CHAPTER SEVEN

RULERS AND CITY LIFE IN MONGOL CENTRAL ASIA (1220-1370)

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Despite their gruesome reputation as destroyers of cities, the Mongols' influence on Eurasian urbanism has been significant and multifaceted. Much scholarly attention has been given to cities built by the Mongols, especially to their capitals, in Qaraqorum, Shandu and Dadu (Beijing), Sultanía and Old and New Sarai. Mongol Central Asia, however, is often left outside this scholarly discussion. This is not only due to the relative lack of sources on this region, but also because in Central Asia the Mongols never founded a capital equivalent in size and importance to those of the other khanates. Nevertheless, the Chagháhádád (var. Chagháhatyíd, Chagatai) and Ögödei Mongols had a noteworthy and complex impact on Central Asian urbanism, which contributed both to the severe decline of city life in Semirech'e and to the phenomenal growth of post-Chagháhádád Samarkand under Temür.

While in sedentary societies the city is often the nexus of the society’s culture and the apex of its development, nomadic empires usually had more ambiguous relations with cities, based on both need and antipathy. After all, while cities may be a source of wealth and much needed products (acquired through plunder, trade or taxation), a reservoir of human capital, and an administrative, economic and political centre, as well as a symbol of prestige and legitimation, they may also hamper the nomads’ advance by their defences, become an economic burden, and be viewed as opposed to a nomadic lifestyle. However, scholars discussing cities that were built

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3 The term ‘Central Asia’ in this chapter refers to the region stretching from the eastern borders of modern Xinjiang to the Oxus.

4 Mumford 1938, 11-12. This is the crux of Ibn Khaldun’s political theory.

5 Chardin 1720, 175-80. A famous example of nomadic negative attitudes towards cities is Toyunqul’s address to the Türkic qaghan in the eighth-century Orkhon inscriptions,
by nomads stress that the rulers who built them usually retained their peripatetic way of life, spending long periods of time moving between different capitals or in their mobile courts. Their cities were often built on the frontier of the steppe and the sown or on trade routes, frequently on the sites of existing cities, and had both practical and symbolic functions. The cities served as economic, administrative and religious centres, as well as being a means to settle, administer and control the nomads’ sedentary subjects. Nomadic cities were also symbols of the authority and prestige of the ruler or dynasty that built them. In the eastern steppe, prestige was often acquired by using Chinese urban models: this was certainly the case with Yuan Shangdu and Dadu. In Muslim Iran, nomadic cities of the Mongol period (e.g. Sultaniyya, Ghazanliyya) often functioned as mausoleum cities, thereby highlighting the prestige of the ruling dynasty and its specific rulers. In the Golden Horde, the Old and New Sarai both used Central Asian urban models rather than Russian, since their point of reference was the nomadic Turkic population, not the Russian sedentaries. Recent archaeological excavations in Mongolia suggest that even in this steppe heartland, the number and scope of nomadic cities founded by the Mongols and their predecessors is larger than was previously thought.

Against this background, the relative lack of urban development in Mongol Central Asia calls for an explanation. This study aims to analyse the changing relationship between the Central Asian Mongol rulers and their subject cities from Chinggis Khan’s conquest of Central Asia to the rise of Temür (1220-1370). Based on Muslim and Chinese literary sources and on archaeological evidence, the analysis is arranged chronologically, according to the sub-periods in the history of Mongol Central Asia. Each section refers first to the question of the capital and then to the general attitude of the Central Asian Mongols towards city life.

THE UNITED EMPIRE PERIOD (1220-60)

Central Asia was one of the first regions to be conquered by the Mongols, and was taken during Chinggis Khan’s reign. The region had been under Qarakhitai rule for most of the century that preceded the Mongol invasion. Where he advises against building cities. See Tekin 1968, 263-73. See also Golden’s chapter in this volume.

10 Haneda 1997; Charleux 2006.

It had enjoyed relative stability and prosperity for most of the second half of the twelfth century, and was a highly cosmopolitan and multilingual area. The eleventh to twelfth centuries were also characterised by growing urbanisation in Central Asia, with new towns rising mainly on the trade routes or at the meeting points of pastoral and agricultural regions. Yet even at the height of urbanisation, the region lacked a unifying imperial tradition and a strong sedentary base like those that existed in Iran and China. In the early thirteenth century, the Qarakhitai authority was considerably weakened due to the deterioration of the ruling family, the rebellion of their former vassal, Khwarazmshah Muhammad, and the repercussions of Chinggis Khan’s rise in Mongolia. All these caused the Qarakhitai to lose both Transoxania and Uighuristan (the Gaochang region), even before the Mongol conquest.

The Mongol conquest of eastern Central Asia (Uighuristan, Semirech’e, the Tarim Basin, that is, the Qarakhitai’s central territory and its eastern
vassals, who were among Chinggis Khan’s first non-Mongol allies) was surprisingly benign. However, the conquest of Transoxania, then under the Khwarazmshahs, was extremely harsh, resulting in the devastation of most major cities in the region. At the same time, it was a speedy conquest, completed in less than a year, and Transoxania’s successful restoration had already begun in earnest in Chinggis Khan’s time.11

When Chinggis Khan allocated appanages to his sons, Central Asia was divided between Chaghadai and Ögödei. Chaghadai received most of the territory, from Uighuristan to the Oxus, roughly equivalent to today’s Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, parts of south Kazakhstan and southern Xinjiang, while Ögödei, Chinggis Khan’s nominated heir, received a smaller adjacent region between the Yenisei and the Ili in north-west Xinjiang and south Kazakhstan, since as the future qa’an he was to inherit Chinggis’s lands.12

Originally, the appanages given to Chinggis’s sons were limited to pasturage and did not include the cities, which remained under Chinggis’s, and later, his heir’s, administration. After he ascended the throne, Ögödei moved to Mongolia, establishing Qaraqorum and leaving his original appanage to his older son, Güyük (who was mainly at the front during his father’s reign). Chaghadai remained in Central Asia, locating his summer pasture near Qarqar and Almaliq (modern Yining/Kulja in Xinjiang, near the China-Kazakhstan border), and his winter pasture on the banks of the Ili.13 The region of Almaliq was famous for its abundant pastures and hunting grounds and its multitude of animals.14 It also had well-developed agriculture, which impressed thirteenth-century Chinese travellers, and had been a station on the road from Central Asia to China, conveniently located on the way to the new Mongol capital at Qaraqorum.15

Almaliq became known as the headquarters of the Chaghadai court, but the sources stress that Chaghadai did not live in the city itself but outside it. Chaghadai’s court is called uluq ev (Turkish: ‘the great house’)

11 For the conquest and restoration of Central Asia, see Biran 2007: 47-70.
12 For a general survey of Central Asia under Mongol rule, see Biran 2009: 44-66; for the
United Empire period, see Liu Yingsheng 2006, 18-35.
13 Juwaynî, 1: 272, trans. 271.
14 Ibn Fadl Allah al-Umarî, 48; Juwaynî, 1: 21, 57-8, trans. 29, 76; but cf. Rashid al-Dîn, 1:
627, trans. Thackston 2: 431-2; Mirkhwandî 5: 63, who reports an unusual famine in Almaliq
in spring 1264.
15 Liu Yu, 13, trans. in Bretschneider 1888, 1: 127; Li Zhichang, chap. 1, 363-72, 40a-b;
chap. 2, 10-28, trans. 88, 94, 105-6; Ibn Fadl Allah al-Umarî, 47; Wâsîf, 12; Juwaynî, 2: 217,
250, trans. 48, 53-3; Qarshi, 138.

16 and Jamāl Qarshī, the only native writer of Mongol Central Asia, explains that Chaghadai’s dâr al-mulq (‘abode of royalty’, i.e. capital) was called il’ al-arghî, and that the major city (al-mîr al-jâmi‘) Almaliq, was within it, thereby stressing the difference between the two places.17 The continued existence of Almaliq’s indigenous dynasty throughout the thirteenth century further suggests that the Chaghadai centre was outside the city.18

Chaghadai did his share of building in his appanage, establishing post stations throughout his realm, and connecting it to the domains of Ögödei and Batu, as well as erecting bridges and roads.19 In the vicinity of Almaliq, he also created a hunting reserve (shikargah), surrounded by a wall of wood and clay with several gates, in which game could be trapped. He made pools to attract waterfowl, and even built a village (dīh) named Qâchlug (Turk.: ‘lucky’), perhaps to accommodate the servants in charge of the reserve and the pools. Even so, Chaghadai did not leave his mark on the city of Almaliq.20 The Chaghadai court, by contrast, enjoyed a prestigious position during Ögödei’s reign, as the court of the oldest living son of Chinggis Khan and the qa’an’s main confidant, and even more so after Ögödei’s death in 1241 (Chaghadai died in 1244),21 and was therefore frequented by travellers, traders, emissaries and scholars. The court contained the usual Mongol gathering of experts, including Chinese engineers, astronomers, physicians

17 Qarshī, 138. For al-mîr al-jâmi‘, the ‘all-embracing city’ or urban centre of an agricultural
hinterland, see Jansen 1985-8, 140-6. Il’ al-arghî (Qarshī, 140) is a mysterious term. Barhold has suggested that it was a general name for the whole province around Almaliq; another option is that it designates the court. Argha may be a reference to yarghî, ‘court’, and so the Il’ arghî may mean the family of the court (of justice), perhaps referring to Chaghadai’s position as the devout adherent of the Yaşâ; or it may be a misunderstanding for ughruq, ‘grand family’.
18 Qarshī, 140-5. The Almaliq dynasty was established in the early thirteenth century by an adventurous Qarshī who managed to establish himself as khans and received the recognition of the Qarakhatid ruler. In 1212, Özâr Khan submitted to Chinggis Khan. He was
well received, and went back to his town, but was killed while hunting by Güshâlghâ, the Natan prince, who assumed the Qarakhatid throne. Chinggis Khan enthroned Özâr’s son, who was then also married to a Jochid princess (a sister of Batu). The realm of Almaliq also included Pulîd on the Illî and perhaps Balâsâghûn, the former Qarakhatid capital, as well
(Qarshī, 136-7, 140-5; Juwaynî, 1: 57, trans. 75). Qarshī acquired his nîsha (which means liter-
ally ‘of the palace’) because he was employed in the palace of the Almaliqi dynasty. The
dynasty continued till the late thirteenth century and was probably destroyed in the wars
that followed Qâhu’s death (see below).
21 Qarshī, 138, but cf. Rashid al-Dîn 1: 544, trans. 2376, according to whom he died before
Ögödei.
and administrators, and Muslim physicians, poets, merchants and religious scholars—sometimes respected more for their miracles than for their religious learning. The mobile court—not the city—thus provided the cultural capital for Chaghadai and his heirs.

Almaqī, however, benefited considerably from being the nearest city to the Chaghadai court, and from the ongoing traffic into it. By Chaghadai’s time, it seems already to have replaced Balāsāqhtūn, the former Qarakhitai capital, as Semirech’e’s major base on the trade routes to China and Mongolia. Apart from the economic benefit, it also gained culturally: at least one Chaghadai courtier—the famous vizier Ḥābash ‘Amdī, is said to have built a khānaqāh in Almaqī, and the existence of a local Muslim dynasty there encouraged the immigration of Muslim scholars, mainly from other cities of Central Asia, and led to the establishment of a sophisticated scholarly community in this relatively new Islamic territory. Mongol rule also resulted in a growing Chinese presence in Almaqī. While the Chinese traveller Chang De claimed in 1239 that they had a noticeable influence on the city’s customs, Muslim sources, including Qarshī, completely ignored them.

The Chaghadai khan continued to dwell in the environs of Almaqī throughout the United Mongol Empire period, and some of them (Qara Hūlegū, r. 1244-6, 1251, and Alghū, r. 1261-6 and see below) were buried in (or near?) the city.

Another city mentioned in this period in relation to the Chaghadaiids is Taraz (Ar.: Ṭarāz, Tālās/Chin.: Talos), which had been an important administrative and military centre during the Qarakhitai period. Returning from the Mongol invasion of Europe in 1237-41, the Chaghadai prince Būrī, settled in Taraz a group of German miners who had been taken prisoner and who mined gold and made weapons for the Mongols. Taraz was a colony of subject artisans, like other cities the Mongols had established in Mongolia and northern China. By Mūŋke’s time, however, the colony had been transferred east to Pūliad (near Almaqī), and after that disappears from the sources. Recently, Monik Kervan has suggested that the Taraz mausoleum, usually known as the tomb of ‘Aīsha Bībī, daughter of the unidentified amīr of Taraz, is actually the mausoleum of Orghina Khátūn, the Chaghadai regent who ruled the őlür in Mūŋke’s time (1251-9). If this is correct, we have here the first surviving Chaghadai mausoleum, almost a century older than any other building ascribed to them and built in a rather unique ‘baroque’ style. Professor Kervan’s argument, however, is highly conjectural, based only on the character of the ornaments in the mausoleum, which combine Muslim, Buddhist, Chinese and nomadic elements. She claims that such Chinese influence could have only started with the Mongols, and that some of the Chinese floral motifs are not attested in Iran and Central Asia before the mid-thirteenth century. Since she ascribes these Chinese motifs to the Liao dynasty (907-1125), the monument could easily be a product of the Qarakhanid (ca. 955-1211) or Qarakhitai periods (1124-1218), when Taraz had been an important centre. Indeed a twelfth century dating for the monument is claimed both by local tradition and by Central Asian archaeologists.

Apart from Almaqī and Taraz, Bukhara also benefited from the patronage of the Chinggisid family and its administrators, the polyglot Khwarazmian merchant Māḥmūd Yalawāch (till 1238) and later his son, Māṣūḏ Beg. By the 1250s, Mūŋke’s wife had already built a college (known as Madrasa-yi khānī) in Bukhara and established the waqf of the Bākhūrī family there, which was still active in the 1340s. Around the same time, Māṣūḏ Beg built the Madrasa-yi masʿūdīya in Bukhara. Samarqand, alongside which Māṣūḏ Beg entertained Hūlegū in the 1250s, seems also to have been restored. For other, less central, Central Asian cities, how-


\[\text{24} \] Qarshī, 140.

\[\text{25} \] Ibid., 140-5.

\[\text{26} \] Liu Yu (retrieving Chang De’s account), 13; trans. in Bretscheider 1888, 1: 124, 137; Li Zhichang, chap. 1, 409, trans. 92-3.

\[\text{27} \] Natanz, 105-4. This fifteenth-century source is the only one that locates early Chaghadai burial places.

\[\text{28} \] Biran 2005, 195 and passim.

\[\text{29} \] Rubruck, 144-6.

\[\text{30} \] Kervan 2003, 5-32.

\[\text{31} \] Ibid., 12-13.

\[\text{32} \] Ibid., 51; Goriacheva and Peregudova 1995, 62-8. For Qarakhitai and Qarakhanid relations with China, see Biran 2005, 139-171 and passim; Biran 2001, 77-89; for Taraz under the Qarakhitai (who originated from the Liao), see n. 28. I have not found any textual evidence connecting Orghina to Taraz.

\[\text{33} \] Juwaynī, 1: 84-5, trans. 108; Sakhāwī, 2: 194-5. For Māḥmūd and Māṣūḏ Beg, see Allsen 1993.

\[\text{34} \] Juwaynī, 1: 84-5, trans. 108; Qarshī, 139.

\[\text{35} \] Rashid al-Dīn, 1: 688, trans. 480.

\[\text{36} \] By the 1250s, Chinese travelers to Samarqand were already describing it as a peaceful and beautiful city full of gardens. See, for example, Yeli Chuqi, Zhan ran, 6: 142-47; Li Zhichang, chap. 1, 368-373, trans. 88.
ever, Mongol rule was far less advantageous. Apart from the effects of the conquest, there were two reasons for this: first, the growing presence of nomads, especially in Mongol Semirech’e, and second, the continuous brain- and labour-drain caused by Mongol policies.

The decline of the Semirech’e cities (probably the fruit of the new urban development under the Qarakhitais) is attested by William of Rubruck, who went through the region in the 1250s. He reports that:

[T]here used to be sizable towns lying in the plain [leading from the Ili river north-eastward to Qayaliq], but they were for the most part completely destroyed so that the Tatars could pasture there, since the area affords very fine grazing lands.\(^{37}\)

Chang De, who visited the region in 1259, a few years after Rubruck, documents only ruins, and not cities, in the territory “where the Khitans used to live”, namely in the Qarakhitai central territory of Semirech’e.\(^{38}\) As a region suitable for both pastoral nomadism and agriculture, the prevalent type of production in Semirech’e was determined by the number of nomads living on it and the priorities of its rulers. Under the Mongols, this meant partially reverting from urbanism to pasturing. The process probably involved turning the cities’ agricultural hinterland into pasturelands and hence the disappearance of the hinterland necessary to sustain urban life, and some re-nomadisation of part of the Semirech’e population, or the migration of nomads (e.g. the Mongol troops), or both.

More generally, as one of the first regions to become part of the Mongol Empire, Central Asia’s resources—both human and material—continued to be channelled for the benefit of the ever-expanding empire, often at the expense of local interests. Thus, numerous artisans were transferred eastward, mainly to Mongolia and northern China, to work for the Mongols.\(^{39}\) The huge numbers involved—allegedly 30,000 artisans from Samarqand alone!\(^{40}\)—suggest that this policy would have seriously damaged local industry. In parallel, the Mongols brought new populations into Central Asia: Chinese farmers, scholars and artisans; Tangut farmers; Khitan admin-

\(^{37}\) Rubruck, 147.

\(^{38}\) Liu Yu, 14, trans. 1260. See also Hamd-Allah Mustawfī’s description in Ḳūḥāt-ī-ṣanīq (1349–50), which stresses the high number of nomads in Balaqhūn, Hamd-Allah Mustawfī, 250, trans. 249.

\(^{39}\) The Beshbāliq settlement, originally in the Chaghad̲āi̲ realm, was probably transferred to northern China in 1283. See Alissen 1997, 41.

starting point. Both were severely damaged by the transition of the qa’nanate from the Ögödeids to the Toluids in 1251. The Ögödeid ulus was dissolved, and most of its senior members eliminated. The ranks of its former supporters, the Chaghadaids, were also considerably thinned out, and, while the Chaghdaid ulus was not dissolved, much of the Chaghadaids’ original appanage was taken over by the Golden Horde.45 Both ulus tried to exploit the dissolution of the empire in order to restore their fortunes. This was first done by the Chaghdaid Khan Alghu (r. 1261-6), who, shifting his loyalty from Arik Böke to Qubilai, managed to take over the original Chaghadaid realm and to extend it at the expense of the Golden Horde and the Ögödeids. However, already during his reign, and especially afterwards, the Chaghadaids were challenged by the Ögödeid Qaidu, who strove to revive the Ögödeid cause. From 1271 until his death in 1301, Qaidu was the Chaghadaids’ overlord. Chaghadaid attempts to resist his authority continued till 1282, when he enthroned Du’a as the Chaghdaid khan, and the two cooperated until Qaidu’s death. Even after the internal struggle in Central Asia had calmed down, however, the combination of Qaidu’s policies, the khanate’s central location and the Chaghadaids’ territorial ambitions led to almost constant tension—and frequent wars—throughout this period between the Chaghadaids, Yuan China and the Ilkhanate.46

During Qaidu’s time, Central Asia did not have a specific capital city. The Yuan shi, the official history of the Yuan dynasty, describes Almaliq, formerly Alghu’s base, as part of Qaidu’s appanage and notes that his mobile encampment (xingying 行營) was there.47 Almaliq, on the other hand, is hardly referred to during Qaidu’s reign. Instead, the city of Taraz is mentioned more frequently as Qaidu’s base: the 1269 quritai, in which Qaidu first made peace with the Chaghdaid Khan Baraq (r. 1266–71), took place in the environs of Taraz, as did Qaidu’s enthronement in 1271, and his meeting with the celebrated Rabban Sauma in ca. 1274/5.48 Moreover, Qaidu’s

sira ordu (Mo.: ‘yellow ordu’) is said to have been located there.49 The term sira ordu described the khan’s residence in the reigns of Ögödei and Güyük. It consisted mainly of huge lavish tents, though sometimes, as in the case of Qubilai’s Shangdu, it also included more permanent buildings.50 Whatever Qaidu’s sira ordu was, however, it was plundered and burned during the princes’ wars after his death.51

Taraz was located in the midst of Qaidu’s realm, alongside abundant pasturelands, and was an important summer pasture for the Chaghadaids for at least two decades afterwards.52 Qaidu’s winter pasture was probably between the Ii and the Chu rivers, and he was buried in the mountains of that region. His burial place is described by Wassaf as “the place of [his] throne” (takhtgah-i Qayd),53 but Qaidu was mainly on the move throughout his reign, often fighting on the Yuan border or in Mongolia; that is to say, his court was mobile. This court included the typical Mongol collection of multi-ethnic experts: Chinese and Muslim physicians; Muslim astronomers; Muslim scholars and Chinese military experts.54 Qaidu’s cultural capital derived from his military success as well as from this court, not from his connection to a specific city.

We have no indication of where Du’a resided. Some of the lesser Chaghdaid khans who operated under Qaidu are said to have been buried in Uzgand (probably the Uzgand on the Sry Darya, where the Qarakhitai’s treasury was located and not Uzgand in Farghâna), but there is no other indication of the city’s importance during this period, nor are there any known remains of mausoleums.55

As for the general urban situation under Qaidu, he was well aware of the importance of the sedentary areas for the wealth of his kingdom, and of the danger of their being tramped under horses’ hooves. This reasoning brought him in 1269 to make peace with the Chaghdaid Khan Baraq, and he insisted that the princes would henceforth live only in the mountains and deserts and not in the cities, would not graze their cattle in cultivated areas and would not make excessive demands on their subjects. The sedentary area

45 See Biran 1997, 14-17; A llen 1987, 30-4.
46 See Biran 1997, passim.
47 Yuan shi, chap. 63, 1569; Arigh Boke took Almaliq from Alghu in 1263; Qaidu took it over after Arigh Boke’s surrender and Alghu’s death, but in 1268 had to withdraw westwards, leaving the city to Qubilai’s forces. Yuan troops held the city till at least 1276, when the princes escorting Qubilai’s son, Nomoghain, who had been sent to Almaliq to lead the struggle against Qaidu, rebelled against him, thereby enabling Qaidu to retake the city. See Biran 1997, 20-2, 37-41.
49 Qâshânî, 37, 210, 221 (sira ordu); 51: Wassaf, 517, adapt. Ayâfi, 291 (sir ordu).
50 Masuya 2002, 78-9, and her chapter in this volume
51 Biran 1997, 97.
52 Wassaf, 517; Qâshânî, 210-11, 213.
53 Wassaf, 452, adapt. Ayâfi, 266 (where it is translated as “capital”); Rashid al-Din, trans. Boylo, 27 n. 74; cf. Qâshânî, 210-11, where ESEN Boqa’s winter pasture is said to be near the Issyk Kul, while his summer pasture was in Taraz.
54 Qâshânî, 138; 143-4; Mirkhâwânî, 5-218; Biran 1997, 97.
55 Natanzî, 104-5.
was entrusted to Mas'ud Beg, who was ordered to restore it to prosperity. These good intentions soon evaporated, however, due to the Chaghadais’s more pressing political and economic interests, which resulted in their regarding the cities as an easy source of wealth to be plundered. These interests led, among others, to Baraq’s invasion of Khurasan in 1270 and to Abuq’s retaliatory expedition to Bukhara in 1273, which reduced the city to ashes. This and the subsequent Ogodeid-Chaghadai struggles resulted in another huge wave of migration by the urban elite, who left the Chaghadai realm and found new homes in the Ilkhanate, Mamluk Egypt, the Delhi Sultanate, the Golden Horde and Yuan China. As soon as Qaidu stabilised his rule, however, he started to restore the cities, which were again entrusted to Mas’ud Beg and later to his sons, who served Qaidu (and his son Chapar) up to the early fourteenth century. By the end of the thirteenth century, numismatic and literary evidence attests to the return of prosperity to the Central Asian cities, and the restoration of the monetary economy, agriculture and scholarly life. In the early 1280s, Qaidu and Du’a also established a new city, Andijan, in Farghana. As none of the khans settled there, the city must have been created solely for the (mostly commercial) needs of the Mongols’ subject population. Its successful location and future prosperity suggest that the khans (or their councillors) were well acquainted with the requirements of the sedentary population. While Andijan continued to exist, most other achievements of the late thirteenth century perished during the princes’ struggles that followed Qaidu’s death.

While Qaidu was well aware of the economic function of the cities, he did not choose to use the city as a source of legitimacy, nor did the Central Asian Mongols establish under him a capital equivalent to those of the other khanates. This might have been due to the relatively limited resources of Central Asia or to its less centralistic political culture, but the main reason seems to have been the uneasy existence of two ulus, Chaghadai and Ogodeid, on the same territory. Ogodeid’s name was connected to Qaraqorum, a territory that the Central Asian Mongols did not hold for most of Qaidu’s reign, nor was the Great Khan willing to give it up easily.

Emil, which was part of Qaidu’s realm, was connected to Gyuuyg, Ogodeid’s son and successor, but Qaidu was not a descendant of Gyuuyg, and the city’s location (on the eastern fringes of Qaidu’s realm) was not ideal for a capital. Any strategically-located capital would have had to be founded on the Chaghadais’ appanage (which constituted the main part of Qaidu’s realm), thus stressing Qaidu’s primacy over them. The mere founding of such a capital, therefore, could have alienated the Chaghadais and destroyed the delicate balance between the two ulus. Qaidu’s position as the Chaghadai overlord was somewhat of an anomaly in the Mongol world, and its legitimacy was questioned during and after his reign, just as he was unable to dissolve the Chaghadai army, Qaidu must have chosen not to create a capital city that would be too obvious a symbol of his authority.

THE RETURN OF THE CHAGHADAIDS (1301-47)

After Qaidu’s death, the Chaghadais regained ascendancy in Central Asia and made peace with the Yuan, but their attempts to overcome the Ogodeids undermined the khanate’s stability. This led to the ultimate dissolution of the Ogodeid ulus (whose last ruler, Qaidu’s son Chapar, surrendered to the Yuan in 1310) and, ironically, to another round of war between the Chaghadais and the Yuan during most of the 1310s. The heyday of the Chaghadais had been under Keke Khan (r. 1320-7), who made peace with the Yuan, moved his residence to Transoxania, built a new capital city, Qarshi, in the Kashkadarya valley (see below), and reorganised the khanate’s internal administration. After the reign of Keke’s Muslim brother, Tarmashirin (r. 1331-4), who also resided in Transoxania, the tension between the western and eastern parts of the khanate became more apparent, and the Chaghadais entered into a civil war during which even the identity of the ruling khan was not always known. It was in this period that closer coexistence between nomadic and sedentary people began to develop, at least in Transoxania.

When the Chaghadais resumed power after Qaidu’s death, Almaliq (or rather its environs) returned to the limelight as a symbol of Chaghadai independence: it was near Almaliq that the Chaghadai khan, Du’a, summoned in 1307 a quriltai that deposed Qaidu’s son, Chapar, and divided the Ogodeid ulus between the descendants of Qaidu and Gyuuyg; Du’a’s son,

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56 Rashid al-Din, 2: 7749; trans. 2: 532; Waṣṣāf, 69, adapt. Ayati, 39; Mirdkwand, 5: 266-8; Biran 1997, 28.
57 Biran 2007-8[s]: 41; Muminov 2003, 30-4; for the battle and its consequences, see Biran 2002.
58 Biran 1997, 98-103.
59 Najimi, 162; Hamd-Allah Mustawfi, 246, trans. 239; Biran 1997, 104-5.
60 For Qaidu’s only attempt to attack Qaraqorum and Qubilai’s response, see Biran 1997, 47-8.
61 For the Chaghadai’s status in Qaidu’s state, see Biran 1997, 79-80 and passion.
Könchek (r. 1307–8), was enthroned near Almaliq and most future Chaghadai khanjs resided beside it or at least visited the place (and Tarnashirin’s neglect to do so was one of the reasons for his deposition).

The disappearance of the local dynasty, probably in the post-Qaidu wars, also facilitated the appropriation of the city by the Chaghadaiids. In 1330, the archbishop of Sultâniyya described the Chaghadai khan as emperor of Almaliq: Christians who sought the khan’s favour settled in the city; and in 1340 a Christian missionary explicitly referred to Almaliq as the Chaghadaiid capital. Ibn Bat’tûta, visiting the Chaghadaiid realm in 1333, also noted that Almaliq was the Chaghadaiid “abode of royalty” (dâr almulk). Almaliq remained a major stopping place on the trade routes from Europe and the Middle East to China. In the mid 1320s a bishopric was established in the city and missionaries populated it and built churches there during the reigns of Iljiigidei (r. 1327–30) and Changshí (r. 1335–8). The Christian missionaries attributed the permission to build churches to the khan’s religious zeal (in Changshí’s case, a result of his son’s healing by Christian doctors). Both khanjs, however, are also described as adherents of Tibetan Buddhism, so one cannot make too much of their Christian affiliation. Religious buildings, on the other hand, were an integral part of other Mongol cities (Qaraqorum is the most notable example). Apart from these churches, there is no evidence for any Chaghadaiid—other—building in or near Almaliq that was meant to enhance its symbolic function, though this may simply be because of the lack of sources. Whatever was built, however, certainly suffered from the khanate’s instability after 1334 (the churches, for instance, were destroyed by ‘Ali Sultân, an ephemeral Oğodeid Muslim khan who coveted the Chaghadaiid throne around 1339–40), and the epidemics that struck the region in the late 1330s.

Simultaneously with the rise of Almaliq, this period saw the establishment of a new centre for Chaghadaiid rule in its western realm, Transoxania, in the city of Qarshi (Mo. ‘palace’). Qarshi was founded by Kebek Khan (r. 1320–7), who had gained a reputation for being a just khan who protected the interests of his sedentary subjects. Although Kebek continued to visit Almaliq, he seems to have built Qarshi as a second, western capital, thereby following the pattern of multiple capitals characteristic of many nomadic empires. Qarshi’s location and layout suggest that the main reasons for its founding were political.

Kebek built Qarshi in his winter pastures and next to good hunting grounds, but this is the first time a Chaghadaiid centre is located not on the open steppes but among Transoxania’s river valleys and oases. Kebek built it at the time of or before his accession to the Chaghadaiid throne. The region had been his centre of power in the decade that preceded his enthronement, when he served as commander of the Chaghadaiid western territories in Transoxania and Farghâna on behalf of his brother, the reigning khan, Esen Boqa (r. ca. 1300–19), who was residing on “the borders of Kish and Nakhshab.” It was there, 6-7 km south-east of the major town of the Kashkadarya valley, Nakhshab (also called Nasa), that Kebek established the fortress residence that became his capital. Qarshi’s location might have reflected the new orientation of Chaghadaiid expansion into Khurasan and India, not into China, with which Kebek established peace in 1323. It might have also indicated Kebek’s attempt to secure a centre of power to compete with that of his eastern amirs, who opposed his pro-Yuan policies.

The ruins of Qarshi are now situated in the old part of Nasa, not far from the banks of the Kashkadarya River. Surveyed by Masson in 1966 and by Rainkuluov and Sultonova in the early 2000s, it was described as being square, measuring 690 m by 630 m, with a total area about 40 hectares. The city was bounded by a strong wall, 4.5 m thick, surrounded by a deep defensive ditch, 8-10 m wide and 3.5-4 m deep, and had four gates. The original layout of the city (before Timurid additions) included one central

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63 E.g. Qâshání, 145–9; Wassâf, 259. adapt. Ayyâl 394.
64 Notable examples are Yuan Shangdu and Dadu, as well as the five Liao capitals and see the references in note 2.
65 Yadżî, fol. 198b; Ibn Fadl Allah al-‘Umârî, 38, 49.
66 Qâshání, 49.
68 Masson 1973, 78; Rainkuluov and Sultonova 2005, 217; on its outer front walls were semicircular towers, used as buttresses.
had strong personal connections for the khans who built them. Since none of the khans of this period ruled more than a few years, this may explain why such fortresses did not become capital cities equivalent to those of other Mongol khanates, such as Sultānīyya.

The building of fortresses such as Qarshī and Zanjīr Sarai did not mean that the Chaghatayids ceased to be nomads. In Qarshī’s case, al-ʿUmarī explicitly says, “They call it their abode of royalty (qaʿīdat al-mulk) although they do not reside in houses or use walls.” And Ibn Battūta, who had met Kebek’s brother, Tarsmashir Khan (r. 1331–34), near Qarshī in 1333, asserted that the Khan rested in his ordu-tent (that is, he maintained a mobile court), in which he received guests, directed the administration, commanded his amirs, and performed his prayers in the ordu’s mosque. This well-known description is the only one we have of the Chaghatayid ordu: the tent, protected by the Khan’s guard, was lavishly decorated with silken cloth of gold, and the Khan sat in the middle of it on a throne covered with golden brocade, wearing a jewelled crown on his head. The principal amirs sat on chairs to the right and left of the Khan, and in front of him were “the sons of the kings”, perhaps hostages taken from local ruling families. At the tent’s doorway stood the four heads of the Khan’s administration: his deputy, the vizier, the chamberlain and the seal keeper, who with him received guests such as Ibn Battūta. Past and future Chaghatayid courts probably retained a similar mobile character, reminiscent of the Great Khans’ customs, and were not necessarily located in cities.

Yet the mere building of compounds such as Qarshī and Zanjīr Sarai suggests a growing rapprochement between the Chaghatayid Mongols and their sedentary subjects. Another indication of such improved relations is Kebek’s reforms, which reshaped the Khanate’s administration. These included the restoration (only partially successful) of devastated cities such as Balkh; limiting the commanders’ ability to oppress their subjects; comprehensive monetary reform; and the division of the appanage into tūmen (Mo. ‘ten thousand’), an area that would supply revenues sufficient for supporting one tūmen of troops. While the tūmen system might have had its roots in Qaidu’s time, the commanders’ authority under Kebek was far greater, since there is no indication of a special official responsible for the sedentary areas and answerable to the Khan, as was the case under

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81 Naṭārī, 107.
82 Petrov 2005, 301-4.
83 Yule 1907, 3: 89; only Nakshab, not Qarshī, is shown on the Yuan map of 1331 (Brethren 1998, 2: 61).
84 See Ibn Faḍl Allah al-ʿUmarī, 49, whose information is based on the oral evidence of people who visited the cities.
85 Ibn Battūta, 3: 28-9, trans. Gibb 3: 555. In both cases, the evidence is from the post-Kebek period.
Qaidu. The cities were apparently included in the tūmen, and the tūmen's commanders were responsible for the collection of the city's taxes by shihnas, whom they appointed. A waqa'f (endowment) document of 1326 suggests that, by Kebek's time, several Turco-Mongolian commanders already held lands in major cities such as Bukhara.91

Another factor that drew the nomads closer to the sedentary population was their Islamisation; large numbers of Mongols are known already to have accepted Islam in Transoxania by Tarmashirin's time and Islam reached the eastern parts of the khanate some two decades later. At least in Ghazna, now part of the Chaghadaid domain, this found expression in the urban landscape, as Tarmashirin's Muslim commander (both governor and amir) built many hospices (khanaqažahs) there.92 Tarmashirin's Islamisation also improved Central Asia's commercial relations with contemporary Muslim states, mainly the Delhi and the Mamluk sultanesates, thereby potentially enhancing the prosperity of the region's urban centres.93

Yet the increasing coexistence and the khan's attempts to revive the Central Asian economy were not enough to assure urban revival. Indeed, both Ibn Battûta and the 1326 waqa'f speak forcefully of the ruins and devastation in several Transoxanian cities, even in the days of Kebek and Tarmashirin.94 The internal struggles that followed certainly did not benefit the Chaghadaids' sedentary subjects.

THE POST-1347 UPEHAULS UP TO THE RISE OF TEMÜR

By 1347, the Chaghadaid khanate dissolved into the Ulus Chaghatay in the west (Transoxania) and Moghulistan in the east (modern Kyrgyzstan, south Kazakhstan and most of Xinjiang), the former ruled by amirs, who were ultimately succeeded by Temür, and the latter by Tughluq Temür Khan (r. 1347-63), who made a last—and in the long run, futile—attempt to unite the khanate. After a short period of amirid rule, Chaghadaid khan, now known as Eastern Chaghadaids or Moghuls, continued to hold power in Moghulistan until the late seventeenth century.95 This period saw a grow-

ing Islamisation, which also reached the eastern regions of the khanate and became physically evident in the appearance of Islamic-style mausoleums erected for various khans, as well as an increase in the importance of cities to the commanders, and the modest beginnings of the rise of Samarkand.

In the east, Tughluq Temür converted to Islam in the 1350s, hoping to use the new religion to cement relations between the khanate's eastern and western parts. Turfan documents from his reign suggest that he was quite attentive to the needs of his sedentary subjects and tried to revive agriculture and commerce.96 In his attempts to reunify the Chaghadaid Khanate, Tughluq Temür moved from Aqsu (in north Xinjiang), where he had been enthroned, to Almalıq, which must have become his capital,97 trying to build on its former prestige. A few years after his death, in 771/1369-70, his wife had an impressive mausoleum erected for her husband, which is the only remnant of Almalıq that still stands today (see Fig. 2).

The monument resembles western Chaghadaid mausoleums (see below); it is an imposing rectangular building (7.7 m high, 6 m wide and 15.8 m long) with a dome, and an entrance façade decorated with carved and glazed terracotta tiles in turquoise, white and dark manganese. This is the only known example of such sophisticated tile work outside Bukhara and Samarkand.98 It is claimed that the builder was an Iraqi architect,99 probably one who was looking for work in Central Asia after the collapse of the Ilkhanate in 1335 and the subsequent turmoil in Iran and Iraq. Almalıq therefore became a mausoleum city, but unlike Ilkhanid examples, the mausoleum was built a few years after the death of its occupant,100 when Moghulistan was ruled by a non-Chinggisid rebel, Qamar al-Din,101 so the mausoleum does not seem to have contributed much to the city's status. Indeed, the inter-Moghul struggles, together with Temür's attacks on their territory, which in 1390 extended all the way to Almalıq, as well as Temür's shifting of the trade routes southwards, away from Semirech'ë,102 all contributed to the decline of Almalıq and Semirech'ë. In the last years

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97 Haydar Dughlat, 300, trans. 8, 226. (Aqsu was the appanage of Amir Bolaji, in whose realm Tughluq Temür grew up.)
99 Haydar Dughlat, 300, trans. 226.
100 O'Kane 2004, 285.
102 On Temür's attacks on the Moghuls, see e.g. Haidar Dughlat, 20-30, trans. 15-25; Manz 1989, 71.
of the fourteenth century, Kashgar is already referred to as the centre of the Moghul khan, Khair Khan (r. 1392–99), and in the early sixteenth century, the eastern Chaghadaiids moved their centre south, away from the steppe, into the oases of Uighuristan and the Tarim basin, the richest parts of their realm, and gradually ceased following their nomadic lifestyle. Babur and Haydar Dughlat both attest that in the early sixteenth century nothing remained of Almaliq but the mausoleum. Similarly, referring to the region of Taraz, formerly another major centre of the Central Asian

Mongols, Haydar Dughlat remarks that there were the ruins of domes and colleges (madrasa) there, but no one knew to which city they belonged. The two main centres of Mongol Central Asia had therefore ceased to exist as cities before the sixteenth century, thereby attesting once more to the ease with which steppe cities were abandoned.

In Transoxania, however, the post-1347 period saw a growing rapprochement between the Chaghadaiid commanders and their appanages, which were centred around cities. This tendency finds its clearest manifestation in the fact that in this period, Chaghadaiid army contingents are defined as belonging to localities (e.g., "the army of Kish", i.e. the region in and around the city of Kish) as opposed to their designation as the army of their commanders (usually Chinggisid princes; e.g. "the army of Sarban"), as had been the custom before. This attests to the growing political importance of the cities to the army commanders. It may also suggest that urban settlers began to serve in the armies, as they did under Temür, a fact that must have accelerated this rapprochement.

Another feature of this period is the appearance of Chaghadaiid mausoleums built within existing cities, and these still survive. In Fathabad, near Bukhara, we have the mausoleum of Bayan Quli Khan (r. 1348–58), a puppet khan of Amir Qazanqan, built around 1363–4, close to the mausoleum of the Sufi shaykh, Sayf al-Din al-Bakhari (d. 1261). This two-chamber domed building, which Haase has defined as demonstrating a transition between Mongol and Timurid styles, is covered with very fine tile work (better than in the Almaliq example), which encircles the whole building. This may have been the modest start of Temür's building enterprises in Transoxania.

Another feature of this period is the rise in importance of established cities, especially Samarqand. When the Qara'unas amir deposited Qazan Khan in 1347, their headquarters, located south of Qarshi, in the region of present-day Afghanistan, acquired new importance. However, Amir Qazanqan, and later Tughluq Temür, both stationed their sons at Samarqand, which gives an indication of the growing importance of the city in this period. There is evidence of a growing scholarly community in the city.
in the fourteenth century and several new buildings were added to the complex of the Šah-i Zinda, around the mausoleum of Qutb b. 'Abbās, perhaps indicating the city's spiritual importance or baraka.\textsuperscript{111} These features, together with Samarkand's historical fame and its status as the site of Temür's first victory, certainly contributed to Temür's decision to make it his capital.\textsuperscript{112}

**IN CONCLUSION**

The Mongol rulers of Central Asia chose to remain nomads and maintain mobile courts, and never built a capital equivalent to those of the other Mongol khanates. This was initially due to the tense coexistence of the Oğödeid and Chaghadaiid uluses in Central Asia during the reigns of Qaidu and Du’a. Later, when the Chaghadais wanted to make Almāliq their capital, the almost constant political instability of the fourteenth-century Chaghadai khanate (aied by the competition from Transoxania) hindered it from achieving real prestige on the level of Dadu, Sarai or Sultāniyya. However, the location of the Mongols’ mobile courts and of the trade routes had an impact on the development and welfare of nearby cities, notably leading to the decline of Balāshāghūn and the relative growth of Almāliq, Taraz and Andijān. Such growth notwithstanding, and despite the attempts of several khans to revive city life in Mongol Central Asia, the region does not seem to have returned to the pre-Mongol level of urbanism. This was due not only to the effects of the Mongol conquest and the large-scale transfers that accompanied it, but also to the growing presence of nomads and almost constant political instability, which in turn resulted in further, mainly voluntary, emigration of urban populations out of the khanate. The consequences of this trend were most pronounced in the relatively newly-urbanised region of Semirech’e, parts of which had already reverted to pasturclands by the mid-thirteenth century. Before the sixteenth century, even the region’s main cities, formerly the headquarters of the Chaghadais, Almāliq and Taraz, had ceased to exist.

In Transoxania, the most established urban region subject to the Chaghadai Khanate, there is evidence of a growing rapprochement between the Chaghadais and their sedentary subjects from the 1320s, and this was later reinforced by Chaghadaiid Islamisation and perhaps by the growing numbers of sedentary people in the Chaghadaiid armies. This rapprochement was expressed physically by the beginning of modest monumental building initiated by the Chaghadaiid royal house, which was influenced by Mongol models (fortress cities) or Muslim Turko-Mongol examples (mausoleums). It also saw the rise in the importance of well-established cities, notably Samarkand.

Temür may also have built upon the modest Chaghadaiid precedents when he chose Samarkand to be his capital and adorned it with magnificent monumental buildings. However, having been raised in the Ulus Chaghatay, closer to the sedentary people, Temür understood the importance of the city as a symbol of legitimacy and prestige much better than had the early Chaghadais. Moreover, he did not confine himself to the Chaghadaiid legacy, but drew upon the combined heritage of the Mongol empire.\textsuperscript{113} His building in Samarkand is reminiscent of Qubilai’s building at Dadu: he chose an existing city that was seriously damaged in the Mongol invasions and built it anew, based on models from the tradition of the local population (Chinese in Qubilai’s case; Muslim in Temür’s) and with the help of an international team of builders. The city also retained certain nomadic characteristics, such as the large number of walled gardens (bāgh),\textsuperscript{114} where the Mongols and Turko-Mongols could pitch their tents. In both cases, the city became a symbol of its builder’s prestige and legitimacy and attracted people not only from the region, but also from much further afield.\textsuperscript{115} Due to the decline of the Mongol khanates before his rise, Temür was able to reverse the direction of migration and to transfer and welcome urban elites—both craftsmen and scholars—into his realm, securing a stability that the region had lacked during most of the Chaghadais’ rule. Temür, in short, had what the Chaghadais lacked: charisma, vision and wealth.

This certainly found expression in its capital city, Samarkand.

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\textsuperscript{111} Nemtseva 1977, 51-73; Sakhñwi 2: 194-5.

\textsuperscript{112} Temür used Qarshi, and Zanjir Sarai until its destruction by Toqtoqish’s invasion. Temür’s destruction of Sarai has once even been described as retaliation for that of Zanjir Sarai (Yezdi, fol. 28th).

\textsuperscript{113} Manz 2000, 137-140.

\textsuperscript{114} For these gardens, see Subtelny 2002, 101-36.

\textsuperscript{115} For Dadu, see Steinhardt 1985; Rossabi 1988, 132-5; Zhihian 2010, 41-63; for Timurid Samarkand, see, for example, the descriptions of Clavijo’s embassy to Samarkand (1403-6) in Clavijo, trans. 218-300.
Rulers and City Life in Mongol Central Asia


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