

Identity and Statecraft in the Khanates of Movarrounahr, 1700-1850

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The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed radical changes in the socio-political structures of the Bukharan, Khivan and Khokand polities. All three saw the emergence of ruling dynasties that reformulated the dispensation of sovereignty, ushering in a legitimation of rule new to Central Asia. This change in statecraft mirrored profound socio-cultural changes occurring within the societies of the three khanates. The rise of a new conceptualization of leadership reoriented the loci of power, thereby upsetting the socio-political complex that constituted the legacy, in Central Asia, of Chingizid statecraft. In turn, this cast into a new light the relations between sedentary and nomadic / semi-nomadic populations which had been governed by that very legacy, with the advantages increasingly resting squarely on the side of the former. Even after becoming partially or completely sedentarized, these semi-nomadic kinship groups came to identify their way of life as something distinct from the centralizing drives of the new rulership, thus setting the stage for a variety of conflict familiar to historians of other Turco-Muslim polities, including various such states in Anatolia and Persia: the tension between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies.

In the Central Asian context, however, this centrifugal / centripetal fault line did not merely repeat patterns of conflict familiar to those who have studied the early centuries of Ottoman and Safavid history. The crucial variable is the fact that, in the three khanates, the retirement of the central legitimizing principles of Chingizid governmentality, if not the entire apparatus associated with that statecraft, came so late.

This was both a result of and a response to international developments occurring beyond the territories that would come to constitute the domains of the three khanates. The looming eighteenth-century presences of the Perso-Afghan successors to the Safavids in Khorezm, the Tsarist Russians among the three Qazaq hordes, and the Chinese in Eastern Turkestan were all conducive to the emergence of a fertile mental and political battleground of ideas and contestation wherein new claimants to power could articulate innovative visions of centrally-oriented statecraft. These claimants' victory in that battleground ushered in the region's first taste of 'modernity', with that term being defined in this paper as 1) an abandonment of 'charismatic' rule - a crucial part of the Chingizid legacy (see below) - as well as 2) an innovative breed of centralization that, through its uncompromising and ideologically motivated strictness, marked a departure from past centripetal drives.

It will not be attempted here to prescribe a unitary role to 'Islam' in this embryonic process of modernization. Rather, one must speak of specific aspects of 'Islam' and their significance. In Central Asia as in many other contexts, Islam could mean different things, both on a personal as well as an institutional level, at various times and places. While these specific 'aspects' of Islam receive detailed discussion below, my general observation may be stated as follows: some of the new rulers reformulated the relationship of the sovereign to Islam and the community of believers as a means of justifying their departure from the Chingizid tradition. Perhaps what is most striking is that this reformulation does *not* appear to have become an especially contentious issue for the rulers and ruled. Neither in the form in which it was conceptualized and placed by the state, nor in the landscape of social identity, does the relationship of the ruler to Islam

appear to have generated the same level of discontent as policy - often justified by invoking Islam - in the areas of taxation, labor obligations, and armed service.

This paper thus argues that a new breed of centralization and a departure from Chingizid legitimation were common to all three khanates and that these phenomena constituted an embryonic Central Asian experience of modernity before the arrival of colonial rule. It begins with an explanation of my understanding of the Chingizid heritage, and then moves on to explore the individual contexts of the three khanates before ending with some general observations and conclusions.

Chingizid (and other) Heritages and their Salience in Central Asia

In the thirteenth century, an identity revolution occurred in precisely that part of the world where there should not have been one. After the invading Mongols swarmed across the entire Eurasian Islamic world, the Muslim chroniclers clearly noted their disgust at the brutality and customs of the newcomers. They painstakingly recorded the specific forms of violence and punishment visited by the Mongols upon those who resisted them, in such graphic detail that they have been well known even to Western popular culture for centuries. Yet it was not only the heaps of skulls that bothered the chroniclers, for the Mongols brought with them a radically different culture that offended contemporary Middle Eastern Islamic sensibilities. The chroniclers noted their amazement at the nocturnal drinking parties held by Mongol commanders, where, it is recorded, unbelievable amounts of alcohol were consumed. These bouts often turned violent and apparently led many of them to very early deaths. An equally interesting though less popularized custom of the Mongol warriors recorded by the chroniclers was

the prevalence of washing taboos. The Mongol officials and soldiers whom the Muslims peoples encountered only washed themselves on specific, and apparently rare, occasions, with the result that their bodies emitted a stench foul enough to merit expressions of disgust in the chronicles that have come down to us.¹

In the aftermath of the sack of Baghdad (1258), one would hardly have expected that within a century versions of the system of political legitimation brought by the Mongol chiefs and their Turkic and Mongolian soldiers would come to dominate political life from Central Asia to the coasts of the Aegean and Mediterranean. Yet, historians of the Islamic world have accepted that this is precisely what happened; from the Ilkhanid to the Mamluk realms and from Persia to Central Asia, blood ties to Chingiz khan became a prerequisite for any aspiring ruler. Those lacking such ties either became *güregens* or sons-in-law by marrying Chingizid princesses (as did Temür and his sons) or set up Chingizid princes as formal sovereigns.

The explanation for this development is that the enshrinement of the Chingizid principle in the Western and Central Asian Islamic world was not as much of a departure from past definitions of sovereignty as the presentation above might suggest. While the chroniclers did indeed perceive the Mongols as outsiders, the Turco-Mongolian armies that descended upon the Islamic world were but one wave, although the most important so far, of invaders who formed a part of what Beatrice Forbes Manz has termed the "Turco-Mongolian heritage". Manz argues that "this tradition had its origins in the pre-Mongol period, and achieved its classic formulation" under Chingiz.² The massive influx of Turkic nomads into Anatolia and the Middle East starting in the eleventh century, and

¹ All of this information is from a lecture given by Prof. Roy Mottahedeh in April 2005.

² Beatrice Forbes Manz. *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlaner* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 3

the establishment of ruling dynasties of Turkic slaves, formed the cultural and political backdrop over which Chingizid descent gained unquestioned supremacy in this part of the Islamic world.

The Turco-Mongolian heritage, then, did not consist solely of Chingizid legitimacy. In reference to the Western Asian Islamic world, John Woods has argued that three models of sovereignty, the prophetic, caliphal, and sacral, dominated political life in the centuries before and after the Mongol conquest. While the Mongol invasion dealt a lethal blow to the first two, the expansion of the sacral model became especially pronounced after 1258. In this model, the ruler practiced "charismatic" rule by virtue of the charisma (Turkic, *ughur*) disposed to him by the divine. God makes him "the repository of sovereignty on earth" so that "God and the king conduct parallel activities."³ According to Woods, this sacral model became especially widespread with the conversion of the Mongol rulers of Western Asia to Islam. At that time, in the fourteenth century, "a curious amalgam of legitimizing principles evolved, in which the Sacred Law of a decapitated Sunni-Jama'i Islamic universal state became inextricably bound up with the concepts and ideals of the devolving nomadic Changizkhanid world empire."⁴ This process bequeathed to much of the Islamic world, including Central Asia, an amalgam that I refer to as the Chingizid heritage: charismatic rule, the Chingizid principle, and, finally, the assignment of specific social roles to the sedentary and nomadic components of society.

The basic division in Turco-Muslim societies across the Muslim world was that between the taxable, peasant class and the non-taxable, 'military' class. This division had

³ John Woods. *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake, 1999), pp. 5-6

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7

its roots in the nomadic negotiation of power acquired over largely sedentary lands. It had lasting influence on the Muslim world, remaining a foundation of governance in the Central Asian khanates as well as the Ottoman Empire well into the nineteenth century - although by that time the numbers, functions, and diversity of the non-taxable classes had exploded beyond recognition. Temür made it a cornerstone of his administration, thus uniting much of Central Asia, and in the region the division took on a particular form: the military / peasant dichotomy corresponded to linguistic and ethnic differences. Whereas in the Ottoman Empire from the outset all officials, including ulema, were defined as 'military', Temür adhered closely to Mongolian tradition. A key argument of Manz is that he kept the sedentary, Persian speaking, madrasa-trained bureaucrats of the towns in a distinctly inferior position, to the extent that government consisted of two symbiotic though utterly separate cultural and administrative spheres.⁵ In fourteenth and fifteenth century Central Asia, then, tribal kinship groups occupied a privileged position in society and maintained strict psycho-cultural barriers between themselves and sedentary people. Within the unsettled, Turco-Mongolian or Chaghatayid sphere, two key axes of authority bequeathed by the Mongols to Central Asia retained their resilience in the administration of the khanates. One was the relationship between the *nökör* (Turkic, *nöker*) or liegeman and the *noyan* (also called *beki*, in Turkic *bek*) or tribal chief.⁶ Like Chingiz, Temür consolidated his rule over a number of kinship groups, each with their own *noyan* and retinues of *nökers*. Decimal organization, an innovation pushed through by Chingiz in 1203 after subduing a rival tribal confederation, served as another one. As Fletcher argues, this variety of military organization did not permit Chingiz (or Temür) to

⁵ Manz, pp. 108-27

⁶ Joseph Fletcher. "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (June, 1986), p. 17

ignore or erode the political and cultural authority of the *noyans*, but it did give him direct channels of access to transmit military commands.⁷ Although Chingiz khan did not push centralization through on anything approaching 'modern' lines, these two principles of Mongol socio-military organization had important consequences for the Central Asian khanates: the Chingizid heritage had inherent in it a tension between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies.

The above presentation readily admits that what I am calling the Chingizid legacy or heritage did not entirely stem from Mongolian tradition. Predating the Mongol invasion, Central, South, and West Asia all featured various Turco-Muslim polities, and lands now in Mongolia and northern China witnessed a separate process of social and military interaction between non-Muslim Turkic and Mongolian groups. This paper has not set itself the task of delineating which segments of this legacy owed their existence to Mongolian or other political traditions. Rather, it takes as its starting point the approach that the history of Central Asia's last khanates cannot be understood outside the context of the monumental legacy of the Chingizid invasion of the Islamic world.

The Bukharan Emirate

From the collapse of Shaybanid rule in 1598 to the rise of the Manghit dynasty in 1785, the Astarkhanid (Astrakhanid) or Janid dynasty ruled Bukhara. The Astarkhanids, however, suffered heavily from the irruption of the Perso-Afghan chief Nadir Shah into South and Central Asia. Safavid rule in Persia had effectively come to an end in 1722 due to a prolonged struggle between the dynasty and the Ghilzai Afghans, the rulership of which Nadir Khan (later Nadir Shah) claimed by 1736. He conquered Khiva and reduced⁷

Bukhara to vassalage in 1740 (a year after he sacked Delhi), nevertheless annexing all the Bukharan lands west of the Oxus. In addition to the violence associated with his rule, his Eastern policy included the resettlement of significant numbers of nomadic Qizlbash (Turkman) tribesmen on Bukharan territory as well as the transfer of the capital to Mashhad. In Persia proper, his reign featured significant, brutal upheaval as he attempted to replace Twelver Shiism with Sunnism as the state religion, possibly to placate his Sunni Afghan core supporters.⁸ Ahmad Khan, who established the Afghan Durrani dynasty as a regional power, arranged his murder in 1747, marking the end of Perso-Afghan dominance in Movarounnahr.⁹

The Manghit kinship group served as chief advisors to the ruling dynasty.¹⁰ In the final decades of Janid rule, the Manghits appropriated the position of *otaliq*, or instructor to the heir apparent, and secured a power base which allowed them to supplant the weak rulers.¹¹ Shah Murad (1785-1800) became the first Manghit ruler to adopt the title of *amir*. Under the Manghits, Bukhara became the most powerful state in Movarounnahr. Their rule lasted until the bombardment of Bukhara in 1921 and the flight of the last Manghit emir, Sayyid Olimkhon.

The Manghits were one of numerous Uzbek tribal groups that arrived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in southern Central Asia as part of the Shaybanid invasion. Under the Shaybanids and afterwards well into the nineteenth century, these Uzbek *beks* became the principal holders of power outside the capital. In this sense they

⁸ David Morgan. *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797* (London, 1988), pp. 152-5

⁹ On this fascinating and little-studied Afghan dynasty see Umar Kamal Khan, Advocate. *Rise of Sadozais and Emancipation of Afghans: a history of the part played by Multanis for the establishment of independent Afghanistan from the year 1638 A.D. to year 1747 A.D.* (Multan, 1999).

¹⁰ IraLapidus. *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 427

¹¹ Paul Georg Geiss. *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia: Communal Commitment and Political Order in Change* (London, 2003), p. 127

occupied a role comparable, though not identical, to that of the Chaghatayid *beks* under Temür. In the Khivan and Khokand khanates, these Uzbek kinship groups constituted one of a limited number of serious threats to the totalizing aspirations of centralization; in Bukhara, by contrast, they were by far the greatest such threat.

With the ascent of Shah Murad to the Manghit throne, a new chapter began in Bukharan history. The severe weakening of central Astarkhanid authority during the period of vassalage due to Shah Nadir's aforementioned policies - a process which, of course, had allowed the Manghits to become powerful in the first place - clearly struck a raw nerve with the new emir, for as soon as he acquired sovereignty he embarked on a centralization and reform program radical by contemporary standards. His first such act was pregnant with symbolic meaning; he abandoned the Chingizid title of khan and adopted the more traditionally Islamic one of *amir al-muslimin* or the leader of the believers. Shah Murad was not the first Central Asian ruler to do so - Temür had done the same, and today is still referred to in Uzbek *as Amir Timur* - but he backed up this symbolic gesture by abandoning the custom of formally installing a Chingizid ruler.¹² Henceforward, the dispensation of sovereignty would stem from ties to the Manghit dynasty alone and the relationship of the ruler to Islam would depart from Chingizid tradition.

Additionally, Shah Murad initiated four key reforms that took the emirate far from the model of its Janid predecessor. In the area of finance, he responded to the increasing capacity of Bukharan traders (due to ascendant commercial networks that included Russia and India) by instituting a reform of the currency that, for the first time,

¹² Ibid., p. 127. As Geiss notes, this did not mean the end of all Chingizid customs, the enthronement ceremony continuing for some generations.

standardized the exchange system and silver component of coinage.¹³ With regards to taxation, he attempted to centralize tax collection in the eastern parts of the emirate, delegating authority to centrally appointed officials rather than relying on the traditional mechanism of using the *beks* and their retinues for this purpose. Similarly, he moved in the direction of favoring taxes prescribed by the *shari 'a* rather than *qanun*. Finally, the areas of administration and law courts also experienced this shift to a more Islamic emphasis.¹⁴ Shah Murad established a foundation on which his predecessors could build; his attempt to weaken the power of the *beks* through Islamization (as a legal or administrative phenomenon, no reference here being made to belief or practice) set a precedent that defined the rest of Bukharan history under the Manghits.

The reigns of the next two emirs, Haydar Amit (1800-26) and Nasrullah (1827-60) carry Bukharan history to the arrival of the colonial Russians. Historians generally recognize the former as having adopted a less aggressive posture than his father.¹⁵ Although he initially attempted to pursue the course of reform and centralization, by the end of his reign he faced a major uprising from another Uzbek kinship group, the Qipchaqs.¹⁶ At this time also, Shahrisabz emerged as a rallying point for disgruntled *beks*

¹³I. M. Muminova (ed.). *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Tashkent, 1974), pp. 115-6 ¹⁴Geiss, pp. 127-8

⁵ Ibid., p. 129; Mary Holdsworth. *Turkestan in the 19th Century* (Oxford, 1959), p. 4

⁶ This, at least, is the description furnished by Geiss as well as Holdsworth (p. 14). However, the volume edited by Muminova (n. 13) characterizes the 1821-25 uprising at some length as an insurgency of the peasant masses against feudal oppression centered around Kattaqo'rg'on in the eastern part of the emirate. I am not a specialist but am inclined to view this characterization with some suspicion. *All* the Soviet literature I have read on the khanates goes to great lengths to find evidence of class-based discontent and violence in these polities. Even the best Soviet scholars studying the khanates, such as Yuri Bregel and R.N. Nabiev, cannot avoid this framework, perhaps for reasons beyond their control. At the same time, the Muminova volume is a serious work of scholarship. The fact that its treatment of this rebellion does not mention Qipchaq at all suggests the possibility that the uprising may have consisted of multiple strands which different scholars have stressed at varying levels in the context of their own biases. Muminova, pp. 125-7

as the *bek* of that city supported the Qipchaq revolt. Shahrīsabz *beks* would provide the Bukharan center with numerous headaches well into the colonial / protectorate period.

Nasrullah pursued a much more radical course of centralization than either of his aforementioned Manghit predecessors. In the 1830s, he sought to do away with the *nöker* power base of the *beks* by creating, for the first time, a standing army *ofsarboz* (also apparently referred to in Turkic as *qara chirik*) or infantry.¹⁷ This infantry included approximately 2,000 farmers, craftsmen, and slaves residing in settlements maintained by the emir that did not fall under the purview of any *bek*.¹⁸ By creating a pool of armed men who depended for their livelihood only on the sovereign, Nasrullah succeeded in supplanting the *nökers* and, in the early part of his reign, killed thousands of *beks* and *nökers*. This development undoubtedly contributed to the expansionist path of Nasrullah's career, notably his conquest of Khokand in 1842 and consolidation of power over Shahrīsabz in 1855. Under Nasrullah, Bukhara for the first administered some provinces directly through town-based bureaucrats recruited from the *Sart* population rather than through *beks*.¹⁹

The above presentation supports the conclusion that, in the Bukharan emirate during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Islam became a partner of the modernizing drives of the centralizing state. This Islamically legitimated reform package created fertile ground for an embryonic process of ethnogenesis, whereby the traditional Turco-Muslim division between sedentary and nomadic took on sharper

¹⁷ Muminova, p. 117

¹⁸ Geiss., p. 129

¹⁹ Some academic debate has occurred over the definition of the word *Sart*. Geiss defines a *Sart* as "a non-tribal rural or urban dweller in pre-revolutionary Central Asia." What seems clear is that it referred to sedentary populations and had slightly different connotations in the context of each individual khanate. Yuri Bregel has written an article on the use of the term in Khorezm (see below), but I have not run across a piece written after the early Soviet Orientalists specifically dealing with its use in the other khanates.

meaning. As the vast bulk of the emirate's sedentary population increasingly came under the direct control of the center (rather than under its indirect control through the Uzbek *beks*), the Uzbeks became marginalized in numbers and authority as the last adherents in Central Asia of the Chingizid legacy with all its military, administrative, and conceptual connotations. If one defines one's terms carefully, one might say that this represented a battle between Islam and the Chingizid legacy.²⁰ When I speak of Islam, I refer to a conceptualization of the religious tradition as an administrative system on the part of the center that excluded Chingizid principles. I do not mean to suggest that the Uzbeks who legitimized their own authority on Chingizid models were something other than 'Muslim', for they clearly defined themselves as such. The point is that their understanding of sovereignty constituted an historical amalgam of Islamic, Turco-Mongolian, and Chingizid traditions of governance, whereas their mortal foe in the capital identified that very amalgam as a threat to his power and the progress of his realm.

It needs to be clarified that the institutions one ordinarily associates with 'Islam' - mosques, courts, madrasas, or even shrines - all stood very much on the sidelines of this showdown. Clearly the weight added by certain emirs to the *shari 'a* over *qanun* did mean that Islamic institutions played a role in the centralizing drive. But I have not encountered any suggestion in the scholarship that figures generally associated with such institutions, such as the *kazi*, *kazi-kalon*, or *shaykh ul-islam* themselves urged the emirs to pursue such a course. An examination of identity at the micro level, and the ways in which historical

²⁰ If one does not define one's terms carefully, one can easily fall into the trap of claiming that the center represented 'high' Islam and the tribal groups 'popular' Islam. This framework is well known in the literature and is now coming under suspicion. My approach is to distinguish between Islam as a system of practices and beliefs, this being irrelevant for the present paper, and Islam as a complex of principles governing statecraft and administration.

actors conceptualized religious and other practices in their locality to distinguish themselves from others, might very well turn to the output of such figures. Such an examination is not proposed here.

The Khivan Khanate

Before the invasion of Nadir Shah, the Janid rulers of Khorezm divided the oasis administratively among four Uzbek tribal groups: the Uyghur-Naiman, the Qunghirot-Qiiat, the Nukus-Manghit, and the Qanghli-Qipchaq. After the death of Nadir Shah, each of these groups effectively ruled independently in their independent spheres. Following Chingizid tradition they installed a khan formally in Khiva, which had succeeded Urganch as capital of Khorezm after a sixteenth century shift in the Amudaryo. Without exception, a Qazaq of Chingizid lineage served as khan.²¹ While the Manghits dominated the oasis in the 1760s, the *inoq* of the Qunghirots, Muhammad Amin, gained supremacy in the 1760s. His dynasty remained in power until 1920.²²

Khiva felt the influence of Nadir Shah and the Tsarist Russians much more acutely than Bukhara. The former did not reduce it to vassalage but fully incorporated it as part of his realm from 1736 until his death in 1747. This decade was an unhappy one in Khorezm due to Nadir Shah's aforementioned migration policy, with a good portion of the population suffering from violent Qizlbash raids and in some cases retaliating.²³ As for Russo-Khivan relations, they came to transcend distant commercial ties when, in 1717, Peter I dispatched an (unsuccessful) expedition of 6,000 soldiers to subdue

²¹ Guliamov, Ia. G. (ed.). *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR s drevneishkikh vremen do serediny XIXveka v chetyrekh tomakh: tom pervyi* (Tashkent, 1967), p. 605

²² Geiss, pp. 137-8. *inoq*: the Khorezmian equivalent of *bek*.

²³ Muminova, p. 119

Khiva.²⁴ Russo-Khivan tensions reached a new level with the Tsarist conquest of the Qazaq steppe in 1824-5. Khivan / Khorezmian activity among the Qazaqs between the Caspian and the Syrdaryo naturally predated those of the Russians by some centuries; after 1825, Khiva did not automatically cease to maintain its claims of authority over certain groups among the Qazaqs. This led to frequent Russian accusations of Khivan meddling in its internal affairs. Seymour Becker has noted that for this reason alone the Russians had much better relations with Bukhara (a fact reflected in the outcomes of the 1868 peace treaties). Another source of tension, however, stemmed from the increasing activity of Russian merchants in Khorezm and areas adjacent to it in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In the decades preceding its invasion of Khorezm, the Russian Empire made incessant demands that Khiva recognize the equality of Russian merchants in its realms, grant immunity to Russian caravans on the banks of the Syrdaryo, and open up the Amudaryo to Russian commercial and military interests. In this context, Nicholas I sent off yet another (unsuccessful) Russian expedition against Khiva in 1839.²⁵

While smaller in population than its Bukharan neighbor, the Khivan khanate featured greater political and social diversity. Turkmen, Qazaq, and Qaraqalpaq tribal groups resided in the vast deserts surrounding the oasis.²⁶ In Khorezm itself, Bregel has argued that until the first half of the nineteenth century the bulk of the sedentary population identified itself as *Sarts*. During the Mongol and Timurid periods, the term *Sart* always denoted Iranian-speaking people; the sixteenth century Khivan historians

²⁴ Ibid., p. 119

²⁵ Seymour Becker. *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865-1924* (London, 2004), pp. 13-14

²⁶ Georg, p. 137

contrasted Iranian-speaking Khorezmians, *Sarts*, with Iranian-speaking Bukharans, *Tajiks*.²⁷ Bregel has identified a number of elements constituting the *Sart* identity in the Khivan khanate. These include their descent "from the ancient sedentary population of Khorezm", their traditions associated with urban and agricultural lifestyles, their predominance in the southern part of Khorezm, their membership in the taxpaying class, and their exclusive recruitment for filling the ranks of the civilian (as opposed to the military) administration.²⁸ In Bregel's view, another key factor in understanding Khorezmian *Sart* identity lies in exploring their relationship with the Khorezmian Uzbeks. The division between *Sart* and Uzbek was one both of lifestyle and of geography. In southern Khorezm, the *Sarts* predominated and an office reserved for *Sarts*, the *mehter*, ran the local government. On the other hand, Uzbek tribal groups populated much of northern Khorezm; a military official, the *qoshbegi*, governed this area. In addition to collecting taxes and being involved in local government, the *qoshbegi* and *mehter* served as the khan's principal advisers on military and civilian matters respectively in the nineteenth century.²⁹ The *qoshbegi* also had the responsibility of overseeing the activities of the semi-nomadic Qazaqs, Qaraqalpaqs, and Turkmen residing in northern Khorezm.³⁰ During the course of the nineteenth century, many of the northern Uzbeks migrated south, adopting a settled lifestyle; this period also saw the consequent turkification of the *Sarts* by the middle of the nineteenth century.³¹ It is also

²⁷ Yuri Bregel. "The Sarts in the Khanate of Khiva." *Journal of Asian History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1978), pp. 148-9

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-1

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-1

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 134

³¹ The article merits two further unrelated observations. First, Bregel quotes Soviet ethnographic sources to the effect that as late as the 1950s Khorezmian interviewees expressed awareness of the difference between themselves and 'Uzbeks'. Second, this particular piece has received harsh criticism from Adeb Khalid in his *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform* (Berkeley, 1998). Khalid interprets it as claiming that a unitary *Sart*

possible that this process contributed to land hunger, as at least one scholar has argued that the landless peasant rather than the peasant smallholder was the predominant figure of nineteenth-century Khivan agricultural life.³²

Along with the *Sarts* and Uzbeks, the Turkmen tribes constituted yet another significant socio-political element in the Khivan polity. In the course of the nineteenth century, the conflict between nomadic Turkmen and sedentarized Uzbeks became the key fault line in Khivan political life, culminating in a series of massive Turkmen uprisings after 1900 against Khivan and Russian rule. The Turkmen moved into Khorezmian territory from the western part of modern-day Turkmenistan in the sixteenth century due in part to hunger for grazing land.³³ In terms of their socio-cultural internal organization, the Turkmen tribes differed greatly from the Uzbeks. For one, in the Khivan context they adhered to a modified version of the *bek-nöker* system. Bregel argues that Khorezmian Turkmen resided in smaller groups (*obas*) united by blood ties through the paternal line. With their augmented migration rates into Khorezmian territory in the seventeenth century, members of the *obas* became *nökers* not in relation to their own leaders, as among the Uzbeks, but directly under the central authority, the khan in Khiva.³⁴

The first two Qunghirot rulers of Khorezm, Muhammad Amin (1765-91) and Avaz *inoq* (1799-1804) maintained reverence for the requirement of Chingizid descent in a formal ruler. Iltuzar (1804-6) became the first ruler in Khorezm to abandon the Chingizid legacy and proclaim himself khan of Khiva. He appears to have had a

identity existed and that the *mehter* represented the interests of *Sarts* to the khan. He accuses Bregel of "misunderstanding... the nature of both power and community inpremodern Central Asia." (p. 201, n. 44). In fact, the article (as I interpret it) makes no such claim.

³² M. Y. Yul'dashev. *Kistorii krest'ian KhivyXIXveka* (Tashkent, 1966), p. 6

³³ Iu. Ie. Bregel'. *Khorezmskie Turkmeny vXIX veke* (Moscow, 1961), p. 21

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118

centralizing agenda in mind from the outset of his rule, but fate gave him little time to realize his ambitions. His successor, Muhammad Rahim I (1806-25) took on the reigns of centralization and reform with great vigor. His reforms included standardization of the coinage, development of a currency system with a gold mint, codification of customs regulations and centralization of tax collection. He also initiated an attack on all the tribal components of the Khivan polity with the goal of reducing their autonomy from the center. First and foremost, this meant the Uzbek kinship groups. In 1811, he launched a highly destructive punitive expedition against Qunghirot (modern-day Kungrad, Qaraqalpaqstan), a realm in the western part of the Khorezmian domains. Throughout Khivan history Qunghirot served as a bastion of tribal resistance to centralization, comparable in this respect to the status of Shahrisabz in the Bukharan emirate. He utilized his 1818 Khorasan campaign to compel the participation of the Turkmen Ahal Teke and Goekleng tribes, and likewise subdued the Choudor Turkmen of Manghyshlaq. A diplomatic attempt to compel Qazaq submission in 1819 failed due to Russian pressure.³⁵ In the realms of administration and military organization, Muhammad Rahim instituted two innovations. First, in a pattern similar to developments in Bukhara, he sought to fill his government with *Sarts* as a means of undermining Uzbek power. Second, he departed radically from the Chingizid heritage by attaching to himself a personal body of *nökers* recruited from the Turkmen tribes. This had the dual effect of undermining Uzbek influence and of centralizing control of the highly mobile Turkmen. Those Turkmen groups which he could not defeat militarily, he sought as allies, again

³⁵ Guliamov, pp. 668-9

through the *nöker* system.³⁶ While these innovations did not translate into absolute centralization, they set a powerful precedent for the course of Khivan history.

In terms both of mechanism and outcome, the Khivan case presents a very different model from the variety of centralization pursued in Bukhara. The period from the death of Muhammad Rahim I to the 1850s witnessed an expansive Khivan policy, coinciding with the reign of the bellicose Bukharan emir, Nasrullah, and the course of Khivan-Turkmen and Khivan-Uzbek relations followed the pattern established in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Ultimately, Khiva did not do as well where Bukhara largely succeeded, namely in the complete standardization of legal and administrative practice across all the constituent elements of the polity. This was undoubtedly due to the greater socio-political diversity of the Khivan khanate. Nevertheless, one should not pass lightly over a significant development attributable directly to the centralizing efforts of the Qunghirot khans, namely the complete subjugation and even sedentarization of the north Khorezmian Uzbeks - the very group which had in the eighteenth century presented the greatest obstacle to centralization. Where the Khivans solved their Uzbek problem, however, they created a new Turkmen one. Due to their looser affiliation with the Chingizid tradition, and the prevalence among them of the *oba* rather than *nöker* based organization, the Turkmen as a whole could not be undermined easily. The khans' innovations made some progress in this direction, but some tribal groups always remained beyond the center's reach.

Clearly, the character of centralization also took on a form different from that observed in Bukhara; in the Khorezmian context, insistence on Islamic legitimacy did not

³⁶Geiss,p. 139

strike the Khivan khans as necessary to justify abandoning the Chingizid heritage. In fact, Bregel discovered evidence that Turkmen *ishans* sought education and confirmation from Khivan *pirs*.³⁷ However, these channels of religious authority, to the extent they existed, never presented themselves to the khans as a desirable means of implementing centralization, at least with respect to the Turkmen. Among the *Sarts* and Uzbeks, of course, a religious educational and legal hierarchy did indeed exist on lines comparable to those found in Bukhara. This in and of itself did not represent a departure from the past. Nevertheless, Khiva does offer some similarities to the Bukharan case, as clearly the ramifications of the khans' policies for ethnogenesis in the khanate were great. The work of Bregel has suggested that the sedentarization of the Uzbeks - a result of Khivan centralization, as I have tried to suggest - and their cultural and ethnic mixing with the *Sarts* led to the emergence of some kind of new, sedentary 'Uzbek' ethnicity, however embryonic. This in and of itself may arguably be counted among the greatest historical developments in modern Central Asia. Surely, then, the Khivan case fits the bill of 'modernity' as I have defined it.

The Khokand Khanate

In the eighteenth century, a number of *beks* held power in various parts of the Farghona Valley. Among these, the Ming dynasty ruled the city of Khokand.³⁸ The rise of this local family to regional power status occurred in the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century in the context of international developments. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the Mings asserted their rule over the two major cities in the

³⁷ Bregel, *Khorezmskie Turkmeny*, p. 175

³⁸ The Khokand and better-known Chinese Ming dynasties share nothing but the etymology of their name, *ming* being the Mongol and later Turkic word for "thousand" and a unit of the Chingizid decimal system.

valley, Andijon and Marghilon. Between 1756-60, the Chinese invaded Kashgar as well as the Qalmyq state of Jungaria. Abdulkarim bii, the Ming ruler in Khokand, approved the requests of Qalmyq and Kashgar Muslim refugees for assistance against the Chinese. This gesture propelled him to valley-wide significance.³⁹ The Chinese dimension would constitute an important part of the story of the Khokand khanate from its modest beginnings all the way until its dissolution by the colonial Russians in 1876. In large part this stemmed from the importance of the Farghona-Kashgar trade route through the Tien Shan mountains for the economic vitality of the valley and the Khokandian urge to keep it under tight control.

In its socio-political makeup the Khokand polity resembled the Bukharan emirate in some respects and the Khivan khanate in others. With respect to administration, the structure of government and the legal system in the settled regions of the Khokand khanate closely mirrored that of Bukhara.⁴⁰ As in the Bukharan emirate, the Uzbek groups in the valley both stood in the way of and constituted the target of state centralization. At the same time, the khanate came to occupy the entire territory of modern-day Kyrgyzstan, as well as a good part of south Kazakhstan up to Aq Mechet (modern-day Qyzylorda). The presence of such a large nomadic population in Khokand's borders makes it comparable to Khiva. At the same time, the polity is unique in its own right for having as subjects, on the one hand, large numbers of people leading a completely nomadic lifestyle, and, on the other, the population of one of the world's most densely populated valleys. Of course, the khanate is also distinguished by the fact that, unlike Bukhara and Khiva, it did not survive colonial rule.

³⁹ Guliamov, p. 659

⁴⁰ Holdsworth, p. 9

The Kyrgyz residing in the southern part of modern-day Kyrgyzstan came under the rule of the Khokandians during the reign of Narbota Bii (c. 1770-98). At this time, broad confederacies constituted the organizational unit defining the lives of most of the Kyrgyz nomads. Narbota's successes among the Kyrgyz resulted not as much from outright conquest as from strategic alliances with individual tribal leaders.⁴¹ The conquest of the northern parts of the Kyrgyz lands occurred in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Khokand was most interested in the collection of taxes on the nomads' herds, and to this end established a whole network of fortresses, including that at Pishpek in 1825. This focus on taxation was important for the experience of the Kyrgyz under Khokandian rule, for the literature has suggested that, in marked contrast to Bukhara and Khiva, the Khokandian consolidation / invasion saw the rise of a new elite landowning group among the Kyrgyz known as *manap*. In 1961, the Kyrgyz scholar Usenbaev challenged the argument of V. V. Bartol'd that the *manap* (Russian, *manapstvo*) had emerged in the eighteenth century, dating its rise to the first decade of the nineteenth century.⁴² Usenbaev argued that the title *manap* did not exist in "southern Kirgiziia", and that "the difference between the *bays* [of sedentary areas] and the *manaps* was that the former had more limited power and their power did not depend on their lineage."⁴³ In the vein of much Soviet literature on Islam among Central Asian nomads, Usenbaev also wrote that Khokand used "the clergy (*dukhovenstvo*)" as a means of Islamizing the Kyrgyz and consolidating control, an argument seriously undermined by the fact that the center did not in fact extend various forms of land tenure over the nomads or attempt to

⁴¹ Geiss, p. 147

⁴² K. Usenbaev. *Obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskie otnosheniia Kirgizov v period gospodstva Kokandskogo khanstva* (Frunze, 1961), p. 120. It bears mentioning that Usenbaev relies heavily on Russian colonial archives and travelogues.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-7

sedentarize them on a massive scale.⁴⁴ At any rate, the *manap* argument has apparently made its mark on the literature, receiving confirmation in a recent work as well.⁴⁵ Noting, then, that the argument has been received seriously by some specialists, one can state that Khokand approached *some* of the nomads it conquered differently than Bukhara and Khiva.

The literature describes the reigns of Alim Khan (1798-1810) and Umar Khan (1810-23) as periods of centralization. These two rulers certainly had ambitious plans for asserting their control, but they faced great difficulties in realizing their goals. Alim was the first Ming to abandon the title of *bii* used by his predecessors and adopt that of khan, thus dispensing with the need for a Chingizid sovereign. He lacked the strength, however, to coerce the valley's Uzbeks on the model of Bukhara or Khiva. Under Umar, the dispensation of rule began to take a turn towards the Bukharan model. Umar khan adopted the title of *amir al-muminin*, at that time claimed by the Bukharan ruler. He also emulated the posture of a classical Islamic ruler in his patronage of cultural life and architecture, including the capital's main mosque. Georg notes a shift towards *shari'a* during his reign.⁴⁶ According to one source, the early nineteenth century saw "the bestowal upon a variety of parties honors and titles corresponding to Bukharan [ones], the construction of an administrative system and, in this manner, the emergence of a centralized state."⁴⁷

There is at least one piece of evidence suggesting that the Ming rulers experienced some success in popularizing the claim of their dynasty to sovereignty in the

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 31

⁴⁵ S. S. Soodanbekov. *Obshchestvennyi i gosudarstvennyi stroi Kokandskogo khanstva* (Bishkek, 2000), pp. 54-56

⁴⁶ Georg, p. 149

⁴⁷ Guliamov, p. 662

khanate. In 1842, when Nasrullah of Bukhara occupied Khokand and imposed a Manghit ruler, a coalition of Khokandian *Sarts*, Kyrgyz confederacies and Uzbek Qipchaqs united to oust the Manghits and return a Ming ruler to the throne.⁴⁸ Although the alliance succeeded in its goal, it broke down soon after. In the aftermath, the Qipchaqs installed their preferred Ming candidate and the last Khokandian khan, Khudoyor. Qipchaq pogroms of *Sarts* were followed by retaliatory massacres of Qipchaqs instigated by the khan.⁴⁹ While Khudoyor relied heavily on *Sarts* in his battles with the Uzbeks, in the meantime some Kyrgyz groups joined forces with the now hostile colonial Russians. This bloody and anarchic backdrop set the stage for the Russian sack of Khokand (1866) and the khanate's final decade of existence as an imperial vassalage.

By the criteria of modernity as I have defined it - the establishment of a new dispensation of sovereignty, and the tireless pursuit of centralization - the Mings squarely fall in the category of the 'modern'. Although they clearly failed in completely reducing the autonomy of the tribal groups under their rule, there are strong indications that they succeeded in obtaining the acknowledgment and approval of their subjects of the retirement of the Chingizid heritage. Ultimately, the Khokandian failure to undermine the authority of the Qipchaq and Kyrgyz leaders did not result from lack of imagination. Khokandian history witnessed attempts to establish a permanent, standing army, and to sedentarize at least some nomads. The historical explanation for the Khokandian outcome may very well lie in the fact that, socially and geographically, the realm was too unwieldy to be managed by a center that sought both to increase its prerogatives and

⁴⁸ Georg, p. 150. The volume edited by Guliamov has also offered the explanation that the Manghit governor's demand for an additional quarter of the harvest as tax fueled the alliance (p. 663).

⁴⁹ Georg, p. 151

redefine itself; in other words, the Chingizid tradition had been custom tailored to suit precisely such a polity, spanning the divide of the nomadic and settled worlds.

Conclusion

Independent of their success in realizing their centralizing aspirations and gaining popular acceptance of their abandonment of the Chingizid principle, all three ruling dynasties discussed in this paper adopted methods and principles of governance different from past modes of statecraft in Central Asia. All three did so, moreover, in the context of an uncertain and unstable international landscape wherein formidable outside powers threaten to encroach upon the region. This situation, in turn, generated a level of instability that yielded fertile ground for the emergence of rulers with new visions of strong governance. It is therefore no coincidence that the rulers of Bukhara, Khiva, and Khokand all abandoned the Chingizid descent principle as a pillar of governance at roughly the same time, around the turn of the nineteenth century. Facing the threat or reality of instability, many elements of these three societies responded positively to the promise of strong rule. Thus, structural conditions prevailed that made possible the emergence of a new vision of centralized rule, attempting to arm its dislike of centrifugal tendencies with an ideologically legitimated dispensation of sovereignty. The new dynasties in all three khanates sought to obviate any possibility of competing groups crystallizing in opposition to their rule. I have referred to this process as a pre-colonial experience of modernity, based on the association of the concept of modernity with states that seek to rationalize, systematize, and understand their subject populations in new ways. This is, naturally, but one aspect of modernity, and the khanates were clearly not

'modern' by the more recent standards of industrialization, commodification, materialism, etc.

My belief that these dynasties represented a form of 'modernity' also rests on my argument that in all three polities the new dispensation of sovereignty and centralization had a profound impact on processes of ethnogenesis. Whereas in the case of the Khivan *Sarts* and Uzbeks state policy led to the emergence of a new ethnicity, in many cases the settled / nomad divide acquired a formidable new salience that frequently led to mass violence. State policies, then, clearly impacted identity formation among subjects.

This leads to one final suggestion regarding the relationship between religion and ethnogenesis in the Central Asian context. Bukhara, Khiva and Khokand present three different models of the use of the administrative and legal complex of Islam as a mechanism of consolidating power: Bukhara employed it consistently, Khiva did not utilize it at all, and Khokand experimented with the possibility. At first glance, this would seem to indicate that Islamically-legitimated statecraft tends to succeed in undermining centrifugal tendencies. However, we have also observed that Bukhara, the most successful of the three in centralizing effectively with comparably little violence, was the least socially diverse of the three realms, whereas Khiva and Khokand both had large nomadic, semi-nomadic, and sedentary populations, some of them adhering to Chingizid modes of organization and sovereignty and others not. If the above hypothesis about the role of Islam were true, Khokand would have fared better at least on some level than Khiva. And yet the Khivan Qunghirot dynasty, however limited in its sovereignty, outlived Khokand by almost half a century. This seems to suggest that Islamization of institutions was *not* the key to successful centralization in Central Asia in the period

before colonialism; rather, dynasties that adopted a unitary, consistent ideology that matched the specific conditions of the particular polity, and that could therefore accommodate the notions of justice and sovereignty of the bulk of the population, had a better chance of ensuring central supremacy and minimizing inter-group violence.