḥaydarābād, 1392–6/1973–6), ii, p. 4 (no. 1273); al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 215.

In Rabīʿ I 722/April 1322, a Mongol mission arrived in Cairo, under Shubuġi who had come the previous year in a private capacity (possibly there is confusion in the sources about the dating of this mission) and the Qadi of Tabriz. Among the messages brought by this embassy was a request to send boxers (*mulākimūn*) from Egypt to Iran, giving us an example of an early form of cultural exchange.³⁹ More to the point, the request not to send assassins was repeated, and it was now suggested that defectors should indeed be handed back. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was opposed to this, “but otherwise responded favorably, agreeing to all of Abū Saʿīd’s proposals, to which he added some of his own. The most important of these was that al-Nāṣir’s name should be mentioned in the *khuṭba* [weekly sermon] alongside Abū Saʿīd’s, and that al-Sallāmī should be established in the Mongol *ordu* [royal camp] as the sultan’s official merchant, to purchase *mamlūks* and slaves.”⁴⁰

The Sultan responded by sending his trusted personal mamluk, Aytamish (perhaps < Etmish).⁴¹ In the next few years, Aytamish—who himself was of Mongol origin—was to become the Sultan’s main envoy to the Ilkhanid court, as well as his advisor on Mongol affairs, since he knew Mongolian and was knowledgeable in their customs and lore. Abū Saʿīd was eventually to request that only Aytamish be sent to him as an intermediary with the Sultan.⁴² Aytamish was the first “official” envoy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, as opposed to al-Majd al-Sallāmī. The ostensible reason for this mission was the ratification of the peace treaty (*ʿiqd al-ṣulḥ*) between the two rulers. Aytamish also brought with him another lavish gift for the Ilkhan.⁴³

At the beginning of 1323 (723), Aytamish returned to Cairo to inform the Sultan that Abū Saʿīd had ratified the agreement and this

³⁹ Zetterstéen, p. 172; Ibn Dawādārī, ix, p. 308. Cf. al-Nuwayrī, xxxiii, p. 40, who gives some different details: the leader of the delegation was the officer Ḥusayn b. Shādī b. Sonjaq, who was accompanied by an equerry (*amīr ākhūr*) and the chief qadi of Tabriz; no details of their request are given.

⁴⁰ Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” p. 254, citing al-ʿAynī, fol. 339b.

⁴¹ On him see Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān,” Part C2, pp. 131–45; D.P. Little, “Notes on Aitamiš, a Mongol Mamlūk,” in *Der islamischen Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. U. Haarmann and P. Bachmann (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 387–401.

⁴² Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi biʾl-wafayāt*, ed. H. Ritter et al. (Wiesbaden, 1931–), ix, p. 440; Aḥmad b. Yahyā ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī, *al-Taʾrīf fi muṣṭalah al-sharīf* (Cairo, 1312/1894–5), p. 47; Ibn Ḥajar, i, pp. 504–5 (no. 1112);

⁴³ Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” pp. 254–55, citing al-ʿAynī, fol. 345b. See also al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 237.

had been announced in the mosques of Tabriz. Aytamish also brought with him the text of the “oath [for keeping] the peace” (*nuskhat al-amān*) from Abū Saʿīd and the wazīr ʿAlī Shāh.⁴⁴ Several months later, envoys of the Ilkhan arrived, in order to swear al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, or in other words, to perform what Aytamish had done among the Mongols. They, of course, brought with them all types of gifts, and read a letter from the Ilkhan which praised the establishment of peace. These envoys were well received and returned to Abū Saʿīd with presents, along it would seem with the Sultan’s oath.⁴⁵ During this year, the hero of the whole affair, al-Majd al-Sallāmī, returned to Egypt, not surprisingly bearing more presents. For his efforts to bring about peace, al-Sallāmī was awarded a grant (*masmūḥ*) of 50,000 dinars per year, as well as an exemption from the custom duties on half of his merchandise. He immediately returned to Tabriz.⁴⁶ In short, 1323 was the year in which the negotiations came to fruition and the 60 year long war between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanid Mongols finally ended.

An observant reader will have noted that almost the entire description of the peace process between the Mamluks and Mongols has been based on contemporary and later Arabic sources written in the Mamluk Sultanate. This lacuna is due neither to myopia nor undue laziness on the author’s part, but rather to the dearth of relevant evidence in the more-or-less contemporary Persian language sources composed in the territory of the Ilkhanate,⁴⁷ or later Persian works.⁴⁸ It should be mentioned that some of the best-known Persian sources for

⁴⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, pp. 241–42.

⁴⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, pp. 245–46; Abū al-Fidāʾ, iv, p. 95 [= tr. Holt, p. 83]; Zetterstéen, p. 173; see also Melville, “Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger,” p. 255, citing al-ʿAynī, fol. 344a.

⁴⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ii, p. 246.

⁴⁷ Ḥamdallāh Qazwīnī Mustawfī, *Ẓafarnāmah*, in L.J. Ward, “The Ẓafarnāmah of Ḥamd Allāh Qazwīnī Mustawfī and the Il-Khān [*sic*] Dynasty of Iran,” Ph.D. dissertation (University of Manchester, 1983); Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Shabānkārāʾī, *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, ed. M.H. Muḥaddith (Teheran, 1376S). A younger contemporary is Abū Bakr al-Quṭbī Āhrī (or Āharī), *Taʾrīkh-i shaykh uways*, ed. and tr. J.-B. van Loon (The Hague, 1954).

⁴⁸ Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, *Dhayl-i jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh-i rashīdī*, ed. Kh. Bayānī, 2nd edn. (Teheran, 1350S/1971) (= K. Bayani [tr.], *Chronique des rois mongols en Iran* [Paris, 1936]); Muʿīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, *Mukhtakhāb al-tawārīkh-i muʿīnī*, ed. J. Aubin (Teheran, 1337S/1957); Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd, *Tārīkh rawḍat al-ṣafā* (Teheran, 1339S); Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Ḥumām al-Dīn Khwāndamir, *Ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār-i afrād-i bashar* (Teheran, 1353S) (= Khwandamir, *Habīb-us-siyar. Tome Three: The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk*, tr. and ed. W.M. Thackston [Cambridge, MA, 1994]); Faṣīḥ Aḥmad b. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Khwāfī, *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* (Mashhad, 1339–41).

the Ilkhanate have ceased reporting before the events described above.⁴⁹

It is certainly possible that I have missed some tidbits of evidence in these or other works, but this would not change the fundamental picture of the silence of the Persian authors regarding what appears to be a development of momentous proportions. The dissonance between the loquaciousness of the Mamluk sources and the complete reticence of the Ilkhanid and later Persian sources is striking.

What is particularly notable in this connection is that the Persian sources are capable of reporting certain events in the realm of Mamluk-Ilkhanid relations before and after the peace process. From the former, there is mention of a Mamluk attack against Diyār Bakr in 718/1318–9,⁵⁰ which may be the same attack reported by Abū al-Fidā' during the previous year (see above). About the latter, we receive a clear picture of the desertion of Temürtāsh the son of Chūpān to the Sultanate in ca. 1328, and the role played by the Mamluk sultan in his subsequent execution.⁵¹ It seems then that Persian writers were aware of developments in relations with the Mamluk Sultanate, and thus the lapse in reporting about the peace of 1323 is not due to general ignorance on that front.

Two possibilities thus present themselves: either the Persian authors did not consider the peace process "newsworthy," or the information about it was deliberately ignored or even suppressed. Given the apparent significance of this development, I find the first possibility the more unlikely of the two: if a small-scale raid on an somewhat unimportant frontier region two-three years before the process is noted, then surely the same sources would have found a series of delegations and negotiations which would completely change the foreign relations of the Ilkhanate an item of some importance. It appears that we are left with the second choice: Ilkhanate authors, who were tied in various ways to the court or administration, seemingly cast a blind eye over the events of 1320–23, and in their wake came the later Persian authors of the Timurid period. I will return to this point below.

⁴⁹ Most notable are Rashīd al-Dīn, whose *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* concludes with the end of Ghazan's reign in 1304; and, Qāshānī's *Tārīkh-i uljāyū*, which obviously only deals with Öljeitü's reign (1303–16). Waṣṣāf, *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-aṣṣār* (= *Tārīkh-i waṣṣāf al-ḥadrat*) (reprint of Bombay, 1269/1852), only runs up to about A.D. 720.

⁵⁰ Mustawfī, tr. Ward, pp. 626–27; Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, p. 133 (= tr., p. 63).

⁵¹ Mustawfī, tr. Ward, p. 665; Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, p. 180 (= tr., p. 107); Mīrkhwānd, v, pp. 525–26; Khwāndamīr, iii, p. 214 (= tr. Thackston, i, p. 122); Naṭanzī, p. 144; Faṣīḥ, iii, p. 39.

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It was important to describe the actual peace process in some detail, since this shows that this was not just the *de facto* recognition of a changing political and military situation, or merely a new *status quo* which came about of its own accord, when hostilities died down. Rather, we are dealing here with organized negotiations, originally carried out by a more-or-less honest broker and completed by official representatives of the two sides. These mediations led finally to the transition from a state of hostility to a ratified peace agreement in 1323, and resulted not only in the end of the military conflict, but in recognized and open borders, the continual exchange of ambassadors, and on the whole good will; it can be admitted, however, that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's continual attempts to assassinate Qara Sunqur did at times put a damper on things.⁵² These are all topics worthy of further discussion, but are beyond the realm of the present paper. In the space which remains, I will first discuss the reasons for the peace initiative and then one aspect of its implications.

It should be clear that the first peace initiative had to come from the Mongols. The Mamluks had been fighting for some 60 years to maintain their rule and to preserve the integrity of their kingdom. While it is true that they vigorously pursued both the border war and espionage across the frontier, these were essentially forms of active defense, aimed at reducing the ability of the Mongols to attack Syria. With the one exception of Baybars' incursion into Anatolia in 1277 (which included his victory at Abulustayn), all major Ilkhanid-Mamluk confrontations were brought about by Mongol campaigns into Syria, whose aims were the destruction of the one regime which not only steadfastly refused to capitulate to the Mongols but even succeeded in resisting them time after time. Virtually, all rounds of diplomatic activity before 1320 were essentially Mongol demands to the Mamluks to surrender unconditionally.⁵³ Since the Mamluk sultans had no intention of doing so, their own messages to the Ilkhans were generally truculent (although sometimes in veiled language). Knowing

⁵² Melville, "Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger," pp. 255–58.

⁵³ I am of course disregarding the short interlude with Aḥmad Tegüder, of which there were no real results, and which as Allouche has shown was only a veiled ultimatum. Another exception would be the letter sent by Öljeitü in 704/1305, but I have suggested above that this was a ploy to gain time until he had arranged a joint campaign with the west.

the state of things among the Mongol leadership, the sultans never bothered initiating a diplomatic exchange in the hope of ending hostilities. When, indeed, the Mamluk sultan and his senior amirs perceived ca. 1320 a real change among the Mongols, which included the recognition of the Mamluk Sultan as a legitimate ruler, as well as accepting the *status quo* along the Euphrates, they, of course, were only too happy to respond in kind.

What brought about the change in Mongol attitudes? Unfortunately, the sources have left us little evidence to go on. As stated above, the Persian-language sources which would have reflected the views of the Mongol court are particularly unhelpful, since they are silent on the whole peace process. In lieu of explicit evidence, I will offer the following explanation, which I admit is somewhat speculative.

I would suggest that at some stage at least part of the Mongol elite, including Chūpān, began to consider how worthwhile it was to keep up the war with the Mamluks. The not too distant memories of Ghazan's wars with the Mamluks would have taught them that even when they won on the battlefield, they were still unable to permanently occupy Syria, the minimal Mongol strategic goal. It was also seen that the cooperation with the Latin rulers of Europe remained an unfulfilled wish. The rather sorry performance of the Mongol army at al-Raḥba in 712/1312–3 certainly did not contribute to Mongol morale. One conclusion which might have been drawn from all of this was that the Mongols would never defeat the Mamluks in battle. At the same time, it is possible that some Mongols even saw the advantage to be gained from the end of hostilities, not the least increased trade.⁵⁴ In the weaning of the Mongol elite from the Mongol imperial ideal to that of political realism the senior members of the Persian bureaucracy, such as Rashīd al-Dīn and 'Alī Shāh—as well as the trusted merchant al-Majd al-Sallāmī—certainly played a role. The final decision, however, surely was taken by the Mongols themselves.⁵⁵

Several additional points can be made here. Firstly, it appears that

⁵⁴ I would not go as far as the Little, *Introduction*, pp. 114–15, 131, who suggests that a major shift in attitudes can be discerned not only among the Mongols but also among the Mamluks for some time. See R. Amitai-Preiss, "Northern Syria between the Mongols and Mamluks: Political Boundary, Military Frontier and Ethnic Commonality," in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands c. 700–1700*, ed. N. Standen and D. Power (London, 1999), pp. 128–52, esp. 146–49.

⁵⁵ See D. Morgan, "Who Ran the Mongol Empire," *JRAS*, 1982, no. 2, pp. 124–37, esp. p. 133.

at this early stage, the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd played a primarily passive role in the whole peace process, as it was Chūpān who made most of the decisions during these years. Mamluk writers were certainly aware of the Ilkhan's secondary role.⁵⁶ However, Abū Saʿīd's friendly attitude towards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad after he eliminated Chūpān in 1327, would indicate that he had probably supported Chūpān's policies in their early stages. Secondly, there is little evidence of opposition among the Mongol elite to this reconciliation with the Mamluks. This, taken together with the above mentioned record of support of the Mongol notables at the early stage of the negotiations, indicates that Chūpān seems to have had the majority of the Mongol ruling strata behind him.

Thirdly, and most important, this changing attitude towards the Mamluks and the waning enthusiasm for a state of permanent war with them is certainly indicative of a more fundamental transformation among the ruling group of the Mongols themselves. The questions of the transformation of Mongol society in the Middle East and the decline of the Ilkhanid state, are weighty ones. A detailed analysis of these matters is beyond the scope of this paper, and I will thus be brief. It can be expected *a priori* that the long term residence of the Mongols in Iran and its surrounding countries would in certain ways decisively influence the Mongols, or at least parts of them, not the least the elite. The contact with the rich sedentary culture of Iran and the Muslim Turkish society—much of it still nomadic—which was already in place when the Mongols arrived might well have altered much of the values of steppe society, again at least among the ruling strata. Actual proof for this change in world outlook is seen by the events, which I have described above: the willingness of the Mongol leaders to accept the existence of their traditional enemies, to compromise with them and to relinquish the idea of conquest and expansion, the basis of the Mongol imperial ideal.⁵⁷ We have here,

⁵⁶ Ibn Hajar, ii, p. 92 (no. 1426): *wa-kāna aʿzam al-asbāb fī taqrīr al-ṣulḥ bayn bū saʿīd waʾl-nāṣir*; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiz waʾl-ʾitibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaʾ waʾl-āthār* (Bulaq, 1270/1853–4), ii, p. 43.

⁵⁷ For the ideological justification of the Mongol empire and its expansion, see R. Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. R. Amitai-Preiss and D. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), p. 62 and the literature cited there in note 20, to which can be added the discussion in A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 2nd edn. (Madison, 1994), p. 239.

then, an indication that these were not the same Mongols who had rolled off the steppe several decades before.

Whether these changes percolated down the ranks of the tribesmen remains an open question. We have some *prima facie* evidence of how the Mongol rank and file, or rather the Mongol and Turkish soldiery, had indeed undergone some transformation during the period of the Ilkhanate. The mid-fourteenth century Mamluk encyclopediast al-'Umarī wrote as follows: "The Persians have joined up with the Mongols, given their daughters to them in marriage and taken their daughters in marriage, and became mixed with them in matters [of life]."⁵⁸ It is unclear, however, to which time exactly this evidence is referring: around 1300 or a generation or two later. In any case, this information finds some confirmation in the words of Marco Polo, whose report dates from around the end of the thirteenth century. He writes that the Mongols "who have settled in the Levant have adopted the customs of the Saracens."⁵⁹ This may be referring only to religion, or may also imply linguistic or other cultural changes, perhaps even the abandonment of nomadism.⁶⁰ But as tempting as it might appear, we should be wary of drawing too wide generalizations on the basis of these pieces of evidence. It has been suggested that instead of assimilating into the sedentary Persian-speaking population, many if not most of the Mongols were absorbed by the Turks⁶¹—the majority of which were still nomads, becoming thus Turkish speakers with Mongol memories. Their descendents continued to reside in north-west Iran and eastern Anatolia, many remained nomads, and for centuries they remained the mainstay for the various regimes which came about in the greater Azerbaijan area. In other

⁵⁸ Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī, in K. Lech (ed. and tr.), *Das Mongolische Weltreich: al-'Umarī's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār fī al-mamālik al-amṣār* (Wiesbaden, 1968), p. 102. For the assimilation of the Mongols into the larger population, cf. the remarks by A.P. Martinez, "Some Notes on the Īl-xānīd Army," *AEMA*, 6 (1986 [1988]), pp. 202–16.

⁵⁹ H. Yule (ed. and tr.), *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 3rd edn. revised by H. Cordier (London, 1921), ii, p. 263.

⁶⁰ On the matter of the sedentarization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate, see Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, pp. 251–53 (see pp. 82–84, 157, for a general discussion of the sedentarization of nomads). Cf. R. Amitai, "Turco-Mongolian Nomads and the *iqṭā'* System in the Islamic Middle East (1000–1400 A.D.)," in *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, ed. A. Wink and A.M. Khazanov, (London, 2001), 156–65, where a less charitable approach is taken to the credibility of Rashīd al-Dīn's evidence on the Mongol adoption of the *iqṭā'* system, and thus indirectly to the possibility of Mongol sedentarization.

⁶¹ See B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220–1350*, 4th edn. (Leiden, 1985), pp. 374–81.

words, it appears that a large proportion of these Turco-Mongolian nomads, who evidently during the fourteenth century (if not before) became almost unanimously Turkish speakers and Muslims, maintained their military qualities which were a function of their nomadic lifestyle.

However, as important as is the fate of the average tribesman, I am primarily concerned with the Mongol leadership, i.e. the Ilkhan, the extended royal family and the group of senior Mongol officers, or in other words, the collection of people who made the decisions in the Ilkhanid state. As an aside, I might add that these strata included the royal and noble ladies, the *khātūns*, who certainly had a say in the way things were decided.⁶² I am not claiming here that the Mongol leadership had repudiated their values wholesale, or had completely abandoned the nomadic lifestyle. But on the other hand, some discernable changes had taken place, in the realm of values and ideals, and perhaps in other spheres.

It is possible that Islam was a major factor in this transformation of attitudes towards the Muslims. I am inclined, however, not to attribute too much importance to this element, since it was the Muslim Ghazan who was most fervent in his pursuit of the war against the Muslim Mamluks, while Öljeitü was also no slouch in this matter, although his efforts were not very effective. There are plenty of examples of Muslim rulers fighting one other, usually each claiming justification in the name of Islam. The answer for the transformation in Ilkhanid foreign policy should be sought elsewhere, although the possibility that Islam could be used as an excuse for such a change should not be discounted.

It is impossible to say when Chūpān and others began to doubt the wisdom of traditional Mongol hostility to the Mamluks. There is, however, an indication that it may have been as early as Öljeitü's reign. In the entry on Chūpān in al-Şafadī's biographical dictionary *al-Wāfi bi'l-wafayāt*, it is mentioned that he attempted to bring a rapid end to the siege at al-Raḥba in 1312–3, because he did not want to shed the blood of Muslims, particularly during the month of Ramaḍān. This effort, which was made together with the wazīr Rashīd al-Dīn, was eventually successful.⁶³ I might add that it is not

⁶² The subject of Mongol women at court is a subject worthy of a separate study.

⁶³ Al-Şafadī, xi, pp. 220–21. See also Ibn Ḥajar, ii, pp. 92–93 (no. 1463). This incident is discussed in some detail in Amitai-Preiss, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources," pp. 29–31.

impossible that this Islamic rationale might have been nothing more than a justification by some Mongol officers to save face as they attempted to end a disastrous campaign, but still I would not totally discount the evidence presented here as an indication of the early existence of a peace party among the members of the Mongol elite, supported not surprisingly by senior civilian officials. As suggested above, al-Maqrīzī's evidence for Mongol envoys early in Abū Sa'īd's reign might also be a reflection of this trend, even if we reject al-Maqrīzī's claim that these were actual peace missions. Why then did it take Chūpān some four years after he had become the strongman of the state to initiate a full-blown peace initiative? This was probably a result of the attention devoted to consolidating power after the Ilkhan's accession, followed by various crises chronicled earlier.

I would not want to claim here that the renouncement of long cherished Mongol goals or ideas was done with ease or without pangs of conscience. Here we might discern the role of Islam in this transformation of values. The Mongols did not have to see themselves as traitors to the aims of the previous Ilkhans to avenge earlier defeats, capture Syria and destroy the Mamluks, let alone as abandoning Chinggis Khan's ideology to conquer the world. Rather, they were realizing the Islamic ideal according to which the believers would live in harmony. Consciously or otherwise, the fact that they were Muslims made it easier for the Mongols to make the transition from war with the Mamluks to that of peace with them. This Islamic ideal of course was not enough to bring the Mongols to initiate the peace process; as said above, there is no lack of examples of Muslim states or groups fighting each other throughout Middle Eastern history. Yet the return of the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd to Sunnism, after the Shi'ism of Öljeitü, as well as the series of religious acts which were undertaken in the Ilkhanid state in the early years of his reign and during the period of negotiations,⁶⁴ certainly made a positive impression on the Mamluk sultan and his amirs, and prepared the psychological ground for the arrival of al-Majd al-Sallāmī with the Mongol peace proposal.⁶⁵

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⁶⁴ See Melville, "Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz," p. 205.

⁶⁵ Cf. S.Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens in Spätmittelalter (1171–1517)* (Wiesbaden, 1970), p. 71, who suggests that the conversion of the Mongol court was a decisive factor in the easing of tensions.

As is to be expected, the end of a state of war which had lasted some 60 years was of great consequence for both kingdoms, not the least because this conflict had been one of the major preoccupations of the ruling groups of these states since their formation. In the following discussion, I will not deal with such results as the increase in travel and trade, or the fate of various minor powers that had played a certain role in the Mamluk-Ilkhanid war, such as the Kingdom of Lesser Armenia and the Bedouin of northern Syria. Rather, I will consider how the formal and actual cessation of hostilities led to major changes in the social structure of the ruling stratum of each state.

In the Mamluk Sultanate, one does not easily discern significant changes until the death of sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 741/1340. As soon as his heavy handed rule disappeared, a wave of intrigues and conflict broke out among the senior amirs, eunuchs and women in the royal harem. The leadership of the Mamluk military society fragmented into various factions, who fought each other in order to place on the throne this or that son or grandson (or even great-grandson) of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Child king replaced child king, and with one notable exception (al-Nāṣir Ḥasan), each was more incompetent than his predecessor. The state treasury was constantly on the verge of bankruptcy, and the readiness of the army declined unchecked. The situation was greatly exacerbated by the occurrence of the Black Death in 749/1348. As has been suggested by numerous remarks in various studies by the late Prof. David Ayalon⁶⁶ and shown in great detail in Dr. Amalia Levanoni's recent book,⁶⁷ this political instability—which was ended only partially with the accession of Barquq to the throne in 784/1382—resulted from internal developments within the Sultanate, primarily the changes enacted by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself in the mamluk system, as well as his

⁶⁶ D. Ayalon, "The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 282–83; *idem*, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān," Part C1, pp. 113n, 138. See also his comments in a book review published in *Der Islam*, 51 (1974), 318; *idem*, *Islam and the Abode of War: Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries* (Aldershot, 1994), articles II, p. 12; IV, p. 37, note 37; VII, pp. 33–35; VIII, p. 110 and note 4). The fullest version of this thesis is found in D. Ayalon, "The Expansion and Decline of Cairo under the Mamlūks and its Background," in *Itinéraires d'orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen* (= *Res Orientales*, 4 [1994]), pp. 13–20.

⁶⁷ *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995). There is a difference in the approaches of Ayalon and Levanoni. The former stresses the autocratic nature of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's regime, while the latter suggests a breakdown in discipline well before its end.

misguided economic policies. At the same time, however, we must take into account the changing circumstances of the Sultanate's foreign relations. The transformation of the Mamluk state's biggest enemy into a friendly neighbor, which came after the final eradication of the Crusading entities along the Syrian coast, virtually removed the factor of external danger which had so united the military class of the early Mamluk Sultanate. At the same time, the lack of a substantial external threat enabled al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to engage in his experiment in mamluk education, as well as his inculcation of the lifestyle of luxurious living among the Mamluk elite. After this sultan's death, the amirs could indulge in internal squabbles, because there was no serious enemy facing them on any front. It can thus be seen, that the end of the war with the Mongols, which of course made perfect sense to Mamluks given the form which the peace treaty took, led inadvertently to—or at least permitted—the shattering of Mamluk social norms, as well as the weakening of Mamluk fighting ability.

Now let us examine the effects on the Ilkhanid state. Just twelve years after the ratification of the peace treaty, the Ilkhanate collapsed, splitting into several, often warring, political entities. This whole process of disintegration has recently been analyzed by an important study by Dr. Charles Melville,⁶⁸ and the details need not detain us. It would appear at first glance that this disintegration is a result of internal developments, and has no connection with relations with the Mamluks. But I would suggest that the end of the state of permanent war with the Mamluks encouraged these internal developments to reach their natural end. In order to give some credence to this suggestion, I will have to say a few words about the nature of the nomadic tribal society of the Eurasian steppe.

Most of the nomadic states of medieval Inner Asia were composed mainly of tribal elements of Turco-Mongolian origin. The normal situation on the Steppe was one of political anarchy and competition between small tribal groups. Only in exceptional circumstances was a tribal leader successful in uniting a number of tribal groups into a nomadic state, and this usually in order to launch campaigns (or to be able to threaten to do so) in order to extract revenues (as booty, tribute or taxes) from sedentary areas.⁶⁹ The best example—and cer-

⁶⁸ C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–37: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999).

⁶⁹ A.M. Khazanov, "Characteristic Features of Nomadic Communities in the

tainly most relevant to the present discussion—is the empire of Chinggis Khan established early in the thirteenth century. He and his immediate successors succeeded in uniting virtually all the nomadic peoples of the Eurasian Steppe by satisfying their desire for conquest and booty, providing ideological justification and excellent leadership, and finally maintaining iron discipline.⁷⁰

The Ilkhanid state, as one of the successor states of Chinggis Khan's empire, united in it various Mongolian and Turkish tribal elements, which made up the army and the ruling strata of the kingdom. I do not think that it would be amiss to suggest that without the heavy hand of the state bolstered by imperial ideology and revenues collected by warfare and taxation,⁷¹ the centrifugal tendency inherent in every nomadic society would have quickly come to the fore.⁷² What particularly interests us here is the ruling strata of the royal family, senior officers and tribal leaders. Since the inception of the Ilkhanate, this group had generally maintained its cohesion around one representative of the Hülegü's descendants, again in spite of the anarchistic nature of nomadic society. There had, of course, been attempts at sedition and revolt during the history of the Ilkhanate, as well as civil wars during times of succession, but these had always been put down, usually with great violence, and the result was that the vast majority of the ruling group eventually rallied around one candidate to be Ilkhan. I am suggesting here that the ruling group

Eurasian Steppes," in *The Nomadic Alternative*, ed. W. Weissleder (The Hague, 1978), pp. 123–25; *idem*, *Nomads and the Outside World*, pp. 229–30; G.E. Markov, "Problems of Social Change among the Asiatic Nomads," in *The Nomadic Alternative*, ed. W. Weissleder (The Hague, 1978), p. 308; J.M. Smith, Jr., "Turanian Nomadism and Iranian Politics," *Iranian Studies*, 11 (1978), p. 62; *idem*, "Mongol Manpower and Persian Population," *JESHO*, 18 (1975), p. 298; L. Krader, "The Cultural and Historical Position of the Mongols," *Asia Major* (NS), 3 (1952–3), p. 171; D. Sinor, "Horse and Pasture in Inner Asian History," *Orient Extremus*, 19 (1972), p. 180.

⁷⁰ For the importance of raids and booty for the creation of a nomadic state, see Smith, "Turanian Nomadism," pp. 63, 67; P.B. Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity amongst the Pre-Chinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *AEMA*, 2 (1982), pp. 37–76, esp. 51.

⁷¹ The importance of these revenues for the unity of the nomadic state is emphasized in Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, p. 230; J.F. Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *HJAS*, 46 (1986), p. 32.

⁷² On the fragile nature of nomadic states and their tendency to disintegrate, see D. Sinor, "Central Eurasia," in *Orientalism and History*, ed. D. Sinor, 2nd edn. (Bloomington, 1970), pp. 99–100; Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, p. 152; S. Jagchid and P. Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Boulder and Folkestone, 1979), pp. 246, 251.

maintained this unity because of the reasons mentioned above with regard to Chinggis Khan's empire: desire for riches, ideology, and the power of the state to enforce solidarity. In other words, the Ilkhanate state was in the eyes of the members of the Mongol ruling stratum the best way to achieve riches and this was bolstered by the traditional Mongol imperial ideal which gave leadership over the Turco-Mongolian nomads to a recognized descendent of Chinggis Khan, who was to bring under his control those lands yet unconquered.

It would seem, however, that this had begun to change. An inkling of such a transformation can perhaps be discerned if we go back to my previous discussion on the causes for the peace initiative among the Mongols. I suggested there that there was a growing lack of enthusiasm for the war with the Mamluks, which led to the commencement of the peace process. With the peace initiative and the eventually ratified peace treaty, this was given official form. Two effects are apparent. Firstly, the long-term project of raiding and attempted conquest to the west was given up, meaning no more loot from that direction, at a time when the Ilkhanate was perhaps already suffering from a shrinking revenue base. At the same time, the declaration of peace meant that one of the tenets of Mongol imperial ideology was dropped. Thus, in one blow two types of the social "glue," one economic and the other ideological, which bound the Mongol ruling elite to the royal family and to each other were removed. These trends may well have been developing previous to 1320 but with its explicit articulation and acceptance by the leadership of the Ilkhanate, they were greatly strengthened.

It may not thus be a coincidence that the Mongol elite failed to overcome the succession crisis which erupted upon the death of Abū Saʿīd in 1335, which resulted in the various Mongol grandees fighting each other until the kingdom disintegrated. I am not claiming here that such a development would not have taken place without the Mongol-Mamluk peace: it appears that there was not a ready candidate who was old enough to occupy the throne in both name and fact.⁷³ It is also possible that the bonds between the Mongol elite and the royal family had become so weak anyway that the end of the united Ilkhanate was approaching, as shown by the abovementioned study by Dr. Melville. Finally there is the general question of the Ilkhanate's decline, although on this matter there is disagreement

⁷³ Boyle, "History of the Īl-Khāns," p. 413.

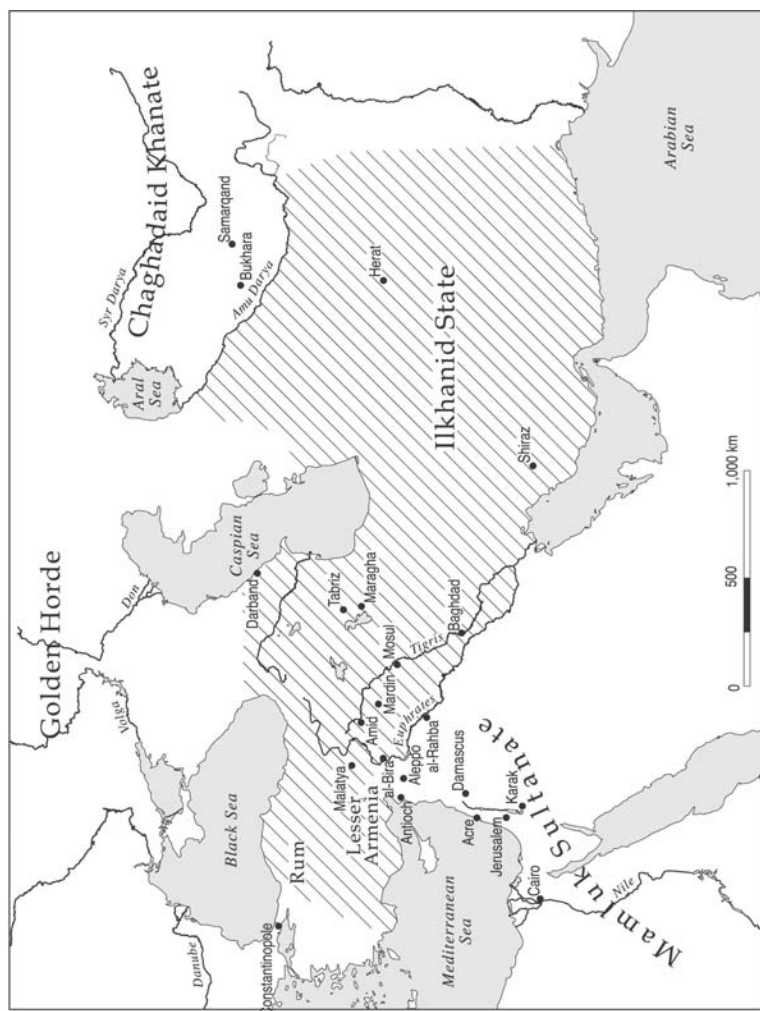
among scholars, as some see stability—and perhaps more—during Abū Saʿīd's later reign.⁷⁴ But, even if there were other, perhaps more important, reasons which brought about the collapse of the Ilkhanid state, it can be seen that the admittance that there were to be no more raids and invasions, with all the economic and ideological implications, contributed to this end. In other words: the willingness of the Mongol leadership to make peace with the Mamluks is both indicative of a change in Mongol attitudes and contributed to them, and thus hastened the decline of the Mongol state in Iran. To put it in Ibn Khaldūnian terms, the Mongol-Mamluk rapprochement both reflected and made a significant contribution to the weakening of the *ʿaṣabiyya* (roughly the *esprit de corps*) of the ruling strata of the Ilkhanid state.

Here I can return to the phenomenon which I noted above, the apparent dearth of information in the pro-Mongol Persian sources about the peace process. I suggested that this was not a matter of mere ignorance, on the one hand, or represented a lack of perceived importance by these writers on the other hand. Rather, I hinted that the information had been suppressed by the contemporary writers, and these were apparently followed by later historians. How can this state of affairs be explained? Again, this is speculative, perhaps highly so, but it appears that embarrassment was at least part of the motivation. Given that the leadership of the Ilkhanate had given up a tenet of the ideological basis of Mongol political theory, as well as admitted that they had been conclusively bested in the 60 year war with their main non-Mongol enemy, it is not surprising that silence was considered the best policy. It can be remembered that all of the contemporary authors noted above were connected in some form to the Ilkhanid court or administration. This fact, together with the unity of silence here, leads me to think that there may have been some type of order or at least subtle instruction from above leading to this condition. I might add, and again this is mere conjecture, that the fact that Waṣṣāf concluded his work around the events of A.H. 720 may not be a coincidence. Like Juwaynī several decades before, who concluded his book on the eve of Hülegü's conquest of Baghdad,

⁷⁴ For a rosy view of these years, see D.O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986), p. 173; P. Jackson, "Abū Saʿīd," *Elr*, I, p. 376. For the opposite view, see D. Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān," Part C1, pp. 131–34, 140; Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan*, passim, esp. p. 3.

Waṣṣāf may have thought it prudent to end his account of the Ilkhans on an upbeat (Abū Saʿīd's triumph over Mongol rebels, and the consolidation of his reign), rather than the perhaps awkward account of a *démarche* resulting from Mongol weakness.

Both the Mamluk Sultanate and the Ilkhanid state were influenced by the end of hostilities which were part and parcel of the first 60 years of their existence. But there is a difference in the degree of impact on each state. The Mongols disappeared as a united factor on the stage of Middle Eastern politics, at least for some 50 years. On the other hand, the Mamluk state, in spite of the elimination of its two enemies—the Mongols together with the Crusaders—continued to exist for almost another 200 years, albeit with a somewhat weaker military capacity. A nomadic state, without raids and conquest, or at least the hope for them, was destined in the not-so-long run to split up and even resort to the state of tribal anarchy until the next charismatic tribal leader came to the fore. The Mamluk Sultanate, however, did not break up in the aftermath of the end of war. We have then another example how the mamluk institution succeeded in transcending one of the endemic conditions of the nomadic Turco-Mongolian society from which its members had been plucked. This is further proof that the mamluk system was a possible way in the long run to preserve at least some of the fighting ability and *élan* of the steppe nomads in the lands of sedentary civilization.



Map 7. The Central Islamic Lands during the Time of the Mamluk-Mongol War (ca. 1260–1320 CE).

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MONGOLS AND MERCHANTS ON THE BLACK SEA
FRONTIER IN THE THIRTEENTH AND
FOURTEENTH CENTURIES:
CONVERGENCES AND CONFLICTS

Nicola Di Cosmo

For some years, historians of Europe and Asia have showed that periods dominated by nomadic invasions were not merely traumatic blackouts that sent civilization back to “square one,” but rather times in which scorched earth and pillage were at least partly counter-balanced by positive achievements. This historiographical tendency maintains that a definite contribution should be first and foremost acknowledged in the contacts and connections across Eurasia that the nomads allowed to take place and develop. This is particularly evident in the century following the Mongol conquest, when Turco-Mongol courts, armies, and administrative *apparati* dictated the terms and conditions that regulated the flow of people and goods from China to the Mediterranean. The world became more open, remote lands more accessible, and knowledge increased as a result of travels and cultural exchange.

Openness was also, largely, the result of a built-in necessity of nomadic empires to feed themselves, with trade being an obvious producer of revenues and commercial communities being requested to pay taxes and tributes.¹ Rulers needed commercial income (among other types of revenues) to offset the expenditures of large court complexes, personal bodyguards and standing armies, and the kind of “lifestyle” to which rulers and their extended families were accustomed. Merchants were also relatively uncomplicated partners, since a common language could be found regardless of linguistic, religious or political barriers. On the other side, the Mongols’ attitude to governance was marked by a distinct propensity towards the employment

¹ For the argument that access to and control over various “economic zones” is vital to explain the survival or success of Mongol policies see J.W. Dardess, “From Mongol Empire to Yüan Dynasty: Changing Forms of Imperial Rule in Mongolia and Central Asia,” *MS*, 30 (1972–73), pp. 122–29.

of loyal foreigners and the flow of goods and merchants.² In 1370 the Mongol khan of the Golden Horde in his correspondence with Grand Prince Iaroslav Iaroslavich stipulated free passage for the merchants and guaranteed their protection.³ There is therefore agreement, at least in principle, that the role of the Mongols was central to the commercial efflorescence that, in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, allowed Europe and Asia to come closer and know each other better than ever before.

But this network of exchanges and connections did not come into existence randomly as a result of a generic greater openness. Rather, following the argument persuasively presented by Thomas Allsen in his recent study of Sino-Iranian relations at the time of Mongol rule, the increased volume of “cross-cultural exchanges” (a phrase borrowed from world history literature) was closely connected with Mongol agency.⁴ In a nutshell, the point eloquently argued by Allsen is that the flow of people, ideas, and goods across Asia was determined, to a large extent, by what the Mongols liked, needed and were interested in. Chinese and Western Asian scientists did not get together at the Mongol courts because of a spontaneous desire to compare notes, but because the Mongols wanted to test the effectiveness, utility, power of persuasion and relative value of different cultural traditions; this applied to fields as diverse as religion, cuisine, astronomy, or mechanical engineering. “Cross-cultural” relations were, therefore, subject to a process of filtering and adaptation within which the Mongol rulers occupied the most central and critical position. They controlled it inasmuch as they created the conditions for *certain* things and people to travel across Eurasia more quickly and in greater numbers than others.

From this analytical vantage point, even a cursory examination of

² On the attitude of Mongol courts towards foreigners we should register, however, two opposite tendencies. One was exclusive and tended to neglect foreigners, and the other was inclusive, cosmopolitan, and open to employing people of different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. With Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–1294), and especially after his death, during the period from 1295 to 1368, the latter tendency held sway and many foreigners, especially of Turkish extraction served in the Yuan government. See I. de Rachewiltz, “Turks in China under the Mongols: A Preliminary investigation in Turco-Mongol Relations in the 13th and 14th Centuries,” in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. M. Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 281–310.

³ D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 114.

⁴ T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 189–211.

the vast literature on the Black Sea as the most important *trait-d'union* between Europe and Asia, which has been described as the "lazy Susan" of international trade, reveals that the role played by the Mongols—especially the Golden Horde—may be in need of a better definition.⁵ My impression is that the role of the Mongols is sometimes underestimated and sometimes overestimated. A degree of underestimation can be detected in the notion that European expansion in terms, for instance, of increased naval power and more sophisticated business organization, propelled in the thirteenth century Italian maritime powers to extend their reach to the Black Sea and beyond.⁶ This particular viewpoint sets its focal centre firmly in the European theatre, and tends to look at the emergence of Venice and Genoa as commercial and military powers, and at their interaction with the Byzantine empire and the many other European and Middle Eastern protagonists the Pope, the Muslims, the northern European powers, and so on. As eminent historians have pointed out long ago, however, even though the treaty of Nymphaeus (1261) gave Genoa commercial monopoly east of the Bosphorus, it was the Mongols who allowed them to "set up shop" in the Crimea.⁷ What the Mongols wanted, how they conceived this relationship, and how they allowed it to develop, are questions that need to be delved into, also in light of our knowledge of Mongol attitudes to governance, international relations and commercial agreements.

What appears sometimes to be overemphasised is the negative impact of the end of the *Pax Mongolica* on international trade, coupled with the perceived closure of Ming China to foreign merchants.⁸ After

⁵ The literature on Black Sea trade is too large to be reported here, but in my study of a good portion of important as well as minor works I have been unable to find any in which the Mongols (or "Tatars" which is a more convenient term since it combines Turks and Mongols under a single term) take a central position, and their actions are given the consideration that they deserve. This distortion is to a large extent inevitable once we consider the nature of the sources, which are quite rich on the "Latin" side and very scant of the side of the Golden Horde.

⁶ J.R.S. Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion of Europe*. 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1998), pp. 96–114, sums up the argument. Phillips' book provides a level-headed picture of the European factors that permitted the growth of eastern trade, which of course played a very important role and should not be dismissed as figments of a "Eurocentric" imagination.

⁷ See, among others, N. Iorga, *Points de vue sur l'histoire du commerce de l'Orient au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1924), p. 92.

⁸ On the term *pax mongolica*, cf. R.S. Lopez: "L'extrême frontière du commerce de l'Europe Médiévale," *Le Moyen Âge*, 69 (1963), p. 480. See also L. Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'empire mongol", *J.A.*, 250/4 (1962), pp. 549, 558. On the

all, the Italian commercial bases continued to operate until the Ottoman conquest, and Italian interests were not completely eradicated even after that.⁹ Secondly, serious difficulties in dealing with Mongol rulers had been experienced even before the collapse of unified and effective leadership in the Golden Horde. Thirdly, although the relative safety ensured by the Mongols' control over trade routes was replaced after about 1360 by a climate of greater insecurity and increased risks, trade in the Black Sea did not come to a halt. In fact, an argument could be made that the Genoese were more effective in imposing their conditions over Black Sea trade from around 1360 onwards exactly because the weakened authority of Mongol rulers and the internecine wars within the Golden Horde made the Mongols concede vast tracts of land and trading rights. Conversely, in Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century, a congeries of factors were militating against investments in long-distance trade. Among these we may mention the crisis in confidence among Genoese and Venetian merchants that set in during the second half of the fourteenth century, possibly related to the collapse of the Mongols in Persia and to the Black Death.¹⁰ Wars fought in 1350–1355 and later by Venice and Genoa both between themselves and against other enemies consumed capitals that would otherwise have been invested in commercial pursuits.¹¹ Another sign of the “crisis” of the investment in international trade was the increased difficulty, in the late fourteenth century, to arrange *mude* (commercial maritime convoys) for the Black Sea.¹² And probably most importantly, trade practices changed, and international business came to be conducted by relying more on local (and stationary) overseas agents and

decadence of international trade due to its end, see M. Nystazopoulou, “Venise et la Mer Noire du XI^e au XV^e siècle”, in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, ed. A. Pertusi, vol. i (Firenze, 1973), p. 571.

⁹ G. Veinstein, “From the Italians to the Ottomans: The Case of the Northern Black Sea Coast in the Sixteenth Century,” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 1/2 (1986), pp. 221–37. See also K. Fleet, *European and Early Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman state: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 134–41.

¹⁰ B.Z. Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis. Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth-Century Depression* (New Haven and London, 1976), p. 1.

¹¹ A description of the effects of protracted wars on the merchants ability to invest overseas can be found in G. Luzzatto, “L'Economia,” *La civiltà veneziana del Trecento*, eds. J. Ortega y Gasset *et al.* (Firenze, 1956), pp. 97–101.

¹² On the *mude* see: F.C. Lane, “Fleets and Fairs: The Functions of the Venetian Muda,” in *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori* (Milano, 1957), pp. 649–664; and M. Berindei and G. Veinstein, “La Tana-Azaq de la presence italienne a l'emprise ottomane,” *Turcica*, 8 (1976), pp. 172–94.

less on the initiative of travelling merchants and ship captains.¹³ In sum, even though the Black Sea colonies were still regarded as pillars of the Italian commercial networks, there was a general entrenchment that reduced greatly the Italian merchants' ability and willingness to penetrate more distant markets.

The aim of this paper is to examine some aspects of the Mongols' role in favouring or inhibiting the profitable establishment and continuation of commercial and political relations between Italians and Mongols in the Black Sea. There are many levels of analysis that should be considered in this regard, namely, the official relations between "states" and the relations on the ground, as it were, that developed among authorities and merchants. It should also be kept in mind that the Venetian and the Genoese establishments on the Black Sea and relative position with the Mongols were different in terms of origin, geopolitical interests, commercial influence and legal status. However, based on the assumption that the relationship between merchants and Mongols involved, above all, mutual interests to be pursued through a series of agreements and adjustments, I have subsumed these levels of analysis within the two overarching categories of "convergences" and "conflicts," focusing specifically on political and economic relations.

Convergences

Naturally, the main point of convergence between Mongol and "Latin" interests concerns the mutual willingness to engage in a business relationship that involved profits made through the exchange of goods. The analysis of the articulation of this relationship from the Mongol side should consider direct and indirect benefits. Among the direct factors we can mention the revenues from trade exacted by the political powers; the involvement of Mongol and "Tatar" merchants in international trade, including partnerships with European merchants; and the participation of "rank and file" Golden Horde subjects in small-scale trading. Among the less direct factors, we can mention the revenues from the "transaction costs" incurred by merchants

¹³ R.S. Lopez, "Les méthodes commerciales des marchands occidentaux en Asie du XI^e au XIV^e siècle," in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien*, ed. M. Mollat (Paris, 1970), pp. 343–48.

trading abroad, inclusive of renting pack animals and labour, and paying storage and transiting fees. These could amount to a sizeable sum that during the period of more intense long-distance trading—the early decades of the fourteenth century—must have contributed to the local economy along the commercial routes. The expansion of trading networks also contributed to urban development in Mongol-ruled lands, and centres such as Sarai, Urgench, and Tabriz became commercial hubs of international import, whose markets were frequented by merchants of every provenance and ethnicity.¹⁴

The commercial fees (*commercium* from the Gr. κομμερκιον) collected by the Golden Horde from Italian trading colonies were fixed at a low rate of 3% of the value of the merchandise, later raised for Venice to 5%.¹⁵ A land tax (*terraticum*) was imposed on the Venetian settlement in Tana with the treaty of 1333, which granted Venice the privilege to establish a commercial colony (or “*comptoir*”) there.¹⁶ Control over these taxes was exercised by the Mongol governor in the Crimea, who resided in Solgat, who was in charge of keeping orderly relations with the sometimes unruly Italians, and in some cases acted as the Khan’s representative in diplomatic negotiations. The Italian colonies, especially Caffa, developed a complex local bureaucracy that assisted in the collection of fees and regulation of trade, although details are not entirely clear.¹⁷ Caffa also paid a tribute to the khan, the *canlucum* in recognition of the khan’s sovereignty.¹⁸ The treaties were negotiated and signed directly with the Khan of the Golden Horde, whose authority as the main political power in the region was not truly challenged even when Genoa, in the 1380s, managed to extract full control over a large portion of the Crimean coastal areas. Other

¹⁴ B. Grekov and A. Iakoubovski, *La Horde d’Or: La domination tatarre au XIII^e et au XIV^e siècle de la Mer Jaune à la Mer Noire* (Paris, 1939), pp. 140–47.

¹⁵ E.C. Skrzinskaja, “Storia della Tana,” *Studi Veneziani*, 10 (1968), pp. 8, 13. *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum, sive Acta et Diplomata res venetas graecas atque levantis illustrantia. Pars I: a. 1300–1350*, ed. G.M. Thomas (Venetiis, 1880), p. 261.

¹⁶ Skrzinskaja, “Storia della Tana,” p. 13, n. 25.

¹⁷ There are several studies on this subject; for Genoa, see G. Astuti, “Le colonie genovesi del Mar Nero e i loro ordinamenti giuridici,” in *Colloquio Romano-Italiano, I Genovesi nel Mar Nero durante i Secoli XIII e XIV—Colocviul Român-Italian, Genovezii la Marea Neagră în secolele XIII–XIV*, ed. S. Pascu (Bucarest, 1977), pp. 87–129. See also P. Saraceno, “L’amministrazione delle colonie genovesi nell’area del Mar Nero dal 1261 al 1453,” *Rivista di storia del diritto italiano*, 72–73 (1969–1970), pp. 177–266.

¹⁸ R.H. Bautier, “Les relations économiques des occidentaux avec les pays d’Orient, au Moyen Âge, points de vue et documents,” in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l’Océan Indien. Actes du huitième colloque internationale d’histoire maritime*, ed. M. Mollat (Paris, 1970), p. 273.

taxes were imposed arbitrarily, as we can see from a complaint lodged by the Venetian Consul in Tana on 4 August 1333, according to which the officials of the Mongol aristocrat "Tatamir"¹⁹ tried to extort additional taxes from some merchants.²⁰

Trade

While the Black Sea Italian *comptoirs* were terminal points of both local (Pontic, South Russian, Anatolian, and Caucasian) as well as international trade with Central Asia, Persia, China, and even India, it is the former that was more important in both economic and strategic terms, although the relative importance of each has been debated for some time (see below). Local trade consisted chiefly of grain, pastoral and hunting products such as hides and furs, fish and caviar, and slaves. International trade consisted mainly of silk and spices, pearls and precious stones.²¹ Famines in Europe had been at the root of Venice and Genoa's search for alternative sources of staples, and the coastal Black Sea region, together with the Bulgarian maritime region, and the territory north of Tana provided supplies that would satisfy the European demand, at the relatively low cost of naval transport. Access to these supplies would not only enrich those who controlled them but also constitute a powerful strategic weapon that both Genoa and Venice were keen to exploit, even though they had already developed an extended Mediterranean network for the importation of wheat. In the words of the chronicler Martin da Canal we can see that the famine of 1268 gave Venice a sense of its vulnerability and spurred it to seek additional sources of grain in the vast producing lands around the Black Sea.²²

Hides were important in the medieval economy, and it is no coincidence that the leather workshops in Giudecca island in Venice became internationally known for the quality of their manufacture

¹⁹ It is uncertain who this person was, but a Tasstemür later served as a general under Toqtamish, and it is not impossible that this may be the same person; see B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde: die Mongolen in Rußland 1223–1502* (Leipzig, 1943), p. 270.

²⁰ *Le Deliberazioni del Consiglio dei Rogati*, Serie "Mixtorum," vol. ii: *Libri XV–XVI*, eds. R. Cessi and M. Brunetti (Venezia, 1961), p. 204, n. 161.

²¹ For a comprehensive treatment of the products traded in the Black Sea, see M. Balard, *La Romanie Genoïse*, vol. ii (Roma-Genova, 1978), pp. 717–868.

²² Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise. Cronaca Veneziana in lingua francese dalle origini al 1275*, ed. A. Limentani (Firenze, 1972), pp. 324–25. See also Berindei and Veinstein, "La Tana," pp. 130 and 135–36.

at a time when large quantities of hides were being imported from the Golden Horde.²³ But the area in which the Mongols (or “Tatars”) seem to have been also very active was the slave trade. It is well known that this was one of the most thriving commercial activities. People who were not necessarily merchants engaged in it, and could sell slaves, sometimes their own family members, to European merchants for the Mediterranean markets as well as for employment in the houses of the Italian residents in the Crimea. Mamluk Egypt imported Central Asian male youths to employ as slave soldiers, whereas their chief employment in Europe was as domestic help, concubines and rarely anything else.²⁴ A large portion of slave sales recorded in notary documents concerns young females between the age of 12 and 18. In this respect there are, among the Italians, professional slave dealers who went inland to procure their “merchandise” that they later sold in Caffa, Tana, and other colonies to merchants who carried them to Italy or to the agents of Italian-based buyers. But we have also examples of “Tatars” who sold their slaves directly.²⁵ Many slaves were not Tatars but Russians, Circassians, Hungarians, and other nationalities captured in raids. An example of a raid is provided in the colourful narrative by Josafat Barbaro, who joined a party of Tatars who decided to attack a passing caravan of Circassian people. Undoubtedly a fearless Mongol of the type befriended by the Venetian would find it attractive to sell the proceeds of a raid to the local slave dealers.²⁶ One Arabic writer from the Mamluk Sultanate, al-ʿUmarī, indicates that famine within Mongol-ruled territory caused people to sell their own children in slavery. Other similar sources—Baybars al-Manṣūrī and al-Nuwayrī—state that children

²³ G. Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia dall'XI al XVI secolo* (Venezia, 1995), p. 56.

²⁴ Genoa played a central role in the Mamluk sultanate's acquisition of Central Asian slaves; see A. Ehrenkreutz, “Strategic Implications of the Slave Trade between Genoa and Mamluk Egypt in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century,” in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History*, ed. A.L. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), pp. 335–45.

²⁵ The sources provide many examples of Tatars selling slaves. See for instance O. Ilescu, “Nouvelles éditions d'actes notariés instrumentés au XIV^e siècle dans les colonies Génoises des bouches du Danube—Actes de Kilia et Licostomo,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est européennes*, 15 (1977), p. 119; C. Verlinden, “Le colonie vénitienne de Tana, centre de la traite des esclaves au XIV^e et au début du XV^e siècle,” in *Studi in onore di Luigi Luzzatto*, vol. ii (Milano, 1949), p. 8; L. Balletto, *Genova Mediterraneo Mar Nero (secoli XIII–XIV)* (Genova, 1976), p. 199.

²⁶ L. Lockart, R. Morozzo della Rocca, M.F. Tiepolo (eds.), *I Viaggi in Persia degli ambasciatori Barbaro e Contarini* (Roma, 1973), pp. 81–82.

and women were sold into slavery in the aftermath of civil war among the Mongols; even Özbeg Khan (1312–40) was not averse to selling people captured in war or plundering raids.²⁷ It is not surprising that the presence of buyers ready to supply the European and North African markets at the Golden Horde's doorstep was welcomed by the Mongols.

Periods of political and military tension did not stop trade, as we can see from the accusations levelled by Venice to Genoa for not respecting the terms of the *devetum* (the prohibition to trade) that the two cities agreed on at the time of the war against the Golden Horde (1343–1347).²⁸ They explicitly mentioned a Mongol military commander in charge of a certain area of the Crimea who allowed trade through regardless of the hostilities and mutual embargo, while levying a personal tax on the eager Genoese merchants. This document hints at a submerged economy of gifts and bribes that undoubtedly “greased the wheels” of the relations between Mongol military and civilian officers and Italian residents.

Transit fees

A description of the fees and duties that merchants had to pay during their journey in Asia is presented by Pegolotti in his description of ordinary expenses to carry goods from Ayas to Tabriz by land. From the entry point to the land of the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (1316–1335) to Tabriz a series of entry, transit, night storage and guarding fees were levied that amounted to the considerable sum of 209 aspres (Italian *aspri*) per animal load.²⁹ As a term of comparison, we can

²⁷ On al-ʿUmarī, see Klaus Lech (ed. and tr.), *Das mongolische Weltreich: Al-ʿUmarī's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Wiesbaden, 1968), p. 73 (Arabic text), 140 (translation). On Baybars al-Manṣūrī, see W. de Tiesenhäusen, *Recueil de matériaux relatifs à l'histoire de la Horde d'Or*, vol. i: *Extraits des ouvrages arabes* (Saint Pétersbourg, 1884), pp. 91 and 114 [= Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Ẓubdat al-fikra fī taʾrīkh al-hijra*, ed. D.S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 347]. On al-Nuwayrī, see Tiesenhäusen, vol. i, pp. 140 and 162 [= ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 1923–97), vol. 27, p. 374]. Cf. also Grekov and Iakoubovski, *La Horde d'Or*, pp. 116–17.

²⁸ R. Morozzo della Rocca, “Notizie da Caffa,” in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, vol. iii (Milano, 1962), pp. 289–95.

²⁹ Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. A. Evans (Cambridge, MA, 1936; rpt. New York, 1970), pp. 28–29 and 389–91.

mention that a house in Caffa could cost as little as 400 *aspri*, although most houses were considerably more expensive.³⁰

On the route from Tana to China, Pegolotti indicates another order of expenses, concerning salaried people (interpreters, guards, guides, and others), victuals and animals. Considering that he recommends that from Tana to Sarai the route is less safe than elsewhere, and it would be appropriate to form a caravan of sixty people for mutual protection, we can see that the income drawn by the Mongol states in payments for services and fees must have been considerable.³¹

Other advantages

We should not neglect to mention that the Italian cities were not only centres of trade, but also of handicraft and manufacturing, and that artisans were available (soldiers sent to Tana were also artisans).³²

Expert knowledge on matters that were important to Mongol rulers could also be acquired. An example of this can be found in the acts of Lamberto di Sambuceto. On 11 May 1290, the falconer Johanes de Rayna was hired by Pietro de Braino until August of the same year to accompany him to the court of Ilkhan Arghun.³³ The falconer would be paid 800 aspres plus expenses if he reached the court (Horde) of the Ilkhan. However, the document does not specify what the duties of the falconer were. A reasonable assumption is that Pietro planned to use the falconer's skills to gain access to Arghun and possibly secure a commercial agreement. However, no additional information can be found, except that a few days earlier a group of merchants had been partially compensated by emissaries of Arghun for the losses incurred when robbed by a Jurzuchi. At this time the relations between Arghun and the Genoese were good, and the compensation might have been seen a signal of the Ilkhan's intention to protect foreign merchants, thus inviting them to his lands.³⁴

On occasion, the Latins even served as mercenaries in Mongol

³⁰ Balard, *Romanie Génoise*, i, p. 286, doc. 730.

³¹ Pegolotti, *Pratica*, pp. 15, 21–23.

³² B. Doumerc, "La Tana au XV^e siècle: comptoir ou colonie?" in *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance*, ed. M. Balard (Lyon, 1989), p. 253.

³³ M. Balard, *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, vol. i: *Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto, 1289–1290* (Paris-The Hague, 1973), p. 192, no. 513.

³⁴ Balard, *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, i, pp. 181–82, no. 459.

armies. Genoese troops, for instance, fought at the side of Mamai, ruler of the Golden Horde, in his campaign against Grand Duke Dmitri of Moscow and with him were defeated at the momentous battle of Kulikovo Pole on September 8, 1380.³⁵

A world market?

M.I. Finley's sharp critique of the idea of a "world market" in the ancient world remains an important caveat against overgeneralizations. "To be meaningful," he stated, "a 'world market,' a 'single economic unit' must embrace something considerably more extensive than the exchange of some goods over long distances; otherwise China, Indonesia, the Malay Peninsula and India were also part of the same unit and world market. One must show the existence of interlocking behaviour and responses over wide areas [. . .] in the dominant sectors of the economy, in food and metal prices, for example, and one cannot, or at least no one has."³⁶

For the Black Sea and Mediterranean economy of the post-Nympheus treaty period, scholars have provided ample evidence of the existence of "interlocking behaviour and responses." Venetian and Genoese merchants developed networks of agents and informants that allowed them to predict short-term market behaviour over an area that covered Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Black Sea.³⁷ What has yet to be proved convincingly is that merchants were able to operate at the same level even beyond those areas.

This takes us to the question of how important long-distance trade with India and China (and even Iran) really was. The most prominent, persuasive, and enthusiastic promoter of the importance of the Far Eastern connection has been Roberto Sabatino Lopez. In numerous studies he has shown that, from the middle of the thirteenth century until the early second half of the fourteenth, and possibly beyond that, there was a vigorous, regular, and well regulated flow

³⁵ B.Z. Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis*, p. 69.

³⁶ M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (London, 1973), p. 34.

³⁷ On the Venetian merchants' tendency to base their business decision on short-term forecasting see U. Tucci, "Alle origini dello spirito capitalistico a Venezia: la previsione economica," in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, vol. iii (Milano, 1962), pp. 547-57.

of goods from China, and he brought to light the names of many Italian and especially Genoese merchants who were active in this long-distance trade buried in wills, notarised sales, or court cases. Additional support for a regular exchange with the Far East has been found in the detailed information found in Pegolotti's manual: what to sell and buy, exchange rates, routes and many other practical matters that the merchant needed to know are included in his treatise. This was not a unique piece, but a particular, sophisticated and systematic example of a type of merchant's manual of which others (possibly many) existed, such as the one partially published by Robert-Henri Bautier.³⁸

On the other hand, Bautier has argued for a far more limited, occasional, inconstant, and economically scarcely relevant Far Eastern exchange. Bautier's argument is based essentially on the scarce quantities of spices that came through the continental route of Tana and the rest of the Black Sea from faraway provinces.³⁹ On the western side, there was little that the Europeans contributed, since the main European export, cloth and fabrics, could be easily sold either in Black Sea ports or at intermediate markets, such as Sarai and Urgenj in Central Asia. A number of expeditions to India and China, moreover, do seem to be "one-off" ventures, in which the parties involved tried to collect "gifts" from fabulously wealthy Oriental rulers in return for "donations" of European mechanical marvels, such as the fountain and clock brought to the Sultan of Delhi by a group of Venetians.⁴⁰ Other prized and unique things can also be found, such as the horses and glass objects probably brought to the Chinese emperor by the Franciscan John of Marignolli. The question is whether the argument that can be constructed for a considerably more relevant and regular Far Eastern trade, which essentially would be based on Lopez's assumption that large imports of cheaper silk justified the existence of a regular and robust traffic.⁴¹ This is a serious point,

³⁸ Bautier, "Les relations économiques," pp. 311–31.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 278–310.

⁴⁰ R.S. Lopez, "Les methods commerciales des marchands occidentaux en Asie du XI^e au XIV^e siècle," in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien*, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris, 1970), p. 346. On Mongol support to Venetians travelling from Urgench to Ghazna, see also P. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge 1999), pp. 252–53.

⁴¹ R.S. Lopez, "L'importance de la Mer Noire dans l'histoire de Gênes," in *Colloquio Romano-Italiano*, pp. 13–33.

but based mostly on an argument *ex-silentio*, that is, on the assumption that the silk used in Italy was largely of Chinese provenance although such a provenance was not specified.

With accumulating knowledge of Genoese and (to a lesser extent) Venetian commercial interests in the Far East, the weight of evidence has shifted towards the assumption that international trade in the early decades of the fourteenth century had become more regular, and that proper merchants, not just adventurers, were making a living by frequenting the most remote marketplaces in Beijing and Quanzhou (Zaiton). Names like Vivaldi, Stancone, Bonaccia, Spazzapetra, Ghisolfi, Bestagno, Savignone, Vegia, Malrasi, Gentile, Ultramarino, Adorno, Basso and more testify to the involvement of individuals and families in Far Eastern trade. According to Michel Balard, the Central Asian route to China through Pera-Caffa-Tana-Sarai-Urgench became the standard route after the fall of the Ilkhans and the withdrawal of Italian trade from Persia after 1340 due to harassment and robberies that had taken place in Tabriz.⁴² Tabriz had been the most important centre of Italian commercial presence in continental Asia from 1290 to 1340. However, the Mongol route through Central Asia only operated until the Ming dynasty overthrew the Mongol empire in 1368 and virtually closed its borders to international trade.

Yet we have very little information regarding the type and volume of traffic, and the evidence, regardless of the number of families that were indeed making a living (and often dying) by trading in those remote areas is not sufficient to claim that we have an integrated market between the Mediterranean and China. That is, the penetration of commercial interests to farther Asia, albeit significant, did not constitute a structural modification of international trade consistent with the type of "colonization" that we see in the Black Sea. These colonies were promoted by a mixture of private and state interests, was sustained by diplomatic agreements and political decisions at the government level and protected by the force of arms. Instead, Far Eastern ventures remained the domain of private individuals and merchants, and did not represent an attempt to penetrate distant markets as a critical goal of the Italian maritime republics. Access to the products of India and China was largely controlled by Muslim intermediaries,

⁴² M. Balard, "Les Gênois en Asie Centrale et en Extrême-Orient au XIV^e siècle: un cas exceptionnel?" in *Économies et sociétés au Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Edouard Perroy* (Paris, 1973), pp. 681–89.

and the North African ports remained the main markets for spices and other products from south, south-east and east Asia.

That the Ming were unwilling, as mentioned above, to support the activities of Italian traders need not, by the way, be construed necessarily as a *tout court* closure to foreign trade.⁴³ Maritime trade flourished under the early Ming, as is well known from the navigational feats of Admiral Zheng He (1371–1435). It is rather more likely to assume that the Ming reacted to the presence of Westerners who had enjoyed so many privileges under the Mongols at the expense of the Chinese. The personal liaisons that Genoese and Venetian merchants had been able to forge with Mongol rulers in China probably were, in the end, their undoing. But this pattern is different from what happened on the Black Sea, where Venetians and Genoese persisted in sending missions and seeking diplomatic and commercial agreements even after centralized rule in the Khanate of Qipchaq collapsed and was replaced by a chaotic and unstable political situation. This means, in my view, that long-distance trade between the Mediterranean and China functioned only because it was actively supported by the Mongol states, and this condition was the pre-eminent factor that made the presence of Italian merchants in the Far East possible at all, together, of course, with their own personal initiative. The end of the *Pax Mongolica* is especially significant, then, in the sense that since Mongol state support was no longer available, the Italian merchants found themselves unable to promote and protect their interests with the incoming powers.

International trade, in order to flourish, required active state protection, and this not only to keep the roads safe, but primarily to make sure that market conditions were fair, that the possessions of deceased merchants were not lost, that exchange rates were reliable, and that circulation of money was sufficient for the need of transactions of considerable value. All of this could not exist without formal agreements and treaties with the local regimes. Both Genoa and Venice exerted themselves to a great degree to promote the existence of these conditions in their treaties with the powers they were dealing with, including the Byzantines, the Mamluks, the Greek rulers of Trebizond and, of course, the Mongols in Russia and Persia. However, the Italian states never tried to initiate formal relations with China, and withdrew from their involvement with Persia after attempts to

⁴³ Petech, "Les marchands italiens," p. 558.

ensure the protection of trade by the successors of the Ilkhans failed.⁴⁴

The mission of Andalò da Savignone to promote diplomatic contacts between the Yuan dynasty and the maritime republics received lukewarm consideration by the Venetian Senate. What the Mongol khan of China Toghon Temür wanted from the West is spelled out very clearly in the diplomatic correspondence with European powers brokered by the Genoese merchant Andalò da Savignone: horses and others marvellous things (*alia mirabilia*). He proposed to acquire in Venice between five and ten horses worth two thousand florins together with crystal “jewels” (*iocalia*) also valued highly, between one and two thousand florins.⁴⁵ Moreover, with a diplomatic move meant to reassure the Venetian Senate, he promised to leave on a Venetian vessel. We do not know whether this request was satisfied, but we do know that Andalò left on a Genoese vessel which landed first in Naples and then proceeded for Caffa, whence the caravan with the gifts proceeded on the route to China. At least some “Frankish” horses made it to Beijing, presumably with John of Marignolli.⁴⁶

The Mongol request is, I think, quite revealing of the type of contacts sought by the Yuan emperor. Clearly the type of “gifts” requested from the West are consistent with the tributary exchanges that China entertained with multiple independent polities. The Italian delegation carrying horses and marvellous things would have appeared, once it reached the Yuan court, as a tributary mission from a faraway tributary nation, thus adding to the prestige of the imperial court of China.

The relationship between Toghon Temür and the West was surely guided by the double objective of “receiving tribute”—in the Chinese tradition—and opening the door to official relations with foreign countries. On the Western side, however, this chance was not exploited. The responsibility of presenting exotic gifts was left to individuals, while the Venetian or Genoese states were not tempted, apparently, to initiate official relations with faraway courts even though they were perfectly familiar with the tributary mode of diplomatic exchange, and even though there were people familiar with the Yuan court who could have easily acted as intermediaries.

⁴⁴ R.S. Lopez, “European Merchants in the Medieval Indies: The Evidence of Commercial Documents,” *Journal of Economic History*, 3 (1943), p. 183.

⁴⁵ The florin was a Florentine golden coin, which started to be coined in 1252. It weighed 3.54 gr. and was used very broadly throughout the Mediterranean.

⁴⁶ Petech, “Les marchands italiens,” p. 555. H. Franke, “Das ‘himmlische Pferd’ des Johann von Marignola,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 50 (1968), pp. 33–40.

If we consider the crucial link between state support and commercial penetration of faraway markets, we see that the farther we move from the epicentre of commercial interests (the Mediterranean and surrounding coastlines) the fainter the state intervention becomes.⁴⁷ Within that sphere of interest, the Venetians and the Genoese did not withdraw from the Black Sea even when seriously threatened, and continued to seek a “common ground” with the local powers while protecting fiercely their positions. Beyond this sphere, the activities of Italian merchants depended upon the Mongol governments’ willingness and ability to promote favourable trading conditions.

The collapse of the Mongol courts that had actively sustained trade coincided with the drastic decline of long-distance trade, therefore, mainly because the governments of the Italian republics had not been and continued not to be interested in pursuing diplomatic relations in the Far East. On the other hand, they continued to negotiate and fight for their positions in the Black Sea even when the meltdown of the Golden Horde’s political order made this an exceedingly difficult and risky business. Private interests, as extensive and regular as they may have been, could not survive for long in an environment in which they did not receive the fair, or at least predictable, protection and legal status that only formal diplomatic agreements could have guaranteed. Let us therefore consider briefly how treaties between states regulated the presence of merchants and what guarantees they typically offered.

Diplomatic activity

The mission of the Venetian ambassador Jacopo Cornaro to Sarai (between 1360 and 1362) at a time of “civil war” within the Golden Horde is a clear indication of the relentless attention paid by the Venetian senate to the promotion of good relations with whomever happened to be in charge. As the Venetian Consul in Tana, Cornaro had the possibility to study the political condition in the steppe before

⁴⁷ On this issue, see M.N. Pearson “Merchants and States,” in *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade 1350–1370*, ed. J.D. Tracy (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 41–116. Note that in his survey of “Asian empires” the Mongols are not mentioned.

undertaking his mission.⁴⁸ According to the meticulous study by Skržinskaja, the khan he met was either Hizr (Khiḍr) or Murād, and the same author advances the hypothesis that Cornaro's mission was meant to confirm Venice's rights in Tana, and the repayment of damages suffered by Venetian at the hands of subjects of the khan in the khan's territory.⁴⁹ But the main issue seems to have been the reduction to 4% of the commercial tax imposed on the Venetians, which had been previously raised to 5%.⁵⁰ Cornaro must have been successful because the brief of another embassy sent to the khan Mamay in 1369 involved the negotiation for a tax reduction from 4% to 3%.⁵¹ The intense diplomatic activity undertaken by the Venetian government involved also additional expenditures, given that the salary of the Consul in Tana was raised from 70 to 110 lire *grossorum*, and the budget for administrative expenses was increased five times to allow an expansion of the personnel and of the guard.

Cornaro's mission to the khan of Qipchaq highlights the key issues that were at the basis of the diplomatic agreements between Venetian and Genoese states and Mongol rulers: territorial concessions, a favourable tax regime, and protection of the interests and possessions of their subjects. To these basic points we should add others that related to special circumstances, such as negotiating the resumption of commercial activities after a war, the repayment of damages suffered by their subjects, or the restitution of prisoners held by the khan. Again, the great chaos (the *zamyatnya* of the Russian sources) that reigned within the Golden Horde was no obstacle to the preservation of the commercial agreements.

Similar agreements are already contained in the text of the treaty between Genoa and the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn of 1290.⁵² Trading rights and immunities for Genoese merchants were granted throughout the sultan's dominions. No Genoese could be held hostage for

⁴⁸ According to a document of the Venetian senate, this mission was assigned to the Consul in Tana because nobody in Venice wanted to be sent as ambassador to the "Tatar emperor". See F. Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie*, vol. i (Paris, 1958), p. 96, no. 363.

⁴⁹ E.Č. Skržinskaja, "Un Ambasciatore veneziano all'Orda d'Oro," *Studi Veneziani*, 16 (1974), pp. 67–96.

⁵⁰ Thiriet, *Régestes*, i, p. 95, no. 355.

⁵¹ Thiriet, *Régestes*, i, p. 121, no. 476.

⁵² On this see P.M. Holt, "Qalāwūn's Treaty with Genoa in 1290," *Der Islam*, 57 (1980), pp. 101–108.

the crimes or debts of another. Upon the death of a merchant in the sultan's territory, if he were to die intestate then his possessions should be claimed by the Genoese consul or any other Genoese in that place if there were no consul. In case there were no Genoese, then the "lord of the land" would keep them until formally claimed from Genoa. Moreover, selling and buying should be free from pressures or coercion, and taxes imposed only on the merchandise that was actually sold. Loading and unloading as well as other operations should not be subject to restrictions or other fees. Other provisions indicated the import duties, which, for example, amounted to 10% for silks and woollens.

The legal procedures within the Genoese settlement were also specified. If a "Saracen" had a case against a Genoese, this would be assessed by the consul. If, on the other hand, a Genoese had a complaint against a Saracen, this would be presented to the finance officer. However, the consul had a right to address the Sultan in case a Genoese sought reparations. The treaty also included reciprocity for Muslim traders in Genoese territories, granting them essentially the same rights and privileges Genoa enjoyed in Egypt. As Holt notes, while the provisions are very similar to those of the grant by the Mamluk Sultan al-Mu'izz Aybeg in favour of the Venetians (1254), the political tone is different: the 1290 agreement is a bilateral treaty between two equivalent powers rather than a concession.

Another matter that was negotiated in formal agreements regarded the protection of the possessions of merchants who died in foreign lands, and specifically on the route from Tana to China. Since death en route was always a possibility, and since merchants carried money or merchandise obtained on credit from investors at home, the ability to claim and retrieve the proceeds in case of the merchant's death was obviously an important point. According to Pegolotti, "[s]hould a merchant coming or going [between Tana and China] die on the road, everything he owned would become the property of the ruler of the place where he dies, and therefore be seized by the ruler's officials; similarly if he died in China. However if he had a brother or a friend who was said to be his brother, these could claim the goods and thus the property would be saved."⁵³ This seems to contrast with a prescription contained in the *yasa*, the collection of laws

⁵³ Pegolotti, *Pratica*, p. 22.

traditionally attributed to Chinggis Khan, according to which, if a person died with no heirs, his possessions should not be taken by the king but given to the "man who ministered unto him."⁵⁴ However, to apply this rule to foreign merchants in places in which a testament could not be produced, and by necessity lived outside the bounds of established social or kin networks, would have probably invited foul play. Therefore, only fellow travellers who were or could reasonably claim to be kin of the deceased could inherit, otherwise the property would belong to the khan, to whom, after all, claims for the restitution of lost or robbed goods were routinely addressed by the Venetian and Genoese authorities. In other words, it seems to me that in a situation in which it would have been obviously impossible to track down the legitimate heirs of the deceased, the provision to give the constituted authority rights over unclaimed possessions, and thus ensuring that unauthorized people would not profit from a foreigner's death, can be seen as intended to guarantee the safety of merchants.⁵⁵

This seems to be confirmed by a provision in the Qalāwūn's treaty, according to which unclaimed property of a deceased Genoese reverted to the local authority to be later claimed by the Genoese through formal request. That the Venetians had the right to claim the property lost by a compatriot who had died "*in partibus Tartarorum*" is confirmed by an order given to the bailo of Constantinople to take every step to recover the goods of Francesco da Canale. These goods had been kept by the local people, but clearly there was hope to recover them by sending an envoy with an official letter.⁵⁶

Territorial and commercial privileges were also granted by the Mongol khans on the basis of treaties or concessions. The first documented instance of a privilege conceded by a Mongol khan to Venice is a letter authored by the Khan of Iran to the Venetian doge at the beginning of November 1306.⁵⁷ This letter, sent by a Sultan of the Tatars (*Soldani Tartarorum*) called Zuci, and attributed by Heyd to Öljeitü Ilkhan (1304–16), contains precious information about three

⁵⁴ G. Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, vol. iii: *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven, 1953), p. 107.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of this question, see R.S. Lopez, "European Merchants in the Medieval Indies: The Evidence of Commercial Documents," p. 176.

⁵⁶ F. Thiriet, *Délibérations des Assemblées vénitiennes concernant la Roumanie*, vol. i (Paris, 1966), pp. 172 and 304.

⁵⁷ W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen-Âge* (Leipzig, 1885–1886; rpt. Amsterdam, 1983), ii, pp. 122–24.

aspects of the Venetian relationship with the Mongol khan. Written in Mongol language, the document was presented together with a Latin translation by the khan's envoy, whose name is not given, but is likely to be a "Latin" in the service of the Ilkhan, as we find several Italians acting in this capacity.⁵⁸ The Ilkhan, extending what could be seen as an invitation rather than a formal concession, notifies the Venetians that their merchants should feel free to come and go without fear of being harassed by locals expecting to be refunded by them for the debts left by other people. Attached to this diplomatic letter there was also another item, which explained, as a confirmation of the enactment of the khan's policy, that a certain Khoja Abdullah (Khwāja 'Abdallāh) would not require compensation for the losses suffered at the hands of a certain Pietro Rodulfo, a Venetian, by holding other citizens of Venice responsible. Finally, the witnesses to this document are two Italians, Balduccio Buffeto, whose place of origin is not specified, and Tommaso Uzi of Siena, who was employed in the service of the Ilkhan as *ilduci* or "sword bearer" of the ruler. It is important to note that the opening of relations with Tabriz coincided with the establishment of peaceful relations between the khan of the Golden Horde Toqta and Öljeitü in 1304–5, a development favoured by the political intervention of the Yuan emperor Temür. This agreement resulted in a general resumption of trade throughout Mongol-ruled lands, even though relations between Toqta and the Genoese in Caffa deteriorated shortly afterwards (see below).⁵⁹

The substance and the circumstances of the letter show that the Ilkhan was keen to attract Venetian merchants by applying a rule of individual, rather than collective responsibility in case of commercial disputes. It also shows that local merchants were compliant with this policy, although we do not know whether they were being forced to comply or whether this policy was in fact something that they had supported and possibly lobbied the khan to approve. Thirdly, we see that Westerners in the service of the khan are vouchsafing for the Muslim merchant and acting, as it were, as guarantors of the stated commitment that merchants would not be held responsible for losses incurred at someone else's hands. Here we notice, first, a direct initiative of the Ilkhanate to apply accepted norms of inter-

⁵⁸ *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum*, pp. 47–48. Only the Latin translation survives in the archives, while the Mongol original is lost.

⁵⁹ Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia*, pp. 82 and 191.

national trade (as these should be regarded given that they appear in a variety of diplomatic agreements) to attract foreign merchants to Persia. As a consequence, the Genoese and Venetian communities in Tabriz flourished for the next three decades, making the city the most important centre for long-distance trade in continental Asia until the end of the Ilkhanate. Venetians and Genoese authorities in Trebizond reciprocated, and dictated to the local rulers conditions that made regular traffic with the Ilkhanids possible. In fact, they insisted that the emperor of Trebizond granted fiscal privileges to merchants from the Ilkhanate in order to attract them to Trebizond.⁶⁰

In 1333, the agreement negotiated by the Venetian ambassadors Giovanni Quirino and Pietro Giustiniano with Khan Özbeg for the establishment of their *comptoir* in Tana included a territorial concession, favourable taxation, protection for the merchants, and provisions in case of legal disputes. Commercial duties were fixed at the same rates granted to the Genoese in Caffa. An interesting point is that disputes would be addressed together by the Consul and the "lord of the land," meaning the khan's representative, who was probably the Mongol governor resident in Solgat. This is confirmed by the fact that a Mongol official carrying the title of *tudun* (Lat. *titanus*) was charged in 1374 with judicial responsibilities over the subjects of the khan until friendly relations were resumed between Caffa and the governor of Solgat.⁶¹ It may be interesting to note that legal disputes between people of different ethnic backgrounds were addressed under the Yuan code by holding a joint conference attended by the representatives of the groups involved.⁶²

Close and constant relations were entertained between the Mongol governor in Solgat and Genoese and Venetian governments in Tana and Caffa. Another document, dated 14 November 1381, mentions an embassy sent to "the lord of Sorgat and the emperor of Gazaria."⁶³ This embassy had three objectives: 1. to request all the privileges

⁶⁰ S.P. Karpov, "Grecs et Latins à Trébizonde (XIII^e-XV^e siècle). Collaboration économique, rapports politiques," in *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge*, ed. M. Balard, p. 416.

⁶¹ Balard, *Romanie*, i, p. 286.

⁶² Paul Heng-chao Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Traditions under the Mongols* (Princeton, 1979), p. 83.

⁶³ Gazaria (or Khazaria, i.e., the land of the Khazars) was a term that referred not just to the Crimea but to the whole khanate of the Golden Horde. The evolution of this term in Venetian usage is explained by Skrzinskaja in "Un ambasciatore veneziano," pp. 91-95.

enjoyed by the Venetians; 2. to explain the conditions of the Peace of Turin, at the end of the Veneto-Genoese war, which prohibited Venice access to the Black Sea for two years; 3. to obtain the restitution of goods taken away from Venetian merchants.⁶⁴ Again, we see here how diplomatic relations continue to play an essential role in ensuring that the political environment remains favourable to trade. Lastly, we should note that these missions were expensive and the gifts presented to the khan could be sizeable. The economic burden of the diplomatic exchanges, which is often remarked on in government documents, was also carried by the state.⁶⁵

As we have seen, the Mongols' 'convergence of interests' with the Italian merchants covered many areas, and the common goal of creating an environment favourable to trade was sustained by the mutual willingness to find a common ground, establish trust, and seek mutual understanding. But this was not a risk-free enterprise, and the need to protect one's own interests, as well as incidents that were allowed to escalate, sometimes led to conflicts.

Conflicts

It is fair to say that, while the Mongols seem to have been favourably disposed towards trade, they were no "pushovers." Conflicts periodically erupted between the rulers of the Golden Horde and the Italian colonies in their territory. As a preliminary assessment of the reasons that led to the violent confrontations, we should note two general points. The first is that conflicts were not caused by disagreements over commercial issues, and peace, once restored, led to the resumption of trading conditions that were not dissimilar from those enjoyed prior to war. The second is that military engagements seem to have been caused, above all, by real or perceived infringements of the sovereign authority of the khan. Motives of conflict related to sovereignty covered mainly two areas: territorial control and offences against Tatar subjects.

In 1308, the Khan of the Golden Horde Toqta attacked the Genoese, allegedly because of their collaboration with Tabriz (notwith-

⁶⁴ Thiriet, *Régestes*, i, p. 151, no. 612.

⁶⁵ The embassy sent in 1369 carried gifts for a value of 100 *sommi*; see Thiriet, *Régestes*, i, p. 121, no. 476.

standing the general improvement of relations between the two Mongol states) and because the Genoese engaged in kidnapping of Tatar children to sell in slavery. To punish the Genoese, Toqta moved the merchants in Sarai to Solgat, and seized their merchandise. Then he sent an army against Caffa. The Genoese resisted for several months but eventually set fire to the city and escaped on their ships. Toqta's troops entered and plundered the defenceless city on 8 May 1308.⁶⁶ The Genoese had supported the Ilkhan Arghun during his struggle with the Golden Horde, and the victory of the latter had dealt a heavy blow to the Genoese interests on the Black Sea. Hence, it is possible that Toqta's aggressive behaviour reflected the old animosity. It is also possible that the trade in Mongol children was so blatant and was depriving the khan of so many people that it provoked a military attack. But it is also likely, as mentioned by Bratianu, that Toqta's motive was, above all, to make the brash Genoese feel "le poids de son autorité."⁶⁷ That is, to punish a behaviour that was aggressive and overbearing, a characteristic of the Genoese in the early period of their activity on the Black Sea, which was denounced from several quarters.⁶⁸

Perhaps the most important episode of conflict between the Golden Horde and the Italian colonies was the war that set Khan Janibeg against Venice and Genoa from 1343 to 1347.⁶⁹ As is well known, shortly after the emperor Janibeg in 1342⁷⁰ confirmed the privileges granted by Özbeg to the Venetians, an incident in Tana brought about his armed reaction, the expulsion of Venetians and Genoese from Tana, and a state of war between the Golden Horde and the

⁶⁶ Grekov and Iakoubovsky, *La Horde d'Or*, p. 89. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 84. Vernadsky says that Caffa was attacked "because of a misunderstanding between Toqta and the Genoese," but does not explain the nature of the misunderstanding; see his *The Mongols and Russia*, p. 191. See also G.I. Bratianu, *Recherches sur le commerce Génois dans la Mer Noire au XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1929), p. 283.

⁶⁷ Bratianu, *Recherches sur le commerce Génois*, p. 283.

⁶⁸ The Greek merchants often complained about Genoese brash and aggressive behavior, see A.E. Laiou, "Monopoly and Privilege: the Byzantine Reaction to the Genoese Presence in the Black Sea," in *Oriente e Occidente tra Medioevo ed età moderna: studi in onore di Geo Pitarino*, ed. L. Balletto, vol. ii (Genova, 1997), pp. 675–86.

⁶⁹ S.P. Karpov, "Génois et Byzantins face à la crise de Tana de 1343 d'après les documents d'archives inédits," *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 22 (1996), pp. 33–51.

⁷⁰ *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum*, i, pp. 261–63. For a detailed study of Janibeg's decree see A.P. Grigor'ev, V.P. Grigor'ev, "Iarlyk Dzhanibeka ot 1342 g. vnezian-skim kupzam Azova (rekonstruktsiia soderzhaniia)," *Istoriografiia i istochnikovedeniie istorii stran Azii i Afriki*, 14 (1992), pp. 33–86.

Italians that led to the unsuccessful siege of Caffa and was resolved only after years of severe political disruption. In September 1343, a Venetian merchant, Andriolo Civran, slew a Mongol aristocrat who had smacked or punched him. This was surely illegal, since, aside from the disproportionate reaction, grievances against Mongols had to be addressed along proper channels, and adjudicated by a joint panel.⁷¹ The incident triggered a popular reaction and the government's armed intervention, which caused the expulsion of all the Italians and the death of several of them, while others were wounded or captured, and their possessions plundered. The majority managed to flee on their ships.⁷² Apparently the Venetians received a formal request to hand over the culprit, which, however, was ignored.⁷³

Tension had been brewing for some time, and it is likely that Janibeg's real target was Caffa rather than Tana, i.e., the most prosperous and the most independent of the Italian colonies. The legal dispute over judicial responsibilities, therefore, screened a broader problem, namely, the extent to which these cities were going to be allowed to retain near-sovereign powers. Even though Venice had been allowed only ten years earlier the right to establish its own basis in the territory of the Golden Horde, and even though its relationship with the local rulers had been extremely cautious, the Civran incident made sure that Venice could not distance itself from the emerging hostilities between the Golden Horde and the Genoese. Instead, an uneasy alliance was forged between Venetians and Genoese to protect their respective positions on the Black Sea. Their primary goals were to resume trade and retain their bases.

This could only occur through the resumption of diplomatic negotiations with the khan, while at the same time enforcing an embargo (*devetum*) of trade within the territory of the Golden Horde. This embargo was enforced only partially, and indeed the Venetians accused the Genoese of continuing their commercial operations in Caffa and other places in violation of the agreement.⁷⁴ But it did

⁷¹ In the Yuan code of 1283 it is expressly said that if a Mongol beat a Chinese the Chinese could not react but had to present witnesses and file a suit with the local authorities. It is possible that a similar procedure was followed in the Golden Horde. See Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Traditions*, p. 85.

⁷² S. Karpov, "Venezia e Genova: rivalità e collaborazione a Trebisonda e Tana, secoli XIII–XV," in *Genova, Venezia, il Levante nei secoli XII–XIV*, eds. G. Ortalli and D. Puncuh (Venezia, 2001), pp. 270–72.

⁷³ Morozzo della Rocca, "Notizie da Caffa," p. 285.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 289–95.

work in the end, as both sides were clearly suffering from the diminished trade, and Janibeg had not been able to resolve the conflict by the force of arms. The debilitating effects of the Plague, which decimated the Mongol armies besieging Caffa, is also said to have played a role in the resumption of a state of peace.⁷⁵ But it must be noted that the Venetians pursued peace with dogged determination, and in 1347 obtained conditions by and large similar to those before the war, with the exception that the commercial tax had been raised from 3 to 5%. On the other hand, the Genoese lost access to Tana until Berdibeg replaced Janibeg on the throne of the Golden Horde, in 1358. But the situation was destined to remain tense throughout this period and several times the Mongols threatened Caffa. According to Venetian intelligence, in 1352 they had to request urgent assistance from Pera because the Mongol Khan was hostile to them and intended to attack Caffa.⁷⁶

Another sign of the tug-of-war between Caffa and the Mongols is represented by the emission of currency. The coin of current usage in Caffa and throughout the Golden Horde for most commercial transaction was the *asper baricatus* (from the name of the Mongol khan Berke, 1257–67). Together with it, there was the *sommo* (a silver ingot) for larger transactions. Until the 1380s the *aspri* in use in Caffa indicate Mongol sovereignty by carrying the name of the khan stamped on the coins. However, probably after 1380, the same coins appear with a countermark stamped by the Caffa authorities. According to some, this was a measure made necessary by the devaluation of the currency, as part of the coins began to be produced in inferior silver. Therefore, good coins were stamped with the Genoese castle to guarantee proper value.⁷⁷

But the Caffa stamp on the verso of the khan's name and title was also a declaration of the new status of Caffa after the treaties between Genoa and the Golden Horde of 1381 and 1387, which sanctioned the territorial expansion of Genoa along the Crimean littoral and the expulsion from the same area of Mongol subjects.⁷⁸ In the early

⁷⁵ A.G. Tononi, "La Peste dell'Anno 1348," *Giornale Ligustico*, 11 (1884), pp. 139–52.

⁷⁶ M.-M. Costa, "Sulla battaglia del Bosforo," *Studi Veneziani*, 14 (1972), p. 210.

⁷⁷ O. Iliescu, "Contributions à l'histoire des colonies génoises en Roumanie aux XIII^e–XV^e siècles," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 28.1/2 (1989), pp. 25–52; *idem*, "La monnaie génoise dans les pays roumains aux XIII^e–XV^e siècles," in *Colloquio Rumeno-Italiano*, pp. 156–71.

⁷⁸ Șerban Papacostea, "Quod non iretur ad Tanam' Un aspect fundamental de

fifteenth century Caffa issued a series of coins in the name of Genoa (and then Milan) only, testifying to a fully independent status. In any case, the motives for the repeated confrontations between Genoa and the Golden Horde cannot be attributed solely to Genoa's rivalry with Venice, but more specifically to Genoa's attempts to seize forcibly territorial rights and sovereign powers from the rulers of the Golden Horde.

From the above we can see that conflicts occurred primarily when the khans of the Golden Horde thought their sovereign powers were being threatened or attacked. But in this connection we should note that Venice and Genoa operated very differently, and this difference is at the heart of our understanding of the "mode" of colonization of the Black Sea.

Colonies or comptoirs?

The reason why the Mongols had overall more conflicts with Genoa than with Venice must be sought not only in the different size of the respective colonies, but in the nature itself of the "colonization" of the Black Sea. Fundamental differences between Venice and Genoa in the respective attitudes to overseas possessions are well known. Most scholars stress the greater autonomy of the Genoese colonial governments and of the offices established to regulate them (most importantly the *Officium Gazarie* and the *Officium Romanie*) from the city's government, while Venetian overseas administration is seen as more closely controlled by the metropolitan centre. The authority of the central government was stronger in the Venetian possessions, while the Genoese colonies were more affected by the initiative of local individuals.

More important for our purposes are differences in the process of colonization. Venice contented itself with the acquisition of commercial bases throughout the Black Sea, but most prominently at Tana, Trebizond, and Soudak, that gave it access to the local markets, while at the same time being safe harbours for its ships and merchants. As long as rights of residence were granted and trade was permitted and protected, the Venetians did not resort to force unless compelled

la politique génoise dans la Mer Noire au XIV^e siècle," *Revue des Études du Sud-Est Européenne*, 12 (1979), p. 214. On the treaties between Genoa and the Tatars, see A.A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA, 1936), pp. 177–87.

to defend themselves. The settlement of Tana, so crucial to the very existence of Venice in the Black Sea, was fortified in 1424–29 only after having endured pillage and destruction several times, but only in 1442 we find a reference to a possibly autonomous and independent status of the Venetians in Tana.⁷⁹

Genoa, on the other hand, pursued a more aggressive policy of territorial expansion, following a trajectory that had first aimed at the exclusion of Venetians and other competitors from the Black Sea by diplomatic arrangements with local powers, and, when they failed, by the force of arms. During the war of 1350–55, Genoa found itself in the position of having to fight at the same time against Byzantines, Venetians, and Mongols. Facing the possibility of being denied access to the Black Sea, it opted for the imposition of full territorial control over strategic areas and commercial ports not only in the Crimean peninsula, but also along the Rumanian coasts.⁸⁰ This control was preserved only with increasing difficulties related to Genoa's own ability to provide for its colonies (and for itself!) until the Ottoman conquest. It is therefore not surprising that the conflicts between Genoa and the Golden Horde were, especially after 1350 of a different order than those between Venice and the Mongols. The different paths of colonization (if such a word can be used) represent two different readings of the political landscape. Whereas Genoa had had time to strengthen its position on the Black Sea, commanded a greater volume of trade, and therefore felt it had to protect these achievements, often by resorting to violence, Venice was weaker from the start, and therefore had to rely to a greater extent on the cooperation and protection of the local authorities.

Conclusion

In this necessarily cursory examination of the multisided and much debated relationship between Italian colonies on the Black Sea and Mongol states I have attempted to focus on Mongol goals, interests and active involvement. A few aspects deserve to be mention in the conclusions.

⁷⁹ Doumerc, "La Tana au XIV^e siècle," p. 260.

⁸⁰ Ș. Papacostea, "Un tournante de la politique génoise en Mer Noire au XIV^e siècle: l'ouverture des routes continentales en direction de l'Europe Centrale," in *Oriente e Occidente tra Medioevo ed età moderna*, ii, pp. 939–47.

First, the Mongols had much to gain from the commercial relations with the European states. These provided vast markets for local products, paid a variety of fees, taxes, and commercial costs, and contributed to the personal purse and interests of the khan with tributes, gifts, and foreign knowledge. Any notion that the arrival of the Italians on the Black Sea shores was a phenomenon to be understood mainly within a European context—rivalry between Genoa and Venice, weakening of Byzantium, the merchants' quest for commercial opportunities in remote markets, and so on—must make room for the obvious understanding shown by the Mongol rulers for the advantages of commerce, and for the many positive steps undertaken to encourage and protect it.

The second noteworthy aspect is that international trade came to an end after the collapse of the Ilkhans and of the Yuan dynasty not only because the end of the *Pax Mongolica* had made the routes insecure and risks unpredictable, but because the states of Venice and Genoa had never been willing to intervene diplomatically to secure adequate agreements. Although the conditions were ripe for initiating diplomatic exchanges with Beijing, they did not translate into a policy of regular state to state correspondence. While one should resist the temptation to resort to counterfactual arguments, it is still important to give due consideration to the fact that concrete and available opportunities were missed. Tabriz marked the eastern limit of state interests, a situation determined by the effects that relations between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde had on regional stability. But once the Ilkhans fell, and conditions became less favourable, the state withdrew, forcing individuals also to forsake the Persian markets. The Mongols had indeed been exceptional in their ability to provide the infrastructure underpinning trade even when the formal backing of European states was lacking.

Lastly, we should note that the overwhelming majority of the conflicts between the Mongols and the Italian colonies was determined not by commercial matters but by issues of sovereignty and political authority. Wars were fought not to deny Italians their commercial privileges but to curb abuses that threatened the formal and factual exercise of sovereign authority by the rulers of the Golden Horde in areas they regarded as their domains. Disputes were, of course, territorial, but also invested legal and monetary matters. In this context, we have also noted that Genoa and Venice adopted strategies of "colonization" that were extremely different but both successful in

preserving their respective positions down to the Ottoman conquest. Mongols' attitudes towards governance and international agreements contributed to shaping the political environment in which Venice and Genoa had to make their choices and confirm the relevance of Mongol agency in directly affecting the extent of commercial, political, and cultural exchange between Europe and Asia at a time of "European expansion."

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NOMAD AND SETTLED IN THE TIMURID MILITARY

Beatrice Forbes Manz

In 1370 the Turco-Mongolian conqueror Temür (Tamerlane) founded the Timurid state, one of a succession of nomad dynasties that controlled the Middle East from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. As the last of the nomad rulers to conquer from the borderlands, Temür brought in new nomad troops and within Iran inherited a mixed population of urban, agricultural, nomadic and mountain peoples, along with a dual system of administration based on difference of lifestyle and interest. The Timurids followed earlier precedent and organized their government in two sets of offices, one held by Turco-Mongolian commanders and centered on the military and the court, another staffed with Iranians and concerned primarily with correspondence and fiscal affairs.¹ Theoretically then, military activity was the province of the Turks. It is clear however that formal structure did not represent the full reality of military manpower and activity. Under the Timurids as under earlier nomad dynasties, Iranians served in the military, though only rarely in the highest ranks. To achieve an understanding of military dynamics then, we must include Iranian personnel. In this paper I plan to assess the importance of settled Iranians in military affairs, examining particularly the role of a segment of settled society rarely counted among military actors, namely the urban population.

One problem we face in estimating the importance of settled military forces lies in the conventions of our sources. Historical chronicles, both before and after the Mongol invasion, give us individual examples of Iranians who were active in the military sphere and relate events in which city populations played a role, but when they enumerate the troops in descriptions of campaigns and military reviews they consistently emphasize the preeminence of the Turco-Mongolian military. For the Timurid period we possess a particularly valuable

¹ There was also a chancellery using the Chaghatay language and staffed with Turks, but there is little evidence of the activities of this branch.

source on military and administrative organization, a genealogy which lists office holders under each member of the dynasty who held formal power. This work, the *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, presents a picture of ethnic segregation, with only a few, exceptional Iranian commanders listed within the military posts.² On the other side, the biographical literature on notables and religious figures almost never contains a hint of possible military involvement.

Despite the superior visibility and prestige of nomad troops, there is no doubt that Iranian populations served in a variety of military capacities under the Timurids, as under other nomad dynasties. Scholars writing on Iranian society and politics have noted that it is not always easy to make a firm distinction between the men of the sword and the men of the pen; Persian viziers, though not formally considered part of the military establishment, often led troops and participated in campaigns.³ The role that urban notables and artisans played in decisions about submission to invading armies and at times also in the defense of cities is accepted, particularly for the pre-Mongol period. Scholarly consensus has been that in the absence of military rulers, the city notables might decide whether or not to resist and might organize the city defense. The forces at their disposal were the common people of the city, sometimes organized in para-military formations.⁴ The military role of city populations and Iranian viziers is generally considered to have decreased with the Mongol invasion, which widened the distance between the nomad military elite and the Persian population.⁵ As I shall argue, however, in the Timurid period we continue to find city populations active in defense and

² *Mu'izz al-ansāb fī shajarat al-ansāb*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. 67.

³ A.K.S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia. Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History, 11th–14th Century*, Bibliotheca Persica (Albany, N.Y., 1988), pp. 28, 30; C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–37: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran*, Papers on Inner Asia 30 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999), pp. 60–61.

⁴ C. Cahen, *Mouvements populaires et autonomisme urbain dans l'Asie musulmane du moyen âge* (Leiden, 1959), pp. 6–9, 31–32, 38–39, 52–57, 79–80; Jürgen Paul, *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit* (Beirut, 1996), pp. 93–102, 117–26. For the Mongol period, Cahen attributes much of urban autonomy and military defense to the *akhi* brotherhoods, building on earlier ideals of *futuwwa* in the absence of strong state control. (C. Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey. The Seljukid Sultanate of Rum: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century*, tr. P.M. Holt (Harlow, Essex, 2001), pp. 250–54.) For this paper I have not used scholarship on the cities of the Mamluk Sultanate, whose military and administrative structure was significantly different from that of the Timurids.

⁵ Lambton, *Continuity*, pp. 56–58; Paul, *Herrscher*, pp. 252–53, 264.

city notables who owed some of their importance to military activity.⁶

Given the difference between common practice and formal structures, the weight we give to settled personnel in the military sphere will depend on the way we pose our questions. If we look at the military establishment from the perspective of the center, our attention will concentrate on the Turco-Mongolian commanders, known as amirs, who were closely bound to the dynasty through ties of personal loyalty and historic service. These men led soldiers of nomad provenance, most of them Chaghatay—that is, the nomads of the region within which Temür rose to power. The Turco-Mongolian troops and their commanders indubitably held the greatest power and prestige within the military establishment and formed the elite troops on major campaigns. Within the power structure of the army, Iranian troops, and particularly those within Iranian cities, had little official role to play and enjoyed inferior power and prestige.

If we examine military manpower from another perspective, and consider what made the crucial difference in gaining or holding power over a given region, then we must give greater weight to local sources of manpower, both those recruited into the army for specific campaigns and those which contributed to the defense of cities threatened by outside forces. Success or failure in attracting and controlling such manpower could decide the outcome of regional power struggles. There were numerous regional sources of soldiers: nomads and mountain populations, agricultural populations conscripted into regional armies, and finally the Iranian city populations, with the city notables who controlled them. While city populations almost certainly had less training and less equipment than most other military, the dynamics of power struggles gave them strategic importance. It was the possession of cities which defined the power of any ruler, and the taking of cities formed a central part of military campaigns.

In this paper I shall examine the military activities of urban populations and analyze how these affected the outcome of local military campaigns. I want to suggest a modification of current thinking in two ways. Firstly, it appears that city populations and settled military personnel remained important after the Mongol invasion; we should not consider the influx of new nomad troops as the end of Iranian

⁶ Masashi Haneda, "La famille Hūzānī d'Isfahan (15^e–17^e siècles)," *Studia Iranica*, 18 (1989), pp. 79–80; H.R. Roemer, "The Safavid Period," in *CHIr*, vol. vi, eds. P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 229–30.

military activity. Secondly, I want to consider the activities of urban notables not only from the standpoint of urban autonomy, but also from that of the overall military and political picture—to see how their power affected the outcome of military contests. I suggest that we should not judge urban military activity as incidental both to the duties of the city leadership and to the larger military picture, but rather take the military responsibilities of city populations as a normal and important aspect of their lives, and further as a significant factor in military contests.

There are a number of factors central to the understanding of urban military activity and its importance. I will first discuss the dynamics of regional struggles, the different types of manpower they involved, and the importance of cities in such contests. The next section of the essay will analyze the internal power structure of several Iranian cities, and show how the city leadership reacted when they were faced with an invading army and had to decide whether to submit or, if they did not submit, how they should organize their defense. In the final section of the paper, I examine how notables, including *'ulamā'* and viziers, fit into a larger class of Iranians who were trained in both the military and the learned professions. When we take full cognizance of Iranian military manpower and of the people who commanded it, we will see before us a changed picture of the Timurid military and of the relationship between the Iranian population and its Turco-Mongolian rulers.

The Dynamics of Regional Warfare

City populations acted within the context of a varied military structure and complex regional dynamics. Under the Timurids provincial governors were either junior members of the dynasty or important Turco-Mongolian commanders, known as amirs. In the larger provinces at least governors commanded sizeable Turco-Mongolian forces, which remained directly under their control and were joined to the ruler's army on major campaigns. Individual cities were governed by a military governor, or *darughā*, who appears to have had a small number of Turco-Mongolian troops, often only in the low hundreds.⁷

⁷ B.F. Manz, "The Office of *Darughā* under Tamerlane," *Nīguča Bīçig Pi Wēn Shu. An Anniversary Volume in Honor of Francis Woodman Cleaves* = *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9 (1985), p. 61.

Temür had left most small dynasties in the regions he conquered intact, and their rulers either joined in his subsequent campaigns or sent contingents to accompany his armies. Provincial manpower was thus available from a variety of populations. When a governor was appointed, he received messages of submission from local power holders—from the notables of cities, often requesting that he send a *darugha*, from local minor dynasties, and from the tribes of the region. Those who had troops available to them were obligated to put some at the disposal of the governor. Probably the most visible local forces were the tribal groups recruited directly into the military; these included Kurds, Lurs, and remnants of Mongol populations such as the Hazara and the Awghani, as well as Turkic nomad populations like the Turkmens and the Qashqa'i. The Iranian population of local rulers and military lords provided another source of military manpower, and often a troublesome one. These men led their own troops, sometimes within the Timurid armies, but occasionally against them.⁸ Besides these semi-independent sources of troops there were regional armies of Iranian soldiers, recruited and led by the servitors of the dynasty, often Iranian bureaucrats. These armies were referred to by the name of their region: the armies of Yazd and Abarqūh, of Fārs, or of Khurāsān, for instance.⁹ Provincial governors thus had access to a variety of troops, some more directly under their control than others. The Turco-Mongolian troops under Chaghatay amirs and the local regional troops were most directly attached to the governor and served the dynasty even on campaigns of conquest, or reconquest, outside their own region.

It was in local power struggles that the role of regional troops could be decisive, and it is in such contests that we find the city populations coming into prominence.¹⁰ Power struggles were neither

⁸ I have argued elsewhere for the political importance of this group of people. (B.F. Manz, "Military Manpower in Late Mongol and Timurid Iran," in *L'Héritage timouride, Iran-Asie centrale-Inde XV^e-XVIII^e siècles = Cahiers d'Asie centrale*, no. 3-4 [1997], pp. 43-55.)

⁹ From the local historian Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Shihāb Yazdī we learn something about the deployment of the foot army of Yazd and Abarqūh. Before the expedition to Kirmān mentioned above, these armies took part in the campaigns in which the princes of Fārs helped 'Umar b. Amīrānshāh against his brother Abū Bakr, and later in Iskandar's campaign against Qum. (Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Shihāb Yazdī [Ḥasanī], *Jāmi' al-tawārikh-i ḥasanī*, ed. Ḥusayn Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Īraj Afshār (Karachi, 1987) (hereafter Ḥasanī), pp. 25-31, 35-6.)

¹⁰ During Temür's great campaigns few cities chose to resist, but in some cases we know of controversies about whether or not to submit, and the city population played a part in the decision. One can take as examples the refusal of the Harātī

rare nor unimportant, due to the difficulty of passing on royal position intact. The death of the Timurid dynastic founder, Temür, in February, 1405, ushered in a protracted war of succession, eventually won by his youngest son, Shāhrukh, who had been governor of the eastern Iranian province of Khurāsān. Shāhrukh gained control of Transoxiana, Temür's capital province, in late 811/spring, 1409, when he defeated his major rival for supreme power and installed his son Ulugh Beg as governor in Samarqand. Even after this, however, Ulugh Beg's control was contested by one of Temür's major amirs, Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn. Only in 814/1411 was Shāhrukh able to achieve firm control. The contest for the rule of Fārs and central Iran was not resolved until 818/1415. This region had been the province of Shāhrukh's elder brother, 'Umar Shaykh, and at his death had passed to his son Pīr Muḥammad who held the capital city of Shīrāz, with younger sons in neighboring cities. After Temür's death, 'Umar Shaykh's sons fought both among themselves and with Timurid princes in other regions, until their pretensions provoked campaigns from Shāhrukh in 817/1414 and 818/1415, during which he defeated them and took direct control of the region.¹¹

For twenty years, Shāhrukh's hold on his realm was strong enough to ensure order, but a little before his death in 850/1447, trouble broke out again. The major troublemaker was a grandson of Shāhrukh, Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Baysunghur, who had been appointed as governor of northern Iran. During Shāhrukh's final illness, Sulṭān Muḥammad took advantage of the restiveness of local powers to try to extend his control into central and southern Iran. Shāhrukh headed west against him, but died on the way. On Shāhrukh's death the realm was contested among numerous pretenders, including his one surviving son Ulugh Beg and several grandsons. After a few years, the Turcoman Qaraqoyunlu dynasty which had held Azerbaijan as vassal to the Timurids took advantage of the disorder to join the contest; they succeeded in taking central and western Iran, but failed to hold Khurāsān. The history of these contests can tell us a great deal about regional dynamics and in studying them we are fortu-

population to defend Harāt against Temür's army in 783/1381 and the uprising in Iṣfāhān led by a smith, in 789/1387. (Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, *Ẓafamāmah*, ed., Muḥammad 'Abbāsī (Tehran, 1336S/1957) (hereafter ZNY), i, pp. 232–35, 312–13.

¹¹ B.F. Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 131–44; P. Soucek, "Eskandar b. 'Omar Šayx b. Timur: A Biography," in *La civiltà Timuride come fenomeno internazionale*, ed. M. Bernardini = *Oriente Moderno*, 15 (1996), pp. 79–82.

nate to have the products of two important local historiographical schools, of Fārs and Khurāsān, which allow us greater insight into the internal working of city politics than do most chronicles. We are further privileged to have works written by men of mixed military, bureaucratic and even religious background, who served personally in some of the campaigns they described.¹² This presents the historian with an unusually full picture of local activity in a time of stress.

In the accounts of the wars after Temür's and Shāhrukh's deaths, we read only occasionally of decisive battles fought in the field. In interregional contests, when a ruler attempted the conquest of a neighboring province, he would collect a large force from his own region. If the ruler of the threatened region was sufficiently organized, he in turn gathered an army and set out to repel the invader. In some cases, perhaps indeed the majority, the two armies sent negotiators forward and made peace before they met, while in others they engaged in battle. If the invader won, he proceeded to his main goal—the cities—while if he lost, the defending army pursued and plundered his troops.¹³

The prize then was the cities, and they were the sites of most decisive battles. We see this clearly in the contests over southern and central Iran, first in 807–818/1405–1415, and again after Shāhrukh's death. The possession of two cities was crucial: Iṣfahān, the chief among the central Iranian cities, and Shīrāz, the capital of Fārs. Third in importance was the prosperous commercial city of Yazd. In times of trouble these three cities endured frequent, sometimes yearly, attacks and sieges. A striking illustration of the importance cities held in determining rulership is found in the failed 812/1409–10 rebellion

¹² These are Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan, author of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh-i ḥasanī*, and Abū Bakr Ṭīhrānī, author of the *Kitāb-i Dīyārbakriyya*, both of whose careers will be described in the last section of the paper.

¹³ Such battles seem to have centered in the border areas, near Jām in the case of 'Irāq-i 'Ajam and Khurāsān, and the Oxus River in the case of Khurāsān and Transoxiana. For examples of encounters avoided through diplomacy or fear, see Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī (Ja'farī), *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, tr. Abbas Zaryab, "Das Bericht über die Nachfolger Timurs aus dem Ta'rikh-i kabīr des Ḡafarī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusainī," Ph.D. dissertation (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität zu Mainz, 1960), p. 57; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, MS. St. Petersburg, Publichnaia Biblioteka im. Saltykova-Shchedrina, PNC 201, fol. 303a; 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, *Maṭla' al-sa'dayn wa majma' al-baḥrayn*, ed. Muḥammad Shafrī (Lahore, 1360–68/1941–49), ii, pp. 900, 904–5, 909, and for battles actually fought: *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, pp. 38, 45/fols. 295b, 298b; *Maṭla'*, ii, pp. 972, 979–84; Abū Bakr Ṭīhrānī Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb-i Dīyārbakriyya*, eds. N. Lugal and F. Sümer (Ankara, 1962–4), pp. 324–5.

of an Iranian military commander against the governor of Fārs, Pīr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar Shaykh. While Pīr Muḥammad was leading an army from Fārs against Kirmān, one of his commanders, a man from the Shīrāz bazaar named Ḥusayn Sharbatdār who had risen to high rank through the prince’s favor, murdered his master in the middle of the night and attempted to seize power for himself. He won over a number of the Turco-Mongolian amirs to his side, and within hours set out to do two crucial things—to kill the next most powerful Timurid prince, Pīr Muḥammad’s younger brother Iskandar, and to take the provincial capital, Shīrāz. Iskandar on his side rushed to Shīrāz the minute he heard about his brother’s murder. Ḥusayn Sharbatdār followed him but failed to take the city. The amirs who had earlier taken his side deserted to Iskandar when they witnessed Ḥusayn’s lack of success, and after this Ḥusayn was easily caught and killed.¹⁴

It was far from easy to take a city by force alone. The Timurid armies contained experts in siege warfare, skilled in the art of tunneling and the use of siege machinery, but siege craft is not frequently mentioned and does not seem to have been the decisive factor in most regional campaigns. In a major conquest, like Temūr’s, the size of the army and the weight of its machinery could crush almost any opposition. On most smaller campaigns a determined city defense might hold out against the machinery available.¹⁵ What usually determined the outcome of a siege was the decision to end the contest because of difficulties, either within the city or within the invading army. Resistance then was not necessarily a hopeless cause; it was fairly common for an army to decide to lift a siege if it did not promise quick enough success or if there was reason to fear attack from another quarter.¹⁶

¹⁴ Fuller discussion of this incident will follow later in the article. It was the mastery of Shīrāz and later the takeover of Iṣfāhān in 814/1412 which allowed Iskandar to defy Shāhrukh and declare himself Sulṭān, and it was Shāhrukh’s conquest of Iṣfāhān in 817/1414 which put an end to Iskandar’s bid for power and brought the voluntary submission of other cities, tribes and local rulers in the area.

¹⁵ See for example Iskandar failing to take Kirmān city with missile throwers (Ḥasanī, pp. 42–43), Iskandar failing to take Qum despite tunnel diggers in 815 (Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, *Ẓubdat al-tawārīkh*, ed., Sayyid Kamāl Ḥājī Sayyid Jawādī (Tehran, 1372S/1993–4), pp. 481–82, and the failure of siege craft in Yazd, in 798 (Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī Kātīb, *Tārīkh-i jadīd-i yazd*, ed. Īraj Afshār (Tehran, 1345S/1996–7), p. 91).

¹⁶ For example, Rustām abandoned the siege at Warzana (*Ẓubdat*, p. 396). Iskandar lifted the siege of Iṣfāhān when some of his local tribal troops deserted (*Ẓubdat*, p. 398). Iskandar left Sīrjān with only a small section of his army to continue the

When an army approached, the city leaders, Turco-Mongolian and Iranian, had to choose among three courses of action; they could submit without a struggle, they could close the gates and defend the city from within, or they could send out troops against the enemy. It was quite common to answer a siege with active fighting either on the walls and towers or outside the city, and sieges sometimes involved one or two battles a day.¹⁷ If it became clear to the defenders that the enemy forces were strong and determined enough to maintain a painfully long siege, they might decide to submit and ask for safety. Thus in 817/1414, for instance, we find the amirs and population of Iṣfāhān, after several days of determined resistance, deciding to desert the cause of the prince Iskandar b. ‘Umar Shaykh and admit the army of his uncle Shāhrukh.¹⁸ In some cases the invading army was able to persuade either an individual or a group within the city to betray the city’s ruler and let its soldiers in. Such actions may in some cases have been due to the ambition and treachery of a single person, but often they appear to have been the result of disagreement within the city leadership about the continuation of the siege. One example is Iskandar b. ‘Umar Shaykh’s takeover of Yazd in 812/1409–10. After Pīr Muḥammad’s murder, Iskandar took power in southern Iran, basing himself in Shīrāz, and sent word to other cities that they should recognize him. The amirs whom Pīr Muḥammad had stationed in Yazd, led by the *kotwāl* (fortress keeper) Abā Bakr Khāzin, refused to acknowledge Iskandar’s rule, and imprisoned the amirs he had sent. Iskandar, learning of Abā Bakr’s recalcitrance, sent troops against Yazd. After the siege had lasted for some time, the leaders within the city found themselves in trouble, released the amirs whom Iskandar had sent, and dispatched an emissary to ask for clemency. Abā Bakr resisted the move to surrender but when he came out of the fortress into the city at noon one day, one of his servitors took the opportunity to close the interior door of the fortress against him while opening the outer one to let in the army,

siege, and these were defeated by the army of the fortress (*Ẓubdat*, pp. 442–43). Iskandar’s siege of Qum failed in 815 (*Ẓubdat*, pp. 481–82), and Sultān Muḥammad abandoned the siege of Shīrāz on Shāhrukh’s approach. (*Ta’rīkh-i jadīd*, p. 239).

¹⁷ See for example Ḥasanī, p. 90; *Ta’rīkh-i kabīr*, p. 61/fol. 304b; *Ẓubdat*, pp. 397, 530–37; *Ta’rīkh-i jadīd*, p. 90.

¹⁸ *Ẓubdat*, pp. 545–47; *Ta’rīkh-i kabīr*, pp. 62–63/fols. 305a–b. For other examples of submission by negotiation see the taking of Qum by the Qaraqoyunlu (Tīhrānī, pp. 343–44) and the taking of Qum and Kirmān by Iskandar (Ḥasanī, pp. 37, 42–43).

which entered and killed the amirs responsible for the uprising, including Abā Bakr.¹⁹

When we examine the dynamics of regional campaigns, we see the cities and their defense as an important element for success or failure. Cities were both the goal of aspiring rulers and the locus of most lengthy military engagements. While the size of the army facing a city certainly affected the outcome of a siege, the quality, enthusiasm and endurance of the defending forces was also of great military importance.

City Populations and City Defense

The next task in elucidating regional military dynamics is to examine what went into the organization of city defense and what part notables and city populations played in it. Cities which were directly under Timurid control contained Turco-Mongolian representatives of the government—a governor in larger cities and a *darugha* in smaller ones—and a bureaucratic staff usually partly locally recruited and partly imported. These outside administrators governed the city in conjunction with the local notables, whom they consulted on important issues. We have some insight into the internal power structure of several provincial cities including Yazd, Shīrāz, Iṣfāhān and Samarqand. In each we find a group of influential notables, among whom usually the judge (*qāḍī*) was the most active in times of crisis. *Sayyids*, particularly their prefect (*naqīb*), prominent Sufi *shaykhs* and local viziers drawn from the wealthy families might also form part of this group. The other set of people important to municipal decisions was the ward headmen or heads of local groups, known variously as *raʿīs*, *kulū* or *kathudā*. In general, ward headmen seem to have come from less wealthy and aristocratic families than the chief notables, and were more firmly attached to the bazaar and to individual sections of the city.

The relative importance of these groups varied from city to city. In

¹⁹ The dynastic historian Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū credits the Turco-Mongolian amirs with the movement towards peace, while the more locally based histories ascribe it to the city notables. Both however agree that Abā Bakr was persisting in the siege despite pressure from within the city to end it. (*Zubdat*, pp. 345, 349–50; Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, (Jaʿfarī) *Taʾrīkh-i yazd*, ed. Īraj Afshār (Tehran, 1338/1960), p. 151; *Taʾrīkh-i jadīd*, pp. 171, 180, 186).

Yazd and Samarqand, as we will see, we hear almost exclusively about the high notables, while in Shīrāz the ward headmen were the ones who took charge. In Iṣfāhān both groups were powerful. What was constant was the power that city representatives wielded. Urban leaders were an important part of the city's decision-making group even when Turco-Mongolian military leaders were present. As an army approached and the city faced the decision on how to react, its governor and major amirs met with the city notables and sometimes surrounding military leaders to decide on a course of action. We can see these dynamics particularly clearly in the struggle surrounding Shāhrukh's death. In Shāhrukh's last year, his grandson Sulṭān Muḥammad decided to widen his sphere of influence. He was encouraged in his ambitions by the independent action of the Iṣfāhānī notables, who wrote to invite him to take over their city. At this point Iṣfāhān had a Turco-Mongolian governor—Amīr Sa'ādat, recently appointed by Shāhrukh to succeed his uncle in the post. As Sulṭān Muḥammad approached the city, Sa'ādat fled, along with one of the city's headmen (*ru'asā*). The notables remained and welcomed in Sulṭān Muḥammad.²⁰ The next step for Sulṭān Muḥammad was to extend his power over other major cities of the region. He sent a messenger to Yazd to propose that the city recognize him. Shāhrukh's governor was absent, but his deputy governor and the city judge decided to receive the envoy and invited the notables to the city mosque to hear Sulṭān Muḥammad's letter. After this they set out to wait upon the prince in Iṣfāhān.²¹ A little later, Sulṭān Muḥammad set out against Shīrāz to impose his authority on the provincial capital. Here he met more resistance. As he approached the city with an army, the amirs serving its young governor, the ward headmen and the heads of local tribes conferred together about the best defense and decided not to meet the army outside the city, but to defend from within.²²

²⁰ *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, pp. 234–35; Ṭīhrānī, pp. 384–87; R. Quiring-Zoeche, *Isfahan im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur persischen Stadtgeschichte* (Freiburg, 1980), pp. 33–34. Sa'ādat had earlier served Sulṭān Muḥammad and had requested his uncle's position from Shāhrukh without asking Sulṭān Muḥammad's permission.

²¹ *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, p. 236.

²² *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, p. 238; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, p. 124. The *Ta'rikh-i jadīd* mentions the Turco-Mongolian amirs, ward headmen and *sardārān* (local commanders), without attaching these last to tribes, while the *Ta'rikh-i kabīr* omits the ward headmen, and mentions the “amirs” of Kurds and Lurs, presumably those mentioned as *sardārān* in the *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*.

As we see from these examples, there can be little doubt that city notables were fully included in decisions about the fate of their cities.

What is striking is that the city notables were not infrequently the stronger party in deliberations. When there was disagreement between notables and the governor, the opinion of the city people could well prevail. We have seen that Iṣfāhān's governor, Sa'ādat, did not prevent the Iṣfāhānī notables from inviting in Sulṭān Muḥammad, but instead fled at the prince's approach. The fact that one of the ward headmen accompanied him in his flight could suggest that there had been some controversy, and that the governor's party had lost. A similar event occurred after the death of Sulṭān Muḥammad in battle in Dhū 'l-Hijja, 855/January, 1452, when Yazd had to decide whether to accept the rule of the victorious Timurid prince, Sulṭān Muḥammad's brother Abū 'l-Qāsim Babur. The regional governor, who had been appointed by Sulṭān Muḥammad, wished to resist Babur but the notables refused, stating that Babur had a right to rule the region. Two of the greatest religious and intellectual figures of the city, Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and Nūr al-Dīn Ni'mat Allāh, appear to have been strongly behind Babur's claims, and this may have helped to decide the issue. In any case, the governor gave in and when Babur arrived, he was ceremonially received outside the city by the assembled dignitaries.²³

In 856/1452, we find the notables of Yazd again acting on their own. At this time Babur had handed control of Yazd to a younger prince, Khalīl Sulṭān, who first squeezed the region for taxes and then left the grandson of the earlier governor in charge and departed to attempt the conquest of Fārs, taking with him the region's taxes, the armies and many of the Yazd notables. These notables included the men who probably constituted the highest council of the city, the chief judge, Majd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh, the viziers Khwāja 'Imād al-Dīn Mas'ūd and Khwāja Jalāl al-Dīn Murshid, and the wealthy merchant Khwāja Zayn al-Dīn 'Alī Bāwardī. The most effective army in southern Iran at this time was that of the Qaraqoyunlu Turcomans, and as they approached, the Yazd notables in Shīrāz wrote to their junior colleagues in Yazd advising that the city surrender to the invaders. The Timurid governor and officials found it expedient to depart, leaving the city in the hands of its notables, headed by Mawlānā

²³ *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, p. 264.

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad, who protected the city while awaiting the Qaraqoyunlu arrival.²⁴ It seems clear that the Timurid forces could not hold the city without the help of its population.

The city of Shīrāz presents us with an even more striking example of the role that internal city leaders could play in decisions—in this case the decision to resist an army despite reluctance on the part of the prince. This event occurred during the 812/1409 rebellion mentioned earlier, when the Iranian Ḥusayn Sharbatdār murdered his master Pīr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar Shaykh and attempted to take Shīrāz. According to the historian Tāj al-Dīn b. Shihāb Yazdī, Iskandar arrived in the city fleeing before Ḥusayn Sharbatdār, planning to gather his family and goods and depart for safety. The ward headmen (*kulū*) stopped him from fleeing, swore allegiance (*bayʿat*) to him and organized the defense of city walls and gates. The head *kulū* then went outside the gate and announced the refusal of the city population to accept Ḥusayn Sharbatdār—a native of Shīrāz and its bazaar—as ruler of the city. On hearing this, Ḥusayn’s amirs quickly began to desert him and he had no choice but to flee.²⁵ What is particularly interesting here is that Ḥusayn had apparently succeeded in winning over a number of Turco-Mongolian amirs to his side earlier, but could not keep their loyalty when they discovered that the people of Shīrāz were behind Iskandar. Shāhrukh’s reconquest of Khwārazm in late 815/early 1413 provides another illustration both of the process of consultation and of the weight that city notables and population held within it. Shāhrukh sent a large force to take Khwārazm, which after Temūr’s death had become part of the Golden Horde and was controlled by a governor, an *amīr dīwān*, and the city judge. These men met with the notables, but opinion was divided over the best course of action. A conciliatory letter from Shāhrukh’s emissary brought most people over to the side of peace, but while negotiations were in progress, some of Shāhrukh’s troops began to pillage the region, and this act brought the pro-war party into the ascendancy. Troops from the city attacked Shāhrukh’s force and found them unprepared. When Shāhrukh’s soldiers heard that an army

²⁴ *Taʾrīkh-i jadīd*, pp. 266–67.

²⁵ In the dynastic histories the credit for the defense of Shīrāz is given primarily to Iskandar who had hastened there, and to the Turco-Mongolian amirs of the city, but the more locally grounded historian Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan portrays the ward headmen, *kulūs*, as the major actors (*Ḥasanī*, pp. 17–18).

from the Golden Horde was coming to the aid of Khwārazm, they retreated. The city population came out, found the battlefield empty, and while some people picked up the goods left behind, others chased the retreating army. After this, however, the governor, claiming that some of the city had sided with the Timurids, imposed heavy taxes and punished those who had sent out propitiation presents to Shāhrukh's representatives. Now the city population turned against him, the more strongly when they learned that Shāhrukh, angry at the failure of his expedition, had punished the soldiers guilty of pillage. As another army sent by Shāhrukh approached the city, the population refused to fight for the governor and sent out *sayyids* and other emissaries to welcome Shāhrukh's rule.²⁶

The accounts reproduced above make it clear that the notables had an important voice in deciding who should rule the city, and it seems likely that the governors did not have sufficient force to hold their cities against an invader without collaboration from the population and its representatives. When there was disagreement between governor and notables about the advisability of defense, it was often the will of the notables and population which prevailed, and when the notables chose not to hold the city, the governor sometimes found it wise to leave.

The Organization of City Defense

Urban leaders were active not only in decision making, but also in the defense of cities under attack. As we saw in the case of consultation, city people took part in fighting invaders even when Turco-Mongolian personnel were present. Here again, all cities were not the same. In Yazd, despite the political voice of notables, there is little evidence of actual military activity on the part of either notables or the population.²⁷ For most other cities the sources suggest active engagement

²⁶ *Ẓubdat*, pp. 478–80.

²⁷ The possible exception to this was the rebellion and siege of Yazd in 798/1395–6. The uprising was led by a minor commander from the remnants of the Khurāsānīan troops of the earlier Muzaffarid dynasty who rebelled against the agents of Temür. The most important troops used probably came from the Khurāsānīan corps and from those of the Turco-Mongolian commander whom the rebel called in to take rulership of the city. He is said also to have gained a following within the city by distributing wealth to the motley population of traders from various regions. The estimated numbers range from one to two thousand, including five hundred horse-

from city leaders and the common people, particularly the artisan class. In Shīrāz for instance, we see a clear connection between city leadership and military activity. Here the most prominent city leaders were the ward headmen, known locally as *kulū*; the presence of a butcher among these seems to argue for a bazaar provenance.²⁸ It is clear that the military prominence of ward headmen was a tradition in Shīrāz, as they had played a prominent role in city defense under the Inju'ids and Muẓaffarid dynasties who ruled Fārs in the Mongol period. At that time ward headmen constituted an important element in the ruler's power, organizing local support and taking charge of the military defense of their own section of the walls and gates.²⁹ Indeed Abū Ishāq Inju had apparently so feared the military power of the Shīrāzis that he forbade the population of Shīrāz to bear arms and kept them out of his service.³⁰

The power of the Shīrāz headmen survived into the Timurid period. During the uprising of Ḥusayn Sharbatdār, it was the *kulūs* who organized the defense of the city's walls and towers. In 817/1414, expecting Shāhrukh's campaign against Iskandar, the same ward headmen mobilized the city in favor of Shāhrukh while Iskandar's agent was absent. They beat drums and put wood at the head of the streets, women and children on roofs threw down stones and ashes, and the population called out, "the city belongs to Shāhrukh." The rioters plundered the houses of Iskandar's Turco-Mongolian officials and their dependents. When Iskandar's son and his agent arrived back, they reimposed Iskandar's control, killed several of the ward headmen, and for three days pillaged houses and killed members of the population, until the *sayyids* and *ulamā'* persuaded them that the uprising was the work of the rabble, and the population as a whole should not be punished.³¹ The next major incident in Shīrāz occurred

men, but these probably include the troops of Sultān Muḥammad b. Abū Sa'īd Tabasī, the Turco-Mongolian commander invited in as ruler. *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, PNC fols. 273b–74a; Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī, *Histoire des conquêtes de Tamerlan intitulée Zafarnāma*, par Nizāmuddīn Shāmī, ed. F. Tauer (Prague, 1937–56), ii, pp. 126–27; ZNY, i, pp. 559–60; *Ta'rikh-i yazd*, p. 56; *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, p. 90.

²⁸ *Hasanī*, p. 18; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, p. 60/fol. 304b.

²⁹ John W. Limbert, "Shiraz in the Age of Hafez," Ph.D. dissertation (Harvard University, 1973), pp. 68–76.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 155–58.

³¹ *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, pp. 59–61, fols. 304a–b; *Hasanī*, pp. 39–40. The account of the *Ta'rikh-i kabīr* is the fuller. Note that Khwāja Nūr al-Dīn Kamāl, earlier named by Tāj al-Dīn Hasan as ward headman, is here identified by him as Iskandar's agent, working with Muḥammad Sāriq.

at the end of Shāhrukh's reign, when the rebellious prince Sulṭān Muḥammad attacked Shīrāz, ruled by Shāhrukh's young grandson 'Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm Sulṭān. As I have written above, when the invading army approached Shīrāz, its Turco-Mongolian commanders conferred with ward headmen and heads of local tribes and decided to defend the city from within.³² While Sulṭān Muḥammad camped for a while outside the walls of Shīrāz, according to the *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, he did not allow his troops to attack the city and made them ignore the bellicose activity of the "rabble" of Shīrāz, screaming from the walls and sounding trumpets and oboes.³³ After Shāhrukh's death, Sulṭān Muḥammad again attacked Shīrāz, and this time its governor, the prince 'Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm Sulṭān, came out with an army to meet him. The historian 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī mentions that many of the defending forces were craftsmen and that they fought bravely; they were however defeated by Sulṭān Muḥammad's superior army.³⁴

What we see in the case of Shīrāz is both a different internal power structure from that of Yazd, allowing a more active role to the headmen of the city quarters, and a more overt military role for the population. There may also have been an alliance on the city level with the local tribes, since they appear to have been called in to consult on the issue of defense. There can be no doubt here that some at least of the bazaar population played a military role in times of need and perhaps also at other times. We should remember that Ḥusayn Sharbatdār and his brother Ḥasan, who before their rebellion in 812 had made successful careers in Pīr Muḥammad's military, were from the Shīrāz bazaar. The mention of a butcher among the ward headmen, whose political importance and military activity is fully attested, and the participation of craftsmen in campaigns even outside the city walls suggest that the bazaar classes were more than untrained emergency levies.

When we try to identify the section of population mobilized for city defense, it is important to note the selective use of the epithet "rabble" (*awbāsh*) in our sources. This was the term applied to the people mobilized by the ward headmen in the uprising of 817/1414, when the notables wanted to exonerate the larger part of the pop-

³² *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, p. 238; Ṭīhrānī, p. 287; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, p. 124.

³³ *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, p. 125.

³⁴ *Ta'rikh-i jadīd*, p. 249; *Maṭlaʿ*, ii, p. 896.

ulation, and it is again used for the people defending the walls of Shīrāz when Sulṭān Muḥammad wished not to let his soldiers react and take up the challenge they presented. When the urban troops of Shīrāz defended the city in 851/1447, however, they were identified as craftsmen. It seems likely that many of the same people were involved in all three of these events and that the difference in terminology was largely tactical; they were rabble when not to be seen as representing the true interests of the city, but artisans when they were.³⁵

While in Shīrāz it was the ward headmen who organized the city population to fight, elsewhere the same task was often undertaken by notables, especially *‘ulamā’*. We find an illustration in the defense of Samarqand early in Shāhrukh’s reign. In the end of 812/ April, 1410, the powerful amir Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn, resisting Shāhrukh’s control on the borders of Transoxiana, had taken advantage of Ulugh Beg’s absence from Samarqand to advance on the city. Shāhmalik, the amir left in charge of its defense, came out against him but was defeated and then instead of retreating into the city, headed for the mountains. When Nūr al-Dīn approached, he found the city closed against him. The first gate he came to, called the Shaykhzāda, was guarded by Khwāja ‘Iṣām al-Dīn, the *shaykh al-Islām* of the region, officially the highest ranking among the *‘ulamā’*, and by the descendants of the local Sufi shaykh, Shaykhzādah Sāgharchī, whose shrine was in that part of the city.³⁶ When Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn failed to get a hearing there, he went to the Iron Gate, guarded by a notable, Khwāja ‘Abd al-Awwal and a judge, Qāḍī Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Here he was met with the answer that these were men of learning; the governance of the city lay with Shāhrukh, and they would admit no one without the permission of the dynasty. The notables sent a delegation to Shāhrukh, which included Khwāja ‘Abd al-Awwal, Khwāja ‘Iṣām al-Dīn, Mawlānā Qāḍī Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Mawlānā Quṭb al-Dīn, Amirak Dānishmand and Khwāja Faḍl b. Abū ‘l-Layth Samarqandī.³⁷

³⁵ The attack on Harāt by Yār ‘Alī Qaraqoyunlu, to be discussed below, presents another example of such selective usage.

³⁶ For these figures see Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar fī akhbār afṛād bashar*, ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī (Tehran, 1333S/1954–5), iv, p. 35; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jalāl Samarqandī, *Qandiyya*, in Īraj Afshār (ed.), *Qandiyya wa samariyya, dū risāla dar ta’rīkh-i mazārāt wa juḡhrāfiyā-i Samarqand* (Tehran, 1367S/1988–9), pp. 120–23.

³⁷ Of these men, Mawlānā Quṭb al-Dīn, later served Ulugh Beg as *ṣadr*, head of pious foundations, and Faḍl b. Abū ‘l-Layth was a well known member of the Samarqand *‘ulamā’*. See Mu‘izz al-ansāb, fol. 138b, and Khwāndamīr, *Habīb*, iv, p. 37.

It appears that some of the other notables of Samarqand remained with the troops of the city; they went against Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn with Amīr Shāhmalik and the foot, horse and elephants from Samarqand. As it turned out, they were no match for their opponent and were defeated. When Shāhmalik returned to the city, he was heaped with reproaches.³⁸ Shāhrukh was more successful against Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn, and after his victory proceeded to Samarqand, where he rewarded its people, especially those who had participated in the defense.³⁹

In the case of Harāt, the capital of Khurāsān, we see the defense organized by the judge and the military governor together, utilizing the city population. After Shāhrukh's death, when his son Ulugh Beg officially controlled Harāt, the city was attacked by the Turcoman commander Yār 'Alī Qaraqoyunlu. The governor fortified the city and notified Ulugh Beg. As the enemy approached, the governor ordered all of the population who owned donkeys to go out against Yār 'Alī; these were unarmed men, easily defeated and plundered by the enemy. With this success, Yār 'Alī gained strength and as he came to the outskirts of the city, attracted adherents from among the undesirable elements (*awbāsh*) and *nōkers* (military servitors) of amirs seeking to better their position. The defense of the city was orchestrated by the governor along with the city judge, Mawlānā Qāḍī Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Imāmī, and other notables. The population, including well-known artisans and Sufis, took part.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the forces of Yār 'Alī advanced to the walls, undeterred by the arrows and stones rained down on them. When the situation reached a crisis, first the Samarqandī Turks retreated and then the Tajiks after them. What saved the city was the bravery of someone called Mawlānā 'Imād al-Dīn Muṭahhar Kārīzī, distinguished for his skill in archery, who now led his soldiers forward and succeeded in pushing the enemy back until new amirs arrived from Ulugh Beg to relieve the city. One should notice the title Mawlānā applied to Kārīzī; this indicates inclusion in the class of scholars rather than of the military or bureaucrats. At some point during the siege the Harātīs captured one of Yār 'Alī's soldiers, whom they tied by the feet and dragged through the city, but then they learned that he was

³⁸ Hāfiz-i Abrū, *Majma' al-tawārīkh*, MS. Istanbul, Fatih 4371/1, fols. 458b, 460a-b; *Żubdat*, pp. 365-66, 370-71.

³⁹ *Żubdat*, pp. 379-80.

⁴⁰ *Maṭla'*, ii, 953-54.

an artisan and let him go.⁴¹ Thus it appears that craftsmen were among those Yār ‘Alī had recruited in the suburbs, as well as those who were defending the city. Since Yār ‘Alī’s recruits are referred to as rabble, we seem again to find a selective use of class terms. A few years later, in 861/1467, we find Shāhrukh’s widow Gawharshād organizing the defense of the Harāt fortress in cooperation with the same judge, Qādī Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad.⁴²

The city whose leaders and population took the most active stance in both political and military affairs was Iṣfāhān, well known for its contentious spirit. Here we are able to discern the activities both of the religious notables and of the ward headmen. After Temūr’s death in 1405, Iṣfāhān became the central point of contention among the princes vying for power within the region, and while the struggle was at its height, suffered yearly sieges. The most active city leader was the chief judge, Qādī Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Ṣā‘idī. He was a member of a landowning family prominent and active in the religious, *dūwān* and military spheres during the Timurid and Qaraqoyunlu periods.⁴³ At the time of Temūr’s death, the prince stationed in Iṣfāhān was Rustam b. ‘Umar Shaykh, the brother of Pīr Muḥammad and Iskandar. When Iṣfāhān suffered a siege in Muḥarram, 809/June–July, 1406, Rustam was in the city, but the defense was led by Qādī Aḥmad Ṣā‘idī. The people mentioned defending the city are identified sometimes as “Iṣfāhānīs,” a term whose meaning remains unclear,⁴⁴ and sometimes more specifically as the “people of the city” (*mardum-i shahr*). After a battle outside the city in which the Iṣfāhānīs were defeated, the *sayyids* and other notables made peace, but when the enemy’s forces misbehaved, they repented their decision and resumed active defense. Qādī Aḥmad, with another local power holder, Jābir Ṭīhrānī, and several other notables came out to fight Abā Bakr, leading foot and horsemen estimated at 20,000. At the time of the Friday communal prayer, Abā Bakr’s soldiers tried to climb the walls, but they were repulsed by the city population. In the *Ta’rīkh-i kabīr*, where these events are chronicled in detail, Rustam is mentioned only tangentially, unable to defend himself or to come out of the city.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Maṭla‘*, ii, pp. 952–97.

⁴² Khwāndamīr, *Habīb*, iv, p. 65.

⁴³ Quiring-Zoche, pp. 230–33.

⁴⁴ The usual meaning would be the inhabitants of the city, but the city name is occasionally applied also to the Turco-Mongolian amirs who served there.

⁴⁵ Quiring-Zoche, pp. 19–21; *Ta’rīkh-i kabīr*, pp. 39–40, fols. 296a–b.

In the next contest for Iṣfāhān, after the murder of Pīr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar Shaykh in 812/1409, Qāḍī Aḥmad again played a very major part; indeed he controlled the city. At this time Rustam was no longer in Iṣfāhān and the young prince ʿUmar Shaykh b. Pīr Muḥammad left in charge of the city, had either fled or been pushed out. On the grounds that Iṣfāhān was empty of rulers, Qāḍī Aḥmad Ṣāʿidī went to Azerbaijan to bring in the son of the former Muẓaffarid ruler, Muʿtaṣim b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, with troops provided by the Turkmen Qaraqoyunlu. Iskandar came against the city to preserve the control of the Timurid dynasty, but although he was able to defeat the Turkmen troops and Muʿtaṣim died in battle, Iṣfāhān continued to resist him under the leadership of Qāḍī Aḥmad and with the help of the troops of Chahār Dānga and Dū Dānga, possibly villages close to Iṣfāhān. It is interesting to note that the *Taʾrīkh-i kabīr*, which attributes ʿUmar Shaykh's earlier departure to internal rebellion, mentions both these groups in that context as well. When he learned that the Iṣfāhānis, while keeping him out, were allowing in the amirs of his brother Rustam, Iskandar gave up the siege.⁴⁶

For the next several years, Iṣfāhān remained contested among the local Timurid princes. In general, Qāḍī Aḥmad Ṣāʿidī and the population preferred Rustam, whom they allowed into the city, and they kept Iskandar's forces at bay. This changed in Dhū 'l-Ḥijja, 814/March–April, 1412, when Rustam, recently welcomed back to Iṣfāhān by Qāḍī Aḥmad, used the opportunity of the Feast of the Sacrifice to murder him. This action cost him the city; the population turned against him and sent a messenger to Iskandar, asking him to send a governor. Although Rustam attempted to fight Iskandar, he could no longer hold against him, and left the area.⁴⁷

Once Iskandar had gained Iṣfāhān, he made it his capital and began to aim for supreme power. Iskandar's pretensions were unacceptable to Shāhrukh, who came against Iṣfāhān with a large army in 817/1414. We hear nothing about the city judge during this battle, and it is likely that this office had been robbed of some of its power. Nonetheless, the population did not lose its involvement in defense. With the arrival of Shāhrukh's vastly superior forces, some

⁴⁶ Quiring-Zoche, p. 24; *Taʾrīkh-i kabīr*, p. 51–52, fol. 300b; *Majmaʿ*, 453b; Ḥasanī, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Quiring-Zoche, pp. 24–26; *Taʾrīkh-i kabīr*, p. 55, fols. 302a–b; Ḥasanī, p. 23; *Żubdat*, pp. 396–99, 441–46.

of Iskandar's amirs began to desert to Shāhrukh, while local nomads likewise came over to his camp. At first the population of Iṣfāhān defended the city walls with arrows, both suffering and inflicting casualties, but after failed negotiations and Iskandar's defeat in battle outside the city, they tired of war and invited in Shāhrukh's troops, leading them up to the fortress, where Iskandar had taken refuge.⁴⁸

When we put together the information discussed above, we see that the notables of Iranian cities, from the *'ulamā'* who held the high judicial and religious offices to the more humbly born headmen of quarters, played an important part not only in decisions about whether to submit or to defend the city, but also in the organization and prosecution of whatever defense was mounted. Notables were involved in organizing the city population even when Turco-Mongolian amirs were present, and, as we have seen, they sometimes led troops outside the city. It seems likely then that the decisive voice of the urban notables in decisions about defense represented not only their moral stature and influence within the city, but also their leadership in military organization. Since most cities had only a small garrison directly attached to them and could not support a large force in the immediate vicinity without damage, it is logical that city populations should have been used for defense. City troops could not hope to defeat a substantial army in battle, but they could manage to hold out until further forces were called in to relieve the city or until the invading army found it expedient to leave for other reasons.⁴⁹

It is hard to tell at what level the urban populations mobilized for defense were armed and trained. When the governor of Harāt sent out all members of the population who owned donkeys to fight the invading army of Yār 'Alī, they were largely unarmed and easily defeated. When Yār 'Alī's army approached the city walls however, they met a barrage of stones and arrows. The population of Iṣfāhān, defending the city from within in 817/1414, is also mentioned shooting arrows. In Shīrāz, when the headmen organized an internal take-over, they encouraged women and children to participate by throwing stones and ashes from the roofs. As we have seen, city troops frequently came out against a besieging army, sometimes under the leadership of their own notables, and this could have been effective

⁴⁸ Quiring-Zoche, pp. 26–30; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, pp. 62–63, fols. 305a–b; *Żubdat*, pp. 530–37, 539–47.

⁴⁹ Manz, "Darughā," pp. 61–62.

only if they possessed arms and training. It seems likely then that the city held some urban militia, probably consisting largely of craftsmen, and that other parts of the population joined in the defense at times of need or of excitement.

Masters of Sword and Pen

If a part of the urban population was trained and armed, while a larger part participated at a lower level in city defense, the same was probably true of the city notables. This was a varied class of people, important and powerful for a number of different reasons, but generally sharing one trait—regional ties and strong local support. Many of them belonged to prominent landowning families and such families could produce military figures. Although both profession and office were often hereditary, ties of marriage and a multiplicity of sons could still lead to a variety of professions within one lineage. For instance, we find among the families in the northern Iranian city of Simnān viziers, Sufis, military and judges in one family and sometimes in one person. The region of Khwāf in the Mongol and Timurid periods likewise produced military men, Sufis, ‘*ulamā*’ and bureaucrats; the family of Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, author of the *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī*, went back and forth between military and bureaucratic careers.⁵⁰ The genealogy of the later Timurid vizier Qiwām al-Dīn Khwāfī is given by the historian Isfizārī and includes men of all important professions, from king through vizier to Sufi and judge.⁵¹ Timurid histories—particularly in southern Iran—contain numerous examples of men active and important in both military and either bureaucratic or religious affairs.

Among the positions open to people of local standing there were several which involved military responsibilities. It appears that the local troops like the armies of Abarqūh and Yazd were led at the higher and lower level by men active in the administrative sphere, often by

⁵⁰ Aḥmad b. Jalāl al-Dīn Faṣīḥ Khwāfī, *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī*, ed. Muḥammad Farrukh (Mashhad, 1339S/1960–1), iii, pp. 31–32; Sayf b. Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Harawī (Sayfī), *Ta‘rīkh-i harāt*, ed. Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddiqī (Calcutta, 1943), pp. 754–62.

⁵¹ Mu‘īn al-Dīn Zamjī Isfizārī, *Rawdāt al-jannāt fī awṣāf madīnat harāt*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Imām (Tehran, 1338/1959), i, pp. 211, 215–17, 228, 239.

a vizier.⁵² Viziers and people of other learned professions are sometimes mentioned among the major commanders in local campaigns, and such men could be extremely useful in negotiating with notables, whom they might know personally. As I have stated above, viziers of local provenance figured among the notables of cities and such men might at one or another time hold a military office. The office of *sardār*, which appears to denote a commander of local troops, was also available to people with *diwān* training. It is not clear what troops were attached to this office but its existence is well attested, particularly for Iṣfāhān.⁵³ We should not consider the city notables, even the *‘ulamā’*, as men by birth and training totally removed from the military sphere.

It may be useful here to sketch the careers of a few men active both in the military campaigns and in civil administration. One such man about whom we know more than usual is Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī, a person of religious learning who originated in Yazd. Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī was a disciple of the famous scholar Sayyid ‘Alī Jurjānī, and, according to the historian Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan, was a Sufi and a *ḥāfiẓ*, that is, a person who knew the Qur’an by heart, and knew seven languages. We find him mentioned with his teacher Sayyid ‘Alī and the prominent Sufi shaykh Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh at the mosque during Ni‘mat Allāh’s visit to Iskandar b. ‘Umar Shaykh in Shīrāz between 1409–1412.⁵⁴ Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī’s bureaucratic career apparently began when Iskandar was in Yazd about 808/1405–6. Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī arrived back from the pilgrimage and after a period in retirement became Iskandar’s deputy, then accompanied him to Shīrāz where he was chief vizier. In this post he served conspicuously, both as bureaucrat and as military commander. He is listed in the *Mu‘izz al-ansāb* and designated in histories as head of the *diwān*.⁵⁵ At the same time, he was commander of a *tiimen* (theoretically 10,000) of foot soldiers and cavalry, which included the troops of Abarqūh and Yazd, and the Qushun-i Jānbāz, a small force famed for its bravery, which may well have been made

⁵² Under Temür the command of the Iranian (Tājik) troops as a whole was given to an Iranian who had served as head of the *diwān* (Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, p. 111).

⁵³ See for instance Tīhrānī, p. 295; Faḍlallāh Khunjī Iṣfāhānī, *Ta’rīkh-i ‘ālim-ārā-i amīnī*, ed. J.E. Woods (London, 1992), p. 174.

⁵⁴ *Hasanī*, pp. 14–15; Soucek, “Eskandar b. ‘Omar Šayx,” p. 83; J. Aubin (ed.), *Matériaux pour la biographie de Shah Ni‘matullah Wali Kermani* (Tehran and Paris, 1956), p. 86.

⁵⁵ *Ta’rīkh-i jadīd*, p. 147; *Mu‘izz*, fol. 108a; *Hasanī*, pp. 14–15.

up of Turco-Mongolian personnel.⁵⁶ The command of a *tümen* was a significant position, held usually by senior Turco-Mongolian amirs.

Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī's activity as scholar and vizier added to his value on campaigns because of his contacts within the urban bureaucratic class. We find him first advising Iskandar to go against the city of Qum which was still under its own leaders, then leading troops against the city, and finally negotiating the surrender of its ruler. He was aided here by the fact that he personally knew the administrator in charges of taxes, who was sent to him to conduct negotiations. This man, Khwāja Muẓaffar, had apparently served under Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī at an earlier time or become his client in some other way. In addition to administering taxes, Khwāja Muẓaffar held responsibility for the defense of one of the city gates, and he agreed to open it to Iskandar's army at a stated time.⁵⁷

Another example of a scholar, bureaucrat and military man is the historian Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan, author of the *Ĵāmiʿ-i tawārīkh-i Ḥasanī*. Early in his career, Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan worked under Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī as *tovachi*, or troop inspector, of the footmen of Yazd and as commander of a unit of ten men, and in this capacity served as messenger in the siege of Qum. He took part also in the expedition that Shāhrukh dispatched against Kirmān in 819/1416.⁵⁸ Some time after this, Ḥasan went into the service of Shāhrukh's governor in Kirmān, Amīr Ghunashirin; he worked in the *dīvān* and seems to have been also involved with religious affairs. We know that he received a yearly stipend from *waqf* funds and was engaged in writing a book on the *waqfs* of Kirmān, a task later finished by his son. When Sulṭān Muḥammad took power over the region in late 854/1450, Ḥasan entered his service, where he seems to have continued his religious and administrative interests, serving as supervisor of the *ashraf-i khāna-i khāṣṣa* (the exact nature of this position is not clear) and becoming *darugha* of Sulṭān Muḥammad's court bazaar.⁵⁹

As a third example, we can examine the career of Khwāja Maḥmūd Ḥaydar, who was vizier under Rustam b. ʿUmar Shaykh, governor of Iṣfāhān from 817/1414 to 827–8/1423–5, and later under Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Baysunghur. We know essentially nothing of Rustam's

⁵⁶ *Ḥasanī*, pp. 14, 24, 30, 42, 46; *Tārīkh-i jadīd*, p. 246.

⁵⁷ *Ḥasanī*, pp. 35–36; *Tārīkh-i kabīr*, pp. 57–58.

⁵⁸ *Ḥasanī*, introduction, pp. 14–15, text, pp. 24, 27, 30, 36, 42.

⁵⁹ *Ḥasanī*, introduction, pp. 11–15, text, pp. 2, 48.

rule in Iṣfāhān after the disturbances of 818/1415; of Maḥmūd Ḥaydar, we only know that he is listed in the Muʿizz as vizier.⁶⁰ He appears again in the events of 849–50 surrounding the rebellion of Sulṭān Muḥammad. Maḥmūd Ḥaydar was one of several notables connected with the *dīwān* (*Khwājās* of the *ṣāhib dīwān*) who had been called to Harāt for tax arrears and had to extricate themselves by assuming responsibility for a large debt.⁶¹ When they returned to Iṣfāhān, the officials found that they were unable to collect the sum they had promised and they were among the notables of Iṣfāhān who appealed to Sulṭān Muḥammad for help and encouraged him to take over Iṣfāhān.⁶² After Shāhrukh's death, Sulṭān Muḥammad returned to Iṣfāhān; Maḥmūd Ḥaydar was among those sent to put the city in order before Sulṭān Muḥammad's arrival, and one of three men appointed to lead the *dīwān*.⁶³

It is clear that Khwāja Maḥmūd Ḥaydar held a high place in Sulṭān Muḥammad's administration, since we find him as one of three people entrusted with the affairs of Khurāsān when Sulṭān Muḥammad controlled it.⁶⁴ On Sulṭān Muḥammad's defeat and death, he went into the service of the victor, the Timurid prince Abū 'l-Qāsim Babur, and once more served in Iṣfāhān. It appears however that his attachment to the city was stronger than his loyalty to his new master, since somewhat later we find the population of Iṣfāhān refusing to accept Babur, and coming to an agreement with Khwāja Maḥmūd Ḥaydar.⁶⁵ When slightly later, the Qaraqoyunlu succeeded in taking Iṣfāhān, they appointed Maḥmūd Ḥaydar to the local military office of *sardār*.⁶⁶ What we see in these three examples is men who belonged to the society within which they worked and who used their local ties in the service of the Timurid dynasty in military as well as administrative affairs.

As I have written above, earlier scholars have noted the military activities of viziers. The combination of religious and military careers seems to have been less common, but we do find several cases in the Timurid period and earlier of people who were almost equally

⁶⁰ *Muʿizz*, fol. 105a.

⁶¹ *Taʾrīkh-i kabīr*, p. 12; *Taʾrīkh-i jadīd*, pp. 234–35.

⁶² *Taʾrīkh-i jadīd*, p. 235.

⁶³ *Hasanī*, p. 69; *Taʾrīkh-i jadīd*, p. 246; *Tīhrānī*, p. 293.

⁶⁴ *Tīhrānī*, p. 321.

⁶⁵ *Hasanī*, p. 69; *Tīhrānī*, p. 327.

⁶⁶ *Tīhrānī*, p. 328.

active in the religious and the military sphere. The example of Qāḍī Aḥmad Ṣāʿidī has been presented above. If we look at the Mongol period for precedents, we find Qāḍī Ṣaʿīn, of Simnān, a relative of the famous Sufi, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī, acting as vizier and as a major commander for the dynasties of Fārs, first the Injuʿids and then the Muẓaffarids.⁶⁷

A good example of a mixed career in the Timurid period is that of Abū Bakr Ṭīhrānī, the author of the *Kitāb-i Diyārbakriyya*. Abū Bakr apparently originated in Iṣfāhān, and seems to have been close to the Iṣfāhānī notables who supported Sulṭān Muḥammad; he went with them to Qum to join Sulṭān Muḥammad after Shāhrukh's death.⁶⁸ He served first Sulṭān Muḥammad and then Jahānshāh Qaraqoyunlu before passing into the employ of the Aqqoyunlu Turcoman who succeeded the Qaraqoyunlu in Iran. His history includes several interesting autobiographical details, particularly on his service under the Qaraqoyunlu following Sulṭān Muḥammad's death. When Muḥammad b. Jahānshāh Qaraqoyunlu became governor of Iṣfāhān, Ṭīhrānī entered his *diwān*, and he mentions several documents he wrote for both the Qaraqoyunlu and the Aqqoyunlu.⁶⁹ Ṭīhrānī makes it clear that he also served in Jahānshāh's army during the campaign against Khurāsān, and he suggests that he spoke in the council of amirs on questions of military strategy. Like Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī, he could use his bureaucratic background to advantage in military affairs. He was instrumental in negotiating the submission of the city of Dāmghān, whose defender he knew personally.⁷⁰ What is most unexpected about Ṭīhrānī's career is that he seems also to have been a member of the *ulamāʾ*. When Jahānshāh briefly took Harāt in 862/1458, he appointed Ṭīhrānī to a teaching post at the well-known Ghiyāthiyya Madrasa.⁷¹ Under the Aqqoyunlu, Ṭīhrānī seems to have been appointed to religious office in Tabrīz; Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū twice refers to him as "Qāḍī."⁷²

⁶⁷ J. Van Ess, "ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Semnānī," *Elr*, i, p. 774; Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Khwāndamīr, *Dastūr al-wuzarāʾ*, ed. Saʿīd Nafīsī (Tehran, 1317/1938–9), pp. 240–41; Faṣīḥ, iii, pp. 17, 70–71.

⁶⁸ Ṭīhrānī, pp. 293, 325.

⁶⁹ Ṭīhrānī, editor's introduction, pp. X, XII–III.

⁷⁰ Ṭīhrānī, intro., p. XI, text, pp. 344–45.

⁷¹ Ṭīhrānī, p. 352.

⁷² Ṭīhrānī, intro., pp. XIV–XV; Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Nawāʾī, Persian Text Series, 41 (Tehran, 1349/1970), pp. 262, 267.

Abū Bakr Ṭīhrānī therefore combined three careers: bureaucratic, military and religious, and the same seems to have been true of another, more powerful figure of the period, Shaykh Muḥibb al-Dīn Abū 'l-Khayr Jazarī. Shaykh Abū 'l-Khayr was the son of an eminent scholar, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Jazarī, who had been taken up by Temūr in the course of his campaigns and after Temūr's death had settled in Shīrāz, where for a while he served as judge. He remained a prestigious and powerful religious authority in Fārs and Khurāsān until his death in Rabī' I, 833/December, 1429.⁷³ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad's son, Shaykh Abū 'l-Khayr, appears to have begun his career as *ṣadr*, or supervisor of religious personnel and property, under Ibrāhīm Sulṭān b. Shāhrukh who was governor in Shīrāz after the downfall of Iskandar b. 'Umar Shaykh.⁷⁴ Along with his religious office, Abū 'l-Khayr assumed military responsibilities, and we find him commanding local armies in a campaign in Khūzistān in 836/1432–3 and leading an expedition against the rebellious Musha'sha', probably in 844/1441.⁷⁵ By the time of Ibrāhīm Sulṭān's death at the end of 838/June, 1435, Shaykh Abū 'l-Khayr had become perhaps the most powerful person in the provincial government, and he was appointed as head of the administration for Ibrāhīm's underage son, 'Abdallāh, who succeeded his father as governor. Shaykh Abū 'l-Khayr held responsibility for the affairs of the province and army and for the protection of the frontiers. In 'Abdallāh's administration he was counted among the military office holders, as *amīr dīwān*, a title usually held by Turco-Mongolian commanders.⁷⁶ Within a few years, Abū 'l-Khayr had so concentrated power in his own hands that other members of the prince's entourage complained to Shāhrukh that the young governor controlled not a single dinar of the provincial funds and that amirs were totally excluded from power. It is interesting to note that when Shāhrukh dismissed Abū 'l-Khayr from office, he replaced him first with an amir, Amir Sayyidī,

⁷³ M. Ben Cheneb, "Ibn al-Djazarī," *ET*, iii, 753, and for the relationship, Ṭīhrānī, p. 307; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, p. 79/fol. 312a.

⁷⁴ *Mu'izz*, fol. 142b.

⁷⁵ Ṭīhrānī, p. 307; *Ta'rikh-i kabīr*, pp. 79, 112, Shahzad Bashir, "Between Mysticism and Messianism: the Life and Thought of Muhammad Nūrbakš (d. 1464)," Ph.D. dissertation (Yale University, 1997), p. 38. It seems likely that Abū 'l-Khayr troops were not of the highest quality, since his expedition failed, while that led a little later by the Qaraqoyunlu succeeded.

⁷⁶ *Mu'izz*, fols. 143a.

and then by a bureaucrat with military experience, Malik Muʿizz al-Dīn Simnānī, who is mentioned as being a member of the council (*jirgha*) of great amirs.⁷⁷ As it happened, both men appointed to succeed Shaykh Abū ʿl-Khayr died after only a short time in office and neither had pleased their subordinates, so that Shaykh Abū ʿl-Khayr was able to bribe and persuade his way back into his old position by 847/1443–4.⁷⁸ He seems, however, to have again misused his power, since he was in prison in Harāt at the time of Shāhrukh's death in 850/1447. The next year he was released and immediately joined Sulṭān Muḥammad, whom he instigated to go against Shīrāz, seeking vengeance for his downfall in its administration.⁷⁹ It would appear that in the eyes of some at least, he still retained his religious prestige. On his way to join Sulṭān Muḥammad he passed through Yazd, and when the author of the *Tārīkh-i jadīd-i yazd* records this event, he gives him the religious honorific *shaykh al-islām*.⁸⁰ After Shaykh Abū ʿl-Khayr's death, his sons remained active and it is notable that they appear to have held positions of regional power usually assigned to Chaghatay amirs.⁸¹

On the anecdotal evidence available, we cannot achieve a full understanding of the military activity and training of the urban notables. Nonetheless, it is clear that viziers and lower level bureaucrats, recruited from families of standing, sometimes led sizeable contingents of troops. For members of the *ʿulamāʾ*, local office might bring some duties connected to city defense, and some members of this class led contingents of troops outside the city and even on major campaigns. The offices of judge and of headman in particular seem to have had a military component and both of these were often, probably usually, hereditary. Thus the knowledge needed to plan a defense could well have been learned in youth. We can conclude then that the urban

⁷⁷ *Maṭlaʿ*, ii, 675, 756, 759.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 759, 795.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 894; *Tārīkh-i jadīd*, pp. 246–47, 249.

⁸⁰ *Tārīkh-i jadīd*, p. 272.

⁸¹ *Tīhrānī*, pp. 311, 331, 337. In this connection it is interesting to consider the story of Jalāl al-Dīn b. Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Lisān, the son of a philosopher at Temūr's court, who served as *ṣadr* under Baysunghur and ʿAlāʾ al-Dawlat. When he joined the retinue of Baysunghur and ʿAlāʾ al-Dawlat, he dropped his religious clothing, and assumed the costume and following of a military man, an action which displeased Ulugh Beg, who thought that he had taken up military service due to lack of knowledge. Nonetheless, when Ulugh Beg tested him on his learning, he answered brilliantly, and thus retained his prestige (*Khawāndamīr*, *Ḥabīb*, iii, p. 16).

notables who governed the city together with the military governor almost certainly included men with active military training and experience. When they faced an attacking army and had to decide whether or how to defend their city, urban notables were competent to judge the situation they faced and to participate in the active organization of defense.

Conclusion

We must consider what conclusions to draw about the relationship between army and society, nomad and settled in Timurid Iran. As I have shown in this paper, both bureaucratic and religious personnel might serve in a military capacity, some occasionally and some regularly. Urban populations took part in local campaigns; agricultural, and perhaps urban populations made up regional armies and served in campaigns throughout Iran, frequently under the command of Iranian officials. The formal division of offices into a Turco-Mongolian military sphere and an Iranian civilian one was then a partly real, partly theoretical, divide placed on a wide spectrum of military training and responsibility. At the top of the ladder stood the Chaghatay troops, led by a corps of senior commanders who were almost exclusively Turco-Mongolian. These troops were certainly the best trained and best armed forces serving the dynasty. Below them were the regional armies, which were commanded ultimately by the provincial governor, but at a more immediate level by such men as Ḥāfiẓ Rāzī and Shaykh Abū 'l-Khayr Jazarī. Finally, we must include the population of city and suburb, probably largely artisan, who defended their cities in time of need. They often fought on the walls, but sometimes also ventured out to face the enemy in battle. Here again, the primary command may have lain with the city *darugha* or fortress keeper, but the more immediate commanders were often headmen and city notables. Furthermore the strategic importance of cities and the difficulty of storming their walls gave to these forces an importance out of proportion to their strength and training.

If the Iranian population was armed and active in the military, then we should consider the rule of Iranian cities and provinces as a rule by consent, and this consent could not be merely passive. The '*ulamā*' and city notables were not simply intermediaries between society and government, nor was the backing of city '*ulamā*' needed by the regime

only because they commanded the loyalty of the people. They also decided whether or not a city should submit and helped to organize the defense without which cities could not be held against an enemy.

The governing, conquest or loss of a province was a series of complicated transactions between the local population and contending outside parties, in which the city populations played a pivotal role. For both sides, that of ruler and that of population, regional contests required difficult calculation. A ruler could not hold a city or an area without the backing of its population, and the cities on their side required the protection and patronage of a powerful ruler. No one could afford to be passive in the midst of a power struggle. In time of trouble it was the responsibility of the urban leadership to choose among contending rulers. When deciding whether or not to submit, city leaders had to weigh their loyalty to their current ruler, the material and social benefits to be won by resistance, and above all, who was likely to win the contest for power. The army standing outside the gates might not be able to take the city by storm, but its size and composition was an important factor in judging its probable success in outdoing other contenders. In order to win control over a region then, a contender for power had to demonstrate his superior military strength both to his rivals and to the urban populations who held the keys to the cities and thus to the rule of the region. The active cooperation of the Iranian urban population was crucial for the success of provincial government, not only in the civil, but also in the military sphere.

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PART IV

INTO THE MODERN PERIOD

THE MONGOLS AND CHINA:
CULTURAL CONTACTS AND THE CHANGING
NATURE OF PASTORAL NOMADISM (TWELFTH
TO EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES)

Elizabeth Endicott

A quick perusal of any bibliography on pastoral nomadism in Inner Asia will reconfirm what may already be well-known: the great majority of books and articles are devoted to the contemporary situations and dilemmas of pastoralists with only a perfunctory nod to historical developments. In particular, with regard to Mongolian pastoral nomadism, the current wave of scholarly interest has swelled on the question of whether the nomadic way of life can survive in Mongolia, and, if so, in what form.¹ Even works that are grounded in Mongolian history, such as Bat-Ochir Bold's *Mongolian Nomadic Society: A Reconstruction of the 'Medieval' History of Mongolia*, tend to conclude with a dim prognosis for the future of nomadism in modern Mongolia.² While individual monographs on particular periods of Mongolian and Inner Asian history have filled many gaps in our knowledge of the pre-twentieth century history of the region, most historians prefer to stick to the century, or, in Chinese time-keeping, the dynastic period whose source material they know best.³

Breaking free from the constraints of traditional historiography in this field, this article will reflect on the changing nature of Mongolian

¹ See, for instance, C. Humphrey and D. Sneath, *The End of Nomadism? Society, State and the Environment in Inner Asia* (Durham, NC, 1999); C. Humphrey and D. Sneath (eds.), *Culture and Environment in Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 1996), vols. i and ii; S. Szynkiewicz, "Contemporary Mongol Concepts on Being a Pastoralist: Institutional Continuity, Change and Substitutes," in *Changing Nomads in a Changing World*, eds. J. Ginat and A.M. Khazanov (Portland, OR, 1998), pp. 202–22; and, more generally on the issue of the survivability of nomadism in the contemporary world, A.M. Khazanov, "Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival," in *ibid.*, pp. 7–23.

² See Bat-Ochir Bold's "Concluding Comments" in his *Mongolian Nomadic Society: A Reconstruction of the 'Medieval' History of Mongolia* (New York, 2001), pp. 161–63.

³ Th.J. Barfield has published two more broadly focused works: *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford, 1989); and *The Nomadic Alternative* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1993).

pastoral nomadism over several centuries from Chinggis Khan's own lifetime into the first decade of the twentieth century. Specifically, the theme of self-reliance versus dependency will be examined.

Anatoly M. Khazanov's argument that pastoralists are by nature dependent upon their sedentary neighbors in all spheres of their human endeavors will provide the point of departure for this article. In the second edition to his *Nomads and the Outside World*, Khazanov writes that

... pastoralists, including pastoral nomads, were culturally and ideologically dependent upon sedentary societies, just as they depended upon them in economic respects. The economic dependence of nomads on sedentary societies, and their different modes of political adaptation to them, carried corresponding ideological implications. As the nomadic economy had to be supplemented with agriculture and crafts, so, too, did the nomadic culture need sedentary culture as a source, a component, and a model for comparison, imitation, or rejection.⁴

Nowadays few scholars would argue that a "pure nomadism" has ever existed, that is, a total economic self-reliance of a nomadic people over a prolonged period of time. Owen Lattimore's pithy statement that "it is the poor nomad who is the pure nomad" is worth keeping in mind.⁵ Incidentally, Khazanov dismissed Lattimore's statement as untrue, since, according to Khazanov, impoverished nomads will usually leave the nomadic way of life behind and become sedentary.⁶ In fact, the existence of impoverished groups of nomads stuck in remote locations off the trade routes and without benefit of contact with sedentary cultures is well attested in the thirteenth-century *Secret History of the Mongols* and in the dynastic history of the Yuan Dynasty (the *Yuan shi*)—a topic to which we shall return later.

In the Preface to his 1962 collection of essays, *Studies in Frontier History*, Owen Lattimore drew a rather critical self-portrait of himself as a young traveller among the Mongols:

... when I first began to travel among the Mongols I certainly had a preconception—shared by many other travellers, and influencing me through books I had read—that there must somewhere be a 'pure' Mongol culture, a prototype of pastoral nomadism; what economists call a 'model.' Consequently when I found such peoples as the Mongols

⁴ A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Madison, 1994), pp. xxxi–xxxii.

⁵ O. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York, 1940), p. 522.

⁶ A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 2nd edn. (Madison, 1994), p. 70.

and Kazakhs living in ways that showed their culture and their practices to be heavily permeated with Chinese and other influences, I tended to assume that this was because they had ‘degenerated’ from a ‘pure’ nomadic pastoralism that must once have existed, perhaps existed still in regions more remote than those I had been able to reach.⁷

The question is really one of the nature and extent of cultural contact in different periods between the Mongols and their sedentary neighbors, rather than a question of a prototypical Mongolian pastoral nomadism being diminished by exposure to the sedentary way of life.

It may be instructive to begin with a historical comparison. It is generally accepted that the Mongols as a people had far less exposure to Chinese cultural and political norms before their conquest of China than the Manchus had before their respective conquest of China some four centuries later. Similarly, the extent of pre-conquest contact with China is usually understood to be a factor in the post-conquest style of rule. Ultimately, the brevity or longevity (i.e., failure or success) of a dynasty of conquest may be tied to the issue of political and cultural assimilation to Chinese norms at this end of the Eurasian steppe. In other words, the Mongols, relatively far removed from the Chinese political orbit before the thirteenth century, did not allow themselves to be sinicized once they had installed themselves as rulers of China. Their intransigent (or incorrigible) loyalty to their own separate and well-defined identity made them (in the assessment of Chinese historians) less capable (less sinicized) as rulers of China—thus the brevity of the Yuan dynasty. In contrast, the Manchus, who had already established Chinese institutions on paper long before they had even breached the walls of the Ming capital city of Beijing, proved willing to shed aspects of their culture that rendered them less appealing to their Chinese subjects in return for being considered legitimate.⁸

⁷ O. Lattimore, “Preface,” in *Studies in Frontier History. Collected Papers, 1928–1958* (New York, 1962), p. 24.

⁸ Pre-1644 Manchu knowledge of Chinese political institutions and cultural mores is reconfirmed by many historians of early Qing history. See, for instance, F. Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley, 1985), i, pp. 157–210. More recent studies have explored the complexities of Han-Manchu relations during the Qing. See E.J.M. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861–1928* (Seattle, 2000), and M.C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 2001).

While this broad-stroke historical comparison between the Mongols and the Manchus is generally accurate, some refinement is necessary. First, it is worthwhile reconsidering the question of how distant from the Chinese cultural and political orbit the Mongols of the late twelfth century really were. The overall image of the Mongols before the rise of Chinggis Khan is that of a pastoral nomadic people with only sporadic and rather limited economic, political, and cultural ties with China. In the eyes of the great Persian historian, Juwaynī (1226–1283), the Mongols were a politically fragmented assembly of tribes living in a state of “indigence, privation and misfortune until the banner of Chingiz-Khan’s fortune was raised and they issued forth from the straits of hardship into the amplitude of well-being, from a prison into a garden, from the desert of poverty into a palace of delight . . .”⁹

In addition to their state of dire poverty, the Mongols, from the sedentary historian Juwaynī’s point of view, were also subject to demands from the rulers of North China, the Jurchens: “The Khan of Khitai [i.e., North China] used to demand and seize goods from them.”¹⁰ According to Chinese sources of the twelfth century, a far more complex interaction between the early Mongols and the Jurchens was at play.¹¹ Sporadic military engagements between the Jurchens and Mongols occurred throughout the twelfth century, with the Jin often defeated, that is, until the Jin hit upon the strategy of uniting with the Tatar tribe against the Mongols.

Thus, the notion of a “pure” pastoral nomadic people living in relative seclusion beyond the reach of China simply does not withstand scrutiny. China, of course, was itself fragmented into different states, with the Jurchen Jin Dynasty in the north, the Tangut Xi Xia Dynasty in the northwest, and the Chinese Southern Song Dynasty south of the Huai River. As Paul Ratchnevsky pointed out in his superb biography of Chinggis Khan, “The frontiers between the nomads and adjoining states were not closed in time of peace . . .”¹² In fact, Ratchnevsky believed that after Temüjin’s defeat by Jamugha around 1187, the future Chinggis Khan left Mongolia as a sort of

⁹ ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī [Juvaini], *The History of the World-Conqueror*, tr. J.A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), i, p. 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹ A good summation of this period of Jurchen-Mongolian contact may be found in P. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan. His Life and Legacy*, tr. and ed. T.N. Haining (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 8–12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

political refugee and sought safety at the court of the Jin Dynasty.¹³ Clearly there are contradictions among the sources regarding the dating of some of the events of the 1180s and 1190s. Ratchnevsky's argument that the ten-year hiatus in Temüjin's life chronology may be explained by the sources' self-imposed reticence regarding the conqueror's residence in Jin China is entirely credible.

The evidence for Temüjin's stay in North China comes from the *Mengda beilu*, written by the Southern Song envoy, Zhao Hong, in 1221, upon return from his visit to the Mongols in that year. Zhao Hong clearly states:

When Chinggis was young he was taken prisoner by the Jin and held as a slave. Only after a period of more than ten years did he escape and return [to Mongolia]. Because of this he was thoroughly knowledgeable in the affairs of the Jin Dynasty.¹⁴

Since most information in the *Mengda beilu* is viewed as accurate, why should historians discount this possibility? What sort of ideas about the Jurchen and Chinese cultures Temüjin might have formed we will never know. It is important, however, to temper the picturesque notion of Mongolian cultural and political isolation in the twelfth century in light of the very real possibility of Temüjin's experience of living in Jin China.

Not all tribes and clans on the Mongolian steppes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries could claim a profitable connection through trade or warfare with China. The *Secret History of the Mongols* (1228) provides glimpses of small isolated bands of people who, lacking the connections with the outside world, fell prey to Temüjin or to his ancestors. For instance, an unnamed group of pastoral nomads who generously supplied Temüjin's ancestor Bodonchar with mare's milk every day are described in the *Secret History* as having no social distinctions and living like equals.¹⁵ This apparently guileless band of nomads was no match for Bodonchar and his four brothers who viewed the lack of leaders and the egalitarian structure of this clan as weaknesses to be exploited. In Bodonchar's words:

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

¹⁴ Zhao Hong, *Mengda beilu*, ed. Wang Guowei, p. 3a. See also N.Ts. Munkuev, *Men-da bei-lu* ("Polnoe opisanie mongolo-tatar") (Moscow, 1975), p. 49.

¹⁵ F.W. Cleaves, tr. and ed., *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 6–8, par. 28–39.

The people . . . [who] are at the Tünggelig Stream are without [a difference between] big or little, bad or good, head or hoof. [They] are [all] equal. They are an easy people [to surprise]. Let us rob them.¹⁶

Egalitarianism, which has commonly been ascribed to nomadic peoples by sedentary observers, was in fact viewed by the thirteenth-century nomads of Mongolia as a mark of weakness.¹⁷

Given the limited sources, it is virtually impossible to reconstruct daily life in Mongolia proper once the Mongols had established the Yuan Dynasty under Qubilai Khan and relocated their capital to Dadu (Beijing). Clearly, much of the population left behind in Mongolia must have consisted of the elderly, women, and children. With the exception of garrison troops stationed in Qara Qorum, most males had been called to serve in the armies of conquest, and had then remained in far-flung territories under Mongolian authority from Il-khanid Iran to China.

A quick perusal of the Yuan dynasty history's monograph on geography (*dili zhi*), however, suggests the low priority assigned to the homeland by the Mongolian rulers. Of the twelve province-sized administrative units termed either *Zhongshu sheng* (Central Secretariat for the area around Dadu) or *Xingzhongshu sheng* (Regional Secretariats, similar to provinces) only one is given such a scant description: the Regional Secretariat of Lingbei or Mongolia.¹⁸ Because Mongolia was not a central revenue-producing region once the Mongols had retrained their focus on China proper, Lingbei remained an administrative and economic backwater, with only one Route (*Lu*), Hening *Lu* (originally called Helin) under its jurisdiction. Yet Mongolia was still important in two distinct ways: as a source of legitimacy and Mongolian identity, it could never be relinquished; and the homeland remained a crucial supplier of horses to the imperial palace in Yuan times.¹⁹ The sources unfortunately do not allow insight into the ques-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7, par. 35. I have slightly modified the Cleaves translation.

¹⁷ Ernest Gellner wrote of nomads: "Often they are rather egalitarian, at any rate in comparison with most agrarian societies." See E. Gellner, "Anomalies of no fixed abode," *Times Literary Supplement* (March 13, 1981), p. 273.

¹⁸ *TS*, 58/1382–83.

¹⁹ On the strategic decision to abandon more distant regions of Central Asia in favor of consolidating control in Mongolia (in spite of Mongolia's economic liability), see J.W. Dardess, "From Mongol Empire to Yuan Dynasty: Changing Forms of Imperial Rule in Mongolia and Central Asia," *MS*, 30 (1972–73), pp. 164–65; on Mongolia as a supplier of horses, see S. Jagchid and C.R. Bawden, "Some Notes on the Horse-Policy of the Yüan Dynasty," *CAJ*, 10 (Dec. 1965), p. 264.

tion of whether requisitions of horses imposed great hardships upon common herders.

In other ways, Mongolia was clearly affected by military impositions. Yuan garrison troops stationed in Qara Qorum were a net drain on the Yuan economy. As Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing has pointed out, staffing and provisioning garrisons in Inner Asia was no easier for the Mongolian rulers of Yuan China than it was for expansionist-minded Chinese dynasties.²⁰ The sources report the need to send wagons of grain from China to feed the garrison troops in Qara Qorum, a very expensive and time-consuming undertaking.²¹

But what about the life of the herdsmen left behind in Mongolia in Yuan times? The sources allow us a few, disconnected glimpses. N.Ts. Munkuev, in a 1977 article entitled "Novye materialy o polo-zhenii Mongol'skikh aratov v XIII–XIV vv." (New materials on the situation of Mongolian herders in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) culled through Yuan sources, particularly the dynastic history of the Yuan, for mentions of poverty among Mongolian soldiers and herders.²² Imperial decrees from virtually every decade of Yuan rule shed light on the deteriorating situation of those Mongols who remained behind in a homeland that had been relegated to the status of an on-demand supplier of horses and manpower. The following selections from the Yuan dynastic history (*Yuan shi*) suggest that the economics of dependency upon China had pushed many pastoral nomads into dire poverty.

In the year 1261, in the seventh month (July 29–August 27), "[the Emperor Qubilai ordered] relief to be provided to the starving people in Qara Qorum (Helin)."²³ This example, one year into Qubilai's reign as Khan or Emperor, is particularly striking since July and August are usually the months when herds and flocks on the central grasslands of Mongolia are approaching peak condition, and food shortages would be most unusual.

On June 28, 1265, "...through investigation it was ascertained that among the people in imperial prince U-lu-dai (Uru[gh]dai)'s

²⁰ Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA, 1978), p. 59.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.

²² N.Ts. Munkuev, "Novye materialy o polo-zhenii mongol'skikh aratov v XIII–XIV vv." in *Tataro-Mongoly v Azii i Evrope. Sbornik statei*, 2nd edn., ed. S.L. Tikhvinskij (Moscow, 1977), pp. 409–46.

²³ *IS*, 4/72; Munkuev, "Novye materialy," p. 413.

appanage (*bumin*) those who were impoverished and without livestock numbered 30,724. [An imperial decree ordered that] every month each person should be provided with two *dou* and five *sheng* of grain; this should be discontinued after four months.²⁴ It is poignant to realize that such hardships could strike relatives of the imperial clan: Urughdai was a grandson of Kölgen, the sixth son of Chinggis Khan.²⁵

Another imperial prince is mentioned in a decree of June 20, 1273: “[The Emperor Qubilai ordered] relief to be provided to the people of imperial prince Ta-cha-er (Tachar)’s appanage (*bumin*) who were starving.”²⁶ Tachar was a descendant of Chinggis Khan’s brother, Temüge-Odchigin, and the people of his appanage very likely consisted of Mongols.²⁷

Garrison troops stationed in Mongolia were supposed to be self-supporting, but as the following decree of August 10, 1284 indicates, the Yuan government’s expectations could not always be met: “[The Emperor Qubilai] bestowed upon the impoverished troops under the command of Duoluduohai Zhalayier (Doldukhai Jalayir?) 10,195 horses and 10,060 sheep.”²⁸

Numerous decrees in the Yuan dynastic history refer to impoverished Mongols as in the following example. In the winter of 1285 (the twelfth month: January 7–February 5), “[The Emperor Qubilai] bestowed upon Wu-ma-er (Umar?) and other Mongols who were destitute 2,885 ingots (*ding*) in paper money (*chao*) and 40 ingots (*ding*) in silver.”²⁹

Other imperial decrees refer to once powerful tribal entities in Mongolia such as the Önggüd and Onggirad. On February 15, 1287, “the people of the Yong-gu (Önggüd) tribe were starving. [The Emperor] ordered the distribution of 4,000 *shi* of grain to aid them; if this was insufficient, a further grant [in currency] valued at 6,000

²⁴ *YS*, 6/107; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 415. Ten *sheng* were the equivalent of one *dou* or 9.488 liters. On Yuan weights and measures see D.M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule* (Stuttgart, 1990), pp. 443–44.

²⁵ On Kölgen and Urughdai, see L. Hambis, *Le chapitre CVII du Yuan che* (Leiden, 1945), pp. 51–52, 64.

²⁶ *YS*, 8/150; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 415.

²⁷ On Tachar, see Hambis, *Yuan che*, p. 35, and *YS*, 107/2712.

²⁸ *YS*, 13/267; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 416.

²⁹ *YS*, 13/271; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 416. Paper money was printed and issued as the currency of the Yuan realm during Qubilai’s reign and in later reigns. One *ding* or silver ingot was equivalent to fifty *liang* or ounces. For the history of currency in Yuan times, see Hok-lam Chan, “The Yüan Currency System,” Appendix 3, in Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule*, pp. 445–60.

shi of grain would be made.”³⁰ Again, on February 23, 1291, “[an imperial decree ordered] Datong Route to distribute grain to aid the starving people of the Weng-gu (Önggüd).”³¹

On occasion, the crisis could be extreme enough that the people of a tribe might be resettled elsewhere as a relief measure. On January 18, 1290, “[the Emperor Qubilai ordered that] the destitute among the households of the Weng-ji-la (Onggirad) people be moved to Liupan for sustenance.”³² Another decree, dated February 27, 1295, also addressed the circumstances of the Onggirad people: “Because the Hong-ji-lie (Onggirad) people under the jurisdiction of the Jining Prince (Jining Wang) Manzitai were destitute, [the Emperor] granted [them] 180,000 *ding* in paper currency (*chao*).”³³

Not all such examples date from Qubilai’s reign (1260–1294). In fact, the decrees of the later Yuan emperors succeeding Qubilai attest to worsening circumstances for the Mongols left behind in the homeland as well as for the Mongolian troops in China proper. On August 23, 1307, the Yuan dynastic history records: “Mongolian troops in Shandong and Hebei reported starvation; [the Emperor] sent officials to aid them.”³⁴ On March 17, 1308: “A great number of destitute people from Qara Qorum (Helin) arrived [presumably in Dadu, the Yuan capital]. One hundred thousand *ding* in paper currency (*chao*) was given to them in aid . . .”³⁵

Impoverished Mongolian families in the fourteenth century were repeatedly warned not to sell their sons and daughters into slavery as the following two examples from 1317 and 1321 attest. On September 3, 1317, “the Emperor decreed to the ministers of the [Central] Secretariat (*Sheng* for *Zhongshu sheng*): ‘We have recently heard that various Mongolian tribes are extremely destitute, and that they frequently sell their sons and daughters to [other] people’s households

³⁰ *YS*, 14/295; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 417. One *shi* was equivalent to 94.88 liters in Yuan times. See Chan, “Weights and Measures,” p. 444.

³¹ *YS*, 16/343; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 419. Datong *Lu* was a Route in the northwest, bordering on the grasslands and desert of Mongolia.

³² *YS*, 15/328; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 418. Liupan’s exact location is unclear.

³³ *YS*, 18/391; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 420. Manjitai was a descendant of Dei Sechen, a leader of the Onggirad and father of Börte, Chinggis Khan’s primary wife. See Munkuev, *Men-da bei-lu*, p. 439, note 87, and Cleaves, *Secret History*, pp. 15–19.

³⁴ *YS*, 22/485; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 422.

³⁵ *YS*, 22/496; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 422.

(*mǐnjia*) as slaves (*bipu*). We order the officials to redeem them and return them each to their [respective] tribes.”³⁶ Similarly, on November 3, 1321, “It was decreed that the [relevant] officials should gather and care for Mongolian boys and girls who had been sold as slaves to Uighurs (*Huihu*) and Chinese (*Hanren*, i.e., Northerners).”³⁷

Two more examples from 1330 and 1331 attest to the movement out of Mongolia of pastoral nomadic groups in quest of food. On August 1, 1330: “As for the Mongolian commoners (*baixing*) who because of hunger and privation came to Shangdu (the summer capital of the Mongolian imperial family in Inner Mongolia), [the Emperor] bestowed upon each of them grain for travel (i.e., travel rations) so that each might return to his tribe (*bu*).”³⁸ The migration of destitute herdspeople into the imperial capital at the height of summer suggests severe problems. Less than a year later, on March 29, 1331: “Because the Four Great Ordos (*si da xing zhan*) of Taizu (Chinggis Khan) through the generations have remained in the northern regions and not nomadized (*buqian*), many of their horses, camels, and cattle have died. [The Emperor] issued ten thousand *dīng* of paper money (*chao*) [to them], and ordered the Office of the Councilors to the Prince of Jin (*neishi fu*) to buy up [cattle] to give them.”³⁹ We are not told why these Mongols in the heartland of Mongolia had stopped nomadizing with their herds, but clearly the introduction of a stationary way of life had proven fatal to their herds. The population of the “Four Great Ordos” had been reduced to living on imperial hand-outs.

While many factors, including severe political instability, erosion of the military, and fiscal problems, indirectly exacerbated the condition of Mongolian herders and soldiers in the post-Qubilai reigns (i.e., 1294–1368), we may also take note of those periodic climatic crises that spelled disaster for the nomad. Heavy snows and prolonged cold spells, which prevent the livestock from grazing below

³⁶ *IS*, 26/580; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 423.

³⁷ *IS*, 27/614; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 425.

³⁸ *IS*, 34/760; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 429.

³⁹ *IS*, 35/777–78; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 429. All four *ordos* were located in Mongolia. Originally, *ordo* referred to the khan or ruler’s encampment. The four *ordos* of Chinggis Khan refer specifically to the appanages (territories) given by Chinggis to each of his four main wives, i.e., Börte, Qulan, Yesüi, and Yesügen. See Farquhar, *Government*, pp. 336–37. The office of *neishi fu* managed the affairs of the Four Ordos of Chinggis Khan. The office was created when the Prince of Jin, Jin Wang, a grandson of Qubilai, was given the lands of the Four Ordos as his appanage. See Farquhar, *Government*, p. 337.

the frozen surface, are called *zud* in modern Mongolian. The recent *zud* of winter 1999–2000 in Mongolia caused livestock losses numbering approximately 2,250,000 animals.⁴⁰

The Yuan dynastic history hints at such episodes without using the particular Mongolian term *zud*. For instance, on April 12, 1288, “because there had been great wind and snow storms in the northern border regions the previous year, many of the cattle and horses belonging to Batu Gulun (Batu Gürün?) died. [The Emperor] bestowed [upon him] 1,000 *shi* of grain.”⁴¹ On October 12, 1323, the Yuan dynastic history reported: “During this year [1323–24], wind and snow storms killed herds belonging to the Mongols of the Great Chiliarchs (*Da qianhu*) in Daning. [The Emperor] bestowed [upon them] 150,000 *shi* of grain.”⁴² Again, on December 5, 1331: “Great snowstorms caused the herds of more than 11,100 households of falconers (*yingfang*) and Mongols in Xinghe Route (*Lu*) to freeze to death. [The Emperor] ordered aid [in the form of] 5,000 *shi* of grain.”⁴³

These examples collectively demonstrate severe cases of impoverishment of pastoral nomads who remained in the grasslands and deserts of Greater Mongolia. Incorporation into a vast “empire” headquartered in Dadu (Beijing) had done little to stabilize or improve the lives of Mongols left behind. While escaping sinicization by virtue of distance from the center, the Mongols of Mongolia proper in Yuan dynastic times do not fit Owen Lattimore’s image of a powerful “reservoir” in either a military or economic sense. Lattimore’s theory of a “reservoir of tribal invasions” envisioned a part of an Inner Asian invading force being left behind to defend borderlands and to

⁴⁰ According to the online newspaper, *Mongoliathisweek*, the State Emergency Committee of Mongolia reported the death toll among livestock as over 2,250,000 head in the week of April 28–May 4, 2000. (Accessed on May 1, 2000: <http://www.mongoliathisweek.mn>).

⁴¹ *IS*, 15/310; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 417. The identity of Batu Gulun has not been established.

⁴² *IS*, 29/639; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 427. Chiliarchs were military officials in the Mongolian decimal-based military organization. Daning *Lu* was in present-day Inner Mongolia. Government delivery of emergency grain shipments to herdspeople in harsh winters has become more common in recent years in Mongolia. For instance, the Mongolian state news agency, Montsame, reported on January 13, 2003 that on January 10th, 12 aimags (provinces) in Mongolia had each received several hundred tons of grass and fodder as well as food products, warm clothes, and medicines. See “270 Million Fodder” in *Headlines from Montsame* for January 13, 2003. (Accessed on January 13, 2003: <http://www.montsame.mn>).

⁴³ *IS*, 35/793; Munkuev, “Novye materialy,” p. 431. Xinghe *Lu* was in present-day Inner Mongolia.

serve as a “reservoir” for future troop conscription.⁴⁴ While some Mongolian troops undoubtedly fulfilled these tasks, the image of a reservoir of military manpower does not mesh well with the actual deprivations experienced by many herding households in Yuan dynastic times. Rather than being privileged as members of a ruling ethnic group, non-imperial Mongolian commoners (and even some imperial relatives) were offered assistance only in the most dire of circumstances.

At the other end of the social spectrum, Qubilai Khan and his successors in Dadu were cognizant enough of Chinese expectations in the realm of legitimation to patronize several important historiography projects.⁴⁵ To an extent, elite Mongols understood the need to accede to Chinese cultural priorities. While placating their Chinese scholar-official advisers, the ruling Mongols kept their options open, turning to other traditions (Tibetan Buddhist, Mongolian shamanist) as sources of political legitimation.⁴⁶ The gap between imperial and elite Mongols accustomed to court life in Dadu and those herders who remained on the grasslands might seem unbridgeable. Yet, as we know, when the armies of Zhu Yuanzhang, the future Ming Dynasty Emperor, entered Dadu in September 1367, large numbers of Mongols including the imperial family had already fled northwest, seeking protection in the very homeland that they had ignored for one hundred or so years.

The story of the remnant Yuan Dynasty as reconstituted in Mongolia after 1368 is beyond the scope of this article. It may be suggested, however, that one reason why the Mongols of the Yuan imperial line (the line of Chinggis Khan) never succeeded in reunifying as a political-military force capable of reconquering China in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries stemmed from the neglect of the homeland as a “reservoir,” and the resulting fragmentation within Mongolian society. As Udo Barkmann has pointed out in his work on post-Empire Mongolia, the historian should not underestimate

⁴⁴ Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers*, pp. 247–48.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Hok-lam Chan, “Chinese Official Historiography at the Yüan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin, and Sung Histories,” in *China under Mongol Rule*, ed. J.D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton, 1981), *passim*.

⁴⁶ For the Mongols’ non-Chinese sources of legitimation, see H. Franke, “From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: The Legitimation of the Yüan Dynasty,” originally published in *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte* 2 (Munich, 1978), *passim* (rpt. in H. Franke, *China under Mongol Rule* [Brookfield, VT, 1994]).

“the economic effect of the sudden return [to Mongolia in 1367–68] of so many people—most of them warriors or former courtiers, who were alienated from nomad working processes . . .”⁴⁷ Although the Chinggisid line survived economic pressures, internecine fighting, Oirat aggression, and periodic Chinese invasions in the early fifteenth century,⁴⁸ stability and strong leadership remained elusive in the post-Empire centuries.

When the Manchus in the early seventeenth century made overtures to the Mongols to join them as allies in an invasion of China, the Manchus presented themselves as sympathetic and culturally attuned to the Mongolian way of life. A Mongolian-language rescript sent by the Manchu ruler Hong Taiji (who ruled as Taizong from 1636 to 1643) in 1640 (four years before the establishment of the Qing Dynasty) is addressed to those Mongols living under Chinese jurisdiction. This document clearly alludes to a shared language, in the sense that Manchu and Mongolian were far more closely related as languages than Mongolian was to Chinese:

We have delivered this to the many Mongols. Why should you die for the sake of the [Ming] Chinese dynasty which has a different language? If you go to the Chinese, shall you not be killed off? If you, having consulted, and having in concerted effort killed the officials and soldiers of the Chinese, surrender along with the settlement, we shall be pleased to bestow titles and ranks [upon you]. Whether many or a few defect, or whether a solitary person defects, we shall be pleased to bestow *ger* [tents], cattle, and servants. Now you have heard that we shall spare the Mongols who have defected to us . . . Given the fact that we have said “submit,” if you do not submit, but regret it later, what use would that be?⁴⁹

The Inner Asian origins of the Manchus enabled them to manipulate other Inner Asian peoples (like the Mongols) through creative strategies, both military and cultural; this approach was very different from the Ming Dynasty’s defensive, wall-building mentality. Yet, because the interests of the Manchus more often than not coincided with the interests

⁴⁷ U.B. Barkmann, “Some Comments on the Consequences of the Decline of the Mongol Empire on the Social Development of the Mongols,” in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. R. Amitai-Preiss and D.O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), p. 277.

⁴⁸ For details, see Barkmann, pp. 273–81.

⁴⁹ Adapted and modified from the translation of F.W. Cleaves, “A Mongolian Rescript of the Fifth Year of Degedü Erdem-tü (1640),” *HJAS*, 46 (June, 1986), pp. 186–87.

of Chinese officials and merchants, Mongolia was in Qing times treated as an economic resource to be exploited, not as an off-bounds “reservoir” of cultural identity and military strength. The history of Chinese mercantile exploitation of Inner and Outer Mongolia, to use the Chinese geographic-administrative terminology, is well known through Urgunge Onon’s annotated translation from Mongolian into English of M. Sanjdorj’s *Manchu Chinese Colonial Rule in Northern Mongolia*.⁵⁰

In the era of the great expeditions of merchants and explorers to Mongolia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Russian, British and other foreign observers were most struck by (in their eyes) the utter desolation and impoverishment of pastoral nomadic households. These observers did not praise the Mongols for economic independence or self-reliance; rather, the Mongols of this era were often contrasted negatively with their ancestors of the thirteenth century. The following example is an excerpt from the “Introduction” to the 1912 Russian-language *Moscow Trade Expedition to Mongolia* report, an account based on Russian merchants’ travels throughout Mongolia in the summer of 1910:

There was a moment when the Mongols rose to an understanding of their national tasks, when, under the power of Chinggis Khan, they formed a vast Asian empire. Now, the Mongols are pathetic herdsmen, exploited by Chinese merchants and officials. But the fundamentals of the Mongolian way of life have existed for centuries, not undergoing changes; and now, as earlier, the entire style of life of the Mongols is based upon a patriarchal nomadic economy.⁵¹

The Russian merchants portrayed the pastoral nomadic way of life as unchanged over the centuries, a stereotype found in many writings of this period. At the same time, the early twentieth-century Mongols did not evoke the heroic image of their thirteenth-century ancestors. The British geographer Douglas Carruthers, travelling in Mongolia in 1910–1911, was struck with “amazement at the sudden disappearance of those powerful nomad people.”⁵² It was difficult for these travellers to make the connection between the Mongols whom they observed and the Mongols about whom they had read in the histories

⁵⁰ M. Sanjdorj, *Manchu Chinese Colonial Rule in Northern Mongolia*, tr. and annot. Urgunge Onon (New York, 1980).

⁵¹ *Moskovskaia Torgovaia Ekspeditsiia v Mongoliiu* (Moscow, 1912), p. 1.

⁵² D. Carruthers, *Unknown Mongolia. A Record of Travel and Exploration in North-West Mongolia and Dzungaria* (rpt., New Delhi, 1994, of London, 1913), i, p. 305.

of the Mongolian empire. Carruthers also tended to portray the pastoral nomadic life as an unchanging aspect of Mongolia:

This race which, at one time, was said "to eat up Empires like grass," is now only to be found in the bleak and far-distant land of its birth, the warriors have returned to the simple life of a pastoral people, and there is no trace left of any desire to foster wars or to carry arms into a foreign land. . . . Instead of being turbulent tribesmen held by military allegiance to their chieftains, instead of being a people who represented as a whole a great brotherhood with both ideas and wealth in common, they are now the serfs of their rulers, downtrodden, overtaxed, and bereft of that energy, fearlessness, and warlike spirit with which once they astonished the world.⁵³

Many other examples could be brought forth to underline the reversal of expectation experienced by early twentieth-century travellers in Mongolia: what they saw on their journeys did not coincide with what they had read of the Mongols as empire-building conquerors. The military might of the nomads had been rendered ineffectual by modern weaponry and by the encroachment of the sedentary empires of Qing China and Tsarist Russia upon the Inner Asian heartland. The highly romanticized vision of invincible mounted warriors did not match the tame existence of steppe dwellers whose economic priority was simple survival in the face of onerous Qing governmental and Mongolian princely exactions of revenue.⁵⁴

It is also true that the economic and political relationships between steppe and sown had changed over the centuries. Arguably, the relations between the Mongols and the Jurchens had been carried out between rough co-equals in the era before Chinggis Khan's conquests began. The same could be said of Ming-Mongolian relations. Neither the Mongols nor the Chinese in Ming times could sufficiently dominate the other side to create a dependency. By late Qing times, however, a one-sided dependency had developed, and the pastoral nomadic households of Mongolia were no longer free to trade or nomadize across banner boundaries as defined by the Qing Dynasty. Economic subservience through Qing taxation and continual indebtedness to

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁵⁴ For a collection of Mongolian documents dated from 1739 to 1919 detailing the economic hardships of the Mongols under Qing Dynasty sovereignty, see S. Rasidondug and V. Veit, *Petitions of Grievances Submitted by the People (18th–beginning of 20th Century)* (Wiesbaden, 1975).

Chinese merchants undermined the historical stand-off between steppe and sown in Inner Asia.

It is perhaps the elasticity of pastoral nomadism in Mongolia that has guaranteed its survival to the present day. The pastoral nomads of the thirteenth century did not resemble those of the early twentieth, and the early twentieth-century descriptions do not fit well with early twenty-first century observations. Mongolian pastoral nomadism historically has adapted when necessary to situations of subservience to dominant sedentary political-economic structures, as in the cases of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) administration and the Soviet-controlled socialist government of the Mongolian People's Republic (1921–1990). Reemerging from the constraints of centralized economic planning and collectivized labor, the Mongolian pastoral nomads of the 1990s responded remarkably well to the challenges of a free-market economy. In place of the old influences from China and Russia, economic and cultural influences from the West will undoubtedly contribute to the ever-changing nature of Mongolian pastoral nomadism in the future.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

<i>baixing</i>	百姓
Batu Gulun	拔突古倫
<i>bipu</i>	婢僕
<i>bu</i>	部
<i>bumin</i>	部民
<i>buqian</i>	不遷
<i>chao</i>	鈔
Dadu	大都
Danling	大寧
Datong	大同
<i>da qianhu</i>	大千戶
<i>Dili zhi</i>	地理志
<i>ding</i>	錠
<i>dou</i>	斗
Duoluduo hai Zhalaier	朵魯朵海 扎刺伊兒
<i>Hanren</i>	漢人
Hebei	河北
Helin	河林
Hening Lu	河寧路
Hongjilie	弘吉烈
<i>Huihui</i>	回回
Jin Wang	晉王
Jining Wang	濟寧王
<i>liang</i>	兩
Lingbei	嶺北
Liupan	六盤
<i>lu</i>	路
Manzитай	蠻子台
<i>Mengda beilu</i>	蒙韃備錄
<i>Minjia</i>	民家
<i>neishi fu</i>	內史府
Shandong	山東
Shangdu	上都
<i>sheng</i>	升
<i>sheng</i>	省
<i>shi</i>	石
<i>si da xing zhang</i>	四大行帳
Tachaer	塔察兒

Taizu	太祖
Wuludai	兀魯帶
Wenggu	甕古
Wengjila	翁吉剌
Wumaer	兀馬兒
Xinghe Lu	興和路
<i>Xingzhongshu sheng</i>	行中書省
<i>yíngfāng</i>	鷹坊
Yonggu	雍古
<i>Yuan shi</i>	元史
Zhao Hong	趙珙
<i>Zhongshu sheng</i>	中書省
Zhu Yuanzhang	朱元璋

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RUSSIA AND THE EURASIAN STEPPE NOMADS: AN OVERVIEW

Moshe Gammer

“The attitude of sedentaries to nomads,” wrote a prominent expert on nomads, “has always been ambiguous.” On the one hand, “a stereotyped view of nomads has arisen in which their real or imaginary freedom and political independence almost occupy pride of place.” On the other hand, in “the darker side” of the “myth of the nomad” the latter “was perceived almost as the devil incarnate.”¹ This observation seems to be valid for the general mood in societies, not for their governments. The attitude of states to nomads, it seems, has usually been hostile on at least three counts:

1. They challenged the state’s monopoly on holding and using armed forces. The fact that settled states used them as mercenaries and/or as allies only served to underline this fact. Furthermore, by using violence they discredited the state’s claim to provide security to its citizens.
2. They were difficult to control (not to say uncontrollable).
3. Their infringements on agricultural lands (not to mention their raids) caused time and again losses to the state’s income.

To the sedentary state the ideal solution to the problems and challenges posed by the nomads has always been what one may call their “denomadisation.” Indeed, strong sedentary empires have tried in the course of history to implement this solution, but only modern technology supplied them with the overwhelming power to do so.²

Russia’s experiences with nomads fall well within these broad lines. Yet in some details Russia is an exception. One is the length and intensity of its contacts with the nomads. Russia’s intricate relationship with the nomads of the Eurasian steppe belt, called in official Imperial Russian terminology *kocheviki* (nomads),³ lasted for more than

¹ A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, tr. J. Crookenden (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1, 2.

² See P.B. Golden, *Nomads and Sedentary Societies in Medieval Eurasia* (Washington D.C., 1998).

³ This is the terminology used in the *ustav ob upravlenii inorodtsev* (Regulation for

a millennium, from the establishment of the first Russian state ca. 862 in Novgorod (moved ca. 912 to Kiev, thus Kievan Rus) to the twentieth century. Although short in comparison to other sedentary neighbours of the Eurasian steppe nomads, Russia's relationship with them was longer, more continuous and more intensive than those of other European nations.

In fact, one may say that Russia's contacts with the nomads go back far into its prehistory, well before the establishment of Kievan Rus, with the arrival of the Slavs and their first encounter with the nomads (perhaps even the Huns). Some of the Eastern Slavic tribes settled in the steppe-forest zone (the transition zone between the two ecological belts and a constant object of rivalry between nomad and peasant) of Eastern Europe and were later incorporated into the Khazar Kaganate.⁴

Usually in an unequal relationship between settled and nomad "the stronger are guided exclusively by their own interests and needs, without any consideration at all of the interests of the weaker."⁵ Nevertheless, the Eastern Slavic agirculturalists, who became later a constituent part of Russia, seem to have not been exploited to such an unbearable extent as to prefer to leave their lands. Kievan Rus was, thus, formed "in the shadow" of the Khazar Kaganate, but was able to destroy it in 965, some 100 years after its (Russia's) establishment.⁶

the Administration of Natives") of 1822. Throughout its history Russia has had contact also with the North Eurasian reindeer breeders, termed *brodiashchie* (wanderers) in that document. As it seems, however, the Russian state influenced them rather than being affected by them. For a classification of nomads, see Khazanov, *Nomads*, pp. 40–69. For the North Eurasian reindeer breeders and their relationship with Russia, see *ibid.*, pp. 41–44.

⁴ The only comprehensive published study of the Khazars in English is D.M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (rpt. 1967, of New York, 1954). A more recent work is P.B. Golden, *The Q'azars: their History and Language as Reflected in the Islamic, Byzantine, Caucasian, Hebrew and Old Russian Source*, Ph.D. dissertation (Harvard University, 1970).

⁵ Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 36.

⁶ The fact that Kievan Rus shared quite a few characteristics with the Khazar Kaganate can be accounted for by several, not necessarily mutually exclusive explanations. One, promoted by the "Eurasian School" (see note 13 below) in Russian historiography, emphasised Khazar influences on the new state. Vernadsky, the most prominent historian of this school, even called the Kievan state "the Rus Kaganate"; G. Vernadsky, *The Origins of Russia* (Oxford, 1959), chapter 5. Another explanation would recall that in each conflict and/or competition both parties end up imitating each other. Yet a third explanation for some of these similarities might lie in the fact that the Viking founders of the ancient Russian state were themselves a wandering people, though on water rather than on land. For a comprehensive discussion of

The second exception was the fact that for the first 376 years of its existence (862–1238) Russia was spared what China, Central Asia and the Middle East had experienced time and again—the invasion of, and domination by nomads. Once the Khazar Kaghanate was destroyed in the tenth century and Kievan Rus disintegrated into numerous principalities,⁷ a *modus vivendi* between equals was arrived at between the nomads and “Russia.” It was only in the thirteenth century that Russia was subjected to such an ordeal—the onslaught of Chinggis Khan’s Mongols in 1238.

The third exception is connected to the Mongol conquest and 242 year long rule (1238–1480); it was the first and only time in its history that Russia was conquered and dominated by nomads, in this case the Khans of the Golden Horde.⁸

The fourth exception is the fact that as it happened, the Mongol conquest was one of the (and until fairly recently regarded as *the*) fiercest and most destructive nomad invasions:

Accounts of the conquest eloquently convey its devastating impact, both material and psychological. The Mongol invaders killed or imprisoned thousands of Russians and looted cities and towns. The poems lamenting the catastrophe express a mood of profound grief and paralysing helplessness at the savagery and overwhelming might of the conquerors.⁹

The combination of the last two components was a major (though not the only and perhaps not even the main) reason for the fact that in Russian memory the Mongol onslaught and the “Tatar yoke” were preserved as extremely negative experiences.¹⁰

The periods that followed the disintegration of the Golden Horde, at the end of the fifteenth century, were characterised by the change

the growth of the Russian state, its demographic and ecological base and their far-reaching consequences, see D. Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, Vol. 1: *Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 327–52.

⁷ For which see J.L.I. Fennell, *The Crisis of Medieval Russia, 1200–1304* (London and New York, 1983).

⁸ For the Golden Horde, see G.A. Fedorov-Davydov, *The Culture of the Golden Horde Cities*, tr. H. Bartlet Wells (Oxford, 1984); *idem*, *The Silk Road and the Cities of the Golden Horde*, tr. A. Naymark (Berkeley, 2001); D. DeWeese, *Islamisation and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Traditions* (Univerity Park, PA, 1998).

⁹ R.O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy, 1304–1613* (London and New York, 1987), p. 30.

¹⁰ Mongol and Tatar (Tartar) are synonymous terms used interchangeably in contemporary sources.

in the balance of power between Russia and the nomads, a change that progressively and increasingly turned to Russia's favour. Like other powers, Russia took advantage of this change to conquer, control and settle its nomad neighbours.

The fifth exception is Russia's greater ruthlessness compared to other European Powers (and also some, though not all—Qing China is a notable exception—Asian ones) in so doing. A major reason for this ruthlessness lies in the fact that in a sharp contrast to the generalisation quoted at the beginning of this paper, Russian attitudes (as opposed to policies) to nomads—Muscovite, Imperial and Soviet alike—have been *almost* uniformly negative.¹¹ That is not to say that there was no occasional dissident voice, but these were quite rare. The nomads were invariably described as “predatory barbarians,” trying to destroy “civilisation.” Correspondingly, the relationship between them and Russia—the paragon of “civilisation”—was one of constant and uncompromising struggle in a zero sum game. No positive attributes were acknowledged to nomadic empires—like the Khazars¹² and especially the Mongols—and any nomad influence on Russia was vehemently denied.¹³ The subject of Mongol influence, wrote Pipes,

¹¹ Following the dissolution of the USSR many of the Soviet “established truths” were put to question. As part of this trend, some new studies of the Khazar Kaganate and the Golden Horde have been published, e.g. L.N. Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus' i velikaia step'* (Moscow, 1992); *idem*, *Ot Rusi do Rossii: ocherki etnicheskoi istorii* (rpt. 1998, of Moscow, 1992); Iu.V. Krivonsheev, *Rus' i Mongoly* (Moscow, 1999); A.A. Gorskii, *Moskva i Orda* (Moscow, 2000); E.S. Kul'pin, *Zolotaia Orda: problema genezisa rossijskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1998). Whether this will lead to a change in Russian historiography regarding the nomads and their role in Russian history remains to be seen.

¹² In the case of the Khazars their conversion to Judaism played an additional role in their negative image. See V.A. Schnirelman, *The Myth of the Khazars and Intellectual Antisemitism in Russia, 1970s–1990s* (Jerusalem, 2002).

¹³ The almost only exception was the “Eurasian School,” which developed mainly in the West by “White” (that is anti-Bolshevik) Russian émigré historians, the most prominent of whom was George Vernadsky. One should not confuse this school with political “Eurasianism” by which, no doubt, it was influenced. For the latest overview of political “Eurasianism,” see I. Vinkovetsky, “Classical Eurasianism and its Legacy,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 34/2 (Summer 2000), pp. 125–39. In revision to the mainstream Imperial historiography, which emphasized the internal continuity and development in Russia's history and Byzantine influences, the Eurasian School underlined external influences, which in the middle ages came necessarily mainly from the nomads. However, even the Eurasian school had a negative view of the nomads. It explained the negative characteristics of the Russian state—autocracy, tyranny, serfdom, etc.—by Mongol influences on Muscovite Russia. According to its view Russia's development on a par with the rest of Europe along the path of “progress” had gone astray due to these “negative” nomad interference and influences.

is a very sensitive one for Russians, who are quick to take offence at the suggestion that their cultural heritage has been shaped in any way by the orient, and especially by the oriental power best remembered for its appalling atrocities and the destruction of great centres of civilisation.¹⁴

Some scholars imply that the Mongol invasion was a major cause for this negative attitude, as before it relations between Russia and its nomad neighbours had been different: "The major territories of Kiev and its neighbours," runs one description, "had been shared for centuries by sedentary agriculturalists and pastoral nomads in complex patterns of symbiosis, exchange and confrontation."¹⁵ After the collapse of the Khazar Kaghannate, the relations of the Turkic nomads "with the Slavs and Ugro-Finns with whom they shared much of the physical space were fairly close and often peaceful, based on mutual trade, political alliances or even on shared statehood."¹⁶

Two arguments seem to be problematic in this proposition. To start with, such a description of the pre-Mongol invasion relationship between Russia and its nomad neighbours seems to be too idyllic. After all, "symbiosis entails not only co-existence, interaction and even interdependence, but also mutual benefit."¹⁷ However, relations between nomads and agriculturalists are usually a "*modus vivendi* which is guided not only by mutual interests of a purely economic kind, but also by the correlation of forces."¹⁸ In this case the *modus vivendi* had been reached because neither side enjoyed a clear-cut superiority: On the one hand Russia was divided into dozens of rival principalities. On the other hand "the Pečeneg and Western Oğuz tribal unions" as well as the Qıpçaqs "remained confederations and never achieved statehood."¹⁹

Furthermore, co-existence, interaction and interdependence do not necessarily entail a positive image of the other. In many (if not most) cases when distinct groups intermingle intensively they make a special

¹⁴ R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (London, 1977), p. 74.

¹⁵ T. Shanin, *Russia as a "Developing Society."* *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of the Century* (London, 1985), i, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6. And see the examples given in the immediately following paragraphs—the Barendai's and Kavui's of Chernigov, Yaroslav "the Wise" (1015–31) and his Cuman allies, Mstislav and the Karakalpak, etc.

¹⁷ Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 35.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁹ P.B. Golden, *Ethnicity and State Formation in Pre-Činggisid Turkic Eurasia*, The Central Eurasian Studies Lectures No. 1, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University (Bloomington, 2001), p. 45.

effort to erect other barriers between them to compensate for the lowering of the existing ones and to prevent the erosion of their identity. Such barriers include stigmatisation of the other as part of boosting one's own group's pride and sense of superiority. This seems also to have been the case in pre-Mongol and Mongol Russia. The yardstick became Christianity and "in the conditions of the decline of the Kievan State," it was the Orthodox Church who defined "who was considered 'Russian'."²⁰ The Church conducted "a massive ideological operation"

separating the sedentary, controllable and Christian "sheep" from the nomad "goats." Nomads enter the later Russian lore mainly as a synonym of evil and "otherness": strange, predatory and hostile. Russian language reflected it clearly. The word Christian became the synonym of a peasant (*krest'ianin*), while the various descriptions of the nomads became an insult, an abomination assigned to the realm of pagan (later Islamic) enemies outside the pale of civilisation: the *iazychnik*, the *Koshchei*, the *Polovets*.²¹

Thus, the negative view of the nomads had been there before the Mongol onslaught. It was not reflected in politics simply because of the realities of the balance of power between settled and nomad. Only after the waning of Mongol power and influence did this negative attitude come out into the open.²²

Secondly, although "the initial [Mongol] conquest was extremely destructive," it "was no brief, but passing calamity, soon to be forgotten."²³ The memory of catastrophe *per se* is not an unchanging constituent, but is shaped and directed, inflated or dimmed by interests. No matter how disastrous the Mongol conquest and how oppres-

²⁰ Shanin, *Russia as a "Developing Society"*, p. 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

²² On this matter see C.I. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde. The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* (Bloomington, 1985), especially pp. 10–20.

²³ Crummey, *Formation of Muscovy*, p. 30. Also in the world of Islam "a more intimate experience of catastrophe" in the 20th century and "a deeper knowledge of Islamic history" have shown that usually the effects of Mongol conquest and rule were not as devastating as previously believed: "Certainly, the damage was great. The immediate blows of the Mongols, though by no doubt trivial by modern standards, were terrible and overwhelming. [...] Yet these effects, however terrible, were limited in extent and duration. [...] Once the conquests, with their attendant horrors, were completed, the Mongols were quick to appreciate the advantages of peace and order, and the *pax mongolica* became a reality in their vast dominions." B. Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and the Muslim Polity," in *idem, Islam in History. Ideas, People and Events in the Middle East*, 2nd edn. (Chicago, 1993), pp. 190, 192, 194.

sive the Tatar rule were, it is clear that their memory was purposefully inflated and prompted into a central place in Russian collective memory. This was done by a joint state-church effort to rewrite the past and construct the concepts (myths is perhaps too strong a word) of the terrible “Tatar Yoke,” Muscovite continuous resistance and the tireless effort by the rulers of Moscow to “reunite” and “liberate” Russia. All this had at least two purposes listed here in ascending order of importance:

1. To erase the memory of collaboration with the Mongol-Tatar rule. Muscovite Russia was born within and out of this *pax mongolica*.²⁴ “The organisation of [its] army, the framework of state administration, [. . .] the definition of [its] princely power” and its ideology—all of them “were overwhelmingly Mongol in origin.”²⁵ Its ruler “claimed unlimited powers [. . .] by the patent of the Tatar khans (the *iarylyk*).”²⁶ More importantly, Moscow’s rulers gained this absolute power and expanded their territories and strength as rewards for their full obedience to, and enthusiastic collaboration with the Khan of the Golden Horde against other Russian rulers. Also the church—the most hostile element to the nomads—co-operated with the Mongol “new world order” and made efforts “to modify and account for Mongol institutions and practices within a Byzantine-based frame of reference.”²⁷
2. To delegitimise the lure of “freedom” offered by the steppes and the nomads. The disintegration of the Golden Horde left large chunks of the steppes out of any state control. It thus attracted

²⁴ For the rise of Moscow, see J. Fennell, *The Emergence of Moscow, 1304–1359* (London, 1968).

²⁵ Shanin, *Russia as a “Developing Society”*, p. 17; D.G. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols. Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 26. Furthermore, not satisfied with imitating the Mongol order only, the Muscovite rulers tried to obtain the “real thing”, i.e., real Tatars in their service. This effort to entice Tatars to join Moscow’s service continued well after the disintegration of the Golden Horde.

²⁶ Shanin, *Russia as a “Developing Society”*, p. 17. The current debate in Western historiography regarding the significance and extent of Mongol influences on Muscovite Russia is partly summarised in a recent exchange in *Kritika*: C.J. Halperin, “Muscovite Political Institutions in the 14th Century,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, NS, 1/2 (Spring 2000), pp. 237–57; D. Goldfrank, “Muscovy and the Mongols: What’s What and What’s Maybe,” *ibid.*, pp. 259–66; D. Ostrowski, “Muscovite Adaptation of Steppe Political Institutions: A Reply to Halperin’s Objections,” *ibid.*, pp. 267–97.

²⁷ Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, p. 26.

runaways from Russia: outlaws, adventurers, peasants fleeing from the creeping enservment, killers and debtors running from their avengers and creditors, *starovery* ("old believers") and *rasskolniki* (schismatics) escaping persecution and, generally, people breaking away from the state and "civilisation." One may say that this was the only period in Russian history when the positive myth of the nomads attracted more than just a few dissidents.

Sticking together to survive, these "Cossacks" (from the Turkic "*qazaq*" = outlaw, fugitive, insubordinate) formed in due time *voiska* ("hosts") in various areas; the Dniepr Cossacks, the Don Cossacks, the Terek Cossacks, etc. Although they retained their Russian and Christian identity and in most cases remained agriculturalists, the Cossacks intermingled (and intermarried) with and assimilated into the (usually nomad) milieu in which they lived. They adopted native values—first and foremost freedom and martial spirit, customs, forms of organisation, military tactics and even costume.²⁸

Both Church and State regarded this phenomenon of *kazachestvo* (Cossackdom) with trepidation. The Church was alarmed at the prospect of losing "souls." The rulers inherited the Mongol khans' fears of subjects "emigrat[ing] to other territories, that is" of "los[ing] power over [people] they controlled."²⁹ They thus used any means at their disposal to stop the flight of people to the steppes and to retain at least some control over the Cossacks. In the end the Muscovite state and rulers succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, which testifies to their resolve, perseverance, power and skill: not only were they able to stop this phenomenon, but within a couple of centuries they reversed the tide and reduced the Cossacks to loyal and obedient servants of the state and the Tsar.³⁰

These new concepts constructed around the "Tatar Yoke" joined the augmented emphasis on Orthodox Christian identity and the Christian-heathen dichotomy. The disintegration of Mongol power

²⁸ For Cossack history in general, sees P. Longworth, *The Cossacks* (New York, 1969); M.G. Hindus, *The Cossacks: The History of a Warrior People* (Westpoint, CN, 1970); V.G. Gloskov, *History of the Cossacks* (New York, 1972). A study of the Dniepr Cossacks is G.P. March, *Cossacks of the Brotherhood: the Zaporog Kosh of the Dniepr River* (New York, 1990).

²⁹ Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 255.

³⁰ The most recent book on this subject is V. Glushchenko, *Kazachestvo Evrazii: zarozhdenie, razvitiie, integratsiia v strukturu rossijskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 2000). See also R.H. McNeal, *Tsar and Cossacks, 1855–1914* (London, 1982).

and subsequent waning of Mongol influences in Moscow were concurrent with a boost in Byzantine Orthodox Christian influences. These reached a peak with the influx of Byzantine clergymen, scholars and artists following the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the marriage of Ivan III (r. 1462–1505) to Sophia, the niece of the last Byzantine emperor. Soon, however, the Byzantine influences declined and Russia pursued its own course.³¹

With the fall of Constantinople, Muscovite Russia suddenly discovered that it had become the strongest (in fact the only) Orthodox Power, and, naturally, it claimed leadership. Ivan III's marriage supplied this claim with a legal justification. Thus an ideology was constructed, according to which Moscow was "the third Rome" and the only true successor of "the second Rome," Constantinople (which had been the only true inheritor of the "first," original Christian Rome).³² By assuming the title of *Tsar* (corruption of *Tsezar* = Caesar), Ivan IV (the "Terrible," r. 1533–1584) formalised the Muscovite rulers' claim to be the heir of the Roman (and Byzantine) *Caesar*. This led to the consecration of Moscow, its ruler, its land³³ and its people—the Russians—as the bastion of the true faith and true church. The religious—Orthodox Christian—and ethnic—Russian—identities merged and, in a way one may say that Orthodox Christianity was russified.

In Russia's view of the nomads, religious and ethnic identities also merged. At an early stage, the Khans of the Golden Horde had converted to Islam and were followed by many of their tribesmen. The Islamic identity of the Golden Horde was impressed in Russian memory, it seems, and nomad, Muslim and Turk became almost synonyms. Thus an opposition was conceived between the settled Christian Russian and the nomad *busurmanin* (a distortion of Muslim) *tatarva* (derogative for Tatars). These pejoratives would be applied

³¹ For this process, see Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, pp. 199–218. For the ambivalent and complicated relationship between Russia and the Greek Orthodox Church(es) in the Near East, especially in the nineteenth century, see T.G. Stavrou, *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914: A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (Thessaloniki, 1963), pp. 7–24.

³² See Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, pp. 219–43.

³³ The concept of Russia being the "Holy Land" became so entrenched that in the nineteenth century when Russia—like all the other Great Powers—developed a strong interest in the original "Holy Land" Palestine, it (Palestine) was viewed by many Russians as "an extension of Holy Russian territory." D. Hopwood, "The Resurrection of Our Eastern Brethren' (Ignatiev); Russia and Orthodox Arab Nationalism in Jerusalem," in M. Ma'oz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 395.

almost up to the 20th century to any Muslim population, sedentary as well as nomadic, which Russia encountered.³⁴

Ideology and attitudes apart, policies were dictated also by considerations of the balance of power and *Realpolitik*. Thus the adoption by the rulers of Moscow of the title of *Tsar* was meant to lay a claim to the inheritance of the Golden Horde no less than to that of Rome.³⁵ (*Tsar* was in Russian usage the title of the Khan of the Golden Horde.)

Throughout the sixteenth century, the assumption that Moscow was one of the successors of the Golden Horde served both to justify its expansion southward and eastward and to legitimate its conquests. In a remarkable blend, Moscow derived its legitimacy simultaneously from two different traditions: the Christian tradition of Byzantium and the secular tradition of the Golden Horde. The later became obsolete only with the accession to the throne of the Romanov dynasty . . .³⁶

Moscow continued *vis-à-vis* the steppe peoples the claims, policies and practices of the Golden Horde a long time after their origin had been forgotten. Its relationship with them was based on the *shert* (“a term derived from the Turkic *şart* or *şärt*, as adopted from the Arabic *shart*—a condition, a clause of a treaty”), which in the eyes of Moscow was “an allegiance” of “eternal submission to the grand tsar.”³⁷

Also the Muscovite army “shared much in equipment and tactics” with “the Tatar forces,” but “with important ‘technical inventions’ or adaptations of its own—the *gulai gorod* of anti-cavalry moving walls-on-wheels, and since the sixteenth century the use of firearms.”³⁸ Furthermore, Moscow made great efforts to court and lure Tatars to join the Tsar’s service.³⁹ It made also military use of nomad aux-

³⁴ For example, as late as 1877 military reports from the Caucasus referred to the Chechens and Daghestanis as “Tatars.” See for example, N. Semenov, “Khronika Chechenskogo vosstaniia 1877 goda,” Appendix to *Terskij sbornik*, Vypusk I (1891).

³⁵ The *Tsar*’s claim to world rule as well as the Russian view that everyone in the world is a potential subject might have derived either from Mongol or Byzantine sources or both. One should not forget, however, that since antiquity such claims have been raised by many rulers independent of foreign influences.

³⁶ M. Khodarkovsky, *Russia’s Steppe Frontier. The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, 2002), p. 222.

³⁷ M. Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Meet: The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600–1771* (Ithaca, 1992), p. 22. The nomads’ perspective was obviously different: “Whereas Moscow regarded all the newly encountered Peoples as its subjects, the non-Christians [. . .] particularly those who saw themselves as the legitimate heirs to Chinggis Khan and to the legacy of the Golden Horde [. . .] often considered Russia no more than a military ally.” *Ibid.* For further elaboration see Khodarkovsky, *Russia’s Steppe Frontier*.

³⁸ Shanin, *Russia as a “Developing Society”*, p. 19.

³⁹ See Khodarkovsky, *Russia’s Steppe Frontier*, pp. 201–10.

iliaries as well as of the Cossacks, who were fighting *à la nomades*.

In one military aspect, though, the "Third Rome" resembled the original: in an attempt to block the devastating raids of the Crimean Khanate it built lines of defence reminiscent of the Roman *limes*. These would soon turn into the base for a strategic offensive by defensive tactics in which advancing lines added "belt upon belt of fertile territory to the Empire of the Tsars."⁴⁰

The Imperial period in Russian history (roughly 1700–1917), that is the period which symbolically started with Peter I (the "Great," r. 1682–1725) assuming in 1721 the title *Imperator* (Emperor) was characterised by Westernisation, or rather "Europeanisation, [by] conquest (actual or attempted), and [by] administrative reforms, in close association with each other."⁴¹ Two points related to this process affected Russia's attitude to the nomads in particular:

First, Russia, or rather the Imperial elite and the emerging *intelligentsia* regarded itself as part of Europe and fully identified with the new secular European or Western civilisation based on science and the idea of progress. Europe, however, did not wholeheartedly embrace Russia. Its attitude was best phrased by the saying attributed to Napoleon: "scratch a Russian a bit and a Tatar will pop out." Like in so many cases of rejection, this attitude only multiplied Russian resolve to be part of Europe and intensified its rejection of everything non-European (and especially of what Europeans said it was—Tatar). Furthermore, unable to deny the fact of Russia's backwardness, Russian intellectuals blamed it on the "Mongol yoke" and the nomads in general. Thus, the negative attitude to nomads was reinforced. Embracing European scientific terminology, the nomads were now described as lacking elementary culture and nomadism, as a waste of resources.

Secondly, in the West the new secular viewpoint did not fully replace the previous Christian one, but rather merged with it, at least partially. The same happened in Russia. "Europeanisation" added but another layer to the Slavic-Christian-Orthodox identity of Russia and to her image of the other. Thus, the nomads were now not merely *busurmane* (the plural of *busurmanin*) and *tatarva* but also "Orientals," "Asiatics" and "fanatics," the latter being used to describe anyone refusing to fully embrace the European-Russian-Christian-Orthodox outlook. Like in the West, the deep sense of *mission civilisatrice* partly replaced and partly embraced the missionary zeal to bring salvation

⁴⁰ J.F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London, 1908), p. 5.

⁴¹ Shanin, *Russia as a "Developing Society,"* p. 26.

to the non-believers. Thus, to sedentarise, “civilise,” Russify and eventually baptise the nomads were a single package.⁴²

This impulse to “normalise” the nomads, that is to make of them “normal,” settled, obedient subjects of the Emperor became feasible due to the accelerating shift in Russia’s favour in the balance of power. The growing military might of Russia was translated into a series of conquests, which placed most of the Eurasian steppes and their nomads under Russian control. Of the larger groupings of nomads the Bashkirs were subdued during the first third of the eighteenth century; the Nogays—in the 1780s; the Kazakhs—during the first half of the nineteenth century and the Türkmen—in the 1880s. The growing lethal power of modern weaponry and the ruthlessness of Russian generals resulted in devastating losses to the nomads and in some cases—in wholesale massacre, like that of the Nogay in Eisk in 1783 and of the Turkmen in Gök Tepe in 1881.⁴³

This impulse was restrained, however, by other, both practical and ideological considerations: the necessity to “pacify” some groups and to prevent others from rebellion while Russia was engaged in other conquests; the need, especially at the beginning of the period, to mobilise nomads to the Russian military effort. (Later this mobilisation was increasingly aimed at removing the most warlike and volatile elements from their society); and in some cases—most particularly the Kazakhs—the wish to “de-Islamise” the nomads, who were considered as only partly Islamised and by far less “fanatic” than the sedentary Muslim populations conquered by Russia.⁴⁴

Yet in the end, economic and social needs—in particular the land hunger in inner Russia which created a demand “to make pasture-land available for cultivation”—combined with strategic considerations “to encourage, and if necessary force, nomadic peoples to abandon

⁴² Cf. Khodarkovsky, *Russia’s Steppe Frontier*, especially pp. 189–201.

⁴³ Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Meet*; *idem*, *Russia’s Steppe Frontier*, especially pp. 78–183; A.S. Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria, 1552–1740. A Case Study in Imperialism* (New Haven, 1968); V. Martin, *Law and Order in the Steppe: the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2001); M. Saray, *The Turkmen in the Age of Imperialism: a Study of the Turkmen People and their Incorporation into the Russian Empire* (Ankara, 1989); M.B. Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, 1987), pp. 28–53.

⁴⁴ See Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, pp. 76–79. This is strongly reminiscent of the French “Berber Policy” in Morocco about half a century later. Of course, the generalised description in this paper paints a (too) simplified picture of the complicated and often contradictory Russian policies.

their traditional way of life and settle down as peasants.”⁴⁵ The vacated lands were opened to massive settlement of Russian peasants, especially from the 1890s. Within twenty years (1897–1916) over 5 million Slavic peasants settled in Siberia, Kazakhstan, the Far East and the Northern Caucasus, prompting “the rapid development and consolidation there of more progressive, capitalist relations” and pulling “these huge empty or little exploited masses of land into the Russian economy.”⁴⁶

“It usually happens,” wrote Khazanov,” that the more the balance of power changes, the worse the position of nomads in a sedentary state becomes.”⁴⁷ Indeed, this policy of “restricting and ultimately preventing nomadism [. . .] reduced many ex-nomads to penury.”⁴⁸ Many were forced to settle and many of those who remained nomadic, or semi-nomadic were pushed to the most infertile lands, which could not sustain their flocks. In order to survive, both groups had to become agricultural workers in Russian farms on their previous pasturelands. All this resulted in their alienation from, resistance to and confrontation with the Russian state. The largest of these confrontations was the so-called revolt of 1916, which was, in fact, a series of local uprisings engulfing all of Central Asia.⁴⁹ Still, by 1917, when the Imperial regime collapsed, sedentarisation of the nomads had made some headway, and parts of their elites had gone through the Russian educational system and at least partially been Russified.⁵⁰

When the Bolsheviks seized power the nomads’ strength disintegrated even more while that of the modern state reached an unprecedented peak. The machine-gun and the airplane doomed to carnage any

⁴⁵ J. Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia. Russia’s North Asian Colony, 1581–1990* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 157. One should remember that nomad resistance to be settled was reinforced by the fact that they were too well acquainted with the lot of Russian peasants-serfs to desire such a life.

⁴⁶ V.M. Kabuzan, *Naselenie Severnogo Kavkaza v XIX–XX vekakh. Etnostatisticheskoe issledovanie* (St. Petersburg, 1996), p. 103. This claim by Soviet and post-Soviet scholars has very little to do with reality. The Slavic colonists were, in fact, pre-Industrial Revolution (or in other words, pre-Capitalist) peasants and therefore contributed very little to the development of Capitalism there.

⁴⁷ Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 219.

⁴⁸ Forsyth, *History of the Peoples of Siberia*, p. 157. A Soviet Kazakh historian called the nomadic Kazakh economy at the turn of the twentieth century “a relic” of the traditional nomad way of life in the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries. S.E. Tolybekov, *Kochevoe obshchestvo Kazakhov v XVII–nachale XX veka* (Alma Ata, 1971), p. 495.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, pp. 118–26.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 104–107.

attempt at resistance by traditional pre-modern forces.⁵¹ The Bolsheviks turned their back on Russia's past and vehemently rejected it. Under them Russia's "Europeanisation" proceeded to an extreme. If in the West science was the dominant, but by no means exclusive set of beliefs, in the Soviet Union it became the one and only truth eliminating any other creed. In a way, one may say that "Science" became the religion of the Soviet Union, "Scientific Socialism" (the official ideology also known as "Marxism-Leninism") became its dogma, and the Communist Party, its Church. The attempt to break totally with the past, however, did not succeed and in many respects the Soviet Union continued the methods and traditions of Imperial Russia.⁵² After all, the new leadership was shaped by Russian culture which conditioned its outlook, feelings and policies. Many common attitudes and prejudices against non-Russians (and non-Christians) were impossible to erase and went on to shape attitudes and policies.

In the case of the nomads, the new "scientific" approach only served to reinforce their negative image and added reasons for their sedentarisation. First,

nomadising involved constant hardships and offered little security of shelter and nourishment. Diseases, especially of the eyes and lungs, were associated with tent life and its cramped, often smoky conditions: personal hygiene was at a low level among the nomads, and they lived in isolation from human society and from that twentieth-century urban culture which the Russian communists considered to be without question the acme of human development.⁵³

Secondly, the Soviet authorities, who were filled with missionary zeal to create a new society which would enjoy all the "blessings of progress," believed that the nomads needed to be settled because "from the point of view of the 'enlighteners' it was certainly easier to provide schooling and medical services to communities settled in villages than to nomadic families."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Air power was so dramatically effective and economical both in manpower and financial expanses that Britain, for example, decided after the First World War to base its control in the Middle East on a chain of air bases.

⁵² This is especially true of political culture, including the fixation with total control of the population and the use of force. If there was any difference, it was in the higher degree of ruthlessness of the Soviet regime as compared to its tsarist predecessor.

⁵³ Forsyth, *History of the Peoples of Siberia*, p. 297.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Thirdly, “to the Bolshevik rulers of the Soviet Union the continuation of the primitive economy side by side with their grandiose plans for the ‘conquest of nature’ was intolerable.”⁵⁵

Each of these reasons, attitudes and beliefs was not peculiar *per se* to the Bolsheviks. They were all part of the Western point of view. What was unique was their combination. Also the effort to sedentarise the nomads was not particular to the Soviet Union. The twentieth century was marked by an unprecedented (and a remarkably successful) effort in all parts the world to settle nomads. But in the Soviet Union the settlement of the nomads was part of a larger by far revolution, the collectivisation drive. “Collectivisation,” wrote a Western historian,

was but one aspect of a comprehensive social revolution imposed upon the native peoples, which affected not only religion and the position of women, but the most fundamental features of traditional life—clan allegiance and nomadism.⁵⁶

Indeed, according to the then (1930) First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Kazakhstan,

Settlement is collectivisation. Settlement is the liquidation of the semi-feudal *bais*. Settlement is the destruction of tribal attitudes [...]. Settlement is simultaneously the question of Socialist construction and the approach of socialism [...].⁵⁷

Collectivisation started in late 1929–early 1930, immediately after Stalin had consolidated his power, and was characterised by enormous use of brutal force towards everyone. “West Siberian Tatars, Bashkirs and Kazaks” were “swept up in the campaign as ruthlessly as the farmers of Russian, Ukrainian and other origins.”⁵⁸ However, the nomads’ lot was worse in at least one respect: in addition to “collectivisation” and “de-*kulakisation*”⁵⁹ they were forced to settle down. In the better case housing—“wooden houses in a village, which Russians automatically assumed to be superior to tent-life”—had been built for them in advance. Even then, life in these huts

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298. Of course one should not forget the desire to control the nomads fully as a major reason for sedentarisation.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 296–97.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, p. 183.

⁵⁸ Forsyth, *History of the Peoples of Siberia*, p. 299.

⁵⁹ *Kulak*—a “rich” land-owning peasant by Soviet definition and as such a *petit bourgeois* element and an “enemy of the people.”

was repugnant [...] because of its stuffiness, dirty surroundings and, above all, static monotony [...] They missed the freedom of movement and contact with nature, and the absence of camp-fire was felt so strongly by some that, it is said, they modified the small wooden huts [...] making a fireplace in the middle of the floor and cutting a smoke-hole in the roof.⁶⁰

However, in most cases the newly settled nomads were dumped without shelter, and more seriously with no means at all for survival. They could not return to pastoralism because their herds were “collectivised,” or in most cases slaughtered by their owners who refused to give them up. In Kazakhstan “nearly 80 percent of the herd was destroyed between 1928 and 1932.”⁶¹ But they could not engage in agriculture either, *because* they lacked agricultural knowledge and more importantly, they had been supplied with neither tools nor seeds. The results were catastrophic. In Kazakhstan, for example, at least 1.5 million—that is, about a third of the—Kazakhs died during the 1930s, more than 95% of them from starvation and related disease.⁶² The others died of violence—resisting the authorities, exiled and/or executed by them as *kulaks* and in clashes between rebel and settled Kazakhs. “Once again Cain [wa]s killing Abel.”⁶³

The “collectivisation” campaign did not obliterate nomadism completely. Nevertheless, it forcefully settled the overwhelming majority of nomads and broke the backbone of nomadism as a way of life. Even though nomads and mainly semi-nomads in small numbers remained in the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991, for all the ex-nomadic peoples, nomadism had become no more than a nostalgic historical memory, a cultural tradition, folklore and a component (sometimes a major one) of their group/national identity. In some cases, most notably in the newly post Soviet independent states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, nomad traditions have been consciously used since independence in the nation-building process. In many other, small groups lacking statehood, especially in the Russian Federation, the process of “de-nomadisation” passed the

⁶⁰ Forsyth, *History of the Peoples of Siberia*, p. 297.

⁶¹ N. Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the U.S.S.R.* (Stanford, 1941), p. 323 as quoted in Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, p. 185.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 6. For the Collectivisation in Kazakhstan, see I. Vladimirski, “Collectivization and the Restoration of Agriculture in Kazakhstan during the 1920s and 1930s,” Ph.D. dissertation (Tel Aviv University, 1998).

no return point and nomadic tradition was no longer retrievable: "We are Russified," said a Tofa woman from southern Siberia to a Western correspondent. "We do not even know our own language . . . We want to sing traditional songs, but we don't even know how."⁶⁴

Post-Soviet Russia seems to face no problem of nomadism. This is not because of a clear-cut change of attitude towards nomads. Neither is it so because, the bulk of ex-nomads live nowadays outside the borders of the Russian Federation. There are several ex-nomad national groups within post-Soviet Russia and one can still meet nomads, or rather semi-nomads, wandering as far as the densely agricultural provinces of inner Russia. The reason for that lack of a "nomad problem" seems to be the fact that the answer to the question posed by the title of a recent book, *The End of Nomadism?*,⁶⁵ seems more and more to be positive and not only in the former Soviet Union.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ M. Slackman, "Bitter Lands: Displaced Peoples of the Former Soviet Union: The Last of the Tofalar: A People's Identity Lost to Soviet Rule," *Newsday*, 22 July 2000, as quoted by F.J. Fuller Coursey, "The Relationship of Language, Culture and Identity in the Post-Soviet World," in *Evraziiskoe prostranstvo v postsovet'skii period: Etnokul'turnaia spetsifika sotsial'nykh i politicheskikh protsessov*, ed. S.K. Golunov (Volgograd, 2001), p. 84.

⁶⁵ C. Humphrey and D. Sneath, *The End of Nomadism? Society, State and the Environment in Inner Asia* (Durham, N.C., 1999).

⁶⁶ "The question as to whether nomadism can survive in the contemporary world raises serious doubts. Opportunities for nomadism to adapt itself to the outside world are few and far between [...] It is true that today, by way of exception, the short-lived revival of nomadism in certain areas may be observed. But the revival is local in character and scarcely will last long." Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 6. See also Khazanov and Shapiro's article in this volume.

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CONTEMPORARY PASTORALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Anatoly M. Khazanov and Kenneth H. Shapiro

Contemporary forms of stockbreeding and pastoralism in Central Asia and Kazakhstan are products of environment, history, and politics, none of which in the modern and contemporary periods were favorable to pastoralists.

Former Soviet Central Asia comprises an area that is flanked to the north by the Aral Sea and Kazakh steppes, to the south by the Kopet-Dagh and Hindu-Kush, to the west by the Caspian Sea, and to the east by the Pamirs. In political respects, the region consists of four newly independent states: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, plus Kazakhstan to the north of Central Asia proper. About 80% of all of its territory (2,717,300 square kilometers) consists of natural pastures and hayfields (Over 80% of the land area of Kazakhstan is classified as agricultural land; of this 80% is pasture, 18% is arable, and 4.5% is meadowland). It was the most important region of pastoral nomadism in the whole belt of the Eurasian steppes, semi-deserts, and deserts that stretches from the Danube to North China. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the pastoralist population of Mongolia never exceeded one million people; in Kazakhstan, at times, it numbered several million.

Actually, the whole history of Central Asia may be, and must be, to a large extent conceived as interaction between sedentary populations of oases and pastoral nomads, particularly those migrating to and settling in the area (Khazanov 1992:69ff.). From the *Avesta* to the *Shāhnāmah* "Iran" (i.e. the sedentary world) was a contrast to "Turan" (i.e. the nomadic world) not only from an economic, but also from a territorial point of view. With time the ethnic implications of these words changed, although the contrast itself remained unchanged. The opposition, however, was never complete.

On the territory between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, which in the Middle Ages was known as *Mā warā' al-nahr*, there were never enough pastures. Thus, nomadic migrations into the area, whatever their reasons and causes, produced a tendency to sedentarize. It is no wonder, then, that the majority of Uzbek pastoralists from

the late medieval period practiced semi-sedentary pastoralism or herdsman husbandry. The majority of the population led a sedentary way of life and was occupied for the most part with agriculture, while livestock was maintained all year round on natural pastures, sometimes quite far from the settlement, and was tended by shepherds or herdsman especially assigned to this task.

In contrast, in the steppes to the north of Mā warā' al-nahr, which in the medieval period was known as Dasht-i Qipchaq, pure pastoral nomadism or semi-nomadism prevailed. In the late medieval and early modern periods, these forms of pastoralism were practiced by the majority of Kazakhs, and, in their mountain variety, by the Kyrgyz. Among the Turkmen there was a division between nomads (*charva*) and sedentary agriculturalists (*chomur*), but this division was neither clear-cut nor permanent. Often, members of one and the same family practiced different kinds of economic activities (Tolstov 1962:49). Despite these differences, extensive pastoralism had played a very important role in Central Asian economies for millennia. The decay of this branch of economic activity had started with the imposition of Russian colonial rule.

In a different form, the decay of pastoralism, and of animal husbandry in general, in Central Asia continued in the Soviet period, despite the fact that by the early 1990s animal husbandry in the region still accounted for from 35 percent to 60 percent of the value of agricultural output (World Bank 1996). In the Soviet Union, Central Asia and Kazakhstan remained the most undeveloped regions, and the agrarian workforce there was the lowest paid. Modernization was pursued in this region with minimal participation by the native population, and none of its processes—industrialization, urbanization, the demographic revolution, the revolution in education, and occupational mobility—was fully implemented there. The so-called interregional division of labor policy carried out by the Moscow center clearly contradicted the interests of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, because it condemned the region to the role of supplier of raw materials which left the region for other parts of the country, mainly in unprocessed form. Sixty to sixty-five percent of the indigenous population in Central Asia is still employed in agriculture. If one compares these figures with those characteristic of developed countries (in West European countries no more than 10 percent of the whole population is involved in agriculture; in the USA and Israel no more than three to four percent) one can easily come to the conclusion

that agriculture in Central Asia remains basically underdeveloped (Khazanov 1995:115ff). This is in spite of the fact (maybe it is better to say: due to the fact) that the Soviets enforced upon the Central Asian pastoralists and peasants several drastic political and socio-economic reforms.

First, in the late 1920s and in the early 1930s, agriculture in Central Asia, just like in other regions of the country, was collectivized, and the traditional agriculturalists became *sovkhozniki* and *kolkhozniki*, i.e. laborers on the state-owned and collective farms. A new and quite peculiar system of "state feudalism" emerged, in which the primary producers were denied a voice in economic decision making and were divorced from the property rights on arable land, pastures, and other key resources.

Secondly, everything in agriculture was subject to the imposed cotton, and, in Kazakhstan, grain monospecialization with the most disastrous repercussions on the economy, living conditions, and environment of Central Asia. In the main oases, the share of irrigated land sown with cotton was approximately 70 percent, and under direct orders from Moscow this continued to expand. This was at the expense of the cultivation of fruit and vegetables and the production of meat and milk for local consumption, and even limited the size of family plots, from which *kolkhozniki* (collective farmers) got the lion's share of their food and income. In Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and to a lesser extent in other Central Asian countries, the cotton specialization resulted in a certain neglect of animal husbandry, especially in its more sedentary oases-based forms.

The decline of pastoralism in other Central Asian countries, like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where until the 1930s it remained the main form of agricultural activity of the indigenous population, was connected with some additional factors. We will illustrate them with the example of Kazakhstan, the largest country in the region (2,717,300 square kilometers), more than 70 percent of the territory of which consists of natural pastures and hayfields.

Russia subdued and annexed Kazakhstan in the second half of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century. Soon afterwards, the Russian government ousted the Kazakhs from their summer pastures and sometimes even from their winter quarters and replaced them with Cossack and then with Russian peasant settlers. About 1.5 million new colonists from European Russia came to Kazakhstan at the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning

of the twentieth century. Kazakh pastoral nomads were gradually removed to the arid areas of Central and Southern Kazakhstan (Demko 1969; Masanov 1995:229ff.).

Then, in the early 1930s, came the traumatic events of forced collectivization and bloody settlement of Kazakh nomads on fixed lands followed by the famine that decimated their herds and altogether cost them around 1.5–2 million souls. Another half million people had to flee the country. In just a few years, about 550,000 nomadic and semi-nomadic households were forced to settle and start working in the newly organized state- and collective farms; their differences existed mainly on paper. Moreover, many farms were located in waterless regions where not only agriculture, but even pastoralism faced many difficulties. In all, in the years 1929 to 1933, no less than one-third of the Kazakh people perished. Such a tragedy had never been experienced in their entire history (Abylkhozhin 1997: 167ff.; Kozybaev 1998).

In the Soviet period, Kazakh pastoralists were treated as guinea pigs, raw material in the pursuit of a vain Utopia. In addition to excessive cotton growing, grain production on the so-called virgin lands, mainly in Northern Kazakhstan, initiated by the Soviet government in the 1950s, also was at their expense and further contributed to the deterioration of stock breeding. The livestock-raising state- and collective farms were closed, but Kazakh employees were prevented from becoming involved in grain production.

The amalgamation of collective farms (*kolkhozes*) into larger units during the Brezhnev period again affected Kazakh peasants and pastoralists in a negative way. It caused the abandonment of many Kazakh small settlements (*auls*). Furthermore, directors of newly-created state farms (*sovkhozes*) offered jobs only to young male Kazakhs; old herds-men (*chabans*) remained in their *auls* (Khazanov 1995:162; Zhambakin 1997:152; Alimaev 1997:160).

Meanwhile, the virgin land campaign aimed at sowing wheat on huge tracts of land, from the outset very dubious in environmental and economic respects, turned out to be a failure. In less than 15 years it generated 3 million hectares of sand and made 12 million hectares of land liable to wind erosion (Komarov 1978:53; Abylkhozhin 1997:267ff.).

Such was the way of things by the early 1960s, when the Soviets, experiencing growing food shortages, began to pay more attention to animal husbandry in Central Asia and for a short time succeeded

in maintaining a rather large number of livestock in the region. However, this number was not based on sound economic considerations and did not take into account the costs of production. It was dependent on huge state subsidies and was achieved by the complete neglect of environmental factors. The access to inputs (fodder, transportation means, etc.) required by livestock production was determined by the bureaucracy. Many goals were unrealistic given the inputs the farms were allocated. This led the farms to accumulate large amounts of debt, especially in the last years of the Soviet economic system. Significant attention was also paid to the selection of new species of livestock. However, the deficiencies of the Soviet economy to a large extent divorced the selection work from practical demands, and prevented it from really improving livestock production. The introduction of new breeds had a very limited effect on the livestock sector; this work had been done mainly for its own sake.

Moscow's demand to increase the number of stock resulted in serious deterioration and desertification of natural pasturelands. Significant damage has also been done to the bio-diversity, ecosystem, and habitat in the especially vulnerable semi-arid and arid zones. Thus, by 1989, the total number of livestock in Kazakhstan was much higher than the reasonable limit, which led to a detrimental trend from multi-species to mono-species herd composition, overgrazing without a seasonal rotation of pastures, and the erosion of one-third of the pastures (Alimaev 1997:159–61; Serebrianniy 1999:166–67). Vast areas of fertile pastures in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have been turned into sand deserts. In Kyrgyzstan, overgrazing resulted in degradation of 1.7 million hectares of pastureland (according to some data, even 3.5 million ha), while another 30 percent of pastures lost their productivity (Dzholdoshev 1997:168; Kliashturniy 1999:61). In Uzbekistan, more than 30 percent of pastures in the desert and semi-desert zones are in various stages of degradation (Aripov 1997:139).

One may conclude that although by the end of the Soviet period the livestock sector in Central Asia was somewhat modernized, it was done in a characteristically Soviet inefficient and erroneous way. Pastoralism ceased to be a family business; one witnessed its decreasing prestige. The lack of personal responsibility and stimuli made the traditional work of shepherds dull and uninspiring. Before collectivization, they were not separated from their families while pasturing the stock. Now, they had to stay away from their families for at least several months a year tending the stock, which did not even

belong to them anymore. The Soviets tried to professionalize different aspects of traditional pastoralist practice, however, narrow specialization within appointed groups brought about the loss of the whole complex of pastoralist skills. As a consequence, a chronic workforce shortage became the norm in herdsman husbandry. Thus, livestock production in Central Asia has never been organized on the principles of a modern, market-oriented ranching economy. In fact, Central Asia has a very limited, if any, history of private property and ownership in the modern Western sense. No wonder that at the moment pastoralists there have a very limited understanding of capitalism.

In 1996–2000, scholars from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in collaboration with Central Asian scholars, were conducting research on the impact of economic reforms on the livestock sector in the region.¹ This paper is based on some preliminary results of our research.²

Post-Soviet development is also unfavorable to pastoralism in Central Asia. It is almost trite to say that at the moment Central Asian agriculture is in transition, but the term “transition” seriously understates the kinds of change that are occurring. We are thus describing not a static situation, but rather a process of change without clear direction or predictable results. The transition of Central Asia’s livestock sector from the Soviet command economy to what is intended to become, in principle, a capitalist-type market economy brings not only major changes in livestock farms themselves; there are also changes, of perhaps even greater magnitude, in the external forces affecting pastoralists and the decisions they make in various ways.

Changes in the organization of the livestock sector continue to yield new forms of production units with considerable variation in physical assets, farm membership, decision-making structure, access to markets and credit, and relationship to government and local authorities. Some forms of farm organization, especially the larger ones, appear to be transitory, leading to the creation of new forms, while others seem to become more stable. The legal environment also continues to evolve, as does the administrative implementation of relevant law.

¹ This research was funded in part by USAID’s Global Livestock Collaborative Research Program.

² For preliminary publication of the data, see Anatoly M. Khazanov and Kenneth H. Shapiro (eds.), *Central Asian Livestock Sector in Transition Series*, Reports Nos. 1–10 (Madison, 1999–2001).

The challenges to livestock development start with this ongoing disequilibrium and the economic and social uncertainty it engenders. In some cases, new farm organizations struggle to develop effective production and marketing strategies, but economic decision-making responsibility is often thrust on individuals with no relevant experience. In other cases, especially appropriate to larger units, some farm leaders are not interested in the farm's success, but simply seek to convert assets into cash for investment elsewhere. The depressed national economies limit market opportunities, and the infant banking sectors do not provide adequate credit options. At the same time, illegal fees extracted by corrupt government officials add to the cost of doing business from the farm all the way to the consumer. Last but not least, legislative and administrative bases of property rights are also in considerable flux, but legislation stops short of providing for full land ownership, and most of the pastoralists are unaware of what rights they do have under the new laws. It is no wonder that at present, pastoralists in Central Asia face extreme uncertainty not only about the prices they will get, but more basically about their ability to sell their produce and buy inputs, and even about their future rights to control land and animals. The word "uncertainty" seems to characterize the situation better than "risk," since very little depends on the choice of individual pastoralists and they are unable even to estimate the probabilities of different outcomes.

It is also worth noting that agricultural policy in post-Soviet Central Asia is becoming increasingly different in individual countries, although everywhere it still remains under discussion and experimentation. Apparently, agricultural reforms in Central Asia, including the livestock sector, should contain several key elements: privatization of stock and denationalization of land ownership, as well as other assets of the former state- and collective farms; the dissolution of these farms and the emergence of new viable economic and social units; legislation which regulates and guarantees ownership of land, pastures, and water resources clearly and unambiguously; and the creation of modern marketing and crediting systems.

In this regard, the Central Asian countries display a continuum of change: from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, where Soviet forms of ownership still predominate; to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which have changed the most.

In the former three countries even private stock ownership remains secondary; most of the animals are still owned by collective farms

that have not changed much since the Soviet period (Gleason 1997: 159). In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, however, most of the stock had been privatized in the early stages of agricultural reforms, although hardly in a fair manner.

With regard to land and pastures the situation is even less satisfactory. Kyrgyzstan was the first Central Asian country that allowed private ownership of land. However, simultaneous to the introduction of private ownership of land in April 1998, a moratorium on the purchase and sale of land for up to 5 years was introduced (based on parliamentarians' fears that rapid sell-offs of agricultural land would take place). In any case, the president of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, is strongly against privatization of pastures, allegedly because of potential conflicts between different groups of pastoralists. Instead, he suggests renting pastures for joint utilization by different pastoralist and farm units, and keeping distant pastures under control of local administrations. However, with devolution of the rights of pasture management to local authorities, the central government has more or less abandoned its responsibility to work out a system, or at least a set of guidelines, for the appropriate regulation of grazing rights in order to ensure efficiency, equity, and sustainability (Bloch 1997:207). It is far from clear how to organize joint utilization and at the same time to avoid the possibility of conflicts. One can be sure, however, that keeping any pastures under the control of local administrations would only open further opportunities for embezzlement, corruption, and favoritism. So, neither a formal land market nor a mortgage credit system is developing in Kyrgyzstan while the moratorium and other restrictions continue (Kliashorny 1999:63ff.).

Only in 1999 did Kazakhstan adopt a new law under which land can be leased for 99 years with the option of inheritance. At the same time, then-Prime Minister Nurlan Balgimbaev claimed that the bulk of Kazakhstan's population (he certainly had in mind ethnic Kazakhs) was not ready for the privatization of land "either morally or materially" (*Interfax Russian News*, August 12, 1999). A similar explanation was provided by Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev. In August 1999, he told Kazakh farmers: "If tomorrow I adopt a law on land, those who have money would buy it out. You would turn into a labor force" (*Interfax Russian News*, August 20, 1999). However, in 2002, Nazarbaev admitted in his annual address to the nation that the existing Land Law failed to stimulate agricultural

production and called on parliament to pass a law on the private ownership of land. Since this is the president's desire, there is no doubt that the new law will be adopted. Still, there is great uncertainty about the details of the new law and its implementation, which is reflected in the ongoing debate in the country. It is more or less clear that it will postfactum legalize privatization (or rather appropriation) of arable lands in the wetter north and in the south, where crop farming depends almost entirely upon irrigation. So far, no one in the government has explained how this law will be applied to and implemented in pastures in the arid zone.

Other Central Asian governments are even less inclined to privatize land. The leadership of Uzbekistan argues that this would increase the number of unemployed people and destabilize the situation in the country. At best, these governments are now playing with the idea of providing land for lifelong use with possible right of inheritance, although so far this right is formulated in very vague terms.

The problem of land and pasture ownership is directly connected with the tempo and ultimate goals of the ongoing reforms in Central Asian animal husbandry. There are great differences between the collective (communal) group ownership which is characteristic of traditional pastoralism, the state ownership of the Soviet era, and the private ownership of modern ranch pastoralism. From the outset, however, the latter had emerged and was operating in the framework of developed capitalist economies. North American cattlemen, in spite of their romantic Hollywood image, were businessmen from the beginning. Recent attempts at introducing ranch pastoralism in some developing countries of Africa and the Middle East have failed or produced very contradictory results (Khazanov 1994:XLVII-L).

For many ecological, social, and economic reasons, we are in no way sure that, in the current situation, the complete privatization of pastures and fenced ranching are the optimal solutions for Central Asian pastoralism. However, preservation of state ownership is detrimental as well. Perhaps the best solution would be various combinations of private ownership of some land and pastures, especially winter quarters, with joint, collective or cooperative ownership of others (Khazanov 1997:31-2). But even this demands serious changes in the social organization of Central Asian pastoralists. Be that as it may, at the moment all Central Asian governments lack a conception of common property resources as compared to state-owned or privately owned resources.

This brings to the fore another question about the new economic and social units that are substituting for the Soviet state- and collective farms. Just as in other respects, the transition away from the Soviet-era farm organization is most advanced in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while much less progress has been made in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. We will illustrate the situation existing in the latter three countries with the example of Uzbekistan.³

In spite of lip service to the contrary, the leadership of Uzbekistan is still unwilling to relinquish its monopolistic control over agriculture in general, and its livestock sector in particular. In the sheep raising regions of the country privatization really has not taken place. Instead, former collective farms have been converted into new cooperatives, known in the Uzbek language as *shirkats*. This conversion, however, appears to be little more than a matter of smoke and mirrors. *Shirkats* retain much the same structure as the former state- and collective farms, but are much smaller. In the late Soviet period, state- and collective farms were large agglomerations of villages into giant farms. *Shirkats*, on the other hand, are more decentralized, usually comprising a single village.

In legal terms, the livestock *shirkats* are supposed to operate as entrepreneurial farms, independent of state planning, requisitioning, etc. Economic facets such as pricing, marketing, and procurement are matters for the *shirkats* alone to decide. *Shirkat* leaders and shepherds are supposed to negotiate with one another to figure out how best to care for the well being of the farm as well as the welfare of the people who make it work. The *shirkat* leadership is not supposed to order shepherds to participate in work teams as had been true of the *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes*. Speaking more practically, however, overall relations between farm administrators and shepherds can hardly be considered harmonious. Decision making abilities and powers remain the privilege and bastion of the former. Shepherd-members of *shirkats* do not have any greater freedom to determine their affairs, while the *shirkat* leaders have more independence from state control, and this is often exercised to the detriment of its members. Although the amount of services and payments provided by *shirkats* to primary producers has drastically decreased in comparison with the Soviet period, the power of their managers has increased. A

³ The information on contemporary pastoralism in Uzbekistan is mainly based on Zanca, 1999.

director of one of the *shirkats* boasted to us that, contrary to Soviet times, he can fire anybody he is not pleased with. On the other hand, shepherds complain that there are “too many *khøjaiins* (bosses)” in the *shirkats*. Where a *kolkhoz* might have an administrative apparatus of 14 people with 420 working in livestock production, a *shirkat* would have six in administration and 90 working in livestock.

Corruption and abuse have already become the order of things on these *shirkats*. Shepherds are not paid in money; sheep leased to them are whisked away at will; and pastures or crop plots are hardly assigned on an impartial basis. Shepherds do not enjoy the privileges of organized assembly to protest and air their grievances, to decide how the collectives will best maximize and distribute their resources. Moreover, to achieve almost anything connected to optimal conditions for the animals, including good pastures, sufficient fodder, land for crop production (crops have always been important for the economy of herdsman husbandry), etc., one must pay bribes to *shirkat* leaders. In addition, pastoralists in Uzbekistan are now facing many other problems: poor transportation (e.g. three days to walk sheep to market); low prices for meat, wool, milk, and pelts; lack of pedigree sperm; no access to credit; limited access to market and bribes extracted by local market managers; and arbitrary regulations imposed by local administrations.

The transition away from Soviet-era agriculture and farm organization is most advanced in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but so far the results of their reforms are also unsatisfactory. Kazakhstan entered independence with 2,055 large state farms (*sovkhoses*) and 430 smaller collective farms (*kolkhozes*). The *sovkhoses* averaged about 80,000 ha, of which 14,000 ha were cultivated. The *kolkhozes* averaged about 9,800 ha of cultivated land. Management structures were similar in the two enterprises (World Bank 1994:9).

Since 1991, the government of Kazakhstan has launched a new policy aimed at the dissolution of state- and collective farms and the development of private farming, including the livestock sector. Actually, privatization had already started in 1990, before the breakup of the Soviet Union. However, land and pastures were available only for use, not for ownership (Zhambakin 1997:147). From the very beginning, the reform was accompanied by widespread embezzlement of state- and collective property by those in power. Members of the established hierarchy were the primary beneficiaries (Rumer 1996:59–60; Kalyuzhnova 1998:137). The allocation of resources and decisions

on input and output prices were left in the hands of the bureaucracy. Directors and managers of the former *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes* took control of disproportionate shares of the farms' wealth, and local officials maintained as much control and captured as large a flow of benefits as they could. Thus, most private farms started under unfavorable conditions. By 1992, only about 350 private farms had been established, mostly by farm managers, technical staff, and former party functionaries. Many of them are now wealthy. This small beginning is considered the first phase of Kazakhstan's agricultural privatization. In all, the early stages of privatization were largely cosmetic. Enterprises underwent little change; they retained the same infrastructure, management, and organization as their Soviet predecessors (Zhambakin 1997:150–51).

The second phase of Kazakhstan's agricultural privatization, from 1993 to 1996, began when the government started decreasing and then ended most funding to the *sovkhozes* and *kolkhozes*, and in March 1993, passed the Presidential Decree on Privatization in Rural Areas. The decree called for completion of "denationalization and privatization of enterprises in the agro-industrial complex in the years 1993–1995." It established the absolute right for a member of a *kolkhoz* or *sovkhoz* staff to withdraw from the enterprise and be allotted a share of land and property in accordance with established procedure for organizing a peasant farm.

While the right to establish private family farms (characteristically referred to as "peasant farms" in the decree) was guaranteed, the decree gave prominence to the formation of Joint Stock Companies, and this, in fact, is the dominant form that privatization took. The change, however, was largely in name only, except for further accumulation of assets by farm managers. The old organizational structures remained in place.

The World Bank summarized this process as follows:

During the main period (1993–1996), officials and farm managers orchestrated the process, giving little information to other rural people. On most farms, land and property shares were allocated to people, but rarely distributed. On some farms, most of the land was allocated to the *raion* (local government unit), rather than to farm members (The World Bank 1998:61).

A Presidential Decree in March 1994 exacerbated the tendency for farm directors to gain control of their enterprises. Farm directors with

at least 20 years of service were granted 10% of the farm's saleable assets and were given another 10% for temporary use for up to five years. The remaining 80% were to be distributed among the farm members, however many farm directors sought control of that 80%:

Most farm managers sought to increase their holdings. In some cases, they bought or leased these shares straightforwardly; in other cases, they coerced members to lease or transfer their shares to them in return for the promise to pay wages or to guarantee employment (The World Bank 1998:61).

During this period, farm members who wanted to leave and establish their own farms had considerable difficulty doing so. Farm directors and local administrators did not actively publicize the new rights of the former *kolkhozniks* and *sovkhozniks*, and, on the contrary, attempted to minimize the exercise of these rights. Those who nevertheless decided to leave were given poor land. Those who remained on the descendants of the Soviet enterprises exercised little control. As in Soviet times, *hakims* (local government leaders) recommended the farm directors, and just like in Soviet times, members rarely voted against the *hakim's* choice. If they did, the new leader would be hamstrung by the local government. Large farms have historically been a source of revenue and extortion for local government personnel, who even today encourage their continuation and attempt to maintain control over them.

As the push for privatization accelerated between 1993 and 1996, and the Joint Stock Companies were proving nonviable, other forms of organization emerged, including (a) large units labeled Limited Liability Enterprises (LLE) and Producer Cooperatives (PC) that represented large pieces of the former *kolkhoz*, *sovkhoz*, or Joint Stock Company (often the new units represented different villages than were within the former *kolkhoz* or *sovkhoz*); and (b) small private households/family farms. Many Joint Stock Companies continued to exist as well.

Most pastoralists, however, stayed on the large units rather than striking out on their own private family farms. In part this was a result of coercion, discouragement or withholding of information by the farm leaders and local government officials. In part, it reflected the workers' assessment of the slim chances for the success of an individual farmer—a farmer with little experience in economic decision making, with limited access to market channels that were dominated by the large enterprises, with virtually no access to credit at acceptable

interest rates and repayment terms, and with weakening consumer demand as a result of the country's post-independence recession. When asked why they remained, most respondents in our surveys gave answers reflecting a passive, fatalistic outlook—because they had no choice, they were told what to do, they did not know any other life, they could not get resources. Thus, although the large units were in bad shape, the majority of pastoralists remained part of them.

The third phase of privatization in Kazakhstan started at the end of 1996. By that time, many of the descendants of the Soviet-era *sovkhozes* and *kolkhozes* were suffering from the end of state subsidies and the thinly cloaked theft of resources by farm managers. Many of them became bankrupt and began to break up. Nothing else remained for the government but to encourage the expanded exodus from the JSC and LLE and the formation of private farms. New bankruptcy laws forced many to dissolve. The state pressed these failing entities to distribute their assets among their members, however, their managers sold whatever assets they could appropriate for personal gain. Of the remaining assets that were distributed, relatives of the farm managers got disproportionately large shares. Thus, many of those who left in the past few years did so under very unfavorable conditions, and had to survive off of a small herd of livestock and a plot of land small enough to be farmed without the use of modern technology. This prompted some to join together, since they felt they could not make it alone.

The number of registered peasant households or farms, as they are officially known in Kazakhstan, increased sharply by the end of the 1990s, growing from 30,785 in 1996 to 42,523 by January 1, 1997 and 84,766 by January 1, 1999. Of these, only 53,000 are actual farms. The rest exist only on paper or are simply vegetable gardens around homesteads. Official statistics fail to reveal the fact that about 2,550 state- and collective farms that existed in the early 1990s have dissolved not into 85,000 viable farms, but primarily into thousands of small family homesteads. They are not registered as private farms, produce little or no surplus, and are struggling for survival under very difficult conditions. The most remarkable characteristics of the registered farms are as follows (data are drawn from KazAgro 1997 and KazAgro 1998):

Families per farm: Of the 42,523 peasant farms existing in January 1997, 63% had just one family, 27% had two to three families, 6% had three to five families and 4% had more than five families.

Land per farm: The average peasant farm had 355 hectares, with farms in the southern irrigated zone being less than 150 ha and those in the dry north and central areas up to 1800 ha. Nationwide, the size distribution of peasant farms was: 25% with less than 35 ha; 8% from 35 to 100; 40% from 100 to 500; 14% from 500 to 1,000; and 13% over 1,000. It should be taken into account, however, that the majority of farmers were not allotted natural meadows and hayfields.

Livestock per farm: The average livestock holding included five head of cattle and 17 sheep and goats. The distribution of sheep holdings was as follows: 72% had less than 50; 10% had 50 to 100; 9% had 100 to 200; 7% had 200 to 500; and 2% had over 500. These figures are much lower than per household figures for the year 1928, i.e. on the eve of collectivization.

Autoconsumption: These farms consume a large portion of the animal products they produce. In 1998, home consumption accounted for about 47% of meat, 64% of milk, and 39% of wool.

It is clear that the majority of these "farms" are at best doomed to subsistence existence and have little in common with modern Western-type farms oriented toward market production.

As for the general picture of contemporary pastoralism in Kazakhstan, it is useful to start with a broad three-part classification of livestock enterprises: (1) Large units organized as joint stock companies or limited liability enterprises, or similar agricultural production cooperatives, i.e., the direct descendants of the *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes*. Besides size, they have in common the old system of clear division between livestock held by the individual and livestock held in common by the enterprise. (2) Small farms with one family or with a small number of related families. Livestock on these farms are held in common as the property of the whole group. Individuals do not keep their own animals. (3) Small farms formed by families that are not related. This has some similarity to the large units in that some animals are kept under individual control and some are under common control. However, all members know how many animals they contributed to the common herds, they take a close interest in the management of the common herd, and they have the easily-exercised right to withdraw their animals from it.

The greatest prospects for success, or at least for stability, seem to rest with the second category, especially the larger of them. Prospects are further enhanced where there are non-farm sources of

income. This is especially important now that credit is largely unavailable. The non-farm income helps finance farm operations. The smaller, individual farms operate as subsistence units. However, many are too small to earn a livelihood and hence sell their animals to finance current consumption. Eventually they will either leave for the city or hire out as farm laborers, a process with many negative effects that is already happening.

The first type seems to be transient. Eventually, these enterprises will dissolve or be appropriated by their directors and managers, while many of their members will leave voluntarily or be forced to leave, or, at best, be retained as hired laborers. This process is already quite conspicuous in northern Kazakhstan, although appropriated farms there are mainly involved in grain production.

The third category is seen as transient. First, they started because each household was too poor to go it alone. But six poor households together are still six poor households. Therefore, their involuntary cooperation did not much improve their chances for survival. Secondly, there is a tendency for the members to devote relatively little energy and care to the common efforts. Local officials predict that those households with greater ambition and opportunities will leave to work on their own and that the group enterprises will fail.

The situation in Kyrgyzstan is not very different from that in Kazakhstan (Bloch 1997:198ff.). In 1991, there were 195 collective farms and 275 state farms in the country. By 1999, they were replaced by thousands of small peasant farms and small cooperatives, which are unable to maintain profitable and market-oriented livestock production. Most of the country's livestock is in these private enterprises. However, most animal products are consumed on the farms rather than marketed.

We would like to turn now to general trends, problems, and difficulties, which in one way or another are characteristic of contemporary pastoralism in all or most of the countries in the region.

One of the most striking characteristics of the current situation is that on all kinds of farms livestock raising, and correspondingly, pastoralist specialization have become unprofitable and must be supplemented by other economic activities. On peasant farms the stock is kept mainly for consumption or for social reasons and prestigious considerations (Masanov 2000:89–90).

Another conspicuous characteristic is a serious decrease in the number of stock in the post-independence period. Their overall num-

ber has stabilized somewhat in the last few years, but remains at the moment much smaller than in the late Soviet period.

Dynamics of Livestock Numbers in Kazakhstan (1992–2001)

Year	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Camels
1992	33,908,000	9,084,000	1,666,400	145,000
1993	33,732,000	9,576,300	1,703,500	148,800
1994	33,312,000	9,347,000	1,776,600	154,900
1995	24,272,600	8,072,900	1,636,000	141,200
1996	18,786,000	6,859,900	1,556,900	130,500
1997	13,000,000	5,424,600	1,310,000	111,100
1998	9,691,300	4,307,100	1,082,700	97,100
1999	8,691,300	3,957,900	986,300	95,800
2000	8,725,400	3,998,200	969,600	96,100
2001	8,939,400	4,106,600	976,000	98,700

Source: UNFAO statistical site, <http://apps.fao.org>; see also Otarov and Satigulov 1999: 44.

In Kyrgyzstan, the number of sheep decreased from 10.5 million in 1990 to 3.8 million in 1998; in the same period, the number of cattle decreased from 1.2 million to 885,000 (Zhumaev 1997:89; Kliashturnyi 1999:62). This situation has aggravated the human nutrition problem and endangered the preservation of wild ungulates (because of the weakening of state preservation agencies and the increase in poaching).

There are several factors that have caused the decline in livestock production in the region; some of them political and others economical. To put it bluntly, with regard to agriculture the Central Asian states are strong where they should be weak, and are weak where they should be strong. Although agricultural policy in the different Central Asian countries varies significantly, it remains in every one an essentially top-down business in which immediate producers have little, if any, voice. As a result, their problems and interests are far from always taken into account by the policy makers.

The Central Asian states prematurely retreated from their former roles as providers of subsidies, credits, services, and input-supply systems (such as fuel, equipment, veterinary service, feed, etc.). Directly or indirectly, national governments and local administrations to a large extent still control the farms' resource allocations, production decisions, and marketing opportunities. Besides this, there is a discrepancy

between decisions made on governmental levels and their implementation by local administrators.

The great losses incurred by the livestock sector resulted not only from the privatization of livestock, but also from the lack of effective government support and even of consistent economic policy toward agriculture, and the destruction of established marketing channels after the collapse of the Soviet command economic system. Since primary producers lacked cash and credit, they had to barter and/or substitute the only property they had—the stock—for real cash. When livestock were privatized, they were the major liquid assets of many pastoralists and were sold or bartered in order to obtain other agricultural inputs and household necessities. Farm families also consumed much stock as food. Still, today many of the large cooperative and joint venture farms pay their members and farm workers with stock because money is in short supply.

In the initial period of reforms, the Central Asian states still remained the main owners of food-processing enterprises; however, many of these enterprises were in debt or have gone bankrupt. In any case, the prices demanded for their services were often too high for producers. The general imbalance between production cost and sale prices is also significantly affected by extra-market factors. In Uzbekistan, the state still controls or even dictates the purchasing price on the most important products of animal husbandry. *Shirkat* directors sometimes boast that they are not producing any longer according to center-determined plan targets, but the state remains the number one client for their goods. In addition, marketing problems consist of the inability of individual pastoralists to enter different administrative regions freely without having to pay taxes and bribes to local officials, police, etc. The existing system of checking and registering animals transported from one region to another is nothing but mindless bureaucratism, mostly encouraging petty corruption and abuse of the shepherds. One also sees very little in the way of individual pastoralists or *shirkats* effectively opening new marketing channels for livestock products in their own localities.

In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the state is no longer involved in the purchasing of meat and dairy products or price control, but this is little help to the primary producers. The marketing system remains underdeveloped; in addition, it suffers from significant “mafia” penetration and the rampant corruption of many local administrators. Thus, in Kazakhstan, with the advance of the market economy, new

private marketing systems are emerging, especially in the big cities. The marketing chain from the immediate producer to the market place (bazaar) or modern supermarket can best be described in the following way: producer—dealer—wholesale firm—plant—bazaar or supermarket. In this respect, the physical infrastructure, which connects the producer and consumer, becomes more diverse. However, access to the meat and dairy business at the level of dealers and wholesalers is very corrupt. Anyway, small livestock farmers possess little bargaining power relative to dealer-wholesalers and processors. This results in the monopolization and control of prices on the purchasing end, which is detrimental to the interests and incomes of the pastoralists (Esenova and Dobson 2000).

Another reason for the sharp decline in the sheep population in most of the Central Asian countries is connected with the overemphasis on wool and pelt production made in the Soviet period. For example, after World War II, the local coarse-wool meat sheep of Kazakhstan were largely replaced with fine-wool sheep of the Merino type in order to provide raw wool for the Russian textile industry. The Kazakh fine-wool was a new breed developed in the 1950s and 1960s for its wool production. Fine-wool sheep are superior to the local sheep for wool production but inferior for meat production. Economic collapse in Russia and a glut of wool on the world market has left Kazakhstan with few markets and unprofitable prices for its fine wool. Therefore, there has been little economic incentive to maintain sheep numbers.

Currently, the prices paid for wool are as low as they have been since many people care to remember. This has international ramifications, negatively affecting, for example, Australia, but much more the Central Asian countries with their weaker economies. In the spring of 2000, wool was selling in the country for as low as 50 tenge/kg, or about 30 cents. In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, collective farm and *shirkat* warehouses are stocked with thousands of dried/salted pelts that are vainly “awaiting buyers” (Soiunova 1997:125).

We would like to turn now to the prospects for the future of pastoralism in Central Asia. Is there a light at the end of the tunnel for this sector of the economy in the region? To give some kind of an answer to this question, we must consider the potential for growth and development, and analyze the new trends of development. It goes without saying that the labor force is industrious and relatively well educated, at least in comparison with other developing countries.

But all peasants, including pastoralists, are hard working. The problem is that insofar as they remain peasants instead of becoming contemporary capitalist farmers, they are pre-modern, or non-modern.

One of the major difficulties in the transition of Central Asian pastoralism to a market-oriented capitalist-type economy is the legacy of the Socialist command economy, which arrested innovations. As a result, one now witnesses a widespread popular unwillingness to try to do things differently. Another difficulty is connected with the harmful agricultural policies of the post-Soviet Central Asian governments. For many years after independence, agriculture in general and pastoralism in particular were neglected. Even when mistakes are recognized and admitted, it is difficult to amend them in the conditions of the overall economic depression in the region. Under this situation, the state's main role in this regard would seem to encourage local solutions to local problems, while allocating material support by developing the infrastructure, marketing, and credit systems; by providing adequate veterinary services; and by effectively combating corruption, embezzlement, and all other kinds of criminal activities. However, this is still a far cry from the current reality.

In spite of this grim picture, there are some positive elements in the most recent developments, which indicate possibilities for serious reconstruction of the livestock sector. First, a growing number of policy makers in Central Asia are coming to the conclusion that the only way to improve the situation is to proceed further and more consistently with market-oriented reforms. Thus, various blueprints for these reforms and their implementation are currently under discussion.

Secondly, despite all obstacles and the power of inertia, some individual and cooperative farmers are successfully adjusting to the new conditions. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan new forms of organization are beginning to emerge within, among, and outside the former collective farms. Most of them do not fit common definitions of "farms," "economic units," or "households," not only as those definitions are used in developed countries, but even as they have been adapted for use among, for example, Middle Eastern or African pastoralists. However, some of them may hold the seeds of a more promising future for the region's livestock economy.

In principle, these new, voluntary, decentralized and horizontal forms of organization and cooperation may become a substitute for the old Soviet forms based on a pyramid-shaped chain of command. In Kazakhstan, such farms account for 7 to 10 percent of the total.

The problem, however, is that their number is not growing. Usually, the owners of these farms started their activity at the dawn of privatization and had enough possibilities and time to create a rather strong material base.

Thirdly, a decrease in the number of livestock, however deplorable it is, allows the pastures to regenerate and to restore their carrying capacity. This is not an insignificant factor in conditions when primary producers do not have access to an affordable supply of feed supplements, especially concentrates, and must rely upon traditional, extensive methods of grazing.

Still, in this respect the situation is very controversial. Distant pastures are not utilized today not only because it is disadvantageous for the farms with but a small number of stock, but also because since the collapse of the Soviet Union the lack of adequate transportation, road maintenance, and water developments has restricted the distance livestock can be grazed. Even on short drives (less than 100 km) of average difficulty animals often lose up to 15% of body weight. Because of this, in the recent past a large number of livestock (with the exception of horses) have been moved from pasture to pasture by vehicle. Nowadays such modes of transportation are very rare because of the excessive expense of fuel and lubrication materials.

As a result of the almost complete abandonment of distant pastures after 1992–1993, they are now undergoing the process of restoration of valuable plant species. However, there is also the danger of their being infected with mosses and lichens. Without being exploited, the pastures may become overgrown and lose their productivity. In addition, there is another problem. When distant pastures are abandoned, livestock are concentrated on a smaller resource base, and the pastures near the villages are overused (Zhambakin 1997:153; Zhambakin 1999:145).

In all, even the positive moments in the recent developments are contradictory and should by no means be overestimated. The continuing deterioration of pastoralism in Central Asia is fraught not only with economic, but also with dangerous social consequences. A growing number of young people who cannot find employment and do not see a decent future in the livestock sector are now moving to the cities, where they constitute a growing underclass prone to violence and crime. The Central Asian governments understand the seriousness of the problem, but in the conditions of severe economic crisis, so far nothing has been done to alleviate it.

In the beginning of the 1990s, some scholars from Central Asia and other countries predicted the revival of traditional forms of extensive and mobile pastoralism in the region. So far, nothing like this has happened. Traditional pastoralism in Central Asia was never the endeavor of individual families. It was inseparable from kinship-based communal ties, mutual cooperation, and reciprocity. The post-Soviet development in the region has quite different dimensions:

- (1) Pastoralism is becoming less, not more, mobile than in the recent past.
- (2) Communal forms of land tenure and pasture utilization destroyed in the Soviet period are not being restored, and in spite of the existing tribalism, the role of kinship-based ties in the organization of pastoralist production remains insignificant.
- (3) Economic and social differentiation is growing. Kinship has become a burden to well-to-do stock owners, while widespread theft of livestock indicates the further deterioration of communal ties.
- (4) The negative effects of privatization are not balanced, and the number of dispossessed and displaced persons is disproportionately high, while mechanisms that should lessen the pains of dispossession are nonexistent or too weak.
- (5) Most of the pastoralists lack both the experience and the necessary capital to start market-oriented enterprises.

Thus, there is no return to traditional forms of pastoralism, and at the same time, the transition to market-oriented forms of pastoralism and animal husbandry is also blocked. There is the danger of re-peasantization and even swift pauperization of those who remain in the pastoralist sector. Instead of becoming small-scale but efficient market-oriented producers, these people may be locked into the role of subsistence-oriented, non-capitalist smallholders. In the worst case scenario they may even become laborers in new, large agricultural enterprises that have been captured by the former communist managers during the so-called "*nomenklatura* privatization." In principle, large ranch enterprises which use wage labor are characteristic of the capitalist livestock sector in some developed countries. In Central Asian conditions, however, such enterprises may well become latifundias.

To sum up, the traditional pastoralist way of life was destroyed and the traditional pastoralist culture was lost in Central Asia, we are afraid irreversibly. Not ecological and economic factors, and not

modernization *per se*, but abusive, corrupt, and exploitative state power, almost always alien to the pastoralists and detrimental to their interests, has ruined this type of economic activity in a region where it thrived for at least three thousand years, without replacing it with any viable modern type. Only the future will tell what will happen to pastoralism there in the twenty-first century. At the moment, however, there is very little room for optimism.

Selected Data from 1998 Farm Surveys

	N=23	N=38	N=41	N=99	N=52	N=10
	Northeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms	Northwest Kazakhstan Multiple Household Farms	Southeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms	Southeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms in Co-ops or State Farms	Northern Kyrgyzstan Private Farms	Northern Kyrgyzstan Private Farm Members of a United Peasant Farm
1.6	EDUCATION (% respondents)					
	None	0	2.5	2.1	0	0
	Primary	26.1	12.5	12.4	3.8	0
	Secondary	60.9	67.5	66	57.7	60
	Higher	13	17.5	18.6	38.5	40
2.1	LAND (mean ha)					
	Total	962	116	45	13	2.7
2.11	Pastures too far to use (% of respondents)					
		33.3	NA	NA	17.3	30
3.1a	INCOME SOURCES (mean %)					
	Animal Husbandry	93	74	78.6	54	67
3.1b	Crop Production	2.27	26.35	21.5	48	33
	LIVESTOCK HOLDINGS (mean #)					
8.1	Total	177	49.5	48	103.4	24
8.2	Sheep	135	42.8	38	81.6	18.6

CHANGE IN LIVESTOCK
HOLDINGS IN PAST
TWO/THREE YEARS

(% of farms)							
8.1.1	Total livestock increased	11.1	10.7	11.4	5.6	41.5	20
8.1.1	Total livestock decreased	50	60.7	71.4	83.1	39	50
8.1.1	Total livestock unchanged	27.8	28.6	17.1	11.2	19.5	30
8.2.1	Sheep increased	4.3	14.3	12.8	5.3	21.6	10
8.2.1	Sheep decreased	45	57.1	74.4	81.9	52.9	40
8.2.1	Sheep unchanged	40	28.6	12.8	12.8	25.5	50
8.5.1	Long-horned cattle increased	17.4	16.7	13.5	12.4	42	10
8.5.1	Long-horned cattle decreased	43.5	55.6	48.6	61.9	32	30
8.5.1	Long-horned cattle unchanged	30.4	27.8	37.8	25.8	26	60

8.8 CHANGE IN TOTAL LIVESTOCK
IN PAST YEAR (% of farms)

Decreased	56.5	62.9	72.2	86.7	47.6	71.4
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SHEEP HOLDINGS AND
DYNAMICS (mean #)

9.1	Total	66	117	43	38	63	90
9.2	Total ewes	42	110	25	22	42	53
9.4	Abortions or miscarriages	3.3	4.4	1.7	1.1	1	3.1
9.5	Barren ewes	1	9	0.9	1.3	2.2	1.9
9.6	Artificially inseminated ewes	0	3.8	0.5	0.36	0	0
9.7	Stud rams	2.8	6.8	1.7	1.3	0.3	1.2
9.12	Lambs born that died	1.8	5.4	2.3	0.95	0.19	0.7
9.13	Slaughtered for meat & sold	7.5	42.7	11.3	4	42.2	N/A

Table (cont.)

	Northwest Kazakhstan Single Household Farms	Northwest Kazakhstan Multiple Household Farms	Southeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms	Southeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms in Co-ops or State Farms	Northern Kyrgyzstan Private Farms	Northern Kyrgyzstan Private Farm Members of a United Peasant Farm
	N=23	N=38	N=41	N=99	N=52	N=10
SHEEP HOLDINGS (cont.)						
9.14 Slaughtered for personal use	11	14	12.8	10	12.8	N/A
9.15 Sold live	8	15	6	6	6	N/A
9.20 Forage year-round	5	51	24	13.7	32	N/A
9.21 Received additional feeding	22	22	32	39	19	N/A
9.22 Housed in stalls	49	109	20	31	1.7	N/A
LAND RIGHTS (% of respondents)						
13.1 Legal ownership of winter pasture	82.6	94.7	14.6	63.6	26.9	0
13.1 Legal ownership of summer pasture	82.6	94.7	22	64.6	7.7	0
13.1 Legal ownership of crop land	13	15.8	34.1	64.6	96.2	100
13.1 Land can be bought and sold	39.1	18.4	2.4	1	9.6	10
14.2 Land cannot be sold due to imperfections in the law	26.1	28.9	95.1	98	9.6	30
14.3 No real market for land	52.2	36.8	90.2	98	13.5	20
14.4 Land can be used but not sold	39.1	18.4	100	99	36.5	50
15.4 Legal ownership of wells	27.3	54.1	40	29.8	0	30

HIRED LABOR									
		(% of farms)							
17.1	Hire labor year-round	13	7.9	7.3	4	19.2	0		
17.1	Hire labor in winter	0	2.6	0	2	3.8	0		
17.1	Hire labor in spring	0	0	4.9	4	38.5	30		
17.1	Hire labor in summer	30.4	21.1	7.3	4	34.6	10		
17.1	Hire labor in fall	0	0	9.8	3	46.2	20		
17.1	Use relatives' labor	8.7	5.3	14.6	11.1	38.5	40		
DISPOSAL OF FARM PRODUCTS (mean %)									
20.1	Consumed on farm								
	Meat	40	28	67.5	67	63	84		
	Milk	96	97.7	96	92	72.5	89		
	Wool	80	67.5	94	96	54	73		
20.3	Bartered								
	Meat	35	47	45	0	13.5	10		
	Milk	0	50	0	0	0	0		
	Wool	0	0	0	0	30	0		
HUNGER OBSERVED IN VILLAGE									
	(% of respondents reporting)								
23.15	Always	0	0	0	1				
23.15	Often	11.1	3.6	61	70.1				
23.15	Sometimes	22.2	28.6	34.1	24.7				
23.15	Rarely	61.1	60.7	4.9	4.1				
23.15	Never	5.6	.1	0	0				

Table (cont.)

	Northwest Kazakhstan Single Household Farms	Northwest Kazakhstan Multiple Household Farms	Southeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms	Southeast Kazakhstan Single Household Farms in Co-ops or State Farms	Northern Kyrgyzstan Private Farms	Northern Kyrgyzstan Private Farm Members of a United Peasant Farm
	N=23	N=38	N=41	N=99	N=52	N=10
WHO MAKES DECISIONS						
(% of respondents)						
About livestock						
27.1 Husband	60.9	83.8	51.2	46.5	63.5	60
27.1 Wife	8.7	5.4	0	3	3.8	10
27.1 Husband & wife jointly	13	5.4	34.1	35.4	13.5	30
27.1 Parents	8.7	0	0	2	3.8	10
27.1 Jointly with parents	8.7	5.4	4.9	7.1	9.6	10
About budget						
27.2 Husband	13	24.3	15	10.1	46.2	30
27.2 Wife	21.7	2.7	7.5	16.2	0	10
27.2 Husband & wife jointly	43.5	64.9	60	58.6	36.5	50
27.2 Parents	17.4	0	0	1	3.8	0
27.2 Jointly with parents	4.3	8.1	7.5	8.1	11.5	10

28 MAJOR PROBLEMS
REPORTED

(% of respondents)					
Shortage of land	4.3	5.3	7.5	1	33.3
Shortage of water	4.3	13.2	45	43.9	19.6
Shortage of feed	8.7	10.5	27.5	39.8	19.6
Animal diseases	0	2.6	12.5	15.3	15.7
Theft of livestock	17.4	21.1	100	98	62.7
High taxes	26.1	51.4	87.5	79.6	50
Lack of money	52.2	50	95	100	22.2
Lack of credit	39.1	63.2	95	100	56.9
Poor pastures	4.3	7.9	5	18.4	66.7
Lack of roads	4.3	21.1	10	4.1	7.8
Lack of transportation	8.7	10.5	7.5	8.2	9.8
Lack of electricity	21.7	34.3	72.5	86.7	43.1
Lack of investments	21.7	13.2	100	100	19.6
High prices for fuel and transport	65.2	81.6	100	100	60
Low prices for agricultural products	73.9	92.1	100	100	80.4
Absence of marketing cooperatives	30.4	57.9	71.8	76.5	70.6
Lack of purebred animals	13	18.4	23.1	18.4	82.4
Inability to acquire agricultural technology and equipment	17.4	34.2	45	64.6	72.5
Inability to sell products profitably	65.2	55.3	97.5	100	66.7
Inability to sell land	0	2.6	7.9	2.1	86.3
Lack of state support policies	60.9	60.5	97.5	100	15.7
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Abbreviations:

Ar. = Arabic; *Ch.* = Chinese; *Mo.* = Mongolian; *Per.* = Persian; *Ru.* = Russian; *Tu.* = Turkish.

Note:

The Arabic definite article al- has been disregarded in the alphabetical arrangement of the index.

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