
The Kings of Xinjiang: Muslims Elites and the Qing Empire¹

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In 1696 ‘Abd al-Rashīd Khān, seventeenth-generation descendent of Chinggis Khan and one-time ruler in Yarkand, arrived on the frontier of the Qing 清 Empire seeking refuge from the turmoil which had engulfed his homeland. Since its founding in 1644, the Qing had maintained intermittent relations with the Muslim nobility of the Tarim Basin region, but this was their first direct contact with a member of the royal Chaghatayid line. ‘Abd al-Rashīd was summoned to Beijing for a formal reception, and the *Lifanyuan* 理番院 (Court of Colonial Affairs) made arrangements for his arrival. However, in their planning they ran into a problem, and they counselled a delay:

When the kings of the forty-nine banners, the *taijis* and the Khalkha are bowing to receive favour, all of our inner kings, ambans, and officials will kow-tow in one procession. Because ‘Abd al-Rashīd Khān and the others do not have proper court attire, they will be made to kow-tow in a separate procession.²

This image of a Muslim prince, garbed, no doubt, in Islamic dress, being left out of a procession of Inner Asian dignitaries clothed in court-approved

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at a meeting of the Harvard Near-Eastern Society, and at the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies in 2007.

² *Daqing Lichao Shilu* (hereafter QSL): Shengzu juan 178, Kangxi 35/12 *dingmo* (17/1/1697). References to the QSL are given in the format: edition, juan no., reign title, year/month day (Western date).

robes is a useful starting point for a discussion of the place of Islam under the Qing.

The study of Xinjiang has benefited from recent developments in the broader field of Qing history, among them a greater interest in the Inner Asian background of the Qing state itself, and in the practice of Qing rule in its Inner Asian frontier zones. Very often, however, consideration of the Islamic component of the Qing formation has served only to offer counter-examples to the new frameworks which have been put forward. In particular, efforts to rethink the Qing as a multifaceted polity have had to confront the absence of any attempt by the Qing to develop a distinct legitimising ideology for their Muslim subjects, in the way that Chinggisid, Buddhist, and Confucian rhetoric are said to have been deployed in other parts of the realm. This has led some to conclude that their Islamic faith effectively inoculated the Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang against the influence of Qing imperial ideology.³

Now, there may well be good reason to treat Xinjiang as an exceptional case of ideological indifference on the part of the Qing. Suffice it here to point out, however, that approaching the Qing primarily in terms of an imperial centre and its rhetorical emanations doesn't tell us a great deal about how the empire actually functioned. As Johan Elverskog has argued in the case of Qing relations with the Mongols, the more pressing need is for an appreciation of how the various modes of Qing rule were interpreted within their distinct subject communities.⁴

Unfortunately, in the case of Xinjiang, this is easier said than done. In comparison with Mongolian historiography of the Qing period, eighteenth and nineteenth century sources in Chaghatay and Persian are far from forthcoming on the question of the Qing state.⁵ Indeed, despite our view that Žünger Mongol rule sat lighter on the natives of Xinjiang than did the Qing occupation, we are in a better position to discuss Muslim attitudes towards their Žünger overlords than we are with respect to the Manchus. This silence forces us to approach the question somewhat indirectly.

Thus my subject here is not Qing rule over Xinjiang *in toto*, nor do I intend to discuss the Qing's relationship with local elites over the entire course of their occupation of the region. Instead I have chosen to examine one small

³ Rawski 1998, p. 199.

⁴ Elverskog 2006, p. 11.

⁵ As Komatsu Hisao has discussed recently (2007), a similar situation prevails in the study of Russian-controlled western Turkestan.

aspect of this interaction, but one which allows us some perspective on the “before” and “after” of Qing conquest, i.e. the immediate impact of the arrival of the Qing on local systems of power and authority.

The Muslim nobles who came to power in the course of the Qing conquest enjoyed a range of official titles, but will be referred to collectively here as the *wangs*. Like the Mongolian banner princes, the *wangs* represent the main point of contact between the Qing and local society. They were regularly received at court, their biographies composed for official Qing publications, and their portraits painted for display in the Hall of Purple Radiance (Ch. *Ziguangge* 紫光閣) in the Forbidden City.⁶ As a result, these figures are relatively well documented in Qing sources, and the careers of the most prominent among them can be traced in some detail. Laura Newby’s research on the *beg* families demonstrates the rich potential of both published and archival Qing material.⁷

What is less well understood is how the *wangs* negotiated their position within the Islamic society of Xinjiang. When faced with the task of understanding where these individuals came from, and how they attempted to foster legitimacy for themselves, Qing sources are much less helpful, offering very little indication of their social standing prior to their submission. By utilising the available Islamic sources we can gain a clearer picture, not necessarily of who the *wangs* were, but rather who they claimed to be—which, after all, is the more important question in the study of legitimation practices. In what follows I have scoured the available textual record, both in manuscript and epigraphic form, for anything that can help us to understand how these individuals, and the local dynasties they founded, expressed their right to rule.

Saguchi Tōru, a pioneer of the study of the social history of China’s north-western regions, was the first to analyse the composition of local ruling class in eastern Turkestan on the eve of the Qing conquest. He identified a northern nobility, based in Hami and Turfan, who came to dominate political life in the aftermath of the Qing invasion. In Kashgaria, he posited a three-way competition for power, between the two branches of the Naqshbandī

⁶ Unfortunately, no portraits of Muslim begs have come to light since the looting and dispersion of this collection during the Anglo-French occupation of Beijing in 1900.

⁷ See Newby 1998 for the history of the *begs* in particular, and Newby 2005 for the political history of the period in general.

Sufi *tariqat* (Āfāqiyya and Ishāqiyya), and the *begs*—local aristocrats of Turko-Mongolian origin.⁸

Saguchi’s analysis, like many studies of the period, is set against the backdrop of a contest between two principles of sovereignty: one Chaghatayid, based on the charisma of the Mongolian ruling house, and the other Naqshbandī, which merged the region’s royal traditions with notions of saintly authority.⁹ Given that the *wangs* laid claim to neither, one might conclude that they were ill-equipped to justify their new status. Thus the onset of Qing rule would appear to signal a major break in the political culture of the region, between the first half of the eighteenth century, when struggles between the Sufi lineages and their supporters reached fever-pitch, and a post-conquest political culture almost devoid of any ideological dimension. Indeed, the *wangs*’ lack of royal or saintly blood led Laura Newby to refer to them as a “quasi-secular ruling elite.”¹⁰

What I hope to show in this brief survey is that alongside these broad, transnational conceptions of authority, which were highly influential in post-Mongol eastern Turkestan, we must also take into account local sources of political legitimacy which the *wangs* were able to draw from. Viewed in terms of political culture, eighteenth-century eastern Turkestan can be broken down into three zones—Hami, Turfan, and Kashgaria, or Altishahr.¹¹ This tripartite division will provide the structure of my study, in which I will discuss four *wang* families, who between them provided most of the high-ranking Muslim officials in Qing Xinjiang: the dynasties founded by ‘Ubaydullāh in Hami, Emin Khwāja and Khwājasi in Turfan, and Mīrzā Hadī in Kashgaria.

Hami

The town of Hami 哈密, or Qumul, is located in a frontier zone between the Chinese, Mongolian, and Turko-Islamic worlds. The Ming dynasty maintained a stronger presence here than anywhere else in the Western Regions (Ch. Xiyu 西域), and even after Hami came under Islamic rule in the early sixteenth century, the institutional legacy of the Ming did not disappear completely. Qing sources suggest that the *wei* 衛 system continued to function there until the middle of the seventeenth century, with locals

⁸ Saguchi 1963, p. 39 ff.

⁹ This question is addressed at length in Papas 2005.

¹⁰ Newby 1998, p. 297.

¹¹ For the purposes of this study I have excluded from consideration northern Xinjiang (Žungaria), where the Qing ennobled Kazakh and Mongolian tribal leaders.

holding the position of Military Governor (*dudu* 都督) appearing in early Qing records.¹² Thus Hami was more closely linked to the Sino-Mongolian border-zone than any other region of eastern Turkestan. As early as 1646, emissaries from Hami were present in Beijing for ritual celebrations of the Qing dynasty's anniversary.¹³

The overriding concern of Qing rulers in this period was the regulation of trade, with the court struggling to enforce its guidelines on who was authorised to send trade missions, and how often. This chaotic situation reflected the ongoing instability in Muslim society, occasioned by the rise of the Žünger Mongols, who were now exercising hegemony over the region. The resultant decline in the power and prestige of the Chaghatayid house created something of a power vacuum in Muslim society. In regions further south, this vacuum was filled by the shaykhs of the Naqshbandiyya. In Hami, the new climate led some to look to the Qing as a potential ally against the power of the Žüngars.

In 1696, a previously unknown *beg* by the name of ‘Ubaydullāh initiated contact with the Qing by dispatching his own trade mission to the capital.¹⁴ Shortly thereafter he demonstrated his usefulness to the court by capturing one of Galdan Khan's sons. At the time, the Qing still lacked knowledge of the Islamic world, and their response to ‘Ubaydullāh was based on long-established patterns of interaction with the nobility of Inner and Outer Mongolia. As a result, in 1697 the Qing introduced the banner system to Hami, and ‘Ubaydullāh was appointed *žasaq*—banner chief. Later, in 1759, his son Yūsuf was awarded the title *junwang* 君王 after assisting in the Qing conquest of the Tarim Basin oasis towns.

‘Ubaydullāh's status as *žasaq*, backed up by the presence of small Qing garrison, made him effective ruler of Hami. This does not mean, however, that his authority within the community derived solely from Qing support. Prior to contact with the Qing he held the rank of *tarkhan*—a hereditary title awarded by the *khan*, usually to members of his retinue who had performed some extraordinary service. We do not know when or how the rank of *tarkhan* came to be attached to ‘Ubaydullāh's family, but it would indicate that they held a position of some status in local society. Indeed, according to one source, the family belonged to a minor branch of the Chaghatayid

¹² Qi 1779, pp. 882-3.

¹³ QSL: Shizu juan 22 Shunzhi 2 12/*bingwu* (13/2/1646).

¹⁴ QSL: Shengzu juan 176 Kangxi 35 9/*bingchen* (28/9/1696)

dynasty itself.¹⁵ This particular genealogy makes ‘Ubaydullāh an eighth generation descendent of Ilyās Khwāja, son of Tughluq Temür Khān, whose conversion in the middle of the fourteenth century opened the way for the Islamisation of the Tarim Basin. Ilyās Khwāja (r. 1363-1390) reigned for several decades in Aqsu, after which he and his offspring disappear completely from the historical record.

If Ilyās’ line did survive in the form of ‘Ubaydullāh and his family, they had by now given up any claim to the khanate, which was held by a different branch of the Chaghatayid line. In terms of their own origins, the family appears to have come to regard themselves not as Mongols, but as Uyghurs. ‘Ubaydullāh’s descendant Bashīr Wang is identified as an Uyghur in his biography compiled for the Draft Qing History, and correspondence between the Chinese official Tao Mo 陶模 and the *wang* in the late nineteenth century indicate that the Qumul royal family professed themselves to be of Uyghur origin.¹⁶ It is tempting to argue that this provides evidence for the strength of local tradition preserving the memory of Hami as “Uyghuristan”—a specifically Uyghur patrimony, to which the Hami *wangs* were obliged to lay claim. We should not discount the possibility, however, that the *wangs* derived their understanding of the historical role of the Uyghurs from an acquaintance with Chinese sources.

As has been shown by research on other frontiers of the Islamic world, from Anatolia to Indonesia, such confessional boundaries can be sites of violence, but also of the creative interaction of group identities and belief systems. Both of these factors contributed to the persistence in Hami of a culture which celebrated the virtues of the holy warrior, or *ghāzī*, as Islamiser and defender of the community. This ethos served both as a mobilising ideology, and as a response to anxiety felt towards Hami’s marginal position in the *dār al-Islām*. According to local legend, early in the seventeenth century ‘Ubaydullāh’s father Muhammad Shāhī led a group of soldiers to Hami to fight the infidel. After defeating a group of Mongols in battle, he became known as Muhammad Shāhī Ghāzī.¹⁷ This story is not corroborated by any other sources, but the Hami frontier *was* a popular destination for ambitious Chaghatayid princes, and there is a wealth of evidence that in the Islamic period, military forays into regions further east were construed in terms of

¹⁵ The source in question is a family tree which remains in private hands in Hami. It was consulted by Su & Huang 1993, p. 21, n. 2. The actual line of descent is given in Ākhmāt 1993, p. 79.

¹⁶ Zhao 1927, p. 13663. Tao 1897, juan 6, p. 11.

¹⁷ Su & Huang 1993, p. 4.

ghazā. Thus we encounter the term *ghāzī* here much more than in other parts of eastern Turkestan. In the 1630s, for example, the local Chaghatayid ruler Baba Khān led raids on Suzhou 肅州 and Ganzhou 甘州 in Gansu, and is celebrated in chronicles as a *ghāzī*.¹⁸

For his part, ‘Ubaydullāh was not lacking in military credentials. He had confronted Galdan Khan and lived to tell the tale, and thus he carried on his father’s tradition, promoting an image of himself as a warrior for the faith as ‘Ubaydullāh Ghāzī. His collaboration with the infidel Qing notwithstanding, Chaghatay poetry composed in ‘Ubaydullāh’s honour at the Hami court extolled him as the “Holy Warrior of the Age” (*ghāzī-i davrān*):

Give thanks to the one, ‘Abīd, who has brought you to this joy,
The *ghāzī* of the age, ‘Ubaydullāh, *mīr* of Qamul.
What perfection has arrived in the region of Qamul,
That I obtained wealth, knowledge and skill there.¹⁹

With hindsight, we might be inclined to regard this stance as hypocritical, or at least ironic. As the debate on the formation of the Ottoman polity has shown, however, we need only do so if we take the *ghāzī* as a theoretically essentialised, rather than socially constructed category. That is to say, if the eponymous ‘Usmān Ghāzī could enter into mutually advantageous relationships with Christian lords in Anatolia without tarnishing his *ghāzī* credentials, then there is no reason why ‘Ubaydullāh could not do the same at the opposite end of the Islamic world.²⁰ The presence of a *ghāzī* ethos among the ruling elite in an Islamic frontier society should not lead us to conclude that this ethos demanded continuous war against the infidel, or precluded alliances with non-Muslim forces.²¹ There is circumstantial

¹⁸ Anonymous, *Ta’rīkh-i Kāshghar*, f. 100a-101a.

¹⁹ Isma’il 2002, p. 74. Today’s “Qumul” is usually spelt Qāmul or Qāmil in pre-modern orthography (cf. Mongolian *Khamil*). On the name, see Pelliot 1959, vol. I, pp. 153-156.

²⁰ See the discussion of the early Ottoman *ghāzī* culture in Kafadar 1995, pp. 55-59.

²¹ The interaction between the ideology of *ghazā* and frontier pragmatics can be seen in the anti-Qing rebellion of Mi-la-yin and Ding Guodong in western Gansu in the 1650s. This rebellion had a distinctively Ming-restorationist colouring at its outset. However, when the rebels were driven out of Lanzhou and fell back to Guazhou, Turumtay, a son of Baba Khān, came to their aid and was briefly installed as ruler there. The rebellion is discussed in Rossabi 1979, pp. 190-192.

evidence, for example, that Baba Khān Ghāzī himself enjoyed investiture as *wang* by the Ming.²²

Turfan

Although Yarkand is commonly regarded as the political centre of Islamic society in eastern Turkestan at this time, in many ways Turfan was the more significant oasis. Accessible from both the Ili Valley and Žungaria, before the coming of the Qing the Turfan region served as a meeting place between ambitious Muslim princes and nomadic military strength, and the combination of the two was usually more than any force based in the south could withstand. From the early seventeenth century onwards, the Tarim Basin was dominated by an aristocracy whose origins lay in Turfan.²³ Not surprisingly it is in Turfan, therefore, that the struggle between the Žüngars and the Qing dynasty found its clearest reflection in the politics of local Islamic rulers. Unlike Hami, where we lack good evidence for internal conflicts among elites, lines of political division are clearly detectable in the sources on Turfan.

The Turfan area was occupied by the Žünger Galdan around the year 1680, but Žünger control was not absolute, and in 1720 when Qing forces briefly seized the region, they drew a range of responses from local nobility. Some took the opportunity to ally with the Qing, while another group of several hundred households, led by a certain Hājīsi, fled westward to the town of Qarashahr (Ch. Yanqi 焉耆).²⁴ The Qing expeditionary force was unable to hold Turfan, however, and after retaliatory raids by the Žünger Tsewang Rabtan, local leaders began crossing into Gansu 甘肅 Province with parties of refugees. Among these was Emin Khwāja, who in 1733 led close to ten thousand people to a location near Guazhou 瓜州, west of the Anxi 安西 garrison. His followers were organised into a banner, and Emin Khwāja was appointed banner chief, with the title of *žasaq fuguogong*.²⁵ Returning to the Turfan region in 1754 he was installed as ruler in Lükchün, and in 1758 was granted the hereditary title of *junwang*.

²² After taking power, the Qing requested that rulers of Hami and Turfan turn in the insignia granted to them by the Ming. Cf. QSL: Shizu juan 26, Shunzhi 3 6/*renwu* (19/7/1646).

²³ A careful reading of Mahmūd Churās' *Khronika* indicates this pattern. The accession of 'Abdullāh Khān in 1638 marked the triumph of a Turfan-based branch of the Sa'īdī dynasty—the line of 'Abd al-Rahīm Khān. After 'Abdullāh, the throne of Yarkand was held by his sons, until the rise of Āfāq Khwāja in the 1680s.

²⁴ Hājīsi's name is transcribed in Chinese as A-ji-si (阿濟斯), cf. Qi 1779, p. 947.

²⁵ Qi 1779, p. 910. On the organisation of the Turfan principality, see Saguchi 1986, pp. 161-167.

In the meantime, Hājīsi's family was prospering under Žūngar patronage in regions further south. Hājīsi's son Khwājasi, whose full name and title was Amīr Sharaf al-Dīn Khwāja Yūsuf Beg, was appointed *hākīm* (governor) of Uch, and his brother 'Abd al-Vahhāb was made *hākīm* of Aqsu.²⁶ At this point our sources fall silent, until 1755 when Qing forces under General Bandi 班第 reached the Ili Valley. Dabachi, the reigning Žūngar *khan*, had only recently seized power there in a bloody civil war, and lacked the manpower necessary to resist the Qing advance. He fled with his son Lobcha Noyan south to Uch, hoping for support from Khwājasi. By this stage, however, many Žūngar nobles had deserted Dabachi and gone over to the Qing side, and the prospect of sheltering Dabachi cannot have appealed to the *hākīm*. Thus Khwājasi took Dabachi prisoner and handed him over to General Bandi, aligning himself with Qing policy, which was to install the Āfāqiyya *khwāja* Burhān al-Dīn as deputy in Yarkand. Under the new regime, Khwājasi would serve as *hākīm* in Khotan, but he soon fell out with Burhān al-Dīn and returned to Uch.²⁷ In October 1758, when General Yarhašan marched into southern Xinjiang with the intention of deposing Burhān al-Dīn, he met with Khwājasi and received his expression of loyalty.

Khwājasi's manoeuvrings throughout this period indicate that he was not bound by strong ties of loyalty to any of the principal actors. Indeed, Qing intelligence learnt that after handing over Dabachi, he met with the Oirat leader Amursana in secret and conspired with him to be made ruler of Kashgar and Yarkand.²⁸ Khwājasi's ambitions remained a concern for the Qianlong 乾隆 Emperor, and despite his contributions to the Qing war effort, he was summoned to Beijing in 1759, with orders given to locate all his male kin and transport them to the capital. Khwājasi's name appears in the dedicatory inscription in the mosque which Qianlong built for visiting Muslim dignitaries.²⁹ He was destined to live out his life under luxurious detention in Beijing, but later his descendants were able to return to Xinjiang and take up positions in local administration, still bearing the title *wang*.

Emin Khwāja is described in Chinese sources as an *ākhūnd*, from a line of *ākhūnds*. Islamic sources offer a number of clues as to his families origins, but no firm conclusions can be drawn at this stage.³⁰ Despite hints at *tarīqat*

²⁶ Kāshgharī 1803, f. 124b.

²⁷ Anonymous, *Zayl-i Ta'rikh-i Rashīdī*, f. 401a.

²⁸ Fu-heng 1770, vol. 358, p. 259.

²⁹ For the Chinese text, see Devéria (1897). The Turkic text was published by Huart (1902).

³⁰ A link to the shaykhs of Yarkand is suggested by a tradition from the Ili Valley, where Emin Khwāja's sons and grandsons served as *hākīm beg*. Nikolai Pantusov (1881, p. 4)

affiliations, Emin Khwāja does not appear to have belonged to any of the major Sufi paths of eastern Turkestan. The evidence instead points to his patronage of local saints of the Turfan region. The first of these is Alp Ata, a semi-legendary *ghāzī* figure from the Qarakhanid period, who is said to have been martyred in Turfan in the course of holy war against the Buddhist Uyghurs.³¹ The popularity of Alp Ata is attested by Naqshbandiyya hagiographies from the seventeenth century, in which Ishāq Valī's leading *khalīfa* defeats him in spiritual combat and wins the allegiance of the local people.³² Some have taken these stories as evidence that local devotion to Alp Ata was displaced by Naqshbandī Sufism at this time, but in actual fact the Sufi *turūq* based in the southern Tarim basin made little headway in Turfan, and Alp Ata remained a figure of reverence.

The family's patronage of Alp Ata is witnessed most clearly in the reconstruction of his tomb in the village of Astana, undertaken by Emin Khwāja's son Iskandar Wang.³³ After his appointment as *hākīm* of Kashgar, Iskandar dispatched artisans north to Turfan, and had the new dome inscribed with a dedication which included the following lines, recorded by a visitor in the late nineteenth century:

With the aid of that well-spring of light and purity, that source of grace and favour, he progressed to the seat of the sultanate of Kashgar, and was confirmed on the throne of governorship.³⁴

The other local saint, or rather saints, acknowledged by this family are the *Ashāb al-Kahf*, the Seven Sleepers, who are associated with a cave in the village of Tuyuq, near Turfan. It is unknown just when and how this location

records that the family there was connected with Khwāja Muhammad Sharīf, an important sixteenth-century saint. From Turfan, Āyaghūzī (1887, p. 55) relates a story which has Emin Khwāja appointed as *hākīm* by none other than Āfāq Khwāja himself. According to the inscription of the Madrasa-i Maymūna (Ch. Sugongta 苏公塔), published by Tenishev (1969, pp. 79-81), Emin Khwāja was 83 years of age in 1181 AH (1767-8 CE). This would place his birth in 1684-5, thus ruling out any personal connection with Āfāq Khwāja, who died in 1695. However, there is no reason to reject the possibility of a link further back in Emin Khwāja's family tree.

³¹ Joseph Fletcher (1995, XI, p. 8) regarded the shrine as a Yasaviyya site, but I have found no evidence for this, other than the use of the epithet "Ata", common among Yasaviyya saints. For a comprehensive discussion of the issues surrounding this shrine, see Kim Ho-Dong 1993.

³² One version of this story is given in Churās ca. 1675, p. 19.

³³ The shrine is described in Dawut 2001, pp. 229-235. Sidiq 2003, p. 25, describes the organisation of the shrine in the late-nineteenth century. He states that there were as many as thirty *aghaliq* shaykhs (head shaykhs), and thirty *iniliq* shaykhs (assistant shaykhs), each apportioned a section of the shrine's waqf holdings for their income.

³⁴ Āyaghūzī 1887, p. 42. Unfortunately the dome is no longer standing.

became identified with the cave described in the eighteenth *sura* of the Qur'ān, and in popular retellings of the story, such as al-Rabghūzī's fourteenth-century Khwārazmian version. The first endowment to the shrine was made in 1667 by Baba Khān, appointing attendants with the hereditary rank of *tarkhan*.³⁵ It is likely that local legends existed prior to this, but Baba Khān's recognition of the shrine at this time may be seen as a response to the growing Sufi influence over politics in Kashgaria, which created a need for rulers elsewhere to enhance their own spiritual credentials.

In the preface to a work commissioned by his grandson Yūnus, *hākim* of Kashgar from 1811 to 1814, Emin Khwāja is described as a trainee (*tarbiyat-karda*) of Ashāb al-Kahf. Another work which was most likely composed under Yūnus' patronage is a versification of the Seven Sleepers legend, the *Tazkiratu 'l-Ashābi 'l-Kahf*, attributed to Muhammad Sādiq Kāshgharī, author of the *Tazkira-i 'azīzān* (see below).³⁶ Given the political context in which he was writing, Kāshgharī's work represents more than a literary reworking of popular legends. It is surely not a coincidence that the first efforts to popularise this Turfani shrine to an audience in southern Xinjiang date from a time when Kashgar was under the rule of these Turfani aristocrats.

Interestingly enough, we also find a statement in an early nineteenth-century historical work, the *Āsār al-Futūh*, to the effect that Khwājasi was a relative or son of one of the shaykhs (*yakē az shaykhzādagān*) who served the shrine of the Seven Sleepers.³⁷ In his case, however, we have a further claim regarding his family origins. In the preface to a Chaghatay translation of the *Ta'rīkh-i Rashīdī* commissioned by his descendant Muhammad 'Azīz Wang, the justification given for the translation is that the text records the exploits of Khwāja Jalāl al-Dīn Katakī and his son Arshad al-Dīn, the two men identified as responsible for the conversion of Tughluq Temür Khān—and from whom Muhammad 'Azīz claimed descent.³⁸ The translator informs us that his patron's family were in fact the caretakers of Jalāl al-Dīn's shrine at Ayköl, near Aqsu.³⁹ This would make Khwājasi himself a descendent of Jalāl al-Dīn Katakī.

³⁵ Āyaghūzī 1887, p. 77.

³⁶ For the text itself, see Gürsoy-Naskali 1985.

³⁷ Kāshgharī 1803, f. 124a

³⁸ ibn-i 'Abd al-Ghafūr 1837, f. 10b. On this *khwāja* family, see Kim 1996, pp. 287ff.

³⁹ Ayköl is about 30km south of Aqsu. A description of the shrine is given in Dawut 2001, pp. 171-173.

What are we to make of this claim? A connection with Turfan is provided by the hagiographical literature, which indicates that Jalāl al-Dīn's son Arshad al-Dīn dispatched one of his sons to the Turfan region, Khwāja Abū 'n-Nasr.⁴⁰

He gave the position of *khwāja* in Chalish and Turfan to Khwāja Abū 'n-Nasr, and said "Oh my son, the people of Turfan will invite you. Be sure to go there and be among them. Lead them on the right road." "Very well" he said, and bowed and sat down...⁴¹

This took place several centuries prior to the period under discussion, however, and we lack the sources to confirm a link to Khwājasi. As a hereditary lineage rather than a full-blown *tarīqat*, the position of the Katakī shaykhs fluctuated in response to the challenges posed by more organised Sufi brotherhoods. According to Kim Ho-Dong, in the fifteenth century the order in Turfan merged with the newly-arrived Naqshbandiyya, whereas another branch of the family, based in Kucha, resisted Naqshbandī encroachment on what they regarded as their territory.⁴² Popular rebellions in Kucha in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led by Katakī *khwājas* attest to the survival of the lineage there.⁴³

However, a third alternative was available to members of the Katakī line, which involved abandoning their claims to the spiritual leadership of the community, while retaining power as *begs*. Such a transition can be observed in hagiographical narratives describing the Naqshbandī shaykh Ishāq Valī's missionary activity in the region in the late 1580s:

[Ishāq Valī] came to Ayköl and went in to circumambulate the tomb of Hazrat Mavlanā (i.e. Arshad al-Dīn Valī). Then he rested between two mulberry trees. The next morning Hazrat Mavlanā appeared from his luminescent tomb. Khwāja Ishāq Valī greeted him. Hazrat Mavlanā said: "My son, you are welcome. I have granted you the custodianship of Uch, Aqsu, and Kucha as far as Chalish and Turfan. Since our children have given up the position of *khwāja* and *darvīsh*, and have desired to become *begs*, let them have the position of *beg*." Having spoken thus he disappeared.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Āyaghūzī 1887, p. 33.

⁴¹ Anonymous, *Tazkira-i Arshad al-Dīn Valī*, f. 54b.

⁴² Kim 1996, p. 320.

⁴³ In the 1860s in Kucha Rāshidīn (Rashīd al-Dīn) Khwāja was proclaimed leader of a rebellion against the Qing, Kim 2004, pp. 39-40. In 1918 his son Hājī Khwāja also led another, smaller, anti-Chinese uprising, Chen et al. 1999, vol. 2, pp. 284-289.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, *Tazkira-i Arshad al-Dīn Valī*, ff. 88b-89a.

It is not possible to link any of these developments with Khwājasi in a more concrete way, but this vignette provides a good example of how social categories which originally derived from divergent systems of authority—the Turko-Mongolian and Islamic, were permeable, and would explain the way in which it was possible for someone like Khwājasi to adopt simultaneously the two titles *khwāja* and *amīr*.

Kashgaria

Further south, in Kashgar and beyond, the influence of Naqshbandiyya was much stronger, and that of the Qing negligible until their invasion in 1759. As was described above, after capturing the Žūngar stronghold of Ili in 1755, the Qing employed the leaders of the Āfāqiyya, the brothers Khwāja Burhān al-Dīn and Khwāja Jahān, as deputies in southern Xinjiang. This provoked a conflict with the reigning Ishāqiyya khwājas, and many *begs* loyal to them fled across the mountains to Andijan. Among them was one Mīrzā Hadī of Kucha.⁴⁵ When Khwāja Burhān al-Dīn and Khwāja Jahān sought to free themselves from Manchu control in 1757, an opportunity presented itself to the disaffected pro-Ishāqiyya *begs*. Mīrzā Hadī joined with a group of nobles opposed to the Āfāqiyya, and sought asylum with Emin Khwāja in Turfan, where he swore allegiance to the Qing. He then accompanied the invading Qing forces south, and assisted with the capture of Kucha and Khotan.⁴⁶

Mīrzā Hadī's family origins lie in Kucha, but his political orientation was southward—towards the courts of Kashgar and Yarkand. Not only was he a strong supporter of the Ishāqiyya Khwājas, he was related to them by marriage through his sister. According to an early twentieth-century source, Mullā Sayrāmī's *Ta'rikh-i Hamīdī*, the family claimed descent from Amīr Khudāydād, one of the powerful *amīrs* of the Dughlat tribe, who were granted the territory of Kashgar and the southern Tarim Basin by Chagadai Khan.⁴⁷ Later they acted as the power behind the Chaghatayid throne in Yarkand for much of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The tribe was purged by ʿAbd al-Rashīd Khān in the 1530s, but survived intact,

⁴⁵ Transcribed in Chinese as E-dui 鄂對. His official biography is given Qi 1779, pp. 961-965.

⁴⁶ Anonymous, *Zayl-i Ta'rikh-i Rashidi*, f. 401b. The Qing biography of Mīrzā Hadī would appear to contain some inaccuracies. It states, for example, that he was forced to move to Ili by the Žūngars. See Qi 1779, p. 961.

⁴⁷ Sayrāmī 1909, p. 110. The author states that the actual line of descent is unknown to him. For the Dughlat dispensation, see Haydar ca. 1545, text p. 241, trans. p. 188. It is of course open to question whether this khanal allocation of territories actually occurred in the way Mīrzā Haydar describes it.

and Dughlats are identified as such in historical sources from the seventeenth century.

Before his death in 1778, Hadī served as governor both of Aqsu and of Yarkand. His son ‘Usmān occupied the position *hākim beg* of Kashgar in the 1770s and 1780s, surviving a brief fall from grace during the Gaopu jade scandal.⁴⁸ ‘Usmān’s son Ishāq was based in Kucha, but briefly held the governorship of Kashgar in the 1810s, while another son, Muhammad Husayn, was *hākim beg* of Yarkand. Therefore, alongside the family of Emin Khwāja, Hadī’s line were the most powerful of the noble families of southern Xinjiang.

Through their literary patronage, Mīrzā Hadī’s family sought to establish an orthodox history of the preceding century of upheavals from the Ishāqiyya standpoint. At the behest of Mīrzā Hadī’s son ‘Usmān, Muhammad Sādiq Kāshgharī composed the *Tazkira-i ‘azīzān*, the most important original literary work from this period.⁴⁹ His text incorporates a broad range of material from earlier hagiographical traditions, but focuses on a narration of events leading up to the invasion of Burhān al-Dīn, with the support of Qing forces, in which the Ishāqiyya *khwājas* were all but wiped out. This historical portion of the text is highly polemical: Kāshgharī offers a defence of the Ishāqiyya’s earlier collaboration with the Žūngars, a celebration of their brief period of independent rule in the early 1750s, and a condemnation of the actions of Burhān al-Dīn, Khwāja Jahān, and those *begs* who supported them—singling out Khwājasi for particular opprobrium. The large number of extant manuscript copies, and the absence of any significant rival narratives in written form, suggest that the *Tazkira-i ‘azīzān* was largely successful in its bid for hegemony. The family’s link with the Ishāqiyya was given architectural form too, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by Mīrzā Hadī’s grandson Muhammad Husayn, *hākim* of Yarkand. His tomb, the only significant addition to the royal grave complex in Yarkand (*altunluq*

⁴⁸ For the details of this incident, see Torbert 1977, pp. 136-171.

⁴⁹ Numerous manuscripts of this work exist, but secondary scholarship has so far been lacking, with the exception of Šalakhedinova 1959. A somewhat inaccurate survey of extant copies is given in Hofman 1969, vol. 4, p. 28. The text is titled *Tazkira-i khwājagān* in some versions. On the basis of a note in one of the British Museum manuscripts (Or. 5338, f. 74b.), this text has been dated to 1768. This dating is too early in my view. In the dedication the author refers to the patron’s father as the ‘late’ (*marhūm*) Mīrzā Hadī, which indicates that the text was composed after Hadī’s death in 1778. Therefore it should date from between 1778 and Usmān’s own death in 1787. For summarised translations, see Shaw (1897) and Hartmann (1905). Shaw’s “Mīr Zāhid” (p. iii) is obviously an error for Mīrzā Hadī.

maziri) made in this period, is located close to the burial site of the Ishāqiyya shaykhs.⁵⁰

Conclusion

In eighteenth-century Central Asia ideas of political legitimacy were in flux. The same period in western Turkestan saw the rise of the non-Chinggisid “tribal” dynasties of the Manghīt in Bukhara and the Ming in Kokand, as well as a period of *khwāja* rule in Tashkent. In Qing Xinjiang, the new aristocracy came from a range of backgrounds. I have identified three distinct zones here: first Hami, where claims to *ghāzī* status carried weight; secondly Turfan, where an attachment to local saints was emphasised; and third Kashgaria, which was still haunted by the ghosts of *khwājas* past, and the aftermath of the struggles for power between Naqshbandī lineages and Moghul *begs*, a situation typical of post-Timurid Central Asia.

An overall assessment of the rule of the *wangs* is beyond the scope of this study, and I am not yet in a position to assess how successful these various strategies of legitimation were.⁵¹ However, if we were to take two simple criteria which were commonly used to assess the worth of an Islamic ruler—namely, the patronage of literary works and construction of fine monuments—it is evident that late eighteenth-century Xinjiang witnessed an upturn over the previous half-century. I have mentioned some of these literary works here, which form part of a minor boom, particularly in Chaghatay translations from Persian. These undertakings included the translation of classical works of ethics and statecraft, such as the *Qābūs-nāma*, and historical works such as the annals of Tabarī.⁵² One striking feature of literary activity in this period is the growth in popularity of the *Ta’rīkh-i Rashīdī*. Between 1751 and the middle of the eighteenth century, three separate Chaghatay translations of this work were produced.⁵³ It reflects a degree of self-confidence on the part of the *wangs* that they actively promoted knowledge of the royal traditions of the region. The sheer wealth of the *wangs*, derived from the large landholdings and labour power granted them by the Qing, expanded the sources of patronage, creating something approaching a literary circuit, where popular works and authors circulated.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Dawut 2001, pp. 89-90.

⁵¹ On this point, see the discussion of the case of Ahmad Wang in Hamada 2001.

⁵² Dmitrieva 2002, p. 136 (#373).

⁵³ On these translations, see Sultanov 1997.

⁵⁴ Sidiq 2003, p. 223, describes how in 1835 the poet and *dīvānbeḡi* of Kashgar, ‘Abd al-Rahīm Nizārī, was dispatched by the *hākīm beg* Zuhūr al-Dīn Tājī to the court of Āfaridūn Wang in Lükchūn.

In the field of construction, alongside funerary architecture, *madrasas* proliferated. Compared with the contemporary Kokandi historiographical tradition, or the monuments of Uzbek Bukhara, the period's achievements appear minimal, but in terms of eastern Turkestan's own recent past, the *wang* period witnessed a modest growth of Islamic culture.

Whether conscious of it or not, by avoiding claimants to the Chaghatayid throne, or direct descendants of the main *khwāja* lineages, the Qing created a new ruling class which lacked the familial or organisational ties which had previously linked oases under the rule of Chaghatayid princes or Naqshbandī Sufis. Thus potential bonds of solidarity among elites were weakened, and we see a localisation of politics. Through the establishment of a new system of ranks and titles, the Qing equated these individuals in a formal sense, but social bonds between the *wangs* cannot be discerned until as late as 1904, when a marriage between the Hami and Turfan dynasties was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony.⁵⁵

The absence of a single principle of legitimacy uniting the Muslim elite in Xinjiang at this time may help explain why the Qing showed so little interest in promoting itself in Islamic terms. In any case, there was little to be gained by making an ideological pitch to the region, as the *wangs* took pains to downplay their relationship with the Qing and emphasise their independence. Apart from Hami, where a late seventeenth-century inscription names the Qing emperor, direct references to the Qing are conspicuously absent from the literary record of this period.⁵⁶ This disjuncture between the Islamic and Sinic worlds is exemplified in the bilingual inscription of the Madrasa-i Maymūna (Ch Sugongta 苏公塔) in Turfan, constructed in 1768 by Emin Khwāja's son Sulaymān Wang. The Islamic inscription begins with an Arabic invocation, "God is the Lord whose aid is begged!" (Ar. *huwa 'llāhu 'l-maliku 'l-musta'ān*), with no mention whatsoever of the Qing. Right alongside it, however, the Chinese inscription begins by exulting "Emperor Qianlong of the Great Qing!", and refers to Emin Khwāja as his "returned servant" (Ch. *guipu* 歸仆).⁵⁷

This janus-faced monument indicates that however much the Qing state was content for the *wangs* to formulate their own public face in Turkic and Islamic terms, they retained control over the way that local autonomy in

⁵⁵ Ākhmät 1993, p. 97.

⁵⁶ Tenishev 1969, p. 87.

⁵⁷ The text of the Arabic script inscription is given in Tenishev 1969, pp. 79-82. For the Chinese text, see Tang 1997, who makes the assertion that "the Uyghur text is largely the same as the Chinese text (与汉文大致相同)!"

Xinjiang was represented to the Chinese-speaking audience. We must keep in mind that the Qing in Xinjiang were engaged in a more complex set of relationships than the simple dichotomy of empire and periphery. It was imperative for the Qing to demonstrate to their subjects who entered Xinjiang from the interior that the furthest reaches of the realm, and the local elites who were empowered there, had been assimilated to the empire's ideological framework. With this in mind, a temple, known locally as the "Great House" (*ulugh öy*) was constructed on the road leading south from Turfan—the gateway to the Tarim Basin oasis towns. The temple was destroyed during the rebellions of the 1860s, but one local chronicler describes its function as follows:

In Ushshaq Tal⁵⁸ they built a big temple, and decorated it with portraits of each of these *begs* [the main *wangs* – DB]. The emperor issued a decree that "I have made these men the masters and guardians of the Seven Cities (Yättishahr). From now on, may all officials who serve in Yättishahr come here and pay their respects!" Until the advent of Islam [i.e. Yaqūb Beg – DB] these idols were still standing. Whenever any rank of official, even commoners and merchants⁵⁹ came from the direction of Beijing, when they reached the location of that temple, they would dismount or stay the night, and according to their own custom burn paper, kow-tow several times, and pray for help from these idols, before they would continue on their way. If they didn't do so, it would be considered a sin.⁶⁰

For the Qing, therefore, it mattered less what their Turkic-speaking subjects thought was going on, than how this relationship was perceived by the banner-men and traders who entered Xinjiang from regions more closely integrated into the empire, lest distance from the metropole tempt them into pursuing a similarly loose-reined arrangement with the Qing court.

Eastern Turkestan was one of the first parts of the Islamic world to fall under colonial rule, yet many questions regarding the impact of Qing rule on Muslim society there remain unanswered. Here I have attempted to survey one subject for which our sources do enable us to distinguish a local perspective from the imperial gaze. In Qing Xinjiang, as I have shown, continuity with the region's Islamic traditions was not the sole preserve of the disenfranchised Naqshbandī shaykhs, but was exhibited in a range of

⁵⁸ Situated between Turfan and Korla, now designated a Hui autonomous village (Ch. 乌什塔拉回族乡)

⁵⁹ *maymaychilar* < Ch. *maimai* 買賣 "commerce".

⁶⁰ Sayrāmī 1909, p. 146.

strategies of legitimation adopted by the different *wang* lineages. I believe this approach contributes to our understanding of the ways in which Qing rule was consolidated over its Islamic frontier. Moreover, it offers us a viewpoint from which to discuss the cultural geography of Xinjiang in its historical specificities, rather than relying on generalisations based on the proximity of the various oasis towns to neighbouring regions. To the extent that we can deepen our understanding of the interplay of these regional differences, we will be in a better position to account for the forces which shaped cultural and religious attitudes in Xinjiang in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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