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THE MONGHŌL-QALMĀQ BAYĀNĪ: A QING-ERA ISLAMIC ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MONGOLS AND TIBETANS

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Abstract

Treatments of the Mongols in the works of Inner Asian Muslim historians have typically focused on Chingisid dynastic history. Despite renewed and intensive Muslim contacts with the Tibetan Buddhist Oirats in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Muslim historians as a rule treated their Buddhist neighbors rather laconically in their historical works. Qurbān-ᶜAlī Khālidī's history and ethnography of the Mongols and Tibetans, titled *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī*, written at the end of the nineteenth century, constitutes a remarkable exception to this rule. Qurbān-ᶜAlī, a Tatar imam who lived in northern Xinjiang, based his work mainly on oral sources, and employed a critical methodology that fit squarely in the practice of traditional Islamic historiography (*ᶜilm-i tārīkh*). Qurbān-ᶜAlī's characterization of the Mongols and Tibetans as above all a single religious community adhering to the Tibetan Buddhist faith is also typical of his understanding of communities, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, as defined primarily in religious terms, and then subdivided by linguistic and tribal categories. His informants provide him with first-hand accounts of Mongol communities in western Mongolia and Xinjiang, and with eye-witness observations of Tibet.

Introduction

In Islamic historiography the recollection of relations between Muslim communities and their Mongol neighbors falls into two very distinct categories. The first is the recollection of the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth centuries, in which the Mongols are remembered as conquerors of Muslim realms. At the same time, they are remembered as the ancestors of the Chingisid dynasts who were so prominent in Muslim Inner Asia until the end of the eighteenth century. In this category the memory of the non-Muslim Mongol dynastic ancestors was tempered by the numerous cases of conversion to Islam of their descendants. Indeed, in some popular traditions Muslims even remembered Chingis Khan himself as a Muslim. Some of the works in this tradition were written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by court historians with direct access to sources in the Chingisid courts who were highly informed about Mongol histori-

cal traditions. Such histories remain some of the richest sources for Mongolia of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Muslim historians, particularly in Khorezm, recorded accounts of oral sources from among Muslim nomads that reflected earlier accounts relating events from the era of the Mongol conquest.[1] Generally though, Muslim historians lost interest in detailed accounts of events that took place in Mongolia after the dissolution of the Mongol world empire.

The second category of recollections of the Mongols deals with a second wave of Mongol conquests, that is, the expansion of the Oirat confederation across much of Muslim Inner Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Oirat expansion most strongly effected Muslim steppe communities, the Qazaqs, Bashkirs, Qïrghïz, Noghays, and Qaraqalpaqs, and consequently their wars with the now Tibetan Buddhist Oirats were in many respects the central features of the narratives in their oral epics. Unlike the treatment of the earlier Mongol conquerors, these communities remembered the Oirats as inveterate foes, as enemies of religion, and generally as the dangerous "other."[2] This attitude belies a more complex historical relationship, in which Muslim and Buddhist nomads themselves were able to coexist peacefully for long periods, and Muslim Chingisids among the Qazaqs especially often established marriage ties with their Oirat neighbors. However the emphasis in the collective memory was the legacy of conflict and war.

While Muslim historians of that era did address the political relationships between their communities and the Oirats, we find very few, if any descriptions of these Mongols, and especially of their social and religious institutions. For example, Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān, who has left us with important accounts of the Mongol tribes in the 12th and 13th centuries, provides only laconic accounts of his military and political contacts with the Oirats he faced as ruler of Khorezm in the mid-17th century.[3] Similarly, historians of Eastern Turkestan, whose communities were under direct Oirat rule in the eighteenth century, generally restricted their assessments of Mongols to political affairs, and depicted them simply as infidels without further qualification. This is evident in the eight-

1 Among these works are the *Shajara-yi Tūrk* of Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān and the *Chingīz-Nāma* of Ötemish Ḥājjī.

2 For a discussion of the religious image of the Qalmaqs in Qïrghïz oral epic tradition cf. DEWEESE, 1994:59–66; Qalmaqs also figure prominently in Qazaq oral tradition, primarily concerning political events of the eighteenth century; cf. KÖPEY-ULÏ, 2003–2006, vol. VIII:160–61, vol. IX:21–22, 46–50.

3 [ABŪ'L GHĀZĪ BAHĀDŪR KHĀN,] 1970:346–348.

eenth century work *Islām-Nāma,*[4] as well as in a later work by Muḥammad-Ṣādiq Kashghārī titled *Tazkīra-yi ʿAzīzān*, a hagiography devoted to the *khwājas* of Eastern Turkestan.[5] In the same way, Qazaq oral tradition regarding the Oirats is mainly restricted to political and military events in a narrow sense. However, in Inner Asia, where from the 16th century Muslim communities increasingly came under non-Muslim rule, it was the general rule for local Muslim historians writing histories of their communities to include very few details or descriptions in their historical or ethnographic surveys of their non-Muslim rulers.

Volga-Ural Muslims, too, were in close contact with Oirat communities, known in Russian sources as Kalmyks, and like their Central Asian co-religionists their historiography and oral traditions were equally laconic regarding their Buddhist neighbors, perhaps in part because Russian political hegemony in the region mitigated the military threat that the Oirats presented to Central Asians.[6] In the late 19th and early 20th centuries interest in the modern Mongols among Volga-Ural historians was selective, and to a significant degree ideologically influenced. Although there was a very large Buddhist Mongol presence in the Volga-Ural region, mainly consisting of Kalmyks, Muslim historians and, later, journalists devoted almost no attention to this group.[7] By contrast, Muslim authors inclined toward modernism showed more interest in the Buryats of eastern Siberia. Modernist and Russophile Muslims appear to have been influenced by Russian ethnographic literature about the Buryats, which depicted them as a particularly "progressive" nation among Russia's Asiatic subjects, a reputation Tatar intellectuals were eager to appropriate for their own community. Already in the 1860's the Qazaq Russophile Chokan Valikhanov's flawed, but influential, theories on Qazaq religion were modeled on an earlier work from 1846 on Buryat Shamanism by the Buryat scholar Dorzhi Banzarov.[8] Similarly, in his 1907 genealogical history of the Turkic and "Turanian" peoples, *Mufaṣṣal-i*

4 IBRAGIMOV, 1969:419–30.

5 Cf. [MUKHAMMED-SADÏQ QASHGHARI,] 2006:93–100. The same is true of later Turkic histories recounting Mongol participation in the Muslim rebellions in nineteenth century Eastern Turkestan; cf. also KUTLUKOV, 1987.

6 Fatykh Urmancheev contrasts the extensive treatment of the Oirats in Qazaq, Qïrghïz, and Siberian Tatar oral epics with their limited treatment on Kazan Tatar oral tradition; cf. URMANCHEEV, 1980:89–91.

7 This is even the case for local histories covering areas where large numbers of Kalmyks were located, such as NĪZHGHĀRŪTĪ, 1907; other historians did at least acknowledge the historical and current presence of Kalmyks in their vicinity; cf. FRANK, 2001:40, 55.

8 PRIVRATSKY, 2001:17–19.

qawm-i tūrkī, by Ḥasan-ᶜAṭā Gabashi, the author in his treatment of the Mongols provides only passing reference to the Oirats and the Mongols of China, devoting the bulk of the section to the Buryats, in this case based entirely on Russian ethnographic literature.[9] In similar fashion the reformist Tatar journal *Shūra's* solitary article on the modern Mongols was also devoted to the Buryats.[10] Among modernist and nationalist scholars, it seems evident that the Mongols' status as non-Turkic and non-Muslim also excluded them from more detailed attention, unless they could be seen as "progressive."

The Work and its sources

The topic of this study is a work that is highly uncharacteristic of the Inner Asian Muslim historiography discussed above, in that it is devoted exclusively to the history and ethnography of the Mongols, as well as to the Tibetans. It is a Turkic treatise titled *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* (Account of the Qalmaq-Mongols). This work is based primarily on oral sources, and represents an attempt to depict the Mongols as a religious community, but also in historical and ethnographic terms. The complete work constitutes one of the original five sections that make up a historical compendium titled *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqī*. Although the work was composed in Xinjiang, it was published in the Russian city of Kazan, in 1910. It differs substantially from the types of Turkic histories produced in Xinjiang at the time that tended to focus primarily on political events surrounding the Chinese conquest of Kashgaria in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By contrast, *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqī* focuses not only on Kashgaria, but also northern Xinjiang, the Qazaq steppe as a whole, and the Ferghana Valley, as well as on non-Muslim peoples, including the Mongols and Chinese.

The author of the *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqī* was Qurbān-ᶜAlī Khālidī (1846–1913), an ethnic Tatar born in the town of Ayaguz (Sergiopol') in the Russian-controlled portion of the Qazaq steppe. In 1874 he moved permanently to the town of Chuguchak (Chawchak in Turkic sources, and Tacheng, or Tarbaghatai, in Qing sources), in the Chinese-controlled portion of the Qazaq steppe, where he served as *mudarris* and *qāżī*, and as assistant to the Russian consuls located there. Qurbān-ᶜAlī is the author of several important historical

9 The work was originally printed in Ufa in 1917. I have used the Uzbek edition, [ABUSHIY,] 1995:179–181.

10 Cf. BURYĀT MILLATĪ, 1909.

and ethnographic works that touch upon the history of the Xinjiang, the Ferghana Valley, and the Qazaq Steppe. He is also the author of important ethnographic works on the Qazaqs and the Hui Muslims.[11] Qurbān-ᶜAlī Khālidī is a historian who eludes simple categorization. On the one had he was a rationalist who was solidly grounded in the Islamic science of history (*ᶜilm-i tārīkh*), which involved a disciplined and critical evaluation of oral sources. At the same time, he ventured beyond the limits of traditional historical topics, including the *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī*. The result is a body of highly original work that avoids the tendency of modernists to produce derivative history and literature based on the often uncritical imitation of Russian and European sources.

The *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqī* is mainly devoted to the history of Muslims. However, it's clear that from his earliest inception he intended to include the *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* in the work, since he counts the Mongols among the five constituent "Oriental Peoples" after whom his book takes its title. Qurbān-ᶜAlī began collecting information on the contemporary Mongols as early as 1882, according to evidence within the text itself. In addition to the finished printed work, at least four manuscript draft copies are known to exist. The drafts are all Qurbān-ᶜAlī's autographs, and are found among his un-cataloged papers in Almaty at the Research Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan.[12] One of these drafts is undated, but appears to be the earliest copy, and bears the title *Qālmūq bayānī*.[13] The other three drafts are all titled *Monghōl-Qalmāq bayānī*, and date from 21 December 1893,[14] 11 January 1895,[15] and 1 January 1896 respectively.[16] The last draft is the most extensive of the four. As a result, the published text appears to have been substantially completed already before the end of the nineteenth century.

The *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* is based mainly on oral sources and correspondence that Qurbān-ᶜAlī collected, as well as on his own observations. In this regard the treatise is typical of his other works. Qurbān-ᶜAlī's methodology as a historian is remarkable for its thoughtfulness and acuity. While Qurbān-ᶜAlī was no modernist, he was very clearly a rationalist committed to an empirical and verifiable use of historical sources. His critical use of oral sources is a character-

11 For a more detailed treatment of Qurbān-ᶜAlī's biography and bibliography, [QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ,] 2005:ix–xiii.

12 For a brief description of this collection, cf. FRANK, 2008.

13 NB AN RK, f. 1439, d. 1, ff. 191b–197b.

14 NB AN RK, f. 1439, d. 4, ff. 17b–22a

15 NB AN RK, f. 1439, d. 4, ff. 1b–8a.

16 NB AN RK, f. 1439, d. 4, ff. 9b–16b.

istic feature of his methodology. While the use of oral sources distinguishes Muslim "traditionalist" historians of that era from their modernist counterparts, who more typically used Russian sources, Qurbān-ᶜAlī's use of oral sources stands out in its scale and detail. In collecting oral sources for the history of Muslim communities, Qurbān-ᶜAlī had the benefit of numerous informants well acquainted with the traditions of their own communities, and in fact he credits the growing ability of merchants to travel in Inner Asia with his very ability to compile his history.[17] Still because of linguistic and cultural barriers, Qurbān-ᶜAlī's information on the Mongols is certainly more limited than his more detailed histories on Muslim communities. In separate chapters devoted to Chinese and Japanese history he uses mainly written sources, including Chinese language materials that a Hui associate was able to translate for him. In the case of the *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* he appears to primarily rely on several Muslim informants, and on at least one Mongol informant. However, he also appears to use some Islamic literary sources, although his documentation of these is imprecise.

He obtained much of his oral material from three Muslim merchants in the western Mongolian town of Kobdo, which at the beginning of the 20th century had become a significant trading center for merchants from Russia. At that time Kobdo had its own Russian consul and a community of Russian subjects who enjoyed extra-territorial rights established in the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg.[18] These merchants included some Muslims, probably Tatars, who were linked to the chief commercial center of Semipalatinsk via Zaisan (on Russian territory) and Burchum (on Chinese territory). Three of these merchants, ᶜIzzatullāh Afandī, Mullā Fatḥullāh, and Ṣāliḥ Ākhūnd provided Qurbān-ᶜAlī with their first-hand observations about Mongol social structure and religious organization. Another informant, a Central Asian merchant in Chuguchak named Ḥājjī Malla, provided Qurbān-ᶜAlī with his remarkable first-hand observations of Tibet.

If Qurbān-ᶜAlī's analytic categories, centered primarily on religious conceptions and models and on sources, and based primarily on eye-witness observation and oral informants, are mainly typical of "traditional" Muslim historians, his interest in the history and ethnography of his Buddhist neighbors should not be understood as a sign of nascent "modernism." Qurbān-ᶜAlī himself attributes the growth of commerce, and the penetration of Muslim merchants into Mongolia and Tibet at the main factors that made such a history possible. However, there is no reason to attribute Qurbān-ᶜAlī's interest in the Mongols as a substan-

17 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:268.

18 On trade in Kobdo in this era cf. ISTORIIA KAZAKHSTANA, 2000:503; GALIEV, 2003:76–77.

tial shift away from traditional modes of Islamic historical thought. Indeed, as we have seen, Islamic modernists and reformers showed no more interest, and perhaps even less, in their Buddhist neighbors than their "traditionalist" predecessors.

Mongol and Tibetan Buddhist ethnic divisions

Qurbān-ᶜAlī acknowledges the problems inherent in the use of the terms "Monghōl" and "Qalmāq," although ultimately he uses the two terms interchangeably in his treatise. He also used the Russian-derived term "Qālmūq," derived from the Turkic form "Qalmāq," mainly to refer to Tibetans. He regards the Qalmaqs as a subdivision of the Mongols, that is, the Qalmaqs refer to the Western Mongols, but he points out that it is widely believed that the Mongols are a subdivision of the Qalmaqs. In the first version, Qalmaq is understood as a tribal or ethnic subdivision of the Mongols, while in the latter version the term Qalmaq is a religious category comprising Tibetan Buddhists at large, and the Mongols are understood as one subdivision of the larger Tibetan Buddhist community.[19] Both views are in fact rooted in Turkic Muslim historical tradition. Qurbān-ᶜAlī's basis for an ethnic definition is based on genealogical tradition, where the name "Mongol" derives from a common ancestor of the Turks and Mongols, Moghol Khan (or Moghol-Tatar in other versions). He points out that the term "Mongol" was generally unknown among Muslims, who used the term Qalmaq exclusively to refer collectively to Mongols and Tibetan Buddhists, and its very etymology was based on a religious definition. Inner Asian Muslims understood the term to be derived from the verb "*qalmaq*," meaning "to remain." Muslims believed that the ancestors of both the Muslim nomads and Mongols were given a choice to accept Islam; the Mongols declared that they would "remain" in their old faith, and henceforth became a separate people.[20] Qurbān-ᶜAlī writes the following is this regard:

> There is a tradition that says that these were called "Qalmaqs" because they did not become Muslims and remained pagans ["qalmaq" means "to remain" in Turkic]. Thus, the khans who converted to Islam did preach to their people with compulsion and violence, but advised and edified them with moderation and justice, and when they had invited them to con-

19 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:287.

20 DEWEESE, 1994:362.

> vert, they said, "Give us time some time, and let us discuss it." At the assembly there were two factions. One faction replied "Let us convert to Islam," and the other faction said "Let's remain in our original religion." They say that their fault was to have remained in paganism, and they were all called by the general name "Qalmaq." This is a well-known tradition among the Qazaqs and the Qalmaqs.[21]

He also understands the ethnic term "Mongol" to be derived from the name of an ancestor of the Mongols, Moghol Khan. This tradition is well established in Turkic historical tradition, and appears to be of some antiquity.[22] In Qurbān-ᶜAlī's understanding, it was only after they rejected Islam that the Qalmaqs adopted Tibetan Buddhism, and as a result the understanding of the term "Qalmaq" comes to include all adherents of Tibetan Buddhism. Thus, among Muslims the name Qalmaq comprises a genealogical component, that is, the descendants of Moghol Khan, and also a religious component, comprising Tibetan Buddhists as a whole, which include not only Mongols, but also Tibetans and even some Buddhist Turkic groups of the Altai region. Overall, the term is flexible and sometimes imprecise, but whatever its origin, Qurbān-ᶜAlī uses the term to indicate Tibetan Buddhists, including both Mongols and Tibetans.

In the history the "Qalmaqs" as a whole are divided broadly between Mongols [*Mongghōllar*] and Tibetans (*Tibet Qalmūqlarī*). From his perspective as a resident of northern Jungaria, Qurbān-ᶜAlī understands these two groups to be geographically separated by Kashgaria (Altï Shahr), and he seems unaware that further east, especially the Amdo region was an extensive ethnic contact area for Tibetans and Mongols. Because his sources for the Tibetans are so limited, he does not further subdivide that group, but devotes most of his attention to the Mongols.

One of his informants, ᶜIzzatullāh Afandī, a merchant in Kobdo, described the Mongols as being divided into for major groups corresponding to the cardinal points, and included the Manchus among them. These were Eastern Dong Dazi (*Dōng Dāzū*) comprising the Manchus, the Western Xi Dazi (*Shū Dāzū*) comprising the Mongols proper, the Southern Zang Dazi (*Zāng Dāzū*) compris-

21 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:271.

22 The account of Moghol Khan is well documented in Turkic oral tradition, most notably in Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān's Turkmen genealogy *Shajara-yi atrak*; cf. [ABŪ'L GHĀZĪ BAHĀDŪR KHĀN,] 1991:15.

ing the Tanghuts (*Tāngghūt*), and the Northern Zung Dazi (*Zūng Dāzū*) comprising the Solon (*Sōlāng*).[23]

Regarding their geographic distribution, he indicates that the northern and southern Qalmāqs are divided by Kashgharia (*Āltī Shahr*) and some of the Chinese cities, but that most of them reside in Tibet. He counts the Mongols in Xinjiang as living in the north, in the Ili region, in the environs of Qarashahr, and in the Saghri, Sayqan, and Altai Mountains, in the Kobdo and Uliasutay regions, and in the environs of Beijing. He also places them in the Urgha region and as far as Kiakhta and Kamchatka. Regarding their sacred geography, he identifies their main pilgrimage site as being a monastery near Urgha, adding that this is where they perform their circumambulations (*ṭawwāf*).[24]

Elsewhere Qurbān-ᶜAlī provides a more detailed division of the Qalmaqs, apparently based on his own observations of their tribal divisions. These are: Jüünghar (*Jūnghār*), Khoshoud (*Khōshāwit*), Oirad (*Ōyrāt*), Torgha'ud (*Ṭōrghā'ūt*), Uriyangkhai (*Urāngqāy*), Mangghud (*Mānghūt*), Tangghud (*Tānghūt*), Dörböd (*Dōrbōt*), Khoyid (*Khōyit*), Kök Monchag (*Kōk Mōnchuq*), Zakhachin (*Zāqchīn*), Khalkha (*Qālqa*), and Khalimag (*Qalmāq*). He lists three other groups, *Ulgūt*, which may correspond to the Ögeled or Ölööd Mongols, and *Ūymāt* and *B.lā'ūt*, which we are unable to identify. This list provides the most detail on the Western Mongol groupings, of which Qurbān-ᶜAlī was in personal contact. He includes in this list of Mongols a Turkic group, the Uriyangkhai (today known as Tuvans) who at the time were part of the Qing Empires and were Tibetan Buddhists.[25]

Qurbān-ᶜAlī emphasized that Mongols and Tibetans made up a substantial part of the Qing Empire, but he admits difficulty in determining how substantial.

> Those who are in the south, the majority of them, are the Qalmaqs who live in the province of Tibet. Their number is not known to me. The Mongols who live in our region, that is, to the northeast of Kashgharia, are divided among forty-six *wāngs*. Forty-two of them extend to Kākhta and "*Mīmāchīn*" [Manchuria?], north of the cities of Qōbdo and Ulāsutāy and Ūrgha, and to the Pacific Ocean [*muḥīt-i sharqī*]. Mullā Fatḥullāh said that the Russian merchants in Kobdo estimated that in total they number fifteen or sixteen million. Others say that of the eighteen provinces [*sīng*] in China eight of them are Mongol and ten of their provinces [*sīng*] belong to others [non-Mongols]. This comprises all of the Mongols, in the north, south, west and east. Thus, close to half of the Chinese state is Mongol. Four *wāngs*

23 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:275. The author wishes to thank Chris Atwood for his help in explaining Mongol vocabulary.

24 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:277.

25 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:268.

are [among] the western Mongols. They live in Qulja, Qarashahr, and in Qāw.r.gha, Qūbūq, and Sāghrī. When some *wāng* from among these died, he had no sons, and while his wife ruled in his place, she became pregnant a few years later, and regarding this she wrote a letter to the Emperor [Ijin Khān] in Beijing that is, she submitted a petition that said, "One night I saw you in a dream. I lay with someone in bed and then I became pregnant." The khan read this petition, completely read the statement, and he sent silver ingots, and precious things as gifts, and said, "You saw me in your dream and became pregnant, may your child be mine, and may it occupy the place of your husband. May you never see me in your dream again, and if you do see me again, and you lay with me, I will kill you and your child. Presently the *wāng* of the western Ṭōrghā'ūts is that boy. They say that today, in this year of 1300 AH [1882–83 CE] he is in his thirties."[26]

Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy, monasteries, and practices

Qurbān-ᶜAlī devoted a substantial portion of his ethnography to Mongol religion. He addresses both the historical and ethnographic aspects of Mongol belief, but his approach to Mongol religion reflects many presuppositions characteristic of Inner Asian Islamic tradition. According to his understanding before the Mongols converted to Buddhism they were Manicheans, which he refers to as *majūs* or *mūgh*. This categorization in fact corresponds closely to the religious taxonomy of the Volga-Ural Muslims, who commonly referred to their own ancestors as "*majūs*." During the modern period, down to the early 20th century, they also used this term to refer to their "unbaptized" or "pagan" Chuvash and Finno-Ugrian neighbors because according to their historical traditions, the ancestors of these communities had rejected Islam and these communities retained this status.[27] In the same manner as the etymology of the ethnonym Qalmaq corresponds to this same idea. Thus, Qurbān-ᶜAlī's categorization of pre-Buddhist Mongols as *majūs* is broadly consistent with Inner Asian Muslim historical traditions. In Qurbān-ᶜAlī's account there is some conflation of Manichean and Buddhist history. We read that a certain Mānī lived in Tibet and made the local people "fire-worshippers" (*ātashparast*).[28] However, Qurbān-ᶜAlī's general discussion of Buddhist history and theology is confused, with Buddha and Zoroaster sometimes conflated as the same figure. Qurbān-ᶜAlī himself indicates that the

26 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:286–287.

27 FRANK, 1998:62, 167.

28 This is usually a synonym for *majūs*.

Islamic sources he consulted fail to distinguish between Manichaeism and Buddhism, and he admits their inadequacy.[29]

The history identifies two centers of Mongol Buddhism, the first being Urga, in Mongolia, and the second being Tibet as a whole. With respect to Tibet Qurbān-ᶜAlī writes, "In ancient times the capital of Mongolia was the city of Tamghāch; they call it Zū in Qalmaq and today it is called Tibet. In their understanding Tibet is a place that confers blessings."[30] Regarding Urga, Qurbān-ᶜAlī understands this to be a monastery roughly equivalent to Mecca's place for Muslims when he writes,

> For all of them their Zū, that is, the place where they pray, and where they circumambulate, which in the south is Tibet, that is, their place of pilgrimage is the city of Urghā. The Qalmaqs call this "Dā Kūra." It means "Great Būrkhān. There is the word "Kūra," it's [origin] is unknown, and it means "idol." Dā Kūra signifies their great *gēgān*, that is, their great cleric [*ᶜālim*] and their great prince [*wāng*]. Their small refuges [*maljā'*] are numerous. They call those "*kūra*" as well. For example, they will build a temple someplace, set up one or two hundred yurts around it, and the lamas and *getsuls* will live their to worship. They even call it a "*qūrūl*." The idol [*ṣanam*] that is the temple itself and inside of the temple they call "*būrkhān*." It is a specific name.[31]

ᶜIzzatullāh, the Muslim merchant on Kobdo, provided Qurbān-ᶜAlī with a list of twenty-one *gegeens* he knew to exist among the Mongols. For the sake of comparison, the Russian traveler Potanin identified eight *gegeens* among the Western Mongols.[32] These were 1) Ilgysen-gegeen, who resided along the upper reaches of the Eter River, 2) Dzhakhyndee-gegeen, on the Shargyn-gol, a tributary of the Tel'gir, 3) Narbandzhin-gegeen on the Dzabkhyn, in the section called Tsagan-tokha, southwest of Uliasutai, 4) Lamyn-gegeen on the southern slopes of the Bain-dziurku Mountain, 5) Zain-gegeen on the Tamir River, 6) Nomokhan gegeen, or Nomon-kha gegeen: his is east of the Burkhan-ola Mountain, in the eastern Altai. There were another two *gegeens* in Kobdo district. Argegeen lived in Kobdo proper at the expense of the Emperor on Beijing, and

29 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:272. He identified two works as general sources on the history of Buddhism:the *Tārīkh-i Khayrullāh* and the *Malāl-i nakhl,* neither of which we have been able to identify.

30 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:267.

31 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:277.

32 These names are given according to Potanin's Russian spellings. A *gegeen* is a Buddhist cleric believed to be a reincarnation.

Tsagan-gegeen lived in the Shar-sume Monastery in the Altai, on the Kran River, a tributary of the Black Irtysh.[33]

ᶜIzzatullāh informed Qurbān-ᶜAlī that there was a total of forty-two *gegeens*, half of whom were male and half of whom were female, although he only provides the names of the male *gegeens*, some of these names are identifiable.[34]

1) Bōghdō Gēgān[35]
2) Jāqū Gēgān[36]
3) Bāla Nār Gēgān
4) Dāylū Gēgān
5) Chīr.n T.y.n Gēgān
6) Lāmīm.yūn Gēgān[37]
7) Zūyūn Gēgān[38]
8) Nārūn Khūtūqdū Gēgān[39]
9) Āruyin Gēgān[40]
10) Jāmbō Gēgān
11) Jōng Sūjūngdū Nōmōn Khān Gēgān[41]
12) Bīkūr Nōmūn
13) Chārīn Kāyān Chū Gēgān
14) Khūtūqdū Gēgān[42]
15) Dōshōkōn Gēgān
16) Dāyin Dīrkō Gēgān[43]
17) Ārūn Chōl Khōbōlōghān Gēgān
18) Yārdūq Kōsh Gēgān
19) Mādūchīr Gēgān[44]
20) Jānjā Gēgān[45]

33 POTANIN, 1881, vol. II:78–79.

34 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:275–276; Qurbān-ᶜAlī speculates that ᶜIzzatullāh was unable to obtain the names of the female *gegeens* because they were *nāmaḥrum* to him, that is, they were not related to him, and social interaction with them was forbidden by Muslim tradition.

35 Bogdo Gegeen.

36 Probably identifiable with Potanin's Dzhakhyndee-gegeen.

37 Probably identifiable with Potanin's Lamyn-gegeen.

38 Probably identifiable with Potanin's Zain-gegeen.

39 Nar-un Khutugdu Gegeen.

40 Aru-yin/Aryiin Gegeen.

41 Probably identifiable with Süjügtü Nom-un Khan Gegeen.

42 Khutugtu Gegeen.

43 Dayan Deerki Gegeen.

44 Mandzushiri Gegeen.

45 Jangjiyan/Zhangjiya Gegeen.

21) Yāndūq Sā Gēgān.

Qurbān-ᶜAlī's mention of female *gegeens* may be based on a misunderstanding of Mongol tradition. Potanin indicates that some *gegeens* were thought to alternate between male and female forms. Elsewhere he writes that there were no *gegeens* at all among the Dörböds, but that there were two "holy virgins" among them named Tsagan-darikhu and Khogon-darikhu.[46]

He does not comment either on the Mongol's belief in the divinity of these reincarnations, or on Mongol legends connected with them. Rather, he notes that both male and female *gegeens* are forbidden to take spouses, and he understands them to be near the top of the Mongols' monastic hierarchy. Below the *gegeen* he identifies five ranks, which are in descending order *lama* (lāmā), *gesgüi* (gēsgū), *umzad* (ungzūt), getsul (gēshul), and *manji* (mānjī), the latter term he identifies as meaning "novice." He names the Chaghan Gegeen as the highest of the *gegeens*, and above the Chaghan Gegeen is Mānī, whom Qurbān-ᶜAlī calls "the leader of the nation and the chief of their sect," evidently a reference to the Dalai Lama. Elsewhere in his treatise Qurbān-ᶜAlī identifies Mānī as the Buddha.

Qurbān-ᶜAlī has the following to say about his impression of Buddhist ritual among the Mongols:

> It is as if worship takes place from sunrise to sunset, from noon to midnight, they sit sweating, raising their arms to pray. They study, and study, always with their heads down, praying before their idol. Their priority is worship, and they do not have another task, and dropping everything for the sake of eternity is the fulfillment of the lamas' and *getsuls'* duty. Moreover, they say the training of lamas is incumbent upon the people. Within a household with three males, one will be designated to be a lama. Those who are lamas are freed from commercial activities [*ālūm-birūm*] and are exempted from earning a living. The common people give all sorts of offerings to the idols. As the lamas collect all of the goods and wealth that was placed by the idol, they become the possessors. The start of their chanting goes: "*Wām mānī bātbākh, wām mānī bātbākh, wām mānī sherākh, wām mānī sherākh, nīgen khōyōr ghūrbūndā wām mānī sherākh.*"[47] They repeat the words two or three times and when they chant with deep, gruff, and coarse voices, and with braying and groaning, their voices are like weeping; it is like the sounds of animals. They say things like, "*Yābūrkhān bāqcha.*"[48]

46 POTANIN, 1881, vol. II:79–80.

47 The Mongols would be chanting:*ōm mani budme, ōm mani budme, ōm mani jerge, ōm mani jerge, nigen, khoyor, ghurbanta, ōm mani jerge.*

48 In Mongol, "*ja burkhan bagsh,*" QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:276–277.

Ḥājjī Malla Marghīnānī's journey to Tibet

As we remarked above, Qurbān-ᶜAlī acknowledges the ethnic and historical division between Mongols and Tibetans, but nevertheless considers them to be the same people on the basis of their adherence to Tibetan Buddhism. His use of several ethnonyms to refer to Tibetans reflects this tension. In some places in his narrative he refers to Tibetans either simply as "Qalmaqs" or as "Tibetan Qalmaqs," in others as "Tibetan Tatars," reflecting Russian and European scholarly convention, which used the term "Tatar" to refer rather generically to Inner Asian peoples of China, including Manchus, Tibetans, and Muslims. Although he does not appear to have had any first hand contacts with Tibetans, on the basis of his informants who did, he believes Tibetans and Mongols were essentially similar. He also distinguishes the two groups by calling the Mongols "Chinese Qalmaqs" and the Tibetans "Tibetan Qalmaqs."

Tibet was by no means unknown to the Islamic world or even particularly isolated from it in the nineteenth century. Muslim merchants from Kashmir and Kashgaria frequently traveled there, and the city of Lhasa also had a Tibetan-speaking Muslim community at that time. Already during the pre-Mongol era Muslim historians and geographers were familiar with Tibet.[49] In the 16th century Chaghatayid forces from Kashgharia conducted military campaigns onto the Tibetan Plateau, and the historian and political figure Muḥammad-Haydar Dūghlāt has left us with a physical and ethnographic description of Tibet as he saw it in the sixteenth century.[50] During the early nineteenth century some Muslims made the trip from Russia to Tibet, when in 1814 the Russian government had dispatched a delegation to Lhasa led by Mahdi Rafailov, an Afghan who also held the position of Court Counselor (*nadvornyi sovetnik*) in St. Petersburg.[51]

Qurbān-ᶜAlī's main source of information was from a Central Asian merchant in Chuguchak named Ḥājjī Malla who visited Tibet in 1889 or 1890, and who provided an account of his impressions of the country. Qurbān-ᶜAlī's stories often contain humorous elements; in this case he relates how a merchant's frustration in a commercial scheme and his obstinacy in earning a profit on worthless merchandise ultimately brought him to Tibet. Whatever his abilities were as a merchant, the fact of a Muslim merchant's travel to Tibet was suffi-

49 GABORIEAU et al., 1997:576.

50 [DUGHLAT,] 1898:404–422.

51 VALIKHANOV, 1985, vol. II:316–319, vol. IV:156–157; cf. also ZOBNIN, 1905.

ciently rare in Chuguchak that Qurbān-ᶜAlī included this remarkable story in his account. The account is as follows:

> It is that Ḥājjī Malla Marghīnānī who provided some limited information on conditions in Tibet. The reason for this person's journey to Tibet was the following: In 1307 AH (1889–90 CE) an Afghan came to this country; that is to our city [Chuguchak]. One day when this Afghan went to Bakhta he would see on the road a plant that grew in India whose resin, or gum, was called "Indian Stink." Its price was equal to its weight in silver. When he returned to Chuguchak he had taken a leaf and pressed it in a wallet from India put it inside a book; he compared them and the two of them were the same. He said, "It's the 'Indian Stink' plant," he made a decision, and right away hired workers and told the Qazaqs and he promised eight or ten rubles per *pood*.[52] And they would go to Jūlāy-aqsaqal[53] in order to write up legal documents among them. Jūlāy offered advice to the Afghan guest, saying, "Here nobody knows the value of this gum. Don't be hasty or be in a rush. First you have to find out for certain it is that plant. Then saying a worker will be found for half of this price, or less, then give two or three rubles per *pood* in advance, and they will pledge and make a seal." Then people on the steppe who had heard that there would be money for such a worthless plant came running with buckets from every direction. Within a few days they had gathered two or three hundred *poods* of the resin, and he sent it to India. There was someone in Chuguchak in this Afghan's service. After a few months a letter arrived for that person. Although there was nothing in the letter besides a greeting, people inferred from this that if the outcome from this resin had not been good, he would not have written this letter. He would not have remembered that place. The letter was a harbinger of coming here. Of course it will make a profit. Saying, "Before the Afghan comes, while it's cheap I'll get the resin," he conspired secretly, put a few people to work, and they began gathering the gum. This Ḥājjī Malla even went into a partnership with someone and gathered a few silver ingots-worth of the resin. He could not sell it here for twelve rubles a pood, and went to Almaty, and from there to Kashghar. From Kashghar when they got to Yarkand, his partner departed, thinking there would be no profit. When Ḥājjī Malla wound up in Yarkand, it was the time that a caravan was going to Tibet. When he was trying to sell the resin as freight, even though the merchants who had come from India had said that it was not Indian stinkweed, that this Afghan had lost money from this, that not one penny's worth would be sold, and that it had been a waste of time, the Ḥājjī did not completely believe it; he had spent so much money and put in so much effort. He said, "I myself will take the goods I brought. I'll see for myself, and I don't know what will happen and whether I come or go will not be because of unsubstantiated rumors." He left most of the resin in Yarkand and he loaded up one-and-a-half horse loads, and went to Tibet with the caravan. He offered the gum to the merchants. Every one of them came and looked, but because they needed the one that stank, and this gum smelled good, it did not correspond to what they wanted, and he did not find a buyer for it.

52 A *pood* is a Russian unit of weight equivalent to approximately 36 pounds.

53 That is, Jūlāy b. Matāy. An *aqsaqal* was an official position corresponding to the administrative head of Muslim Russian subjects in Chinese cities where Russian subjects enjoyed extra-territorial rights. Cf. GALIEV, 1996.

To make a long story short, what is in Tibet is in Tibet, and the gum that was in Yarkand stayed in Yarkand. After people had heard about this gum, it was sent to one place and then to another. As a result of Ḥājjī Malla's trip, there was no outcome other than financial loss. But after he had said that on his travels in some places he was on foot and in some he was traveling by buffalo and yak, he said that the Tibetan people's appearance and qualities were like those of the Qalmaqs with whom we were familiar, and though they were of a different sect, their manner of worship [*ifitiqād*] was the same, Tibet was their [religious] center [*malāzī*]. Caravans would make the journey there from India once a year. A British consul came with the caravan and went back [to India]. The citadel and palace of their ancient khans was on the top of a hill outside of the city.[54] Their princes [*khānzādalarī*] always live in that place. By ancient custom they are not visible to anyone. Although the province of Tibet is subject to the British, their governors and rulers are always from among their own, that is, from among the Qālmūqs. And the people are very quiet and are not involved in anything. Their country is mountainous and is snowy and icy even in summer. Because their rivers are very pure, and come from regions of extreme frigidity, they are terribly cold. Since he related various circumstances such as these, and brought such remarkable information, his name was written down and what he said was recorded. Within the first month of having returned to Chuguchak he passed away, in 1310 AH, during the month of *rabīᶜ al-akhir* [Oct.-Nov. 1892] he died and was buried. May God place him in Paradise.[55]

The Western Mongols of Jungaria under Qing rule

Much of Qurbān-ᶜAlī's knowledge about Mongols appears to have come from his own contacts with communities inhabiting northern Xinjiang, specifically in the Qulja region and in Jungaria. The Mongol presence in the Ili region and Jungaria by no means ended with the Qing's destruction of the Oirats in the 1750's. Some Western Mongol communities returned to the region from the Volga region after 1756, and the Qing resettled other Mongols in the area. These were virtually all nomadic communities. There were three main Mongol groups in Xinjiang at the beginning of the 20th century. These groups are the Ölööd, who resided mainly in the Ili region, the Chahars, who nomadized in the Sairam-Nor region, and the Torgha'ud, who nomadized in several areas, especially in the Tarbaghatay region, near Chuguchak, and further south in the mountains around the town of Qarashahr. There were also Buddhist monasteries in the Ili district, around Qarashahr and Yulduzi, and in Tarbaghatay District. The chief monastery in Xinjiang was located in the town of Shikho, which was the residence of

54 Evidently this is a reference to the Potala.

55 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:273–275.

the Tsagan (Chaghan) Gegeen.[56] The traveler Potanin identifies another Tsagan (Chaghan) Gegeen as resident in a monastery in the Chinese Altai in the town of Shar-Sume.[57]

Qurbān-ᶜAlī's understanding of the Buddhist hierarchy among the Mongols appears to be based on his observation of the Western Mongols. As we have seen above, he understands the Chaghan Gegeen to be at the top of the monastic hierarchy, at least regionally.

> Although the late Ḥājjī [Malla Marghīnānī] had said the Tibetan Qālmūqs were negligent regarding their wives and daughters, even Chinese husbands keep their wives concealed. Their houses have an inner part and an outer part and the household lives in the inner part. And even the wives of our local Qalmaqs are not often idly looked upon. In fire-worship and idol-worship there is no difference between them and the Chinese. In their ceremonies and precepts they are the same, but in their appearance diverge, namely the Qalmaqs leave their dead on the steppe, and some of them bury them and others cremate them. They call the Qalmaqs' exemplar (*muqtadā*) Gēgān Chaghān. They call his disciples (*murīdlarī*) and students (*shāgirdlarī*) "lāmā." Their clothes are yellow and completely without pants. They talk in the markets and in the streets and they have discussions where they stay, and they aren't involved in any work. They are dirty creatures whose bodies and clothing are soiled with filth. They aren't aware of this flaw, and if they were, for them doing work would be such a great sin because their delusion is such as to say that indeed, their yellow clothes are for hiding the filth.[58]

At the same time, while he critics the practice of polyandry and other sexual customs of the Tibetans, he affirms that such a practice is not in evidence among the Xinjiang Qalmaqs.

> The habits and customs of this people [the Tibetans] are unlike those of humanity as a whole. A number of them will marry one wife. When one of them goes to the wife, he leaves his shoes outside, and when the others see this, they won't go in. When they marry, on the wedding night she remains with a lama. When one is a guest at their homes, in addition to food and drink, they say they will offer their daughter as well. In this regard, they say that these are a people who provide good hospitality. But such abominations of theirs are not met among our local Qalmaqs, the Tōrghā'ūts. They say they exist among the Tibetan Qālmūqs. After Ḥājjī Malla Marghīnānī visited Tibet, he said that several Qalmaqs would take one wife. This information circulates by word of mouth. I traveled for a few years among the Chinese Qālmūqs, and when I didn't encounter this practice, I thought it was a lie. He said, "I saw it with my own eyes that it exists among the Tibetan Qālmūqs. Next

56 BOGOIAVLENSKII, 1906:77–78, 80–81.

57 POTANIN, 1881, vol. II:79.

58 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:275.

door to our palace, or 'khān,' in Tibet, there were six Qalmaq sons, and all six of them had the same wife, and some of them informed me of this. He took me by the collar. 'God deliver me!' I prayed to God."[59]

Regarding the history and political organization of the Mongols in Xinjiang Qurbān-ᶜAlī writes that the Qalmaqs were resettled in the region after the khan of the Qazaq Middle Horde, Ablay Khan (d. 1781) pushed the Qalmaqs eastward into Jungaria. As a result, the Qing authorities settled them in the Qulja and Burja regions. They also granted Qalmaqs summer pastures in the Jayur and Tarbaghatay Mountains, and winter pastures in the Qolostay region. Regarding the Chinese administration of these Qalmaqs he indicates that the Chinese authorities imposed superintendents called a *chakhar* who administered a specific number of yurts. He understands the *chakhars* to be equivalent to the Qazaq *töräs*, that is, Chingisids who administered Qazaq communities under both Russian and Qing rule.[60]

He notes that seven or eight years after the Chinese reconquest of Chuguchak (1874) these Qalmaqs returned to their original lands in the Tarbaghatay region, and that "nowadays the Chuguchak and Durbunjun area is filled with them." This community is known as the "Ten *Ṣum* Black Qalmaqs." Qurbān-ᶜAlī identifies a *ṣūm*, or *ṣumūn*, as an administrative unit containing 500 yurts. Eight of these are pure (*ṣāf*) Qalmaqs; one belongs to the Chakhar Qalmaqs, and one to the so-called Olcha Qalmaqs, who are believed to be descended from captives. In this regard he provides an interesting etymology:

One [*sum*] is called the Ōlcha Māngāl, which means the Mongols who were captives and became booty. The Kazakh call "booty" [*ghanīmat*] "*ōlja*." The Qalmaqs say "*ōlcha*," with the letter "ch," and it means "partial," or "half" [*chālā*]. Both are correct, and are correct for this name, that is, it means "Half-Mongol" or "Prisoner Mongol." They say they also have among them crypto-Muslims [*yāshrūnchī musulmānlar*].[61]

Generally, he finds the administrative structure for the Xinjiang Qalmaqs to be essentially similar to that of the Qazaqs under Russian rule. He equates the *ṣūm/ṣumūn* to be basically analogous to the Russian *volost'*, and notes that the *sums* are known collectively as an *ulūt*. Individually *ṣūms* bear the name of the

59 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:271–272.

60 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:284–285. Bogoiavlenskii identifies the Chakhars as a group of Mongols that the Qing authorities brought into Xinjiang as a military force; cf. BOGOIAVLENSKII, 1906:78.

61 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:285.

community that they constitute. He names as examples the Imil *ṣūm* and the Jayur *ṣūm*. Again, he describes the Russian and Chinese political administration among the Qazaqs and Qalmaqs respectively as essentially equivalent, but also dynamic. For example, he notes that before 1874 the *chakhars* held substantial authority among the Qalmaqs, but after the reestablishment of direct Qing rule, the Chinese authorities began the practice of appointing local rulers from among the Qalmaqs, as well as khans (*wāngs*) from among the Chingisid nobility, which he says is equivalent to the Qazaq *törä*,[62] rather than to the Qazaq term *khan*.[63]

Muslims and Turks among the Mongols

Qurbān-ᶜAlī was well aware of the ethnic and political impact of the Mongols on Inner Asian Muslims. While he certainly wrote from an Islamic perspective, as a Muslim historian, he expressed dismay elsewhere in his book that the Qazaqs, for instance, were too willing to Islamize their own genealogies, concealing Mongol ancestors who were not Muslims.[64] He especially blamed the Qazaq Chingisids for this. In the same manner, in his study of the Mongols he sought evidence of Turkic and Muslim cultural influences on the Mongols. In this regard he provides some sketchy information on two groups of Mongols he believes are descended from Central Asian Muslims, although he does not indicate that their descendants remained Muslims.

> Those of the names of the Mongols that were known to us were recorded at the beginning. While their race [*jins*] is the same, their names are different, and their tongues and languages are even contrary and separate. And there is also information that groups that penetrated from outside exist among them. Today in the Uliastai region there are seemingly two groups [*ṭā'ifa*] named *bukhārīs* and *tāshkandīs*, whose origin derives from those two cities. They

62 Indeed, the Qing authorities also conferred the title *wang* on senior *töräs* among the Xinjiang Qazaqs.

63 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:286. Bogoiavlenskii identifies three Qalmaq khans, or *wangs*, in Xinjiang, although he notes that all of the Ili Torgha'uts were under the authority of the Governor General in Qulja. These khans were hereditary princes, like the Qazaq *töräs*. The most senior of these resided in Qarashahr, while the Tarbaghatay and Shikho Torgha'uts had their own *wangs* as well; cf. BOGOIAVLENSKII, 1906:133–135.

64 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:453.

> say their language is Turkic-like [*turkīya māyil*], and perhaps when they speak quite deliberately their speech is Turkic.[65]

He devotes slightly more attention to a group of Mongol-speaking descendants of Muslim captives of the Oirats who retained their Islamic identity despite a high degree of isolation from other Muslim communities at least until the beginning of the 20th century. This group, known in Mongol as Khotongs, and as Khotons in Russian sources, inhabited Western Mongolia, not far from Kobdo, and probably became known to Qurbān-ᶜAlī through the Muslim merchants there who served as his informants. Potanin wrote about the Khotongs after visiting them in the 1870's, identified them as subject to the local Dörböds who gave them the name Khotongs, while they called themselves "Musurmon." By that time they had become Mongolized to the point that they largely lost their Turkic language of the ancestors, although the prayers one of their elders communicated to Potanin were recognizably Turkic.[66] B. Vladimirtsov and A. Samoilovich published a more in-depth ethnographic and linguistic study of the group in 1916, which largely expanded on Potanin's conclusions. These later scholars estimated the group to consist of about 300 households and proposed the Khotongs were descended from Qïrghïz and Eastern Turkestani captives of the Oirats brought to Mongolia in the 18th century, and subsequently isolated from Muslims. Vladimirtsov and Samoilovich discount the significance of the Khotons' Muslim identity, describing it as debased and largely divorced from the textual and ritual aspects of Islam as they understood it. But it is clear from both their and Potanin's account that the Khotongs themselves completely equated their communal status with their Muslim status, even though their expression of Muslim status was expressed from a Mongol cultural perspective, at least as far as the accounts of their ancestry and their understanding of the geography of the Muslim world was concerned. Additionally, their adherence to endogamy certainly illustrates their self perception of separateness from their Buddhist neighbors and overlords.[67]

It is clear from the *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* that by 1910 the Khotongs' isolation from the Islamic world had ended, and that Muslim teachers from Chuguchak had made contact with them. It is probably these contacts that enabled Qurbān-ᶜAlī to gather information about them. He understands their name to be derived from the town of Khotan, in the Tarim Basin, and he explains that that

65 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910, 287.

66 POTANIN, 1881, vol. II:15–17.

67 VLADIMIRTSOV/SAMOILOVICH, 1915:265–290.

was where this group originated. He also relates that following the establishment of contacts with Muslims communities in Xinjiang the Khotongs began requesting teachers to provide Muslim education.[68]

"Mongol" Archeological monuments: Qozï-Körpesh and *kurgans*

Qurbān-ᶜAlī also examines the Qazaq legends surrounding archeological and architectural monuments on the Qazaq steppe linked to the Mongols in popular consciousness. Particularly on the eastern part of the steppe Muslims were well aware that they were residing on land that the Qalmaqs had occupied in the 17th and 18th centuries. Muslim histories of Semipalatinsk, the area's main Muslim educational and commercial center, trace the etymology of the city's name to the ruins of a Buddhist monastery that had once existed nearby.[69] Qurbān-ᶜAlī looks critically at a landmark near the town of Ayaguz called Közi Körpesh, which local Qazaqs venerated as a shrine.[70] In Qazaq tradition the monument is thought to mark the tombs of Qozï Körpesh and his wife Bayan-Solu, who are also the subjects of a very popular cycle of epic poems. The popularity of the legends and poems about Qozï Körpesh and Bayan-Solu among the Qazaqs is difficult to overstate. Chokan Valikhanov recorded a version in the 1850's or early 1860's. In 1870 V. V. Radlov included a version in his collection of Qazaq oral literature.[71] Qazaq versions appeared in five separate editions in Kazan between 1878 and 1909, and numerous other versions were also recorded, including one by Mäshhür-Zhüsip Köpey-ulï.[72] The poem was by no means restricted to Qazaqs, and in fact the earliest printed version is a Russian translation of a Bashkir version was published in Kazan in 1812.[73] This was clearly a very popular poem across the Qazaq steppe. Qurbān-ᶜAlī dismisses the historical value of these poems that link the shrine to these literary figures. He believes the tomb was built by the Oirats, and he cites the accounts of elderly Qazaqs who informed him that the tomb had once been painted, but that it had since fallen into disre-

68 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:287–288.

69 FRANK/USMANOV, 2001:12–13.

70 For descriptions of the shrine, and summaries of the Qazaq legends surrounding it, cf. KASTAN'E, 1910:276–292.

71 VALIKHANOV, 1985, vol. I:115–162.

72 KÖPEY-ULÏ, 2003–2006, vol. VI:296–348.

73 KHARISOV, 1973:77–109.

pair. He supposes the tomb to have originally been built for one of the daughters of a Oirat khan, and cites an Oirat informant who explained how the mausoleum's architecture corresponded to that of a Buddhist tomb.[74]

In the same manner, he dismisses Muslim oral traditions linking the large burial mounds on the steppe with the Mongols and Chingis Khan. He indicates that local Mongols he consulted had no traditions regarding these burial mounds. Furthermore, on the basis of Russian excavations described to him by an informant in Qarqaralï (Karkaralinsk), he determined that the quality of the tombs' architecture far surpassed current Mongol or even Chinese architectural technology. Qurbān-ᶜAlī rather believed another Qazaq tradition that established a far greater antiquity to the mounds, linking them to the "Magians (*mūgh*, or *mūq*)".

> They make a mistake saying that the origin of [the word] Magian [*mūq*] is Noah [Nūḥ], that it means "the family [*qawm*] of Noah." In books of tales and in the mouths of the minstrels [*maddāḥ*] Magians are precisely this family, and are so named. They were the mausolea [*dōkhma*], and the tombs of the families that came after this. To make it plain, the *dokhma* is the cellar that the deceased were put in. They were built in a cave or a mountain in the form of a room. They would place several biers, at one time. This is different from a niche [*lahd*]. They would even place them into the niche. Generally it has the sense of a coffin, and specifically, a Magian grave [*gōrkhāna-yi majūsī*]. They [akin to] the tombs of the sultans and major figures of pre-Islamic Persia [*fars-i jāhilīyat*] that were in the environs of Persepolis [*Gūh-i Istakhr*].[75]

Conclusion

The *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* stands out as an empirical study of Mongol communities based primarily on oral sources and correspondence derived from Qurbān-ᶜAlī's informants, who included Muslims, Mongols, and even Russians. The critical evaluation of sources and chronolog, as well as a generally unromanticized take on his informants, characterize Qurbān-ᶜAlī's methodology as a historian in this work, as in his other works. While his history fits squarely into the major currents of Islamic religious historiography, his attention to the modern Mongols as a subject of study in their own right appears unprecedented, and testifies to the dynamism of this tradition as late as the early twentieth century.

74 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ, 1910:277, 281–282.

75 QURBĀN-ᶜALI KHALĪDĪ , 1910:278–279.

The *Qalmāq-Monghōl Bayānī* also helps illustrate the nature of religious divisions between Muslim and Buddhist communities in Xinjiang and Mongolia. It is quite evident that at the beginning of the twentieth century Mongols and Muslims defined their communities both in terms of ancestry and religious affiliation. As a result these communities remained essentially separate. The case of the Muslim Khotongs, who were linguistically mongolized and isolated from the Islamic world, furnishes perhaps the clearest illustration of the strength of the religious basis of communal identification. Nevertheless, Qurbān-ᶜAlī speaks of generally peaceful relations between Qazaqs and Qalmaqs, and of marriage relations between dynasts, even if military conflict and religious divergence characterize Muslim historical memory of the Qalmaqs.

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