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INVOKING THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF KHIVA AND THE MASSACRE OF THE YOMUT TURKMENS: THE CHOICES OF A CENTRAL ASIAN HISTORIAN[1]

Ron Sela

Abstract

Almost forty years after the Russian conquest of Central Asia, Muḥammad Yūsuf Bek Bayānī, an official in the court of Khiva, compiled the *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī*, a "proto-national" history of his country. The work, which was never fully edited or translated and has remained largely unexplored, dedicates nearly ten percent of its narrative to the description of the Russian conquest and the massacre of the Yomut Turkmens. Bayānī's task was both sensitive and difficult. He was to portray these sordid affairs when Khiva had been a Russian protectorate; he was to render a reliable account when most sources were unavailable, and he had to negotiate his own position as an Uzbek aristocrat writing about Turkmen suffering. An improbable encounter with an American war correspondent's manuscript helped Bayānī solve some of these dilemmas and marked a turning point in Khivan historiography.

On May 29, 1873, General von Kaufman, governor of Turkestan and supreme commander of the Russian forces in Central Asia, triumphantly entered Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan's palace in Khiva. The conquest of Khiva, "Russia's most troublesome Central Asian neighbor,"[2] was the peak of the Russian advance into Central Asia at the time. Following the subjugation of the two other khanates of the region, Bukhara and Khoqand, the final defeat of Khorezm consolidated Russia's position in Asia, restored prestige to the Russian army, created favorable trading conditions for the Russian merchants, and caught the alarmed British off guard. Approximately six weeks after securing the capital of Khorezm and most of its territory, von Kaufman ordered General Golovachev to annihilate the Turkmen Yomut tribe in one of the most brutal expeditions of the Khivan campaign.

The story of the conquest of Central Asia was the subject for countless discussions in Russia and elsewhere.[3] Eyewitness accounts, reported by Russian

1 Work on this project began approximately three years ago. Brief, preliminary conclusions were published in the *Central Eurasian Studies Review* (vol. 2/2, Spring 2003:15–18).

2 BECKER, 1968:70; MACKENZIE, 1988:223.

3 For a comprehensive bibliography on this topic see BREGEL, 1995, I:129–152.

soldiers and civilians, American journalists, and German and French observers, spread rapidly throughout Russia and the West. Several accounts were translated into European and non-European languages and captivated the attention and imagination of many. Intelligence officers analyzed Russian military strategies, diplomats examined potential consequences, and readers – both expert and lay – followed reports from the field describing the subjugation of an exotic and unruly adversary.

In the decades that followed, the Russians and Soviets devoted considerable scholarship to the subject.[4] In the West, however, the conquest of Central Asia remains for the most part unstudied, and scholarship has tended to rely upon a very limited group of sources, mostly Russian works and European records.[5] In the impressive array of analyses, Russian and Western scholars alike generally neglected the one group of sources that may shed light on the Central Asian perception of the approaching Russians and that may render the indigenous voices heard, namely, the testimonials of the Central Asians themselves.[6] Often difficult to access and still in manuscript form, these unpublished texts are even now waiting to be tapped in order to add another layer to our understanding of one of the most momentous events in the region's history.

One such historical narrative, the basis for the present essay, is the *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī* (Genealogy of the Kings of Khorezm), authored in Chaghatay Turkic – the language of Khivan historiography – by Muḥammad Yūsuf Bek "Bayānī."[7] Bayānī wrote his account in the beginning of the twentieth century as a retainer of Isfandiyār Khan of Khiva. His work is reviewed here for the first time in the context of the Russian conquest. Although the story of the conquest is well known and Bayānī does not digress too far from the standard presentations, he still provides insights that cannot be found in other sources; he presents a perspective where the Russians are the enemy, where the Cossacks and not the Khivans behave like barbarians, and where Uzbek and Turkmen personages account for the greater part of the narrative. Unfortunately, although the work seems to be of outmost significance for the history of Central Asia and Khiva in

4 On the presentations of the conquest in Soviet historiography see COOPER, 1995; TILLETT, 1969.

5 HOLDSWORTH, 1959:46–65; CARRERE D'ENCAUSSE, 1989:131–151; BERLS, 1972.

6 This problem is beginning to be rectified in recent years. See GROSS, 1997; BEISEMBIEV, 2003; ERKINOV, 2004; ṢADR ZIYĀ, 2004.

7 Bayānī, *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī*, Tashkent, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, MS no. 9596.

particular it has been utilized by only a handful of scholars worldwide, who offered valuable discussions of the history of irrigation in Khorezm,[8] briefly compared Bayānī with other nineteenth-century Khivan historians,[9] or used the work as a source for studying Turkmen history, particularly in the 1840s and 50s.[10]

1. Muḥammad Yūsuf Bek "Bayānī" and the Genealogy of the Khorezmian Kings

Muḥammad Yūsuf Bek, known for his poetic pseudonym (*takhallus*) "Bayānī," was a poet, writer and a *dīvān-begi* (one of the highest administrative officials) in the court of Khiva. The son of Bābājān Bek, himself an author and a Khivan administration official, and the great-grandson of Eltüzer, the late khan of Khiva (d. 1806), Bayānī was clearly a part of the Khivan aristocracy. His father had passed away shortly after the Russian conquest of Khiva in 1873, when Bayānī was only thirteen years old. The boy nevertheless continued his rigorous education and soon became known in the city as a poet and an expert on the Persian language. From the mid-1880s Bayānī was translating Persian historical works into Turkic at the behest of the ruler, Sayyid Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan II (d. 1910). Bayānī also attended a poetic circle in the city, where twice a week the khan made him read from his own works.

Although Bayānī does not volunteer much information about his political and administrative career, the Russian ethnographer Samoilovitch, who had visited Khiva in 1908, listed Bayānī as a prominent Khivan poet, musician and *dīvān-begi*. He also mentioned that Bayānī was a captain in the service of the Russians – the Russians often bestowed honorary titles with no actual responsibilities to local officials – and apparently knew Russian well and was regularly receiving Muslim and Russian newspapers and journals.[11]

Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī is a history of Khorezm up to 1911, written in the genre of "general histories." The work consists of an introduction and sixteen chapters. The first three chapters portray the genealogy of the ʿArabshahid dynasty of Khiva (*circa* 1511–1770); Chapter Four sketches the genealogy of the Khivan Qongrat dynasty (*circa* 1770–1920), and Chapters 5–16, the bulk of the

8 GULIAMOV, 1957.
9 MUNIROV, 1960.
10 BREGEL, 1961.
11 BREGEL, 1961:127.

composition, describe the reigning years of the Qongrat rulers, one chapter devoted to each sovereign. The work is long, over five hundred folios, and the Russian conquest of Khiva and the expeditions against the Turkmens occupy close to ten percent of the entire narrative. *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī* was never edited or published, although recently a portion of Bayānī's account dealing with the Russian conquest was transcribed from the Arabic script of the original Chaghatay into Cyrillic.[12] As is customary these days in Uzbekistan, the editor accommodated the text for her Uzbek readers by occasionally providing synonyms in modern Uzbek to the Chaghatay words. The transcription is generally good but this publication lacks any scholarly apparatus (there is a short introduction, but no commentary or analysis, neither footnotes, nor an index).

On the circumstances of the writing of the work, Bayānī relates that on 22 *Jumādā 'l-Ūlā*, 1329 (May 21, 1911) he received instructions from Isfandiyār Khan to write down the history of the latter's "noble and sublime" dynasty. Isfandiyār had just replaced the late Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan on the throne of Khiva, and as it was not uncommon for new rulers in the Islamic world to commission such works at the beginning of their reign, he decided to keep to the custom. After all, such acts of royal patronage were beneficial to patrons and clients alike. Interestingly, Isfandiyār insisted that Bayānī renders his composition in a simple language, "avoiding superfluous metaphors and allegories," a language that would be intelligible to the people, who sometimes had difficulties understanding the very florid, complicated style of earlier historians. With this objective at the core of Bayānī's composition, we may wish to consider the *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī* as a "proto-national" history of Khiva.

Bayānī based his account on previous historical works, most notably by Mūnis and Āgahī, the most celebrated historians of Khiva in the nineteenth century.[13] However, unable to find all of Āgahī's chronicles, Bayānī had to write the history from 1846–1856 and from 1864 onward on his own. These parts are his original contribution, based on information largely gathered from oral testimonies that he had collected himself. He also explains that this hard task of collecting evidence was the reason it took him three years to finish the work (the work was completed in 1914). Nevertheless, it has been difficult to ascertain whether Bayānī had at his disposal any other historical records, documents or other written contemporary sources.

12 BAËNII, 1994.

13 About these prominent historians and their work see Bregel's Introduction in MUNIS & AGAHI, 1999.

Bayānī's account is indeed written in a relatively simple language in a straightforward, even concise style, and his chronology generally (though not always) conforms to the order of events one usually finds in presentations of the conquest in other sources. However, every now and then Bayānī strays from the standard narrative, emphasizing the role of groups and individuals in Khiva, and these descriptions, even if influenced by the passage of time, may be very different from other presentations.

2. Bayānī and the Russian Conquest of Khiva

Bayānī begins his account by taking pride in the fact that Khiva was never conquered by the Russians, "Five times in the past Russia had sent an army against Khorezm and [since] many of the troops perished on the way from thirst and those who had reached Khorezm perished here, until today they have not found victory. So at this time, the Great Emperor [i.e., the tsar] consulted all the pillars of state to find the best way to get here."[14] Bayānī explains that, in his reluctance to take any chances the "Great Emperor" finally decided to send an army to Khorezm from four directions. One column was to attack Khiva from Turkestan under General von Kaufman himself, the second from Kransnovodsk on the Caspian under Colonel Markazov, a third column from Orenburg led by General Verevkin and the fourth from Kinderly Bay under Colonel Lomakin. General von Kaufman was appointed the supreme commander for the mission.

Bayānī describes the conquest in great detail. The reaction in Khiva to the news of the advancing Russians was in the beginning a mixture of confusion and apathy. The khan held consultations at the court and decided to release twenty-one Russian prisoners to von Kaufman's hands, thereby thwarting one of Russia's main pretexts of going to war. The prisoners' release did not delay the Russians, and the khan and his immediate council needed to resort to planning the defense of the khanate. Bayānī describes the troops' ethnic composition, their strategies, as well as the battles at the crossing of the Amu Darya river. Realizing, however, that the Russians were too strong to halt their advance, the khan ordered his troops to fallback and concentrate their efforts in the defense of the city of Khiva. Following a fierce battle in the town of Khoja-eli, "the Uzbek troops dispersed [...] and the Turkmen troops of the Yomut and Chowdur were

14 BAYĀNĪ, f. 447b.

on their way back to Khiva, determined to defeat the Russians."[15] Thus, the Turkmens were the only ones who remained to defend Khiva and its Uzbek rulers.

Meanwhile, in Khiva, the khan was beginning to appreciate the danger. He sent two letters to Kaufman admitting his defeat and asking him to halt the attack, but the letters were unanswered.[16] When the khan realized that the conquest of Khiva was imminent, he consulted his close advisers, and one night left the citadel and escaped with the help of the Yomuts to their sanctuary.[17] When the khan left the city, Amir Töre became the de-facto khan. After a short enthronement ceremony attended by a few relatives, he gave orders for the peaceful submission of the city and sent a messenger to Kaufman to inform him that Khiva has surrendered.[18] Two days later Kaufman entered the city and Bayānī had only this to say, "Such was the will of God most high, there is no escape from the divine decree."[19]

Kaufman entered the citadel and seated himself upon the throne of the Khorezmian kings while various dignitaries sat around him in their places. Different relatives of the khan came in and paid their respects, carrying food and drink.[20] Kaufman also decided to inspect the palace treasury and together with Golovachev, found an assortment of weapons, bejeweled daggers, swords and hand guns.[21] Refusing to conduct negotiations with the khan's relatives and having finally learned of the Khan's whereabouts, von Kaufman decided to send a messenger to invite the khan to return and conduct negotiations himself, promising not to hurt him.

The khan consulted with Sarï Sardar, the Yomut commander hosting him, who told him, in Bayānī's words, "O King, your departure may be a good thing. If they indeed made peace, it cannot be bad for you. Now that it has become so by the will of God, it cannot be good for you to abandon your country and go to Akhal."[22] The Khan accepted Sarï Sardar's advice, mounted his horse and set out in the direction of Khiva.[23]

15 BAYĀNĪ, f. 453b
16 BAYĀNĪ, f. 457a.
17 BAYĀNĪ, f. 457b.
18 BAYĀNĪ, ff 458a–458b.
19 BAYĀNĪ, f. 461a.
20 BAYĀNĪ, f. 461b.
21 BAYĀNĪ, f. 462a.
22 The central parts of the traditional homeland of the Turkmens.
23 BAYĀNĪ, f. 463b.

The description of the historic meeting between the khan of Khiva and General von Kaufman is well known and we will return to it shortly. Both leaders began negotiations of the conditions for Khiva's final submission that would lead to the establishment of an advisory council of dignitaries in the city, the abolition of slavery, and the release of all the Persian slaves. Kaufman also insisted that Khiva should pay war indemnities, and together with the khan decided that the Yomut Turkmens would pay the fantastic sum of 300,000 rubles in cash. The Yomuts responded by sending a delegation of their elders to Kaufman saying that they did not have that kind of ready money, and Kaufman agreed to give them fifteen days to procure it. Meanwhile, he prepared the army for battle and instructed generals Golovachev, Lomakin and Ivanov to be prepared to fight if the Yomuts avoided payment. According to Bayānī, the generals agreed that fighting the Yomuts was not a desirable course of action, but two weeks later Golovachev received an order from von Kaufman to annihilate the whole tribe of the Yomut Turkmens. Bayānī's narrative transcends to a dramatic mode as he describes this "punitive expedition." Here's a glimpse into Bayānī's text,

> The Cossacks who were mounted on their horses dispersed to all sides and set fire to the Yomuts' crops, to their huts and tents. The flames reached the sky from every direction and the smoke could be seen everywhere, so that the meaning of [the Qur'anic verse] 'Wait for the day when the heavens bring forth visible smoke, enveloping mankind,'[24] became clear. The Cossacks fired at everyone they saw. They stabbed the old and the women and children with their sabers and impaled infants who were still suckling their mother's milk on their lances and tossed them into the burning fire. And they continued to plunder their [the Yomuts'] possessions.
>
> At that time, a group of Yomuts, a few old men, women and children, escaped. Several Cossacks learned of this and gave chase. When they caught up with them the Yomuts said, crying, "What wrong have we done to you?"
>
> The Cossacks answered, "You rebelled by not paying the indemnities."
>
> The Yomuts said, "The sum was impossible to pay, [but] this does not mean a rebellion. Give us more time [...]. No man can endure such tyranny as we have experienced in this world."
>
> The Cossacks came [to General Golovachev] and conveyed these words to him.
>
> Golovachev said, "Their words are true. I did not tell you to burn their crops and their houses or to massacre their women and children. Now, what is done is done, there is nothing we can do."
>
> After this event the Yomuts were all in agreement and said, "Now that we have encountered the Russians it is better for us to live by the sword. After our women and children

24 *Qur'an* [44:10], a reference to the Sura of the Smoke, the Day of Judgment.

were butchered it is our obligation to rise against Russia. It is better to die than to lead such life in this world."

They gathered and were going to Hilali. In order to follow the Yomuts, Golovachev chose from among the Cossacks seven mounted divisions and sent them on their way.[25]

The Cossacks gave chase and every now and then caught up with a group of Yomuts who had broken off from the rest and were lagging behind, many of them women and children who would succumb to a similar fate as described above. The scene of the massacre harbored many images: Women jumping under the hooves of the horses; women and children trying to hide in the reeds in the lake only to be fired upon by the Russian troops on the bank; Cossack riders thrashing their sabers at unarmed Yomut men; the continued burning of crops, and the looting of possessions. Whenever the Yomuts could, they returned a fight, mainly through night attacks on the Russian camps, killing several Russians and taking their weapons.[26] Eventually, it became clear that the Yomuts had no chance. Those who did not perish fled and regrouped in the hope of returning one day to their land.

3. J. A. MacGahan's *Campaigning on the Oxus & the Fall of Khiva*

In 1873, the very year of Khiva's suppression by the Russians, Januarius Aloysius MacGahan was sent by his newspaper, the New York *Herald*, to cover the Russian advance into Central Asia. The *Herald* was one of the most established and significant newspapers in the United States at the time,[27] and MacGahan was already a veteran war correspondent having covered the Franco-Prussian war. He was later to earn fame as the reporter of the Turkish massacres in Bulgaria.[28] Before embarking upon his journey to Central Asia, MacGahan did his best to learn about this unfamiliar territory. He read as much as he could, met well-known experts in Europe, such as the renowned Hungarian scholar and explorer Arminius Vambéry, and maintained a correspondence with Eugene

25 BAYĀNĪ, f. 468a–469a.

26 BAYĀNĪ, f. 470b.

27 The *Herald* would later merge with the *Tribune* and eventually, after various reincarnations, become the *International Herald Tribune*.

28 About MacGahan's career see WALKER, 1988.

Schuyler, the American charge d'affaire in St. Petersburg. Having gained favor with the Russian authorities, MacGahan received von Kaufman's permission to accompany and document the Russian campaign against Khiva. He joined Kaufman's column, attacking Khiva from the east, and was later granted permission to follow the expedition against the Yomuts, riding side by side Prince Eugene, a commander of one of the Cossack *sotnia*s.

Back in New York in 1874, MacGahan published his eyewitness account from the field in a book titled *Campaigning on the Oxus & the Fall of Khiva.*[29] His testimony has been an invaluable source for exploring the history of the conquest and the atrocities that followed. The book was complemented by pictures drawn by Vasily Vasilievich Vereshchagin, a famed Russian soldier and painter, whose pictures had been published originally in the *Illustrated London News*, *The Graphic* and other European newspapers that were enthusiastically following Russia's advance into Central Asia.

4. Muḥammad Yūsuf Bek Bayānī and J. A. MacGahan: Their Improbable Meeting.

Reading Bayānī's account, it became increasingly clear that the Khivan author had in fact based – at least in part – his Chaghatay Turkic account of the Russian conquest of Khiva and the massacre of the Yomut Turkmens on the American correspondent's book, written in English some forty years earlier. In the following pages I will demonstrate how I came to this conclusion, how Bayānī got access to such far removed a material, and the implications of such a peculiar and unexpected association.

Wording and Phrasing: The Meeting of General von Kaufman and the Khan of Khiva

Both works – Bayānī's and MacGahan's – bear a striking similarity in their descriptions of a variety of events. The example I chose to retell here is the historic meeting between the Khan of Khiva, Muḥammad Raḥīm Bahādur Khan, and his Russian nemesis, General von Kaufman, held after the latter had already secured Russia's position in Khorezm's capital, and the former returned from his asylum with the Turkmens. The memorable encounter took place in the Khan's summer

29 MACGAHAN, 1874.

palace in Khiva, in a small pavilion shadowed by mature trees. MacGahan describes the conversation that ensued between the two,

> "Well, Khan, you see, I have come to see you at last, as I wrote you I would, three years ago."
>
> KHAN. Yes; Allah has willed it.
>
> KAUFMANN. No, Khan, there you are mistaken. Allah had very little to do with it. You have brought it upon yourself. If you had listened to my counsel three years ago, and acceded to my just demands, you would never have seen me here. In other words, if you had done as I advised you, Allah would not have willed it.
>
> KHAN. The pleasure of seeing the Yarim-Padshah is so great, that I could wish nothing changed.
>
> KAUFMANN (with a laugh). "The pleasure, I assure you, Khan, is mutual. But now let us proceed to business. What are you going to do? What do you wish to do?
>
> KHAN If I could wish for anything, it would be to become a subject of the Great White Tsar.[30]

Although Bayānī stresses in his introduction to the conversation the great honor that von Kaufman lavished upon the khan, gestures that are noticeably absent from other sources, the rest of the conversation looks remarkably similar to MacGahan's account,

> Kaufman said, "I have planned to come here with my army for three years and now I have come."
>
> The Khan said, "It is the will of God."
>
> Kaufman said, "If you had understood the meaning of my letter three years ago, you would never have seen me, and God would not have made me come here."
>
> The Khan said, "Nothing remains hidden from the will of God. In any case, I am pleased to see you."
>
> Kaufman smiled and said, "The pleasure is not yours alone, it is mine as well. If we continue in this friendly manner, we may be able to turn harm into good."
>
> They ate for a while and then the Khan expressed his country's submission by saying, "We are at the Emperor's command."[31]

Clearly, the conversation is described in a similar manner, with almost the exact same rhetoric. Since Russian sources describe the meeting in some detail, I was at first inclined to think that both MacGahan and Bayānī relied upon Russian sources to bring this conversation to light. Such a possibility would not seem too far fetched, as MacGahan affirms that he occasionally needed to rely upon Rus-

30 MACGAHAN, 1874:276.

31 BAYĀNĪ, f. 464a.

sian sources in order to corroborate information that was not readily accessible to him, and Bayānī may have had access to such sources in early twentieth-century Khiva. However, the following choices of war scenes persuaded me that Bayānī had direct access to the American's narrative.

The Choice of War Scenes

Bayānī chose to depict scenes of war and strife that essentially replicate MacGahan's testimony. The atmosphere in the battlefield was chaotic, affording the eyewitness ample opportunities to describe different anecdotes or specific incidents. And yet, Bayānī chose to fix his attention on the same scenes illustrated by MacGahan, that presumably Bayānī would otherwise have no way of knowing. For example, MacGahan describes the following horrifying drama,

> In the marsh there are twenty or thirty women and children, up to their necks in water, trying to hide among the weeds and grass, begging for their lives, and screaming in the most pitiful manner. The Cossacks have already passed, paying no attention to them. One villainous-looking brute, however, had dropped out of the ranks, and leveling his piece as he sat on his horse, deliberately took aim at the screaming group, and before I could stop him pulled the trigger.[32]

And, following on the same page,

> A few yards further on there are four Cossacks around a Turcoman. He has already been beaten to his knees, and weapon he has none. To the four sabers that are hacking at him he can offer only the resistance of his arms; but he utters no word of entreaty. It is terrible. Blow after blow they shower down on his head without avail, as though their sabers were tin. Will they never have done?[33]

Bayānī follows MacGahan almost to the letter, in his description of the stupefying drama,

> There was a small lake there, with over twenty women, hugging their children, having entered the lake and gone further into the water hoping to conceal them. The Russians noticed them and began shooting and killing them.[34]

32 MACGAHAN, 1874:364.
33 *Ibid.*
34 BAYĀNĪ, f. 469b.

And, following on the same page,

> At that time four Cossacks surrounded a Yomut, and began striking him with their sabers from every side. He had no weapon in his hands, and they wounded him a great deal, blood was flowing from his hands and body.[35]

Undoubtedly, choosing to concentrate on the same scenes of war in the same immediate sequence makes the similarity between the two works more than coincidental. It is quite clear, therefore, that Bayānī had access to MacGahan's account although the possibility of him having at his disposal (and being able to consult) the English original, published in New York in 1874, seems almost unimaginable.

A Clue in MacGahan's Ottoman Turkish Translation

Throughout his narrative, Bayānī uses almost a perfect transliteration into the Arabic script of the numerous Russian names and terms. He regularly repeats military words utilized by the Russians, such as *imperator*, *saldat*, *sotnia*, *artileria*, *rusia*, *qozaq*, *general*, and so forth, as well as the names of the participating commanders and high officers, such as Verevkin, Golovachev, Kaufman, and many others. Given the Russian ethnographer Samoilovitch's testimony that Bayānī knew Russian well, and the fact that Bayānī wrote his history in the 1910s, when the khanate of Khiva had been a protectorate of Russia for over forty years, Bayānī's command of the Russian language is not very surprising. It would have been therefore quite natural to assume, as we hinted above, that if indeed Bayānī relied, at least in part, on MacGahan's account, he would not have relied upon the English original but on the Russian translation of the American correspondent's book, published in Moscow already in 1875.[36] However, one name and title stand out and betray Bayānī's source. In the *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī* Bayānī mentions in Chaghatay – in perfect Arabic script transliteration – the name of the commander of one of the Cossack *sotnia*s as "Prince Eugene." The same "Prince Eugene" whom MacGahan had accompanied on his foray into the Yomut lands. The Russian translation would never acknowledge one of their own as "Prince Eugene." The "prince" was clearly known in Russia as Knyaz Evgenii. Where, then, would Bayānī have access to the literal transliteration of "Prince Eugene" unless he had consulted the English publication?

35 BAYĀNĪ, ff. 469b–470a.

36 MAK-GAKHAN, 1875.

The probable answer is that Bayānī had access to MacGahan's account in its Ottoman Turkish translation, published in Istanbul the very year when the Russian translation appeared (namely, 1875) under the title *Hive seyahetnamesi ve tarihi*.[37] Indeed, the Ottoman Turkish translation, naturally in Arabic script, represents all the names mentioned in MacGahan's account in almost the exact manner in which they appear in the English text. Prince Eugene makes his appearance as well,[38] and is rendered in precisely the same way in the Chaghatay account, several decades later. It seems clear, therefore, that Bayānī had at his disposal a copy of MacGahan's Ottoman Turkish translation, and apparently borrowed from it a great deal.

The Allocation of Blame and Bayānī's Delicate Position

As much as he was horrified by the atrocities, J. A. MacGahan felt that the Russian troops were relatively well-behaved, and that General Golovachev himself was a rather compassionate person. MacGahan reported that Golovachev hesitated a long time before giving the order to strike, a hesitation that, MacGahan estimated, was meant to give the Yomuts enough time to escape the ordeal. Golovachev, MacGahan wrote, would have "gladly spared" the many women and children involved.[39] Eugene Schuyler supported his compatriot's assertion and added that, "General Golovatchef personally is innocent of the savagery which accompanied the Turkoman campaign. He did nothing but unwillingly obey imperative orders, and tried rather to mitigate than to increase their effect."[40] The blame for the massacre and the violence was laid squarely on the shoulders of the Cossacks, and not their commanders, although Schuyler also held General von Kaufman responsible for giving the order to attack.

Bayānī gives the impression to make a similar distinction between the Russians and the Cossacks. He attributed the atrocities to the Cossacks, whereas the Russian generals always expressed their dismay at the turn of events. At no point did Bayānī openly criticize the Russians for having decided to conquer Khiva or for their expedition against the Yomuts. Bayānī described General Golovachev's humane nature, and related – much like MacGahan – that after Golovachev had reached Ghaziabad he stopped and said, "It is not good to fight with the Yomuts, we shall stop here and perhaps they will get news of our advance and pay the

37 MACGAHAN, 1875.
38 MACGAHAN, 1875:331.
39 MACGAHAN, 1874:360.
40 SCHUYLER, 1874, II:363.

indemnities. However, if they want a fight we shall give them one." The next day, the Yomuts showed no sign that they were about to pay the reparations, and Golovachev set out and together with his army entered the territory of the Yomuts. Even at the height of battle, when the Cossacks reported back to the general, he censured their actions, saying, "I did not tell you to burn their crops and their houses or to massacre their women and children. Now, what is done is done, there is nothing we can do."[41]

The allocation of blame raises the more general matter of Bayānī's delicate position in the hierarchy of the khanate of Khiva and his ability to write an "objective" account of the conquest. His composition, as noted, was written at a time when the khanate of Khiva was a protectorate under Russian indirect rule, and yet there was heavy Russian involvement in some of the affairs of the khanate. Bayānī was therefore writing in an environment that was not altogether comfortable. The region was, in part, a colonized country, so one may be tempted to examine the *Shajara* in light of post-colonial theory and subaltern studies. The general assumption of such theories has been that, the literature produced by the colonizing culture or that was influenced by the colonizing culture tended to distort the experience and realities of the indigenous population, as well as to inscribe their inferiority. The so-called indigenous voice attempted to articulate its identity and reclaim its past vis-à-vis the colonial masters, as well as the native elites. It has been generally assumed that such literature tended to appropriate the language, images, scenes, traditions and so forth of the colonial ruler, and that authors of such literary works would usually find themselves in an awkward position, as they both identified with and rejected their imperial lords.

Bayānī shared, of course, in the position of power, and was clearly a part of the elite when he attempted to re-create the history of his country. He was indeed influenced, to a certain extent, by Russian and Western styles. His composition contains many foreign words, and he even uses dots and commas throughout the narrative, a true novelty in such manuscripts. At the same time, we must emphasize that the incentive to produce the history of Khiva came from within, from the old elite, or the khan. This demand conformed to the traditional system, even if the directive was to render the work in a different style, so it would be more accessible to the people. Any hint of Russian involvement in the process in order to perhaps create a unified, favorable attitude in Khiva towards the Empire, is absent.

41 BAYĀNĪ, f. 469a.

Bayānī wrote in Chaghatay, continuing a tradition that went back to sixteenth-century Khiva, and the style of his presentation, conforming to the genre of "general history," also suggests that he did not really compromise the conventional way of writing history. Furthermore, Bayānī did not approve of the method of literary production offered by the Russians, namely, print. He still put pen to paper in the old-fashioned, hand-written way, and did not consider using the printing press, an innovation introduced to Khiva by the Russians already in the 1880s. This supports the assumption that the most widely acceptable forms of the literary culture were still the manuscripts, even in the early 1910s.

Nevertheless, Bayānī's composition also marks a turning point in historical production in Khiva. This essay suggests that the Khivans began to utilize external sources of information that had nothing to do with the organic body of materials that they would normally use to write down their history, such as older court chronicles, "classical" reference works from Central Asia and Iran, documents, stories, popular knowledge, and local eyewitnesses. Oddly enough, the borrowing seems to have been from the most unlikely source, that is to say, an American journalist's account, even if this "loan" was mediated by the Ottoman Turkish rendering of the book. The move to rely on more diverse sources of information in Central Asian historiography would have caused the Khivans to unknowingly rely on an Ohio-born journalist as the storyteller of their most depressing hour. If Orient and Occident are allegedly oppositional terms, and Orientalism is a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient," how should one interpret this particular turn of events?

Of course, MacGahan's perspective and Bayānī's point of view were very different. In order to accommodate this new set of materials to Khivan reality, Bayānī needed to modify not only some of the contents, but also the style of presentation. Accordingly, Bayānī would occasionally quote from the Qur'an, provide a domestic perspective on peoples and locales, and give more credit to the Khivan military than they deserved. Bayānī's position becomes particularly clear in his description of Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan's meeting with von Kaufman. The Khivan author described how "[Kaufman] shook his [i.e., the khan's] hand and greeted him, and with utmost respect and highest regard and the greatest esteem and appreciation he showed him into the pavilion. He made him sit on a cushion a little higher than himself, and he himself sat on the carpet."[42] MacGahan, on the on the other hand, rendered the sense that the khan was greatly humiliated, as "he rode humbly enough into his own garden [...] dis-

42 BAYĀNĪ, ff. 463b–464a.

mounted [...] and knelt before Kaufman [...] humbly he sat before Kaufman scarcely daring to look him in [his] face [...]".[43]

This same gap is evident in the very different descriptions of the outcome of the scenes that we have described earlier. MacGahan narrated how he bravely intervened to stop one of the Cossacks from shooting at the helpless women in the marsh. "I rode up," MacGahan related, "and cutting him across the face with my riding-whip, ordered him to his sotnia."[44] Bayānī described a much more gruesome outcome, dispensing with any outside intervention. While MacGahan was standing helplessly, watching the lone Yomut being tortured to death by four Cossacks, Bayānī decided to portray the heroic nature of the Yomut man, who was suddenly imbued with divine strength and was able to kill his attackers, only to succumb to a cowardly stab in the back. Naturally, different audiences would have diverse appreciation for the respective texts, as well as different identification with their individual heroes (in this case, MacGahan and the anonymous Turkmen).

Conclusion

Bayānī's *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī* is still absent from Russian and Western presentations of the conquest of Khiva. The abundance of Russian and Western primary sources that historians have had at their disposal may have helped them ignore the indigenous accounts, but the importance of the *Shajara-i Khorezmshāhī* lies precisely in its unique perspective, the perspective of the conquered. The account underscores the decision-making process in the khanate, the interaction among local personalities and ethnic groups, and parts of the story are not mentioned elsewhere. Bayānī sheds light not only on the conquest of the Khanate of Khiva, but also on the Turkmens' role as the defenders of Khiva, the protectors of the Khan and, eventually, as those who had suffered the most from the Russian brutality. For an Uzbek aristocrat like Bayānī to acknowledge the role of the Turkmens may have been significant for internal ethnic relations in the Khanate of Khiva. Finally, it is important to remember that this account was designed to be read by (or for) the general public. This would have been one of their sources of information for the history of Khorezm, the Russian conquest of

43 MACGAHAN, 1874:275.
44 MACGAHAN, 1874:364.

the region and the Turkmen suffering. As such, it is important to be able to understand what was available to them.

What happened to Bayānī's account? Was it used by the khan? Who was its audience? These questions are difficult to answer since there is no evidence – or none that I have come across – to verify the circulation of the narrative. Bayānī finished his work in 1914. Two years later, some of the most intense Turkmen rebellions broke out in Khiva, in the course of which the khan's palace was plundered. With only a single copy of the work in existence, the composition may not have circulated very far. Then again, the number of copies that survived from this period is usually fairly small for other works as well. Bayānī's narrative deserves further study and should ultimately be compared to other sources on the conquest from Bukhara and Khoqand. Such comparison will surely contribute to our understanding of the history of the peoples of Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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