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Contents

EDIT BATHÓ
Jászberény ist die Hauptstadt von Jászen ........................................... 3

A. A. ARSLANOVA
Vassaf al-Hazrat and Hamdallah Kazvini (Protégés of Rashid ad-Din and
court historiographers of the Ilkhans) ............................................. 6

LÁSZLÓ BALOGH
A New Source on the Hungarian Raids against Byzantium in the Middle
of the Tenth Century ........................................................................ 16

MICHAL BIRAN
Culture and Cross-Cultural Contacts in the Chaghadaid Realm (1220–
1370) (Some Preliminary Notes) ..................................................... 26

ÁGNES BIRTLAN
Rituals of Sworn Brotherhood (Mong. anda bol-, Oir. and, ax dütü bol-)
in Mongol Historic and Epic Tradition ............................................. 44

THOMAS BRÜGEMANN
Cumans in Southern Dobrudja (Some remarks on the Second Bulgarian
Empire during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) ......................... 57

MIHÁLY DOBOVITS
(H)oplayu tăgdi (On the military tactics of the Ancient Türks) ........... 72

ISTVÁN FODOR
Ecology and nomadic migrations ..................................................... 77

JOHANNES GIEBAUF
A Programme of Terror and Cruelty (Aspects of Mongol strategy in the
light of Western Sources) ................................................................ 85

EMIL HERŠAK AND BORIS NIŠIČ
Croatian Ethnogenesis and the Nomadic Element ............................ 97

V. I. IVAŅOV AND M. I. IVAŅOVA
Horsemens Interments of the Golden Horde (The informational potential
of the archaeological material for social reconstructions) ................. 111

Y. S. KHUDYAKOV
The role of the ancient Turks in the translation of cultural achievements
to Siberia in the early Middle Ages .................................................. 118
OLEKSII KOMAR
The factor of climate in the life of the nomads of the North Black Sea region (From the end of the fifth to the seventh century) ........................................... 125

SZILVIA KOVÁCS
Alan women in the neighbouring foreign courts in the eleventh-twelfth centuries .......................................................... 134

NIKOLAY N. KRADIN
Qamüq Mongqol Ulus and Chiefdom Theory ........................................... 144

KATALIN NAGY
The arms terminology of the Sarmatian army in the written sources ........ 151

TAKASHI OSAWA
New research on historical aspects and interpretation of the Ongi site and inscriptions .................................................... 161

SZABOLCS POLGÁR
Notes on the role of Alania in international trade in the early Middle Ages (eighth-tenth centuries) on the basis of written sources .......... 178

TIBOR SCHÄFER
Die Teilnehmer an der Barbareninvasion am Silvestertag des Jahres 406 ... 184

OLIVER SCHMITT
Priscus als ethnographische Quelle für die Hunnen .................................. 192

LÁSZLÓ SELMECZI
Ясы в Венгрии в XIII-XIV веках ....................................................... 204

TATIANA D. SKRYNNIKOVA
Chinggis Khan’s distribution of posts to his comrades-in-arms: Officials or courtiers? ......................................................... 208

JOHANNES STEINER
Empfange und Du wirst einen Sohn gebären, welcher der Herrscher über die Erde werden wird... (Vorstellungen über Geburt und Tod Tschinggis Khans) ................................................... 220

ZSOLT SZILÁGYI
Öndör Gegen Zanabazar and his Role in the Mongolian Culture ........ 233

AHMET TAŞAĞIL
The Tribal System of the Turk Khaganate .................................................. 242

ДМИТРИЙ Д. ВАСИЛЬЕВ
Кочевая аристократия енисейской периферии каганата (Генеалогические реконструкции) .................................................. 249

ISTVÁN ZIMONYI
Vom Ural ins Karpaten-Becken (Die Grundzüge der ungarischen Frühgeschichte) ....................................................... 261
Culture and Cross-Cultural Contacts in the Chaghadaid Realm (1220–1370)

Some Preliminary Notes

MICHAL BIRAN

Despite its central location at the heart of the Mongol empire, the Chaghadaid Khanate is often left out of the discussion of cross-cultural contacts inside and outside the Mongol empire. However, both the vigorous contacts between the neighbours of the Chaghadaids, Yuan China and Ilkhanid Iran, recently discussed in Allsen’s superb Culture and Conquest in the Mongol Empire,\(^1\) and the grandeur and cosmopolitanism of Tamerlane’s empire, which succeeded the Chaghadaids’ western realm in 1370, suggest that significant cross-cultural contacts existed under the Chaghadaids as well.

What were those contacts like? What kind of culture existed in the Chaghadaid realm? These questions are not easily answered due to the dearth of sources for the history of the Chaghadaid Khanate, which is in sharp contrast to the ample historical literature that exists for both Ilkhanid Iran and Yuan China. Based on Muslim and Chinese literary sources, archaeological and numismatic findings, and Mongolian documents from Turfan and Dunhuang, this article aims to highlight a few aspects of the cross-cultural contacts in the Chaghadaid realm, mainly through three, often interrelated, agents of such contacts; the court, trade networks and religious networks – Buddhist, Christian and Muslim. First, however, some background information on the Chaghadaid realm is called for.

The background: The Chaghadai realm before and after the Mongol Invasion

Chaghadai’s appanage, stretching from Uighuria to the Oxus, had been under Qara Khitai rule for most of the century which preceded the Mongol invasion. The region enjoyed a relative stability and prosperity for most of the second half of the twelfth century. It benefited from a highly developed artisan class, flourishing agriculture, growing urbanization, thriving commerce and very active intellectual life. Moreover, it was a highly cosmopolitan and multilingual area, combining Chinese and Muslim administrative traditions, which in a way served as a precedent for the Mongol mode of ruling.

This relatively peaceful condition was severely disturbed in the early thirteenth century by the struggle between the Khwarazm Shāh and the Qara Khitai and the repercussions of the rise of Chinggis Khan in Mongolia. Yet the Mongol invasion, while rather disastrous to Transoxania (which, however, recovered quite quickly), hardly harmed the eastern parts of the Chaghadai realm: Uighuristan, Semirechye and the Tarim basin.

Nevertheless, the Mongol conquest had an enormous impact on Central Asia. As one of the first regions that became part of the Mongol empire, Central Asia’s resources—human and material—were channelled for the benefit of the ever-expanding empire, often at the expense of local interests. Thus a substantial part of the region’s nomadic warriors were recruited into the Mongol army and sent across Eurasia to fight. More important for our purposes was the transfer of myriad artisans and their relocation eastward, mainly into Mongolia and north China. The huge numbers involved—supposedly 30,000 artisans from Samarkand alone!—suggest that this policy seriously damaged local industries. In

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5 See Biran, Qara Khitai (see n. 4), ch. 3; M. Biran, Chinggis Khan. Oxford 2007, 43–70.

6 The Beshbaliq colony, originally in the Chaghadai realm (but see n.3), was probably transferred to north China in 1283. T. T. Allsen, Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles. Cambridge 1997, 41.

some cases the Mongols agreed to send back some of the transferred artisans, but this was in no proportion to the original brain-drain and hand-drain. 8

Moreover, apart from the forced transfers – and occasional flights – there was a considerable amount of voluntary migration due to the new opportunities opened up by Mongol rule. The Mongols needed experts to help them administer their growing empire and the educated, multi-lingual elite of Central Asia, already experienced in serving nomadic rulers, was highly qualified for this task. Many, therefore, chose to join the Mongol imperial venture and were dispersed across the empire. For example, most of the famous Muslims who reached high positions in Yuan China, such as Sayid Ajall, Ahmad or ‘Abd al-Rahman, originated in Transoxania. This constant immigration continued to characterize the region throughout the rule of the Chaghadaids as well.

In return for the major transfers the Mongols brought new populations into Central Asia. They imported Chinese farmers, scholars and artisans; Tangut farmers, Khitan administrators, and European craftsmen. 9 Certainly, the first requirement of cross-cultural contacts – extensive mobilization of skilled population – was apparent in the Chaghadaid realm under the united empire.

When the Mongol empire disintegrated in the early 1260s, the Chaghadaids did not have a good starting point. They were politically weak, after supporting the losing side in the succession struggle of 1251; and were also challenged by the Ögödei Qaidu who from 1271 until his death in 1301 became the Chaghadaids’ overlord. Qaidu’s policies, the Khanate’s central location and the Chaghadaids’ territorial ambitions led to an almost constant tension – and frequent wars – between the Chaghadaids, Yuan China and the Ilkhanate. After Qaidu’s death, the Chaghadaids regained ascendancy in Central Asia and made peace with the Yuan, but their attempts to overcome the Ögödeids undermined the khanate’s stability. The heydays of the Chaghadaids were under Kebek Khan (r. 1320–1327), who established peaceful relations with Yuan China, moved into Transoxania and reorganized the Khanate’s internal administration. After the reign of Kebek’s Muslim brother, Tarmashirin (1331–1334), who also resided in Transoxania, the tension between the western and eastern parts of the Khanate became more apparent. In 1347 the western realm was taken by the emirs, eventually leading to Tamerlane’s accession in 1370, while in the east (modern Kirgizstan, south Kazakhstan and Xinjiang, known from the fourteenth century as Moghulistan), Chaghadaid Khans, known as Eastern Chaghadaids or Moghuls, continued to hold power until the late seventeenth century.

Squeezed between stronger and richer Mongol khanates, and accommodating two competing uluses, Mongol Central Asia was often plagued by internal strife or engaged in raiding its neighbouring states. This certainly harmed the economic

8 Allsen, Commodity (n. 6), 36–37; Allsen, “Uighurs” (n. 3), 248.
and religious networks active in its domains and encouraged outward migration. Yet raiding was not a phenomenon new to the region, and during the turbulent years there were decades of relative peace and prosperity in Central Asia (1280s–1290s; 1320s–mid 1330s). This allowed the evolution, albeit on a modest scale, of cross cultural contacts.

**The Khan’s Court**

The mobile courts of the Chaghadaids and Qaidu were the principal arenas of cross-cultural contacts, mainly due to the usual Mongol amalgamation of experts which manned the court, its multi-linguality and the diplomatic contacts it held. Already Chaghadaib’s court enjoyed special prestige under Ögödei’s reign, as the court of the older living son of Chinggis Khan, and even more so after Ögödei’s death (in 1241; Chaghadaib died in 1244) and was often frequented by travellers, traders and scholars who came to pay homage. In terms of experts, Chaghadaib’s court included Chinese engineers, astronomers, physicians and administrators; Muslim physicians, poets, merchants and religious scholars, who were sometimes respected more for their miracles than for their religious learning.\(^\text{10}\) Qaidu’s court also included Chinese and Muslim physicians, a Muslim astronomer, Muslim scholars and Chinese military experts.\(^\text{11}\) Buddhist priests and European physicians manned the court of the Chaghadaid Khan Changshi (r. 12/1335–1337).\(^\text{12}\) The court’s interests therefore encouraged inter-religious dialogue and scientific interest.

At least regarding the latter, and in contrast to Barthold’s statement that the Chaghadaid realm had no tradition of secular sciences,\(^\text{13}\) other evidence indicates the continuation of scholarly activities in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, poetry and philology in Mongol Central Asia.\(^\text{14}\) The region’s sound scientific infrastructure is attested by the fact that several leading scientists who

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were active either in Yuan China or in Ilkhanid Iran were of Tansoxanian or Turkestani origin. Nonetheless, as will be apparent also in the discussion of religious scholars below, many scholars chose to migrate to safer and richer places than to stay in the turbulent Chaghadaid realm.\(^{15}\)

The Chaghadaid court was multi-lingual. The Chaghadaid chancellery in Turfan wrote in Mongolian at least until 1369, and the use of ‘Phags-Pa seals there suggests Yuan influence.\(^{16}\) Already in Chaghadaï’s time, however, his court was called \textit{ulugh ef} (Turkic: Great House), the khans Kebek and Tarmashirin spoke Turkic, and Turkic appeared on Chaghadaid seals.\(^{17}\) Most Chaghadaid coins bore Arabic legends, and monumental inscriptions were written in Arabic and Persian.\(^{18}\) Multi-lingual knowledge therefore remained an asset for Central Asians working inside and outside the Chaghadaid realm even in the fourteenth century, and facilitated further contacts.\(^{19}\)

The court conducted diplomatic relations with its neighbours. Chaghadaid tribute missions to China in the early decades of the fourteenth century are well documented and also involved trade and gift exchange. There was also frequent exchange of messengers with the other khanates, either on strategic matters (attempts to ally against a certain threat – often of a third khanate) or formal ones (e.g. announcing the accession of a new khan or the death of another), and such contacts also existed with the Delhi Sultanate.\(^{20}\) The Pope also sent letters to

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\(^{19}\) Ibn al-Fuwaṭi, \textit{Majma’} (n. 10), Vol. 4/4, 692; Vol. 4/2, 1201–1202; Qarshi (n. 11), 150.

\(^{20}\) E.g. \textit{Yuan shi} (n. 7), ch. 24, 550, 551, 555; ch. 30, 680; ch. 31, 699; ch. 33, 740; ch. 34, 754; ch. 139, 3352; \textit{fēng shí dadian, zhián shí} 經世大典, 章簡, in \textit{Yongle da dian} 永樂大典 [Yongle’s encyclopedic dictionary] facsimile edition. Beijing 1960, ch. 19420, 2 (hereafter \textit{Yongle Dadian}); Ibn Baṭṭūta/Gibb (n. 17), vol. 3, 556; Abū al-Qāsim Qāshānī, \textit{Ta’rikh-i Üjayṭū}, ed. M. Hambly. Tehran 1969 (hereafter Qāshānī), 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 53, 145–6, 149. Note Chaghadaid diplomatic relations with the Mamluks, which seem to have been con-
Qaidu and to the Chaghadaids, but it is unclear whether they received them.\textsuperscript{21} Due to the Khanate’s location, diplomatic missions, especially from Yuan China to Ilkhanid Iran and vice versa, often passed through the Chaghdaids realm. The court often investigated the emissaries and, depending on the political situation, either detained them and confiscated their property, or hosted them, providing them with a letter to ensure their peaceful journey through its lands.\textsuperscript{22} Other international travellers, such as missionaries or traders, also often asked for the court’s protection.\textsuperscript{23}

The itinerant courts also retained Mongol nomadic traditions. Chaghadai was famous as an expert in Mongol rituals and law (the Jasaq or Yasa),\textsuperscript{24} and his descendants were keen on keeping their nomadic culture. Thus Qaidu and the Chaghadaids entertained their guests in lavish golden tents;\textsuperscript{25} hunting remained a popular activity of the khans, and they often held the traditional toy (banquet, assembly) in which the khan entertained his keen and commanders, and where the latter could depose him.\textsuperscript{26} In their inauguration ceremonies, the Chaghadai retained the custom of removing their hats and slinging their belts across their backs, to demonstrate their giving up of their former privileges and their subor-


\textsuperscript{23} E.g., W. E. A. Budge, tr., The Monks of Khubilai Khan: The History of Rabban Sâwma. London 1928, 59.

\textsuperscript{24} E.g., Rashid/Boyle (n. 10), 145; Chaghadai’s erudition in ritual, especially the fire cult, made him the patron of shamans in later Mongolian folklore. A. Birtalan, “The Mongolian Great Khans in Mongolian mythology and folklore,” Acta Orientalia Hungarica 58:3 (2005), 308.

\textsuperscript{25} Qâshâni (n. 20), 37, 41; Biran, Qaidu (n. 3), 97; Ibn Batûtah/Gibb (n. 17), 3, 558.

\textsuperscript{26} E.g., Qâshâni (n. 20), 34-35, 37, 41, 217; Naţân Anonyme d’Iskandar (n. 12), 104, 108; Ibn Batûtah/Gibb (n. 17), Vol. 3, 561 (one of the main reasons for Tarmashirin’s deposition, according to Ibn Batûtah, was his refusal to conduct the traditional toy, perhaps because he preferred not to deal with his eastern commanders).
dination to the new ruler. Women held an especially high position in the Chaghadaid court. They acted as regents or actual rulers, for instance, in the cases of Naishi, wife of Yestii Mongke Khan (r. 1246–1251), who performed the duties of her constantly-drunk husband, or of Orghina Khatun, who reigned for nine years (r. 1251–1260) as regent for her son; or as patrons of monumental building as in the case of Tughluq Temür’s wife, Tini Khatun. There is also at least one example of a fighting princess, Qaidu’s daughter, Qutulun (Marco Polo’s Ajuruc), who excelled over most of her father’s generals, but when she had tried to succeed him, her brothers sent her to “the scissors and needles”.

Although the courts were mobile, the location of Chaghadaid summer pasture in the vicinity of Almaliq (a town near modern Kulja in Xinjiang) greatly affected the city’s importance. Almaliq became a major post on the Silk Roads, thereby marginalizing Balasagun, the former Qara Khitai capital. Later on, in the 1320s, the khan Kebek moved to Transoxania and built a city of tents named Qarshi (Turkish: castle) in the Kashka Daria valley to serve as his capital, though it was never a match for the region’s traditional centres in Samarqand and Bukhara, nor is it clear if future khans ever resided there.

The court’s mobility also meant that there are few remaining Chaghadaid monuments. These monuments – mainly the mausoleum of Tughluq Temür in Almaligh and that of Bayan Quli Khan (the puppet khan of amir Qazaghan, 1348–1358) in Bukhara – date from the Khanate’s Muslim period and are obviously influenced by Ilkhanid style. A notable exception is the “baroque” monument in Talas which Kervran proposed to identify as the mausoleum of Orghina Khatun (Chaghadaï’s regent, r. 1251–1260). This identification is highly conjectural, however, and the monument could easily be a product of the Qara Khitai period, i.e., of the twelfth century, as indeed local tradition maintains.

The court also had enormous impact on the trade and religious networks in Central Asia as will be discussed below.

Trade and Trading Networks

Central Asian traders were among the first supporters of Chinggis Khan and many of them became useful participants in the Mongol imperial venture, manning high posts in Mongol (and Chaghadaid) administration. The Yalawach fam-

27 Qāshānī (n. 20), 150; see R. Sela, Ritual and Authority in Central Asia: The Khan’s Inauguration Ceremony, Papers on Inner Asia, no. 37. Bloomington 2003, 26.
28 Rashid/Boyle (n. 10), 143, 149–151; Okane, “Architecture” (n. 18), 278–288; Biran, Qaidu (n. 3), 2, 70, 76, and see Marco Polo’s description of Qutulun’s adventures in H. Yule, tr., The Book of Sir Marco Polo, London 1903, Vol. 2, 393–396.
CULTURE AND CROSS-CULTURAL CONTACTS IN THE CHAGHADAID REALM ...

ily, which served the Mongols from Chinggis Khan’s time and administered the Chaghadaid realm throughout the thirteenth century, was a family of polyglot merchants from Khwárazm. Chaghadaid’s trusted minister, Ḥabash ʿAmid, also made fortune in trade.\(^{31}\) Most of the ortogh merchants active under the Mongols were either Central Asian Muslims or Uighurs.\(^{32}\) They must have kept contacts in their original home towns, thereby creating commercial networks which spread throughout the empire.\(^{33}\) Although we have no indication that the Chaghadaid rulers, like their cousins in China and Iran, were directly involved in the ortogh trade, and even though the political unrest in Central Asia shifted part of the exchange to maritime channels, the rulers of the landlocked Chaghadaid realm actively endeavoured to promote trade, and commercial interests influenced their political stance, especially with regard to their relations with the Yuan. Thus Qaidu and Du’a built the city of Andijân to serve as Farghána’s mercantile centre, and one of the main reasons for Chaghadaid peace overtures in 1304 was their desire to revive the caravan trade throughout the empire.\(^{34}\) In the 1310s, Yuan officials complained about traders from the Chaghadaid realm who exploited the post-station system and the tribute conditions for enriching themselves and threatened to limit their number. This attempt was one of the reasons for the subsequent tension between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan,\(^{35}\) which continued up to Kebek’s submission in the early 1320s. The 1320s–1330s were the heydays of the overland Silk Roads, and Pagellotti’s famous – and often criticized – statement in the 1340s, that “the road you travel from Tana to Cathay [i.e. via the Chaghadaid Khanate] is perfectly safe whether by day or night”, probably relates to this period.\(^{36}\) Apart from native traders, who remained active and accompanied the resumed Chaghadaid tribute missions to China from the 1320s,\(^{37}\) in the 1320s–1330s we many European (mostly Italian) and Muslim (Iraqi, Syrian, Indian) traders were active in Chaghadaid Central Asia, often on their way to China or

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\(^{32}\) The ortogh was a trader (or trading company) who acted on behalf or was financed by the capital of a Mongol (or other) notable and in return shared his profits with his patron. Th. T. Allsen, “Mongollian Princes and their Merchant Partners 1200–1260,” Asia Major, 3rd series, 2/2 (1989), 83–126; E. Endicott-West, “Merchant associations in Yuan China: The Ortogh,” Asia Major, 3rd series, 2/2 (1989), 127–156; see e.g. Yuan shí (n. 7), ch. 51, 3568; ch. 53, 3592; ch. 59, 3752; ch. 62, 3987; ch. 65, 4204; ch. 73, 4635.

\(^{33}\) As an example, see the solidarity of the Kashgari merchants in the Ilkhanate: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Majma’, Vol. 4/2, 861, 1201–1202; also the Iraqi merchants in Ibn Baṭṭūta/Gibb (n. 17), Vol. 3, 546, 548.

\(^{34}\) Biran, Qaidu (n. 3), 103–104.

\(^{35}\) Liu, “War and Peace” (n. 22), 342–343.


\(^{37}\) Yongle Dadian (n. 20), ch. 19420, 2.
the Golden Horde.\textsuperscript{38} Their presence was prompted not only by the Chaghadaid's improved relations with China since Kebek's reign (1320–1327), but also with the Muslim rule of Tarmashirin Khan (r. 1331–1334), who abolished the commercial duties not sanctioned by the shari'a (Muslim law) and improved economic relations with Mamluk Egypt and the Delhi Sultanate.\textsuperscript{39}

As for the trade routes, the main east-west routes passed through Utrar to Almaliq, Qarakhhojo to Dadu (modern Beijing and the Yuan capital); or from Tabriz, via Khurasan to Bukhara, Samarqand, Kashgar and Qarakhhojo to China. There was also a north-south route leading from the Golden Horde (via Urgench) to Ghazna and Delhi.\textsuperscript{40}

What was exported from the Chaghadaid realm? The items mentioned in the sources include agricultural products (fruits, wheat and barley),\textsuperscript{41} animals (from horses and camels to tigers and wild and domesticated leopards),\textsuperscript{42} jade, jewels, furs, herbal medicines, textiles and wine. Most of these were renowned products of the region in the pre-Mongol period as well.\textsuperscript{43} Another traditional merchandise of the region was slaves. Captives, later sold as slaves, were often the main booty from the Chaghadaid's frequent raids to India (from 1287 onwards) and lively slave markets existed in Central Asia. A 1333 \textit{waqf} document from Bukhara described the purchasing of Mongol, Chinese and Indian slaves for working in the fields. Even earlier, the renowned Bukharan Sheikh, Sayf al-Din al-Bákharzí, is credited for buying Fāṭima, the daughter of the last 'Abbasid Caliph, who was sold in the slave markets after the conquest of Baghdad. Central Asians, either children of nomadic tribesmen or exported captives, were also sold as Mamluks in Egypt in the 1280s.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{} Ibn Baṭṭūţa /Gibb (n 17), vol. 3, 546–8; ‘Umarī/Lech (n. 29), 41; Yule, 
\bibitem{} Jackson, \textit{The Mongols and the West} (n. 36), 296–301.
\bibitem{} ‘Umarī/India (n. 38), 49; Ibn Baṭṭūţa/Gibb (n. 17), Vol. 3, 542, 550.
\bibitem{} \textit{Yuan shì} (n. 7), ch. 24, 550, 551, 555; ch. 27, 620, 629; ch. 28, 631–632; \textit{Yongle Dadian} (n. 20), ch.19420, 2, 14; ‘Umarī/Lech (n. 29), 47–48. Exchanging wild animals, especially those used for hunting like leopards or gerfalcons, was also common among the Yuan and the Ilkhanate, see, e.g. Qāshānī (n. 20), 204–205, 208.
\end{thebibliography}
While Chinese paper money was in use in Uighuria, most deals there were made by barter and taxes were paid in kind (wine, leather, cotton, wheat). In the rest of the Chaghadaid realm, however, taxes and commercial deals were paid mainly in cash. Already in the 1220s the Mongols strove to revive the Central Asian monetary economy, and under Möngke (1251–1259) the wide-scale minting of gold, silver and copper coins resumed in Almaligh. In 1271, simultaneously with Qaidu’s enthronement, Mas‘ūd Beg (Yalawach’s son and the administrator of Central Asia) led a currency reform in Central Asia, minting coins with a high percentage of silver. The coins appeared first in Utrar, Talas and Khujand, but with the stabilization of Qaidu’s rule in 1281–82 they proliferated in various mints in Transoxania and Farghāna as well as in Almaliq and Kashgar. Although these coins were anonymous and were not uniform in iconography, their identical weight, purity and basic design suggest a central supervision of minting. A further reform was introduced by Kebek, the first Chaghadaid khan to mint coins in his own name. Following the reform of Ghazan in early fourteenth-century Iran, Kebek minted a silver coin (dinár) equivalent to six smaller silver coins (dirhams) with a new weight. Numismatic finds, as well as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s and al-Umari’s descriptions, attest to a developed monetary economy in the Chaghadaid realm.

Local prices were regarded as very low in comparison to the level of prices in the Mamluk and the Delhi Sultanates.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Turfan documents also illustrate the existence of commercial infrastructure in Chaghadaid Central Asia, consisting of loans, hospices, road maintenance, load animals for hire and post-stations. While the post-stations, at least in Uighuria, were a major part of this infrastructure, they could also be a


source of trouble for travellers, since the post-stations’ personnel occasionally confiscated animals and merchandise for their own use.\footnote{Dai Matsui, “Mongolian Decree” (n. 22), 158.}

A certain amount of commercial infrastructure and expertise was evidently retained in the Chaghadaid realm, and it certainly benefited the later flourishing trade under Tamerlane.

**Religious Networks**

The Chaghadaids’ subject population was mostly Muslim, although there were also considerable Buddhist and Christian communities. Despite Chaghadaï’s insistence on enforcing Mongol norms (sometimes colliding with Muslim ones), which earned him an anti-Islamic reputation, and several cases of Muslim or Buddhist zealoussness,\footnote{See the case of ‘Ali Sultan mentioned below (Yule, *Cathay* (n. 12), Book 3, 31, 212); Naťanči’s assertion mentioned below that Khan Changshì (1335–1337) put idols in every mosque is highly questionable due to the contemporary accounts of the continuation of Muslim scholarship in Samarqand at the time. (Naťanči, *Anonyme d’Iskandar* (n. 12), 114 and see below). Two questionable stories from the united empire period may suggest the existence of inter-religious tension in Central Asia: see Minhäj al-Din Juzjānī, *Ṭabqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. A. Habibi. Kabul 1342–44/1963–64, Vol. 2, 171–173 (Buddhist suggesting to Gīyūk to kill all the Muslims in his realm or at least emasculate them), 215–217 (Christian-Muslim tension in Samarqand leads to a murder of a Christian convert to Islam who refused to renounce his new religion; Berke, the Golden Horde Muslim Khan, orders the execution of the murderers, including the Mongol who participated in the slaying).} Qaidu and most Chaghadaid khans were tolerant towards the main religions in their realm. Each of these three religions contributed to the cross-cultural contacts in the realm.

Buddhism prevailed in Uighuria and smaller Buddhist communities existed under the Chaghadaids at least in Khotan, Kashgar and Qayalıq. Once a major religion along the Silk Roads, towards the twelfth century, Buddhism was gradually driven out of Central Asia due to both Islamic expansion and the decline of the Buddhist tradition in its homeland of India. Even the rule of the Buddhist Qara Khitai (1124–1218) over most of the territory which later became the Chaghadaïd realm did not create a major revival.\footnote{Biran, *Qara Khitai* (n. 4 above), 177–178; Liu, *Yingsheng*, Chahatai hanguo shi yanjiu. [Research on the History of the Chaghadaïd Khanate]. Shanghai 2006, 555–564.} In the Mongol period, however, Tibetan Buddhism, which had been adopted as the state religion in Yuan China, was also introduced to eastern Turkestan, and found many adherents among Uighurs and Mongols alike, as proved by the quantities of Uighur and Mongol Tantric texts unearthed in Turfan.\footnote{Ligeti, *Monuments* (n. 16), 115–83; Dai Matsui, “Mongolian Decree” (n. 22), 167–169.} The Turfan Buddhists held close connections with Buddhist communities in northern China, both in Dadu, the Yuan capital, and in the closer Gansu, where a Chaghadaïd branch subject to the Yuan heavily patronized Buddhist translations and monasteries. The translation efforts, both in Gansu and Dadu, involved the work of Tibetan, Kashmiri and
Uighur translators, and were also a channel for cross-cultural contacts, the repercussions of which probably reached Turfan. Although many Buddhist Uighurs - both laymen and monks - emigrated to Yuan China, pilgrimage from Tibet to China and vice versa, which passed through the Chaghadaid realm, helped to establish the presence of Tibetan Buddhism there.\textsuperscript{55}

Several Chaghadaid khans personally favoured Buddhism, mainly Du’a (r. 1282-1307) who gave his son the Buddhist name Tarmashirin and who granted very generous exemptions to Buddhist monasteries; and Changshi (r. 12/1335-1338) who, according to one exaggerated description, “put up Buddhist sculptures in every mosque”.\textsuperscript{56} Other khans, such as Eljigidei (r. 1327-1330) and Yesün Temür (r. 1338-1339) also patronized Buddhism, and a decree ascribed to Muhammad Polad (r. ca. 1340s) assures the safe transit of a high Tibetan priest from Yuan China in the Chaghadaid domains. Even after his conversion to Islam, the Eastern Chaghadaid Khan Tughluq Temür (r. 1347-1363) is said to have asked for a Buddhist teacher from Tibet.\textsuperscript{57} It has also been suggested that the Chaghadaid tamgha (seal), a mark shaped as double-leaves which is rendered in the seal stamped on Chaghadaid Mongolian decrees and on Chaghadaid coins from the early fourteenth century onward, is an upside-down form of the Tibetan script for Cha (the beginning of Chaghadaï’s name).\textsuperscript{58} If this is correct, it attests a sound connection between the Chaghadaid royal house and Tibet, perhaps initiated by Du’a. Nonetheless, after the fall of the Yuan and the subsequent decline of Tibetan Buddhism among the Mongols, Islam had less competition both among the Chaghadaid royal house and among the East Turkestan population.

As for Christianity, Nestorian communities were scattered in Central Asia centuries before the Mongols arrived, but the Latin missionaries were an innovation of the Mongol period. In pre-Mongol Central Asia, the Nestorians had a metropolitanate in Samarqand and in Kashgar and Nawákít (near the Issyk Kul). They instructed in Syriac, Arabic, Persian and Turkic, and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries managed to convert several Mongol tribes (Kerayids, Ongîts, and part of the Naimans and Merkits). Strong Nestorian communities existed in Semirechye (the Issyk Kul region and Balâsaghun) and even among the Turfan Uighurs. Under the Chaghadaids, a strong Nestorian community, attested up to the late 1360s, flourished in Almalîq, and the Nestorian presence in Samarqand continued into Timurlaine’s time. The Nestorian community of the Issyk Kul, on the other hand, was eliminated around 1338-9 due to a combination of epidemics,

\textsuperscript{55} Liu, \textit{Chahatai hanguo} (n. 51), 555-64; Dai Matsui, “Mongolian Decree” (n. 22), 157-163.

\textsuperscript{56} Natanzí, \textit{Anonyme d’Iskander} (n. 12), 114; Dai Matsui, “Taxation” (n. 41), 72.


\textsuperscript{58} Matsui, “Mongolian Decree” (n. 22), 165.
the persecutions of ‘Ali Sultan (r. 1339-1340), a fanatic Ögödeid who for a short while usurped the Chaghadaid throne, and a gradual process of islamization.\(^{59}\)

The Catholic mission in Central Asia began as a by-product of the mission in China, and its bishoprics were established in Almaligh (mid-1320s) and Samarqand (1329), later than in the other Mongol khanates. The missionaries included friars from Europe (Italy, Spain, France) and Alexandria as well as European merchants. They learned Turkish, bought and baptized pagan slaves, and tried to stay in touch with their co-religionists in India and China (the latter often passed through the Chaghadaid realm on their way to China). We have no information about the missionaries’ relations with the Nestorians, but the Latin priests seem to have been closer to the Chaghadaid khans. Chaghadaid himself was said to have been baptized (though this was probably wishful thinking), and obviously the khans’ support was a major factor which enabled the mission to flourish or led to its fall. Both Eljigidei (r. 1327-1330) and Changshi (r.12/1335-1338), also famous as admirers of Buddhism, showed favour to Latin missionaries. Eljigidei, under whom the Samarqand bishopric was established, sent two Dominican friars from there to Europe with greetings to the pope. One of these emissaries, Thomas of Mancasola, reported that the Khan had been baptized (perhaps wishful thinking again) and that he had given the friars licence to preach and build a church in Samarqand. Before the papal envoys returned, however, Eljigidei was replaced and the islamization of his brother Tarmashirin (r. 1331-1334) hampered future relations with Rome. Among Tarmashirin’s non-Muslim successors, however, Changshi is said to have baptized his son after a Christian physician healed him. He also welcomed Nicholas, the newly appointed Archbishop of Dadu, who had left Europe in 1334 and stopped at Almaligh on his way to China, allowing him to preach freely and restore churches and granting him land for building a friary.\(^{60}\) Apparently the local Muslim population at that time was less sympathetic towards the missionaries. In a letter of 1338 Pascal of Vitoria recounts the many trials he suffered on his way from Urgench to Almaligh, throughout which he insisted on preaching Christianity. His adventures included polemic with the Muslims (in which he won, according to his testimony), many vain attempts to convince him to adopt Islam, and lots of humiliations and injuries, although he managed to make it to Almaligh.\(^{61}\) When the fanatic ‘Ali Sultan took the throne in 1339, however, he massacred the bishop of Almaligh and his companions (including Pascal), and the Latin attempts at revival evaporated with the islamization of the eastern khanate in the 1350s.

\(^{59}\) Niu Ruji “Xinjiang Alimali gucheng faxian de Xuliya wen jingjiao beiming yanjiu,” Xiya yanjiu (2007), 74-80; Liu, Chahatai hanguo (n. 51), 543-554; Yule, Cathay (n. 12), Book 3, 31, 212.

\(^{60}\) Yule, Cathay (n. 12), 31-32, 34-35, 81-88, 213-214; Ryan, “Preaching Christianity” (n. 21), 359-368.

\(^{61}\) Yule, Cathay (n. 12), Book 3, 81-88.
The mission therefore came to an end, leaving very limited intellectual or other legacy. 62

Most of the Chaghadaid subject population was Muslim, and the region had a sound scholarly base from the pre-Mongol period, when Bukhara was a major centre especially for the study of law, and Muslim studies flourished also in Farghāna, Samarqand and even in Kashgar, Khotan and Balāsāghūn. 63 Indeed we have more information on Muslim networks, as one of their main – and lasting – outcomes was the islamization of the khanate in the fourteenth century.

Chaghadaid islamization was a complex and gradual process, which began in the west and moved eastward. As in the other Mongol khanates, contact with Muslim elements, mainly in the army and among the local population, as well as Sufi missionary activity, were the main stimulants of conversion, though it took longer to root Islam among the Yasa-adherent Chaghadaids than among other Mongols in West Asia. Tarmashirin (r. 1331–1334) is credited with bringing Islam to Transoxania, and his pro-Muslim policies certainly contributed to the khanate’s Muslim character. Yet, similarly to the situation in Ilkhanid Iran, conversion seems to have begun in the lower levels before it reached the top, since many army commanders and rank-and-file Mongols, as well as several princes and ephemerel khans, embraced Islam before Tarmashirin. 64

While by Tarmashirin’s time Islam was well established in the western Chaghadaid khanate, this was not the situation in the eastern Chaghadaid realm, and this contrast was one of the reasons for Tarmashirin’s deposition and for the disintegration of the khanate into its eastern and western parts. As was already mentioned, Tarmashirin’s successors included patrons of Buddhism and Christianity as well as the fanatic ‘Ali Sultan, and some less fanatical Muslims. A few decades after Tarmashirin’s reign, in the early 1350s, the eastern Chaghadaid Khan, Tughluq Temür (r. 1347–1363), adopted Islam under the influence of wandering Sufis combined with political considerations. Building on the Muslim infrastructure of the Tarim basin (originating in the tenth-century Qarakhanids), Tughluq Temür used Islam to unite his subjects – both the different nomadic tribes over which he ruled and the nomads and sedentary populations subject to him – and for trying to regain legitimacy in the western part of the khanate. 65

Even before the Khanate’s islamization, Muslim scholars and administrators held a place of honour in the Chaghadaid court (despite Chaghadaï’s anti-Muslim reputation), and Mongolian versions of the Alexander romance (closer to

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62 Ryan, “Preaching Christianity” (n. 21), 371–373.
63 Biran, Qara Khitai (n. 4), 177–178; 181–182.
64 Biran, “Tarmashirin” (n. 39), 750–751.
its Persian version) and of an Arabic divination book unearthed in Turfan suggest that western cultural influence reached even the most eastern Chaghadaid domains.\(^{66}\) The non-Muslim Mongols sometimes patronized Muslim religious institutions, and already in the 1250s Mönkê's wife built a college (known as Madrasa-i Khānî) in Bukhara and established the waqf of the Bakharzi family there, which was still active in the 1340s.\(^{67}\) The Khans' Muslim administrators also patronized Muslim scholarship. The house of Bahā' al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī, the minister of Chaghādād and his son Yesū Mönkê, himself an offspring of a distinguished scholarly family, was a meeting place for scholars, and Maṣʿūd Beg, the main administrator of the Chaghādād realm in the thirteenth century, not only befriended 'ulmā' and Sufis, but also built (in the 1240s–1250s) the Madrasa-i-Masʿūdiyya in Bukhara (burned in 1273 but rebuilt later).\(^{68}\) Local Muslim dynasties which existed in the Chaghādād domains (e.g. in Almālīq, Khujand and Tirmidh) also employed and subsidized Muslim scholars, thereby contributing to the growth of the cities' scholarly prestige. Jamāl Qarshi, who was employed by the ruler of Almālīq, describes the flourishing Muslim community in the city (which was also Chaghādād summer pasture). Many of the Almālīq scholars arrived from more established centres like Bukhara or Khujand, or from Balāsghān, which the rise of Almālīq had marginalized. The Jaxartes region also became more prominent with an important centre in Sighnāq.\(^{69}\) In Samarqand the Marghīnānī family continued to hold the office of sheikh al-islām (the town's most prestigious scholar) throughout the fourteenth century.\(^{70}\) Bukhara retained some of its pre-Mongol prestige through scholars such as Shams al-ʿāima' Kardārī (d. 1246); Ḥāfiz al-Dīn al-Kabīr (d. 1296) and the Maḥbūbī ṣādīs (attested until 1346).\(^{71}\) They retained the local traditions (based on Marghīnānī's Hīdāya, and the Maḥbūbīs' and Ibn Māzās' works), which continued to be studied under the Timurids as well.\(^{72}\) Apart from the two big colleges mentioned above, each comprising around 1000 students, at least two other Bukharan colleges are attested in the sources; Madrasat Abū Ḥafs and the Vabkent madrasa, which held only 80 stu-

\(^{66}\) Ligeti, *Monuments* (n. 16), 184–207.

\(^{67}\) Juwayni/Boyle (n. 7), 108; Sakhawi, (n. 14), vol. 2, 194–195.

\(^{68}\) Juwayni/Boyle (n. 7), 108, 275; Qarshi (n. 11), 139.

\(^{69}\) Qarshi (n. 11), 140–143.


dents in the 1340s.\textsuperscript{73} After Tarmshirin’s conversion his emir established many colleges in Ghazna.\textsuperscript{74}

Law remained the main field of study but \textit{hadith}, the Qur’an and its exegesis, Arabic grammar, \textit{belles-lettres} (\textit{adab}), poetry and medicine were also taught.\textsuperscript{75} People from the Chaghadaid realm moved freely between the different centres (\textit{fiqh al-’ilm}) inside the khanate and in Khwárazm,\textsuperscript{76} but I have found only a few cases of people from outside, mainly from Khurasan, who came to learn in Bukhara or the Chaghadaid realm in general, in contrast to the situation in the pre-Mongol period.\textsuperscript{77} Certainly one of the most apparent phenomena of the thirteenth century was the massive migration of scholars – mainly \textit{Hanafite} lawyers – away from the Chaghadaid realm, into the Ilkhanate (to Tabriz, Baghdad, Anatolia and especially Kirmān, probably due to the Qara Khitai origin of the Muslim dynasty ruling there under the Ilkhanate’s overlordship), the Delhi Sultanate, the Mamluk sultanate, the Golden Horde, and even Yuan China.\textsuperscript{78} A major wave of emigration followed the 1270s events of Bukhara, when Aбаqa reduced the city to ashes in 1273 in retaliation for the Chaghadaid attack on Khurasan in 1270, and Aльghу’s sons pillaged the city in 1276 during their struggle with Qaidu.\textsuperscript{79} Yet the emigrants took their traditions with them, and leading twelfth-century Central Asian paragons, like Qади Kān or (especially) al-Marghīnānī as well as their continuator Shams al-‘imā’ Kardārī (d. 1246), continued to be studied all over the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{80} Transoxania, however, retained some scholarly prestige, at least in comparison with India. Around the 1330s the Delhi Sultan Muḥammad b. Tugh-


\textsuperscript{74} Ibn Bāṭṭūṭa/Gibb, vol. 3, 561–562.


\textsuperscript{76} E.g., Sakhāwī, (n. 14), Vol. 2, 194–5; Qarshī (n. 11), 129, 144–145, 149.

\textsuperscript{77} Dhababī, \textit{Ta’rīkh} (n. 71), Vol. 57, 86; Vol. 58, 116.


luq tried to enlist Transoxanian scholars into his realm, and was willing to invest large sums of money for this goal.  

Sufism also flourished in Mongol Central Asia. While individual Sufis were active among the Chaghadaids, and are credited with Tughluq Temür’s conversion, Chaghadaid Bukhara was a centre of thriving Sufi activity, mainly of the Kubrawi order. Among the disciples of Najm al-Dīn Kūbrā (d. 1220), the lines of Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī and Bābā Kamāl Jandī were active in the Chaghadaid realm, and both enjoyed the patronage of the Mongols or their administrators. Bākharzī (d. 1261), famous for converting the Golden Horde khan Berke (r. 1257-67), held an important waqf in Bukhara, which originated in a grant from Möngke’s wife. It remained under the administration of his family until the mid-fourteenth century, accumulated considerable economic power, and some of its riches were used for the purchase, conversion and manumission of slaves. Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 1273), whose pupil was the sheikh of Maşʼūd Beg, was active in the Jaxartes region and beyond it among nomads and sedentaries alike. Bukharan Kubrawī Sufis reached India, Kashmir, China and the Volga region and were a major agent of cross-cultural contacts in the khanate.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations of sources, even the scanty evidence assembled in this article suggests that the Chaghadaid Khanate took a significant part in the cross-cultural contacts characteristic of Mongol rule. While some of the cross-cultural network active in the khanate (e.g. the Latin mission) resulted only in contact, not in communication, others left a more enduring legacy, the most lasting result being the islamization of the Chaghadaids and their territories.

Like the other khanates, Chaghadaid state culture was composed of Mongol nomadic traditions, augmented by local components and elements from the cultures of other parts of the empire (notably China), and the Khans promoted trade, scholarship and religions. Evidently, and with the court’s blessing, an infrastructure of both commerce and scholarship – religious and scientific – continued to exist in the Chaghadaid realm despite its frequent political upheavals.

Another apparent phenomenon was the high degree of mobility of scholars inside and outside the Chaghadaid realm. This mobility was partly motivated by the competition for human talent that characterized the Mongol khanates and into which other states (such as the Delhi Sultanate) were quick to join, and partly by the scholars’ attempts to improve their position and security. Due to the dis-

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81 ‘Umari/India (n. 38), 48-49.
82 Hodong, “Muslim Saints,” (n. 64), 285-322.
85 Ibid; DeWeese, “Kubrawiyah” (n. 78), 45-83.
86 For the Mongol imperial culture, see Allsen, Culture and Conquest (n. 1), 189-211.
turbed Chaghadaid politics and the high demand for the highly-qualified Central Asian elite, the Chaghadaids were more often the losers in this competition. With the collapse of the Ilkhanate (1335) and of Yuan China (1368) and the stabilization of the political scene in Central Asia under Tamerlane from 1370, the direction of the migration could easily be changed in favour of Central Asia. Both the existing infrastructure and the high incidence of mobility were helpful for Tamerlane when he came to build his state on the remnants of Chaghadaid Transoxania. The cosmopolitanism of Tamerlane’s empire was therefore built not only on Ilkhanid models but also on the more modest developments that had already taken place in the Chaghadaid realm.