

NOMADEN UND SESSHAFTE

Sonderforschungsbereich Differenz und Integration
Wechselwirkungen zwischen nomadischen und sesshaften Lebensformen
in Zivilisationen der Alten Welt

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von Jörg Gertel, Stefan Leder, Jürgen Paul und Bernhard Streck

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Nomad Military Power
in Iran and Adjacent Areas in the Islamic Period

Edited by Kurt Franz
and Wolfgang Holzwarth

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Ismā'il's night attack on Alwand (907/1501)
Qāsim Junābadī, *Shāhnāma-yi Ismā'il*
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Notes on Conventions

Dates

Combined dates such as 658/1260 indicate AH/CE dates. Whole numbers imply that both calendars refer largely to the same period of time. A double CE equivalent, e.g. 568/1172-3, indicates that the Hijri year overlaps two CE years roughly equally. Some bibliographic entries concerning material published in Iran refer to the Islamic solar calendar, which is specified as 'h.sh.'

Transcriptions

Arabic and Persian are rendered largely according to the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Exceptions include the rendering of the assimilated article (thus *dhū l-qurbā, wal-Akrād*), Persian و (*w*), Ottoman Turkish غ and ك (always *g* and *k*), and additional vocal characters in both Persian and Ottoman Turkish (*ō* and *ē*).

The Persian transcription is also used for Middle Turkish names and terms that emanate from Persian texts prior to, or apart from, Ottoman Turkish literature. There are also specific renderings of گ / ک (*ng*) and some vocals (*e, i, o, ö, ü*).

Mongolian words are transcribed according to the system of Vladimirtsov and Mostaert, save for some established simplifications (thus *ch, j, ng, gh/g', sh*).

Names, Terms, and Titles

Names and terms that are widely accepted in English, such as Safavids, Tamerlane/Timur, and Shiite, remain unchanged.

The spelling of common place-names follows *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World*, edited by L.E. Seltzer (Morningside Heights, N.Y., 1952). However, inconsistencies could not entirely be ruled out as some appellations have become outdated; e.g. Erivan is now usually referred to as Yerevan. A special case is place-names of Asia Minor, which appear in today's Turkish form.

A simplified transcription system has also been chosen for rulers' titles that constantly recur as appellatives, namely Atabeg, Beg, Caliph, Emir, Khan, Shah and Sultan. In proper names or designations of a particular ruler, however, they yet are fully transliterated and capitalised, thus 'Ayyār Beg, Ṭamghach Khān, Nādir Shāh, and 'the Khwārazmshāh'.

List of Abbreviations

- DİA* *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. 44 vols. Istanbul, 1988–2013
- EI*² *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New ed. 12 vols and index vol. Leiden; London, 1960–2009
- EIr* *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Edited by Ehsan Yarshater. 15 vols to date. London, 1985–98; Costa Mesa, Calif., 1992–98; New York, 1999–
- h. *hijrî*, after the Hijra (lunar calendar)
- h.sh. *hijrî shamsî*, after the Hijra (Iranian solar calendar, from 1925)
- İA* *İslâm Ansiklopedisi: İslâm âlemi tarih, coğrafya, etnografya ve biyografya lugati*. 13 vols. Istanbul, 1940–88

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Who Makes Use of Whom? Some Remarks on the Nomad Policy of the Khwārazmshāhs, 1150–1200

Jürgen Paul

Introduction

Khwārazm, the agricultural oasis situated on both sides of the lower Amu Darya, has been a major hub for sedentary-pastoralist exchange throughout much of its history. This is partly due to the very particular geographical position of the oasis: it is surrounded on all sides by vast stretches of steppe or desert, some of them very inhospitable, like the Qarā-Qūm desert between Khwārazm and the Köpet Dagħ mountain range; some of them much sought after by pastoralists as winter pasture, such as the fringes of the oasis itself, the shores of the Aral Sea, the lower Syr Darya region; and to the west, the region called Mangqışhlaq (to be understood as “one thousand winter camps”).¹

In the second half of the twelfth century Saljūq rule over Khurāsān had come to an end. After the death of the last great Saljūq Sultan Sanjar in 1157, the great powers were the Qarākhīṭāy and the Ghūrīds. The Chinese-oriented Qarākhīṭāy² were situated in the east, centered in what is today northern Kyrgyzstan, with their capital in the city Balāsāghūn; they had established their rule in the region in a process starting around 1128 and culminating in the crushing defeat they inflicted on Sanjar in the Qaṭwān steppe close to Samarqand, in 1141. To the south, the very particular state of the Ghūrīds³ was on the rise with a number of centers, among them Fīrūzkūh,⁴ Bāmiyān, and later Ghaznīn and places in India such as Lahore. In Khurāsān proper, a number of regional states had emerged (which are outside the purview of this study); and in Transoxiana, Qarakhānid local dynasties contin-

¹ For a general overview over the history of eastern Iran and Transoxiana in this period, see Bosworth, “The Political and Dynastic History,” 1–202, in particular 185–95; Bartol’d, *Turkestan*, and Buniyatov, *Gosudarstvo*. For the history of the steppe regions, see Golden, “Peoples,” 256–84, and Klyashtornyi and Sultanov, *Gosudarstva*.

² See Biran, *Empire of the Qara Khitai*, and also Kychanov, *Kochevye gosudarstva*, 125–55.

³ Nizami, “The Ghūrīds,” 177–90.

⁴ Thomas, “Fīrūzkūh,” 115–44.

ued under Qarākhīṭāy overlordship, with Bukhara boasting a local dynasty of Muslim dignitaries.⁵

There is much less information on the situation in the steppe and among the Turkish pastoralists in general. A far-flung reshuffling of tribal alliances, grazing grounds and migration routes evidently occurred as a result of the Qarākhīṭāy advance.⁶

Least affected by these changes may have been the Oghuz. We can assume that Oghuz tribes nomadized between the Band-i Turkistān and the Amu Darya. They had several centers, and apparently petty states had also formed around them, in Balkh, Marw and Sarakhs. Their orientation seems to have been to the south and west; they raided in central Afghanistan, and later, under Malik Dīnār,⁷ a considerable body of Oghuz moved to Kirmān together with their families. They had been beaten by Sulṭānshāh b. ʿĪl Arslān, so they arrived in Kirmān in bad shape. Sulṭānshāh's victory over them and their flight is mentioned under 568/1173 in *Islām Ansiklopedisi*,⁸ and their arrival in Kirmān is dated to 569/1174 in Kirmānī.⁹ Consequently, they do not play a major role in Khwārazmian politics, if we do not consider Sulṭānshāh's regional state a part of Khwārazm.

Another central group were the Qarluq. Their grazing grounds apparently belonged to territory claimed by the Qarakhānid rulers of Samarqand. In that region at least, they had become numerous enough to pose a threat to the Qarakhānid ruler, who felt that he had to take measures against them, and a conflict over grazing grounds may have contributed to the situation. Such a conflict also figures as the prelude to the Saljūq disaster at Qaṭwān in 1141.¹⁰ It is also known that the Qarluq had earlier been involved in the surrender of the Eastern Qarakhānid ruler in Balā-sāghūn – he had called in the Qarākhīṭāy in order to keep the Qarluq and the Qanglı in check; this probably took place in the early 1130s.¹¹ In consequence, the Qarluq groups in Transoxiana had grown, and their position seems to have been uneasy, maybe their very presence in that region was a problem. This Qarluq problem will be the first case study in this paper.

The third group to be mentioned here are the Qīpchāq.¹² They are in fact the most important tribal group in Khwārazmian politics in the last decades of the twelfth century, since we know that the Khwārazmshāh Muḥammad b. Tekesh (r. 1200–21) was closely linked to them because his mother, the legendary Terken

⁵ Pritsak, "Āl-i Burhān," 81–96.

⁶ Golden, "Peoples;" id., *Introduction*; Agajanov, "States," 61–76; Klyashtornyi and Sultanov, *Gosudarstva*.

⁷ Cahen, "Ghuzz. i. Muslim East," *EI*², and id., "Dīnār, Malik," *EI*².

⁸ Sümer, "Oğuzlar," *Islām Ansiklopedisi*, 9:383b. Sümer gives 568/1173 for Sulṭānshāh's dispersal of the Oghuz at Sarakhs and does not mention the bad shape they were in when arriving in Kirmān. The Oghuz defeat is no longer mentioned at all in his "Oğuzlar," *DİA*, 33:329.

⁹ Kirmānī, *Tārikh-i afzal*, 87. See also Lambton, "Kirmān," *EI*², 5:160–61.

¹⁰ Description and analysis in Biran, *Empire of the Qara Khitai*.

¹¹ Juwaynī, *Tārikh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:87.

¹² Golden, *Introduction*; id., "Qīpchaqs," 132–57.

Khātūn, was one of them.¹³ Moreover, a considerable part of Muḥammad's army seems to have been Qıpchāq troops.¹⁴ In a (hostile) source, Jūzjānī, the origin of the Khwārazmian dynasty is even said to have been within the Qıpchāq confederation. This should be taken to be a statement about the importance the Qıpchāq had in Khwārazmian politics.¹⁵ The Khwārazmian-Qıpchāq alliance is the second case study in this paper.

My thesis in both cases is that it is not clear who made use of whom – whether the Qarluq or later the Qıpchāq nomads initiated and determined the course of their relations with the Khwārazmian state or vice versa, and who profited most from the relationship. In earlier scholarship, the agency of the Qarluq and Qıpchāq groups and leadership is more or less completely neglected, it is almost always the Khwārazmshāh who is regarded as the head of the alliance.

Other groups are also mentioned, in particular Turkmen who were to be found on both sides of the Köpet Dagħ mountain range, but also in the lower Syr Darya region.

Khwārazm by the mid-twelfth century already had a long record of using nomadic manpower for military purposes, and from the start, it is not always clear who made use of whom in this context. I have tried to show this in a paper where one of the cases under study was the Saljūq advance into Khurāsān in the 1030s. The Oghuz Saljūqs came into the purview of the Khurāsānian and Khwārazmian powers as a defeated group seeking military employment, since this was about the only way they could hope to make a living in the first place.¹⁶ They were offered winter grazing grounds in or around Khwārazm by the ruling Khwārazmshāh Hārūn, and after Hārūn's plans to invade Khurāsān together with the Oghuz Saljūqs and other groups had come to nothing, they offered the same bargain to the Ghaznavids: grazing grounds against military service. This might be a pattern, and thus, whenever a pastoralist group offered military service, we should ask what they received in return, and what the terms of the alliance might have been.

There is a clear consciousness of these questions in the sources. One source (Gardīzī) even states that whenever a military confrontation is ahead, the Turks offer submission (*tā'at*) in return for grazing grounds (*charākhwār*).¹⁷ A later author also knows a rule about Oghuz behaviour: Their bad habit is to first enter through the door of weakness in order to find out about their 'host', and then, when they see that they can win the upper hand, they start their high-handedness.¹⁸

¹³ There are several versions about which tribal group Terken Khātūn came from, all of them apparently Qıpchāq. See Golden, "Cumanica II," 23, note 78.

¹⁴ Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:109.

¹⁵ Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i Nāşiri*, 352.

¹⁶ I have dealt with this situation in my "Role of Khwārazm."

¹⁷ Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akbbār*, 199 and 202.

¹⁸ Kirmānī, *Tārīkh-i afşal*, 87: 'ādat-i shum-i Ghuzz khūd chunīn būd ki nakhust az dar-i 'ajz dar āmadandī tā ḥarīf-rā na-shinākhbandī agar gbālib būdandī dast-bāz-i khwāsh ba-namūdandī.

In what follows, I take the Qarluq and the Qıpchāq as examples, and I discuss whether they conform to the rule or not.

The Qarluq Problem

The prelude to the battle of Qaṭwān had been the influx of Qarluq pastoralists into the territory controlled by the Qarakhānid ruler of Samarqand who, in order to establish his rule over them or else to drive them away, asked Sanjar for help. The outcome of the battle certainly did not weaken the Qarluq position in the region, and it certainly did a lot to further the rift between the Samarqandī rulers and the Qarluq. Control over the Qarluq must have been an ongoing problem for the Qarakhānids during the entire period from the middle of the 1130s until c. 1165. That both parties, the Qarluq and the Qarakhānids, did not get along well, is also attested by the report that some Qarluq killed the Qarakhānid Qılıch Ṭamghach Khān and did not even have him buried, but threw the corpse onto the steppe;¹⁹ this event is placed at Kalābād (near Bukhara) and dated to 551/1156 by Jamāl Qarshī.²⁰

Qarluq groups had managed to push the Oghuz out of Transoxiana some time in the early part of the twelfth century. This may have caused longer lasting enmity among them: Qarluq flocked to Sanjar as soon as he had been liberated from the Oghuz.²¹ But they did this probably not out of loyalty to the Saljūq ruler, but because their chief ‘Alī Beg had died – that ‘Alī was seen in a bad light in Ibn al-Athīr might be related to the murder of the Qarakhānid just one year earlier. Possibly, the Qarluq leaders felt that they needed a solid political alliance in this situation.

Immediately afterwards, in 1158, there was some trouble in Transoxiana due to the Qarluq. Sanjar had died in the meantime, 8 May 1157. We read that in that year, a group of Transoxianan Qarluq leaders (including somebody called Lājīn Beg and the sons of Bayghū Khān) fled from the Qarakhānid lord of Samarqand and came to Khwārazm, complaining that the Qarakhānid had killed Bayghū Khān and was now pursuing the other leaders. The killer was, according to Bartol’d, Chaghri Khān Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Ḥasan Tegīn. We probably have some kind of normal blood retaliation here.²² Īl Arslān the Khwārazmshāh (r. 1156–72) took sides with them, and together they started a campaign into Māwarānnahr. On the other side, the Samarqandī ruler also took appropriate measures: He fortified him-

¹⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11:202 s.a. 550.

²⁰ Jamāl al-Qarshī, *al-Mulḥaqāt bil-ṣurāḥ*, 104, has 550. Qarshī does not give a story about who killed the Khan, the text just says *al-khāqān Ibrāhīm Arslān Khān Muḥammad b. Sulaymān māta bi-Kalābād Bukhārā sanata 550*, f. 21b, p. cxlvi. The editors emend the date to 551 in the edition but not in the translation. See Bartol’d, *Turkestan*, monograph edition, vol. 1, *Teksty* (thus quoted in the following), 132.

²¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11:210 s.a. 551.

²² Bartol’d, *Turkestan*, 357, tr. 333.

self in Samarqand, and he asked for help – first from the pastoralist Turkmen throughout all of his realm, from Qarākūl to the lower Syr Darya, and then from his overlords, the Qarākhīṭāy. The Qarākhīṭāy sent help, indeed, and the captain of the 10,000 horse force was the *ilig-i Turkmān*, the title they had given the erstwhile Qarakhānid ruler of Balāsāghūn, a considerable downgrading. After some fighting on both banks of the river Zarafshān, it was agreed that the Qarluq leaders would return.²³

What we hear next is dated some years later (to 559/1163-4):²⁴ The Qarākhīṭāy lords ordered the Qarluq displaced from their lands in Transoxiana (the Samarqand and Bukhara regions) to Kāshghar, where they were to engage in agriculture and other peaceful occupations; he also ordered that they no longer bear weapons. In reaction, the Qarluq went to Bukhara and started plundering the region, causing the city head (one of the Ṣadr family²⁵) to send to the Qarakhānid for help. This man also told the Qarluq that they compared unfavorably to the Qarākhīṭāy, who had not plundered, whereas the Qarluq, despite calling themselves Muslims, and even warriors for the faith, did just that. The city walls and fortifications were finally restored by the Qarakhānid ruler, Qılıch Ṭamghach Khān, in 1164-5.

Around the same time, another Qarluq revolt took place led by a man called ‘Ayyār Beg; the reasons for the revolt are not given, but it seems clear that the order to displace the Qarluq from Māwarānnahr had been neither revoked nor implemented. Moreover, the situation of the Qarluq pastoralists in Māwarānnahr had remained undefined since the battle of Qaṭwān, and therefore, one need not seek a new reason for revolt; we can assume that this was just another stage in a long-lasting conflict. The Qarakhānid involved here was the ruler of Samarqand, the Qılıch Ṭamghach Khān mentioned above (r. 1161–71).²⁶ He is also credited with a punitive expedition against the murderers of Ṭamghach Khān Ibrāhīm, which was conducted with utmost brutality, involving large parts of southern Māwarānnahr, places such as Nakhshab, Kish, Chaghāniyān, and Tirmiz.²⁷ No Khwārazmian intervention is mentioned in this context. Bartol’d wonders whether this could be the same campaign as described above with Īl Arslān and the *ilig-i Turkmān* as the main antagonists.²⁸

²³ Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:14–15.

²⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11:310.

²⁵ This is the Burhānī family mentioned in note 5.

²⁶ Rulers of the Qarakhānid dynasty at Samarqand: 1132–41 Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān, Ṭamghach Khān; 1132–unknown date Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad (later ruler in Khurāsān after Sanjar); 1141–56 Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, Ṭamghach Khān (murdered); 1156–61 ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan, Chaghri Khān; 1161–71 Muḥammad b. Mas‘ūd, Ṭamghach Khān (Qılıch Ṭamghach Khān). See the chronology in Kotchnev, “Chronologie,” 65.

²⁷ Bartol’d, *Turkestan*, 360–61, tr. 336; see also id., *Teksty*, 71 (al-Kātib al-Samarqandī: *Agbrāḍ al-siyāsa fī a’rāḍ al-r’āsa*).

²⁸ Id., *Turkestan*, 1:358, tr. 334. This campaign was led by Mas‘ūd b. Ḥasan the Qarakhānid; see id., *Turkestan*, 1:336. See further Pritsak, “Karachaniden,” 54–55. For all this, one of the main sources is al-Kātib al-Samarqandī: *Agbrāḍ*, as quoted in Bartol’d, *Teksty*, 71 ff. Another source is al-Ḥusaynī, *Akhhār*, 263.

However that may be, we next encounter some Qarluq in one of the first Khwārazmian campaigns in central Iran; ʿĪl Arslān sent an army under the leadership of one Shams al-Mulk Ḥusayn b. ʿAyyār Beg whose task it was to help Qutluḡ Inanch against the ruler of Māzandarān in the Rayy region, this is dated to 562/1166-7.²⁹ This campaign started with a preparatory period in Gurgān,³⁰ the army was told to pass the spring there until the animals had put on some flesh, and then to move on to central Iran. It must be this Qarluq army which was called “the Khwārazmians” in Rashīd al-Dīn, and the way they fought is telling: “they did not wait long, but wanted to fight, to take booty, and to return quickly.”³¹ Their style is described accordingly: In Abhar and Qazwīn and that entire region, they wreaked much disorder, took the children of Muslims prisoner, and even robbed the Muslims of their livestock and drove it away; for example in Qazwīn, they robbed 2000 camels and went away.³²

The next report involving Qarluq is dated to 560/1164-5, but this date must be corrected, probably to 567/1171-2 according to Ibn al-Athīr,³³ and also because this report is closely linked to the story of how ʿĪl Arslān died, shortly after the campaign.³⁴ In this campaign the Qarākhīṭāy attacked the Khwārazmshāh ʿĪl Arslān, together with a large number of *hasham*³⁵ from Transoxiana. ʿĪl Arslān’s captain was a certain ʿAyyār Beg, a Qarluq from Māwarānnahr. Bartol’d warns that this must be a different person from the ʿAyyār Beg previously mentioned;³⁶ this is true if we assume that the story about his being killed is correct. Instead of assuming that this is another person however, I’d suggest that the individual referred to is his son Ḥusayn b. ʿAyyār Beg, who comes to the fore in much the same function in another context (see below); this is in fact confirmed by al-Ḥusaynī, who mentions the Qarluq leader and also that his father had once ruled in “Samarqand,” but was killed in battle.³⁷ The name of this commander killed in battle is given as Ibn Ḥusayn ʿAyyār Beg. However, the Qarluq did not fight well: Even before joining battle, even before the arrival of the enemies, they turned to flight, and ʿAyyār Beg was taken prisoner.³⁸ This battle is said to have taken place in the region of Āmūya, close to the Amu Darya river, and it would be reasonable to think that in the course of all these events, the Qarakhānids succeeded in getting many Qarluq out

²⁹ Schwarz, *Sultan*, 76, and see al-Ḥusaynī, *Akbbār*, 148, and Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 294.

³⁰ Al-Ḥusaynī, *Akbbār*, 148-49.

³¹ *Lashkar-i Khwārazm tawaqquf namī-kardand mi-khwāstand ki jang kunand wa ghārat girand wa zūd bāz gashtand*. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārikh: Zikr-i Āl-i Saljūq*, 169.

³² Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārikh: Zikr-i Āl-i Saljūq*, 169-70. The same material in Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 294.

³³ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11:375.

³⁴ Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*, 179.

³⁵ The term *hasham* frequently is used for “military retinue, indeed warriors, mobilized for campaigns, coming from a pastoral nomadic background, and returning to their more peaceful occupations after the campaign;” see Paul, “Terms for Nomads,” 446.

³⁶ Bartol’d, *Turkestan*, 361, tr. 337.

³⁷ Al-Ḥusaynī, *Akbbār*, 148.

³⁸ Juwaynī, *Tārikh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:16-17.

of Māwarānnahr, not into the Kāshghar region, but into Khurāsān; they consequently did not come under Qarākhīṭāy control, but continued as Khwārazmian allies.

As a result, we get the following chronology:

- 1156 Qarluq kill the Qarakhānid ruler (Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad)
- 1158 Qarluq appeal to the Khwārazmshāh (Īl Arslān) for help against the Qarakhānids
- 1163 Qarākhīṭāy order Qarluq displaced from Transoxiana. Qarluq raid against Bukhara; punitive campaign by Qarakhānid ruler (Qılıch Ṭamghach Khān). Same time? Same events? One ‘Ayyār Beg, from a humble family, revolts against Qarakhānids, takes over in southern Transoxiana; punitive expedition by Qarakhānid ruler (Qılıch Ṭamghach Khān); ‘Ayyār Beg killed
- 1166 Qarluq participate in Khwārazmian campaign in central and western Iran; Qarluq leader possibly Ḥusayn b. ‘Ayyār Beg
- 1171-2 Qarluq support Khwārazmians against Qarākhīṭāy at Āmūya, but are unreliable; Qarluq leader (again): (possibly) Ḥusayn b. ‘Ayyār Beg

What can we make of these reports? First, it seems that the Qarluq groups we meet in the sources have difficulty finding and retaining their place in Transoxiana, where apparently they are not ancient dwellers; at least part of them came there as a result of the Qarākhīṭāy expansion. Apparently, for whatever reasons, their relationships with the Qarakhānids were never good since they sought to ally themselves to other rulers present in the region: first, they rallied around Sanjar, and after his death and that of their own leader, they turned to the new Khwārazmshāh. We must remember that it was Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad, a Qarakhānid in his patrilineage and Sanjar’s nephew, who succeeded him on the throne of Khurāsān, and thus for a group which was at loggerheads with the Qarakhānids, the Saljūq alliance ended up in an impasse after Sanjar’s death. It should also be kept in mind that Qarakhānid coins were minted in a number of places in what is today northern Afghanistan during this period, among others, at Balkh and at Andkhud;³⁹ that is, the region where we suppose Oghuz ‘statelets’ to have formed.

The Qarluq-Khwārazmian alliance was clearly directed against the Qarakhānid ruler of Samarqand. In this conflict, both sides, the Khwārazmians and the Qarakhānids, employed a similar strategy in military matters, in particular in the recruitment of military manpower. There was a core group recruited by the ruler who was the leader of the alliance, the Khwārazmshāh or the Qarakhānid, and both had allies coming from a pastoralist background. It is not clear, however, who played the leading part in such pacts: was Īl Arslān acting on behalf of the Qarluq, or did he have his own plans, intending perhaps to enlarge his realm by adding at least parts of Transoxiana to it?

When the Qarluq were threatened with eviction from Transoxiana, the Khwārazmian alliance became even more important for them. Apparently they were then

³⁹ Kotchnev, “Chronologie,” map at p. 70.

willing (or perhaps forced) to serve as Khwārazmian troops in territories in which they themselves may not have been interested. It appears that at some juncture (around 1164-5), a considerable number of Qarluq crossed the Amu Darya and henceforth served in Īl Arslān's armies in central and western Iran. Their interest is grossly described as booty.

On the other hand, Īl Arslān's benefit from this alliance is rather clear: He wanted to gain control over the southern fringe of the Qarā-Qūm, in particular the region called Dihistān, and perhaps had an intention to push farther into Gurgān. At that time Qarakhānid influence in the region was next to nothing. Control over Dihistān was achieved in 1164-5,⁴⁰ and at the same time Īl Arslān also succeeded in taking Nasā.⁴¹ In the case of Nasā, the Khwārazmshāh was reacting to a maneuver by al-Mu'ayyid Āy Āba, the lord of Naysābūr.⁴² It is not entirely clear what role the Qarluq troops played in achieving this; they are described as unreliable forces, and Īl Arslān certainly was not using them as his main army. Therefore, he made use of them, but at the same time, he kept them at a distance; Schwarz thinks that he was interested in keeping them on the move.⁴³

Is this a case for the paradigm mentioned before, grazing grounds for military service? The answer is affirmative, but not without qualification, since what was at stake for the Qarluq at first, evidently, is the territory they needed and which for whatever reasons the Qarakhānid ruler of Samarqand was no longer willing to grant them. On the other hand, this case does not seem typical since the Qarluq are not described as destitute. Military service, at least at first, does not seem to be the only solution they envisage; initially they are able to return to their grazing grounds. At a second stage, however, this may have changed, and their situation may have deteriorated. Did the Qarluq hope to get new pastures as a result of their campaigning in central and even western Iran? The sources suggest the contrary: they were interested in plunder rather than in acquiring territory and we do not know whether any significant Qarluq groups remained in Māwarānnahr after 1164-5 or where their flocks, if any, were grazing after that. Nor do we know whence came the Qarluq who fought – or rather, did not fight – the Qarākhīṭāy as allies of Īl Arslān, where they went after the battle, and where the group around Ḥusayn b. 'Ayyār Beg had their winter and summer camps.

The Qīpchāq: Alliance and Conflict

One of the most vital objectives of Khwārazmian politics from the 1130s onwards⁴⁴ was to expand into the winter pastures around Khwārazm, the shores of

⁴⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11:315.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² For these developments and persons, see Schwarz, *Sultan*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁴ For the essentials of Khwārazmian politics, see Paul, "Role of Khwārazm."

the Aral Sea, the Mangqishlaq peninsula, and the lower Syr Darya, including the city of Jand, the main commercial emporium and fortress commanding the trading routes as well as the pastoralist campgrounds. The successful expansion into both regions is linked to Atsız (either as crown prince or in the earlier years of his rule; Jand was certainly taken before 1133); Jand was henceforth the second most important town in the Khwārazmian realm, and Khwārazmian rule in that region was more or less continuous.⁴⁵ Further advances along the right (northeastern) bank of the Syr Darya were the natural consequence, but these were much harder to secure. The target of such campaigns normally was Sighnāq, to the east of the Syr Darya (on its middle course). The Turks who were nomadising in that area probably were not Muslims, since these campaigns are styled as *ghazwa*. Juwaynī gives one example: In Muḥarram 547/April 1152, when the governor of Jand was one Kamāl al-Dīn, son of Arslan Khān Maḥmūd (and thus probably a Qarakhānid), Atsız went on campaign against the unbelievers with Sighnāq as the ultimate aim. The unbelievers in question were therefore probably Qıpchāq – Sighnāq was known as the Qıpchāq centre along the right bank of the Syr. For this campaign, Atsız sought to win Kamāl al-Dīn over for an alliance. This man, however, feared Atsız, took to flight, but was taken and killed.⁴⁶

Non-Muslims are said to have constituted part of the Khwārazmian army, and some of these Turks very probably were Qıpchāq from early on: When Sanjar besieged Atsız in Hazārasp (in 1138), around 10,000 of the latter's warriors and allies were killed, some of them non-Muslims.⁴⁷ Sanjar's chancery had a tendency to mark Atsız as an ally of unbelievers, not only in this case, but also when he is reproached for having taken Jand and Mangqishlaq, where he had fought against good Muslims, among them warriors for the faith. Besides, of course, it was known that Atsız had accepted Qarākhīṭāy overlordship and was paying annual tribute to their ruler, the Gurkhan.

We do not know for certain, however, whether any of these (probably non-Muslim) Turkish warriors were Qıpchāq, even if it is very likely – the sources are not very forthcoming in giving ethnic or tribal identifications. This leads to the question of how ancient the friendly relationship between the Khwārazmshāh dynasty and the Qıpchāq in fact was. Two authors (among those used for this paper) give the impression that the link is very old and was “always” there: Nasawī, one of the most “Khwārazmian” authors we have (although we must keep in mind that he was hostile to Terken Khātūn, the representative of the Qıpchāq party); and Jūzjānī, a hostile one.

Jūzjānī has a marked interest in underlining the alliance between the emerging Khwārazmian dynasty and Qıpchāq groups. Atsız is praised for his campaigns

⁴⁵ Agajanov, “States,” 75, thinks that these victories were won against – among others – some Qıpchāq groups.

⁴⁶ Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:10 ff.

⁴⁷ Bartol'd, *Teksty*, 45, taken from a ‘Khwārazmian’ collection of specimens for official correspondence (*inshā'*), ms. St Petersburg, C-816.

against Jand, Turkestan and the Qipchāq,⁴⁸ but already his son Īl Arslān is said to have taken them as allies,⁴⁹ and it is also stated (of course) that both paid tribute to the infidel Qarākhīṭāy. It is Jūzjānī again who sees the origin of the Khwārazmshāhs (descendants of Anūsh-Tegīn) in the Qipchāq confederation, even if the source itself states that this is an oral tradition; and in the same context, he mentions an early influx of Qipchāq groups into the regions in which Khwārazm was interested, particularly the region of Jand, even before the coming of the Saljūqs. Nasawī confirms the narrow ties between the Khwārazmshāhs and the Qipchāq; he even states that from early on, all their rulers had Qipchāq mothers, and that therefore, the Qipchāq felt friendship and love for this dynasty.

The areas the Khwārazmshāhs were interested in were exactly those regions where Qipchāq groups were to be found. The Qipchāq had taken the place of the Oghuz in these areas; from the middle of the eleventh century on, they seem to have been dominant in formerly Oghuz lands on the lower Syr Darya and on the fringes of Khwārazm. But apparently, their territories stretched far to the east, and Qipchāq groups must have been affected by the Qarākhīṭāy advance into Central Asia.

One of the most important sources on the Qipchāq alliance is certainly the collection of letters called *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*, one of the famous *inshā'*-collections from Saljūq and Khwārazmian chanceries.⁵⁰ This is not the moment to comment on the methods to be used with this kind of source material; suffice it to say that we have to reckon with a fair amount of boasting – the pieces in question are all outbound correspondence, and one of the purposes in writing them doubtlessly was to enhance the standing of the sender in the eyes of the addressee. This said, there is a series of half a dozen letters or so from 577 to 578 (1181–82) in which Qipchāq are mentioned. The dates of some of the letters are disputed, but this is not a vital concern in our context, since the difference is no more than one year, and another group is firmly dated to the mentioned period.⁵¹

The very first letter – written to the Ghūrid Sultan Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn – already mentions that the Khwārazmians are planning a campaign in Khurāsān in which the participation of Qipchāq warriors also is to be expected.⁵² (It must be said that Tekesh and also his son Muḥammad had a habit of mentioning Turkish support, for evident reasons: the Turks were renowned warriors, they were numerous, and

⁴⁸ Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 354.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Bahā' al-Dīn Baghdādī, *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*.

⁵¹ The letters in question and their datings have been discussed by Schwarz, *Sultan*, 1–25, with a German translation of the relevant letters, 26–49. I have myself discussed the source critical problems connected to this literary genre in my “*Inshā'*-Collections.” – In the case of the texts under study here, one main argument that they reflect ‘real’ letters is their wealth in personal names and even datings.

⁵² Bahā' al-Dīn Baghdādī, *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*, 145–49, the Qipchāq are mentioned on p. 148; Schwarz, *Sultan*, 26 ff. Schwarz dates this piece to 577/1181–2. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn was the head of the Ghūrid ruling family from 1163–1203.

they were feared both for their alleged or real recklessness in fighting and also their tendency to plunder.)

One of the following letters, while it does not mention Qıpchāq warriors as possible support, does contain a statement about the regional provenance of the troops Tekesh has under his command. Among these regions, the Turkmen zone – Dihistān, Gurgān, Nasā, Abīward, and possibly Māzandarān – holds a prominent place; second is the Syr Darya region, represented by Jand, Shahrkent, Bārjīnlighkent, and Ribāṭāt – all of which could be Qıpchāq territories – as well as Mang-qıshlaq, which is also mentioned.⁵³

The next letter was probably written at about the same time as the previous one.⁵⁴ Here, Qıpchāq are mentioned – indeed, they form one of the major subjects of the letter. It is stated that the Qıpchāq chiefs, Alp Qarā Urān and his son Qırān, together with a group of Yughūr followers, have arrived in the vicinity of Jand and have offered their services (which we must understand to be military in character). There can be no doubt that these men were not Muslims (from the pious wish “May God make them find the happiness of Islam” which the author adds to their names).⁵⁵ The offer implies that the Qıpchāq leaders asked Tekesh what he bade them to do that winter; in yet another letter (written some months later), they refer to a campaign they had undertaken as Tekesh’s allies the previous winter which had led them deep into Qarākhītāy territory (Ṭarāz is mentioned as the ultimate point they claim to have reached, but one should remember the present author’s previous remarks about boasting; also, the accompanying rhetoric about fighting the infidels sounds funny in relation to people who we know had nothing to do with Islam).

It is known that Tekesh at some point married Qırān’s daughter, the famous Terken Khātūn, mother of Muḥammad, under whose joint reign Qıpchāq influence in the Khwārazmian Empire can be said to have become paramount. This marriage is alluded to in one of the letters,⁵⁶ and it is also mentioned in both Jūzjānī⁵⁷ and Juwaynī.⁵⁸

⁵³ Bahā’ al-Dīn Baghdādī, *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*, 155, and Schwarz, *Sultan*, 32, addressed again to Ghiyās al-Dīn Ghūrī, dated to the beginning of 578/May–June 1182 by Schwarz. For the place names cf. Bartol’d, *Turkestan*, 179–80, tr. 178–79, where it is said that Shahrkent is another term for Yangkent or al-Qarya al-Hadītha; Bārjīnlighkent is probably closer to Jand than to Sighnāq because Tekesh established his son ‘Alishāh as governor there before moving on campaign on to the latter place; Ribāṭāt is also in this region.

⁵⁴ Bahā’ al-Dīn Baghdādī, *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*, 156 ff.; Schwarz, *Sultan*, 34 ff. Addressed again to Ghiyās al-Dīn Ghūrī, dated to Muḥarrām 578/May–June 1182.

⁵⁵ Bahā’ al-Dīn Baghdādī, *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*, 158. The formula is *razzaqabu llāhu ‘izza l-islām*; again p. 174.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 174: *wasīlat-i qarābat*; Schwarz, *Sultan*, 39.

⁵⁷ Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 355. Here Qırān is called the Khan of the Qıpchāq.

⁵⁸ Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:109, where it is stated that Muḥammad’s mother was from the Uran tribal group.

Terken Khātūn's genealogy is given differently in Nasawī. This author makes her come from the Bayāwut tribal group⁵⁹ of the Yimek (Kimek) confederation; but on the other hand, he states that the Khwārazmshāh dynasty had firm marital alliances with the Qipchāq. Probably this would mean, as Golden suggested, that the Bayāwut (Bayat) and Uran (Oran) "may be viewed as related clans or tribes, parts of the Ölberli grouping of the Yimek."⁶⁰ All the tribal groups mentioned could possibly be subsumed under the heading 'Qipchāq', depending on the perspective and the context.

We do not know which tasks Tekesh had for the Uran Qipchāq, but it is altogether possible that his unquestionable military superiority over the course of the next years has something to do with his powerful allies. Also, we might note that as soon as Tekesh established his rule in Khurāsān, he adopted a clearly pastoralist style of ruling: It is not by chance that he ascended the throne of Khurāsān (and had himself addressed as the *sulṭān*) on the famous summer pastures of Rādkān-i Tūs,⁶¹ after having spent the winter in the no less famous winter grazing grounds of Gurgān. No such 'migratory cycle' is reported from his immediate predecessors, al-Mu'ayyid Āy Āba and his descendants.

We do not know, either, how many Qipchāq participated in Tekesh's campaigns into central and western Iran (beginning in 1193 and continuing throughout the remainder of his reign). But some clues come from an observation in Rāwandī: Even if it is evident that this author aims at depicting the political and military situation of his time as abjectly chaotic – and at proving his point that "kingship and religious law are like this world and the next, two opposites that cannot be brought together"⁶² – one of the features he uses to describe this is to underline that the Khwārazmians stole the cattle and in general the livestock of the unhappy populations who had to endure their exactions.⁶³ It is even said that they had the animals driven away to Khwārazm.

This does not mean that the Qipchāq were entirely won over to the Khwārazmian alliance, nor does it mean that Tekesh had in any meaningful way added the Qipchāq territory to his realm. In a story related by Juwaynī, complications between the Khwārazmians and the Qipchāq are evident. Juwaynī says that in the late winter or spring of 591/1195, Tekesh went campaigning to the northeastern side of the Syr Darya, with Sighnāq (again) as a target. The man he was fighting, called Qātir Būqū, retreated as soon as he learnt that Tekesh had reached Jand.⁶⁴ While pursuing his enemy, some of the Uran warriors who were in Tekesh's reti-

⁵⁹ The evidence for this question has been discussed by Golden, "Cumanica II," 23, note 78. Nasawī, *Sīra*, 71.

⁶⁰ See Golden, "Cumanica II."

⁶¹ These summer pastures became 'imperial' pastures in the Mongol period, but perhaps had held particular prestige earlier. See Aubin, "Réseau pastoral et réseau caravanier."

⁶² Rāwandī, *Rāhat al-sudūr*, 391–92 (in both Arabic and Persian).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 383 and 394 (among others).

⁶⁴ Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, 2:40. See also Golden, "Cumanica II," 23, note 78: "Attempts have been made to connect this *qran* with Qadir Buqu Xan and others."

nue passed word to Qātir Būqū that in the event of a military encounter, they would not fight. Qātir Būqū was not slow in understanding, and battle was joined on 6 Jumādā II 591/18 May 1195. The Uranis kept their promise; they did not fight, but plundered Tekesh's baggage instead. The Khwārazmians consequently suffered a serious defeat and had a hard time getting back to Khwārazm.

There is a sequel to this story. Only two or three years later, fighting broke out between Qātir Būqū and his nephew (*barādarzāda*) Alp Derek (?).⁶⁵ Alp Derek, of course, played the Khwārazmian card, promising that if help were forthcoming, he would annihilate Būqū, and thus Būqū's realm would fall to the Sultan. At that juncture, Muḥammad (the Khwārazmian prince who was a Qıpchāq on his mother's side and whose *kbāl* Alp Derek therefore must have been) was called from the post in Shādyākh he had taken over shortly before, and in Rabī' I 594 (began 11 January 1198) he was on the spot in the lower Syr Darya region. Būqū was indeed defeated in battle, and in the beginning of Rabī' II he was led in chains to Khwārazm. The remainder of his people (*qawm*) immediately sided with Alp Derek, who had no better ideas than to shift his alliances and 'rebel' against his erstwhile allies. Tekesh, in turn, was well versed in steppe politics: He made Būqū one of his emirs, and after some time, he had the pleasure of hearing that Būqū had won a victory over Alp Derek.

Again, what are we to make of these reports? First, there were evidently several stages in the Khwārazmian-Qıpchāq mixture of alliance and conflict. We do not know much about the very first stage, before the arrival of the Uran leaders at Jand; we can only suppose or surmise that there were some Qıpchāq in Khwārazmian service as early as Sanjar's siege of Hazārasp in 1138, and that already Atsız had some dealings with them when he took control of Mangqışlaq and Jand. But we cannot be sure, and we do not know anything about the possible terms of such an alliance. Neither can we say much about the balance between alliance and conflict.

In the next stage, things become a little bit clearer. Alp Qarā and Qırān evidently offered military services, and it is evident that they led important groups, so that their offer could not easily be declined. Two campaigns are mentioned in the sources, both of them winter campaigns. The first allegedly directed against the Qarākhītāy, although doubts about the reliability of that information are justified, the other aimed at a target which the sources do not specify. We do not know what they asked for in return. Winter pasture? This is not impossible, indeed I think it is probable, but there is no real proof. However that may be, the military alliance now became important enough for both sides to conclude a marriage alliance as

⁶⁵ I do not see any reason to identify this Alp Derek with the Alp Qarā mentioned above, pace Bartol'd, *Turkestan*, 368–69, tr. 343–44. Agajanov sees the family relationships differently: Alp Qarā's son Qırān was also called Qādir Khān alias Qātir Būqū Khān; this man had at least one daughter – Terken Khātūn – and at least one son, Alp Derek, also called Qāyır Khān Īnālchık, but this does not fit with the statement that Alp Derek was a nephew of Qırān. See Agajanov, "States," 76.

well. (It is a pity that we do not know anything about the background of Tekesh's and Sulṭānshāh's respective mothers. Were 'tribal' marriages a tradition in the Khwārazmshāh dynasty?) In this stage, alliance seems to prevail, and conflict is not mentioned at all. But the Qıpchāq leaders retain their agency all along, even if they are said to be awaiting Tekesh's orders and even if they go campaigning together with Khwārazmian emirs. We do not know much more about the terms of the alliance, but it does not seem to have involved conversion to Islam.

The third stage is characterized by infighting among two (or more) Qıpchāq leaders, with the Khwārazmians getting involved, with deplorable results at first, but with the Khwārazmians prevailing in the end. At this stage, conflict again emerges, with the roots of the conflict probably lying within the Qıpchāq ruling family; the Khwārazmian ruling family, in turn, could not avoid being involved in this conflict because the family ties had become too close.

For the time being, I cannot tell whether there is a link between the Qıpchāq alliance and the Khwārazmian 'western' policy during Tekesh's reign.

Conclusion

How can we describe the relationship between the Khwārazmshāhs and first the Qarluq, then the Qıpchāq in the second half of the twelfth century? First, it is striking that we do not hear anything about the Qarluq during Tekesh's reign. This remains a mystery, and it gives rise to a number of questions: Did the Qarluq confederation 'dissolve'? Did the Qarluq migrate out of the Khwārazmian sphere of influence? Can we presume a change of labels, with some groups coming first under the Qarluq label and later under the Qıpchāq one? Or did the Qıpchāq alliance completely obliterate the Qarluq?

One of the theses about the way Turkic pastoral nomads behaved in military alliances was formulated by Gardīzī: He said that whenever they are weak, they offer military service in return for pasture; then when they get stronger, they try to revise the terms of the alliance. The Qarluq conform to this pattern quite neatly: They had problems getting sufficient grazing grounds within Transoxiana, and after their revolt in 1163 had been quelled (by the Qarakhānid rulers), they presumably could no longer stay where they had been. The internal conflicts within the Qarluq tribal groups cannot be traced, but the fact that the leader of the revolt is described as an upstart is a sure sign that there must have been conflicts. We do not know what became of the previous ruling clan – the people we can identify over the following years come from the new leadership. As a result of both the internal conflicts and the defeat in revolt, the Qarluq, or at least a substantial portion of the confederation, changed their alliances and also their way of earning a living; they sought military employment, just as the very early Saljūqs had done after they had been defeated by the Oghuz Yabghū Shāh Malik.

It is no coincidence that their relationship with the Khwārazmshāh ʿĪl Arslān also takes on a different character at that point: The Qarluq had fostered a Khwārazmian alliance before, and without doubt the Qarluq retained their independence, even to the point where it is by no means clear who is the leading partner in the joint campaigns they undertook together with the Khwārazmians. After the defeat, however, the Qarluq leaders clearly appear as subordinate; the Qarluq are now integrated into the Khwārazmian army (that they did not always obey orders is quite another question) so that to some, the Khwārazmian army in Iran appeared to be a Qarluq one.

The Qipchāq, on the other hand, retain their standing as equals to the Khwārazmians all along. It is true that Baghdādī, the court scribe at the Khwārazmian dīwan, wrote in his letters to the Ghūrid Sultans that the Qipchāq leaders had submitted to the Khwārazmshāh (the term is *ṭāʿat*), just as Gardīzī had described the pattern: Whenever a military confrontation is ahead, the Turks offer obedience and military service in return for grazing grounds. This may well have been the background for Qipchāq behaviour at this moment – the steppe was again in turmoil. But the details are shrouded in mystery. We do not know what the Qipchāq may have wanted: did they need winter pasture? Or were they just looking for additional sources of income? Did they expect a military confrontation, e.g. with the Qarākhīṭāy, and were they therefore willing to enter into close relationship with the Khwārazmshāh dynasty? For all these questions, I fear, there will be no answer. Taken in all, it is probably best to follow Nasawī in his description of the Qipchāq–Khwārazmian alliance: he uses the terms *walāʾ* and *maḥabbat*, ‘affection’ and ‘love’, and the verb *māla*, ‘to lean or tend towards’, ‘to feel sympathy for’, when he speaks of the Qipchāq and their alliance with the Khwārazmshāh dynasty. At any rate, this was a relationship between equals, and we must suppose that the Qipchāq leaders (or the tribes in their entirety) profited from the alliance as much as the Khwārazmshāhs did.

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