

SOME REMARKS ON THE TURKICISATION OF THE MONGOLS IN POST-MONGOL CENTRAL ASIA AND THE QIPCHAQ STEPPE

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The Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe arose from the merging of various Turkic groups and the Mongols. The former had consisted of heterogeneous elements that did not coalesce into a single entity sharing a common identity and historical consciousness. They thus did not constitute a uniform majority in relation to the more cohesive Mongols. In terms of tribal and genetic compositions, the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states were closer to the Mongols than to the pre-Mongol Turkic groups. Naturally, they held on to a predominantly Mongol orientation rather than reverting to pre-Mongol identities.

Key words: Turkic nomads, Mongol Empire, Mongol descendants, Turkicisation, Mongolness, Y-DNA haplogroup, Central Asia, Qipchaq Steppe.

Introduction

By the late 14th century, the Mongol descendants in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe, including the members of the Chinggisid dynasty and such tribes of Mongol origin as the Barlas, Manghit, and Qunghrat, had become speakers of Turkic languages. Historians accordingly remark that these Mongol descendants were “Turkicised” and refer to them as “Turks” or “Turkicised Mongols”.¹ However, we hear of no Turkic *amīrs* or tribal leaders of the Mongol successor states² in Central Asia and

¹ For instance, Peter Golden (2011, pp. 93–94) refers to the nomads of Moghulistan or the eastern Chaghatayid khanate as “Turks” and “Turkicised Mongols”.

² The Mongol successor states in this paper refer to the polities whose ruling elites consisted of the Mongol descendants and honoured the Mongol political traditions. They include the Timurid Empire, Moghul Khanate, Uzbek Khanate, Kazakh Khanate, Crimean Khanate, Mughal Empire, and Northern Yuan, among others.

the Qipchaq Steppe seeking to revive the pre-Mongol Turkic states or looking to the latter for political legitimation during the post-Mongol period.³ The Turkic nomad elites of the Mongol successor states instead continued to honour the charisma and traditions of the Mongol Empire.⁴ Most notably, Temür, the Turkic-speaking Muslim conqueror who created a vast empire encompassing the western half of the former Mongol Empire, proclaimed himself heir to the Mongol Empire,⁵ not to the ancient Kök Türk Khaghanate or the pre-Mongol Muslim Turkic dynasties such as the Seljuqs or the Qarakhanids.

We may then wonder why the Turkic nomads⁶ of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not exhibit some sort of pre-Mongol Turkic identity. As a matter of fact, it has been remarked by V. V. Bartold (1962, pp. 5–6; 1964, pp. 203–204) that “while the Mongols were being Turkicised in the West, the Turks themselves gradually absorbed the traditions of Chingiz-khan’s empire, until the reminiscences of the Turkish rulers of pre-Mongol times came to be obliterated”. Although I essentially agree with Barthold’s remarks, I do not consider his explanation to be comprehensive. I would like to point out that the Turkic groups of Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe also forgot about their pre-Islamic past before

³ In the Mongol successor states, there was no such thing as “ethnic conflict” (or “class struggle”) between the Turkic nomads of indigenous origin and the nomad elites of Mongol origin (or “the Mongol feudal overlords”) as some pan-Turkic historians or the Soviet historians would like us to believe. Such a point of view is well reflected in the following quote from a work following Kazakh scholarship: “The collapse of Mongolian authority after 1395, released the hunger of the indigenous people for self-determination ... the gradual recovery from the Mongol conquest saw the growing influence of the local Turkic nobles and intensified the people’s resistance to the feudal powers of the Mongol Khans ...” (Fergus–Jandosova 2003, p. 121). However, no such occurrences of “ethnic conflict” or “class struggle” are attested to in Central Asian sources. As will be discussed below, there was no clear line of distinction between the indigenous Turkic elements and the Mongol elements among the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe.

⁴ The Mongol orientation of the Turkic nomad elites in post-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe has been noted and discussed by Beatrice F. Manz (1989, pp. 1–12; 1994, pp. 5–7).

⁵ By contemporaries, Temür was often depicted as a Mongol. For instance, the *Mu‘izz al-ansāb fī shajarat al-ansāb*, a Timurid genealogy of the Chinggisids and the Timurids, describes Temür as being of Mongol descent. See *Mu‘izz al-ansāb fī shajarat al-ansāb* (2006, fol. 3a). Ibn Khaldūn (1951, p. 366) refers to Temür as “the *sultān* of the *Mughul* and *Tatar*” in his work. According to Ibn ‘Arabshāh (1936, p. 178; 1986, p. 320), Temür identified himself with the Qara Tatars, a Mongol group residing in Anatolia, in his letter sent to the latter. Manz (2009, p. 182) thus rightfully defines Temür as “at once Muslim, Turk and Mongol”. For more on Temür’s Mongol identity, see Lee (2016b, pp. 122–124).

⁶ During the post-Mongol period, they formed such Chinggisid *uluses*, or nomadic peoples, as the Chaghatays (Moghuls and Timurids), Uzbeks, Qazaqs (Kazakhs), Manghits, and (Crimean) Tatars, among others.

experiencing Mongol rule.⁷ More importantly, I question Barthold's and other historians' premise that "the majority Turks" Turkicised "the minority Mongols".⁸

In this paper, I will attempt to answer the question, "Why did the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe look to the Mongol Empire for political legitimation and even retain a Mongol identity⁹ instead of reverting to pre-Mongol Turkic identities?" by challenging the widely held view that the Mongols were assimilated by "the majority Turks". More specifically, I will defend the following thesis: The Turkic groups of Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe consisted of heterogeneous elements that, in their entirety, did not coalesce into a single group identity sharing a common historical consciousness prior to being incorporated to the Mongol Empire in the 13th century. Although greater in number, they existed as separate groups and did not constitute a uniform majority in relation to the Mongols. The Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe arose from the merging of these fragmented indigenous Turkic groups and the more cohesive Mongols.¹⁰ Importantly, they were closer to the 13th-century Mongols than to the pre-Mongol Oghuz or Qipchaq Turkic groups in terms of tribal and genetic compositions. As expected, they held on to a predominantly Mongol orientation rather than reverting to pre-Mongol Turkic identities.¹¹

For this purpose, I will first demonstrate that the Turkic groups of post-Kök Türk Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not descend from a common ancestral group, drawing on the findings of DNA studies. I will highlight the fact that the various Turkic groups that were incorporated to the Mongol Empire did not constitute a homogeneous entity in terms of phenotype and patrilineal descent. Secondly, I will demonstrate that the various Turkic groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not share a common identity and historical consciousness. I will show that the Kök Türk identity was not widely shared by the Turkic groups of non-Kök Türk descent, and that the Oghuz and Afrāsiyāb traditions were not shared by all Turkic groups. Finally, I will discuss the "Mongolness" of the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe. I will show that, in terms of tribal and genetic affiliations, they were closer to the 13th-century Mongols than to the pre-Mongol Oghuz or Qipchaq Turkic groups.

⁷ In his unpublished online article, Ron Sela (2013) demonstrates how the new Muslim Turkic dynasties in Central Asia forgot their pre-Islamic Turkic past. Here, I would like to add that many of the "non-Muslim" Turkic groups also forgot or simply did not know about the Kök Türks.

⁸ For instance, the Kazakh historian Tursun I. Sultanov (Klyashtornyĭ – Sultanov 2000, pp. 208–209) argues that the indigenous Qipchaqs Turkicised the Mongols, who were insignificant in number, to form the Kazakhs.

⁹ For a discussion of their Mongol identity, see Lee (2016b, pp. 122–131).

¹⁰ I do not use the term "Turko-Mongol" in this paper to denote the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states although it is widely used in scholarship. One should note that, in pre-modern Muslim sources, while *Mongol* was used for specific groups, that is, the Mongols or the Moghuls, *Turk* was often used as a generic term for Inner Asian nomads that also included the Mongols.

¹¹ I follow Manz's view that the new group identities of post-Mongol Central Asia such as the Chaghatays, Kazakhs, and Uzbeks came into being as a result of the division of Mongol identity. See Manz (1994, pp. 7–9; 2016, pp. 285–286). I dedicate this work to Professor Beatrice F. Manz whose works inspired me to become a historian of Central Asia.

The “Turks” of Pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe: A Heterogeneous Entity

The Turkic groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe were a heterogeneous entity in terms of phenotype and patrilineal descent.¹² Unlike the Mongols, the various Turkic groups did not share common phenotypes. For instance, the Xiong-nu, the (eastern) Kök Türks and the Uighurs possessed Inner Asian phenotypic features,¹³ whereas some groups, most notably, the Yenisei Qirghiz had a distinct European physiognomy (see Lee–Kuang 2017, pp. 197–239). Similarly, genetic studies show that the Turkic tribes of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe had heterogeneous paternal origins unlike the Mongols.¹⁴ DNA testing of modern Turkic populations show that the most prevalent Y-DNA haplogroups¹⁵ among different Turkic peoples are as follows: (1) N (N1c1) among the Sakhas (Yakuts) of northeastern Siberia, who are probably descended from the Quriqan, a Tiele tribe; (2) N (both N1b and N1c1) and C2 among the Tuvinians of the Sayan Mountains region, who are probably descended from the Tiele and/or the Kök Türks; (3) R1a1 and C2 among the Qirghiz (Kyrgyz) of the Tien Shan Mountains, who are probably descended from the ancient Qirghiz; (4) N and R1a1 among the Khakass of the Yenisei River region, whose name was created by the Soviets from Xiajiasi (黠戛斯), a Chinese name for the ancient Qirghiz; (5) R1a1, N, and J among the Turkic peoples of the Volga-Ural region, who are descended from various groups; (6) R1a1, J, and O2 or C2 among the Xinjiang Uighurs and the Uzbeks (of the Central Asian oasis regions called East and West Turkestan in the past), who are descended from various Turkic and Indo-European groups; (7) C2, O2, and G1 among the Kazakhs, who are descended from various Turkic tribes and the Mongols; (8) Q, J, and R1a1 among the Turkmens, who are descended from the Oghuz; (9) J, R (R1a1 or R1b), E, and G2 among the Turks and the Azeris of Anatolia and the Caucasus region, who are descended from various Turkic and indigenous groups (see Lee–Kuang 2017, pp.

¹² I am not concerned with modern theories of ethnicity or identity in this study. Also, I shall not discuss the definition of Turk here. My main concern is to demonstrate the heterogeneity of the Turkic-speaking groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe in terms of patrilineal descent, self-identity, and historical consciousness.

¹³ According to Russian anthropologists, the Xiong-nu and the Kök Türks were the first to spread the “Mongoloid” phenotype beyond Mongolia. See Oshanin (1964, Vol. 2, p. 20); Ismagulov (1968, pp. 130–131).

¹⁴ Unlike the various Turkic peoples, the modern-day Mongols are characterised by the high frequency of a single Y-DNA clan, which is haplogroup C2. For the Mongol genetic makeup, see Katoh et al. (2005, p. 66).

¹⁵ A Y-DNA haplogroup is a male group that shares one or more Y-DNA mutations. When a mutation, which is a permanent structural alteration in the DNA sequence, occurs in a male person, it is passed down to all his male descendants. Over time, such mutations accumulate and this allows us to trace relatedness in groups of people. Geneticists categorise human Y-DNA into over twenty major groups. The Y Chromosome Consortium, a scholarship group organised to standardise haplogroup classification, named Y-DNA haplogroups using the capital letters A through T and their subclades using numbers and lower case letters. For the Y-DNA haplogroup nomenclature, see ISOGG (2018).

210–222). What these DNA data tell us is that modern Turkic populations do not descend from a common ancestral group and that the same may hold true for the Turkic groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe.

The Y-chromosomes of the Kök Türk elites, who cremated their dead (Wei Zheng 2008, Chapter 84, p. 1864), have not been investigated yet. We can only presume their patrilineal lineages by testing the DNA of their direct descendants, who are, however, difficult to identify. The *Zhoushu* [the book of the Zhou Dynasty] (Linghu Defen 2003, Chapter 50, p. 908) informs us that the Ashina, the royal clan of the Kök Türks, were related to the Qirghiz. If so, the Ashina may have belonged to the R1a1 lineage like the modern-day Tienshan Qirghiz, who are characterised by the high frequency of R1a1 (over 60%).¹⁶ Haplogroup R1a1, more specifically, its sub-clade R1a1a1b2 defined by mutation Z93, was carried by the Indo-European pastoralists, who reached the Kazakh steppes, the Tarim Basin, the Altai Mountains region, the Yenisei River region, and western Mongolia from the Black Sea steppes during the Bronze Age (Semino et al. 2000, p. 1156).¹⁷ The Chinese histories also inform us that one of the three tribes of the Muma Tujue (木馬突厥) [Wooden-horse Türk] was Doubo, who are probably the ancestors of the Tuvinians.¹⁸ If the modern descendants of the Kök Türks are Tuvinians, who are characterised by moderate to high frequencies of haplogroups N (42.2–45.1%), C2 (16.1–26.5%), and Q (4.9–13.9%), the Kök Türks may have carried haplogroups N, C2 and Q, among others (see Table 3 in Gubina et al. 2013, p. 339; Kharkov et al. 2013, p. 1239).¹⁹ Haplogroup N originated in East Asia and spread from Siberia into eastern/northern Europe approximately eight to ten thousand years ago (Shi et al. 2013, pp. 1–9). Haplogroup C2 is the major lineage of the Mongols, Kazakhs, and Evenks, who are speakers of the proposed Altaic language family.²⁰ Haplogroup Q is found at varying frequencies among some Turkic peoples, two Siberian peoples (Yeniseinan Kets and Uralic Selkups at 93.7% and 66.4%, respectively) (see Table 3 in Tambets et al. 2004, p. 667), and the Native Americans (at over 90%) (Dulik et al. 2012, pp. 229–246).

When compared to the Kök Türks, the genetic structure of the ancient Uighurs/Tiele is easier to identify since it may be inferred from the DNA testings of their descendants, namely, the Sakhas, the Western Yugurs, the Naiman tribe among the Kazakhs, and the Buryats, among others. The Sakhas (Yakuts), who probably descended from the Quriqan (Tokarev 1962, p. 107), a Tiele tribe, are characterised

¹⁶ See Table 1 in Wells et al. (2001, p. 10245) where M17 corresponds to haplogroup R1a1.

¹⁷ M17 or Eu19 in this article corresponds to R1a1; Keyser et al. (2009, pp. 406–409); Li et al. (2010, pp. 9–10).

¹⁸ For the Muma Tujue, see *Xin Tangshu* (Ouyang Xiu–Song Qi 2003, Chapter 217b, p. 6148). Denis Sinor (1985, pp. 152–157) suggests that the Muma Tujue were the Kök Türks “living outside the Türk state” or “[not belonging] to the ruling stratum of the Türk state”.

¹⁹ C3 in these articles correspond to C2.

²⁰ For the Evenks, see Table 5 in Pakendorf et al. (2007, p. 1017). C-M217 and its sub-clades C-M48 and C-M86 correspond to C2. For the Mongols and Kazakhs, see Table 1 in Wells et al. (2001, p. 10245). M130 and M48 in Table 1 corresponds to haplogroup C2; and see Table 3 in Zerjal et al. (2002, p. 474). Haplogroups 10 and 36 in Table 3 correspond to haplogroup C2.

by haplogroup N1c1.²¹ The Western Yugurs, residing in Gansu Province, China, are descended from the remnants of the ancient Uighurs (Golden 1992, p. 409) and are characterised by moderate to high frequencies of haplogroups C2 (21.2~30%), O2 (34.6%), and Q (15%) (see Figure 2 in Zhou et al. 2008, p. 202; Xu–Wen 2017, p. 69). Haplogroup O2 (formerly known as O3) is the genetic marker of East Asians (see Table 1 in Xue et al. 2005, pp. 2431–2439), also found among various Mongolic and Turkic groups at moderate frequency. The Naiman, a Turkic tribe subdued by Chinggis Khan in the early 13th century, are now found among the modern-day Kazakhs and are characterised by high frequencies of haplogroups O2 and C2.²² The Buryats, who, at least partly, descend from the Quriqan (Tokarev 1962, p. 107; Golden 1992, pp. 106–107), like the Sakhas, are characterised by high frequencies of haplogroups N (48%) and C2 (40%) (see Table 1 in Kharkov et al. 2014, p. 183). In sum, the Tiele/ancient Uighurs were probably carriers of haplogroups C2, N, O2, and Q, among others.

We may also infer the genetic structure of the Yenisei Qirghiz, who destroyed the Uighur Khaganate in 840 CE, from that of their modern descendants. The Qirghiz (Kyrgyz) of the Tien Shan Mountains region (in Kyrgyzstan)²³ are characterised by moderate to high frequency of R1a1 (over 60%) and C2 (12~20%).²⁴ The Khakass, who are also believed to have descended from the Yenisei Qirghiz, are characterised by high percentages of N (50%) and R1a1 (35.2%).²⁵

We may speculate on the genetic structure of the Qipchaqs based on the DNA of their modern descendants among the Kazakhs. The Qipchaq (Karakypshak) tribe belonging to the Kazakh Middle Horde (*Orta Jüz*) is characterised by a high frequency of R1b1a1a1 (R1b-M73) (Sabitov 2013, p. 35). R1b1a1a1 is a rare haplogroup that appears at moderate to high frequency only among this Kazakh tribe and some other Turkic groups (including the Kumandin).²⁶ We may also speculate that the modern descendants of the Qipchaqs are the western Kazakhs, who are characterised by a high frequency of C2 subclade C2b1b1 (formerly known as C3c1).²⁷

We are unable to identify the genetic structure of the Qarakhanids, who were made up of the Qarluq and Chuyue tribes, among others.²⁸ Recently, Chinese geneticists tested the DNA of the remains of a Yuan nobleman, who was probably an

²¹ Most of the Y-chromosome DNA extracted from the mummified frozen bodies of the Sakhas dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries belongs to haplogroup N1c1 (61%). See Crubézy et al. (2010, p. 2).

²² For haplogroup C2, see Table S1 in Zhabagin et al. (2017, pp. 1–11). For haplogroup O, see Sabitov (2013, p. 35).

²³ On their descent from the Yenisei Qirghiz, see Golden (1992, pp. 404–406).

²⁴ See Table 1 in Wells et al. (2001, p. 10245) where M17 corresponds to haplogroup R1a1; and Table 3 in Zerjal et al. (2002, p. 474). Haplogroups 3, 10, and 36 in Table 3 correspond to haplogroups R1a1, C2, and C2b1b1, respectively.

²⁵ See Table 3 in Gubina et al. (2013, p. 339); and Table S3 in Shi et al. (2013, pp. 1–9). Haplogroup N found among the Khakass may have originated in the Turkic nomads who Turkicised the R1a1 carriers.

²⁶ For the Kumandin, see Table 2 in Dulik et al. (2012, p. 234).

²⁷ For the haplogroups of the western Kazakh tribes, see Sabitov (2013, p. 35).

²⁸ For the tribal composition of the Qarakhanids, see Golden (2015, pp. 509–510).

Önggüt prince. This nobleman's Y-DNA haplogroup was Q (Cui et al. 2015, pp. 3, 5–8). One should note that the Önggüt may have descended from the Chuyue. The *Yuanshi* [the history of the Yuan Dynasty] (Song Lian 2005, Chapter 118, p. 2923) states that the chief of the Önggüt, Alawusi Tijihuli (阿剌兀思剔吉忽裏), who submitted to Chinggis Khan in 1203, was “a descendant of the Shatuo-yanmen (沙陀雁門之後)”. In turn, the *Xin Tangshu* (Chapter 218, p. 6153) relates that the Shatuo (沙陀) were “a sort of the Chuyue, a separate tribe of the Western Tujue (西突厥別部處月種也)”. Furthermore, the Qarluq (Geluolu 歌邏祿) and the Chuyue (處月) belonged to the Western Türk tribal union.²⁹ In sum, we may conjecture that the Y-DNA haplogroups of the Qarakhanids included those of the Kök Türks and those of the indigenous tribes of the Qipchaq Steppe.

The genetic structure of the mediaeval Turkmens or Oghuz, from whom the Seljuqs and the Ottomans branched off, are easier to identify since it is not difficult to identify their modern descendants. The major Y-chromosome haplogroups of the modern-day Turkmens are haplogroups Q, R1a1, J and N, among others. The Y-DNA haplogroups of the Turkmens living in Afghanistan and northern Iran are as follows: Q (33.8~42.6%), J (14.3~17.6%), R1a1 (14.5~16.2%), L (4~5.8%),³⁰ G (4~5.7%), N and O (2.9~9.45%), E (4.3~5.4%), and C (0~1.35%).³¹ Among the Turkmens living in Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan), mostly belonging to the Yomud tribe, haplogroups Q (73%) dominates the gene pool (Skhalyakho et al. 2016, p. 88), which indicates that haplogroup Q was probably the most prevalent lineage among the Oghuz.

In sum, in terms of patrilineal descent, the Turkic groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not, in all likelihood, descend from a common ancestral group. Although the genetic makeup of the Kök Türks is yet to be identified by geneticists, one cannot observe a common set of Y-DNA haplogroups that could have been spread by them or by any other common ancestral group among the various Turkic groups.³² It is also highly likely that many of the mediaeval Turkic

²⁹ The *Jiu Tangshu* (Chapter 194b, p. 5179) lists the Qarluq and Chuyue among the tribes of the Western Türks.

³⁰ Haplogroup L is a South Asian lineage, found at significant frequencies in South Asia, but at low frequencies in the Middle East, Europe and Central Asia. For its frequency in India and elsewhere, see Tables 5, 6, and 7 in Sengupta et al. (2006, pp. 202–221).

³¹ See Table 1 in Grugni et al. (2012, p. 7); Figure S7 in Di Cristofaro et al. (2013, pp. 1–12).

³² Concerning the genetic structure of the earliest Turkic peoples, one may assume that their lineages included haplogroups N, C, Q, and R1a1, among others. R1a1 (its subclade R1a-Z93) is found at high frequencies among the Turkic peoples of the Altai Mountains and Tianshan Mountains regions. R1a1 could have been one of the most prevalent lineages among the Turkic groups of the Qipchaq Steppe after the Turkicisation of this region. However, it is unlikely that the earliest Turkic speakers were characterised by a high frequency of haplogroup R1a1 since the earliest carriers of this haplogroup in South Siberia and Central Asia were Indo-European speakers. It was the carriers of haplogroup R1a1 that spread the Indo-European languages to South Asia and Iran. Haplogroup Q is found at varying frequencies among several historical Turkic peoples such as the Turkmens, Önggüt, and Western Yugurs, which makes it an important candidate for one of the original Turkic lineages. However, the presence of haplogroup Q is minimal among many other Turkic peoples including the Kazakhs and the Qirghiz (Kyrgyz). If haplogroup Q was indeed one of

groups were non-Turkic by origin. These facts are attested to by their diverse representative haplogroups and dissimilar haplogroup compositions. It was thus natural that the Turkic groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe, made up of heterogeneous elements, did not create and share a common identity or historical consciousness as will be discussed below.

The Absence of a Common Identity in the Pre-Mongol Turkic World

The various Turkic groups of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not share a common identity. To begin with, they did not share a common “Kök Türk” identity, which had existed as a group identity reserved for the core group of the Türk Khaganates. One should note that the Kök Türks did not regard other Turkic groups as *Türks*. For instance, the Kök Türks did not use the name *Türk* for other Turkic-speaking groups such as the Toquz Oghuz (Tiele) and Qirghiz in the Orkhon inscriptions.³³ Similarly, the Uighurs, who succeeded the Kök Türks in Mongolia in the mid-8th century CE, did not identify themselves as *Türks*. The Uighurs called themselves *Uighur* (*Uyğur*) and used the name *Türk* (*Türük*) only for the Kök Türks, whom they depicted as their enemies, in their royal inscriptions.³⁴

The “Kök Türk” identity, however, may have been preserved among the direct descendants of the Kök Türks. The Khazars, who probably branched off from the Western Türks,³⁵ may have claimed descent from the Ashina.³⁶ According to Peter

the original Turkic lineages, one may observe that the genetic legacy of the original Turks is rather minimal. Haplogroup N is commonly found among most Turkic peoples. It is the dominant lineage of the Siberian Turkic peoples such as the Tuvinians, the Khakass, the (Oghur Turkic) Chuvash, and the Saka (of Quriqan/Tiele descent), who are perhaps more homogeneous than the Turkic peoples of Central Asia and West Asia. Haplogroup C is the most common lineage of the Mongolic and Tungusic peoples. However, it is also found at a high frequency among many Turkic groups including the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Western Yugurs (of Uighur/Tiele descent), and the Naiman tribe. Its high frequency among these Turkic groups indicates that it was carried by the Turkic groups of western Mongolia prior to the rise of the Mongols. Haplogroup C was also present in Mongolia during the Xiongnu period. For now, it would be safe to say that the early Turkic peoples included haplogroups N, C, Q, and R1a1, like the Xiongnu.

³³ See the lines 11–14 (east side) of the Kül Tegin inscription translated in Silay (1996, p. 4).

³⁴ For instance, the Taryat (Terkhin) inscription records that the Uighur khan El Etmış Bilgä said the following: “At my age of twenty-eight, in the Year of the Serpent, I disturbed and destroyed the realm of the Turk.” (see Tekin 1983, p. 46 [text], p. 49 [trans.]). The Moyun Çor (Šine-Usu) inscription also records El Etmış Bilgä’s words as follows: “I heard that Özmiš Tegin had become qan (of the Türüks). In the Sheep Year (A.D. 743), I marched (with my army) ... I seized (Özmiš Qayan) ... Thereafter the Türük people has ceased to exist” (see the lines 9–10 [north side] of the Šine-Usu inscription, Moriyasu et al. 2009, p. 11 [text], p. 24 [trans.]).

³⁵ They are referred to as *Tujue Hesa* 突厥曷薩 (Türk Khazar) in the *Xin Tangshu* (Chapter 221b, p. 6247).

³⁶ However, the mid-10-century Khazar ruler Joseph claimed descent from Khazar, the seventh son of Togarmah, a son of Japheth in his letter to Hasdai b. Shaprüt, the Jewish courtier of the Caliph of Cordoba. He was thus following the biblical tradition, not the Ashina or Kök Türk

Golden, the *Hudūd al-‘ālam* records that the Khazar ruler descends from Ansā, that is, Ashina (see Golden 2013, p. 53). The same may hold true for the Qarluq (Geluolu 歌邏祿), the Chuyue (處月),³⁷ and the Türgesh (Tuqishi 突騎施)³⁸ that had belonged to the Western Türk tribal confederation centred in the Kazakh steppes. In his *Dīwān Luġāt at-Turk*, the Qarakhanid philologist Maḥmūd Al-Kāšġarī (fl. c. 1075) uses the name *Turk* only for the Qarakhanids, made up of the former Western Türk tribes Qarluq and the Chuyue (Chigil), among others, when he uses *Turk* in a narrow sense.³⁹ However, it is not clear if the Qarakhanids possessed a “Kök Türk” identity. When describing the Ötükān mountains, the homeland of the Kök Türks, Al-Kāšġarī simply writes that it is the “name of a place in the deserts of Tatār, near Uighur”, without mentioning the Kök Türks (Al-Kāšġarī 1982–1985, Vol. 1, p. 159). One should note that the Qocho Uighurs, who were descended from the Uighur refugees who settled in the Tarim Basin after the collapse of the Uighur Khaganate (744–840 CE), were aware that their place of origin was the Orkhon River valley (see Juvaynī 1958, Vol. 1, p. 54). As a matter of fact, Al-Kāšġarī does not mention the Ashina or the Kök Türks in his work. It seems that he did not have any real memory of the Kök Türks.⁴⁰ Concerning the progenitors of the Turkic groups, Al-Kāšġarī mentions Turk, son of Japheth, son of Noah (Al-Kāšġarī 1982–1985, Vol. 1, p. 82), and Alp Er Tonga, whom, like Yūsuf Khāšṣ Ḥājib, the author of the *Kutadġu Bilig*, he identifies with Afrāsiyāb, the Turanian hero of the *Shāh-nāma* (Al-Kāšġarī 1982–1985, Vol. 2, p. 337; Yūsuf Khāšṣ Ḥājib 1983, p. 48),⁴¹ without mentioning any historical Kök Türk figure.

All in all, it appears that, by the turn of the second millennium CE, the memory of the Kök Türks and the Ashina clan had been obliterated in the Turkic world. Various Turkic groups created their respective dynastic traditions or foundation myths that were unrelated to the Ashina legend and the Kök Türks.

The Qocho Uighurs developed a founding legend, according to which the progenitor of their state was born of a tree.⁴²

tradition, in accordance with the conversion of the Khazar elite to Judaism (see Zhivkov 2013, p. 41).

³⁷ As mentioned above, the *Jiu Tangshu* lists the Qarluq and Chuyue among the tribes of the Western Türks (*Jiu Tangshu* Chapter 194b, p. 5179 in Liu Xu 2002).

³⁸ For instance, in the *Jiu Tangshu* (Chapter 194b, p. 5190), Wuzhilei (烏質勒), a Türgesh chief, is described as being from “a separate stock of the Western Türks (西突厥之別種)”.

³⁹ Al-Kāšġarī also uses *Turk* in a broader sense to refer to the Inner Asian nomadic groups in general (see Al-Kāšġarī 1982–1985, Vol. 1, p. 83).

⁴⁰ On this point, see Golden (2015, p. 507).

⁴¹ For a discussion of this identification, see Vásáry (2015, pp. 19–20). Perhaps, Alp Er Tonga was a legendary hero of the Qarluq and the Chuyue (Chigil).

⁴² “一夕，有天光降於樹，在兩河之間，國人即而候之。樹生癭，若人妊身然。自是光恆見者越九月又十日，而癭裂，得嬰兒五，收養之。其最釋者，曰卜古可罕。” See Yu Ji 虞集 (1965, Vol. 2, p. 259); ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Atā Malik Juvaynī (1958, Vol. 1, pp. 55–56) also relates in his work that the legendary founder of the Uighurs, Būġū Khan, whom he identifies with Afrāsiyāb, was born of two parent-trees. According to the Moghul historian Muḥammad Ḥaidar Dughlat (1996, p. 184; 2004, p. 418), the Moghuls identified Būġū Khan (Būġhā Khan) with Afrāsiyāb.

One evening, a heavenly light shone down upon a tree that was between two rivers. The people of the realm drew near and waited. The tree yielded a lump that looked like a person pregnant. This light was continuously visible for nine months and ten days, and then the lump broke. [The people] received five babies whom they adopted and raised. The youngest among [the babies] was called Bügü Qaghan.

The (Yenisei) Qirghiz, who destroyed the Uighur Khaganate in 840 CE, probably had a founding legend that was not related to the Kök Türk origin myths. The *You yang za zu*, written by Duan Chengshi in the 9th century CE, relates that the Qirghiz viewed themselves as descending from a god and a cow.⁴³

The Jiankun (堅昆) [Qirghiz] tribe, [unlike the Türks], is not of wolf descent. Their ancestors were born in a cave located to the north of the Quman Mountain. They themselves say that in the ancient times there was a god who mated with a cow in that cave. The people's hair is yellow, eyes are green, and beards are red.

Like the Qarakhanids, the Seljuqs did not possess any memory of the Kök Türks and the Ashina clan (Mecit 2014, p. 4). They may have considered Oghuz Khan, the legendary ancestor of the Oghuz Turkic tribes, to be their progenitor. However, the Oghuz tradition⁴⁴ did not preserve any memory of the Kök Türks. Besides, it was probably not regarded as an important source of legitimation by the Seljuqs.⁴⁵ According to A.C.S. Peacock, the early Seljuqs may have used the Khazar connection to legitimise themselves rather than emphasise their Oghuz origin.⁴⁶ Some Seljuq court historians also saw Afrāsiyāb, the Turanian hero of the *Shāh-nāma*, as the ancestor of the Seljuqs. For instance, Ibn Ḥassūl (d. 1058) connected the Seljuqs to Afrāsiyāb (Kafesoğlu 1972, p. 5).⁴⁷ However, according to Songül Mecit (2014, p. 2), it is not clear if the Seljuq rulers actually viewed themselves as the descendants of Afrāsiyāb.⁴⁸

As a matter of fact, neither the Oghuz tradition nor the Afrāsiyāb tradition was widely shared by the Turkic groups in pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq

⁴³ “堅昆部落非狼種，其先所生之窟在曲漫山北。自謂上代有神與牝牛交於此窟。其人髮黃，目綠，赤髭髯。” Duan (n.d., Chapter 4).

⁴⁴ For the legend of Oghuz Khan, see Rashīd al-Dīn (1988, pp. 29–45; 1998–1999, Vol. 1, pp. 27–35). For an English translation of the Oghuz tradition written in Uighur script and preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris (MS Supplément turc 1001), see Doğruyol (2012, pp. 187–196). For a study of the Oghuz tradition, see Binbaş (2010).

⁴⁵ It was the Ottomans, the Aqqoyunlu and the Qaraqoyunlu who legitimised their dynasty through the adoption of the Oghuz tradition. On this point, see Peacock (2010, p. 59). In contrast, the Timurids chose the Mongol tradition. On this, Manz (2016, pp. 288–289) remarks that the post-Mongol Turkic dynasties of the Middle East were divided into two distinct groups, with their respective descent myth. In her work, Manz also views the Oghuz tradition as being connected with the Kök Türks. However, the present author regards the connection between the two as conjectural.

⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of the Khazar connection of the Seljuqs, see Peacock (2010, pp. 27–35, 59).

⁴⁷ According to Osamu Otsuka (2007, pp. 83–84), after the demise of the Seljuqs, their Afrāsiyāb descent was favoured over their Qiniq descent by the Persian historians, who sought to connect the Persian dynasties, including the Seljuqs, with the legendary Iranian heroes.

⁴⁸ It is also not clear if the Seljuq historians identified Afrāsiyāb with “Alp Er Tonga”.

Steppe. Importantly, Al-Kāšġarī does not associate Afrāsiyāb, whom he saw as a progenitor of the Qarakhanids, with the Seljuqs or the Oghuz in his work (Safī 2006, p. 219). He probably did not regard the Seljuqs as being related to the Qarakhanids. Furthermore, the Ghaznavids did not even adopt a steppe Turkic tradition. Unlike the Qarakhanids and Seljuqs, the Ghaznavids, who began their career as the military slaves of the Persian Samanids, sought to legitimise themselves following the Persian imperial tradition (Mecit 2014, p. 1). Their later court historians linked them to Yazdagird III, the last Sasanian ruler, discarding their steppe roots. According to István Vásáry (2015, pp. 14–17), not only the Ghaznavids, but also the Seljuqs had a strong Persian orientation. This means that the Qarakhanids, the Seljuqs, and the Ghaznavids, who formed the three most powerful Muslim Turkic states in the 11th century CE, did not share a common identity or historical consciousness.⁴⁹

In sum, neither Ashina, nor Afrāsiyāb, nor Oghuz Khan served as a legitimising figure for the major portion of the Turkic world during the pre-Mongol period. The various Turkic groups of the Eurasian steppes in the pre-Mongol period did not even share a common Turkic identity⁵⁰ in line with their heterogeneous origins. In contrast, the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe shared strong Mongol elements as will be discussed below.

The “Mongolness” of the Turkic Nomads of the Mongol Successor States in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe

The Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe arose from the merging of the above-discussed Turkic groups and the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries. In many respects, this hybrid group was closer to the Mongols of the 13th century than to the pre-Mongol Oghuz or Qipchaq Turkic groups.

In terms of tribal compositions, the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe, namely, the Chaghatays (Moghuls and Timurids), Kazakhs, Shibanid Uzbeks, Manghits/Noghays, and Crimean Tatars, were not made up of the “majority Turks” and “the minority Mongols”. More specifically, they consisted of the tribes of Mongol origin, such as the Barlas, Barin, Dughlat,

⁴⁹ Interestingly, the Mamluk historian Ibn al-Dawādārī records a very unique origin myth of the Turkic peoples unrelated to the Oghuz or Afrāsiyāb tradition. According to it, the progenitor of the Turkic peoples was created in a cave from the combination of water, earth, sun, and wind (see Frenkel 2015, pp. 60–66).

⁵⁰ In the Islamic world, the various Turkic groups were collectively called Turks and viewed as descendants of Japheth, son of Noah. However, this Turkic identity was a broad Inner Asian identity that also encompassed the Mongols. On this point see Lee (2016b, pp. 108–113, 118–122). According to Al-Kāšġarī (1982–1985, Vol. 2, p. 103), the Yaghma and the Tukhsi referred to “the Uighur infidels” as *Tat*, a term denoting the Iranian-speaking peoples. Also, see Vásáry (2015, pp. 13–14). Perhaps, these Uighurs were “Turkicised” local inhabitants of modern-day Xinjiang. At any rate, this is only one of the many instances that show that the pre-Mongol Turkic groups did not share a common Turkic identity.

Manghit, Qunghrat, and Ushin; the Mongolic and Turkic tribes of non-Mongol origin, such as the Jalayir, Kereyit, Naiman, Öngüt, Tatar, and Uighur; the tribes of the Qipchaq Steppe origin, such as the Qipchaq and Qanqli,⁵¹ and other newly formed or named tribes within the Mongol polities, such as the Shirin and Ming.⁵² For instance, the Uzbeks of Khiva were made up of four pairs of tribes: the Kiyat-Qunghrat, Uighur-Naiman, Neküs-Manghit, and Qanqli-Qipchaq (see Murav'yov 1977, p. 117). The Kiyat, Qunghrat, Neküs, and Manghit were tribes of Mongol origin; the Naiman were a tribe of non-Mongol origin from Mongolia; the Qanqli and Qipchaq were indigenous tribes of the Qipchaq Steppe. The Crimean Tatar tribes included the Qipchaq, an indigenous tribe of the Qipchaq Steppe, the Shirin, a new tribe of probable Iranian origin,⁵³ the Arghin, a tribe of obscure origin,⁵⁴ and the Mansur/Manghit and Barin, tribes of Mongol origin. Here, one should bear in mind that the above-listed “non-Mongol” tribes of Mongolic, Turkic, and Iranian origins were never grouped together and characterised as the “majority Turks” and contrasted with “the minority Mongols” by contemporary writers during the Mongol and post-Mongol periods.

Table 1. The Tribal Composition of the Chinggisid *Uluses**

	Chaghatays (Timurid/Moghuls)	Kazakhs	Uzbeks	Crimean Tatars	Northern Yuan Mongols
Tribes of Mongol origin	Arlat, Barin, Barlas, Besüd, Dughlat, Qunghrat, Sudus, etc.	Dughlat, Manghit, Qunghrat, Ushin/Uysu n, etc.	Arlat, Barin, Barlas, Dur- man, Man- ghit, Qungh- rat, Ushin/ Uysun, etc.	Barin, Ciji- vut, Man- ghit, etc.	Baarin, Bayaud, Besüd, Eljigin, Khatagin, Man- gud, Qunqirat, Ushin, etc.
Tribes of non-Mongol origin from the Mongo- lian Steppe	Jalayir, Kereyit, etc.	Jalayir, Kereyit, Merkit, Naiman, etc.	Jalayir, Ke- reyit, Nai- man, Oirat, Öngüt, Tan- gut, Tatar, Uighur, etc.		Jalayir, Kereyit, Naiman, Öngüt (Enggüd), Tan- gut, Uighur, etc.

⁵¹ Here, I follow Rashīd al-Dīn's classification of Mongol and non-Mongol tribes (see Rashīd al-Dīn 1988, pp. 21–161; 1998–1999, Vol. 1, pp. 21–112).

⁵² For the Qazaq and Uzbek tribes, see Sultanov (1982, pp. 7–51). For the Timurid tribes, see Manz (1989, pp. 154–165); Ando (1992, pp. 66–217). For the Moghul tribes, see Mano (1978, pp. 49–52); Yudin (2001, pp. 72–82). For the Crimean Tatar tribes, see İnalçık (1977); Fisher (1978, p. 22).

⁵³ For the As/Alan origin of the (Crimean) Shirin tribe, see 'Abd al-Ghaffār Qūrīmī (1924–1925, p. 46).

⁵⁴ The Arghin (*Aerhun* 阿兒渾) tribe is listed as one of the *semuren* groups in Tao Zongyi's *Nancun Chuogeng lu* (1959, p. 13). However, Rashīd al-Dīn (1988) does not mention this tribe when discussing the various Inner Asian nomadic tribes in the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*.

	Chaghatays (Timurid/Moghuls)	Kazakhs	Uzbeks	Crimean Tatars	Northern Yuan Mongols
Indigenous tribes of the Qipchaq Steppe	Qangli, Qipchaq, etc.	Qangli, Qipchaq, etc.	Qangli, Qipchaq, etc.	Qipchaq, etc.	Asud (Alan), Kharachin (partly Qip- chaq), etc.
Newly or- ganised or named tribes	Yasa'uri, etc.	Shapyrash- ty, Baiuly, etc.	Ming, etc.	Shirin (As/Alan), etc.	Khalkha, Tu- med, etc.

* This table is not exhaustive.

If we are to choose the most representative descendants of the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe, our choice must fall on the Kazakhs since they are descended from the nomads of the eastern wing of the Jochid Ulus (the Orda Ulus), the eastern Chaghatayid state (the Moghul Khanate), and the Manghit/Noghay Horde. The genetic compositions of the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states can thus be inferred from that of the modern Kazakhs. The most common patrilineal lineage among the Kazakhs is haplogroup C2 like among the Mongols.⁵⁵ More specifically, haplogroup C2 makes up 66~73.7% among the Kazakhs of Kazakhstan,⁵⁶ 75.47% of the Kazakhs of Xinjiang (see Figure 1 in Zhong et al. 2010, pp. 428–435), 78% of the Kazakhs of Karakalpakstan (see Supplementary Figure 1 in Balaesque et al. 2015, pp. 1413–1422), and 59.7% of the Kazakhs of the Altai Republic in Russia (see Tables 1 and 2 in Dulik et al. 2011, pp. 2–3). The other Y-chromosome haplogroups that are found at low to moderate frequency among the Kazakhs are haplogroups O, G1, R1a1, R2, R1b, J, Q, and N, among others. Some of the Kazakh tribes that are divided into the Senior Horde (*Ulu Jüz*), the Middle Horde (*Orta Jüz*), and the Lesser or Junior Horde (*Kishi Jüz*) have their own representative haplogroups. For instance, the Naiman, belonging to the Middle Horde, are characterised by haplogroups O2 and C2.⁵⁷ The Arghin, another Middle Horde tribe, are characterised by haplogroup G1-M285 (Sabitov 2013, p. 35), which is believed to have originated in West Iran.⁵⁸ The Qipchaq (Karakypshak),

⁵⁵ Haplogroup C2 found among various Turkic peoples should not be regarded as the genetic legacy of the Mongol Empire as some suggest. For instance, Zhabagin et al. (2017, pp. 5–6) argue that C2 found among the modern-day Uzbeks and Kazakhs was introduced to them by the Mongols. However, one should note that haplogroup C2 was carried by the Turkic tribes of Mongolia prior to the rise of the Mongols in the 13th century.

⁵⁶ See Table 1 in Wells et al. (2014, p. 10245) where M130 and M48 correspond to haplogroup C2; also see Table 3 in Zerjal et al. (2002, p. 474). Haplogroups 10 and 36 in Table 3 correspond to haplogroup C2.

⁵⁷ See footnote 22.

⁵⁸ Haplogroup G1 is mainly found in Iran and Kazakhstan. For a detailed study of haplogroup G1-M285, see Balanovsky et al. (2015, pp. 1–20).

another Middle Horde tribe, are characterised by the R1b1a1a1 (R1b-M73) (63.6%) (Sabitov 2013, p. 35).⁵⁹

The genetic composition of the Karakalpaks, a Qipchaq Turkic-speaking people who descend from various Turkic groups and the Mongols,⁶⁰ can also provide some information on the patrilineal lineages of the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states. They are divided into two major groups, the On Tört Uruw (that includes such tribes as the Manghit and the Qipchaq) and the Qunghrat. The Karakalpaks exhibit a set of haplogroups similar to that of the Kazakhs with a lower frequency of haplogroup C2: C2 (31.5%), G (26%), R1a1 (9.26%), and N (7.4%) among the On Tört Uruw; R1a1 (29.6%), N (22.2%), C2 (20.4%), and Q (11.1%) among the Qunghrat (see Supplementary Figure 1 in Balaesque et al. 2015, pp. 1413–1422).

The modern Uzbeks exhibit a more diverse set of haplogroups than the Kazakhs: R1a1 (17.6~32%), J (5.9~21.4%),⁶¹ C2 (7~18%), O2 (0~12%), and N (0~5.9%) (see Table 1 in Wells et al. 2001, p. 10245).⁶² However, one should differentiate between the modern Uzbeks, who are descended from the ancient Indo-European (Iranic) populations and various Inner Asian nomadic peoples (Golden 1992, p. 407), and the Shibanid Uzbeks who conquered Transoxiana at the turn of the 16th century and formed the nomad elite in the Uzbek Khanate.⁶³ The Y-chromosome haplogroups of the Shibanid Uzbeks should be inferred from the DNA data of the Kazakhs since the two groups were one and the same people inhabiting the Kazakh steppes prior to their division in the 16th century.⁶⁴ Interestingly, a higher frequency of C2 (41.2%) is observed among the Uzbeks residing in Afghanistan (Table S4 in Haber et al. 2012), who are probably descended from the Shibanid Uzbeks.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ According to John of Plano Carpini's travel account, the majority of the Qanqli may have perished during the Mongol conquest of the Qipchaq Steppe. He writes, "The Tartars also wiped out the Kanghitis and now inhabit their country; such Kanghitis as were left have been reduced to slavery". See John of Plano Carpini (1998, pp. 58–59). If so, the Qipchaq elements may not have constituted the majority of the nomad population of the eastern Qipchaq Steppe from the mid-13th century onwards. Alternatively, one may conjecture that Carpini was unable to distinguish the Qanqli from the Mongols.

⁶⁰ For the origin of the Karakalpaks, see Golden (1992, pp. 403–404). In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Karakalpaks became a semi-nomadic or semi-settled group, which indicates that they were more mixed with the sedentary populations than the nomadic Kazakhs.

⁶¹ Haplogroup J reached Central Asia probably with Neolithic farmers from the Middle East (Zerjal et al. 2002, pp. 476–477). Haplogroup 9 in this paper corresponds to haplogroup J.

⁶² M17, M130, M46, M172, M175 and 122, and M48 in Table 1 correspond to haplogroup R1a1, C2, N1c1, J, O, and C2b1b1, respectively; Table 3 in Zerjal et al. (2002, p. 474). Haplogroups 3, 9, 10, 13, 16, and 36 in Table 3 correspond to haplogroups R1a1, J, C2, O2, N1c1, and C2b1b1, respectively; Table S4 in Haber et al. (2012).

⁶³ The modern Uzbeks can be differentiated into "joqchi Uzbeks" and "yo'kchi Uzbeks". According to Peter Finke (2014, pp. 216–219), the former have a "distinctive Mongolian" or "Kazakh" physiognomy unlike other Uzbeks.

⁶⁴ On their division, see Lee (2016a, pp. 121–139).

⁶⁵ According to Mountstuart Elphinstone (1842, Vol. 2, p. 190), the Uzbeks of the Balkh Province of Afghanistan in the 19th century were organised into tribes and possessed an Inner Asian physiognomy, which implies that they were Shibanid Uzbeks.

From the DNA data of the Turkic peoples originating in the Mongol successor states, one may suggest that the Kazakhs, the Shibanid Uzbeks, the Manghits/No-gghays, and the Crimean Tatars, who all branched off from the same Jochid Ulus,⁶⁶ consisted of the following lineages: haplogroups C2, O, G1, Q, R1a1, R1b, N, J, and R2, among others. Here, one should note that these haplogroups or Y-DNA clans cannot be divided into the “minority Mongol” and “majority Turkic” lineages. Haplogroups such as C2, N, O2, Q, and R1a1, among others, are shared by the Mongolic and Turkic groups, while haplogroups such as R1a1, G1, and J are shared by the Turkic and Iranian groups. More importantly, one cannot define or identify what constituted the “Turkic” haplogroups, since the various Turkic groups had dissimilar Y-chromosome haplogroup compositions and representative haplogroups. Furthermore, one should also note that the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states, characterised by haplogroup C2, were closer to the 13th-century Mongols in terms of patrilineal descent than to the Turkmens, whose major lineage was haplogroup Q, or the mediaeval Qipchaqs, whose major lineage was probably haplogroup R1b1a1a1 (R1b-M73).⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, the physiognomy of the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe was not very different from that of the Mongols. Sigismund von Herberstein (1963, Vol. 2, p. 53), the envoy sent to Muscovy by Emperor Maximilian I in 1517, writes about the Tatars of the Qipchaq Steppe as follows: “The men are of middle stature, with a broad, fat face, with eyes turned in and hollow, wearing no hair but the beard, shaving the rest of the hair.” Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan (1993, p. 41), a 17th-century French military engineer in Polish service, writes about the Crimean Tatars as follows: “They are not of great stature, their tallest men not surpassing ours of average height. They are rather shorter than taller, but are thick-set, with very big limbs; they have high and prominent bellies, broad shoulders, short necks, large heads, faces almost round, and wide foreheads. Their eyes open only a little, and are very black and wide. They have short noses, quite small mouths, teeth as white as ivory, dark complexions, and very black hair, which is coarse like horsehair.” Similarly, Charles Henry Scott (1854, p. 306), who travelled in Russia in the mid-19th century, writes about the Crimean Tatars as follows: “The Crimean Tatars are divided into two classes, those of the plain and those of the mountains ... [The former] bear on their visages the characteristics of the Mongols.”

Ármin Vámbéry (1865, p. 421), the Hungarian Turkologist, who travelled in Central Asia in the mid-19th century, writes as follows about the Kazakhs: “[The

⁶⁶ For instance, Fazlallāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī (1962, p. 41), the court historian of Muḥammad Shībānī Khan relates in his *Mihmān-nāma-i Bukhārā* that there were three branches (*tāyifa*) that “belong to the Uzbeks” (*mansūb bi-Uzbak*). The first was the Shibanids (*Shibāniyān*). The second was the Qazaqs (*Qazāq*), “who are, in strength and ferocity, well known throughout the world” (*ki dar quvva va ba’s mashhūr-i āfāqand*). The third was the Manghit (*Manfit* [sic]), “who are the rulers of Hajji Tarkhan” (*ki īshān pādshāhān-i Hājji Tarkhān-and*).

⁶⁷ In a personal communication, Zhaxylyk Sabitov, a leading specialist in Kazakh DNA research and history, expressed the view that more than half of the mediaeval Qipchaqs belonged to R1b1a1a1 (R1b-M73).

Kazakhs] compassionate all whose faces have not the pure Mongol conformation. According to their aesthetic views, that race stands at the very zenith for beauty ...” Vámbéry depicts the Qipchaqs of Khokand, a Kazakh tribe residing in the Ferghana region, whom he views as being “the primitive original Turkish race”, as follows: “In their slanting eyes, beardless chins, and prominent cheek-bones they resemble the Mongols, and are, for the most part, of small stature, but extraordinary agility” (Ibid. pp. 433–434). Similarly, J. A. MacGahan (1970, p. 44), a 19th-century American journalist, writes that the Kazakhs had “small eyes, high cheek-bones, flat noses, thick lips, and round beardless faces”.

As mentioned above, the Shibanid Uzbeks and the Kazakhs were one and the same people sharing the same phenotype prior to their division in the 16th century (Oshanin 1964, Vol. 1, pp. xxii–xxiii). When the Safavid ruler Tahmāsb I (r. 1514–1576) sent a letter to the Shibanid Uzbek khan ‘Ubaidallāh (r. 1533–1540), he mocked the latter’s Inner Asian physiognomy as follows: “Let your sword be tainted red by blood, O *yellow-skinned* man.”⁶⁸ However, over the course of time, the Shibanid Uzbeks residing in Transoxiana intermixed with the indigenous population. Therefore, Vámbéry (1865, p. 418) writes that the Uzbeks of Bukhara “have dwelt in closer connection with the Tadjiks than the Khivites have done with the Sarts, and have consequently paid the penalty by losing much of their national type ...”. However, it appears that the Uzbeks of other regions better preserved their original physiognomy. Vámbéry (Ibid. p. 397) writes that a Khivan Uzbek’s “complexion and form of countenance indicate very often genuine Tartar origin”. Nikolay Murav’yov (1977, p. 159), a Russian visitor to Khiva in the 19th century, also recorded in his work that the Khivan Uzbeks resembled the Qalmaqs, although the former had larger eyes. Mountstuart Elphinstone (1842, Vol. 2, p. 190), a 19th-century British official in India, writes about the Uzbeks of the Balkh Province as follows: “The Uzbeks are generally short and stout men. Their national features are broad foreheads, high cheek-bones, thin beards, and small eyes.”

Finally, the Russian anthropologists who examined the crania of the Timurids characterised Temür as belonging to “the South Siberian Mongoloid type”.⁶⁹ However, they characterised his son Shāhrukh (r. 1405–1447) as belonging to “the Europeoid type” and his grandson Ulugh Beg as belonging to “the Europeoid type” with “Mongoloid admixture” (Oshanin 1964, Vol. 2, p. 39).

Unlike the Tatars, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs, the mediaeval Turkmens possessed a Tajik (Central Asian Iranian) physiognomy. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “because of the climate their features gradually changed into those of Tajiks. Since they were not Tajiks, the Tajik peoples called them *turkmān*, i.e. Turk-like (*Turk-mānand*)” (Rashīd al-Dīn 1988, pp. 35–36; Thackston 1998–1999, Vol. 1, p. 31). Abū al-Ghāzī Bahadur Khan also relates that after coming to Transoxiana, they came to have narrower chin, larger eyes, smaller faces, bigger noses than those of the Turks

⁶⁸ This passage is quoted from Soudavar (2002, p. 100).

⁶⁹ Russian anthropologists explain that the South Siberian Mongoloid type “was formed as a result of the mixture of the numerically predominant Mongoloid Central Asiatic race with the ancient Europeoid population” (see Miklashevskaja 1968, p. 96).

(Abu-l-Gazi 1958, p. 42 [text]; Ebūlgazî 1975, pp. 57–58). According to Murav'yov (1977, p. 138), the Turkmens and the Uzbeks in Khiva did not intermix, seeing each other as distinct groups.

In sum, in terms of tribal and genetic compositions, as well as physiognomy, the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe were close or related to the 13th-century Mongols. Unlike the fragmented pre-Mongol Turkic groups, the Turkic nomad elites of the Mongol successor states shared a common identity and historical consciousness. One should note that in numerous written (and oral) sources, the Timurids, the Moghuls, the Mughals, the Kazkaks, the Shibanid Uzbeks, and the Crimean Tatars depicted themselves as belonging to or descending from the Mongols.⁷⁰ They also adopted and modified the Chinggisid Mongol dynastic and tribal genealogies first created by the Ilkhanid historians. Through these genealogies, they claimed descent from the ancient Mongols and such mythical figure as Alan Qo'a.⁷¹ Importantly, the historians of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not regard Afrāsiyāb as their progenitor. For instance, when the Moghul historian Muḥammad Ḥaidar Dughlat (2004, p. 418) relates that the rulers of Kashghar (the Qarakhanids) are “the offspring and race” (*nasl va dūdmān*) of Afrāsiyāb, he does not connect the latter to the Moghuls or the Timurids. As for Oghuz Khan, the Timurid and Uzbek historians regarded him as an ancestor of the Chinggisids and the Timurids. However, this claim to Oghuz descent was an expression of Muslim identity, not an Oghuz Turkic identity. Oghuz Khan was depicted as a descendant of Mongol Khan, that is, a Mongol in their genealogies. One should also note that the Timurids did not identify themselves with their contemporary Ottomans. For instance, Temür's grandson Ulugh Beg states in his Chinggisid history that Oghuz Khan, from whom the Ottoman dynasty descends, is not to be confused with his namesake from whom the Chinggisids and Timurids descend.⁷² Such a Mongol orientation of the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe ought to be understood as a natural reflection of their Mongol connection.

Conclusion

In this paper, I attempted to address the question, “Why did the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe retain a Mongol identity instead of reverting to pre-Mongol Turkic identities?” by refuting the widely held premise that “the minority Mongols” were assimilated by “the majority Turks”.

⁷⁰ The Timurids, the Moghuls, the Mughals, and the Shibanid Uzbeks also had a Turkic identity. However, their Turkic identity was compatible with and encompassed the Mongol identity. On this point, see Lee (2016b, pp. 118–126).

⁷¹ For more on this topic, see Lee (2016b, pp. 126–131).

⁷² See *Shajarat al-Atrāk* (n.d., fols 61–62). For an abridged English translation, see *Shajarat Ul Atrak* (2007, pp. 40–41).

The various Turkic groups of post-Kök Türk Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe did not form a single entity that shared a common past, patrilineal lineages, royal tradition, and identity: They consisted of genetically heterogeneous groups that did not share a common Kök Türk identity or genetic legacy. They also developed separate dynastic traditions such as the Oghuz and Afrāsiyāb traditions. Many groups did not even identify themselves as *Türks*. In other words, the “Turks” of pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe formed a language family that shared a common nomadic culture, not a uniform majority that would later Turkicise the Mongols or that would be regarded as a common ancestral group by the Turkic nomads of the post-Mongol period.

The Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe were closer to the 13th-century Mongols in terms of tribal and genetic affiliations than to the pre-Mongol Oghuz or Qipchaq Turkic groups. The Mongolic and Turkic tribes that had originated in Mongolia and those that were newly organised within the Chinggisid *ulus*es formed their majority. Besides, their major Y-DNA haplogroup was haplogroup C2 like that of the Mongols. All in all, they were made up of the tribes and patrilineal lineages that were close or related to the Mongols, and the diverse nomadic groups that cannot be characterised as “the majority Turks”. As a result, when the Turkic nomads of the Mongol successor states branched off into new group identities, such as the Chaghatays (Moghuls and Timurids), Kazakhs, Shibanid Uzbeks, Crimean Tatars, and Manghits/Noghays, among others, during the post-Mongol period, they retained a Mongol identity and various elements of Mongol tradition. Naturally, they were identified as Mongols or Tatars by Timurid, Uzbek, Crimean Tatar, and other pre-modern writers.⁷³

We should then understand why such Turkic state-builders as Temür and Muḥammad Shībānī Khan honoured the Mongol and Chinggisid dynastic traditions, not the pre-Mongol Turkic traditions. The Turkicisation of the Mongols in Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe was essentially a linguistic phenomenon, which did not accompany significant changes in genetic structure and identity.

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⁷³ The use of the term *Tatar* by pre-modern European writers to refer to both the Mongols and the Turkic-speaking nomads of the Mongol successor states was therefore in line with such a practice.

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