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The Qanqlī of Khorāsān: Cuman-Qïpchaq Refugees of a Different Nature

The Western Campaign of Chingiz Khan led to the destruction of the Khwārazmian Empire, whose ephemeral hegemony extended over large areas of Central and South Eastern Asia. But the Mongols did not incorporate all of the Anūshtegīnids' former domains. Thus over the territory of Khorāsān appeared a power vacuum into which the spheres of influence of the expanding Mongol Empire, the last Anūshtegīnid Jalāl al-Dīn and the local elites were entangled. It is not a coincidence that significant groups of Cuman-Qïpchaq refugees decided to look for asylum precisely in this region. The present paper aims at tracing the parallels and the differences in their behavior compared with their counterparts in Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia and the Middle East, thus shedding light upon the fate of the Central Asian Cuman-Qïpchaqs in the dramatic age of the Mongol Expansion.

The presentation is based upon an account of the destruction of a group of Cuman-Qïpchaq refugees in Herāt, preserved in its local history (*Tārīkh nāma-yi Harāt*) which by now remained unnoticed by the specialists. Its unique data is compared with the parallel passages of Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn's fundamental works, as well as Jalāl al-Dīn's biography, written by al-Nasavī. It could be concluded that the conduct of these particular Cuman-Qïpchaq refugees differed significantly from the patterns of behavior of their cousins in other geographical regions. Explanation for this phenomenon as well as conjectures about the subsequent fate of these refugees is offered on the basis of the examined sources.