

to the rank of Major-General, and a little later to the position of Military overnorn of the Samarkand Province. This is not to suggest, of course, that he was in any way involved in the murder plot: but the ease with which the Russian authorities reconciled themselves to the fact of Sayyid Islām Khvāja's murder suggests that there were few people in Petro-Aleksandrovsk, Tashkent and St Petersburg who seriously grieved his death.

Sayyid Islām Khvāja's murder remains an open case, and speculation as to who exactly was responsible – the Khan, the *Divanbegi*-ites, Mat-Vafā Bakkalov or/and 'Ashūr Maḥram – will likely carry on far into the future. As a general observation, though, I suggest that such a high-profile murder is unlikely to have taken place without the Khivan ruler's foreknowledge. The fact furthermore that the crime remained unsolved seems telling, given that it took place in the relatively small town of Khiva, where information spread quickly and where everyone was related in one way or another to everyone else. Clearly, therefore, the threads of the conspiracy led all the way to the highest ranks of the Khivan court: and the Russian colonial administration probably knew more about the matter than it let on.

7. "The Proud Stepsons of Khiva", Distribution of Sweets and the Search for a Bride: the Turkmens of Khorezm

The Khorezmian Turkmens, and more specifically their relations with the Khivan authorities, are the central topic of both Lykoshin's *Zapiska* and his subsequent reports. The first occasion when Lykoshin, in his capacity as the ADO Commandant, came into immediate contact with the Turkmen Yomut chieftains, or *katkhudās*,²³⁶ was in early July 1912, soon after his accession to office, during his

²³⁶ Although Lykoshin repeatedly employs this term for designating Turkmen tribal elders, this was not the only designation used by the Turkmens themselves. According to Yuri Bregel' such terms as *yāshūlī*, *āqsaqāl*, *khān*, *bakhshī*, and *vakīl* had been equally used as emic designations of Turkmen tribal aristocracy, see Yu.E. Bregel', *Khorezmskie turkmeny v XIX veke* (Moscow: Vostochnoi literatury, 1961), pp. 123–133.

third tour of inspection of the Khivan Khanate. As noted above in Section 3 of this Introduction, one of the purposes of this tour was to establish communications with those Turkmen Yomut clans in the vicinity of Kuhna-Urgench, who were known as *Küllī-Yāmūt*, or Lakeside Yomuts, and who had found themselves at odds with the Khivan authorities on the issues of water and land use.²³⁷ After a number of abortive attempts to arrange a meeting, the encounter eventually occurred midway between Yangi-Qal'a and Kuhna-Urgench, in the cemetery (*mazār*) of 'Azīzlar Bābā, named after the venerated local saint. During the meeting not only was Lykoshin able to listen to the Yomut *katkhudās*' concerns, but he also succeeded in persuading even the most intransigent of them, such as Maḥmūd-Khān Atal'khanov (Maḥmūd Khān Ātāl Khān ūghlī), to travel with him to Khiva and discuss their concerns with the Khivan Khan and his officials in person.

Over the subsequent journey to the Khivan capital, the whole procession – Lykoshin and some of the *Küllī*-Yomuts' representatives, including Atal'khanov – crossed the Daryaliq, an old western riverbed of the Amu-Darya, from where the party advanced to the banks of the Shah-Murad Canal. This was an area where until recently cultivation had flourished and a Turkmen population had thrived, but at the time of Lykoshin's arrival it had fallen into a state of neglect due to the collapse of the irrigation system.²³⁸ There on the bank

²³⁷ He admits, however, that the initial encounter with what he came to call as “the Turkmen case” started somewhat earlier. Lykoshin mentions that even before traveling to the Khanate he had meetings in Petro-Aleksandrovsk with a certain Turkmen individual, whom he called Shāh-Zā (evidently, Shāh-Jān Shamiev in the Khivan sources) and whom he regarded as nothing other than an “informer” (*agent*) of his predecessor in the office of ADO Commandant. Lykoshin further admits that over the meetings Shāh-Zā briefed him on the state of an ongoing conflict between some clans of the *Küllī*-Yomuts, whom the Shāh-Zā belonged to, with the Khivan authorities, see *infra*, *Заниска*, pp. 183–184.

²³⁸ The agricultural revival of this area unfolded in the last quarter of the 19th century due to natural flooding of the waters of the Amu-Darya River along the Daryaliq and Lawzan system of canals. This was not a completely unique event, as similar floodings had occurred with certain regularity throughout the

of the canal Lykoshin and his fellow travelers decided to make a stop. Lykoshin was put up in one of the local homesteads, while the Turkmen *katkhudās* travelling with him were lodged in *yurtas*, which were set up in the same homestead's courtyard. In his *Zapiska* Lykoshin recounts an episode that took place while they were staying there. He writes that the Yomut leaders were sitting in one of the *yurtas* with "sad and gloomy" thoughts, but that they cheered up when they were joined by a young stranger. The latter turned out to be one of their kinsmen, a Yomut Turkmen, though one not from Khorezm but from the neighboring Trans-Caspian Region, that is to say the territory under Russian jurisdiction. He was looking for a bride for one of his brothers, and so had come to Khorezm where the bride price was considerably lower than in Transcaspia.

19th century. On previous occasions such environmental changes had been used, not without advantage, by the ruling dynasty as a means of expanding irrigational lands and engaging various tribal groups, notably Turkmen clans, in agriculture: see Shioya, "Irrigation Policy of the Khanate of Khiva", pp. 115–122. The environmental shift that occurred in the last quarter of the 19th century, however, was complicated by the involvement of the Russian imperial agencies, including representatives of the Romanov royal family, who came up with distinct irrigational projects which seemed to be at odds with the local irrigational practices: see Ekaterina Pravilova, "River of Empire: Geopolitics, Irrigation, and the Amu Darya in the Late XIXth Century" *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 17/18 (2009): 255–287. Not only did these projects fail to come to fruition, but there was a noticeable decrease of the water flow of the Amu-Darya in the direction of Lawzan and Daryaliq in the last decade of the century, resulting in the decreasing availability of fertile land and diminishing of agricultural activities, affecting thereby the life conditions of the local Turkmen groups (primarily *Kūllī*-Yomuts), who resided in that area. Disputes over water seem to have furthermore triggered a chain of conflicts between local *Kūllī*-Yomut Turkmens with the Khivan authorities. As Akifumi Shioya has noted, a number of the disturbances that occurred in that area at the turn of the 20th century marked "a starting point" of the long-standing enmity between the *Kūllī*-Yomut Turkmens with the authorities of Khiva, which seemed to be still in force even a decade later, during Lykoshin's tenure as the Commandant of the ADO: see Shioya, "Povorot and the Khanate of Khiva", pp. 232–245.

There soon followed a flood of questions from the Khivan Turkmens:

– Do you have guns? – asks one Khivan Turkmen.

– No, we don't, – responds the visitor, – we don't need guns. We live in peace, no one offends us, and if a quarrel arises, then we have a '*boyar*' – a [Russian] colonel in charge of our affairs. One can approach him with a grievance at any time, and he will justly resolve the case and ensure protection to the offended. We have no need of guns.

– Well, you've surely got people's judges, who do not mind making a profit from the litigants, – grumbles a[nother] Khivan Turkmen.

– They'd better not try, after all what is a junior *boyar* or a *pristav* there for? If someone files a justified complaint against a people's judge, the latter is swiftly removed [from office]. The *boyar* often heads off to the steppe [for inspections], along with an interpreter and a horseman-*jigit*, and one can tell him everything [he needs]; every Turkmen fellow will slaughter a ram so as to host the *boyar* – it is a big occasion when he stays with us ...

The Khivan Turkmens are silent and moody while [listening to] these enquiries. The charming stories of their visiting kinsman causes nothing but envy in those destitute people.

When the visiting Turkmen mentioned that in the Krasnovodsk Uyezd they have well-developed cattle breeding and agriculture, and they pay only 6 roubles 50 kopecks per year as the *kibitka*-tax, the Khivan Turkmens only shared a sad look, and while [the visitor] was praising the justice and availability of the Russian officials, Maḥmūd-Khan caught a fly, tore off its head and remarked with [sense of] sorrow:

– Whereas here in Khiva, killing a fly or chopping off a Turkmen's head: it's all the same to the Khivan's authorities ...²³⁹

It is a delightful account, but one that presents the reader with a number of questions. While the conversation as reproduced may indeed have taken place, Lykoshin seems to be availing himself of literary license in his rendering of the episode. As he himself admits, the scene in question occurred in one of the Turkmen's *yurtas* where he was not present, and so he must have heard about the episode through an intermediary party. There is thus necessarily an element of invention in his retelling, and a novelistic playfulness in his use of dramatic dialog; the resultant impression is closer to fiction, or literary travel-writing, than a sober administrative report.

Regardless of whether the episode unfolded precisely as Lykoshin suggests, however, his account is nevertheless telling, clearly reflecting as it does the various prejudices, preconceptions and wishful hopes that informed his thinking. The Khivan Turkmen are presented here as a destitute and hopeless people, in striking contrast to their Russian-subject kinsman from Transcaspia who is portrayed as radiating happiness and well-being – “[t]he cheerful young fellow”, as Lykoshin describes him. The story furthermore depicts those Russian colonial officers, or *boyars*, who governed the Turkmen-populated regions of Transcaspia as the very embodiment of honor and fairness and suggests that they were easily accessible to those seeking justice. What is more, Lykoshin himself seems to have been keen to embody the role of the good-natured Russian officer. As he recounts, he followed the example of his predecessor General A.S. Galkin a decade earlier and took sweets with him when visiting the Yomut settlement on the Shah-Murad Canal, planning to distribute them among the local Turkmen children. To his evident disappointment, however, Lykoshin found out that no

²³⁹ See: *Занука*, pp. 197–198.

children were to be found there, and he admits that “I had myself to gather the children to my quarters” so as to fulfill the mission.²⁴⁰

Whereas Lykoshin’s text clearly offers a rosy picture of the Russian colonial officers and their paternalistic care for the Turkmens, he offers a very different picture of the Khivan authorities, whom he depicts as cruel and despotic, and interested only in exacerbating the Turkmens’ miserable plight. “In the Khanate”, Lykoshin notes, “there is constantly underway a covert diplomatic agitation, which aims at calming the bellicose Turkmens and achieving their [further] enslavement.” The Khivan Turkmens themselves, meanwhile, he presents as a people who “never abandon the dream of becoming Russian subjects one day”.²⁴¹ In one of his reports to the Governor-General of Turkestan he states the matter more explicitly: “more than among any other ethnicities”, he writes, “among the Turkmens there is an eternally existing desire to assume Russian subjecthood”, and thus they “are forever dreaming of assuming Russian subjecthood, so as to avoid the numerous harms inflicted upon them by Khivan customs”.²⁴² We lack sufficient data either to substantiate the idea that the Khorezmian Turkmens desired to assume Russian subjecthood or to reject it. What is telling, however, is Lykoshin’s evident desire to present the inclination of one particular group of local Turkmens – who were reportedly at odds with the Khivan authorities at this particular juncture and whose members could have articulated the proposal of assumption of the Russian subjecthood as a strategic move – as reflecting the aspirations of the entire Turkmen population of Khorezm.

Strikingly, therefore, even Lykoshin, renowned as he was as a sensitive and well-informed expert on the region, was evidently not immune from certain prejudices. Nor did these prejudices and preconceptions simply inform what he wrote in the *Zapiska* and his

²⁴⁰ *Заметка*, p. 196.

²⁴¹ See for instance: Lykoshin, *Raport G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 28.09.1912, no 14; O‘zMA, f. I-1, op. 2, d. 289, l. 143.

²⁴² Lykoshin, *Raport G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 28.09.1912, no 14, ll. 143–143 ob.

various reports: more significantly, perhaps, they also affected the colonial authorities' decision-making process in their monitoring of Khivan policy *vis-à-vis* Turkmen groups.

History is never a settled matter. This is particularly true of the history of Khivan-Turkmen relations. One of the major challenges for scholars who work on this topic is the fact that we know of very few written texts produced by the Turkmens themselves. As result, whereas there are numerous sources which speak *for* Turkmens, we know little about those sources in which Turkmens speak for themselves.²⁴³ Most 19th- and early 20th-century authors who wrote about Khivan-Turkmen relations, including local court historians, occasional European voyagers, and Russian colonial officers, tended, like Lykoshin, to emphasise antagonism and tensions. By doing so, wittingly, or otherwise, they drew a fundamental line of division between the central authorities in Khiva and their Turkmen subjects, portraying them as two distinct and self-contained entities in a never-ending state of conflict. As a result, the commonalities and similarities between Turkmens and other ethnic groups in Khorezm have been obscured by a prevailing narrative that instead emphasises binary opposition. Very few scholars, meanwhile, have paused to reflect on why the Turkmens came to be one of the principal driving forces of the political alignment of the Qonghrat Khivan Khanate, and the extent to which they were deeply interwoven into the fabric of the Khanate's political and social landscapes.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Only recently have scholars started excavating the local texts to unveil the voices of the Turkmens of Khorezm; see Devin DeWeese, "A Khwārazmian Saint in the Golden Horde: Kozluk Ata (Gozlī Ata) and the Social Vectors of Islamization" *La Revue des mondes musulmans et de la méditerranée* 143 (2018): 107–132 and Allen J. Frank, "Turkmen Literacy and Turkmen Identity before the Soviets: the *Ravnaq al-Islām* in Its Literary and Social Context" *JESHO* 63 (2020): 286–315.

²⁴⁴ There are a number of scholarly works that have attempted to address these matters: see Yuri Bregel', *Khorezmskie turkmeny v XIX veke* (Moscow: Vostochnoi literatury, 1961); Willian A. Wood, *The Sarii Turkmens of Merv and the Khanate of Khiva in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Indiana University: Unpublished PhD dissertation, 1998); Shioya, "Povorot and the Khanate of Khiva", pp. 232–245.

The Turkmen clans seem to have played a instrumental role in elevating the Qonghrat dynasty to power in Khorezm in the second half of the 18th century.²⁴⁵ This was in fact nothing new, as the practices of employing Turkmen warriors had been frequently utilized even by the Qonghrats' predecessors, the 'Arabshahid dynasts, in their own inter-dynastic conflicts.²⁴⁶ The main principle of state formation and political culture of the Khanate under the 'Arabshahids was based upon the concept of corporate sovereignty, whereby both political and territorial sovereignty were shared by members of the titular ruling clan.²⁴⁷ As Thomas Welsford notes, such Chinggisid ruling collectives constituted highly unstable political ecologies, requiring the regular elimination of various dynastic factions so as to permit the continued reallocation of resources among members of the prevailing party.²⁴⁸ The accession of the Qonghrats to power seems to have brought about a somewhat different political architecture, one that combined a diverse set of administrative techniques – both symbolic and practical – and new forms of social contracts with various groups, including the Turkmens.²⁴⁹ These policies enabled the Qonghrats to establish and maintain a balance of power over the territories under their control, thereby enabling the integration into the khanate of a highly heterogeneous human

²⁴⁵ G.E. Markov, *Ocherk istorii formirovaniia severnykh turkmen* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1961), p. 67.

²⁴⁶ Markov, *Ocherk istorii formirovaniia severnykh turkmen*, pp. 40–45; Yuri Bregel, "Uzbeks, Qazaqs and Turkmens", in Nicola Di Cosmo et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia. The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 234–235.

²⁴⁷ Martin B. Dickson, "Uzbek Dynastic Theory in the Sixteenth Century", in B.G. Gafurov et al. (eds.), *Trudy dvadtsat' piatogo mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov, Moskva 9–16 avgusta 1960* (Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1963), pp. 208–217.

²⁴⁸ Thomas Welsford, "The Disappearing Khanate", in Ferenc Csirkes and Benedek Péri (eds), *Mongols, Tatars and Turks in the Persianate World: Festschrift in Honor of István Vásáry* (Leiden and Boston: Brill) [forthcoming].

²⁴⁹ Paolo Sartori, "Seeing Like a Khanate: On Archives, Cultures of Documentation, and Nineteenth-Century Kh'ārazm" *Journal of Persian Studies* 9/2 (2016): 242; 251–252.

landscape and social geography, ranging from the lower reaches of the Syr-Darya River in the north right down into the sands of the Qara-Qum in the south.²⁵⁰ The ability to engage various actors in the negotiating process was an important resource that allowed the pre-colonial Muslim dynasty to succeed and to cope with various challenges of the time.

The Turkmen groups came to be a crucial element of this new political alignment. The large-scale irrigation projects initiated by the dynasty in the western and north-western margins of the Khorezmian oasis²⁵¹ played a crucial role in facilitating the settlement of various Turkmen groups such as the Yomuts, Chowdurs, Yemreli and Goklan on those lands and their further incorporation into the political and social landscape of the Khanate.²⁵² Soon, by the mid-19th century the Turkmens constituted up to 40,000 families (up to 200,000 individuals), or a quarter of the Khanate's population, with members of the Yomut tribal confederation alone making up more than half of that figure.²⁵³ One important role performed by the Turkmen was the provision of equestrian warriors for the Khivan army. The Turkmen – and especially Yomut – cavalry reportedly comprised the most battleworthy and efficient units of the Khivan army and engaged in all notable military campaigns undertaken by the Qonghrats.²⁵⁴ Turkmen warlords also played an important role in leading predatory raids into neighboring realms, thereby raising

²⁵⁰ Ulfatbek Abdurasulov, "The Aral Region and Geopolitical Agenda of the Early Qongrats" *Eurasian Studies* 14 (2016): 3–36.

²⁵¹ For an overview of the Qonghrats' irrigation activities in that area see Shioya, "Irrigation Policy of the Khanate of Khiva", pp. 115–122.

²⁵² Bregel', *Khorezmskie turkmeny*, pp. 25–39; idem, "The New Uzbek States: Bukhara, Khiva and Khoqand: c. 1750–1886", pp. 399–400.

²⁵³ See Bregel', *Khorezmskie turkmeny*, pp. 40–44; According to Bregel', in Khorezm the Yomuts during the 19th and early 20th century were represented mainly, if not exclusively, by the members of the main tribal branch called *Bayram-Shali*, which in turn was divided into four major tribes: Oshaq (*Ūshāq*), Okuz (*Ūkūz*), Orus-Koshchi (*Ūrūs-Qūchī*) and Salakh (*Ṣalāq*), see *ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁵⁴ Bregel, *Khorezmskie turkmeny*, pp. 40–44; Shioya, "Irrigation policy of the Khanate of Khiva", pp. 126–127.

revenue not only for themselves but also for the financially hard-pressed Qonghrat court itself.²⁵⁵

In providing these services, Turkmen leaders were not simply fulfilling their mandated requirements to the Qonghrat state. They were also seeking to bolster their own standing by developing personal bonds with members of the Khivan court. Such relationships were a crucial means for Turkmen leaders to consolidate their authority within the clan and beyond, conferring not just prestige – the granting of ceremonial robes and other formal privileges (*in 'ām va sarūpā*), for instance – but also more tangible rewards: a Turkmen leader who cultivated allies at the court was liable to receive preferential treatment in the division of booty, the granting of access to particularly fertile lands, and valuable fiscal privileges both for himself and for his subordinate tribesmen. Such provisions were particularly valuable given the liminal situation in which the majority of Khorezmian Turkmen found themselves: living in the area between the oasis and the steppe zones, the majority of them observed a “semi-nomadic” way of life, engaging in both cattle-breeding and agriculture; they were thus heavily dependent on the infrastructure of the Khanate’s agricultural oasis, such as irrigational canals and bazaars.²⁵⁶

Yuri Bregel, who authored one of the most comprehensive studies on the Turkmens of Khorezm, noted that despite being one of the major ethnic groups of the Khanate and possessing significant military resources in their hands, the Turkmen leaders were nevertheless not permitted to serve in the Khanate’s administration. This is an important observation, to be sure, but it raises the question as to whether the Turkmen chieftains actually aspired to assume such

²⁵⁵ Paolo Sartori has recently proposed that the Qonghrat dynasts utilized such raids as a means “to keep together the various, ethnically diverse constituents of the khanate’s political body”, see his “The Sovereign’s Brigands. Reflection on Forms of Governance in Central Asian History” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 40/3 (2020): 479; see also: Iu.M. Botiakov, *Alaman. Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie aspekty instituta nabega u Turkmen (seredina XIX – pervaiia polovina XX veka)*. (St. Petersburg: Kunstkamera, 2002).

²⁵⁶ Markov, *Ocherk istorii formirovaniia severnykh turkmen*, pp. 107–126.

office. Indeed, the actual status quo seems to have served the Turkmen well. They enjoyed autonomy in self-administration, and their indispensable position in the Khivan army secured them fiscal privileges and access to cheap agricultural manpower through a corvee system, which placed a heavy burden on the rest of the population. As a coda to this observation one may recall the episode which unfolded some years later in spring 1920: in the wake of a *coup d'état* that put an end to the Khanal regime, and to the Khanate of Khiva as a distinct state formation, the new republican authorities of the recently formed Khorezmian People Soviet Republic, which sought to be inclusive in flavor, allocated four seats in the newly elected government (Council of the People's Nazirs, or *Nāzirlar Kingashī*) – those of the second deputy of the government's chairman, as well as ministers (*Nāzir*) of the Social Affairs and of the Health – among the prominent Yomut tribal chieftains Qūch Muḥammad Khān, Ghulām 'Alī Pahlavān, and Shāh Murād Bakhshī, respectively. Strikingly, however, following the inauguration none of these chieftains chose to remain in Khiva and instead the very next day they all returned to their encampments, leaving their nominal representatives in Khiva.²⁵⁷ One may also recall in this same regard Qurbān Muḥammad Sardār (1857–1938), otherwise known as Junayd Khān, who despite becoming *de facto* ruler of the Khanate in the second half of 1918, with the power of dethroning or enthroning the rulers in Khiva, neither ascended to the khanal throne himself nor even assumed any prominent position in Khiva. Instead, he preferred to use his home village of Badrikent, deep in the Yomut encampments, as his residence and thence to govern the Khanate through various loyal appointees. Evidently, it was in their own familiar environment – both ecological and social – that the Turkmen leaders were best able to draw on resources and capital and, where they felt most comfortable exercising their authority.

Perhaps for this reason, most of the Yomut clans were very sensitive to any attempts by the Khivan authorities and, later, the

²⁵⁷ Yusupov, *Khāṭīralar*, fols. 294b–295b.

Russian colonial administration to extend control over their territories, and any such initiatives inevitably met with fierce resistance from the chieftains. This resistance often took the form of attacks on merchants, members of rival clans or, most frequently, the settled population of the neighboring settlements. Such raids were not necessarily undertaken for the purpose of gaining booty alone. They might equally function as a symbolic gesture, enabling clans to articulate their own voices, induce opponents or rivals to enter into negotiations, or simply to demonstrate their own power.²⁵⁸ Should the interests of various clans align with one another in their dealings with the Khivan metropole, meanwhile, said clans could coordinate their actions to fearsome effect, mobilizing *en masse* and presenting a real threat to the dynasty. This was what happened in the 1850s, for instance, when the Khivan ruler Muḥammad Amīn Khān (r. 1845–1855) sought to deprive the Yomut Turkmens of their prominent role in the Khivan army by replacing them with Afghanistani emigrés from the Jamshidi tribal group: in order to protect their interests, the various Yomut clans coordinated their response and were able to engineer one of the most severe political crises (1855–1859) in the history of the Khivan Khanate under Qongh-rats.²⁵⁹ Indeed, over the course of these events Yomut leaders played a direct or indirect role in the overthrow of at least three Khivan Khans, repeatedly thus making clear that the Yomuts were not to be trifled with.²⁶⁰ Such assertive – not to say rebellious – behavior by the Turkmens is well attested in Khivan sources, with numerous accounts of “bellicose Turkmens” plundering Khivan farmers, or of Khivan campaigns “to call to order” or “to punish” certain

²⁵⁸ In 1914, for instance, the Yomut chieftain of the Okuz clan Shāh Murād Bakhshī (d. 1920) raided various localities of the Khanate, for he found himself disadvantaged by the reconfiguration of power within the Okuz clan, which seems to have been conceived by rival Yomut chieftains in alliance with their supporters within the Khivan court, see further: Abdurasulov, “Konflikt kak resurs,” pp. 158–159.

²⁵⁹ Shioya, “Irrigation Policy of the Khanate of Khiva,” pp. 125–126.

²⁶⁰ Bregel, *Khorezmskie turkmeny*, pp. 200–219; Markov, *Ocherk istorii formirovaniia severnykh turkmen*, pp. 98–100.

“Turkmen insurgents”. When, therefore, we encounter mention in the sources about Khivan authorities being in conflict with the Turkmen, we need to understand that the authorities were in conflict not with *the whole* Turkmen population, as Lykoshin and other colonial author often sought to portray, but rather with *one or a few particular groups*, and furthermore that their conflict with said groups was liable to be a circumstantial and contingent one rather than the reflection of some permanent fundamental enmity.

One might be tempted when conceptualizing political relations in the Khanate to think simply in terms of a basic division between the Khivan metropole and a marginal Turkmen/Yomut periphery. Such a model, however, is of very limited heuristic value. The notion of a single Turkmen/Yomut “periphery” obscures the fact that there was in fact widespread variation among the Turkmen/Yomut lands: the southern areas known as the so-called *Bish-Qal’a* in fact constituted core lands of the Khanate, and were far more closely integrated with the center than those further afield in the lower reaches of Amu-Darya (known as the province of Ārāl). Similarly, there were vast cultural, linguistic, and societal differences between, say, the Yomuts and Ata Turkmen, or even between the Lakeside Yomuts and their kinsmen from around Gazavat and Takhta-Bazar known as the Upper Yomuts. This was a highly diverse world, and indeed it was its very diversity that bound it together in a web of mutually supportive relationships, with the Khanate of Khiva itself being the totality of these bonds. The “marginality” of the Turkmen was thus in a sense nothing more than an optical illusion: indeed, the Turkmen were every much as integral an element of the Khivan Khanate as were, say, the Uzbeks and the Sarts.

The Russian takeover of Khiva in 1873 did not put an end to this delicate equilibrium, but it did result in a certain recalibration of relations. With the establishment of the Russian protectorate, the Khivan authorities lost the power to initiate large-scale military campaigns, and Russia’s further military advance into Central Asia resulted in the Khanate’s being surrounded on all sides by territories under imperial rule, thereby constraining its scope for launching raids. Given that Turkmen groups had traditionally been the prime

architects and beneficiaries of such raids, this seems to have had a particularly serious impact on their economic standing. Deprived thus of a significant source of their livelihood, a number of Turkmen groups opted to leave the Khorezmian oasis and seek their fortunes elsewhere, while others chose to stay and adapt themselves to the new conditions that presented themselves.

But the situation was now complicated by the presence of the Russian authorities in the region. This was partly because the Russian agencies now presented an alternative power center, to which the local actors deemed it expedient to appeal when needed. Equally importantly, though, it was also because there existed a fundamental disjunct of power between St Petersburg, and Tashkent, and Petro-Aleksandrovsk, which became clear even in the very first years after the conquest.²⁶¹ The disjunct manifested itself in the fact that various agencies in the metropole and in the colony pursued distinct and sometimes mutually contradictory policies *vis-à-vis* the Khivan protectorate, to the extent that General Kolosovskii, the ADO Commandant in 1914–1916, came to the conclusion that “not only were there no clearly defined directives on how to deal with the Khivan Khanate, but on many occasions the directives of Military and Foreign Ministries [of Russia] appeared to be in complete disagreement with each other”.²⁶²

With the passage of time this disjunct became even greater. Things were further complicated by the fact that the Russian colonial officers who oversaw Khivan affairs were simultaneously pursuing two mutually exclusive ends. On the hand, they were to “preserve the dignity of his Serene Majesty the Khan of Khiva”, whose rule was sanctioned by “the Highest permission of the Emperor of whole-Russia”. By the terms of this instruction, they were expected to secure safety and the well-being in the Khanate, should there emerge any opposition to the Khan, including from the Turkmens,

²⁶¹ For more on this power disjunct, see: Abdurasulov and Sartori, “Neopredelenost’ kak politika”.

²⁶² V.P. Kolosovskii, *Ego Prevoskhoditel’stvu N.F. Efremovu, 31.01.1917*; O’zMA, f. I-461, op. 1, d. 1889-a, l. 120 ob.

the Russian colonial authorities were to side with the Khivan sovereign.²⁶³ On the other hand, however, the voices advocating the further truncation of the authority of two Russian protectorates in Central Asia – Bukhara and Khiva – became more evident by the end of the first decade of the 20th century.²⁶⁴ Such voices seemed to gain further strength with General A.V. Samsonov's assumption of the office of Turkestan Governor-General in 1909. An advocate of expanding the Turkestan administration's mandate, Samsonov was also keen to reduce the scope of sovereignty of the "semi-vassal" regimes of Bukhara and Khiva, not ruling out the possibility of their full annexation.²⁶⁵ As early as 1909 Samsonov reached out to the authorities in the metropole with a proposal to significantly reduce the authority of the Bukharan and Khivan regimes. The imperial authorities in St. Petersburg deemed this proposal at the time to be "premature", and opted instead for "preserving the current status quo" with regard to Russian policy towards its Central Asian protectorates.²⁶⁶ Despite his initial failure, Samsonov seems to have remained eager to continue in his endeavor.²⁶⁷ One of the strategies that the Russian administration in Turkestan seems to have used during these years was to showcase the failure of the current Khivan regime in governing over its realm. The Khivan authorities' complicated relations with some of the Turkmen groups, given the previous and ongoing controversies, came to be regarded by some members of the Turkestan administration as one of the principal arenas to showcase to upper echelons the vulnerability of the Khivan regime and its inability to govern over its subjects. One cannot help but

²⁶³ TsGIA StPb, f. 400, op. 262/912-915. 1909 g., *sviazka* 293, d. 90/77, ll. 65–68; cited from: Tukhtametov, *Rossia i Khiva*, p. 56.

²⁶⁴ A.Iu. Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*, p. 318.

²⁶⁵ Tukhtametov, *Rossia i Khiva*, pp. 54–55.

²⁶⁶ Tukhtametov, *Rossia i Khiva*, pp. 56–57; Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*, pp. 319–321.

²⁶⁷ A few years later, in 1913 Samsonov would initiate yet another attempt to truncate the authority of the Khanate, but, as previously, such measures were regarded as "inappropriate for the current moment", see further: Abdurasulov and Sartori, "Neopredelennost' kak politika", pp. 155–159.

notice an incremental alteration in Russian attitudes towards this matter. Accordingly, the Turkmen came to be increasingly regarded by the colonial administration as “proud stepsons of Khiva”,²⁶⁸ who were being oppressed – on the whole unjustly – by the Khivan authorities and whose long-held aspirations to assume Russian subjecthood should not be ignored any longer. In the meanwhile, the Khivan authorities’ treatment of these latter groups came to be increasingly criticized for lacking both justice and consistency.²⁶⁹

There may have been other reasons behind the Russian authorities’ changing attitude towards Khivan-Turkmen relations. Colonel Lobachevskii, who in 1911 was tasked with the compilation of a detailed and confidential survey of the Khivan Khanate, emphasized in his discussion of Khiva’s Turkmen population that this latter possessed a substantial military capacity.²⁷⁰ Should the Turkmen – he further noted – find themselves aligned alongside the Khivan authorities in a state of war against Russia, the united Khivan-Turkmen forces “could entail significant complications for the Russian troops”. Contemplating such a scenario, Lobachevskii proposed to take steps to prevent the emergence of a military coalition between the Khivan authorities and their Turkmen subjects.²⁷¹ Even though Lykoshin in his *Zapiska* criticizes the Khivan authorities for employing the *divide et impera* approach in their policies towards the Turkmen clans,²⁷² it seems that members of the Russian colonial administration were not averse to implementing a similar such strategy themselves.

²⁶⁸ N.S. Lykoshin, *G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 28.11.1912, no. 49; O’zMA, f. I-2, op. 1, d. 289, l. 179; also see *infra*: *Zanucka*, p. 146.

²⁶⁹ Samsonov, *G. Ministru Inostrannykh Del*, ll. 9–10 ob.; Lykoshin, *G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 28.09. 1912, no. 14, ll. 143–144 ob.; *idem*, *Raport G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 28.11.1912, no 53, l. 168 ob.

²⁷⁰ According to Lobachevskii’s estimations, when needed the Khivan Turkmen could present up to 30,000 armed horsemen, see his *Voenno-statisticheskoe opisanie*, p. 40.

²⁷¹ Lobachevskii, *Voenno-statisticheskoe opisanie*, p. 62.

²⁷² See: *Zanucka*, p. 164.

Lykoshin seems to have operated in full accord with the aforementioned expectations, endeavoring to reduce the sovereignty of the Khivan regime by portraying the latter as a failed state that lacked the political tools and authority to govern over its subjects, first and foremost the Turkmens. In his *Zapiska* he describes the Khivan attitude to the Turkmens in the following way:

In the Khanate, there is constantly underway a covert diplomatic agitation, which aims at calming the bellicose Turkmens and their [further] enslavement. This goal is being achieved by attracting some individuals from among the more compliant *katkhudās* – those who can be manipulated owing to their selfish interests – to the cause of the Khan's Government. Such a Turkmen chieftain, having gone over to the side of the [Khivan] Government, brings all his Turkmen [tribesmen] under [Khanal] authority, making them obey the government's demands. This is quite possible, given that a patriarchal way of life is still fully maintained among the Turkmens and the *katkhudās* enjoy unlimited influence among the popular masses.²⁷³

Here again we see an entire bricolage of cultural prejudices and clichés. Along the familiar tropes, Lykoshin ascribes unchallenged authority to the Turkmen chieftains or *katkhudās*. Of course, one should remember that Lykoshin did not have the benefit of access to later works of scholarship such as Yuri Bregel's *The Turkmens of Khorezm*, which compellingly demonstrate the fragmented and highly contingent authority that Turkmen chieftains wielded over their clans.²⁷⁴ Nevertheless, in arguing as he did Lykoshin disregarded much of the information gathered by his fellow officers just a few years earlier which he cited on other occasions. In the meantime, Colonel Lobachevskii noted in 1911 that although one may observe very strong kinship ties among the Khivan Turkmens,

²⁷³ See: *Занука*, p. 182.

²⁷⁴ Bregel, *Khorezmskie turkmeny*, pp. 164–170.

“each Turkmen has little obligation towards those who are in power, including the elders of his own clan”. Thus, he concluded, they obey their [elders’] orders only as insofar as these latter conform with their own interests.²⁷⁵ This observation echoed the sentiment in yet another survey, composed this time by the Russian colonial officers Girshfel’d and Galkin. “Turkmen tribal elites (*aksakals*, *biks*, *bakhshis*, and *khans* alike)”, the authors insist, “enjoy only limited authority among their kinsmen, and this absence of solo authority has been observable throughout all previous history”.²⁷⁶

Lykoshin’s notion that the Turkmen tribal elites enjoyed unchallenged authority among the kinsmen goes hand in hand with and influences a further assumption, namely that the Turkmen population together shared a single set of common interests and aspirations. This assumption in turn led Lykoshin to regard those chieftains who sought to improve the conditions of their kinsmen by making a deal with the Khivan authorities as nothing less than “the betrayers” of “the common Turkmen cause” (*obshche-turkenskoe delo*).²⁷⁷ As we make this observation, we are not of course denying that there may indeed have existed among the Khivan Turkmens a supra-tribal identity, one that we find referred to in local sources as *turkmanlik*.²⁷⁸ But when one examines more closely exactly what Lykoshin understands by ‘common Turkmen cause’, one sees that it is nothing more than an oversimplified and politicized idea that all Turkmens desire to resist the Khivan yoke and to secure Russian subjecthood.

Despite his presumption of a ‘common Turkmen cause’, Lykoshin in fact provides a wide array of data – statistical and ethnographic alike – emphasizing the sharp distinctiveness among the various Turkmen tribes, clans and even smaller groups, not only

²⁷⁵ Lobachevskii, *Voenno-statisticheskoe opisanie*, p. 52.

²⁷⁶ Girshfel’d, and Galkin, *Voenno-statisticheskoe opisanie Khivinskogo oazisa*, pt. 2, pp. 62–63.

²⁷⁷ *Занука*, pp. 182–183.

²⁷⁸ Allen Frank has recently made a compelling attempt to chart the Turkmens’ supra-tribal identities through one particular text that they could have read in their traditional school before the Soviet era: see Frank, “Turkmen Literacy and Turkmen Identity before Soviets”, pp. 286–315.

in the matter of their respective economic activities or their stances towards Khivan authorities, but also in a wide range of matters such as marriage rituals, blood feuds, and the role of women within the family or clan. Whether consciously or otherwise, however, Lykoshin opts to overlook such ethnographic variations when advancing his chosen argument.

How, then, are we to explain the prejudices that inform Lykoshin's account? I would suggest that we can trace in Lykoshin's writings two distinct impulses, both of which were shared by many colonial officers. One is profoundly modernist, which tends to ascribe coherence and stability to the highly volatile and contingent political dynamics that one might encounter. The other is based on somewhat racist assumptions that confer upon ethnic and tribal groups certain (historically and racially) predetermined qualities. For instance, in one of his reports to the Governor-General of Turkestan, Lykoshin stated:

The Turkmens live under worse conditions than all the other ethnicities of the Khanate; in light of historical conditions and their racial peculiarities (*po svoim rasovym osobennostiam*), they have found it more difficult than other entities to get accustomed to the Khivan [authorities'] mostly unjust approach towards them.²⁷⁹

This is not the only such observation by Lykoshin, and in his *Zapiska* he expresses a similar sentiment.

The Khivans try to harm the Turkmens on every occasion; they do not recognize their [=the Turkmens'] rights as they do with regard to the other [ethnic] groups of the Khanate, and they treat them [=the Turkmens] with scorn, like savages ...²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Lykoshin, *G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 28.09.1912, no. 14, l. 143 ob.

²⁸⁰ *Занука*, p. 193.

Lykoshin's writings seem to have played a major role in the emergence of a discourse that depicted Khivan-Turkmen relations as a binary opposition, in which the Turkmens were regarded as "the proud stepsons of Khiva", "stern people, yet "naïve and honest," and the Khivan authorities as inherently cruel and despotic. In attempting to liberate the Turkmens from "the Khivan yoke", Lykoshin did not want to admit that he completely deprived them of their agency, portraying them as people acting within the limits of prescribed norms and modes of behavior.

Lykoshin's views were appreciated by his superiors among the Turkestan authorities and clearly affected the subsequent decision-making process. This was not so much because people consciously revered Lykoshin's expertise as because the individuals in charge, including Governor-General Samsonov, were already preoccupied with similar ideas, and so were pleased to find their opinions substantiated by a man on the ground. It was perhaps for that reason that the Turkestan Governor-General in his letters to the highest imperial officials would echo his subordinate's tone in speaking about "the primordial liberty of nomads [=Turkmens]", and "the necessity to meet the Turkmens' fair demands" since they "are being repeatedly harmed by the Khivan officials without reason".²⁸¹

Such sweeping judgments had an impact not only on conventional perceptions about the Turkmens in Khiva but also on political developments over both the short and the long run. Lykoshin and his superior clearly misjudged the level of "naivety" that they were so keen to ascribe to the Turkmens. As we have noted above, the Yomut chieftains had never been merely passive observers of ongoing processes but were instead highly responsive towards any alteration in this dynamic of power relations. It is thus very likely that the Turkmens similarly noticed the changing attitudes of Russian officials, and it is little surprise that they increasingly tried to

²⁸¹ Samsonov, *G. Ministru Inostrannykh Del*. 11.11.1913, ll. 9 ob.–10.

tailor the information they delivered to the Russian authorities so as to comply with people's vested interests. Accordingly, whenever there took place an incident in which the Turkmens were involved, be it an ordinary raid or a larger-scale armed skirmish, the Turkmen chieftains would justify their actions with reference to the injustices that they had suffered at the hands of the Khivan authorities. The latter, in the meantime, also sought to exploit the circumstances for their own benefit. In particular, the Khivan court invoked the challenge of executing the program of reforms that had been drawn up at the insistence of the Russian authorities²⁸² as a pretext for extending political control and imposing fiscal burdens upon those Turkmen tribes that had so far escaped such obligations. Such endeavors however were complicated by the ongoing confrontations between various factions and individuals at the court, which became more evident over the months preceding and following Sayyid Islām Khvāja's murder.

In December 1912, just a few months after Lykoshin finished his *Zapiska*, a certain Shāmmī-Kal,²⁸³ a leader of a relatively small group of Okuz clan of Yomut Turkmens, launched a series of raids on settlements in the agricultural oasis.²⁸⁴ This move did not occur simply out of thin air. As a formal pretext for his action Shāmmī-Kal used the request of one of his kinsmen, whose relative, a certain Turkmen named Mamed-Kaka (or Murād Qahqa), was assassinated, – in a very brutal way, or so it was stated – by the Khivan militia.²⁸⁵ The real motives behind Shāmmī-Kal's behavior evidently lay deeper. The Khivan chronicler Laffasī, for instance, argues that Shāmmī-Kal's rebellion was instigated by certain conflicting factions at the Khivan court, who sought to use the Turkmen

²⁸² On the reform program and the Russian authorities' participation in its implementation, see Abdurasulov and Sartori, "Neopredelennost' kak politika", pp. 118–164.

²⁸³ According to Nepesov, writing in the Soviet period, this chieftain's full name was Shammi-Kal Qlich Humash ughlī, see: Nepesov, *Pobeda sovetskogo stroia v Severnom Turkmenistane*, p. 65.

²⁸⁴ Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia*, pp. 180–181.

²⁸⁵ Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskie turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 50.

insurgency as a tool against each other.²⁸⁶ Shāmmī-Kal, however, himself seems to have been pursuing his own interest, trying to enhance his influence among his kinsmen by means of defending the kinsmen's desecrated honor and by making use of the rivalry at the Khivan court. (Looking ahead, it is perhaps worth mentioning that, although he met with defeat at the hands of Khivan troops, subsequent events would indicate that he in fact managed to achieve some of his goals. Just a year later we find him not as the leader of some relatively small group²⁸⁷ but rather as the chieftain of a substantial part of the Okuz clan, known as Qāra Okuz.²⁸⁸) In the meantime, by way of response to this move by Shāmmī-Kal, the Khivan Khan dispatched a party of troops under the command of Shaykh Nazar Bāy Yasavūlbāshī, one of the *Divanbegi*-ite brothers. The latter was renowned, according to Lykoshin, for his ability to "hit the Turkmen [warlords] mercilessly and pacify them whenever needed by bestowing them with precious presents".²⁸⁹ The Khivan troops laid siege to Shāmmī-Kal's redoubt (*qūrghān*) located in the vicinity of Diraqli.²⁹⁰ There followed a tense armed face-off. The Khivan authors, who provide detailed account of the siege – which lasted for 46 days –, clearly testify to the participation of

²⁸⁶ Laffasī, *Ta'rīkh-i gulshan*, fol. 31a; Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskii turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 52.

²⁸⁷ According to information collected among the Turkmens in 1920s, at the moment the conflict started Shammī-Kal was nothing more than "an armed and wealthy clan member", Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskii turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 50.

²⁸⁸ According to some evidence, the very division of the Okuz clan into two parts (Āq Okuz and Qāra Okuz) was achieved by Shāmmī-Kal in no small part due to support he was provided by his allies in the Khivan court: see Kolosovskii, *Raport G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 08.01.1915; cited from Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskii turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 55.

²⁸⁹ Lykoshin N.S., *Raport G. Turkestanskomu General-gubernatoru*, 04.01.1913, no. 4; O'zMA, f. I-2, op. 1, d. 305, l. 8.

²⁹⁰ Laffasī, *Ta'rīkh-i gulshan*, fols. 31a–31b; Babaniyazov, *Isfandiyār Khān davrinīg vāqi'alārī*, fol. 8b.

other Yomut chieftains on both sides of the conflict.²⁹¹ Like on other occasions, following a series of skirmishes the parties entered into negotiations. The Russian authorities used this incident as a pretext to launch a military intervention into the Khanate's affairs. In accordance with instruction from Tashkent, Lykoshin together with a Cossack escort proceeded to the place of conflict.

On the face of it, it looked as if it was the Russian intervention that facilitated the resolution of the conflict: a treaty was signed, and several leaders of the rebel party went to Khiva as voluntary hostages. Yet, the involvement of the ADO Commandant seems to have had far-reaching ramifications for subsequent developments. Although Governor-General Samsonov stated that Lykoshin was following his own directives, according to which "his [=Lykoshin's] paramount task was to ensure by all possible means (*vo chto by to ni stalo*) that the Khivan authorities would meet the Turkmens' fair demands",²⁹² he nevertheless had to admit that "it was from those actions undertaken by the ADO Commandant [Lykoshin] that the Turkmens came to realize ... that the Russian troops would not come to aid the Khivan troops [in the event that a further conflict sparks up]."²⁹³ Such testimony, coming as it does from someone at the apex of the colonial hierarchy in Turkestan, is tellingly reflective of a massive shift in Russia's policy towards the Khivan Khanate. The further involvement of the ADO Commandant in the subsequent negotiation process between the Khivan authorities and Yomut leaders about the fate of the rebel Shāmmī Kal seems to have further escalated Khivan-Turkmen relations.²⁹⁴

Karpov and Betser, the authors of arguably the most comprehensive study on the history of Khivan-Turkmen relations, provide the following attestation of the Russian officials' stance in the

²⁹¹ Laffasī, *Ta'rīkh-i gulshan*, fos. 31a–34b; Babaniyazov, *Isfandiyār Khān davrinīg vāqi'alārī*, fols. 10a–10b; see also Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskie turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 51.

²⁹² Samsonov, G. *Ministru Inostrannykh Del. 11.11.1913*, l. 9 ob.

²⁹³ Samsonov, G. *Ministru Inostrannykh Del. 11.11.1913*, l. 9 ob.

²⁹⁴ Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskie turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 52.

afore-mentioned conflict, by way of putting it in metaphorical terms: “once they had stepped in on this trope”, they write, Lykoshin and other members of the colonial authorities in Turkestan “had no other choice but to walk it through up to the very end. By saying “A” [in 1913], they [=the Russian authorities] soon needed to say “B” and “C” [and further letters all the way] until by 1916 [when a mass Turkmen uprising took place] they would reach the final symbol of the alphabet”.²⁹⁵

Indeed, the outcome of this policy would soon become evident. As far as Khivan-Turkmen relations were concerned, the consequences became clear in late 1914, soon after Lykoshin was promoted to the position of Governor of the Samarkand Province (while his superior General Samsonov was transferred to the European Eastern Front of World War One, where he died on the battlefield in Prussia). Lykoshin’s successor as the ADO Commandant, General Kosolovskii, found that the situation which he encountered in the Khivan Khanate offered rich scope for him to exercise his authority and ambitions.²⁹⁶ Soon after his arrival, yet another collision unfolded between two parts of the Okuz Yomut clan, known as the Āq Okuz and Qāra Okuz. It looked like a conventional conflict between competing clans, yet in the light of the fragmentation of the political landscape in the Khanate and unparalleled involvement of the Russian colonial officers, this development soon would bring about one of the most severe political crises seen in the Khanate for over 100 years, namely the Turkmen uprising of 1915–1916.²⁹⁷ What made thus uprising so momentous was that, just as Lykoshin and others in the Turkestan administration had envisaged might one day occur, the majority of the Yomut clans briefly made common cause

²⁹⁵ Karpov and Betser, *Khivinskii turkmeny i konets Kungradskoi dinastii*, p. 52. The implication here is that once the Russian authorities themselves intervened in the Khivan-Turkmen tensions, whether they wished to or not they became a co-belligerent and thereby acquired responsibility for further ramifications.

²⁹⁶ See: Kolosovskii, *Ego Prevoskhoditel’sstvu N.V. Efremovu*, 31.01.1917, ll. 103 ob.–113.

²⁹⁷ For a more detailed account of these events, see Abdurasulov, “Konflikt kak resurs”, pp. 141–186.

under the command of a single leader, a certain Qurbān Muḥammad Sardār, who would later gain prominence – and notoriety – under the name of Khān Junayd.