



11. Pagoda-style minaret with dragons, Xian mosque. Photo by Camilla Foltz.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Islamization of the Silk Road

No religious tradition in world history favored trade as much as did Islam. The Prophet Muhammad himself was a businessman by profession. While in his twenties he became employed by a wealthy merchant woman of Mecca, Khadija, and made his reputation by successfully carrying out a trade mission to Syria; Khadija married him soon after.

Sometime around 610 of the common era, Muhammad, who liked to spend time alone meditating in the mountains outside Mecca, began hearing voices during the course of these retreats. At first he began to doubt his own sanity, but Khadija persuaded him that these voices might be divine in nature and should be listened to. Gradually Muhammad came to believe he was receiving revelations from God, calling upon him to “rise and warn” his fellow Meccans that the time had come to mend their ways.

Mecca was a desert town with little to subsist on apart from its trade. Successful merchants must have been its wealthiest inhabitants. Many of the revelations Muhammad received dealt with social injustice, which was

clearly a problem in Mecca at that time. His message found a growing audience of sympathetic ears, while it increasingly alienated the social classes who were the target of his criticism. Before long certain powerful residents of Mecca were making life difficult for Muhammad and his followers.

In 622 the citizens of Yathrib, a town some two hundred twenty miles to the north of Mecca, were involved in factional disputes they could not resolve. Hearing of Muhammad's reputation for fairness and piety, they invited him to come and arbitrate. He accepted. Sending most of his followers ahead of him, the Prophet of Islam put his affairs in order and finally left his hometown, an event known to Muslims as the *hijra*, or migration, which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

Once in Yathrib, the Muslims were not only no longer persecuted, they enjoyed special status. From their new power base they launched raids (Ar. *razzia*) on Meccan-bound caravans, at the same time enriching their own treasury while inflicting damage on their former persecutors. After several battles with the Meccans, the Muslims were able to negotiate the right to return to Mecca for the traditional Arabian pilgrimage to the sacred *ka'ba* stone; by 628 Mecca was under Muslim control.

Raiding caravans was an established part of the economic life of Arabia. The only rule was that one couldn't raid clan members or groups with whom one had made a non-aggression pact. With the successes of the Muslims growing from year to year, eventually all the tribes of the Arabian peninsula sent emissaries to Muhammad in order to seek such pacts. Their professions of loyalty were described by later Muslim writers as "submission," which in Arabic is *islam*. Small wonder that these sources, and the non-Muslim histories based on them, interpret this as meaning all the Arabian tribes had accepted the new religion.

Understanding this term "submission" in its more restricted literal sense, however, more easily explains what happened upon the Prophet's death in 632: Most of the Arabian tribes rebelled. Later Muslim sources refer to these as rebellions of "apostasy." A simpler interpretation would be that the rebel parties simply saw their nonaggression pacts as having been rendered null and void by the Prophet's passing.

The Muslims immediately chose a successor, or caliph (from Middle Pers. *khalifa*), Abu Bakr, under whose leadership the various

Arab tribes were forced to resubmit. Since the Arabian economy required the component of raiding, and since according to the nonaggression pacts no one in Arabia could legitimately be raided, the Muslims were forced to launch forays beyond the Arabian peninsula into Byzantine and Persian territory. Their successes in defeating the armies of both empires probably surprised many of the Muslims as much as it did their imperial enemies.

It is important to recognize the economic aspect of Muslim expansion, driven by the ancient Arabian tradition of raiding. While in hindsight both Muslims and non-Muslims have read into this early expansion a large element of religious zeal, the Arab armies of the time were simply doing what they were naturally acculturated to do, what the economic conditions of their homeland had always constrained them to do. What had changed was that, for the first time, all the Arab groups of the peninsula had excluded for themselves the possibility of raiding other Arab groups. They were forced, therefore, to raid elsewhere. Their new religious self-concept may indeed have inspired them by giving divine meaning to their increasing successes, but other factors were at work as well.

Iranians, in the form of Medes, Achemenians, Parthians, and Sasanians, had been vying with Athenian, Seleucid, and Roman Greeks for hegemony in western Asia for over a millennium. By the seventh century both the Sasanian Persian and Byzantine Greek empires were exhausted and decadent. Neither treated their subject peoples in Mesopotamia, Syria, or Egypt with anything that could be called benevolence. In many locations townspeople threw open the gates to the Arabs and welcomed them as liberators. The Muslims were, in fact, no more foreign in most of the lands they conquered than had been the previous rulers, and at first they were less exploitative.

By the 660s, however, the ruling Arab family, the Umayyads, had set themselves up in Damascus in very much the mold of the Byzantine governors they had dislodged. Throughout the subsequent decades non-Muslims came to chafe under the new regime. Many Arab Muslims, furthermore, resented the imperial manner and "un-Islamic" lifestyles of the Umayyads, many of whom had taken to drinking and debauchery in the best Roman tradition.

But the group which was to bring about the Umayyads' downfall and, in doing so, forever change the very nature of Islam as a cultural tradition was the non-Arabs who chose to adopt the Islamic religion.

Initially and throughout the Umayyad period, the Arabs had seen Islam as a religion belonging to them; their subjects, likewise, referred to Islam as "the Arab religion" (*al-din al-'arab*). The Qur'an enjoined Muslims to spread Muslim *rule* throughout the world but laid down no requirement to spread the faith itself. The original impulse of holy war (*jihad*) was that no Muslim should be constrained to live under the rule of infidels. Once a given locality agreed to submit to Muslim authority and pay the poll tax (*jizya*) levied on protected communities (*dhimmis*, usually "peoples of the Book," i.e., Christians and Jews), there was no further need for coercion on either side.

In fact, Arab Muslims had strong reasons *not* to want non-Arabs to join the faith, since conversion directly affected both their sources of income and the spread of its distribution among Muslims. Conversely, there were numerous reasons why non-Muslims might wish to join the ruling group, which could most obviously be symbolized by adopting their faith. Despite some apparent resistance from the Arab elite, by the early eighth century non-Arab converts were probably beginning to outnumber Arab Muslims.

Islam had attempted to eliminate class and racial distinctions, but even during the Prophet's lifetime this goal was never met. Early converts and their descendants often felt entitled to greater status and privilege than later converts, and members of aristocratic families never forgot who came from humble ones. Tribal and clan loyalties affected government appointments and led to rivalries.

Often these rivalries developed power bases in garrison towns where particular factions were dominant. Local governors, therefore, usually had more or less personal armies at their ready disposal. In areas where the Arabs were quartered among non-Arab majority populations, there was increasing pressure from converts to be treated on equal footing with Arab Muslims.

The problem was that a non-Arab, even after converting to Islam, had no tribal affiliation which could provide him an identity within Arab society. A solution to this was devised whereby an Arab Muslim could

take a non-Arab convert under his wing as a "client" (*mawla*), making the convert a sort of honorary tribal member. Of course, such clients were at the mercy of the individual who sponsored them.

Over time this inequality between Arab and non-Arab Muslims became a major pretext for various parties disaffected with Umayyad rule. Not surprisingly it was in eastern Iran, at the fringes of Umayyad power, that a rebel movement capable of overthrowing the central government and completely reshaping Muslim society took place.

In addition to complaints about the un-Islamic character of the Umayyad elite and the inequalities between Arab and non-Arab Muslims, the anti-Umayyad movement could draw on the issue of the very legitimacy of Umayyad rule. The first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiya, had assumed power by refusing to recognize the selection of the Prophet's nephew and son-in-law, Ali, as fourth caliph. A significant minority of Muslims felt that leadership should be sought in charismatic authority passed down through the Prophet's line. For the "partisans of Ali" (*shi'at Ali*), the Umayyads (and indeed the first three caliphs) had been usurpers from the outset.

All of these antigovernment impulses came together in the so-called Abbasid revolution of 749 to 751, in which a Khurasan-based Muslim army rallied behind an Iranian general, Abu Muslim, in the name of an Arab descendant of the Prophet's uncle Abbas. The rebels succeeded in wresting power from the Umayyads, moved the capital to Mesopotamia, and began setting up a new Islamic administration on the Sasanian imperial model. The new ministers and functionaries were overwhelmingly Iranian, often recent converts from Zoroastrianism or Christianity or, in the case of the influential Barmak family from Balkh, from Buddhism. In 762 the Caliph Mansur built a new capital at Baghdad (Pers. "given by God") and commented that this would put Muslims in touch "with lands as far off as China."¹

"RELIGIOUS" REBELLIONS IN IRAN AND CENTRAL ASIA

During the first half of the eighth century, Muslim armies repeatedly attempted to assert and maintain their authority over the easternmost

parts of the Iranian world, Sogdiana and Bactria. Following the pattern of the Arab tribes at the time of the Prophet, local rulers would "submit" when overwhelmed and then "apostatize" again as soon as they thought they could get away with it. Some, like the Sogdian king Tughshada, did this several times.

Like the Chinese, Iranians have long considered theirs to be the greatest and most ancient of civilizations. For many Iranians, being conquered by the Arabs, a people they had always considered barbaric, was and remains the greatest single trauma in the history of their nation. The Iranian national epic, the *Shah-nama* ("Book of Kings"), though compiled in the tenth century by a Muslim poet for a Muslim patron, portrays the Arab conquest of Iran as a sort of final and ultimate tragedy.

Because the Zoroastrian priesthood, the magi, were so directly identified with the ruling house throughout most of the Sasanian period, the fall of the dynasty inevitably meant the fall of the priestly class. This did not mean, however, that Iranian religion in other forms could not provide a rallying focus for resistance to Arab rule.

In Sogdiana a resistance movement took shape in 777 around a figure known as Muqanna', or "the Veiled One," a self-declared prophet whose followers, like the Manichaeans, wore white robes. According to Narshakhi, a Sogdian Muslim writing a century later, Muqanna' said of himself: "Do you know who I am? I am your lord and lord of all the world. . . . I am the one who showed myself to people as Adam, then in the form of Noah, also in the form of Abraham, Moses, then in the guise of Jesus, Muhammad the prophet, in the guise of Abu Muslim, and now in this guise which you see. . . . I have the power to be in any guise I wish to show."² His missionaries distributed letters which read: "Verily al-Muqanna' has strength, power, glory, and proof. Accept me and realize that I have dominion. Glory and omnipotence are mine. There is no other God but me. He who follows me will go to Paradise, but he who does not accept me will rest in Hell."³

Narshakhi writes that in Sogdiana, "most of the villages accepted the faith of Muqanna'" and that the Muslims were "impotent" before them. The movement was so successful in Central Asia, he writes, that the caliph in Baghdad "feared that there was a danger that Islam would

be lost and the religion of Muqanna' would spread throughout the entire world."⁴

Like many successful religious figures, Muqanna' may have been a master illusionist. When begged by a crowd to reveal himself, he had assistants direct sunlight into the mob by use of mirrors, in order to dazzle them. Many afterward claimed they had seen God. When after nine years of struggle the Muslim armies finally cornered Muqanna' in his fortress stronghold, he told his followers that he would go up to heaven and bring down angels to help them, then threw himself into a fire. Narshakhi states that in his time Muqanna's followers still followed their faith in secret. "Their religion is such," he says, "that they neither pray nor fast, nor do they wash after sexual intercourse." He goes on to accuse them of promiscuity: "They say that a woman is like a flower; [no matter] who smells it, nothing is detracted from it."⁵

The single most effective anti-Muslim resistance movement in Iran proper, which lasted from around 816 to 837, was waged in the region south of the Caspian Sea by a sect known as the *Khurram-din*, or "Happy Religion." Led by a prophetic figure named Babak, the *Khurram-diniyya* were a group descended from a sixth-century social reform movement known as Mazdakism, which enjoyed a period of official favor under the Sasanian Emperor Kavad from 488 to 531 but was brutally crushed under his son and successor, Khusraw I.

The Mazdakites were a sort of proto-communist sect which opposed the possession of private property, including wives. Following the public execution of Babak, which was particularly drawn out and grisly, the movement ceased to be a political force, but continued a secret existence while professing Islam and may still survive today.⁶

ISLAM AND TRADE IN THE EASTERN LANDS

As with any case of mass cultural conversion, the Islamization of Central Asia was a complex process which occurred on more than one level. The first, and most visible level, was the spread of political power. It is worth noting that the spread of a particular religion's rule is not identical with the spread of faith, although historians have often written as if it were.

Muslim rule over the western half of the Silk Road came fairly early and was established, albeit through a period of false starts and occasional reversals, by the mid-eighth century. Muslims thereafter controlled much of trans-Asian trade, which became the second major factor in the Islamization of Central Asian culture. Gradually a third factor, the influence of charismatic Muslim preachers, entered into the process.

The reality of Muslim rule could no longer be reasonably ignored once the numerous eighth-century attempts to rally behind local, non-Islamic religious figures had all failed. Politics was therefore an initial influence encouraging Central Asians to abandon their native cultural traditions and join the growing world culture of Islamic civilization. It appears, however, that only local rulers, especially those who had raised arms against the Muslims, were ever subjected to the convert-or-die alternative that has so long been the stereotype characterizing the spread of Islam. Other people, at least at first, would have embraced the faith of their new rulers for other reasons, in certain cases no doubt spiritual ones.

One of the most commonly cited incentives to religio-cultural conversion is the pursuit of patronage. Anyone directly dependent on the government for his livelihood might sense advantages in joining the cultural group of his patrons and accepting the norms and values of that ruling group. To a large extent, converts to Islam do appear to have held onto their preconquest positions, and being a Muslim increased one's chances of attaining a new or better one.

A second and probably greater influence affecting Islamization was the Muslim domination of commercial activity. A businessman could feel that becoming a Muslim would facilitate contacts and cooperation with other Muslim businessmen both at home and abroad; he would also benefit from favorable conditions extended by Muslim officials and from the Islamic laws governing commerce.

The presence of Muslim rule and the increasing Muslim dominance of trade meant that Islamization came first in the urban areas along the Silk Road and only in later centuries spread to the countryside. The gradual Islamization of the nomadic Turkic peoples of Central and Inner Asia was at first directly tied to their increasing participation in the oasis-

based Silk Road trade in the tenth century,⁷ accelerated by the political activities of three Turkic Muslim dynasties—the Qara-khanids, the Ghaznavids, and the Seljuks—and supplemented by the proselytizing efforts of Muslim missionaries.⁸

The third major factor accounting for the Islamization of the Silk Road, which follows those of politics and economics, is assimilation. Whatever the reasons for one's converting to Islam, Islamization occurs most profoundly (and irrevocably) among the succeeding generation, since the convert's children in principle will be raised within the father's new community, not his original one.⁹ Furthermore, although a Muslim man may marry a non-Muslim woman, Islamic law requires that the children of a mixed marriage be raised as Muslims. However, in light of our remarks in chapter 1 on women's roles in religious education, it may be safe to assume that aspects of pre-Islamic local religion survived through transmission by non-Muslim wives of Muslims.

Central Asians of the countryside, being less directly affected by the factors just described, held onto their Iranian (usually agriculturalist) or Turkic (usually pastoral nomadic) native religious traditions longer than did their urban counterparts. Gradually, though, the same influences were felt throughout the rural areas. An additional and even more significant Islamicizing influence especially on the pastoral peoples came through the activities of Sufi shaykhs, who took it upon themselves to spread Islam to the remotest areas. Their influence stemmed largely from their personal charisma, which often made them the authoritative sources for the religion even above and beyond the Qur'an, *hadith* (stories about the prophet), or Islamic law.

It was the shaykh's own personal interpretations of the Islamic message that formed the basis of the faith as the pastoral folk heard it. Often these personal interpretations were accommodating towards preexisting local beliefs and practices, leading to the development of "popular" expressions of Islam which could deviate significantly from the normative tradition emanating from the cities. In some ways local religion in Central Asia, whether of the Iranian or Turkic variety, never really disappeared. Rather, it acquired Islamic meanings, interpretations, and appearances.

THE FATE OF ZOROASTRIANISM AND BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

By the time of the Arab conquest in the middle to late seventh century CE, those elements of Sogdian religiosity most noticed and commented on by Muslim writers—such as fire worship and the exposure of corpses—were elements modern scholars normally associate with Zoroastrianism. This is in contrast to the Muslim accounts of the conquest of Sind, located in coastal NW India, where local religiosity appears to have remained strongly Buddhist-oriented. But even in the Muslim accounts of Central Asia, we see aspects of local culture which do not mesh entirely with the canonical Zoroastrianism of Sasanian Iran.

Narshakhi comments that in his day there were mosque doors in Bukhara which bore images with the faces scratched out. He explains that these doors had been taken by lower-class converts to Islam from the suburban villas of the unconverted rich, each of whose gate bore the image of a patron idol.

In contrast to this example, Narshakhi elsewhere provides evidence of more recognizably “Zoroastrian” practice. He relates that upon the death of Tughshada—the eighth-century Sogdian ruler whose “submission” to Islam was so clearly political—the royal servants “removed his flesh and brought his bones to Bukhara.”¹⁰

Other cases of the Sogdians’ use of iconography incompatible with both canonical Zoroastrianism and Islam can be seen in their burial customs. While, like the Sasanians, Central Asian Iranians exposed their dead to have their bones picked clean by vultures, unlike the Zoroastrians of the Iranian plateau they then buried the bones in clay ossuaries decorated with figures.¹¹

Accounts of Sogdian merchants and their trading communities along the Silk Road eastward into China variously identify them as having Buddhist or Zoroastrian practices. While Sogdians of both faiths may well have been represented within these expatriate communities, the lines need not be so clearly drawn, for as we have seen, the Sogdians’ pool of religious beliefs and practices could include elements of both tradi-

tions. In addition, the balance of elements likely differed among various Sogdian communities or even individuals.

As Sogdiana became administratively incorporated into the *dar al-islam*, the Sogdians came to assimilate themselves into the broader Persian cultural sphere, adopting Persian in preference to their original tongue and becoming increasingly identified as Persians. The revival of Zoroastrian letters in the ninth century, which came as a reaction to the mass conversions of Zoroastrians to Islam in Iran, probably improved communication of the institutional form of the religion to those Central Asians who had not yet turned to Islam. Zoroastrians were usually classified as a “protected” (*dhimmi*) community in Central Asia as in Iran, and in Samarqand the Zoroastrian community was entrusted with the maintenance of the water piping system in lieu of paying the *jizya*, the poll tax levied on non-Muslims.¹²

From the seventh century Chinese sources make increasing reference to Zoroastrian communities there. Many Zoroastrians appear to have fled eastward along the Silk Road after the Muslim conquest of Iran, following in the steps of Peroz, son of the last Sasanian emperor Yazdigard III, who was welcomed at the T’ang court at Ch’ang-an as the “King of Persia” and made a general in the imperial guard. Peroz was accompanied by many refugees, who were allowed to build fire temples and practice their faith.

As late as the Mongol period, Zoroastrian exile communities are mentioned as flourishing in China. Zoroastrianism is not a missionary religion, and these communities do not appear to have included local converts, but very likely they included Zoroastrians of Central Asian origin in addition to the refugees and merchants from Iran proper. Numerous T’ang period temples at Ch’ang-an, Lo-yang, K’ai-feng, and elsewhere appear to have been Zoroastrian. Popular Chinese tales from the T’ang period attest to the familiarity of the Chinese population with the figure of the Zoroastrian merchant.¹³

Thus, while we can make certain qualified assumptions about the presence of a recognizably “canonical” Zoroastrianism to the east of Iran in post-Sasanian times, attempts to categorize the Iranian-inhabited Central Asian lands of Sogdiana and adjacent territories as specifically

"Zoroastrian" in any period are unwarranted. On the other hand, religious belief and practice among the Iranians of Central Asia has always had many elements in common with that of Iranians farther west, a truth which holds through the present day.

Despite the Muslims' special aversion to Buddhism as an "idol-worshipping" religion inferior to the religions "of the Book," there is evidence of some Buddhist survivals into the Muslim period. The Barmak family, furthermore, which gave the early Abbasid government many of its most powerful and effective administrators, was originally a family of hereditary Buddhist priests.

The Barmaks controlled a monastery known as Naw Bahar ("new spring" in Persian, a *faux ami* derived from the Sanskrit *nava vihara*, or "new temple") near Balkh, which appears to have been the center of a network of monasteries dispersed throughout Iran.¹⁴ It has been suggested that the Barmaks' conversion to Islam robbed the eastern lands of a major potential anti-Muslim rallying force, thereby facilitating Islamization in those regions.¹⁵ However, after the Abbasids executed Abu Muslim just three years after the Iranian general had led their revolution to success, widespread rumors of his reincarnation arose, pointing to a survival of Buddhist belief among the general population.¹⁶

The best known of the classical Muslim historians, Tabari, mentions Buddhist idols being brought from Kabul to Baghdad in the late ninth century.¹⁷ Narshakhi gives some interesting information pertaining to Bukhara. He states that at the bazaar adjoining the Makh mosque—which appears to have been a Buddhist temple that the Sasanians had turned into a fire temple before the Muslims came and transformed it once again—a twice-annual fair was held where 50,000 dirhams' worth of Buddhist idols were sold.¹⁸ Another Muslim historian, Ibn Hawkal, writes that in the tenth century, wooden animal figures were for sale in Samarqand.¹⁹

The Samanids, an Iranian Muslim dynasty which took over many formerly Buddhist lands in Central Asia, seem to have borrowed certain influences into their architecture, such as the four-archway plan of the religious schools, the *madrasas*, which developed during their reign. In fact, the very idea of the *madrasas* themselves may have been absorbed

from the Buddhist schools, since these institutions first appear in this part of the Muslim world.

Farther east, where Muslim power took longer to consolidate and Buddhism survived longer as a result, similar patterns can be observed. Aurel Stein in the course of his excavations in the Tarim Basin discovered an early Turkish Muslim shrine purported to be the tomb of four imams, but which he determined had originally been a Buddhist monument.²⁰ Another such shrine in the Tarim region is mentioned in the sixteenth-century Muslim hagiography *History of the Uwaysis*, which contains a legend about a sufi named Muhibb-i Kuhmar ("Lover of the Mountain Snake") and a holy snake, apparently modeled on a Buddhist snake story connected with the philosopher Nagarjuna.²¹

THE LATER DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH TRADE NETWORKS

Jews certainly participated in the Silk Road trade networks which linked the Roman Mediterranean with Han China in classical times. During the Muslim period Jewish traders known as Radanites (Ar. *al-radaniyya*, perhaps from Pers. *rah-dan*, "one who knows the way") held a privileged status, which allowed them to move freely between the Muslim and Christian worlds, but the origins of the Radanite system must go back at least several centuries prior to the coming of Islam, since it is highly developed by the time the Radanites appear in Muslim writings.²² Latin sources seem to indicate that already in the preceding centuries Mediterranean trade was dominated by Jews from the West and Syrians from the Byzantine East.²³

The original base of the Radanites was in Roman Gaul, centered in Arles and Marseilles.²⁴ They trafficked particularly in slaves and controlled a large operation in Verdun for turning them into eunuchs. It was this involvement in the slave trade that brought the Jewish Radanites into contact with the Turkish Khazars of the north Caspian region, a transit point for captured Slavs (from Lat. *slav*, "slave"; hence Ar. *saqaliba*).

Controlling an important northern offshoot of the Silk Road, the Khazars were ideally situated to serve as middlemen between East and West.

They enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the settled Iranian peoples to the South and the East along the Silk Road, which was well expressed in the Turkish proverb, "*Tatsız Türk bolmas; bashesiz bürk bolmas*," or "There is no Turk without an Iranian merchant, just as there is no cap without a head." Perceiving the commercial benefits associated with the Radanites' neutral religious status, the Khazar elite eventually embraced Judaism, although the supreme ruler, the *kaghan*, as well as most of the general population, retained their original shamanistic Turkic religion.²⁵

The ninth-century Persian geographer Ibn Khurdadbih describes the Radanites thus: "These merchants speak Arabic, Persian, Roman [i.e., Greek], the language of the Franks, Andalusians, and Slavs. They journey from west to east, partly on land, partly by sea. They transport from the west eunuchs, female and male slaves, silk, castor, marten and other furs, and swords."²⁶

Ibn Khurdadbih describes four different trade routes on which the Radanites were active. The first is from Gaul across the Mediterranean and overland to the Red Sea and via the Indian Ocean to the East Asia; the second is via Mesopotamia; and the third across North Africa. The fourth route went northward through the Khazar lands, from whence it joined the Silk Road: "Sometimes they likewise take the route behind Rome, and, passing through the country of the Slavs, arrive at Khamlif [Etil], the capital of the Khazars. They embark upon the Jorjan Sea [the Caspian], arrive at Balkh, betake themselves from there across the Oxus, and continue their journey toward the Yourts of the Toghozghor [the Tüqqüz Oghuz Turks], and from there to China."²⁷

Naturally, the raising of Judaism to official status within the Khazar dominions would have facilitated and encouraged the northern alternative. In any event, Ibn Khurdadbih's account makes it clear that Jews were active along all the world's major trade routes at that time, which implies the existence of diaspora communities of Jews living all along the various stages of those routes. The widespread extent of these diaspora communities and the fact that they remained in communication with each other is borne out by the many locations referred to in the Gaonic *responsa* literature (rabbinic instruction on questions of Jewish life) that began in the eighth century.²⁸

THE ASSASSINS

Frankish Crusaders in the eleventh and twelfth centuries brought to Europe stories of a secretive extremist sect led by "The Old Man of the Mountain," a group which came to be known as the Assassins. The derivation of this term continues to be debated; popular tales derive it from *hashishiyun*, claiming that members of the sect would drug themselves before carrying out their spectacular and usually public murders of well-known Muslim politicians and other figures. A more sober etymology traces back to *assasiyun*, "the people of the foundation."

The sect in question was an offshoot of the "partisans of Ali," known variously as the Sevener Shi'ites, since their lineage of spiritual leaders (*imams*) diverges from the Shi'ite majority after the sixth imam; as the Isma'ilis, after their seventh imam, Isma'il; or in earlier Muslim sources, as the Batinites (from the Arabic *batin*, "esoteric"), because of their secretive doctrines and practices.

A Sevener dynasty, the Fatimids, ruled from Egypt throughout the eleventh century, drawing much of their prosperity from trade linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. The Fatimids provided Sevener Shi'ism with state sponsorship, fostering an active and often quite successful missionary program. The most famous Sevener missionary of this period was the poet-philosopher Nasir-i Khusraw, who traveled the Silk Road westward from his home in eastern Khurasan to Cairo, the Fatimid capital, apparently making a tour of Sevener centers along the way.²⁹

The Sunni state based in Baghdad found the Seveners' missionary successes threatening and persecuted Sevener communities wherever they could. It was in response to this persecution that Sevener devotees began their campaign of political killings, designed to strike terror into the hearts of their enemies. The Assassins, as these defenders of their faith have come to be known, were eminently successful in carrying out their missions.³⁰ Perhaps their most famous victim was Nizam al-Mulk, the Persian prime minister of the staunchly Sunni Seljuk Turks, who was stabbed to death in his litter in 1092.

Two years later the Sevener community split over the issue of succession. The minority faction came to be known as the Nizaris, after

a martyred leader. The Nizari cause was taken up by Hasan-i Sabah, a Persian trained in Cairo who had ordered Nizam al-Mulk's killing.³¹ Hasan's community operated out of a mountain fortress at Alamut in northern Iran. This region, which had always resisted incorporation into the caliphate and had been home to many heterodox movements, provided safe haven for the Nizaris for over 120 years, until a concerted effort by the Mongols finally dislodged them in 1226.

THE ISLAMIZATION OF TURKIC DYNASTIES

When the first Muslim merchants and missionaries reached the Tarim Basin, they found one of the most religiously diverse cultures in the world. By that time the majority of inhabitants were probably Buddhists, but there were Manichaean and Nestorian Christian communities as well. Various local cults and traditional religions must also have been represented.

According to local accounts, the Islamization of Kashgar began in the first half of the tenth century when Satoq Bughra, a local Turkish boy from the clan later known as the Qara-khanids, was converted by one Nasr b. Mansur of the Samanid family, which was ruling Transoxiana and eastern Iran.³² Nasr may have been sent to negotiate trade agreements, since according to the story caravans from Bukhara followed him in large numbers.

Eventually Satoq Bughra became khan of Kashgar and gave Islam official status. Although aspects of this account may belong to legend, it does fit in with the Samanids' well-known policy of sending missions to the various Turkish tribes throughout Inner Asia in hopes of transforming them from raiders into traders.

With the conversion of Satoq Bughra Khan, who died around 955, the Qara-khanids became the first Turkish dynasty officially to espouse Islam.³³ The Muslim historians Ibn Athir and Ibn Miskawayh state that in the year 960 an immense number of Turks—200,000 tents—converted to Islam.³⁴ The group in question has commonly been identified as the Qara-khanids. Throughout the first half of the eleventh

century Islam gained in importance across the eastern part of the Central Asian Silk Road that was under their control.

Other Turkic ruling groups, the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks, also converted to Islam before coming to control large areas from Anatolia to India in the eleventh century. The Ghaznavids became Islamicized in the service of the Iranian Samanids of Bukhara, then challenged and eventually took much of the southern territory of their former employers.

The Oghuz Turkish chieftain Seljuk converted to Islam around 985, apparently for political reasons. His descendants took control of the Ghaznavid lands in 1040. From 1055 the Seljuks established hegemony over Baghdad and, with the somewhat reluctant acquiescence of the caliph, assumed the role of champions of Sunni Islam. Islamization was therefore central to their legitimizing ideology. At the same time, the Seljuks were a major force in the Turkicization of the Muslim world, especially with their conquest of much of Byzantine Anatolia by the late eleventh century and the establishment of the Sultanate of Rum (i.e., eastern "Rome").³⁵

Along the northwestern spur of the Silk Road, which included the Volga Basin, the Turkic Bulgars became Islamized during the tenth century. This seems to have been largely an effect of their trade connections with the Muslim world. An eleventh-century Muslim Bulgar historian, Ya'qub b. Nu'man al-Bulgari, writes that the Bulgar king had converted to Islam after a Muslim merchant healed him and his wife from some disease.³⁶

Among the eastern Turks, Islam was still very much tied to the merchant class by the eve of the Mongol conquest. Buddhism remained strong in the towns of the Tarim Basin, as did Nestorianism and traditional shamanistic religion among the steppe nomads.

The *pax mongolica* established through the thirteenth-century conquests of Chinggis Khan and his successors was a boon to overland trade. Thus, no doubt at first unintentionally, the Mongols strengthened the position of the Silk Road Muslims by creating conditions under which their business could prosper as never before. Although many of the Mongol elite held onto their native traditions for several more generations, sooner or later those most concerned with trade

tended to throw their support behind the Muslims, and many themselves adopted Islam.

The Further Islamization of the Tarim

With the support of a converted ruler, Sufi missionaries could travel and preach more freely among the Turkish and Mongol general populations. Most of the later Turkic tribal groups developed origin legends which attributed their Islamization to a particular charismatic individual from the Muslim West, one of a class which came to be known as *khojas* (from the Persian *khwaja*, or "master").

Many of the earliest Sufi missionaries who came from Transoxiana to the Tarim Basin (or *alti shahr*, "Six Cities," as it is known in Muslim sources) were members of the popular and predominantly Turkish Yasavi order. By the late fourteenth century, however, the more shari'a-bound and politically involved Naqshbandiyya began to displace them.³⁷ Hagiographies and histories from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries portray the subsequent Islamization of the Tarim region as very much the story of these Naqshbandi shaykhs and their inspiring, pious deeds, which often included taking up arms against non-Muslim Turks, Mongols, and Chinese to support candidates for power who were pro-Muslim.

CHINESE MUSLIMS

Today there are about 5 million ethnically Chinese Muslims, known as Hui, living in China. Just exactly who the Hui are and where they came from continues to be a matter of debate.

Persian and Arab Muslim traders traveled to China from the very beginnings of Islamic expansion. Modern legends have the prophet's uncle, Sa'ad Waqqas, bringing Islam to China during the Prophet's lifetime, but this story lacks evidence.³⁸ The earliest written reference to Muslims traveling the Silk Road to China is in the *New T'ang History*, which states that a delegation sent by the Caliph 'Uthman arrived at Ch'ang-an in 651.³⁹

In 757 the T'ang emperor requested the aid of various mercenary groups to help him put down the rebellion of An Lu-shan; in addition to the then-pagan Uighurs, Muslims are mentioned as being among those who helped restore T'ang power. In reward for their services the Muslim soldiers were given lands in Central China. A number of them settled and took Chinese wives. In 801 another contingent of Arab and Sogdian Muslims were hired by the Tibetans who were attacking Yunnan in the southwest of China. Although the Tibetans and Muslims were defeated, the T'ang allowed the Muslims to settle there and marry Chinese women.⁴⁰ The Hui are presumed to have been originally descended from these mercenary groups.

Like other foreign communities, the Muslims in China lived mainly in self-governing enclaves and resisted sinicization. They had their own educational systems, their own community leaders, and their own economy, which was connected by the Silk Road with that of Muslim communities to the west.

There is little evidence that individual Chinese actually chose to convert to Islam. Once Muslim communities were established in China, however, a significant aspect of their growth was the adoption of unwanted Chinese children, who were raised as Muslims. This influx of Chinese blood, combined with the fact that Muslim soldiers and merchants who settled in China married Chinese women, contributed to the eventual creation of a distinct Chinese Muslim ethnicity. Again, the fact that mixed marriages were the rule suggests significant (if unverifiable) women's input into the early development of Chinese Islam.

During the period of the Yüan (i.e., Mongol) dynasty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Persian and Arab Muslims were brought to China to serve as administrators. Because of their experience in commerce, Muslims were the favored candidates for positions in finance, tax collection, and so forth. This trend reinforced existing Chinese stereotypes of Persian and Arab Muslims (whom, incidentally, the Chinese did not distinguish from Jews) as conniving, untrustworthy merchants. An exception to this negative image is seen in the case of Sayyid 'Ajall of Bukhara, governor of Yunnan province under the Mongols, whom Chinese sources (such as the later Ming chronicles) treat

as a fair and talented administrator and, curiously, as a proponent of Confucian ethics.⁴¹

A REVERSAL FOR ISLAM

During the first half of the twelfth century, the Islamicized Qara-khanids were displaced in eastern Central Asia by a Mongolian non-Muslim group, the Qara-khitai. (It was from the name of this latter group that Europeans derived the term "Cathay," which they long applied to China). The next two centuries would pose the greatest challenge to Muslim domination of the Silk Road.

The Qara-khitai had been forced out of their original territory farther east by a tribe or confederation called the Jürchens. They moved westward and conquered many Silk Road towns that had been under Muslim control for several centuries. Various religions were represented among the Qara-khitai. The Muslim writer Ibn al-Athir states that their first leader, called the *Gür-khan*, was a Manichaean. Other references suggest he may have been a Nestorian Christian.⁴² Most likely, in keeping with steppe tradition, he saw potential value in all religions.

In any event, under the Qara-khitai Muslims lost their preeminent position along the central part of the Silk Road, to the benefit of the followers of other traditions. In some places the Qara-khitai had mosques turned into Buddhist temples or Christian churches. Whether this indicates merely the preferences of the Qara-khitai themselves or their attempt to win the support of non-Muslim populations that had been living under Muslim rule cannot be known from the historical evidence. The fact is we simply do not know what proportion of the population in any given locality adhered to any particular religious tradition. Clearly, however, Central Asian Christianity, Manichaeism, and Buddhism had fallen into a defensive phase of their respective histories. The activities of first the Qara-khitai and then the Mongols reversed that trend and put Muslims on the defensive, at least temporarily.

The most significant conquests in the westward movement of the religiously mixed Qara-khitai were the Silk Road cities of Samarqand and Bukhara, which they wrested from the Muslim Sultan Sanjar in

1141.⁴³ This reverse in the supremacy of Islam in Central Asia inaugurated two centuries of exacerbated tensions and competitive intrigue among exponents of Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, which crested under Mongol rule in the thirteenth century. Muslims would emerge dominant once again by the end of the Mongol period, but throughout this time such an outcome was far from being a given.

Ecumenical Mischief

Echoes and rumors of the Qara-khitai exploits reached the Frankish Crusaders in the Levant, who through a bit of creative phonetics interpreted the ruler's title, *Gür-khan*, as "Prester John" (Syriac: Yuhanan) and developed the myth of a Christian king from the East who would come to join forces with them in the Holy Land and help to crush Islam there.¹ This myth was to persist for nearly two centuries, as the persona of Prester John came optimistically to be associated with a succession of Turkish or Mongolian steppe figures having Christian connections.

It was at least partly in hopes of contacting this nonexistent ally that a series of embassies was sent from Western Europe into the far-off depths of Inner Asia. The ambassadors themselves often joined in the struggle for supremacy that took place at the Mongol courts between representatives of the major world religions of the time.

Prester John stories circulated vigorously during the early thirteenth century. First there were the successes of the mostly Christian Naiman Mongols against the Khwarazm-shah Sultan Muhammad, perhaps the most powerful figure in the Muslim world at that time. Then as details

filtered westward regarding the new scourge of the steppes, Temujin (who would become known as Chinggis Khan), information regarding Christian members of his household (particularly women) gave rise to yet further hopes. This, of course, was at a time when the Mongol army under Temujin's grandson Batu had not yet laid waste to Eastern Europe, and the Mongols' westward advances could still be interpreted as directed specifically at Muslim centers of power.

In fact, the Naimans' appearance in western Central Asia was due to the fact that they were fleeing Temujin's attempts to consolidate the various Mongol and Turkic tribes under his solitary command. The Naiman leader, Küchlük, is referred to as a Buddhist, while his wife was a Christian, or possibly the other way around.² In any event, he was no friend of Muslims, and when his ally the ruler of Kashgar was killed in a local uprising, he intervened to put down the rebellion and subsequently launched a full-scale persecution of the local Muslim community, forbidding the ritual prayer (*salat*) and commanding Muslims to convert to Christianity or Buddhism.³

The Muslim population of Kashgar by that time must have been significant, since when Temujin sent an army against Küchlük and promised to give Kashgar religious freedom, a large number of the inhabitants allied themselves with Temujin's forces. Following Küchlük's expulsion, Temujin's general Jäbä issued a proclamation that "everyone should follow the religion of his ancestors and leave others alone."⁴ The Persian historian Juvaini later reported that the Kashgarians told him Chinggis Khan's army had come as an act of "divine mercy."⁵

Sometimes, however, the Muslims were their own worst enemies. According to a later Persian writer, Khwand Amir, when Jäbä and another Mongol general, Sübödei, turned their attentions to the city of Rayy in northern Iran, the local jurists of the Shafite school of law "went out to greet them and encouraged Jäbä and Sübödei to slaughter the half of the city that was Hanafite." The Mongols did so, but then, saying to themselves "What good can be expected of men who plot to have their own countrymen's blood shed?" they killed the Shafites too. Likewise, when they proceeded south to the city of Qom, it was on the

urging of some Sunnis that the Mongols put the local population, which was mostly Shi'ite, to death.⁶

RELIGION AMONG THE MONGOLS

The religiosity of the Mongols and related steppe peoples was generally reflected in what goes under the rubric of shamanism and featured a somewhat vague notion of a supreme sky god, Tangri. However, their interest in spiritual matters centered largely on applications to real-life issues, such as the acquisition of food, victory in battle, and personal health. Thus, they were open to any sort of religious practice or ritual which might help them to find success in realizing their immediate aims.

This led to a kind of religious toleration, in which any religion tended to be seen as being potentially effective, at least until proven otherwise. Successive Mongol *khans* repeatedly asked representatives of every religion—Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism—to pray for them, and the Mongol elite frequently patronized all of these religions through the construction of places of worship and the giving of gifts to religious figures. They drew the line on foreign religious practice only when it infringed on their own, such as the Muslim method of slaughtering animals for meat or bathing in running water.⁷ Edicts against these practices were promulgated by Chinggis Khan and enforced sporadically by his successors.⁸

Like previous steppe conquerors, the Mongols aimed to reap the benefits of controlling the trans-Asian trade routes. Among all those groups fitting this historical pattern, they were the most successful in bringing the greater part of Eurasia under their rule. This meant that once Mongol power was firmly established, travel across Asia, although still difficult, was facilitated as never before. This led to a surge in long-distance trade and attendant cultural exchanges. The Polos have left the best-known legacy of these times, but Roman Catholic monks such as William of Rubruck, John of Plano Carpini, and others made the trip before and after them, often combining proselytization with diplomacy. Coming the other direction from the Turkish Nestorian town of Kosheng (Marco Polo's Tenduc) north of China, the monks known as Rabban Sauma and Markos (who later became the Nestorian patriarch

Mar Yaballaha) traveled to the West, with Rabban Sauma going on to Italy and France. They were preceded on the westward road by a Taoist monk named Ch'ang Ch'un, whom Chinggis Khan had summoned while on campaign in what is now Afghanistan.⁹

In more worldly matters Chinggis was aided by information gained from merchants whom he enlisted to accompany him. This meant especially Muslims, since by that time Silk Road commerce was largely dominated by them.¹⁰ As the Mongol victories expanded the territories under their control, they required both advisors and administrators experienced in matters of rule. For this they engaged the services of individuals native to or familiar with the cultures of the conquered regions. Often, especially in Central and western Asia, this meant relying on Muslims, but Christians, Buddhists, and others were not excluded from positions of influence. Muslim merchants, valued for their financial acumen, were appointed as fiscal advisors and tax collectors¹¹ (although this led to their being stereotyped by the subject populations as greedy and corrupt). Finally, during their bloody campaigns the Mongols made a point of sparing craftsmen and other talented people of whatever race or religion and sending them off to work in Mongolia or wherever their services were needed.

Another aspect of the Mongols' attitude toward religions is that they tended to perceive them as being identified with a particular community.¹² The Mongols recognized the need to earn legitimacy in the eyes of their subjects, and Chinggis Khan "cultivated the religious leaders of the conquered areas, believing that good relations with the clergy would translate into good relations with the people whom they led."¹³ In particular, he issued an edict which exempted Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist priests and scholars from taxation.¹⁴ In general, Mongol attitudes were based on practical considerations, which helps to explain the eventual conversion of the western Mongols to Islam and those of the East to Buddhism.

Steppe Christianity

The European Christians cannot be faulted too severely for what appears in hindsight to have been an unrealistic assessment of the Mongols'

attachment to Christianity. It is true that overall perhaps only a small percentage of the steppe population professed Christianity, and even their knowledge of the tradition may have been fairly superficial. Still, of the world religions, initially Christianity seems to have been the best represented within steppe society.

Not long after the Christianization of the Kerait and Öngöt tribes in the eleventh century, Christian names appear within the central Mongolian Merkits and even farther east among the Tatars.¹⁵ As a result of such conversions, whatever their depth or meaning in terms of the religious life of the steppe, we have a definite Christian presence in Inner Asia by Chinggis Khan's time, reflected in the loyalties of Küchlük the Naiman and several members of the Chinggisid royal family. Sorghaghtani Begi, the mother of two future Great Khans, Möngke and Khubilai, as well as of Hülegü, the founder of the Il-khan dynasty of Iran, was a Nestorian Christian, although she patronized other religions as well.¹⁶ Rumors of this Christian presence at the Mongol court, together with several forged "letters from Prester John" circulating in the Mediterranean world at the time, fed European hopes of gaining a powerful ally in their struggle against their Muslim neighbors.¹⁷

Favor to Muslims

Like the Christians, the Muslims writers often tried to portray the early Mongol conquerors as supporters and therefore potential converts to their religion. Unlike the Christian sources, however, the major Muslim accounts of the period were written under Mongol patronage and therefore demonstrate a clear tendency toward revisionism. The Persian historian Rashid al-Din, writing as an official of the later Mongol Il-khan dynasty in Iran, portrays Chinggis' successor Ögödei as a defender of the expatriate Muslim community in China from the bigotry of locals by having him say:

The poorest Tazik Muslim has several Khitayan slaves standing before him, while not one of the great amirs of Khitai has a single Muslim captive. And the reason for this can only be the wisdom of God, who

knows the rank and station of all the peoples of the world; it is also in conformity with the auspicious *yasa* of Chinghiz-Khan, for he made the blood-money for a Muslim 40 *balish* and that for a Khitayan a donkey. In view of such clear proofs and testimonies how can you make a laughing stock of the people of Islam?¹⁸

It may be noted that a defensive tone seems to underlie this passage—apparently the Chinese *were* “making a laughing stock of the people of Islam.”

Rashid al-Din likewise has Ögödei rescue a Muslim who, unable to repay a loan from an Uighur, had been told to embrace idolatry (presumably Buddhism) or be publicly humiliated and beaten; the *khan* is said to have given over the Uighur's house and wife to the Muslim and ordered the Uighur to be beaten instead.¹⁹ Juzjani, writing in India in the late thirteenth century, cites another example of Buddhist intrigue against the Muslims: At the instigation of Chaghatai Khan (who was known for his antipathy toward Muslims), one of the Buddhist priests claimed to have heard from Chinggis Khan in a dream that the Muslims would bring about the end of Mongol rule and that to prevent this they should all be killed. Ögödei, according to Juzjani, “perceived that this statement was false . . . and that it appeared to have been hatched by his brother, Chaghatai,” and had the priest executed.²⁰

Rashid al-Din states that the Mongols credited Muslims with “great sexual powers,”²¹ and later claims of Möngke Khan that “of all the peoples and religious communities he showed most honor and respect to the Muslims and bestowed the largest amount of gifts and alms upon them.”²²

Thus, while Christian and Muslim accounts each made certain claims of Mongol sympathy, the reasoning was different. The Christian accounts were wishful thinking and propaganda aimed at a remote Christian audience; Muslim accounts such as those of Juvaini and Rashid al-Din were written to satisfy and flatter their Mongol patrons. On the other hand, the Central Asian Muslim exile Juzjani, writing from India, and post-Mongol writers such as the early-sixteenth-century historian Khwand Amir are more circumspect.

EARLY EUROPEAN EMBASSIES TO THE MONGOL COURT

By 1238 news of Mongol devastations in the Ukraine and Russia was beginning to reach Europe. The Mongol invasions of Poland in 1240 and Hungary in 1241 made it disappointingly clear to Europeans that the hordes from the East were not aiming exclusively at the conquest of Muslim-held lands. A full-scale Mongol attack on Europe was avoided fortuitously, however, by the Great Khan Ögödei's death, which necessitated the recall of all the royal generals to Mongolia in order to choose a successor.

Encouraged by this reprieve, and no doubt misunderstanding its nature, Pope Innocent IV sent an embassy led by the Franciscan monk John of Plano Carpini to the Mongol court in 1245. This mission, which called upon the Mongols to be baptized and submit to the Pope's authority, was also intended as a means for gathering intelligence regarding possible future Mongol plans to invade Europe. Thus John and subsequent ambassadors represented what Sinologist and explorer Owen Lattimore has wryly termed “the C.I.A., or Christian Intelligence Agency of its time.”²³

John's account of his sojourn at the Mongol court, during which he was privileged to witness the coronation of Güyük as Great Khan in 1246, bears witness to the sectarian intrigues already taking place there. Güyük appears to have looked favorably on Christianity. According to Rashid al-Din, he had had a Christian attendant, Qadaq, since childhood, and

To this was afterward added the influence of [his secretary] Chinqai. He therefore always went to great lengths in honoring priests and Christians, and when this was noised abroad, priests set their faces toward his court from the lands of Syria and Rum [Byzantium] and the As [Ossetia] and the Oros [Russia]. And because of the attendance of Qadaq and Chinqai he was prone to denounce the faith of Islam, and the cause of the Christians flourished during his reign, and no Muslim dared to raise his voice to them.²⁴

At his accession Güyük quickly did away with several Muslims who had become very powerful during the regency of his mother Töregene, including her financial advisor, 'Abd al-Rahman, and her confidante, a Persian woman by the name of Fatima.²⁵ Conversely he reinstated Ögödei's former chief secretary, the Nestorian Chinqai mentioned earlier, whom Töregene had forced out.²⁶

Chinqai oversaw the rendering into Latin of Güyük's reply to Pope Innocent and probably was responsible for the passage in which the Mongol emperor rebukes the pontiff for his "arrogance" in claiming Catholicism to be the only true form of Christianity.²⁷ While Güyük's "cabinet reshuffling" may have been more politically than religiously motivated from his own point of view, it must have appeared otherwise to representatives of the competing religious sects.

Juzjani claims that Buddhist priests were constantly inciting Güyük to persecute Muslims. One well-known Buddhist advisor is said to have told the Great Khan, "If thou desirest that the sovereignty and throne of the Mughals should remain unto thee, of two things do one: either massacre the whole of the Musalmans, or put a stop to their generating and propagating." Güyük then issued an order for all Muslim men under his rule to be castrated; this disaster was averted only by a "miracle" in which one of the Buddhist conspirators had his genitals ripped off by the khan's dog, which was taken as a sign to leave the Muslims alone.²⁸ Elsewhere, however, Juzjani confirms Güyük's partiality to Christians.²⁹

One of the earliest and most cynical examples of the Mongols courting Christian hopes for political ends is seen in a letter sent in 1248 to King Louis, then in Cyprus about to launch the Seventh Crusade, by a Mongol official named Eljigidei in Tabriz. In this letter, Eljigidei "prays God for the success of the Christian forces against the enemies of the Cross." He claims to have been sent by Güyük to protect the Christians and rebuild their churches and affirms that "Latins, Greeks, Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites and all worshippers of the Cross are one in the eyes of God and the Mongol emperor."³⁰

Actually Eljigidei, recently appointed commander of the western Mongol forces, was planning an attack on Baghdad and hoped to entice Louis to carry out a diversionary invasion of Egypt. Furthermore, the

two Persian Nestorians who brought the letter told the French king that Güyük was Prester John's grandson and that both he and Eljigidei had embraced Christianity and wished to help the Crusaders recapture Jerusalem.³¹ Louis' response, carried by the Dominican monk Andrew of Longjumeau, eventually reached the Mongol court in 1250 some time after Güyük's death, and the Empress Dowager Oghul Qaimish sent a reply which simply demanded annual tribute, echoing nothing of Eljigidei's promises.³²

The report which Andrew brought back included mention of German slaves languishing in Central Asia. This notice sparked the imagination of a Franciscan friar named William of Rubruck, who was attached to King Louis' court at the time. Word was also circulating that Chinggis Khan's great-grandson Sartaq, head of the Juchid Golden Horde which ruled Russia, was a Christian. William resolved to travel via Sartaq's court to Inner Asia and preach Christianity to the Mongols, and if possible minister to Christians living there.³³

William's trip was a mixed success. He never found the German slaves, and Möngke Khan, Güyük's successor, did not allow him to stay on permanently in Mongolia to carry out his intended missionary effort. Furthermore, William's interpreter was an uncooperative drunkard who frustrated what opportunities the friar might have had to spread his view of the Gospel. On the other hand, William's account of his journey, which lasted from 1253 to 1255, is one of the most detailed and informative travelogues of its time.

Among other things, William is the first medieval European to encounter and describe Buddhism. His first impression was that Buddhists were simply wayward Christians:

In the town of Cailac [Qayaliq, in present-day Kazakhstan] they possessed three idol temples, two of which I entered in order to see their stupid practices. In the first one, I encountered a man who had on his hand a little cross in black ink, which led me to believe he was a Christian, since he answered like a Christian all the questions I put to him. So I asked him: "And why do you not have here a cross and an effigy of Jesus Christ?" "It is not our custom," he replied. From this

I concluded that they were Christians, and that the omission was due to faulty doctrine.³⁴

William was frustrated in his attempt to learn more about this strange sect from the local Muslims, who refused to talk about them. Subsequently whenever he asked any Muslims about the Buddhists' religion, "they were scandalized."³⁵

According to Rubruck, in China the Nestorians and Muslims lived with alien status. His impression of his fellow Christians in the East was not positive:

The Nestorians there are ignorant. They recite their office and have the Holy Scriptures in Syriac, a language they do not know, so that they chant like the monks among us who know no grammar; and for this reason they are completely corrupt. Above all they are usurers and drunkards, and some of them, furthermore, who live among the Tartars, have several wives just as the Tartars have. On entering the church they wash their lower members, in the Saracen manner [i.e., the Muslim *wudhu*, or "lesser ablution"]; they eat meat on Friday and follow the Saracens in having their feasts on that day. . . . The result is that when any of them rear the sons of aristocratic Mo'als [i.e., Mongols], even though they instruct them in the Gospels and the Faith, nevertheless by their immorality and their greed they rather alienate them from the Christian religion.³⁶

William also states that the Nestorians would not allow members of other Christian sects, such as the many Hungarian, Alan, Russian, Georgian, and Armenian slaves, into their churches unless they would be rebaptized as Nestorians.³⁷ In addition, they practiced divination and even resorted to the services of Muslim diviners.³⁸ The Nestorians shunned the symbol of the cross, and when the captive French craftsman Guillaume Boucher fashioned one as a gift for the chief of police, Bulghai, Nestorian priests stole it and the object was never found.³⁹

During his stay at Möngke's court William was hosted by an Armenian monk named Sargis (Sergius), who was constantly at odds

with the Muslims at court. Once during a court ceremony Möngke's younger brother Arigh Böke indicated a pair of Muslims and asked Sargis whether he knew them. "I know that they are dogs," he answered. In response the Muslims said, "Why do you insult us when we do not insult you?" The ensuing argument was broken up by Arigh Böke, but the next day Sargis started a brawl with some Muslims in the street. As a result of this the troublemaker was ordered to move his tent away from the center of the encampment and William, as his guest, had to go with him.⁴⁰

William had earlier been exposed to the anti-Muslim intrigues of Armenians while en route, when he discovered that Armenian translators had taken liberties in transforming his letter of introduction from King Louis into a call for a joint war against the Muslims.⁴¹ Likewise he discovered that Sargis "had told Mangu Chan that if he were prepared to become a Christian the whole world would enter into subjection to him, and that the Franks and the Great Pope would obey him. . . ."⁴²

One factor demonstrating Möngke's respect for Christianity was his appointment of Bulghai, a Nestorian Christian, as his chief secretary.⁴³ However, soon after his accession, his predecessor's Christian minister, Chinqai, was accused of conspiracy and handed over to the Muslim courtier Danishmand Hajib for execution; likewise, a Buddhist plot in the town of Beshbaliq which aimed to massacre the Muslim population during their Friday prayer was discovered by Möngke, who ordered the local Uighur governor publicly executed instead.⁴⁴

It is clear that in typical Mongol fashion, Möngke's policy was to support each religion equally in view of what powers they might provide.⁴⁵ William mentions that on feast days, the clergy of each religion in turn come before the *khan* to pray for him and bless his cup. In William's somewhat cynical view, the *khan* "believes in none of them . . . and yet they [the clerics] all follow his court as flies do honey, and he makes them all gifts and all of them believe they are on intimate terms with him. . . ."⁴⁶

Nowhere is the failure of the Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist leaders to understand the Mongol attitude toward religion clearer than in the preceding passage; William alone seems to have assessed the situation with any accuracy. Later he tried to explain to the Mongols that

his purpose in coming to Möngke was not for any diplomatic reason but simply "to utter the words of God, if he were willing to hear them." The reaction of the Mongols was that "They seized on this and asked what were the words of God that I wanted to say, thinking that I intended to foretell some success for him as many others do."⁴⁷

Möngke, like Güyük before him, enjoyed setting the competing clerics against each other in formal debates.⁴⁸ As a prelude to holding such a debate between William and others at court, Möngke declared, "Here you are, Christians, Saracens, and *tuins* [Buddhist priests], and each of you claims that his religion is superior and that his writings or books contain more truth."⁴⁹ The only account we have of the ensuing debate is William's, in which he portrays himself as putting the Buddhists, Muslims, and Nestorians to shame. "But for all that," he admits, "no one said, 'I believe, and wish to become a Christian.'"⁵⁰

In William's final interview with the *khan*, Möngke explains to him that "We Mo'als believe that there is only one God, through whom we have life and through whom we die, and towards him we direct our hearts. . . . But just as God has given the hand several fingers, so he has given mankind several paths. To you God has given the Scriptures and you Christians do not observe them." Möngke then criticizes the Christians for their divisiveness and greed, although tactfully explaining that he is not referring to William.⁵¹

In 1258 Möngke convened a debate similar to the one in which William had participated, but this time limited to Taoists and Buddhists, whose rivalry in China went back to the T'ang period. The *khan* appointed his younger brother Khubilai to preside, and following the debate Möngke expressed his preference for Buddhism, saying that it was like the palm of the hand and the other religions like fingers.⁵²

Meanwhile back in the West, Mongol ambitions were leading to the revived possibility of a Christian-Mongol alliance against the Muslims. The presence of Christians close to the Mongol ruler of Iran, Hülegü, including his wife, Doquz Khatun, and his general Kitbuqa, lent weight to these renewed hopes. In 1254 Hethum, the king of Armenia, agreed to provide troops for the Mongol army in return for protection of Anatolia's Christian communities and, once again, the

promise that Jerusalem would revert to the Christians. Following the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, during which Muslims were slaughtered while Christians were spared, Hülegü gave over the royal palace to the Nestorian Catholicus Mar Makikha and had a new cathedral built for him.⁵³

Kitbuqa's conquest of Aleppo and Damascus in early 1260 made it appear that Jerusalem would soon be in Mongol hands. This hope was quashed, however, by the Mongols' unexpected defeat by Mamluk forces from Egypt at 'Ain Jalut later in the year. The Mamluk victory ended Mongol expansion to the southwest and may have caused at least some of the Mongols to begin to doubt the power of Christianity and to wonder if Islam might be the more powerful religion. The stability of Mamluk power was further ensured by an alliance with the Mongol Golden Horde under Juchi's son Berke, who had either converted to Islam or perhaps been raised as a Muslim and was hostile to Hülegü.⁵⁴

Juzjani relates an interesting anecdote to illustrate Berke's defense of Islam. A young Christian of Samarqand had converted to Islam; failing to persuade the youth to renounce Islam and return to Christianity, an unnamed visiting Mongol official, "the inclinations of which accursed one were towards the Christian faith," executed him. On hearing of this, Berke sanctioned the slaughter of Samarqand's Christians while they were assembled in church.⁵⁵ Juzjani also claims that Sartaq died as a result of Berke's praying for his death.⁵⁶

Berke's conversion did not lead to the complete Islamization of the Golden Horde at that point, however. Christian missionaries—mainly Latin but also Russian Orthodox—continued to compete for influence there well into the fourteenth century. Their major rivals appear to have been individual Sufi shaykhs. Sometime around 1320 a Dominican missionary by the name of William Adam wrote a treatise calling for increased missionary activity in the Volga region in order to meet the challenge of growing Muslim influence there. William attributes the conversion of the Juchid ruler Özbek Khan, whom Central Asian Muslims credit with Islamizing the Golden Horde, to the activity of Sufi *faqirs* sent by the Mamluk sultan. He also claims that because of the Sufis, the ruler of the Golden Horde "has lately, along with many other

Tartars, become a most evil Saracen, an enemy and persecutor of Christians."⁵⁷

Mongol rule reached its greatest sophistication under Khubilai Khan, who became Great Khan following Möngke's death in 1259. Khubilai's initial attitude toward the great religious traditions was a typical Mongol openness to anything that could be of use. Marco Polo quotes him as saying: "There are four prophets who are worshipped and to whom all the world does reverence. The Christians say their God was Jesus Christ; the Saracens Mahomet; the Jews Moses; and the idolaters Sakyamuni Burkhan, who was the first to be represented as God in the form of an idol; and I do honour and reverence to all four, so that I may be sure of doing it to him who is greatest in heaven and truest, and to him I pray for aid."⁵⁸

Likewise the Muslim historian Khwand Amir states that: "Khubilai Khan used to tend to administrative affairs from sunup until midmorn- ing, and then he used to gather the 'ulema' [religious scholars] of Islam, the learned of the Jews, Christian monks, and the wise men of China and hold deliberations, for he enjoyed listening to philosophical and religious debates. During his reign he ordered the Qur'an, the Torah, the Gospel, and Sakyamuni's book translated into Mongolian."⁵⁹

Khubilai took pains to avoid religious rivalries at court. Rashid al-Din states that the Great Divan included four ministers (Pers. *finjan*, Ch. *P'ing-chang*) "from amongst the great amirs of the various peoples, Taziks, Khitayans, Uighurs, and Christians."⁶⁰ Further, according to Khwand Amir "It was Khubilai Khan's practice to appoint to the post of vizier four men who were of the same religion in order that disputes and disagreements on religion would not arise and so that the ministry's funds would be safe from embezzlement."⁶¹

This policy does not seem to have been particularly effective, however, as the following case illustrates. Rashid al-Din records that at one point Khubilai appointed a presumably Buddhist Uighur by the name of Sanga, who was hostile to Muslims, to a ministerial position. After a Muslim at court accused Sanga of lying to the Khan about his wealth, Khubilai had the Uighur executed.⁶²

Tibetan Buddhists, meanwhile, maintained their rivalry with native Chinese Taoists, and eventually used their influence (through the monk

'Phags-pa) to persuade Khubilai to suppress the latter and destroy their books in 1281; the only Taoist text to survive this purge was the *Tao Te Ching*.⁶³ A notable aspect of Khubilai's administrative policy was his distrust of the native Chinese in his service. Although he had shifted his court to China and built a new capital, Khanbaliq (present-day Beijing), several early betrayals by Chinese advisors led him to turn increasingly to foreigners, particularly Muslims.⁶⁴ Since the foreigners had no support base in China apart from their Mongol patrons, Khubilai saw them as being more reliable.⁶⁵ Likewise, perhaps, Khubilai's suppression of Taoists and Confucians was "intended to deprive of their spiritual support the Chinese who were subject to the Mongol dynasty."⁶⁶

The most well-known Muslim figure at Khubilai's court was his infamous finance minister, Ahmad, whose twenty-year campaign of extortion earned him the hatred of Khubilai's Chinese subjects and foreigners alike. His relations with the Great Khan's Buddhist and Confucian officials were particularly bitter. The Chinese advisors would accuse Ahmad of profiteering, and he would respond by charging them with embezzlement. Eventually Ahmad's Chinese opponents were dismissed or executed at his instigation, died of natural causes, or resigned their posts in disgust, with the result that by 1280 Ahmad's power was almost unchallenged.⁶⁷ Two years later, however, he was assassinated by a Chinese general named Ch'ien-hu. Khubilai put to death many Chinese whom he suspected of having a part in this conspiracy, but when Ahmad's house was searched and it was discovered how much treasure he had accumulated, the *khan* had his body exhumed and flung to the dogs, in Marco Polo's account, or wagons driven over it, according to Rashid al-Din.⁶⁸

Following Ahmad's posthumous disgrace Khubilai took a more restrictive attitude toward his subject Muslim population, by, for example, reinstating the ban on *halal* slaughter.⁶⁹ Rashid al-Din asserts that the anti-Muslim policies, which also banned circumcision, were implemented at the instigation of a Christian official by the name of 'Isa Tarsah Kelemechi (Ch. Ai-hsüeh), whom Rashid further accuses of inciting slaves of Muslims to denounce their masters. As a result, he claims, "most Muslims left the country of Khitai."⁷⁰

'Isa Kelemechi appears to have nearly sealed the Muslims' fate for good by pointing out to Khubilai the Qur'anic verse which commands, "Kill the polytheists, all of them!"⁷¹ The *khan* then somewhat sarcastically asked the Muslims at his court why they didn't carry out this directive and kill their Mongol overlords. None of the Muslims could reply, until one finally volunteered, "Thou art not a polytheist since thou writest the name of the Great God at the head of thy *yarlights* [edicts]."⁷² This response saved the Muslims for the time being, but the restrictions against them remained in place for several more years. During that time revenues from Muslim trade declined severely, so that in 1287 Khubilai lifted the ban on *halal* slaughter.⁷³

This was the same year that, in the West, the Il-khan ruler Arghun sent his second embassy to the Vatican, this time led by the Nestorian Turk Rabban Sauma. In his letter to the Pope, Arghun repeats an earlier request for European assistance in attacking the Levant and Egypt, and states that if he succeeds in capturing Jerusalem, he will become a Christian.⁷⁴

INTRIGUE AND MAYHEM IN THE IL-KHAN LANDS

Arghun was the son of Abaqa, who is presented in Christian sources as a patron of Christianity.⁷⁵ In 1281 Abaqa gave his blessing to the ordination of Yaballaha III, whom the Nestorians had elected as catholicus. An Öngör Turk from China who had traveled to the West with Rabban Sauma in hopes of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Mar Yaballaha had been chosen by the Nestorians to head their church because of his cultural affinities with the new Mongol rulers. The following year Abaqa is said to have attended Easter mass in Baghdad.⁷⁶ Shortly thereafter, however, Abaqa died and was succeeded by his brother Tägüdar, who had converted to Islam and taken the name Sultan Ahmad. One of the new ruler's first acts was to dismiss the Christian and Jewish astrologers and physicians at the Il-khan court. In addition, "Idol temples, churches and synagogues were destroyed, and in their place rose mosques."⁷⁷

A pair of high-ranking Syrian clergy, who were jealous of the foreigner Mar Yaballaha's appointment as catholicus and Rabban Sauma's as visitor general, passed to Sultan Ahmad the accusation that the two Turks favored the succession of another of Abaqa's sons, Arghun. The evidence condemning Mar Yaballaha and Rabban Sauma was found to be inadequate, but their position was clearly precarious until Arghun's victory over Sultan Ahmad in 1284. When Arghun heard of the conspiracy of the two Syrians he ordered their executions; they were saved, however, through the intervention of Mar Yaballaha, who asked only that they be stripped of their ranks.⁷⁸

During Arghun's reign a Jewish physician by the name of Sa'ad al-dawla rose to the position of chief tax collector and later prime minister. According to Muslim sources, "Sa'ad al-dawla gave the governorships of most of Arghun Khan's realm to his relatives." The same sources state that "in all fairness, it must be said that during the time of Sa'ad al-dawla's vizierate all of the realm flourished, and none of Arghun Khan's amirs or retinue was able to transgress the rights of the subjects and peasants in any way."⁷⁹

Sa'ad al-dawla appears to have nominally converted to Islam, although he is said to have urged the *khan* to claim prophethood and found a new religion "that would wipe out all traces of former religions." As a result of this advice, Arghun barred Muslims from the court and at Sa'ad al-dawla's suggestion decided "that the Kaaba should be turned into an idol temple and that the Muslims and all others should be made to worship images instead of God." Finally, while Arghun had fallen ill, a group of courtiers captured Sa'ad al-dawla and executed him, and "the friends of Islam were given a new lease on life."⁸⁰

In 1291 Arghun died and was succeeded by his younger brother Kaikatu, who in typical Mongol fashion "confirmed all the religious sectaries each in his status and honored all the chief dogmas, whether of Christians or Arabs or Jews or Pagans, and showed partiality to none."⁸¹ He did, however, bestow gifts upon the Nestorian Catholicus, to the order of 20,000 dinars. He also commissioned the construction of a new cathedral at the Il-khan capital of Maragha, which he visited twice during the following year. Finally, Kaikatu commissioned the building of a new monastery north of the capital; in short, "anything that the Mar

Catholicus opened his mouth about and desired he did not refuse."⁸² The effects of this apparent favoritism on relations with the Muslims of the realm would soon manifest themselves.

In 1295 Kaikhatu was overthrown and put to death by his nobles. A cousin, Baidu, seized power, but his accession was challenged by Ghazan, Kaikhatu's brother. Ghazan had been baptized and raised a Christian. His chief general, however, a man by the name of Amir Nawruz, was a Muslim,⁸³ and offered the support of a Muslim army if Ghazan would promise to embrace Islam in the event of his victory over Baidu. This was soon accomplished, and Ghazan accordingly converted.

The Muslim accounts of this event make it clear that part of the religious struggle in the Il-khan territories was between Mongols who had converted to Islam and those that had not: "Also accepting to obey Islamic law, [Ghazan] abandoned polytheism and the despicable nation of the Turks. That very day nearly a hundred thousand obstinate polytheists became believing monotheists and were delivered from the darkness of infidelity and idolatry."⁸⁴

Within a few months, however: "a group of princes and noyans . . . who had been opposed to the adoption of Islam, conspired to do away with Ghazan Khan and Amir Nawroz by any means possible and then turn Muslim mosques into churches and temples."⁸⁵

In the East, meanwhile, Khubilai's successor, Temür Khan, had appointed a cousin, Ananda (who must have been a Buddhist), to govern the Tungut Province. The urban population there had become largely Chinese Muslim, while the countryside remained pagan. Ananda converted to Islam as a result of falling in love with a Muslim woman and coerced most of his 150,000 soldiers into converting as well. This caused some friction with Temür Khan, who tried to force him to renounce Islam, but when Ananda heard of Ghazan's conversion in Iran "and that all the Mongols in Persia had become Muslims, breaking all the idols and destroying idol-temples" (presumably, mainly churches) he took heart and "in imitation of him [Ghazan], strove to strengthen the faith of Islam"⁸⁶—one imagines, by equally forceful means.

It is against this backdrop of tension among the Mongols themselves that we should see the persecutions of Nestorians in the West described

in Christian sources. According to Mar Yaballaha's history, it was Nawruz who issued the following edict: "The Churches shall be uprooted, and the altars overturned, and the celebrations of the Eucharist shall cease, and the hymns of praise, and the sounds of calls to prayer shall be abolished; and the heads [chiefs?] of the Christians, and the heads of the congregations [i.e., synagogues] of the Jews, and the great men among them shall be killed."

Immediately the Muslims broke into and looted the Maragha cathedral and took the priests hostage. Some they tied up naked; Mar Yaballaha himself was hung upside down and beaten while his captors urged him to renounce his faith in favor of Islam. In the end he was ransomed by local Christians for 5,000 dinars. King Hethum of Armenia finally intervened with his private armed retinue to stop the looting of Maragha's churches and bought off the Muslim mob.⁸⁷ Nawruz continued to harass Mar Yaballaha, however, and sent orders that the Catholicus return the cash gifts Kaikhatu had bestowed upon him.⁸⁸ In addition, Nawruz ordered the destruction of the churches of Tabriz and Hamadan. Those of Mosul and Baghdad ransomed themselves, while the caliphal palace given to the Patriarch by Hülegü was taken back by the Muslims, who also converted the Nestorian cathedral into a mosque and had the bones of the Patriarchs Mar Makikha and Mar Denha exhumed and taken away.⁸⁹

When Ghazan heard of the tribulations being inflicted upon the Christians, he issued an edict exempting them from the *jizya*, and stated further that "none of them shall abandon his faith, that the Catholicus shall live in the state to which he hath been accustomed, that he shall be treated with the respect due his rank, that he shall rule over his throne, and shall hold the staff of strength over his dominion." In addition, the new *khan* sent Mar Yaballaha 5,000 dinars by way of reparation.⁹⁰ Yet not surprisingly, "in proportion as the king [Ghazan], little [by little], was increasing the honour which he paid to the Catholicus, the hatred which was in the hearts of the enemies [of the Catholicus] increased, and they forged evil plots, and they sent information about everything which took place to . . . Nawruz."⁹¹

The following year "a certain man, who was called by the name of Shenâkh êl-Tâmûr, came into Maragah, and he cast about a report that

he had with him an Edict ordering that every one who did not abandon Christianity and deny his faith be killed."⁹² This news, though false, inspired the Muslims to indulge in a fresh round of looting at the cathedral. Among the items they carried off were a gold seal given the Patriarch by Möngke Khan and a silver one from Arghun.

An attempt by local officials to bring the perpetrators to justice sparked off a general uprising, during which the cathedral was severely damaged and many of the monks killed. Mar Yaballaha himself escaped with some companions and took refuge in the house of one of Ghazan's Christian wives, a woman by the name of Burgessin Argi.⁹³ When Ghazan, who was traveling at the time, heard of the incident, he ordered the Muslims of Maragha rounded up and tortured until they returned what they had looted, but they returned only "a very small part of what they had stolen, and the rest remained with them."⁹⁴

Some time later in Arbil, local Kurds began circulating a story that some of Ghazan's Christian soldiers had attacked them and killed one of their elders. According to Yaballaha's history, "fighting and hatred followed, and revolt increased, and evil grew, and fury and bitter hatred flourished in both parties, namely, in both Christians and the Arabs [i.e., the Muslims]. And they laid ambushes each party for the other, and they fought pitched battles."⁹⁵ During this time Ghazan was occupied in putting down a rebellion which Nawruz had launched in Khurasan. The Christians of Arbil, meanwhile, had fled to the citadel where they were besieged by Muslims, who greatly outnumbered them. Ghazan's Muslim advisors characterized the situation as a Christian revolt. In response to this Mar Yaballaha came to court to present the case of the besieged Christians. The *khan* ordered a reconciliation between the Christians and Muslims of Arbil, which cost the Christians 20,000 dinars in indemnities. They were, however, allowed to keep control of the citadel.⁹⁶

LATER PAPAL MISSIONS

The first genuine successes of the Latin church in the Mongol east were due to the efforts of John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan monk sent to the Mongol court at Khanbaliq in 1290. Over the next four decades,

until his death in 1328, John tirelessly propagated Catholicism among the various Christians of the realm, who were by then quite numerous. In addition to the local Turkic and Mongol Nestorian communities, large numbers of Armenians, Slavs, Greeks, and other Christians had been brought forcibly from Europe and the eastern Mediterranean following the Mongol victories earlier in the century.

John's first great coup was to win over the Nestorian Öngöt ruler Körgüz Küregen ("Prince George") for the Pope, and his subjects along with him, although following George's death the local Nestorian priests turned the people back to their original faith. John also had great influence with the Caucasian Alans who followed the Greek Orthodox rite and with the Armenians whose language he had learned during a previous mission in their country. In 1307 news of John's efforts in China reached the Pope, who responded by making him the first archbishop of Khanbaliq and Patriarch of the Orient.

John's efforts were constantly hampered by the Nestorian priests, however, who quite naturally saw him as a competitor trying to muscle in on their turf. Eventually they went so far as to accuse him of being an impostor and nearly succeeded in bringing about his ruin, as he describes in the following passage from the second of three letters he hoped would reach the Pope:

... the Nestorians, who call themselves Christians, but behave in a very unchristian manner, have grown so strong in these parts that they did not allow any Christian of another rite to have any place of worship, however small, nor preach any doctrine but their own. For these lands have never been reached by any apostle or disciple of the apostles and so the aforesaid Nestorians both directly and by the bribery of others have brought most grievous persecutions upon me, declaring that I was not sent by the Lord Pope, but that I was a spy, a magician and a deceiver of men. And after some time they produced more false witnesses, saying that another messenger had been sent with a great treasure to the Emperor and that I had murdered him in India and made away with his gifts. And this intrigue lasted about five years, so that I was often brought to judgement, and in danger of a shameful

death. But at last, by God's ordering, the Emperor came to know my innocence and the nature of my accusers, by the confession of some of them, and he sent them into exile with their wives and children.⁹⁷

John's battle for the Catholic faith in Mongol China was a most lonely one, and he claims in his letter that if he had had only two or three other Catholic priests to buttress his position against the Nestorians, he might have succeeded in converting the *khan* himself.⁹⁸ Indeed, it appears that John lacked even the support of his fellow Italian Franciscan and theoretical subordinate, Andrew of Perugia, perhaps due to the rift between the Spirituals and the Community which existed within the order at that time.⁹⁹

It is clear that the Mongol emperor continued to exercise a tolerance unknown among the clerics of various sects that operated within his realm. Andrew unwittingly sums up the difference when he says, "In this vast empire there are verily men of every nation under heaven and of every sect; and each and all are allowed to live according to their sect. For this is their opinion, or I should say their error, that every man is saved in his own sect."¹⁰⁰

Likewise Peregrine, whom the Pope had sent together with Andrew in order to consecrate John as archbishop, reports that under the Mongols, the Catholic monks were allowed to preach to the Buddhists and even in Muslim mosques,¹⁰¹ although Andrew admits that "of the Jews and the Saracens none is converted" and that "of the idolators [Buddhists] exceedingly many are baptized, but when they are baptized they do not adhere strictly to Christian ways."¹⁰² Nevertheless, it has been estimated that John may have made as many as 10,000 converts to Catholicism during his years in China, mainly of individuals from various Christian sects.¹⁰³

In 1336 the Alans of Khanbaliq wrote the Pope requesting he send a successor to replace John, who had been dead for eight years. It has been suggested that the Alans needed someone who could stand up to the Nestorian clergy as John had done.¹⁰⁴ Although the Pope's appointee never reached China, a papal embassy led by John of Marignolli did, traveling via the Central Asian Silk Road. Along the way they witnessed

the effects Muslim persecutions were having on Central Asia's Christian communities following the Islamization of the western Mongols.

At Almaliq they found that the local Chaghatayid ruler, a convert to Islam named Ali Sultan, had wiped out the Franciscan mission there during the previous year.¹⁰⁵ Marignolli and his entourage proceeded to Khanbaliq, where they stayed for three years. During this time he claims to have held "many glorious disputations with the Jews and other sects."¹⁰⁶ It seems the Jews, like the Nestorians and the Muslims, found the sculptures and paintings of the Catholics' saints to be particularly offensive and verging on idol worship.

Choosing the sea route for his return journey to Europe, Marignolli stopped in the port city of Zaytun long enough to commission the casting of two church bells, which as a parting insult he had placed within the Muslim quarter. Upon his arrival at Avignon in 1353 Marignolli conveyed a letter from the Great Khan which requested that the Pope send more Franciscans to China. This was at a time when the plague had begun to sweep Europe, however, and no further Catholic missions were sent to East Asia until the sixteenth century.

A MISCARRIED POLICY

Although individual Mongol rulers occasionally favored one or another of the religions of their domains, their general policy was to attempt to balance the various traditions so that each might serve them to the extent it could. This policy, by variously allowing representatives of each tradition to believe they were gaining the upper hand vis-à-vis their rivals and could act against them with impunity, led to an enormous amount of destruction and bloodshed. The situation was perhaps analogous to the Qur'anic observation in regard to the fair treatment of multiple wives: "Ye will not be able to deal equally between [your] wives, however much ye wish [to do so]" (Qur'an 4:129). In practice the Mongols could not hope to treat the adherents of diverse faiths equally, since any favor shown to one group tended to inflate their sense of importance while incensing the others.

In fact, the tolerance and favor shown by the Mongols to each of the major religions of their realm had the undesired effect of exacerbating

existing tensions and rivalries between them, and the Christians, whose status within steppe society at the outset of Mongol rule exceeded that of Muslims and Buddhists, were the ultimate victims of this intensified rivalry. But while in hindsight it appears inevitable that the Mongols had eventually to embrace the faith of the majority in each sphere of their disintegrating empire—Buddhism in the East and Islam in the West—the sources of the time show how much was due to chance and individual personalities.¹⁰⁷ Khubilai Khan's advisor 'Phags-pa seems to have been singularly instrumental in winning support for the Tibetan form of Buddhism which otherwise might never have made such a mark in the Eastern realm of the empire. At least as late as the early fourteenth century, the direction of events in the West was every bit as uncertain.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Melting Pot No More

By the time the Portuguese, Dutch, and English began their seaborne encounters with Asian civilization, the Silk Road's two-thousand-year role in transmitting cultural traditions was ending. A popular form of Islam, driven by Sufi orders such as the Yasaviyya and the Naqshbandi, was the dominant religious force throughout Central Asia, reaching the last holdouts of steppe paganism among the Turkic nomads. By the sixteenth century the religious melting pot into which the Silk Road continuously poured its various influences was no more.

THE END OF CHRISTIANITY IN MEDIEVAL CENTRAL ASIA

Historians have tended to breeze over the question of exactly how and when Christianity was extinguished in Central Asia. Modern accounts, echoing the portrayal in Christopher Marlowe's sixteenth-century play *Tamburlaine the Great*, often offer no more than a curt comment to the effect that Timur himself was the cause, waging holy war to extirpate religious rivals. The well-known French historian René Grousset typ-

the European stereotype in assessing that Timur "killed from piety. He represents a synthesis, probably unprecedented in history, of Mongol barbarity and Muslim fanaticism, and symbolizes the advanced form of primitive slaughter which is murder committed for the sake of abstract ideology, as a duty and a sacred mission."¹

But although Timur's biographers do mention his victories over Christian rulers in the Caucasus, such as the "infidels" of Georgia, they make no reference to anti-Christian crusades by Timur in Central Asia.² Indeed, the Dominican Archbishop of Sultaniyya in Iran, John II, commented that Timur "does not harm Christians—especially Latins—and receives them well; merchants in particular are allowed to go about their business and worship as if they were in Christendom."³

It is true that Timur's historians dubbed him a *ghazi*, a fighter for the faith, but the context of this title is either struggles with competing Muslim sects or with "heathens" such as uncooperative groups of steppe nomads who posed a serious obstacle to his empire-building activities.⁴ Christianity, having lost its last Mongol patrons decades earlier, no longer posed any political threat and is not likely to have concerned Timur. On the other hand, for Timur, a political upstart from the recently converted Barlas tribe, orthodox Sunnism was a propaganda tool to be used against rivals whether Muslim or shamanistic.⁵

It may be that by Timur's time there were no Christians left in Central Asia. Nestorian tombstone inscriptions indicate that the communities of the "Seven Rivers" (southern Kazakhstan) were devastated by plague in 1338 and 1339.⁶ At that same time the Chaghatayid ruler Jenkshi, who had allowed Roman Catholic missionaries to come from Europe and proselytize within his realm, was murdered as a result of family intrigues. He was succeeded by the convert 'Ali Sultan, who zealously encouraged Muslim pogroms in which all the Catholic missionaries were killed. Presumably local Nestorians were targeted as well, especially since many had enjoyed government positions under Jenkshi.⁷

One effect that Timur's policies did definitely have was to solidify the status of the Muslim elite classes, such as religious scholars and Sufi masters. Timur did this by granting them lands and tax-exempt financial bases through the administration of pious endowments, known as *waqfs*,

which could be in the form of buildings—including not only mosques and religious schools but also bazaars—land, or utilities such as water for irrigation.

The trusteeships for these pious endowments could be stipulated to remain within families, guaranteeing their income and status over generations. Under Timur's successors several such families of religious leaders became the economic masters of numerous Silk Road towns, including Samarqand and Bukhara.

In China, after the end of Mongol rule in 1368, it appears that Christianity suffered from its association with the expelled dynasty. Christians of the Öngöt, Kerait, and other Turkish and Mongol tribes were cut off once and for all from the support of any power sympathetic to their tradition. It appears that, over time, the Christians of the steppes turned increasingly to Buddhist lamas for the fulfillment of their spiritual needs. Early in the twentieth century, European Catholic missionaries felt they detected echoes of a forgotten Christian tradition (baptism, confession, extreme unction) among some Mongol groups, such as the Erküts of the Ordos in Inner Mongolia.⁸

The "Failure" of Christianity Along the Silk Road

Christianity was a part of the religious culture of the Silk Road for over a millennium but in the end left strangely little mark. Apart from the remote and politically insignificant Öngöt kingdom north of China, there were no Nestorian-ruled lands to compare even with the brief effects of state sponsorship which Manichaeism enjoyed in the ninth century. By the late fourteenth century the tradition had vanished, leaving only the scantiest traces. Even in the west Asian and North African heartlands of Islam, substantial Christian communities have survived even to the present day, including Nestorians in northern Iraq and Iran. Why was their fate in Central Asia different?

This is a question which has preoccupied and often vexed Christian historians, by whom the history of Asian Christianity has almost exclusively been written. Their tone is one of tragedy, of promise unfulfilled. Many of their explanations focus on the "quality" of Asian

Christianity, which is seen as either simply heretical (from the viewpoint of Western Christians) or at best superficial. The Nestorians have been accused of accepting "converts without making sure that Christianity was a spiritual reality in their lives."⁹ Nestorianism was more successful among the steppe peoples on the fringes of Silk Road civilization than it was in the urban centers, which has led to its characterization as a religion of "low civilization."¹⁰

These arguments are found already in the medieval accounts of William Rubruck and John of Montecorvino, which in many ways set the tone for Western perceptions of the Nestorians in the East. The Western Christians constantly accused the Nestorians of sectarian bias as well, as if the medieval Roman Catholics were somehow more open to ecumenical cooperation (and as the accounts of Rubruck and Montecorvino show, they weren't).

More recent, circumspect accounts have pointed out the complexity of Christian doctrine, which the steppe peoples do not appear ever to have fully mastered, and the alien nature of many Christian concepts in a Central Asian setting.¹¹ Buddhism, however, was neither less complex nor more inherently compatible with either the Central Asian or the Chinese mind-sets, at least initially; it had to be transformed. Christianity too was transformed in the East, yet it still failed to take hold.

One aspect which has not been emphasized is the lack of a powerful Nestorian body sponsoring trade. Even where Nestorianism was officially tolerated and protected, as in the Sasanian Empire, Nestorian merchants never enjoyed the kind of preferential advantages accorded by Buddhist or Muslim rulers along the Silk Road to members of their traditions. The only exception to this is under the rule of some of the Mongols, when policies favoring Nestorians backfired by provoking anti-Christian reaction from Muslims.

The major successes of Nestorian missionaries in converting Central Asians were among the steppe peoples, who were after all peripheral participants in the Silk Road commercial system. Given the dramatic change in lifestyle and values which the adoption of a new cultural-religious traditions often entails, perhaps we should marvel at the "success" of Christianity in Asia, which thrived for over a thousand years

despite the factors just indicated, rather than bemoan its ultimate "failure."¹²

THE LAST MANICHAEAN COMMUNITY

Manichaeism, known in Chinese as the "Religion of Light" (*Ming chiao*), survived in China by going underground following the persecutions of 841 to 846. Manichaeans met in secret and outwardly resembled Taoists or Buddhists. At that time a Manichaean teacher by the name of Hulu (perhaps Turk. *Ulugh*, "great") traveled from the capital at Ch'ang-an to Fu-chou in the southeastern province of Fu-ch'ien, where he developed a following. Marco Polo encountered this Manichaean community during the course of his travels in the thirteenth century, although he mistook them for Christians.¹³

A Chinese tradition developed whereby Lao Tze, the putative founder of Taoism, traveled to the West and was transformed into a pomegranate; centuries later the fruit was eaten by an Iranian queen, who became pregnant by it and gave birth to the prophet Mani. According to this tradition, Mani united the teachings of Lao Tze and the Buddha.¹⁴ This appropriation of Taoism enabled Chinese Manichaeans to represent their temples as Taoist and their religion as a school of Taoism, a strategy which proved useful in enabling Manichaeism to persist under the Sung rulers, who viewed the foreign religion with suspicion and outlawed Manichaean temples.¹⁵ Even so Manichaeans often were vilified during the Sung period, referred to as "vegetarian demon-worshippers"—it was unfortunate that the initial character in the Chinese transcription of Mani's name, *mo*, means "demon."¹⁶

Like the Christians in pagan Rome, the sect was seen as a threat not because of its beliefs so much as because of its secretive nature.¹⁷ This persecution was eased under the Mongols, who placed the Manichaeans under the jurisdiction of the Nestorian bishop.¹⁸ The Ming dynasty, however, which expelled the Mongols during the fifteenth century, forced the Manichaeans of China underground once again.

Despite this renewed assault the religion survived in Fu-ch'ien as late as the seventeenth century,¹⁹ and traces of it remain there today. A

Manichaean temple survives at Ts'ao-an, about fifteen miles south of the modern city of Ch'üan-chou, the great medieval port known to Westerners as Zaytun. The shrine contains a stone statue which appears at first glance to represent the Buddha; on closer inspection, however, numerous features indicate that it is the prophet Mani. An inscription in the courtyard, moreover, mentions "Mani, the Buddha of Light."²⁰ Eating vessels with Manichaean inscriptions have recently been unearthed nearby.²¹ According to one report, "The Cao'an temple is still in use today. It is inhabited by pious old women who worship and take care of the Mani relief, considering [it] to be a picture of Buddha Sakyamuni."²²

FURTHER ISLAMIZATION IN THE EAST

The army of Chinggis Khan was a confederation of Turkic and Mongol tribes that he succeeded briefly in bringing under his authority. After Chinggis' death the vast empire he had established slowly began its long process of disintegration. Throughout the subsequent years, decades, and centuries, these tribal groups would band together and disband again to meet the needs of the time and place, whether it be to defend themselves against intertribal raiding or to launch an attack on oasis states.²³

Often individual aspirants to power would embrace Islam in an effort to consolidate their authority among merchants and other town-dwellers, but this procedure sometimes backfired, as many of the steppe nomads reacted to such conversions with hostility.²⁴ According the *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, during the mid-fifteenth century one such convert, the Chaghatayid Tughluq Temür, executed any of his entourage who refused to convert with him: "[Tughluq and his spiritual master] then decided that for the propagation of Islam, they should interview the princes one by one, and it should be well for those who accepted the faith, but those who refused should be slain as heathens and idolaters."²⁵ Later, after a frail sufi missionary miraculously defeated a well-known warrior in single combat, "The people raised loud shouts of applause, and on that day 160,000 persons cut off the hair of their heads and became Musulmans."²⁶

In the last decade of the fourteenth century, Tughluq Temür's youngest son and eventual successor Khizr Khwaja "undertook a holy war (*ghazat*) against Khitai" (here, apparently meaning the Tarim region). He conquered the Silk Road towns of Qara Khoja and Turfan, "and forced their inhabitants to become Musulmans, so that at the present time it is called 'Dar al-Islam.'"²⁷

Khizr Khwaja's son Muhammad Khan in turn continued the policy of pressuring his subjects to become Muslim. He is said to have pursued this policy so vigorously "that during his blessed reign most of the tribes of the Moghuls became Musulmans." These efforts apparently were met with some resistance, for "It is well known what severe measures he had recourse to, in bringing the Moghuls to be believers in Islam. If, for instance, a Moghul did not wear a turban, a horseshoe nail was driven into his head: and treatment of this kind was common."²⁸

The groups known today as Kazakh and Kyrgyz, who have given their names to two present-day republics in Central Asia, were the last of these ever-reshuffling tribal alliances to be Islamicized. Another component group, the Mongol Qalmaqs, never were, but instead embraced Buddhism.

The designation "Kyrgyz" (by which name the modern Kazakhs are known prior to the twentieth century; the modern Kyrgyz were called "Qara-Qyrgyz") first appears in Muslim sources of the tenth century in reference to the conquerors of the town of Aq Su (Whitewater) in the Seven Rivers region of southern Kazakhstan.²⁹

Chinese records state that Muslim caravans brought silk from Kucha to this tribe every three years. Most of the Kyrgyz-Kazakhs must have remained apart from this sedentarizing group, however, since Muslim sources refer to them as infidels as late as the mid-sixteenth century.³⁰ One such source calls the Kyrgyz "the originators of all the revolts in Moghulistan" and explains that "they were still infidels, and hence their hostility to Islam."³¹

Another Muslim, writing in 1582, offers the qualification that "they are neither infidels, nor Muslims."³² A seventeenth-century writer says that the Kyrgyz worship idols and are not "true" Muslims.³³ By the latter statements we can understand that the people in question had accepted

certain Islamic practices, symbols, and vocabularies while retaining or "Islamicizing" much of their traditional religious heritage. This is in fact the very blending of traditions that one finds among these peoples today.

The Islamic content absorbed by these steppe tribes during the centuries immediately before and after the Mongol period can be attributed largely to the work of Sufi missionaries, such as Ahmad Yasavi (1103-1167), Najm al-Din Kubra (d. 1221), and their followers, who were often perceived to have magical powers and, like Christians and others before them, often assumed a role traditionally filled by shamans. Like shamans, they were sometimes believed to be able to fly.³⁴ To this day among the Kazakhs one can find shamans who perform traditional shamanistic rituals using the Qur'an, Arabic letters, and such.³⁵

Miracle-working (*karamat*) had always been a successful strategy for missionaries among the steppe peoples, and few are the Sufi masters who don't at very least acquire posthumous miraculous or healing powers in their hagiographies.³⁶ According to the fourteenth-century traveler Ibn Battuta, even before becoming Muslims the nomads around Samarqand used to visit the tomb of Qusam ibn Abbas (a cousin of the Prophet who was martyred there in 676), in order "to gain blessing as the result of the miraculous signs which they witnessed on its behalf."³⁷

It seems some of the shaykhs were not above verbal deception either as a way of securing influence. Ibn Battuta relates that a preacher by the name of Badr al-din Maydani was once asked by Kebek, ruler of the Chaghatayid White Horde in Transoxiana from 1309 to 1326, whether the Qur'an, which Muslims claimed to contain everything, mentioned his name. "Yes," the preacher replied. "It is in His word (most High is He), 'In whatsoever form He would He hath composed thee (Ar. *rakkabak*).'" As a result of this flattery Kebek "showed great favor to him and increased respect for Muslims."³⁸

Sufi preachers, like Nestorians and Manichaeans before them, usually traveled to the steppes as part of trade missions. In conjunction with the charismatic appeal of these Muslim missionaries, therefore, the more commercially minded nomads must have perceived the advantages that could accrue from adopting at least enough of the religio-cultural tradition of the town-based merchants to foster good business relations.

CONCLUSIONS

European historians, the conceptualizers of the Silk Road, generally agree that the concept loses its meaning by the sixteenth century. Lack of a unifying political authority in Central Asia made long-distance overland trade in expensive goods less and less viable,³⁹ although regional commerce in essential commodities remained active.⁴⁰

Instead, long-distance trade realigned itself along a new axis connecting India in the southeast with the emerging power of Russia in the northwest.⁴¹ Western Central Asians, at least, were able to maintain their role as middlemen between the tsarist and Mughal empires throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Increasingly an even more important role was played by Hindus, who established trading communities throughout Iran and Central Asia and whose networks extended as far as Moscow and Amsterdam.

During the nineteenth century, British and Russian empires converged on Central Asia, turning it into a mere buffer zone and shutting off the flow of trade altogether but for a smugglers' trickle. The Chinese began consolidating their hold on East Turkestan, turning Asia into a colonial pie split three ways. For most of the twentieth century the peoples of Central Asia have lived separated and under the rule of foreign regimes; only in the past two decades have the imperial borders slowly started to open again and the commercial and cultural contacts of the Silk Road begun to resume.

In terms of religious culture, sixteenth-century Central Asia was one of the most thoroughly Islamicized areas of the Muslim world, more so than the Arab and Iranian heartlands of western Asia and Egypt, which retain significant non-Muslim minorities even to the present day. Only North Africa, also relatively peripheral to the heartland of Islamic civilization, matched Central Asia's nearly total degree of Islamization.

It has been suggested that this apparent paradox can be accounted for by the fact that Central Asia was removed from the centers of rival religions such as Christianity, that preexisting religious institutions were weak, and that communication with central religious authority was difficult or nonexistent.⁴² This explanation begs certain questions,

however. Why, for example, did Christianity survive in southern India, and how did Manichaeism in Fu-ch'ien maintain for so long a distinct identity within the sea of popular Chinese religion?

An alternative explanation, which does not preclude accommodation with the one preceding, is that the peoples of Central Asia were almost entirely dependent, either directly or indirectly, on trade which was dominated by Muslims. This is true even for the Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomads who were the last to be Islamicized. Islamization was likewise most complete in other areas of the world most directly plugged into the Muslim-controlled trade routes, such as the coasts of Africa and South-east Asia. Conversely in India and Spain, which retained non-Muslim majorities, the dependence of local economies on long-distance trade was nowhere near as generalized.

Direct coercion was at most a minor aspect of the Islamization of the Silk Road. The major factor, from which others derived, was the early and lasting involvement of Muslims in long-distance trade.

The story of the religions of the Silk Road is a part of the broader history of the conversation of cultures, a conversation made possible by the activities of individuals possessing sufficient commercial skills and sense of adventure to overcome profitably the immense difficulties and dangers of travel across the center of the vast Eurasian continent.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. See Morris Rossabi, "The 'Decline' of the Central Asian Caravan Trade," in James Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350-1750*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 351-370; also Niels Steensgard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Company and the Decline of the Caravan Trade*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. A number of scholars have recently sought to revise the conventional view of decline in overland trade during this period; see, for example, Muzaffar Alam, "Trade, State Policy and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Relations, c.1550-1750," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37 (1994), pp. 202-227, and Robert McChesney, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*, Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1996, pp. 53-54, note 3.
2. See Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1992.
3. Laszlo Torday, *Mounted Archers: The Beginnings of Central Asian History*, Durham: Durham Academic Press, 1997, p. 91.
4. John Noble Wilford, "New Finds Suggest Even Earlier Trade on Fabled Silk Road," *New York Times*, March 16, 1993, pp. C1, C8.
5. Francesco de Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, in Henry Yule and H. Cordier, eds. and trs., *Cathay and the Way Thither*, 4 vols., London: Hakluyt Society, 1937 [1913-16].
6. By the fifth century even silk was not making the complete trip from China, as it was being produced in Iran, India, and eventually the Byzantine Empire (Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 9).
7. See Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984 [1980].
8. Sir Aurel Stein, *The Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 2 vols., New York: Dover, 1987 [1912], v. 2, p. 194.
9. Albert von le Coq, *Die buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien: v.2, Die manichäischen Miniaturen*, Berlin: D. Reimer, 1913.
10. D. S. Margoliouth, "An Early Judeo-Persian Document from Khotan in the Stein Collection, with Other Early Persian Documents," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1903), pp. 735-761; B. Utas, "The Jewish-Persian Fragment from Dandan-Uiliq," *Orientalia Suecana* 17 (1968), pp. 123-126.
11. A. V. W. Jackson, H. W. Bailey, W. B. Henning, I. Gershevitch, and Mary Boyce in England, and W. Bang, A. von Gebain, W. Sundermann, P. Zieme, and H.-J. Klimkeit in Germany, have been some of the major contributors to this effort.
12. See, for example, Jerry Bentley, *Old World Encounters*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993 and Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.