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Pre-Islamic Turkish Elements in the Art of the Seljuqid Period (1040-1194)

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

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Table of Contents

Abstract

Author : V. A. Pocock

Title : Pre-Islamic Turkish Elements in the Art of the Seljuqid Period (1040-1194 AD)

Department : Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree : Master of Arts

This thesis attempts to examine and define the degree of influence which the Turks exerted on Islamic art of the Seljuqid period (1040-1194 AD) specifically, and on Islamic art of the medieval period generally. As this thesis represents a first investigation of the topic, it was necessary to retrace Turkish history from its beginnings to fully understand its dynamic, but also to analyze the art historical and cultural past of the Turkish peoples in order to assess the degree of probability of Turkish influence on Islamic art as well as the means of its penetration. The vaster arena of this research is the field of Central Asian history and the growing awareness of the important cultural ramifications of its widespread Indo-Buddhist culture.

Due to the complexity of the thesis topic, a simple method has been followed to present the material. The thesis is divided into three chapters, each addressing a major issue. The first chapter introduces the four major Turkish steppe dynasties and their art in so far as archaeology permits. The second chapter deals with the process of Islamicization of the Turks, while the third chapter broaches the issue of Turkish influence on Islamic art of the Seljuqid period under four headings: architecture, architectural decoration, animal imagery, and figurative iconography. The basic premise of this paper is the assumption that, if the Turks played such a major role in the political developments of medieval *dār al-islām*, they must have also contributed, consciously or not, to the formation of medieval Islamic art.

Résumé

Auteur : V. A. Pocock
Titre : Eléments pré-islamiques turcs dans l'art de l'époque seljouqide (1040-1194 AD)
Département : Institut d'Etudes Islamiques, Université McGill
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Ce mémoire tente d'examiner et de définir le degré d'influence que les Turcs ont exercé sur l'art islamique de l'époque seljouqide (1040-1194 AD) en particulier, et sur l'art islamique de la période médiévale en général. Comme ce mémoire constitue une première investigation du sujet, il fut nécessaire de retracer l'histoire des Turcs dès ses débuts dans l'histoire pour comprendre pleinement sa dynamique et analyser le passé artistique et culturel des peuples turcs afin d'établir le degré de probabilité d'une influence turque sur l'art islamique et les moyens de sa pénétration. L'arène plus vaste de cette recherche est le domaine de l'histoire de l'Asie centrale et la conscience croissante des importantes ramifications culturelles de sa vaste culture indo-bouddhiste.

Dû a la complexité du sujet, une méthode simple a été choisi pour présenter le matériel. Le mémoire comporte trois chapitres dont chacun traite une problématique spécifique. Le premier chapitre introduit les quatres principaux empires turcs des steppes et leur art autant que l'archéologie le permet. Le deuxième chapitre étudie le processus de l'islamisation des Turcs, tandis que le troisième chapitre discute l'influence turque sur l'art islamique de la période seljouqide, sous les rubriques de l'architecture, la décoration architecturale, l'imagerie animalière et l'iconographie figurative. La prémisse de base de cette étude est le postulat que les Turcs auraient contribué, sciemment ou pas, à la formation de l'art islamique médiéval en vue du rôle majeur qu'ils ont assumé dans le dévelopmemt politique de *dār al-islām* à cette époque.

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I would also like to thank Salwa Ferahian, Stephen Miller, and Wayne St. Thomas of the Institute of Islamic Studies Library, as well as Ann Yaxley and Dawn Richard from the administrative office. A special thanks is offered to my friend Hannah Walzer for her encouragement and for her proof-reading of my manuscript. Many other people should be thanked for their silent support of my life's direction and dream, especially Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an unfailing guide, and my best friend and husband, Dr. Ayman Hassan Ali Behiery.

Technical Note

A great problem presented itself throughout the study in terms of devising consistent systems of transliteration especially when the languages involved, Chinese, Turkish and Arabic, are not mastered by the present author. In fact, only proper names, dynasty names, and names of institutions have been presented in their transliterated forms. The system of transliteration of Arabic words and names follows that of the Institute of Islamic Studies, whereas transliteration of Chinese and Turkish terms are based upon P. Golden's system used in his *An Introduction to the History of the Turkish Peoples*. However, when a Turkish dignitary's name for example, was found in any other work and demonstrated that another system of transliteration had obviously been employed, it was changed accordingly. Also, there may exist a seeming confusion over the terms "Turk" and "Türk". The former refers to the Turkish peoples in general, while the latter refers specifically to the Turkish T'u-kiue - or Kök-Türk- dynasty (552-582/681-744 AD).

Introduction

The major political role played by the Turks in medieval Islamic history from the Qarakhānid dynasty (992-1211 AD) on is largely undisputed and has been amply documented by various scholars. However, the cultural impact exerted by the Turkish presence within *dār al-islām* does not seem to have been successfully addressed, at least not in English or French scholarship. This is due, no doubt, to the complexity of pre-Islamic Turkish history and to the seemingly better-defined Persian influence on Islamic art, which has thus understandably tended to overshadow Turkish input. This overshadowing effect added to the birth of the modern Turkish state, which created the necessity and impetus for a national or ethnic history, has led to a polarization in the historical discourse, being either pro-Iranian or pro-Turkish in nature. This intellectual debate may be disguising an old ethnic conflict reignited or else the more ancient nomad-sedentary opposition which has been historically interpreted as the struggle between 'barbarism' and civilization. And finally, the Turkish version of history may indeed be a rectification, as it may also simply be symptomatic of the almost impossible disentanglement of diverse elements and tendencies so enmeshed in the history of the Central Asian steppe. Central Asia housed not only peoples of Iranian, Turkish and Mongol descent but also received cultural and religious influences from the surrounding established civilizations; *i.e.*, Chinese, Indian, Hellenistic, Persian and Islamic. The history of Central Asia has now deservedly become a field of inquiry in its own right, after long being unfairly deemed as peripheral.

The history of Islamic art also constitutes a still relatively recent discipline dating back only to the beginning of the twentieth century. The reasons for the rapid development of the specificity of Islamic art remain largely unknown as the history of art, like the history of civilizations, appears to have an internal process of its own which defies analytical formulation. One is limited to studying the facts of its evolution and identifying both its characteristics and its external stylistic borrowings. In the case of Islamic art, the influence of Sassanid and Byzantine art, both drawing upon Hellenistic precedents, has been studied. The same cannot be said for Turkish influence, with the exception of a school of Turkish historians and a small group of Europeans, who perhaps having discovered the importance of

Khurasan, became focused on Central Asia and its cultural history.[1] Other historians would claim that the latter were unduly influenced by Turkish nationalism.[2] Deemed nationalistic or uncritical, certain tendencies of some of the propositions of these "pro-Turkish" authors, have caused the whole notion of Turkish influence on Islamic art to be ignored and often refuted *en bloc* by the scholarly community, regardless of the accuracy or feasability of many of the arguments. This refutation, as mentioned above, has, at its root, a plurality of motives. However, the increasing seriousness of Turcology will oblige an "objective" reassessment of this widespread rejection and allow for a fresh outlook on the older often still relevant material. That the time is ripe, over and above any political or ethnocentric factionalism, to reevaluate this issue is proven by the works of contemporary scholars such as Peter Golden and Jean-Paul Roux which are paving the way for this historical and cultural reappraisal. It should be stated that great Islamic art historians such as Richard Ettinghausen, although not belonging to either of the previously mentioned schools, never dismissed the possibility of a Turkish input into Islamic art. It would indeed be extremely odd that the Turks, who formed many of the Muslim armies, ruled over Muslim lands for centuries, and according to historical sources, safeguarded many of their autochthonous traditions, would not have affected Islamic art, nor contributed anything to it.

The Turks composed the ruling élites within the Muslim world from the tenth century right up until the modern age. Due to the intense "Iranisation" of the eastern boundaries of *dār al-islām* which had fully crystallized by the mid-eleventh century, coinciding with the first Turkish migrations into Muslim territory, it is generally acknowledged that the Turks transmitted to the central lands the Perso-Islamic culture which constituted the first Islamic cultural model they had encountered. However, it is also possible, and even likely, that they also carried in and propagated elements and themes of their own pre-Islamic tradition as well as their own interpretations and experiences of the Inner or Central Asian multi-cultural heritage.

The task of addressing the issue of Turkish elements in Islamic art has necessarily first

[1] Amongst many others, one could cite, as examples for the first group E.Esin, G.Öney, and for the second one, E. Kühnel, J. Strzygowski, E. Diez, and K. Otto-Dorn. See bibliography for specific works.

[2] J. P. Roux, Etudes d'iconographie islamique, p. 7.

required defining the Turks and the cultural and artistic history they possessed before arriving in *dār al-islām*. The very historical nature of this paper also revealed itself essential to understand and trace how Buddhist, Persian and Chinese influences and motifs came to form part of the Turkish legacy, even though the study is concerned more specifically with indigenous Turkish traditions. An accusation of treating the Turks as a single category when they perhaps viewed themselves more according to tribal or clanal affiliations could be relevant. However, as shall be shown, a certain unity in the artefacts, belief system, and material culture of the Inner Asian nomad, regardless of ethnic origins, encourages one to consider a continuity of heritage. Inscriptive evidence indicating the usage of the term Turk as an ethnonym first appeared with the first Türk kaghanates (552-582/681-744 AD), indicating a consciousness and a oneness of identity. The Uighurs (744-840 AD) who overthrew and replaced the kaghanate, refer to "the entire Türk people" or "a special Türk hymn" in their Manichaean documents.[3] Unfortunately, before the sixth century, there is no proof of the term's usage for self-appellation since previous mentions of Turks in earlier foreign sources remain contested, even the first century reference to the Turcae living in the forests of the Azov Sea by the Latin author Pomponius Mela which scholars still manage to refute on very weak grounds. [4]

However, the common way of life, language and religion was not invented by the first Türk kaghanate but formed part of a much older tradition of the steppes, which had evolved over millennia.The subsequent adoption by the Turks of Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam was also seminal in bestowing identity. On the eve of their penetration into the Muslim lands, not only had the whole steppe undergone Turkicization but the Turkish steppe polities had also developed their own strong imperial tradition of which less "civilized" neighbouring Turkish tribes were well aware.

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3 P. Golden, An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples , p.115, quoting from Von le Coq and Von Gabain; see footnote 3 for references. P. Golden also states that the Khazars must also have considered themselves Turks as Chinese, Arab, Byzantine and Georgian sources refer to them as such.

4 D. Sinor, "The establishment and dissolution of the Türk empire", The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia , p.287, The author explains this debate in a paragraph and states : "I see no compelling reason to impugn the Latin data". For the Arab and Chinese sources, see pp. 287-291 of this same chapter. The author also suggests that a cultural and ethnic heterogeneity existed in the Turkish tribes from the beginning.

The first chapter of this study treats the history of the Turks. It will, however, begin with two sub-sections, one on the Inner Asian nomad and the other on steppe art, as they compose, in view of the uniformity of the material culture of the steppe, the fountainhead of both the art and the history of the Turks. It will then proceed to introduce four major Turkish steppe dynasties chronologically, beginning with the earliest recorded formation, that of the Hsiung-nu (210 BC - ca.155 AD) on the north-west border of China, followed by the T'opa Wei (386-534 AD) in northern China, the T'u-kiue Kaghanates (552-582/681-744 AD) in Mongolia, and ending with the Uighurs (744-840 AD) in Mongolia and the Tarim basin. The socio-political and religious conditions of each dynasty will be depicted to better contextualize the diversity and the dynamics of the Turkish past. Also, the art and archaeology of these different political formations will be described and analyzed in an attempt to circumscribe a Turkish aesthetic and iconography. Although singling out the most prominent Turkish steppe polities only partially reflects the dynamics of the steppe- in reality much more tumultuous- there seems to exist no alternative procedure which would provide greater or clearer results than following broadly the classical divisions of steppe history.

The second chapter deals with the Islamicization of the Turks and their entrance into the Muslim lands. The first Turko-Islamic dynasties are presented. However, the demographic complexities of the north-eastern borders of *dār al-islām* during the ninth and tenth centuries, appearing to have been minutely examined only by Turkish and Russian historians, and deserving an independent study, shall here be broached in a rather schematic fashion. This period is nevertheless crucial to the topic as it constitues the phase of Turkicization of the western steppes, and as such, a tracing of the possible paths of Turkish penetration into Islamic art will be attempted. The second chapter also brings forth some of the problems facing the art historian investigating Turkish influence on Islamic art and describes the art of the Seljuqid period (1040-1194 AD). It is during this period that Islamic art reached peaks in its achievements, a factor which has sometimes been attributed to the coming of the Seljuqs, and thus to Turkish influence.[5] This would be underrating the four

5 For the problems in this point of view, see J. Sourdel-Thomine, " Renouvellement et tradition dans l'architecture saljūqide", Islamic Civilisation 950-1150 (Ed. D. S. Richards), pp. 251-257.

previous formative centuries of Islamic art and history, as well as disregarding many other conditioning economic, social and political factors of eleventh century *dār al-islām*. There are no ideological inclinations to this research which simply seeks, in so far as it is possible, an objective approach to history.

The third chapter examines Turkish input into Islamic art and does so under four subdivisions of the possible areas of influence, namely architecture, abstract decoration, zoomorphic imagery, and figurative iconography. Although this research focuses on the Seljuqid period (1040-1194), examples are also chosen from earlier or later Turkish-run dynasties such as the Ṭūlūnids (868-905 AD), the Ikhshīdids (935-69 AD), or the Mamlūks (1250-1390), all of which were situated in present-day Egypt and Syria. The art of the the Seljuqs of Rūm (1081-1302 AD) in Anatolia, which differs from that of the Great Seljuqs in terms of style and of historical precedents and influences,[6] will also be included in the discussion. It is generally agreed that classifying Islamic art by dynasty is somewhat problematic as changes in the political sphere do not necessarily coincide with those in the artistic one, even if specific dynasties and rulers did exert a certain influence on art through the nature of their commissions. This explains why many Islamic art historians have opted for a purely chronological classification by region. This blurring of dynastic boundaries coupled with the theory that what is somewhat erroneously termed Seljuqid art persisted much later than the dynasty of the same name, and carried over to a certain degree in later Islamic dynasties- such as the Mamlūks, or even the Ayyūbids (1169-end of 15th c.) or Zengids (1127-1251)- allows us this theoretical leeway. If the term Seljuqid art is sometimes employed interchangeably for "the art of the Seljuqid period", it is simply for conciseness.

This study can be neither exhaustive, nor fully conclusive. It is rather an open-ended inquiry into the subject and one of its chief aims is to draw together material from different, and often separate fields, such as history, archaeology, and art history, as well as Central Asian and Islamic studies. It thus functions as a type of survey serving to manifest a core of undying and persistent indigenous elements throughout Turkish cultural history. Like all

6 First of all, in Anatolia (Rūm) the building material was stone and not brick. Secondly, the historical influences or precedents were Armenian and Georgian as opposed to Sassanid. And thirdly, in the Seljuqs of Rūm dynasty, the roofed mosque with central dome developed and not the four *iwan*- type typical of the period of the Great Seljuqs. The monuments of Rūm are also later than those in Iran and Iraq since no building has been dated arlier than the mid -12th c.

inventories, it will suffer from the drawbacks of a certain amount of necessary repetition. The broader context and the intention animating this research is the important question of how Islamic art evolved and how it preserved, transformed and filtered "foreign" or "non-Muslim" elements.

Review of Sources

The survey of sources can in no way be complete, especially as only recent sources in French and English were consulted due to the linguistic limitations of the author. To pursue any further research, not only would Persian and Arabic be necessary for approaching the medieval literature, but also a working knowledge of Turkish, German and Russian to keep abreast of the evolution of scholarship concerning Central Asian history and art. With few exceptions, works addressing the specific topic of this paper exist in these latter languages. The sources utilized for the present study can be divided into three groups; the general histories of Central Asia, those of Islamic art, and the few works and articles treating the specific area of Turkish influence on Islamic art.

The first group composes the backbone of this research; no analysis of Turkish influence can be attempted without a preliminary apprenticeship in Central Asian history. The recent and most thorough piece of scholarship is Peter Golden's *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (1992). The volume presents a full critical analysis of Turkish history from the remotest era up until modern times. The author discusses and assesses the divergent theories pertaining to the ethnogenesis, ethnicity and homeland of the plethora of steppe peoples, including the Indo-European tribes. The book is a model of its kind in the extensiveness of the author's knowledge of the field. The bibliography and footnotes are extremely comprehensive. Golden has meticulously combed Chinese, Georgian, Latin, Russian, Persian, Arabic, Greek and other sources, animated by the sole objective of piecing together Turkish history, with a special emphasis on state-formation, as accurately as possible. With this publication, Turcology can no longer be regarded as a sort of fanciful speculation. Because of the unavoidable panoramic scope of the book, certain difficult passages of Turkish history such as the Islamicization of the Turks were not as well articulated as might have been hoped. However, Golden compensates for this in

a chapter, devoted to the period more particularly, which he contributed to *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (1992). The latter, edited by Denis Sinor, another authority in the field of Central Asian studies, forms an additional modern essential source book. It also covers an enormous time span from neolithic times up until the Islamicization of the Turks. The advantage of this work from the art historical perspective, is that, unlike *An Introduction to the History of the Turkish Peoples*, several of the articles encompass material culture, art and archaeology. The Cambridge volume is, however, more traditonally historical and slightly less concerned with the theoretical evolution of the discipline. These two works, representative of the progress accomplished in the area of Central Asian history, perhaps especially the first, complement each other.

Some of the older works remain vital and should not be ignored such as René Grousset's *Empire of the Steppes* (1939), which constitutes an easy and useful reference. Its clear style renders it accessible, and much useful information is to be found in this classic work. The author displays a keen interest in art which he integrates into the general history, though only up until the tenth century. Given the fact that this work is one of the first of its kind, it possesses the benefit of simplicity and a broad categorization, allowing a neophyte to grasp the basics of steppe history. Jean-Paul Roux's more recent *Histoire des Turcs* (1984), written with the intent of having Turkish history penetrate the mainstream of general culture, follows the Grousset framework; in fact the two works resemble each other very closely. René Grousset's *Chinese Art and Culture* (1951) also proved useful in understanding the link between Chinese and Siberian cultures, and its chapter presenting the art of the T'opa Wei, the first major Turkish dynasty to wield power in the Celestial Empire, was especially instructive.

In terms of Islamic art histories, a few works were heavily relied upon, and it would not be an overestimation to state that Professor Oleg Grabar is playing the pivotal role. His chapters on the visual arts in the *Cambridge History of Iran*, contained in volumes 4 and 5, as well as his earlier (although published later) joint textbook-type work with Richard Ettinghausen, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250* (1987), served as constant

references. The Cambridge volume 4 includes the earliest period of Islamic Iran up until the Seljuq incursions, and although its chapter on the visual arts is short, all the major issues and problems revolving around the iconography, the techniques and the origin of the artistic tendencies just prior to the Seljuqid period are raised. In general, Grabar's intellectual rigour and inquisitiveness create a standard which sets his works apart from other Islamic art historians. The strength of his writings lies in the scholar's attempt to place artefacts and monuments within their societal context and to query their iconographic meaning, while not losing perspective of finer art historical details. However, Grabar's insistence on an empirical methodology manifests both advantages and disadvantages. One of its positive effects is that it minimizes speculation and encourages research and publication of remote monuments to fill the many lacunae that exist in the field. It has also fostered the study of Muslim literary sources in an attempt to contextualize the patronage and the significance of artefacts and buildings within Islamic societies. The methodology's major and most serious flaw resides in its unidimensional literal definition of iconographic meaning, which the author almost exclusively limits to figurative representation, immediately dismissing a large portion of world art; one need only cite Australian aboriginal painting to counter Grabar's notion that what aniconism gains in universality, it loses in iconic meaning. A secondary effect of this is, oddly enough, the danger of a literal over-interpretation which overlooks the often semiconscious intent and decision-making involved in the art-making or art-buying process. The most mundane iconographic choice implies a world beyond what is represented; for example one may decide to acquire dishes bearing bucolic scenes, but if one obtains them from Provence or from Sèvres, the aesthetic associations evoked by each differ enormously. This level of aesthetic response remains applicable to abstract motifs and symbols. Nevertheless, Grabar is a great scholar whose disciplined engagement has advanced the field of Islamic art history tremendously.

Many other Islamic art surveys were employed, but mostly for comparative purposes on specific issues involved in the debate. However, two other authors should be mentioned as they may be responsible for the present undertaking: Richard Ettinghausen and Katharina Otto-Dorn. The works of the former consulted in this research, apart from the joint work mentioned above, were his *Arab Painting* (1962), and his chapter on the Islamic

period in *Treasures of Turkey* (1966), as well as various other articles, the most important being "Turkish elements on silver objects of the Seljuq period of Iran" found in his *Islamic Art and Archaeology:Collected Papers* (1984), edited by M. Rosen-Ayalon. Although in all of his works, the author accepts and proposes the idea of Turkish input in Islamic art, it is only the latter article that is devoted to this particular subject. It centers on the single discovery of artefacts indubitably commissioned by a Turkish officer, hence demonstrating that Turks were patrons ordering work to their taste, as the silver objects excavated manifest incredible parallels with the art of the steppe. This article equates Turks with steppe nomads and history. The second author, Katharina Otto-Dorn, is representative of a school of European historians who first proposed, supported, and expanded the theory of Turkish influence on the arts of Islam. Her survey work, *L'art de l'islam*, first published in 1964, is dedicated to two main figures of the school, namely Ernst Kühnel and Josef Strzygowski, and possesses as its main objective to convey the "new" approach to Islamic art history which the author defines as a growing awareness of the importance of Central Asian steppe cultures on Islamic art.[7] Although Otto-Dorn clearly attributes the crystallization of Central Asian tendencies to the influence of the Seljuqs, she puts forth the art of Sāmarrā as the first step in the introduction of Turkish features. Unfortunately, most of the writings of her mentors remain untranslated. However, a few articles by J. Strzygowski have been translated and allow a glimpse into his enlightened mind and original thinking, such as "Le lambrequin" (1926) and "Les éléments proprement asiatiques dans l'art" (1929), both published in the *Revue des arts asiatiques*. The author's main objective was the deconstruction of the prevailing yet sometimes subtle ethnocentricity present in Western history-making.

Only two authors have composed works on the specific topic of Turkish influence on Islamic art, namely Jean-Paul Roux and Emel Esin. The first is a Turcologist who has written extensively on the religion and beliefs of the Altaic peoples. His fascination with Turkish cosmology and symbolism naturally led him to study Islamic art as an integral part of his analysis of Turkish iconography. Four of the articles he has written on the matter, have

7 K. Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p. 7.

been compiled into a book, *Etudes d'iconographie islamique* (1982), each article revolving around a given theme: bonnet, feather, bow and cup. Jean-Paul Roux's perspective differs from the previously mentioned writers in that his view is ethnological or anthropological, a perspective which leads him to view Turkish history as a continuum still in progress, to focus on what is perennial in the Turkish tradition. He criticizes Islamic art historians, Turkish or non-Turkish, for not possessing enough knowledge of the Turkish world-view to be able to accurately decode the Turkish symbols which entered the Islamic artistic repertoire. The book is both pertinent and innovative and it discloses the author's mastery of the subject matter. Its possibilities may not have been exhausted in this present study, except for the chapter on the cup, as the other elements are not discussed here. The greatest quality of the author is his autonomy. Not belonging to any school, Roux remains free to judge without concession the diverse propositions put forth in terms of Turkish influence; the most obvious example of his intellectual independence is his refutation of the use of the Chinese duodecimal calendar in Anatolian Seljuq art, an idea which has long been anchored in the minds of the more Turkish-oriented writers.[8]

As for Emel Esin, an astonishingly prolific and indefatiguable author incessantly seeking to reconstruct Turkish cultural history, no study on the topic would be complete without having consulted her writings. She is greatly respected in Turkey, and fortunately many of her works have been published in English. One of her major books, *A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Culture* (1980) proved itself to be an invaluable source, though initially daunting. Its full utility or enjoyment may require a certain orientation in steppe history. This book, unlike Golden's or Grousset's is not a purely chronological account, and is divided thematically. The author easily discusses a myriad of various tribal groupings, historical facts and obscure locations within the same paragraph, presupposing that the reader possesses a certain familiarity with steppe history. *A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Culture* treats Turkish history from the Karasuk era to the Qarakhānid dynasty, and emphasizes the development and nature of Turkish art, custom, and belief.

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[8] See Roux, "La prétendue représentation du calendrier des douze animaux dans l'art islamique médiéval", Journal Asiatique, 267, pp.237-51.

The book's bibliography reveals that the author based her research on medieval Arabic and Persian texts, as well as on many modern Turkish and Russian sources. The author may diverge in her ideas from more mainstream works, such as those cited earlier; for example, Esin may attribute certain artefacts to the Qarakhānid or Kök-Türk dynasties, while another author will ascribe to the same objects a Sāmānid and Soghdian origin respectively. To conduct research employing sources which propose a variety of perspectives is enriching, for it obliges one to deepen one's intellectual understanding while still questioning any preconceived notions one may have. Though one might not always agree with some of the Esin's conclusions, one cannot help but be astounded by the enormous amount of research undertaken, but especially by its relevance. It seemed that whenever a difficult question arose, only Esin had already addressed the issue. Her articles are mostly to be found in the proceedings of conferences on Turkish art or in journals such as the *Central Asiatic Journal*, but should not remain ignored by the community of Islamic art historians as a whole. The most difficult problem, as will hopefully be expounded, is to establish how the Sāmarrā Turkish guards could have come to have had such a strong cultural influence on Islamic society and art. It is in this respect that Esin's article "The Turk al-'Aǧam of Sāmārrā and the paintings attributable to them in the Ğawsaq Al-Ḫāqānī", published in *Kunst des Orients* in 1973, proposes some interesting resolutions based on medieval texts. This article, which constituted one of the discoveries of this present research, will be dealt with in the third chapter, under the heading of architectural decoration.

Chapter I. History of the Turks
The Turk and the Inner Asian Nomad

Since the term "Turk" spread to all Turkish-speaking peoples, regardless of tribe or territory, the contemporary Turcologist Jean-Paul Roux concludes that the term Turkish can only be defined linguistically: "*Est Turc qui parle la langue turque*".[9] Anthropology offers no help in aiding us to more clearly decipher the ethnonym, as most scholars agree that groupings considered Turkish, proto-Turkish or "maybe" Turkish have always presented a mixture of dolycocephalic (European) and brachycephalic (Asiatic) types. Tribal groupings were eclectic, as assimilation into groups conquering and conquered occurred, and a certain tradition of exogamy existed, for example the marrying of Chinese princesses. The Turks also always closely mixed with the Mongols with whom they share many religious, political and social customs.

The Turks and proto-Turks must have had an original homeland, it is argued, because pastoral nomadism did not constitute their earliest way of life. The exact whereabouts of this homeland is still a preoccupying concern. The Altaic theory seems to have given sway in modern Turcology in favour of the theory of a South Siberian homeland as it has now also for the Iranians.[10] This new theory should however not let us lose sight of the older one. Based on archaeology, and still to a certain extent on racial types, a Siberian homeland does not contradict that the Altai may have been an important region at a stage in the development of Turkish culture and it can still be plausibly argued that the forty tombs or *kurgans* at Pazyryk (5th c. BC) in the Altai region may be Turkish, or proto-Turkish, even

9 Roux, Histoire des Turcs, p. 20.

10 This Siberian theory is upheld by Golden (amongst others like Frye or Bregel- see biblio.), Introduction, p.39, who suggests that it is the most plausible, given the present state of our knowledge of the history of Central and Inner Asia . Esin, History , p. 5, refers to the Eberhard-Togan Altaic theory of a 12th c.BC Indo-European migration towards West Turkistan provoking an eastward retreat of the native Turk inhabitants.

if it is usually taken for granted that they are Scythian (c. 800-200 BC).[11] It must be noted that Turkish historians incorporate these tombs and their wonderful finds (ill.1-3) just as rapidly into their national art history, but these Turkish views are much less prevalent in Western scholarship (or education).

The date at which the Turks adopted nomadism and whether or not it reached them via the Scythians are also still greatly debated issues. Hunting and gathering cultures took to nomadism with the development of horse "technology" and animal husbandry, somewhere around the beginning of the first millenium BC. It is at this date that Esin places the roots of Turkish culture, whereas Golden proposes that equestrian nomadism was embraced by Turkish speaking peoples only in the late fifth century BC.[12] Although nomadic societies leave few traces and allow for artefacts to travel great distances, archaeology has assisted the field greatly. Much excavation work has now been undertaken in Central Asia, and future digs may yet reveal findings, unearthing new leads which would allow us to move from viable, though still conjectural, scholarly frameworks to more sure-footed groundings. The ethnogenesis of the Turks is still being researched.

The original home of the Iranians is as debated as is that of the Turks, and although some scholars believe it to be the Balkan-Carpathian region, others assign anywhere from Chinese Central Asia to Eastern Anatolia.[13] Nevertheless, as was earlier stated, the consensus is that both these groups were originally forest-dwelling Siberians.

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11 Golden, Introduction, p.47, sees them as probable Scytho-Saka burials of the Tagar period (ca. 800 BC- 1 AD), Esin, History, p. 51, based on Rudenko, considers them as burials of the Ting-Ling, a proto-Turkic tribe, or Wu-han (p.14) and Jean-Paul Roux.*op. cit.* p.39, implies that they are Turkish. The oldest known knotted rug found at the site is especially debated. Rice in Ancient Arts of Central Asia, p. 34, mentions that the rug is often thought to be Persian due to its "urban" size, but also narrates how Rudenko proposed that the rug displayed the Turkish knot. The most recent research has advanced the opinion that the rug's wool may be of the same origin as many of the other smaller textile artefacts, which may connote that the rug was woven locally by the Scythians, the Turks, or the "Pazyryk people" depending on who one believes was living in the region at the time; see Day 's "Tales of totems and tamghas", Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies 4, p. 263.

12 Esin, History, p.1., Golden, Introduction, p. 44 . In view of the present still incomplete knowledge of Eurasian prehistory, these dates are still somewhat hypothetical. Roux states in The Turkic Peoples of the World (Ed. M.Bainbridge) on p.1 of the introduction that we can "only guess when in the first millenium B.C. they left (the forest of Siberia) to become large-scale stock breeders in Upper Asia and mixed with nomadic hordes already on the move in steppes of Eurasia..."

13 Golden, Introduction, p. 44.

The earliest archaeological evidence of indigenous Central Asia leads us back to the end of the ice age, and reveals a variety of cultures some Siberian, some akin to the native-American type, and some resembling more the European Levalloisian Paleolithic culture. And although many Europoid types have been excavated, the Mongoloid type appears as early as the second millenium BC with the Okunev culture (ca.2000 BC-1500 BC).[14]

The theories presenting the Iranians as the sole representatives of civilization in the Near East disregard the many similarities between the Indo-European and Turkish tribes originally, as well as the important Semitic tradition of the Levant. The Indo-Europeans adopted pastoral nomadism and also descended from Siberia, although most probably at an earlier date than the Turks. They were also nomads reknowned for their military prowess and warfare techniques and became thereby masters of the ancient Near East. The Scytho-Sakan tribes outside the Iranian plateau played much the same role, as did the Turks in the Far East, and both were considered disruptive frontier raiders causing an ongoing instability.[15] The difference in destiny of the Turks in China and of the Indo-Europeans in Persia can be understood by the greater potential of absorption of the Near East with its already multi-ethnic background, whereas China had from the beginning displayed a strong xenophobia. So the Turks bore the brunt of being the barbarians, although after the Turkicization of Central Asia, the Indo-Europeans were integrated into the Turkish polities. History, unlike anthropology or ethnology, often disregards nomadic cultures thereby perpetuating a common negative stereotype.

Throughout history what identifies the Turk, aside from language, is not so much the adopted religions, customs or learned ways of foreigners but rather the primordial steppe mythology, its way of life and its codes of honour, all of which were still clearly evident after the conversion of the Turks to Islam and their becoming the governing classes of Muslim states. The basic characteristics of steppe life should be reiterated if only to remind one of the degree to which the birth of nomadism constituted a major political, social and

[14] A. P. Okladinov, "Inner Asia at the dawn of history", The Cambridge History of Inner Early Asia, p. 81. This is a excellent study for those interested in Paleolithic and Neolithic Inner Asia.

[15] According to Golden, Introduction, p. 44, the Iranian nomads were already present around the 5th-4th millenium BC and by 2000 BC their migrations were set in motion. He also discusses the many conflicting hypotheses concerning their *Urheimat*, Central and South-East Europe, the Urals, the Balkan-Carpathian region and more recently Eastern Anatolia. Still others authors postulate South Siberia.

economic revolution, as well as a general evolution in steppe life reflected in the success of later polity formation. A. P. Okladinov writes:

"The nomads developed a completely new material culture, one which was adapted to a mobile life with cattle in the steppes. This included the felt tent, the hooded cart, a complex and highly productive milk economy with dairy foods, kumiss and lactic alcohol, cheese, and much else concerning which the hunters and their fishermen neighbors had no concept. The people of this culture had guaranteed supplies of food not only in the form of meat, but also of milk products. They produced wool for felt and cloth which replaced the former animal pelts as the material for clothing.

"The steppe nomads of Inner Asia also created their own spiritual world. In religion this was a rich dualistic mythology based on the heavenly gods of light and the evil gods of the underworld. Heaven was honored as the highest divinity. In art they created their dynamic animal style and monumental epic poems, astonishing in their scope of fantasy. Echoes of this wealth of folklore are still to be heard in the Yakut heroic poems, the *olonkho*, and in the Buriat and Mongol *üliger*.

"In the social structure of the nomads there was also unquestionable progress, tribal alliances, predecessors of governments, came into being. The first such alliance was evidently among the tribes of the slab-grave culture, as evidenced by the astonishing uniformity of their monuments from the Baikal to Tibet."[16]

To this should be added trade, raid and war with its necessary accoutrements, extensive decorative arts, from metalwork to weaving, and allegiance to family, tribe and clan which not only led to the importance of oaths of kinship but also to a whole system of signs such as totems and *tamghas* (property marks on cattle or objects). Nomadism also engendered the notion of the hero-warrior, in Turkish *er* or *alp*, and all of its symbolic attributes such as the belt, blade, cup and feather.[17] The Turkish native religion *Teb Tëngri*, some of whose traditions have lasted up until today, comprising not only shamanism and nature and ancestor cults, but a whole cosmological system, fostered a strong communal bond of spiritual and sometimes political kinship, uniting the steppe from one end to the other. As in all traditional cultures, there was little divide between the symbolic and the material realms; to give only one example, the *yurt*, or round tent, was not simply a dwelling. Its central hearth constituted the family altar to the ancestors, and the hearth up to the smoke-hole formed the *axis mundi*. The *yurt*'s door originally faced east, and then south when the nomads were influenced by Chinese concepts of the zenith. This mythopeic world view was shared by all steppe nomads, regardless of ethnic origin. Also common to both Turks

16 Okladinov, "Inner Asia", CHEIA, pp. 94-5.

17 Esin, The Culture of the Turks: the Initial Inner Asian Phase, p. 4.

and Scythians were horse sacrifices, a water taboo, the disquieting custom of fabricating a drinking cup from the enemy's skull, and various forms of divination.[18] Whether the Turks inherited a large part of their culture from the Scythians or whether there was a common Siberian cultural fountainhead (a venue not yet adequately explored), is not the concern here. The title of this thesis, had it not been the Turks who penetrated *dār al-islām* as bearers of steppe culture, could have been *Steppe Elements in Islamic Art* because of this original cultural unity of both the Indo-European and Turkish tribes. Thus, although the mixture of Asiatic with European types is seen as the birth of the Turks, [19] it is perhaps more viable to consider the Inner Asian nomad as the historical prototype of the Turk and to view the Inner Asian nomadic tradition as the common source of both the Indo-European and Turkic steppe groupings. In any case, this tendency seems unanimous among scholars of different approaches and opinions.[20] The resilience of the culture of the Inner Asian nomad may be perceived through its persistence after the acquaintance with and adoption of external cultural, religious or imperial codes. An erroneous view that nomadic societies are devoid of culture until they absorb foreign sedentary norms and practices, unfortunately still often prevails. To redress this, Elizabeth Endicott-West will be quoted, although she is discussing two Mongol steppe dynasties which controlled parts of today's China, the Kitan Liao (907-1125 AD) and the Yüan (1206-1368 AD) dynasties:

> "I shall stress the cultural integrity of the Inner Asian nomads. I shall emphasize their continuing adherence to ancestral patterns even after their deep involvement with the sedentary cultures of China and Korea. The Liao and Yuan dynasties offer revealing examples of nomad-sedentary interaction, with implications for the entire range of interaction in the pre-modern Eurasian setting. Nomadic cultures, I shall argue, are internally coherent and forceful, and remain thus, even in those periods when nomads rule and reside in neighboring sedentary lands."[21]

Steppe Art

If the shift in the steppe from hunting-gathering cultures to pastoral nomadism initiated

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18 Okladinov, "Dawn", CHEIA, p. 95.

19 Roux, La religion des Turcs et des Mongols, pp. 84-85 and 67.

21 Roux, Histoire, p.39, and Esin, History, p.1, Golden, Introduction, p. 39 and p. 43.

21 E. Endicott-West, "Aspects of Khitan Liao and Mongolian Yüan Imperial rule; a comparative perspective", Rulers of the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery (Ed. G. Seaman), p.199.

a new way of life and a spiritual world over and above ethnicity, it achieved the same in the field of art. Whether one considers steppe art to have originated in the East (China), in the West (Ionian or Near Eastern influence via Scythia) or in the North from a primeval hyperborean tradition, the art of the Inner Asian steppe, as earlier with the Inner Asian nomad himself, will be regarded as the artistic prototype of the Turkish peoples.

Steppe art, also known as animal art, appeared suddenly across northern Central Asia.[22] An integral part of the "nomadic revolution", it emerged from the spread of metalworking technology, a trade often connected to early Eurasian myths relating the magical power of the smith.[23] The stylistic and iconographic unity of steppe art over such a large area and length of time has caused art historians to qualify it as an "international" style. A new self-assured identity, imbued with indigenous Siberian elements was able to draw upon a rich repertoire of foreign motifs: European, Hellenistic, Assyrian, Achaemenid, and Chinese. The steppe belt even as far back as the European Halstatt cultures in the Celto-Danubian region ca.1000-450 BC had provided a great territory of cross-cultural exchanges.

The findings of steppe art consist of functional portable metallic objects, mostly weapons, harnesses, belts, and jewelry (ill.5-7). Other everyday articles were made of fragile materials such as felt, bone, birchbark, leather, and textiles. Some of these perishables, and even bodies of notables, have been found intact in the only architecture that has survived from these early periods, namely the funerary *kurgans* whose contents the Siberian cold had managed to preserve. Almost all of the graves had been looted for their gold and remained ignored until the interest generated by the Russian Czar Peter the Great (d.1725), after his wife, the Empress Catherine (d.1727), had received as a gift, on the occasion of the birth of their son, a collection of these ancient gold objects.

The art of pre-nomadic Eurasian cultures was mostly aniconic demonstrating a predilection for abstract patterns such as whorls and waves. When the animal motif first emerged,

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[22] The article "Steppe Cultures" by M. Bussagli in the Encyclopedia of World Art, p. 375, places a very large time span for steppe art, namely from 1500 BC until 1000 A D. See also the chronological table in K. Jettmar's in The Art of the Steppes pp. 244-245. Whereas W.H.McNeill in the Rise of the West, p. 486, places the beginning in the 7th or 6th c.BC, having it coincide with the emergence of the Scythians.

[23] Grousset, Chinese Art and Culture, p.16, The author mentions ancient Chinese legends about the magic powers (associated with the dragon K'uei) of the metal-founder and the smith which attribute the gift of metal technology to pastoral tribes.

it tended towards realism. But as it matured, the inclination towards the stylization and the ornamentalization of the zoomorphs became apparent: contours were simplified, detail was emphasized, and a great tension in composition and narrative was sought. The term *Schrägschnitt* (bevelled style) is used to describe the cutting in curves of the inclined planes of the animal's compactly represented body.[24] These two steppe tendencies, abstract and figurative, may be likened by identifying the similar ways in which they function. One author, although discussing steppe animal art in particular, puts forth a statement applicable to all steppe art even in its pre-animal stage:

"The art of the Steppes is a coherent system of signs and operates like a language. For these peoples with no writing system, it must have occupied the place of a written language. Like language it has its vocabulary which consists of details selected from the bestiary, its syntax which operates by juxtapositions, combinations and confrontations, and also its stylistic devices."[25]

The major characteristic of this art is, as the name indicates, the recurrence of the animal motif, at first rendered alone but later portrayed in animal combats. It is mostly beasts of prey and wild game that are depicted and not the animals implied in the nomadic economy. Cervidae, deer, reindeer, stag and elk are preferred and appear the most frequently, followed by birds of prey. Many other animals were represented, such as boars, bears, leopards and fish. Lions, which denote a foreign influence, became a favoured symbol on the steppe. And the camel, the yak and the serpent entered steppe art vocabulary in its later phase.[26] The evident fondness for the reindeer and the role it is thought to have played in steppe mythology has been used as proof of an indigenous Siberian strain in animal art in opposition to scholars who view the latter only as a naive and "barbarized" interpretation of surrounding animal iconography common in both proto-historic Chinese and Mesopotamian art. In the first chapter of *The Art of the Steppes*, Karl Jettmar, who remains an authority in the field, discusses indigenous abstract patterns of the steppe lands which were made up of an abstract pictographic vocabulary whose elements were combined to tell a story or to convey a meaning. But the author then proceeds to describe the birth of the ani-

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24 Jettmar, Steppes, p. 237. This method of carving persevered right up into the Islamic period and has been used to evince the steppe influence on Islamic art.

25 M. Beazly (Ed.), World Atlas of Archaeology, p. 218.

26 E. H. Minns, The Art of the Ancient Nomads, p.12.

mal style in this manner: "most of what we encounter here is not original creative work, but the accumulated débris of many styles, inherited from a long and eventful history."[27] This opinion may be partially based on the fact that many of the craftsmen of steppe art are known to have been foreign, such as the Greeks catering to the Scythians or the Chinese catering to the Hsiung-nu. However, many other authors judge animal art in a more positive light. For instance, M. Beazly declares: "This is indeed a unique and original style. In the course of its formation, it may well have borrowed, but it still remains radically different from the images which the Eurasian continent knew elsewhere or before, even if the "stag stones" constitute a link in a chain of development."[28] It should also be noted that the expressionistic quality of the animal style, with its dynamic composition and its design more concerned with effect rather than form, diverges tremendously from the classicism of the art of the surrounding established cultures.

The acute stylization of steppe art has been explained by aesthetic preference, by the constraints and properties of the original carving materials such as wood and bone, by religious symbolism, and/or by the departure from a life dependent upon the necessary keen observation of the hunter. This raises the speculative question of meaning, especially difficult due to the fact that animals have played a prominent role in ancient arts across the globe, because of their role in human survival, ancient religious systems, and ritual sacrifice. The theory that animal worship was prevalent in Eurasia has largely been disregarded as no evidence of theriomorphic deities has been found.[29] Some scholars have posited that the animal representations served as amulets to provide luck in hunting or on a journey. [30] Jettmar proposes, along the same lines, that each animal feature was a symbol endowed with "magic power and irradiating beneficial influence";[31] they were combined and worn by the warrior as protection. The author also suggests that because the depicted animals had

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27 Jettmar, Steppes, pp.13-14. Bussagli, in "Steppe Cultures", Enc. of W.Art, p. 238, shares this opinion. The former at least mentions the two schools of thought regarding steppe art: those that view it as deriving only from outside stimuli and those who see it as a natural evolution of indigenous techniques such as felt and leather appliqué.

28 Beazly, World Atlas, p. 218.

29 Jettmar, Steppes, pp. 238-239. Also Bussagli, "Steppe Cultures", Enc. of W. Art, p. 238.

30 Minns, Ancient Nomads, p.13.

31 Jettmar, Steppes, p. 34.

lost much of their religious significance, they had been, as in the Achaemenid animal style (ca. 700-330 BC), fabricated as objects of personal adornment and symbols of power and prestige. Wilhelm Worringer postulates that the abstract power of the pieces seem to express metaphysical concepts [32] as, historically speaking, sacred art has always tended towards non-naturalistic styles and stylization. The influence of shamanism has also been supposed, as still in contemporary shamanism, animals play a large role because they are believed to embody the shaman's double and his spirit helpers, thought to empower him on his "journeys" as well as ward off evil and disease. Animal charms, mirrors, and masks, all implements of the modern shaman, have been retrieved from ancient Siberian graves. Other research has concluded that zoomorphism is linked to clannic symbols, heraldic emblems, and totems. Perhaps these two last points facilitate our understanding of the art of the steppe and its survival as both shamanism and totemic heraldry endured throughout Turkish history, even after Islamicization.

The animal style perpetuated itself and persevered as a substratum of all future Turkish art. Certain elements infiltrated into the art of *dār al-islām* under Turkish rule disclosing the ongoing relevance of the world view that animated the art. A possibility exists that zoomorphic imagery persisted as folklore and that its meanings were no longer consciously perceived or known. However, should it have been the case, the hieratic somewhat severe style would not have been maintained. The pre-animal style of abstract ornamentation survived as a strong artistic current co-existing alongside the zoomorphs. Many scholars perceive its post-animal phase usage, not as a retention of a previous aesthetic but as a natural consequence of the steppe's tendency towards stylization, [33] especially with the advent of Islam and its aniconic leanings, for this ornamental tendency also subsisted into Islamic times.

Historical Beginnings

Turkish society and history, apart from modern Turkey, have been largely tribal, but it

[32] G. László, The Art of the Migration Period, p.17, referring to Worringer's *Formproblem der Gothik* (1922).G. László also lists other theories of meaning that have been offered by various specialists.

[33] Jettmar, Steppes, pp.159-160. The author refutes this theory he terms 'traditional' supported by K. Schefold, and E. Dittrich. Some scholars actually see the animal style as the basis of the Islamic arabesque, see Esin, History, p.188.

will be impossible to list and identify all the proto-Turkish and Turkish tribes which played a part in the shaping of Central Asia,[34] especially given that the political dynamic consisted of often ephemeral political formations. The objective here is to examine the four major Turkish formations before the Islamicization of the Turks, in order to expose their variety, their similitude, and their evolution. As this thesis represents the present author's first investigation into the topic, a certain amount of detail proves itself necessary in order to achieve a degree of comprehension of Turkish steppe history.

The field of Turcology bases itself on archaeology, linguistics and still to a certain degree, on anthropology. Many Turcologists trace the earliest roots of Turkish society back to the Siberian Karasuk (Minusinsk and Yenissei, ca.1300-800 BC) and to the Altaic Tagar (Altai ca. 800 BC-100 AD) cultures.[35] These regions were earlier inhabited by Europoids, but Asiatic types arrived during the Karasuk period in which Shang-Chou Chinese (ca. 1766-255 BC) influences or at least similarities in the material culture are to be found.[36] These early groups esteemed to be the forefathers of the Turks, migrated but also dwelled, according to petroglyphs, in log huts resembling tents by their dome-shaped roof, or in very large dug out houses. During the Karasuk period, metalwork was implemented on a large scale. The metal technology was fairly sophisticated as evidence has been found of the mining of ore and the knowledge of after-changing copper by adding arsenic and tin.[37] Karasuk knives and daggers with tiny bells or with sculpted heads of mountain goats, rams, horses or deer, as well as numerous ornaments, copper and bronze clips, bracelets, rings, and temporal rings have been excavated. These constitute the earliest examples of animal art on the Eurasian steppe and the first undisputed expressions of its world view. The metallurgical technical excellence displayed may have been due to very early contacts with China.[38] The Sinologist B. Kalgren posits that Shang China was the matrix of the ani-

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34 The terms Inner Asia and Central Asia will be used synonymously throughout this study.

35 Golden, Introduction, p. 41. These dates are approximations and vary according to the authors.

36 Esin, History, p. 9.

37 Okladinov, "Inner Asia", CHEIA, p. 85.

38 Yet another question of origin arises. Grousset in Chinese Art , p.11, speculates whether the bronze technique could have arrived in China from an original home of Syria and Mesopotamia , or else an original Siberian homeland of Karasuk or pre-Karasuk culture .

mal style [39] as opposed to the more prevalent view that it was the Scythians who, inheriting it from the Near East and Greece, carried it to the East.[40] This hypothesis seems credible as, after all, one is discussing Asiatic tribes who lived on the periphery of what very early on became the Chinese state.[41] Many other scholars have hypothesized a Central Asian origin to this technology. W. H. McNeill, exploring this question of an eastern or western origin to steppe art, concludes tentatively: "I find most plausible the theory that a very ancient style of woodcarving, indigenous to eastern and northern Asia,was developed in different directions by the Chinese, the Scythians, and the Amerindians of the Pacific coast." [42]

The Tagar period (ca. 800 BC-100 AD) which followed resembled the Karasuk culture in its artefacts and burial rites although an incursion of Europoid people can be noted. Men and women were buried with personal jewellery, weapons (ill.4), as well as victuals. Remains of flag poles topped by bronze mountain goats have been found in Tagar graves, reminding us of the antiquity of both the symbol and the artefact (ill.10-11). During the Tagar period, bears, boars, and ibexes were introduced into the art. Newly introduced features were animals composed curled up in a circle and the representation of eyes, nostrils, and feet rendered as rings. This tendency toward transforming the motif into spirals and curves is best exemplified by the birds' heads consisting of a volute as beak looped around an enormous eye curve (ill.9).[43] Again, one may speculate an eastern origin to this animal arabesque, as from the beginning of the Bronze Age, animals were often drawn in

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39 Jettmar, Steppes, p. 81. The author states that although he aided in propagating this thesis, it has been over-simplified. M A. Czaplicka also supports an Eastern origin thesis as she writes on p. 87 of The Turks of Central Asia: "In any case it is not the Scythian bronze that influenced the Minusinsk bronze, but rather the reverse." V. Elisséeff, in "Asiatic protohistory", Enc. of W. Art, p. 32, writes: "As R. Ghirshman points out, it is very tempting to look for the point of departure of Scythian art in the area of Karasuk culture, since it seems impossible that it should have arisen from any culture dominated by geometric currents. Thus, Scythian art (8th c. BC) would be the third stage in Chinese animal art (14th c. BC), transmitted through Karasuk (10th c. BC)."

40 Jettmar, Steppes, p. 186.

41 This point of view does not seek to deny the obvious influence of Assyro-Babylonian Mesopotamia on the early Scythian art of outer Persia, for example in the Kuban or the Luristan finds. See Grousset, Empire, pp. 11-15 on Scythian art.

42 McNeill, Rise, p. 222, footnote 81.

43 Jettmar, Steppes, p.83.

an "S" shape so prevalent in Chinese art.[44]

Certain standing stones bearing depictions of stags, known simply as stag stones, originally thought to be from the Karasuk culture are now seen as belonging to Bronze Age peoples of Trans-Baikal and Mongolia, forming what is termed the slab-grave culture (1500-500 BC), a culture closely related to the Karasuk. The stags often appear in high relief and are accompanied by solar symbols, eagles, and bows, quivers, daggers, and battle-axes.[45] This iconography is regarded as expressing the cult of the heroized ancestor-warrior along with the cult of the sun, both associated with religious rites.[46] These types of stag stones have been common to several ancient steppe cultures; a millenium later, during the first Türk khaganate, animal reliefs were carved on cliffs although the stag had by then been replaced by the mountain goat. There is however another type of stag stones appearing as early as the ninth or eighth century BC, which are free-standing monoliths depicting the face and belt of a man and bearing emblems of stags and mountain goats (ill.8).[47] These are also considered stelae and their markings vividly display the original Siberian aesthetic. Dating back to the previously mentioned Okunev period (ca. 2000-1500 BC), but also originally attributed to the Karasuk period, are the carved monolithic stelae bearing strange masks, half anthropomorphic and half zoomorphic with "radiating head ornaments" and other cosmic symbols such as circles with rays or branches thought to be connected with the hereafter.[48] It has been suggested that these mask carvings represented and perhaps functioned as shamans' masks. And they are incontestably related to the monstrous *t'ao-t'ieh* [49] masks of Chinese art; another illustration of the link between the art and the beliefs of north China and those of the steppe peoples.

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44 V. Elisséeff, "Asiatic protohistory", Enc. of W. Art, p. 32.

45 Okladinov, "Inner Asia", CHEIA, p. 89.

46 *Ibid.*

47 See A. Askarov,V.Volkov, and N.Ser-Odjav, "Pastoral and nomadic tribes at the beginning of the first millenium B.C.", History of Civilizations of Central Asia (Ed. A. H. Dani), v. I, pp. 467-8.

48 *Ibid.*, p.82.

49 The term refers to a stylized animal face used often in ritual bronzes of the Shang period (1766-1122 BC). D. Carter, Four Thousand Years of China's Art, p.30, describes it in this fash ion: "Frequently it appears as a monster masque that looks like the split head of a beast laid flat on the design, with a ridge where the nose should be."

The Hsiung-nu (210 BC - ca. 155 AD)

Apart from these very early cultures which may have experienced the transition to nomadism, some of which may be thought to form the ancient roots of the Turkish peoples, one can affirm with more certainty that in the pre-Christian era, amongst the several tribes bordering to the north and the west of China, proto-Turkish tribes are to be found. Although the debate is still open as to their ethnic group [50] and although it is not known if the ruling class was proto-Turkish or whether simply Turkish tribes were amongst them, the Hsiung-nu, until otherwise demonstrated, are regarded as marking the official beginning of Turkish history. The Hsiung-nu appear in the third century BC in Chinese records, in reference to their leader T'eou-man's death in 210 BC, but they may have been referred to at an earlier date, under different appellations, such as the Hsien-yün hordes whose eight century BC attack on Lo-yang is described. Chinese sources also inform us of "barbarian" (Hsiun-yü, Hu) raids dating back as far back as the second millenium BC. The Chinese depictions of Hsiung-nu physiognomy testify to their belonging to the Asiatic group.

The Hsiung-nu established in Mongolia the first empire of the eastern steppes (map A) and set the precedent for the subsequent Central Asian nomadic empires, such as the exchanges with and the raids against China, and the resulting somewhat forced peace treaties which led to a political organization beyond the tribe and clan system. Hence, while the Hsiung-nu continued the warfare technique of inspiring terror, administrative structures were instituted. They were divided into twenty-four major tribes, and counted five classes of officials as well as adminstrative aids. Hsiung-nu success is amply demonstrated by the Chinese decision to erect a great defensive wall as well as by their later cavalry reform when the Chinese army adopted nomadic riding techniques, archery and dress. It seems that there may have existed in Hsiung-nu society, an official tax system as well as permanent constructions for religious, political and food-storing ends.[51] After all, like

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50 Roux, Histoire, p. 41. The author briefly discusses the three schools whereby the Hsiung-nu are thought to be Paleo-Asiatics, proto-Mongols or proto-Turks. W. Samolin, "Hsiung-nu, Hun, Turk", Central Asiatic Journal, 3, declares that Chinese sources consistently maintained that the Turks were "ethnically descendants of the Hsiung-nu". p.149.

51 Golden, Introduction, p. 66.

most steppe empires, the Hsiung-nu contained a sedentary agrarian element. The nature of the Hsiung-nu polity is best expressed by Barfield in his *Perilous Frontier* as: "an imperial confederacy, autocratic and statelike in foreign affairs but consultative and federally structured internally."[52] The Hsiung-nu leaders, following the Asiatic tradition, believed that they ruled by a divine decree or a mandate from Heaven. The title for the leader was *shan-yü* and was sometimes embellished, becoming for example "Shan-yü whom Heaven has set up" or "the great Shan-yü of the Hsiung-nu born of Heaven and Earth and ordained by the sun and the moon." [53] However his effective power was not absolute.

T'eou-man was assassinated by his son Mao-tun (209-174 BC) who subjugated many neighbouring tribes, such as the Tung-hu (proto-Mongols), the Hun-yü, the Ch'ü-she, the Ting-ling, the Ko-k'un and the Hsien-li. Later, he attacked the Yüeh-chih (Indo-Europeans, Tokhars), the Wu-sun and the Hu-chieh (Oghurs or Oghuz) managing to unite "all the people who live by drawing the bow" into "one family."[54] Not only is the multitude of tribes here demonstrated, but also a certain definition of identity and its implied characteristics. While the Hsiung-nu didn't disappear, their empire dissolved in 155 AD. Some became frontier guards for China, able to usurp power and form the Pei-Han or Northern Han dynasty (304-329 AD), eventually obliging China to move their capital from Lo-yang to Nankin (317 AD), while others were to temporarily vanish only to reappear as Huns a few centuries later.[55] The Hsiung-nu empire greatly affected the destinies of both Central Asia and of Europe. Their attack on the Yü-cheh caused the latter to flee and to subsequently destroy in ca.130 BC, Bactria (present-day Afghanistan), the last bastion of Central Asian Hellenism. Hsiung-nu power and success attracted much hostility and caused them to be pressured from almost all sides, obliging them to move west, thus opening up all of

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52 T. J. Barfield, Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, pp. 36-37.

53 Golden, Introduction, p. 65, note 135.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

55 This last point is not unanimously accepted . Golden, in Introduction, p. 86, writes in his impartial way : "It seems likely, but cannot be proved as yet, that this (xwn) along with Xiyon, Hunni, Ouvvai etc. were all variants of the name rendered in Chinese as Hsiung-nu." However, another modern scholar of Central Asia disagrees. See Sinor "The Huns", CHEIA, pp.177-180, where the author analyzes the sources on which this theory is based. Sinor does not refute the general opinion that the Huns were Turks or Mongols (p.202).

Upper Asia to the process of Turkicization.

It is generally thought, but not without contestation, that the Huns who arrived in south-east Europe in 375 AD were the same group as the earlier Hsiung-nu. The Huns would thus be the first group of attested proto-Turks on the western Eurasian steppe. They were followed by a succession of Turkish tribes; the Khazar, the Bulghar, the Pecheneg, the Kipchak, and the Oghur. In the East, in place of the Hsiung-nu there was also a plethora of Turkish tribes, the Ting-ling and the Tie-lo amongst others.

The Hsiung-nu religion was similar to that of ancient China as well as to the later Turkish one.The Hsiung-nu worshipped their ancestors, Heaven (Tëngri) and Earth, certain sacred mountains, gods and spirits to which they performed sacrifices biannually. Shamanism is presumed by Golden, [56] but asserted by N. Ishjamts: "The Hsiung-nu initially believed in animism, totemism and in life beyond the grave. From the time of Mao-tun, Shamanism became the state religion." [57] It is perhaps to this that the earliest Chinese annals allude when they describe foreign hordes as "uncanny people who, versed in all sorts of black art, knew the language of birds and wild animals." [58]

Their art, although Sophia-Karin Psarras states that there is a "category accepted through visual experience as Xiongnu art", [59] is in the pure animal tradition of the steppe and therefore consists of portable items, charms and objects of adornment (ill.14). Several Hsiung-nu-type plaques have been uncovered in Chinese graves as well. They were fabricated by the Hsiung-nu themselves or else mass-produced in large numbers by the Chinese Han dynasty (202 BC-220 AD).[60] The Chinese pieces are less dynamic in style, tend towards the orderly symmetry and regularity of the Chinese aesthetic and show a

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56 Golden, Introduction, p. 65, referring to Warson's Records of the Grand Historian of China (tr.of the Shih-chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien) II, (NY 1961) p.164. Grousset, Empire, p. 25 summarizes Hsiung- nu religion in a succinct fashion: "Their religion was a vague shamanism based on the cult of Tängri or heaven and on the worship of certain sacred mountains."

57 Ishjamts, "Nomads in eastern Central Asia", History of Civilizations in Central Asia (Ed. J. Harmatta), v. II, p.164. The author also describes a shaman's head-dress with bird motif found at Noin-Ula, and other facets of Hsiung-nu cults and divination, p.165.

58 Carter, Four Thousand Years , p. 95.

59 S. K. Psarras, "Pieces of Xiongnu art", Central Asiatic Journal, 40 , 2, p. 235

60 O. Maenchen-Holfen, "Crenelated mane and scabbard slide", CAJ ,3, p. 97.

greater use of vegetal ornamentation.[61]

Many simple graves have been found, on the Selenga River, where the dead are simply placed under the earth, upon a bed of stones surrounded by victuals, sacrificed horses heads and the necessary artefacts and weapons for the afterlife. The implements in the tombs disclose a certain degree of Chinese influence as most items were of Chinese provenance, including silks, jades, bits of mirrors and even chopsticks.[62] Some indigenous artefacts such as fragments of bronze cauldrons, small statuettes of horses and gold-plated bronze plaques were also excavated. The Ordos bronzes, found in the region between north of the Yellow River and the Great Wall, mostly all in the animal style, are usually deemed as Hsiung-nu.[63] The royal tombs in the mountains of Noin-Ula in the Altai were the first Hsiung-nu finds dating back to 1912, and are more elaborate as they no doubt belonged to dignitaries, chieftains or princes. The external mound of earth, or tumulus, is fairly low and covered with stones to form a lattice motif. The shafts are eight metres deep and terminate by a carefully wooded burial chamber. The polished planks covered with cloth and the dovetailing of the sarcophagus reveal the extent and the level of workmanship. Like most graves, these also had been looted for gold but in spite of this, great finds were made. Tables, Chinese lacquered bowls, kettles, ornamental plaques, weapons, textile fragments and carpets were discovered. Many of the artefacts demonstrate a Chinese origin, but those attributed to local manufacture unite the Chinese-inspired and the Scytho-Siberian aesthetic.[64] The depth of the Noin-Ula graves is responsible for the preservation of the textiles. Two felt rugs were discovered; the best preserved is the largest, 2.60 by 1.95 metres, and consists of a central panel decorated with a continuous pattern of twenty four spirals filled in with smaller volutes around which is a border bearing motifs which is itself surrounded by a frieze of trees and animal combats. The scene of this rug often reproduced depicts an embroidered eagle or wolverine with wings attacking a stag or elk with an

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61 Carter, Four Thousand Years, p.103. See also Psarras, "Xiongnu art", CA J. 40, pp. 234-260, who analyzes and compares the differences betwen Chinese-made or native-made pieces of Hsiung-nu art.

62 Jettmar, Steppes, p.168.

63 For a list of Hsiung-nu sites and their finds see Grousset, Empire, p. 25.

64 Bussagli,"Steppe Cultures", Enc. of W. Art, , p. 400.

appliqué of Chinese silk under the stag's feet (ill.12a-b). The silk is Chinese but the motif appears to belong to the steppe tradition.[65] Karl Jettmar proposes that this rug, because of its identical composition with the one found at Pazyryk, namely a frieze surrounding a central panel made up of twenty-four units, may have held a ritual function, serving for example as an aid for divination in a type of cosmic board-game.[66]

The few artefacts ascribed to the Huns [67] testify to their Inner Asian heritage: metallic belt plaques, certain types of arrows, metallic and earthen statuettes, Chinese mirrors, reflexed compound bows and large cauldrons with projecting handles,[68] all possess definite counterparts in Central Asia, Siberia and Northern China. This type of cauldron is not only found in Hsiung-nu graves but is represented in much earlier Altaic rock drawings and has been associated with burial rites, raising the question of the possibility of the practice of cremation.[69] Also, the procedure of Attila's (d.453) funeral, with his coffin placed in a tent around which the mourners circumambulate and cut their faces, also points to the Huns' Inner Asian origin. Literary sources expose the meagre aspect of our present-day findings, which do not measure up to the ancient descriptions of the Hun environment. Priscus Rhetor, a fifth century Byzantine diplomat and historian, was dazzled by the splendour of Attila's wooden palace, richly attired with Armenian rugs.

In dealing with steppe art, one should always bear in mind that the finds represent a very partial vision of the material culture, much of which has perished. Or, to quote Gyula

65 Ishjamts, "Nomads", His.of Civ. C. Asia (Ed. J. Harmatta), v. II, p.160, confirms this hunch about the "felt carpets of local manufacture" which were embroidered with spirals and bordered with animals and trees.

66 Jettmar, Steppes, p.173 and p.162.

67 The Huns appear in sources as early as the 4th c. AD, the most famous date being their crossing of the Volga in ca.370. Their dynasty was short lived; in the latter half of the 5th c. they disappear from the sources and no doubt joined other tribes and confederations on the Western steppe.

68 Sinor, "The Huns", CHEIA, p.204. The author ascertains that only the last two artefacts are of Hun origin whereas László, in Art, pp. 36-40, attributes a gold bow, cicada fibulae thought to denote rank, precious gold objects and jewelry and a characteristic scale pattern decorative motif. Esin, in History, p. 83, mentions the Turco-Hunnic aspects of material culture that the Huns transmitted to the West, such as leather belts with metallic plaques and hanging straps, the prey bird motif and the gold plaques with cabochons. She also attributes as proof to their Inner Asian an provenance, their long hair, their Chinese mirrors, their bronze cauldrons and their clothes appliquéed with embroidered bands.

69 László, Art, p. 38.

László : "And who would dare to think of the wonders of Rheims or Rouen on seeing a Gothic belt with leafwork ornament? " [70] The importance of the animal style can be demonstrated by the fact that it carried over into Hun art, spread to Scandinavian and Germanic art, and ultimately revitalized the early Christian art of northern Europe; by crossing the Don in 374, the Huns instigated the great migrations of Goths, Visigoths and Alans. The expressionist style of drawing, the animal iconography, the taut composition and ornamental quality of Romanesque church carving are all greatly indebted to the steppe traditions and what they had absorbed from neighbouring cultures. V. Elisséeff phrases it thus: "The Goths and the Avars transmitted these zoomorphic elements to our early Middle Ages. Viking swords and European cathedrals still preserve, thanks to the Huns, the rememberance of the Sino-Siberian torsions and the Scytho-Sarmatian figural interlaced designs." [71] The original meanings of the symbols were often transformed and reinterpreted in light of the new spiritual and social context.

Instead of turning to those who succeeded the Huns in Eastern Europe, the Avars, [72] who left behind them many archaeological testimonies, such as the forty-four thousand graves that have been identified and excavated, a small word will be said on the animal style in China. If the painting and sculpture of the Han (206 BC-220 AD) dynasty, sometimes portraying the steppe nomads, attests to their place in the Chinese imagination, the art of the earlier Chou period (1027-255 BC) establishes the presence of conquering steppe tribes within ancient China. The small eastern kingdom of Chou was a small border state federated to the Shang dynasty which it overthrew when it had grown into a consequential military power. Grousset divides the art of the official Chou into two periods, that of Spring

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[70] *Ibid.*, p.10.

[71] Elisséeff, "Asiatic protohistory", Enc. of W. Art, , p. 34.

[72] The Avars, were a powerful grouping of Turkish, Mongol, or Turko-Mongol descent, who ruled from the mid-6th to the 9th centuries. None of the palaces or settlements have been located, but as mentioned, thousands of cemetaries have been found and many nomadic-type articles have been excavated, belt plaques and buckles, harnesses, and fibulae all bear zoomorphic designs as well as graceful "spiralling geometric or plant motifs." See Grousset, Empire, p.176. See also S.Szádeczky-Kardoss, "The Avars", CHEIA , pp. 226-28, who discusses the types of belts found in the different Avar phases and their insignia marking rank, for example the rhytons, cups, swords, quivers, arrows, and most importantly the belt "adorned in accordance with his rank and ancestry." All of which testify to the Inner Asian tradition. The early belts carry geometric *tamghas* which are replaced in later times by griffins which possessed both ancestral and totemic attributes.

and Autumn (722-481 BC) and that of the Warring States (481-221 BC).[73] During the latter, a new style evolved in bronze known as the Huai style found especially in the northwestern and southern border states, where interlaced animals *-t'aoh-t'ieh* masks, serpents, dragons, fantastic animals- and delicately engraved arabesques figure on the metal backdrop of mirrors and plaques (ill.15). The whole tendency is one of dynamic movement and abstraction and lends itself as proof of the still unclarified but certain link between Hsiung-nu and Chinese art, and perhaps of their later influence on the art of the Muslim lands.

The T'opa Wei -Tabğač (386-534 AD)

After forming a small strategical state, the Tabgatch (Tabğač), a proto-Turk tribe, conquered north China (map B) and adopted the Chinese name of Northern Wei (386-534 AD). A military ruling class consisting of a hundred and nineteen tribes governed a predominantly Chinese population. As is often the case when a nomadic society vanquishes a longly established sedentary one, the T'opa Wei retained the administration formerly in place, and learning to read and write, underwent a process of Sinicization. This assimilation, another leitmotif of history, instigated an estrangement between the ruling élite and their tribesmen ultimately leading, through inner dissent, to their downfall. By the end the T'opa were completely absorbed into the Chinese population.

Early on, the Tabgatch worshipped the sky-god Tëngri and practised a cave cult, both rites of the Turkish religion. But in 452 AD, through the many cultural influences travelling along the Silk Road, the T'opa Wei converted to Buddhism and declared it the state religion. Tradition has it that thirteen thousand Buddhist temples were built during the short reign of just one emperor, [74] and that one ruler, T'opa Hong I (465-471 AD) was

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[73] Grousset, Chinese Art, p.38. In Empire, p. 25 he purports: "All (S. Umehara, B. Karlgren, T. J. A r ne) are agreed that the influence of Ordos art (Hsiung-nu) is one of the factors which together with the laws of internal evolution and apparently working in the same direction as these, caused the transition of archaic Chinese bronzes from the Middle Chou style to that of the Warring States." Ishjamts, "Nomads", His.of Civ. C. Asia (Ed. J. Har matta), v. II, p.168, is of this opinion and mentions as Hsiung-nu influence on Chinese art, the rendering of wolves, goats and horses. This issue of Chinese and steppe mutual artistic influencing would have to be fully investigated at a later date to better discern the origin of the shared iconography and symbolism. Chinese archaeology has also made incredible progress in the last few decades.

[74] Carter, Four Thousand Years, p.140.

pious enough to relinquish his position and to become a monk.

The T'opa Wei dynasty held an extensive empire, and once they had subjugated the K'ao-ch'ü, it extended from Karashahr to Korea. The Tabgatch, despite their complete Sinicization, may have preserved some sense of kinship with other Turkish tribes, because, although they were adamant supporters of Chinese civilization and generally on the defensive towards the steppe "barbarians", they agreed to assist, as allies, the T'u-kiue when the latter successfully rebelled against their Mongol Juan-juan overlords in 552 AD.

The Wei arrived in China endowed with the artistic heritage of the steppe which, allied to the new Buddhist faith, was to change the course of Chinese art, liberating it forever of its obssessive hearkening to the past. Dagny Carter, although identifying the Tabgatch as a Tunguz rather than as a Turkish people, nevertheless states:

"Wei records-compiled after the T'opa tribes had settled in China tell that in the days of old, when their ancestors lived in tents, no girl could become the bride of a chieftain until she had successfully cast an image. Indicating the quality of the work required, sometimes as many as seven castings were made before the result was approved by the tribe. The records do not tell what kind of image, but it probably was in the animal style, for at that time the T'opa tribes had not been converted to Buddhism."[75]

A variant of this tradition was perpetuated by the T'opa Wei as it has been reported that the descendants of the khan who sought to marry a princess had to first successfully master the art of carving statues of Buddha.[76] This at least testifies to the existence of indigenous craftsmen.

This wave of foreign invaders invigorated Chinese, as well as Buddhist art. The latter originally aniconic, had already been Hellenized along the Silk Road, notably at Gandhara, hence the appellation Gandhara art (ill.17).[77] To the T'opa-Wei period belong the sculpted caves, the Yün Kang and the Lung-mên being the two most famous. The former are situated near the first T'opa capital of Ta-t'ung in the province of Shansi and are dated to the fifth century AD. The earliest caves begun in 414-415 were destroyed, probably due to the Buddhist persecutions of 446-447, but carving resumed in 453. Grousset identifies the Chinese monk T'an-yo who directed the endeavour in many of the caves, as the underly-

[75] Carter, Four Thousand Years, p.105. This also gives us important information on gender roles, implying that women were also involved in art-making.

[76] O. Aslanapa, Turkish Art and Architecture, p. 41.

[77] Before this period, the representation of Buddha was forbidden.

ing artistic mind, and envisions the caves of Buddhist Afghanistan as their artistic prototype.[78] The caves' fundamental style certainly exhibits an awareness of the art of the sedentary oases of the Silk Road, as opposed to the pure nomadic elements of the steppe. Carter, on her part, although she points out the eclecticism so characteristic of the art of the caravan route region and the monsters and dragons of Chinese art, proposes that not only were the artists familiar with Central Asian multi-ethnic iconography but also that Yün-kang sculpture is related to the art of the steppe by its sense of rhythm and its allover composition (ill.16, 18), and that it may have been executed by the Wei themselves.[79] To further illustrate her point, she cites the angular flat figures, the treatment of the folds of the garments, the movements of the flying genii, the filling of space with ornamentation, but especially the emphasis on the effect of the whole as opposed to the detail.[80] Grousset intimates that the only artistic steppe influence of the Turkish leaders to be found in Wei art as a whole, is their epic tastes translated into representations of processions of elaborate cavalcades of donors on stelae or in the loving depictions of Buddha's horse, Kanthaka. The same author however concedes that it was the T'opa Wei's steppe past and 'religious fervor', which provoked such an unreserved mysticism in their art which Chinese classical taste would have inhibited.[81] Oktay Aslanapa has singled out the decorative patterns in the T'opa caves as being based on textile prototypes and therefore connoting a Turkish nomadic influence.[82] It was also during this period that the lion was introduced into "Turkish"

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78 Grousset, Chinese Art, pp.149-150.

79 Carter, Four Thousand Years, pp. 134 and 138.

80 *Ibid.* Grousset gives a more general Central Asian background to these same features, see Chinese Art, pp.156-57, and p. 68 of text, footnote 287 concerning the tent features depicted. (The T'opa had managed to reunite China with the oasis states).

80 Grousset, Empire, p. 64.

81 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p. 41.

art from Indian Buddhist iconography, [83] and was to become a favourite theme among the later Turks, in both their titles (*arslan*) and their art, even if in the latter it often more closely resembled a dog or a tiger.

When the Wei made Lo-yang their capital in 494 AD, new caves were begun in 508, eight miles south, in the black limestone cliff of the Lung-mēn pass. The Lung-mēn caves were commissioned by T'opa Hong I's grandson T'opa Hong II. Here, perhaps due to the hardness of the stone, more bas-reliefs as opposed to sculpture in the round were rendered. The nature of the material may also have been responsible, to a certain degree, for the greater highlighting of detail. These caves with their Chinese sophistication are considered one of the masterpieces of Chinese art (ill.21). Chinese influence on Wei Buddhist sculpture is to be found in the beatific expression of the faces and the meditative attitude of the bodies that "evokes a spirituality of form that was unknown to Gandhāra (ill.20, 22)." [84]

The Wei period also produced, apart from other caves such as She-ku-ssu and Kung-hsien, many stelae (ill.19). Wei sculpture is not only considered the greatest sculpture within the parameters of Chinese art; Grousset concludes: "The sculpture of the Wei - whether it be that of the Wei of the North up to 534 or of the successors, the Eastern and Western Wei, after this date- represents one of the peaks of religious art of all time." [85]

The T'opa Wei divided into East and West in 534 AD, while on the steppe, the proto-Mongol Juan-juan [86] and the Hephthalites, generally also considered proto-Mongols, had

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83 Esin, History, p. 68. The author discusses other steppe features of T'opa art, such as the influence of of T'opa physiognomy on Wei art: "In 518, when the art of...the Tabğač had reached a peak of excellence, Sung-yun, a monk born in Tun-huang, travelled from Kansu towards Ḫōtan. Until he reached the latter province, Sung-yun, had never seen a Buddha effigy which did not look like a Hu (Hun or northern nomad)." The author also gives evidence that Buddhas were often represented as specific T'opa rulers, and perhaps more importantly she mentions the "Northern" influences on certain concepts of the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism (p.67).

84 Grousset, Chinese Art, p.162.

85 *Ibid.*, p.160.

86 The Juan-juan became prominent in ca. 402 AD and ruled in a large area surrounding present-day Mongolia. They suffered internal dissent after the T'u-kiue take-over in 522 AD.

constitued for themselves large empires.[87] Both typify, culturally and politically, the Inner Asian steppe empire traditions.

The T'u-kiue Kaghanates (552-582/681-744 AD)

This outline of Turkish history and cycles on the Eurasian steppe is necessarily schematic, and presenting four dynasties in a logical and chronological fashion does not succeed in translating all the subtle connections, ethnological, geographical, and cultural, between the seemingly disparate groups. Unfortunately, it is impossible to present these important aspects in this study; it will have to suffice to state that the previous T'opa Wei dynasty and the present T'u-kiue kaghanates were not completely isolated entities. Their geographical and ethnological proximity alone reveals a common shared history and set of customs. By the time of the rise of the T'u-kiue, also known as the Türks or Kök-Türks (Blue-Turks), most of the Eurasian steppe had been penetrated by Turkish tribes. In the region of the T'u-kiue, the Kurikan, Kirghiz, Syr Tarduch, the Uighurs, the Sha-t'o, the Basmil and the Türgech tribes were present while in the West, the Khazars, the Bulgars, the Avars, the Petchenegs and the Kipchaks were to be found.

The T'u-kiue are assumed to be both progeny of the Hsiung-nu and part of the Toquz Oguz group. They excelled in the smelting of iron ore and the manufacture of weapons for their overlords, the Juan-juan, and rebelled against them setting up their own state in 552 AD (map C). Their mastery in metalworking must have played a considerable military, economic and political part in the establishing of their power. The Juan-juan were compelled to flee. After this take-over, the T'u-kiue succeeded in sustaining, "for a period long by Inner Asian standards, the political unification of a stretch of land that reached from the confines of China to the borders of Byzantium." [88]

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[87] Some Chinese sources view the Hephthalites as descendants of the Yüeh-chih (Indo-European). Esin, History, p. 54: " Chinese sources stated by Kollantz and Miyakawa represented them as kindred to the Yüeh-chih and deriving from areas north of the Chinese wall." Golden in Introduction, p. 79, writes that they were ethnically connected to the Mongol Juan-juan to whom they were vassals. The Hephthalites gained importance in the second half of the 5th c. when they reigned from the upper Yulduz in the East to as far as the Aral Sea. They then annexed Soghdiana, Samarkand, and Gandhara. They disappear from Indian history in the second half of the 7th c. and in the West they are conquered by a joint operation of the Sassanids and the Wes tern T'u- kiue. For their art, see B. A. Litvinsky, "The Hephtalite Empire", His. of Civ. C. Asia (Ed. B.A.Litvinsky), vol. III, pp. 151-162.

[88] Sinor, "Türk empire", CHEIA, p. 315.

The first Türk kaghanate was followed by a second one, instigated by a veritable popular revolution after a century of Chinese rule (582-681 AD). The *budun* (people) experienced this vassaldom to China as treason on the part of the rulers and were only too aware of the social and economic gap between the latter and themselves. This new national consciousness of the second Türk kaghanate played itself out by a return to the Turkish, as opposed to Soghdian, language employed even in official inscriptions, an affirmation of the Tëngri religion and a growing suspicion of Buddhism, which nevertheless continued to assume an influential role within Turk society. This popular movement was headed by three first great leaders, Elterish, Kapghan and Bilge, who were guided and advised by the man who is often hailed as the first great Turkish statesman, Tonyukuk. The latter was a Chinese-educated Turk who had held a hereditary post in the Chinese administration which he had forsaken to join the pro-Turkish kaghanate, being a very steadfast defender of pro-Turkish sentiment. Denis Sinor describes this unique figure in the following way:

"Tonyukuk was the embodiment of Türk polity, staunch but reasonable opponent to the Chinese, and fierce guardian of Türk national values, even to rejecting Buddhism and Taoism as unsuited to a people of warriors. Tonyukuk felt that because the Türks were few in numbers- less than a hundredth part of the Chinese, as he put it- the only way for them to maintain their national identity was "to follow the water and the grass" and have no permanent dwellings. If the Türks were to change their old customs, he argued, one day they would be defeated and annexed by the Chinese."[89]

The cause of the revolution as well as the ideology of the second Türk kaghanate is well expressed in some of the inscriptions, for example engraved on Bilge Kaghan's (r.716-34 AD) stele, we read: "I did not reign over a people that was rich; I reigned over a people weak and frightened, a people that had no food in their bellies and no cloth on their backs... Then, by the grace of Heaven, and because of good fortune and propitious circumstances, I brought back to life the dying people, the naked people I clothed, and I made the few many."[90] That a hierarchical social organization, so typical of steppe societies, endured despite or alongside this idealism, is evinced by the twenty-nine T'u-kiue

89 *Ibid.*, p. 312.

90 *Ibid.*, pp. 312-13.

classes of dignitaries enumerated on the Orkhon inscriptions.[91]

The religion of the T'u-kiue upheld the rites of the Hsiung-nu. The cult of Tëngri prevailed with sheep and horse sacrifices at the summer and winter equinox, in the fifth and eighth month of the year. Byzantine sources confirm this practice: "But it is the author of Heaven and earth alone that they worship and call God, sacrificing to him horses, oxen and sheep." [92] At least once a year, other sacrifices, connected to metallurgy, took place in the "ancestral cavern." The sacred forest Ötükän in Mongolia, an important site of Turkish identity, was revered. The cult of the mother or hearth goddess Umay,[93] originally a Mongol cult, was also maintained as was the use of shamans (*kams*). The widespread use of the wolf as totem and ancestor explains the T'u-kiue gold wolf head flagstaffs and the wolf bas-reliefs on some of the stelae. The Bugut inscription with its carved wolf under whose belly appears a man clearly denotes the wolf-ancestor myth of the Türks. Byzantine sources also allude to the veneration of water, fire and air as an Iranian or Mazdean influences.[94] The Turkish religion was essentially a mystical and cosmological religion and its organic uncodified nature rendered it open to the influence of other doctrines sweeping over Asia.[95] Religious tolerance was always exercised by the pre-Islamic Turks and this clemency attracted persecuted religious minorities to their land. This is how, Buddhism in the long run and, despite Tonyukuk's warning, managed to attract high ranking officials. The Tur-

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91 The Orkhon inscriptions are usually deemed the oldest written documents in Turkish. They are composed of three stones, one for Tonyukuk, one for Kültegin, and one for Bilge Kaghan. See Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p.38. The T'u-kiue are generally attributed with the earliest form of writing amongst theTurks of the steppe; however, the most recent scholarship reveals over twenty carved characters on Hsiung-nu artefacts which were either similar or identical to T'u-kiue "runic" alphabet. See Ishjamts, "Nomads", His.of Civ. C. Asia (Ed. J. Harmatta), v. II, pp.165-7 (ill. 13).

92 Golden, Introduction, p.84.

93 Umay, Tëngri's companion, represented essentially a cosmic principle rather than an anthropomorphic deity.

94 *Ibid.*, p.84.

95 Grousset, Empire, p. 86, describes Turkish cosmogony thus: "The universe consisted of a series of levels, one above the other. The seventeen upper levels formed the heavens, or realm of Light, and the seven or nine lower ones constituted the underworld, or place of Darkness. Between the two lay the surface of the earth, where men dwelt. Heaven and earth obeyed a supreme being who inhabited the highest level of the sky and who was known by the name of Divine Heaven or Tängri. Heaven was also the place of virtuous souls, as the subterranean world was the hell of the wicked."

kish ruler Taspar (r.572-581) converted to the Indian religion and thus began, not only the building of monasteries, but also the translation of Buddhist canonical works into Turkish and Chinese.

The art of this period comprises engraved and painted petroglyphs and demonstrates a predilection for epic and cynegetic scenes and a tendency towards pictograms and pictogram-like motifs reducing drawing to its essential features (ill.23). These features no doubt represent popular artistic expressions, and the narrative scenes most probably represent the feats of a deceased person's life. The artefacts cited in inscriptions or found in graves, typify the Inner Asian steppe tradition: gilded arrow-cases, buckles, belts and belt plaques (ill. 29), mirrors, textiles (fragments), decorated horn and bone artefacts, weaponry, cups and beakers with animal designs, and saddlery (ill.24, 25, 30).[96] Even birchbark quivers bore designs as shown by one found in Tuva which has endured until today, despite the fragility of the material. Some evidence as to the existence of painting on wood has been found, such as a pommel bearing animal designs. Now over a millenium old, the Inner Asian nomadic tradition had survived (ill.26). The past of the Turkish peoples attests to their loyalty to the indigenous tradition and its undying pertinence which, now allied to a consciousness of identity, may permit us to speak of the Turkish artistic *genius loci*.

The kaghanate of the T'u-kiue and the birth of the term "Turk" it instigated, the consolidation of large ethnic Turkish-speaking groups in the West as well as a greater preservation of sculpture, architecture and petroglyphs have led certain modern academic sources, such as the *Encyclopedia of World Art*, to discuss from this point on "Turkish" art without tribal or geographical distinctions. It defines the ancient Turkish period (6th -10th c. AD) as having witnessed "the crystallization not only of the ethnologic aspects but also of the basic cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples."[97] Continuity abides as in the earliest periods of the steppe. The same types and styles of art and iconography were pursued by the T'u-kiue, and other Turkish peoples, and even to a certain extent, conceptually if not formally, by the later Uighur (744-840 AD). The Uighur society experienced great changes through the adoption of Manichaeism and the inheritance of the refined Indo-Buddhist culture and art of

96 Esin, History, p.118.

97 Enc. of W. Art, article on "Turkic art" by A. D. Grach, p. 438.

the Silk Road, when a number of Turkish features were transferred to the new religious artistic repertoires.

From the sixth to the tenth centuries, the arts evolved notably. Metalworking had always been a great speciality of the Turks as artefacts fashioned in precious metals were in great demand by the Turkish nomadic aristocracy. Techniques such as casting, hammering, chasing, embossing, engraving and damascening were employed in the fabrication of swords, silver and gold cups, jewelry and statuary. To this category belong the finds of ornamental plaques, "lyre" plaques which were suspended from the warrior's belt, and many types of differently shaped and sized vessels. The metal belt plaques were made of metallic foil hammered onto a wooden matrix mold and embellished such items as belts or harnesses. Natural forms, such as flower and leaf shapes (ill.29), were preferred for the gold and silver plaques, whereas for those of poured bronze, usually lyre plaques affixed to the belt by leather strips, heart and crescent shapes were chosen.[98] In the steppe tradition, any self-respecting Turk owned a decorated belt which designated rank and conferred status. To it was often appended the warrior's sword and cup, two necessary implements in the Turkish ceremonies of oaths of allegiance, forming part of their system of bonds of kinship (*and*). This type of belt or parts of them have been widely discovered in Tuva, Mongolia, in the Minusinsk basin, in Khirghizia and elsewhere. One such belt unearthed in the tomb of a wealthy Turk in the Altai bears an inscription which reads "Master Ak-Kyon's ...sash." [99]

Metalwork, especially jewelry making, also possessed an important center beyond the Turkish Kaghanates in the land of the Kirghiz. The latter deliberately tried to dupe grave robbers by not burying the person's possessions in the actual tomb, and thus several sites escaped the fate of rifling. Kirghiz metalwork exhibits a particular excellence, for example, one *kurgan* revealed four weighty gold vessels, adorned with plants and fish clutching griffins, set upon a silver tray. Gold ornamental plaques portraying fantastic birds, fish and geese whose style exhibits both a Sassanid and a T'ang (618-906 AD) influence were also excavated. Actual bronze objects of "galloping horsemen with bow and arrow shooting at

98 *Ibid.*, p. 441. This is one of the only sources which discusses T'u-kiue art in any detail and this section is entirely based upon it. For T'u-kiue art and its symbolic implications, see also Esin, History, pp. 92-127. Unfortunately, reproductions of T'u-kiue metalwork are difficult to find.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 441.

snow leopards, roes, deer, and wild boar" were also unearthed.[100] In fact, figurative bronze statuettes have been discovered all over the Turkicized areas of the steppe, many of which are thought to represent ancestor legends. A return to the original naturalistic style of the steppe seems to have been attempted.

Historical annals describe an imperial art which has unfortunately perished completely. Central Asian rulers were charismatic figures on whom heaven had bestowed leadership; they represented "the celestial deity and the eponym ancestor".[101] The khans' successful steppe *mise en scène* of this notion captivated visitors. The Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang paints vivid pictures of his two encounters with the Western Türk leader T'ung Shi-hu (r.618-630) in ca. 630:

"The Khan dwelt in a large tent ornamented with golden flowers that dazzled the eyes. His officers had spread long mats over the entrance and sat there in two lines, all wearing splendid garments of silk brocade. Behind them stood the king's bodyguard. Although this was a barbarian ruler sheltered by a felt tent, one could not behold him without esteem.

"The horses of these barbarians were exceedingly numerous. The khan wore a coat of green satin and allowed all his hair to be seen, his brow alone being bound by several turns of a silken fillet ten feet long, of which the ends hung down at the back. He was attended by some two hundred officers wearing brocade coats, all with their hair braided. The rest of the troops consisted of riders mounted on camels or horses; they were clad in furs and fine woolen cloth, and carried long lances, banners and straight bows. Such was their multitude that the eye could discern no limit."[102]

The description of the T'u-kiue leader's surroundings also include decorated silks, statues, urns, gilded columns, and golden beds with sculpted legs in the shape of peacocks. Unfortunately, few, if any, of these types of items have come down to us. Sources also refer to the felt carpets and draperies of the T'u-kiue, and finds of fragments of Uighur textiles such as the woollen pile-carpets with geometrical patterns described by Aurel Stein.[103] These permit one to imagine a certain production and quality in this typical nomadic domain. During the Uighur period prayer carpets in the Buddhist tradition were also produced.

It has been put forth that the funerary monuments of the Kök-Türks, like their dwel-

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100 *Ibid.*, p. 442.

101 Esin, Culture, p. 9.

102 Grousset, Empire, p. 94.

103 Esin, History, p.119.

lings, assumed two forms, the traditional construction imitating the domed tent and the Chinese style kiosk.[104] Chinese annals inform us about two tombs of Kök-Türk kaghans built in 643 and 655 AD in the shape of mountains. The tent-like structure has its prototype in the Hsiung-nu domed tombs reserved for the monarch, and in the funereal chambers of the T'opa Wei. Unfortunately, only ruins remain of the T'u-kiue princely tombs. The mausoleum of the Türk Kültegin (d.732 AD) was discovered in 1958, forty miles north of Karakorum, by the Archaeological Institute of Czechoslavakia. The tomb had been almost completely destroyed by thieves, and of the original statues of the dignitary and his wife, only parts have been retrieved, the most important being Kültegin's head whose headress carries an eagle insignia (ill.27). This portrait, sculpted by Chinese artists, is the one that so moved his brother Bilge Kaghan (d.734). According to Chinese annals, the six artists that were sent by the Chinese emperor to decorate the funerary structure also painted the four walls of the tomb with scenes of Kültegin's battles.[105] The T'u-kie erected inscribed stones in memory of their dead, the epigraphy praised the deceased, stated his political views and expressed the views of the author of the text. Oral eulogies reciting the prowesses and main events of the person's life took place during the funeral ceremony. The paintings mentioned above may have functioned as a visual expression of this custom. At the Kültegin site, a pair of sculpted rams thought to be the tomb guardians, a sculpted tortoise carrying an inscribed stone, and *balbal* were also unearthed. The tradition of animal sculpture was maintained by the Kök-Türks.

The important question of whether native craftsmen existed permeates this whole study. Sources so far have only alluded to autochthonous craft traditions amongst the T'opa Wei. Jettmar, referring to the much earlier periods of steppe art, states:

"We have seen that the chefs d'oeuvre of Altai art were the work of men who could still hardly be distinguished from the mass of the people, and who were still active as warriors- as were, for example, the smiths of the Vikings. Instructive in this respect is a find at Karmir Blur: an improvised workshop within an Urartian fortress. A man belonging to the Scythian garrison had just carved small griffins' heads from the branch of an antler when

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104 Esin, History, p.125.

105 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p. 42. Sinor, "Türk empire", CHEIA, p. 213, states that it was the Chinese Emperor Hsuang Tsung who ordered a funeral stele and sent the artists to depict Kültegin's most famous battles. Some art historians have surmised that it is Kültegin or his father who is represented on the "Family of Kings" mural of the Umayyad Quṣayr 'Amra (ca.724-43).

suddenly another band of Scythians conquered the fort and interrupted the idyll."[106]

The same author intimates that out of the economic and political developments of nomadism grew a greater division of labour which led to the creation of specific groups specialized in the manufacture of weapons or jewelry who were often foreigners, or women in the case of weaving and embroidery,[107] the latter particularly interesting, as they preserved pre-animal art motifs. Whether Turkish artisans continued to practise their respective crafts after this type of development, and when it ocurred within the Turk polities, constitutes a still largely unresolved dilemma. That a link between political authority and craft survived is evinced by the ancient Central Asian legend of the "smith king", still alive in one of the names of the later Mongol ruler Genghis Khan (d.1227), namely Temuchin or "Smith." With regard to this issue of Turkish craftsmen during the T'u-kiue period, Esin suggests that the stone sculpture of the Kök-Türks was sometimes executed by Turkish sculptors as signatures of several artists bearing Turkish names, such as the prince Yolluğ Tigin, are to be found on the steles of Bilge Kaghan and Tekesh Altun Tamğan Tarkan.[108] Louis Bazin has also put forth the idea of the existence of a school of artists amongst the T'u-kiue for when both they and their successors, the Uighurs, had fallen, the victorious Kirghiz summoned Kök-Türk artists to sculpt their funerary statuary.[109] Reports by the historian Zemarchos who remarked upon the masterful craftmanship of animal representations in precious metals of the Türks, would tend to confirm this thesis.[110] And so, one may conclude that, alongside the numerous Chinese craftsmen who were sent or summoned for, Turkish artisans also existed.

Free-standing stone statues, also of a commemorative type, abound from this period. They depict men holding a cup up to their breast and touching the weapon at their waist (ill.28). This attitude is the traditional attitude of swearing fidelity related to the rituals of a chivalrous brotherhood honouring the individual's heroism or swearing allegiance to a

106 Jettmar, Steppes, p. 241.

107 *Ibid.*, p.241.

108 Esin, History, p. 3, and p.122. According to Aslanapa, in Turkish Art, p. 39, Yolluğ Tigin was the author of the inscription.

109 Esin, History, p.122.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

chieftain. These statues, although quite rough in style, may have attempted to individualize physiognomies by the variety of facial types and expressions they display, and they offer us many details on Turkish male dress, adornment and hairstyle. The same type of statuary representing both men and women, and dating from a later period, has been discovered in the northern region of the Kipchak Turks.

In terms of sculpture, we also find the *balbal*, stone carvings representing the enemies killed by the deceased, and thought to become the warrior's servants in the afterlife. These are placed around the representation of the deceased. Debates did arise as to their exact ritual function but found clarification in Chinese chronicles where one reads: "Inside the building erected at the grave site are placed a drawn or painted image of the deceased together with an account of the battles in which he took part during his lifetime. Usually if he killed one man, then one stone was put up. Some have stones numbering up to a hundred, even a thousand."[111] Some *balbal* depict only the face while others are full-figured and they are generally carved in a "primitive" fashion. They are also presumed to have been painted.[112] This custom came to an end in the eastern steppe in the ninth century. However, in the West, the *balbal* persevered at least into the tenth century. Aḥmad ibn-Faḍlān, an envoy to the 'Abbāsids, noted in his travelogue detailing his journey to Central Asia in 921-22 AD, that when a Turk was buried "if he had ever killed a man and had been brave, (they) then carved an image in wood, one for every man he had killed, and placed them on his grave, saying 'these are the pages who will wait on him in paradise'." [113] These stones also served an imperial or political function as they were erected in places to be seen by the public and to remind them of their national duty.

A second type of petroglyph continued and proliferated during this period. It was composed of a stylized mountain goat, rendered in pictographic style, usually alone, in profile and in motion, but sometimes as part of a hunting scene. These petroglyphs exist in the

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111 Grach, "Turkic art", Enc. of W. Art, p. 444.

112 Some *balbal* , having not lost their painted colours, have been found. To the modern eye whose sober aesthetic has learned to appreciate stone antiquities, it seems odd that even monuments such as the Parthenon and Notre-Dame de Paris were once coated in bright colours.

113 Grach, "Turkic art", Enc. of W. Art, p. 446.

thousands and have been found mostly in the Tuva area. The cliffs on which they appear seem to have been considered a kind of sanctuary, and for more than a thousand years, artists covered their southern slopes with carvings. They ceased in the tenth century. Their significance is a matter of debate. Some scholars have proposed that they are the *tamgha* (property marks) or the totem of the T'u-kiue; others claim that they are the symbol for the word 'kaghan' indicating a princely burial.[114] Or again, it has been proposed that these images are related to sacrificial rites.[115] It is generally acknowledged that the totem of many of the T'u-kiue was the wolf.[116]

The Uighur Empire (744-840 AD)

The T'u-kiue were overthrown by the Uighur who, in coalition with the Karluk and Basmil tribes, founded an empire (744-840 AD). The Uighur remained in Mongolia but extended the limits of T'u-kiue territory to include the Turfan region. If Beshbalik, Kocho, Kucha, Kashgar and Karashar were not always under their rule, Uighur influence was strongly felt (map D). The new rulers reversed the uncooperative second Turk kaghanate's policy towards China and offered the latter their military aid. And it was in China, during one of these military services, that the third Uighur kaghan Mou-yü (r.759-80), adopted Manichaeism. A great prominence of Sogdians at the Uighur court as well as the seeking of asylum of Manichaeans persecuted elsewhere was the outcome of the change effectuated. Many speculations on the reason for Mo-yü's conversion have been made: religious sincerity, the creation of a distinct identity from China who disliked Manichaeism, and the attraction to the financial strength of the Soghdians. The dominant element in the Uighur population, as with the T'u-kiue, was the Turkish confederation known as the Toquz Oghuz, but there were also former Türks, Soghdians and Chinese.

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114 *Ibid.*, pp. 447-448. This symbol was also greatly used and carved on stones by the Scythians, see Jettmar, Steppes, for theories regarding its "Scythian" meaning, pp. 239-40.

115 Esin, History, p.12.

116 Sinor ,"Türk empire", CHEIA, , p. 314, Grousset, Empire, p. 81. The theme of wolf ancestry dates back to the Hsiung-nu and/or Mongol tribes. The later Seljuqs retained the wolf as their mythical ancestor. There are many versions of this myth. Sinor , in "Türk empire", p. 71, recounts: "According to legend, the Kök-Türk tribe had been defeated and massacred by enemies. Only a child, whose arms and legs had been chopped off, remained alive. A she-wolf cared for him and bearing his issue in her womb, flew miraculously to Koso from further pursuit of enemies."

The adoption of the religion of Mani transfigured the traditional Turkish social structure. A new priestly class evolved which acquired enough authority to vie for power with the military, and stemming from this, a whole infrastructure was implemented for the teaching and translating of religious texts mainly from Sanscrit and Chinese. It was during this period that the first Turkish literati and intelligentsia were formed. It was they who begot the first Turkish literature. Furthermore, Manichaeism distanced the kaghan and his close entourage from the Turks living outside of the precincts of Karabalghasun, the Uighur capital.[117] Despite an edict declaring Manichaeism the state religion, there is no doubt that the ancient Turkish religion and customs forbidden by the new religion, continued to be practised. The tenacity of the latter is demonstrated by its unwavering presence. Even in the kaghan's circle, shamans were still consulted for military campaigns, the forest Ötükän was still deemed sacred, and rain stones (*yada*) were still used in hope of changing the weather. A *yada* was made of jade, a talismanic stone for both the Turks and the Chinese, and was thrown into water by the shaman to produce rain or thrown into a fire to have it extinguished. And although Soghdian had become the official language, the Turkic "runic" script persevered in traditional religious texts.[118] Consequently, and despite its sophistication, the Uighur empire remained very much a Turkish one. Even upon the adoption of non-indigenous religions, the Turks naturally transposed their national cults upon the new religion.

Agriculture with irrigation canals was developed but perhaps the major historically significant change in material culture was the appearance of fortified cities and palaces in Mongolia, even if the nucleus of the population the lived extra-muros and was nomadic; the majority of the people, including the ministers, still favoured living in tents.[119] It was at this time, in ca.757 AD, that both Bay-balik and Karabalghasun were built. Little is known

117 The capital was also known as Ordubaligh or "city of the court". Situated on the upper Orkhon near the earlier location of the Hsiung-nu shan-yü, and the T'u-kiue kaghans and which was later to become the Karakorum of Genghis Khan.

118 Roux, Histoire, p. 32.

119 That the Uighurs were the first to build fortified cities in Mongolia is the view taken by Grach in "Turkic art", Enc. of W. Art, p. 441. Esin, History, p.123, however states that the scholar Kizlasov attributes to the Kök-Türks the construction of the city of Kara-kum (ca. 680 AD) and its adoption as residence. The point is that Turkish history long before Islamicization was not purely nomadic.

about the first, but the second was known to have been quite majestic. In its center stood the palace with its large golden tent erected on the roof, a royal emblem visible from a distance. And from the account of Tamīm ibn-Baḥr, who visited in ca. 821 AD, one learns that Karabalghasun was populous, crowded with markets and various trades, and flanked with twelve monumental iron gates.[120] It should be noted that Kök-Türk annals also discuss fortified enclosures and watch towers which were used also as hostels for travellers. On the stele of Tonyukuk one reads: "I increased the watch-towers and the forts" (Orkhon, 1, 118).[121] The Kök-Türk Bilge Kaghan had in fact expressed the wish to build a city based on a Chinese model and endowed with Taoist temples. The dwellings inside the Uighur cities were of two types, one cylindrical and based on the domed tent, and the other resembling the Chinese kiosk with molded tiles in the T'ang style. These were also built in earlier Turkish periods as the stylistic and cultural connection with China was present throughout the whole of pre-Islamic Turkish history. That these kiosks became more prevalent during the Uighur period may be attributed to the number of Uighur kaghans who married Chinese princesses, or at least thought they had, as it is said that only very few of the Chinese ladies sent were in reality princesses.

The Uighur were in turn vanquished by the Yenisei Kirghiz (840 AD), whose attacks unfortunately destroyed many monuments of both the T'u-kiue and Uighur periods, notably the stone sculpture. The Uighur were driven out of Mongolia and founded states in Eastern Turkestan and in Kansu along the caravan routes where Turkish culture continued to thrive. It was in the period after 840 AD, in the second half of the ninth century and in the first part of the tenth, that Uighur art flourished. A few of these city-states, like that of Beshbaligh-Kusha, endured until the Genghis Khan period in the thirteenth century. The Uighurs' destiny was then to become the sedentary civilized element in the Mongol Il-Khānids, teaching the latter the arts of reading, writing and administration.

The possession of the Tarim basin also meant the possession of the rich syncretic culture of the area established during the centuries of Indo-European polities. Manichean communities continued to flourish and, if architecture has here better resisted time, the many

120 C. Mackerras, "The Uighurs", CHEIA, p. 337.
121 Esin, History, p.124.

frescoes, sculpture, and manuscripts are intact due to such intrepid men, both adventurers and scholars, as Le Coq, Grünwedel, Sir Aurel Stein and Pelliot. Unfortunately, the hundreds of frescoes taken to the Ethnographic Museum in Berlin were devastated during the Second World War. The pre-Uighur traditions of Manichaean and Buddhist temples decorated with stylized frescoes were continued. Much scholarship now exists on the art of this unique region, and its stenciling techniques and rectangular grid compositions are known to have predated the Uighurs. Le Coq suggests however, that the the new Turkish patrons were not satisfied with the typified physiognomies and, with their brush of realism, they introduced portraiture. He further notes: "This attempt (to individualize) was never made in the older Indo-Aryan work; the same stencils were used for all faces and then the inscription was added: this is Knight X,Y, Z, as the case might be."[122] An example of Turkish portraiture may be found in the depiction of the Uighur prince of Turfan, Bughra Sali Tutuq, in the Bezeklik (ca. from 840 to early 10th c.) frescoes.

Uighur Turfanese art is considered a great peak in Turkish art history of the pre-Islamic period as it signifies the birth of Turkish painting. In all the principalities they founded or took over, the Uighur emerged as the finest patrons. Numerous temples were decorated with Manichaean and Buddhist religious iconography, the most important monument being that of the Buddhist temple at Bezeklik. The frescoes depict "priests, donors and musicians grouped symmetrically in rows and portrayed in bright colous, azure and crimson (ill.32, 33)."[123] These murals testify to the lavishness of the Uighur court and form important social documents due to their realism and their portrayals of patrons, some of whom were women. By the signature of artists possessing Turkish names, on the temples of Kosho (ill.34), Kusha, Yarhoto and Besbalik, we learn that Turks were trained as craftsmen and particpa-ted in the making of Uighur Buddhist and Manichaean art. In fact, according to Chinese documents, artisan terminology demonstrated an organized hierarchy in the artistic production. Along with the birth of Turkish painting, the newly fostered religions also gave rise to the art of the book, both religious and secular. Illuminated manuscripts rescued by the European archaeologists cited above are now to be found in the major collections of

122 A.Le Coq, Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan, p. 87.

123 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p. 43.

museums around the world (ill.35). The pre-Uighur and Uighur manuscripts of this region have often been deemed the first "Persian miniatures." [124] Bussagli in his *Central Asian Painting* explains that these miniatures "were richly coloured and anticipated in many of their features the miniatures and ceramics of Islamic art, particularly those of Iran. Their way of treating the human form, the structure of the face and the stylized draperies are still to be found in the ceramics of Saveh, in Ilkhānid art and even later."[125] Turfanese art is of the highest quality and the particular history and geography of the region allowed for Chinese, Indian, Iranian, and Turkish styles to fuse in a harmonious manner. Neither the impact of this Persian-inspired art that developed outside of Iran and which re-entered Iran after its Islamicization, nor the role of the Turks in this phenomenon, has been adequately studied. The degree of impact of Turfanese art on Islamic painting can again be seen later when its' stylistics were reintroduced into the miniatures executed during the Ilkhānid period (1256-1353) of *dār al-islām*.

During these two last periods of Turkish history, the T'u-kiue and the Uighur, the culture of the northern Turks coalesced with those of the caravan routes of international trade. The presence of artefacts from foreign cultures accrued. If the influence of the pre-existent Indo-Iranian art has been elaborated, what, if anything, did the Turks contribute to the art of the Silk Road ? According to Turkish scholars, the major contribution of Turkish culture to Central Asia was the epic style based on a heroic conception of the individual (ill.31) which would explain both the tendency towards portraiture, a Turkish characteristic first noted by Le Coq, and also the strong emphasis on expression and detail which overshadowed anatomical structure. The most widespread characteristic attributed to the Uighurs, after portraiture, is the "disembodied purity of line." [126] One may also indicate that Uighur art reveals a stricter, less flowing yet more solemn composition, brought about by the strong military consciousness of the Turks. The more sensual tendencies of Indian and Hellenistic art were subdued and the figures, unlike the earlier traditions, were donned

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124 Grousset, Empire, p.123.

125 M.Bussagli, Central Asian Painting, p. 111. The author states that "the particular stylistic idiom" of Turfan "reacted on Islamic art with profound effect."

126 *Ibid.*, p. 96 and p.111.

with loose-fitting garments.[127] A certain amount of transposition also appeared; Inner Asian symbolic animals, traditional emblems or even Turkish gods were integrated into the Central Asian style of Buddhist and Manichaean iconography.[128] The architectural feature known as "Turkish triangles" which refer to the shape of the corner squinches upholding a dome, are first found in a domed building at Komul from the Uighur period. This feature having no Persian precedents was widely used in the architecture of the later Turkish Muslim dynasties.[129]

To conclude, one may say that Turkish art, like Turkish society, in the time of the Kök-Türk and Uighur dynasties was two-tiered; on the one hand existed the art of the élite, and on the other, the art of the people obstinately faithful to their early autochtonous traditions. The two tendencies were not mutually exclusive and sometimes cohabitated as has been shown.

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127 This has also been ascribed to a return to Chinese influence. However Esin, History, p.149, mentions that the Western T'u-kiue leader T'ong yabgu had criticized the Indian dress.

128 See Esin, History, pp.152-53.

129 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p. 42.

Chapter II. Islamicization of the Turks
The Eastern Borders of Dār al-islām

By the time of the first overthrow of the Uighurs (840 AD) by the Kirghiz, the process of Turkicization of the whole of the Central Asian steppe had been accomplished, from China to the borders of *dār al-islām*.[130] The previous chapter has shown us that, contrary to the popular notion that the Turks arrived into *dār al-islām* as "barbarians", we may ascertain that they had, by the period of their Islamicization, a long history of aquaintance with diverse sedentary established civilizations, an experience with a variety of concepts of state, as well as a knowledge of the tenets of many world religions which they had sometimes adopted. It is in this respect that Peter Golden, discussing the spread of Islam amongst the Turks, describes them thus: "These nomads were not cultural savages. They had been in contact with China, Byzantium and the oasis cities of Eastern and Western Turkestan. Their experience with empire had led to the creation of an elaborate imperial ideology."[131] The process of Islamicization of the Turks and their general take-over of the Muslim lands shall be briefly delineated. The meeting of the Turks and Islam took place in three ways: through the Islamicization of Central Asia provoked by the continuation of the first Arab conquests, through travelling Sufi mystics and Muslim merchants, and through the 'Abbāsid Caliphs' or provincial Muslim rulers' recruiting of large numbers of Turks into their armies.

The demography of the steppe borders of the Muslim lands from the eighth to the tenth centuries is still being reconstructed from sometimes unclear Arabic sources and remains "the object of intense scholarly investigation."[132] This applies not only to the domain of history but also to that of art history. It is this period, but especially this region, whether part of *dār al-islām* or not, which deeply confounds our issue and forms the crux of our still current inability to attribute in all certainty many techniques and much imagery to a definite Central Asian ethnic group. The history of this frontier region during these two

[130] Not all the tribe formations and names can be enumerated here. See Golden, "The peoples of the south Russian steppes", CHEIA, pp. 256-285; and Esin, History, Chapter 4.

[131] Golden, "The Karakhanids and early Islam", CHEIA, p. 349.

[132] Golden, Introduction, p. 348. The number of Turks present in Turkish principalities remains largely unknown. it is believed that native populations always outnumbered their Turkish overlords in pre-Islamic or Islamic contexts, but to varying degrees.

centuries is extremely complex, forming an entanglement of short lived city-states or dynasties with Arabs, Persians, and Turks fighting one another, sometimes shifting sides, and dealing with internecine strife. A good summary account is to be found in the second chapter of W. Barthold's *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* written as early as 1900.[133] And since Professor Barthold's era, historians have brought to light the importance of the eastern border of the Muslim lands, especially Khurasan, and articulated its great political and cultural impact on the formation of medieval Islamic society and art. But the very nature of the region with its historical and geographical multiculturalism and its readiness to adopt and absorb external influences may perhaps, even despite future excavations and research, remain slightly elusive to further clarification.

While both Golden and Esin agree upon the existence of Turkish-ruled formerly Iranian principalities in the western steppe,[134] the latter is the only author, based on Arab and Russian sources, to have attempted an art-historical reconstruction of these different city states.[135] Of the many eighth century cities under Turkish rule, she mentions, Gurgan, Nishapur, Kayin, Kabul, Ghazna, and Balkh, all of whose cultural manifestations, still according to Professor Esin, demonstrate both indigenous elements and the hybrid Irano-Islamic culture typical of the eastern frontier of Muslim territory and which was to become a major formative element in medieval Islamic culture, and even political life.

The Muslim armies had sporadically ventured into Central Asia from very early on but it wasn't until the Muslims had annexed Khorasan that they began in a systematic fashion to set out and to conquer western Central Asia. The idea that Turks were then already present in Khurasan and Transoxiana is supported by Esin, but also by Frye and Sahili, who, based not only on Muslim, but also on Byzantine, Syriac, and Chinese records, state that Turks resided in these regions not only as part of soldiery but as an important element of

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133 W.Barthold, Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion, pp.180-322. See also C. E. Bosworth's The Ghaznavids, chapter 7.

134 Esin, History, pp.157-179. Golden, Introduction, p. 344: He qualifies it as "an increasingly nominal over- lordship." It is generally acknowledged that the local rulers were often "ethnically Turkish but culturally Iranized."

135 Esin, History, pp. 157-179.

the local population at the time of the Arab conquest.[136] Islamicization of the Turks in Turkistan (Transoxiana) began around the eighth century. As far back as 707 and 712 AD battles had been fought between the T'u-kiue and Arab armies led by Quṭayba ibn Muslim (d.715).[137] In 709 AD, the Muslims won over the rule of Transoxiana where the first mosques, built in the seventh and eighth centuries, were open-air spaces with the *qibla* indicated by a minbar like the one said to have existed in front of the palace of Bukhara.[138] Some previously existing structures, temples or royal residences were also transformed into mosques.

As early as 642 or 652 AD the Muslims ventured as far as Darband on the western coast of the Caspian Sea where they fought against the Turks. This and succeeding campaigns in the same area are said to have brought about the adoption of Islam by some Turks of the Turkish Khazars who formed an important polity on the south-western Russian steppe between the seventh and ninth centuries.[139] The Muslim armies then tried their luck on the eastern coast of the same sea, in Khurasan where the Ṣūl Turks resided. The Ṣūl prince negotiated a peace treaty with the Muslim army as early as 639 AD, which he later breached. There was a second Arab expedition in 714-716 AD, led by Yazīd Ibn Muḥallab (d.720). Again in Muslim sources such as al-Ṭabarī (d.923), the opponents are reported to have been Turks who built castles and whose rulers bore Turkish names.[140] One, Ṣūl Tigin, a local ruler of Dihistan, converted to Islam and among his progeny, scholars, poets, and viziers are to be found.[141] Gurgan was a port city where the Bulgar Turks

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136 R.Frye and A.M. Sahili, "The Turks in Khurasan and Transoxiana at the time of the Arab Conquest", The Muslim World, 35, pp. 308-15. This thesis has been refuted by Y.Bregel, in "Turko-Mongol influences in Central Asia", Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective, p. 55, as well as by C.E. Bosworth in "Barbarian incursions:The coming of the Turks into the Islamic world", Islamic Civilisation: 950-1150, p. 3.

137 For the names of the eighth century Turkish regional rulers of Bukhara, Samarkand, Tokharistan, or of the Shahi dynasty in Kabul, see Esin, History, pp.116-18.

138 Esin, History, p.168.

139 *Ibid.*, p.158.

140 *Ibid.*, p. 63. Esin also imparts to us the fact that Barthold and Minorsky considered the Ṣūl to be Oghuz Turks, *ibid.*, p.63. For their life after Islam, see Iṣfahānī IX,21 or al-Ṭabarī, II,1411,1695-96. For monuments of the Ṣūl period see H.Rawlinson, "The road to Merv", The Country of the Turkomans, p. 93.

141 Bosworth, "Barbarian incursions", Isl. Civ.: 950-1150, p. 5.

also traded. After its conquest, Ibn Muḥallab commissioned the building of over forty mosques and fortifications related perhaps to the Ribāṭ of Dihistān and its domed edifice, the Ṣīr Kabīr, still standing today, both of which were built as protection against the non-Muslim Oghuz Turks. Esin proposes that these may have been the first Islamic monuments known to the Oghuz Turks.[142]

To the north of Gurgan, at Siyah-kuh, some Oghuz Turks, having had a falling out with their fellows, settled in the ninth century. They converted to Islam, and judging by the remains of monuments and other artefacts, much as in the whole of Turkish history that has been traced, Islamic motifs coexisted with traditional Turkish ones, for example. Related to the latter are funerary animal statues, standing tombstones with figurative representations much akin to the later Anatolian Seljuq Turkish tombstones.[143] Also a pre-Islamic monument or temple with altar has been found. Its structure is tent-shaped and the inside walls once contained battle scenes. A mosque on the Tüb-karagan (Saritas Bay) peninsula has been attributed to the early ninth or tenth century Oghuz Muslims. Its plan is cross-axial with a pillar supported cupola. Murals existed but traces only remain above the portal depicting archers on horseback and the beginning of a Prophetic *ḥadīth*.[144] Balkh and its vicinity were also governed by Turks, of the Bānīcūr tribe, who had, in fact, adopted Islam in the eighth century and who were on good terms with both the 'Abbāsid (750-1258 AD) and the Sāmānid (819-1005 AD) dynasties. The Bānīcūr were already following the Muslim societal model, by building mosques, madrasas, water-reservoirs, canals and baths.[145]

The best documented account of an instance of early conversion concerns the Volga Bulgars, a Turkish people who rose to prominence in the second half of the seventh century between the Kuban river and the Sea of Azov, after the decline of the Avars. A certain prince Almush, upon deciding to adopt Islam after a vision or a dream, wrote to the

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142 Esin, History, p. 159, and p.161. The author refers to G.A. Pugaçenkova, who views this monument as a prototype, which helps to trace the Central Asian influences in Islamic art of the medieval period. Unfortunately, the Central Asian features are not described.

143 *Ibid.*, p.162.

144 *Ibid.*

145 *Ibid.*, p.167.

Caliph al-Muqtadir (r.934-40 AD) requesting that scholars be sent to teach theology and experts in the building of mosques and forts.[146] Ibn Faḍlān, who was part of the caliphal delegation in 921 AD, narrates his journey and reports on the Bulgar Turks who were still leading a semi-nomadic existence.[147] He describes, for example, the king's tent able to hold one thousand people, and its many Armenian rugs.

After Islamicization, the Bulgars, who were already reputed as fur traders, learnt reading and writing and underwent urbanization. Two major cities developed: Bulghar and Suwar.[148] One of them even developed into a city of fifty thousand inhabitants with two mosques and a *ḥammām*, and a flourishing business of tanning, shoe-making, jewelry-making, goldsmithery and agriculture.[149] The houses, used only in winter, were built of wood, in particular oak and pine. Silver coins were minted, inscribed with the name of the 'Abbāsid caliph in both the tenth and the twelfth centuries. Little was recorded concerning the Bulgars' military and political institutions, but historians describe their economy and their extensive trade with some detail. For instance, al-Muqaddasī (d.ca.985) notes: "From Khwārazm there are imported sable-skins, squirrel-skins, hermine-skins, marten, foxes, beavers, rabbits of all colors, goat-hides, wax, arrows, poplar wood, hats, fish-glue, fish-teeth, castoreum, yellow amber, *kimukht* (a type of hide), Ṣaqlab slaves, sheep and cattle. All this comes from Bulghar via Khwārazm."[150] From the above, one may assume, at least in the case of the Bulgar Turks, a masterful degree of craftmanship and no doubt a school of native artisans.

Finds have been made at the site of the ruins of Bilar[151] of tenth-century objects like a faience cup with seven crowned Mongol-type heads in high-relief, or a cup with elk-shaped

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146 This event has been interpreted in light of its political context, namely that this conversion was an open affront to the Bulgars' overlords, the Khazars. See P.Golden, "The peoples of the Russian forest belt", CHEIA, p. 237.

147 See Aḥmad Ibn Faḍlān, Voyage chez les Bulgares de la Volga.

148 For the cities' exact locations, see Golden, Introduction, p. 256.

149 Roux, Histoire, p.140. E.Esin, History, p.171.

150 Golden, "Russian forest", CHEIA, p. 238.

151 *Ibid.*, p.256. The author states that the capital was moved to Bilar on the Malyj Čeremšan in the latter half of the 12th century.

handles.[152] Roux considers the conversion of the Bulgars an isolated event devoid of influence on the contemporary and subsequent conversion of many of the Turkish tribes, whereas P.Golden, as it is hopefully shown above, situates the event within the general trend of Islamicization in both the geographical and historical context.[153] The Bulgars were finally overtaken by the Mongols in ca.1236-37.

On the eastern frontier of *dār al-islām* during this period, the Turks formed the chief opponents of the Muslims whose general policy towards them was defensive. The Turks either resisted, signed peace treaties or adopted Islam. Battles were fought and re-fought. Turks thus penetrated the Muslim lands as prisoners of war or were sent as slaves as tribute.[154] If the conversion of the Turks proceeded relatively slowly, the point is that their Islamicization demonstrates the general Central Asian tendency, whether related to Arab conquests or not, and whose rhythm was slow but sure. The first Turkish cities to accept Islam lay along the Syr-Darya river. Border towns began to attract an Islamicized Turkish population, for example Isbijab whose Turkish governor had, in the tenth century built four *ribāṭs* and tombs for himself and his son.[155] The Khwarazmian province with its Iranian heritage may have been also very Turkicized as one Muslim medieval author states: "Starting from Ispicāb live the Oğuz and from Ispicāb to the end of Farğana the Ḳarluḳ Turks."[156] Ibn Ḥawqal (dates unknown) also cites Sutkend as a center for Oghuz and Karluk Muslims, and mentions a thousand tents of the Turks between Farab and Tashkent that had also converted.[157]

The tenth century is deemed pivotal in the expansion of Islam amongst the Turks of the steppes, as it is then that, according to Muslim sources, conversion occured on a large

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152 Esin, History, p.179.

153 Golden, Introduction, p.213.

154 *Ibid.*, p.164.

155 Esin, History, p.173.

156 *Ibid*, p.174. The author is here quoting from the 10th c. Geographer al-Iṣṭakhrī.

157 Golden, Introduction, p.212.

scale.[158] The introduction of a new ethnic element into *dār al-islām* was to have very long term political repercussions. Peter Golden states that the Turks sought to create an Islamo-Turkish civilization in Central Asia and that Islam, not only became a "critical element in shaping the identity of different Turkic peoples" but also "the necessary element for the success of Turkic regimes ruling Muslim sedentary populations both in Central Asia and subsequently in the Near and Middle East." [159]

In the east of *dār al-islām*, Islamic culture had already fused with the strong Persian heritage, and "it was in its Irano-Islamic garb that Muslim culture penetrated the Turkic steppes."[160] The Islam that spread was then modified by the newly adhering Turkish members and local Turkish culture.[161] The Turkish concepts of Islam were developed in Khurasan and western Turkestan against the background of older religions, and under the influence of Sufi circles. As in the earlier tendencies encountered in T'opa-Wei or Uighur art, Central Asia's singularity seems to be cross-fertilization and syncretism. The many other faiths prevailing on the steppe also fashioned the "heterodox" future of Islam in the region. The territory around the Aral Sea and its meeting with both the Syr Darya and the Amu-Darya formed a symbiotic center where Iranian Mazdean and Zoroastrianism, astral cults of the Turks, Christianity, Buddhism, a Soghdian-influenced Bacchic cult, and a cult of the fertility goddess Anahit all co-existed peacefully.[162] The degree of hybridity and of Turkish presence may perhaps be inferred from al-Nadīm's (d.995) *Kitāb al-Fihrist* where he describes the religion of the majority of the steppe peoples before Islam as "Shamanīya whose prophet is Buddha."[163]

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158 The analysis of the diverse motives animating this phenomenon, ranging from religious sincerity, to political astuteness lies outside the scope of this study. More importantly, the exact census of the Turks will remain unknown as one cannot always rely on the often "over-enthusiastic" numbers quoted in the medieval historical sources.

159 Golden, Introduction, p. 213 .

160 Golden, "Karakhanids" , CHEIA, p. 346.

161 Golden, Introduction , p. 212.

162 Golden, "Karakhanids", CHEIA ,p.3 44.

163 *Ibid.*, p. 345.

The Qarakhānid Dynasty (922-1211 AD)

Islamicization on the steppes culminated with the Qarakhānid dynasty (922-1211 AD), which emerged as the first Central Asian Muslim Turkish polity. Although Ornelian Pritsak considered the Qarakhānids descendants of the ruling élite of the Qarluq Turkish people,[164] authors such as Jean-Paul Roux and Peter Golden see them as Oghuz [165] from the region of lake Balkash and the Aral Sea. Much of the earliest Qarakhānid period remains obscure, and the narrative sources are somewhat conflicting. It is reported that Satuk Bughra Khān, who became 'Abd al-Karīm, adopted Islam as did two hundred thousand tents along with him in 920, 926 or 960.[166]

The dynasty was originally situated in eastern Turkestan, but took advantage of the decline of the Sāmānids (819-1005 AD) to annex Transoxiana. The Qarakhānid polity, although Muslim, retained its nomadic nature and the steppe political tradition of the loose tribal confederation with a Turkish system of shared kaghanate.[167] Despite the fact that war continued with the non-Muslim Uighurs up until the time of their adherence to Islam in the fifteenth century, the Qarakhānid kaghanate brought about a relative peace by uniting Turks once again under the banner of a common ideology. It was an achievement which lasted for three centuries; the downfall of the Qarakhānids was eventually brought about by internecine strife, and their final overthrow by the Seljuqs (1040-1194).

Kashgar, an important city of the eastern kaghanate and a previous Buddhist enclave, became a center of religious and cultural life, and one which greatly propelled the spread of

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164 Bosworth, Islamic Dynasties, p.112.

165 Roux, Histoire, p.141. Golden,p.351.

166 Esin, History, p.182. Esin gives ca. 926 as the date of conversion and Aslanapa, Turkish Art, mentions 920, while Bosworth, Islamic Dynasties, p.112, cites 960. The mythical aspect of the conversion narrative has lead authors such as Golden to consider Satuk Bughra Khān as a legendary figure, "Karakhanids", CHEIA, p.214.

167 Barthold, Turkestan, p.17. The author views the tribal structure negatively: "The period of rule of the Turkish Qarā-Khānid dynasty was without doubt a period of cultural retrogression for Transoxiana. In spite of the good intentions of individual rulers, the view that the kingdom formed the personal property of the Khān's family, and the system of appanages resulting from this view with its inevitable quarrels, must have been followed by the decay of agriculture, commerce, and industry no less than of intellectual culture." Curiously, this passage is found *verbatim* unfootnoted in E.Knobloch's Beyond the Oxus, p.57!

Islam over the Tarim basin towards the borders of Mongolia and China.[168] The Buddhist heritage with its Inner Asian developments in the ninth and tenth centuries is part of the Qarakhānid dynasty's contribution to Islam and explains the institutions of *madrasas* and *ribāṭs*, both of which have been surmised to have originated in Central Asia, with the Buddhist monastery as their historical model.[169] Although the Qarakhānids subscribed to the Perso-Islamic or Irano-Islamic cultural model, Uighur and Chinese influences were especially strong in the eastern province and no doubt affected all the arts. This may help explain the perseverance and propagation of Indo-Buddhist artistic tendencies within Islamic art of the medieval period.

Turkish historians generally concur that Qarakhānid art laid the foundation of Turko-Islamic art, and Aslanapa posits that the dynasty's architecture, calligraphy, and general material culture "radiated" southwards with diverse Turkish migrations to the Seljuqs (1040-1194), the Khwārazm Shāhs (995-1017), and even to the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1555).[170] Unfortunately, no comprehensive work on Qarakhānid art has been written in a European language, and what ruins exist have not been well documented or published. The author mentioned above does, however, devote a chapter to Qarakhānid art in his *Turkish Art and Architecture*, which enumerates and describes the major mausolea, mosques and caravanserais of the dynasty, but each of these monuments in so far as they draw us into the mainstream of Islamic art will not be examined here.[171] The Qarakhānid monuments of Bukhara have also been described by Narshakhī (dates unknown) in his history of the city written in 943-44. These included "the Friday mosque, the great minaret, many *ribāṭs* (hospices), *madrasas* (theological schools), hospitals, bridges, palaces and parks".[172] The medieval author also writes "as most of the minarets of the Samanids were constructed of wood they caught fire very easily. The Karakhānids, on the other hand, built monumental

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168 Bosworth, "Ilek-Khans or Ḳarakhānids", Enc. of Islam , 2nd. ed., v. 2:1, p.1114.

169 Esin, History, p.167 and p.18 .

170 *Ibid.*, pp.193-4, and Aslanapa, Turkish Art , p. 44.

171 Aslanapa, Turkish Art , pp. 45-54. This is quite valuable as Qarakhānid monuments tend to be omitted in general Islamic art history works.

172 *Ibid.*, p.200.

minarets in brick".[173] The use and origin of decorative brickwork, so prevalent in Islamic architecture of medieval Iran, has been viewed as Central Asian or Turkish [174] input but this claim would necessitate its own extensive study.

As in all of our previous Turkish dynasties, the newly adopted religion did not obliterate pre-Islamic traditional tendencies. Firstly, sources inform us that the court figures surrounded themselves with astrologers, exorcists and dream-interpreters. Secondly, Qarakhānid titulature indicates the co-existence of indigenous and Islamic beliefs. The actual term Qarakhānid was coined based on the frequent use of the Turkish word *qara*, or black, in the rulers' titles, and hearkens back to Turkish cosmology where black is associated with the north and with the attributes of strength or power. Totemic animals also figure in the titles, such as *bughra*, or camel, the totem of the Yaghma tribe, and *arslan*, or lion, totem of the Chigil tribe. This is further confirmed by the accounts of Satuk Bughra Khān's conversion replete with allusions to shamanism, animal-guides, and general dreamlike atmosphere, all of which testify to the perseverence of the Inner Asian Turkish tradition which would continue in Turkish milieus unhampered by the orthodox Islamic tradition. In the few artefacts attributed to the Qarakhānids, pre-Islamic Turkish tendencies, such as figurative imagery, mixed with Islamic elements continued: for example, a tomb statue found depiciting the traditional bearing of cup but with a new addition of the Islamic turban (ill. 38).[175] Aside from Esin, who also attributes to the Turko-Islamic dynasty a few objects bearing animal imagery, no mention of artefacts or elements of material culture from this period could be found. The need for a thorough monograph on Qarakhānid art has hopefully become evident.

In the present state of knowledge regarding the Qarakhānids, their most important cultural contribution was literary, as it represents the first use of Turkish as a Muslim language. Even the legends on coins present the Uighur script and Arabic side by side. As in the realm of the fine arts, religion, or politics, Qarakhānid literature sought to "conciliate

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173 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p .49.

174 G.Fehervari, "Some problems of Seljuq art", The Art of Iran and Anatolia (Ed. W.Watson), p. 6.

175 Esin, History, p.187.

the beliefs of pre-Islamic Turks with Islam" through a marriage of the two traditions.[176] Only three major authors will be cited, but these examples should suffice to prove that there was an original and rich literature, much of which is no longer extant. The *Ḳutadghu bilig* ("The Sapience of Felicity" or "The Science of Happiness") written in the Uighur script has been described as a Turkish-Islamic philosophy of life, or as a Turkish version of the Mirror for Princes type of literature.[177] It was written by Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, a chamberlain as the name denotes, in 1067-69. The allegorical work reveals a newly acquired Muslim zeal as well as a a complex pre-Islamic culture stemming both from Turkish indigenous and Buddhist traditions. The *Dīwān lughāt al-Turk*, an encyclopaedic lexicon written to demonstrate the richness and beauty of the Turkish language, was authored by Maḥmūd Kāshgarī (b.early 11th c.), a Qarakhānid scion, for the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Muqtadī (r.1075-94). This work is of great value to Turcologists as one finds many explanations of Turkish etymology, history and customs. The works of the father of Turkish mysticism and of the Yesevī order, Aḥmed Yesevī (d.ca.1160) also date to this period. The latter, who devoted his life to the propagation of Islam amongst the Turks of the steppe, wrote poetry which again integrated Buddhist, Indian, Manichaean, and shamanistic aspects.[178] Perhaps, one may tentatively proffer that Karakhānid artefacts must also have demonstrated these same tendencies.

This dynasty is the earliest example of a Turko-Islamic state upholding both Sunnī Islam and the Hanafī School of law which would constitute the basic pattern for all future Turkish dynasties. The Turkish inclination of propagating what is termed the Perso-Islamic cultural and governmental traditions is already to be noted here, with public building programs, the medieval notion of holy war and orthodoxy, and by the rulers' patronage of scholars and literati. Nonetheless, according to C. E. Bosworth: "the Ḳarakhānids retained their strong Turkishness, and their age is of prime importance for the creation of a Turkish cultural consciousness and, in particular, for the creation of the first Turkish Islamic

176 *Ibid.*, p.190.
177 Golden, Introduction, p. 229.
178 Esin, History, p.196.

literature."[179]

The Turks Within Dār al-islām

If by the ninth and tenth centuries, Islam had reached the Turks outside of the perimeters of the central lands, it had long done the same within the boundaries of *dār al-islām*. As has been suggested, Turks may have resided within the Muslim lands at a relatively early date, but more importantly, many were sent as slaves and recruited into armies or other forms of court service. Already by the the middle of the 'Abbasid period, many Turks had risen to prominent positions; for example, Zūbair ibn al-Türki, governor of Hamadan and Mosul; Hammad al-Türki who played an important role in the building of Baghdad, or Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn (d.844) who had even managed to found a quasi-independent dynasty in Egypt and Syria (868-905 AD), amongst many others.

Turks first entered Muslim armies as early as the late seventh century,[180] and during the next two centuries the numbers accrued in such fashion that by the time of the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r.833-842), the whole imperial bodyguard had become exclusively Turkish. The importance of these influential armies should not be underestimated for the present study as the soldiers' adherence to traditional Turkish ways and beliefs persisted, despite the youths' separation from their family, homeland and culture, and this adherence existed peacefully alongside the Islamic society of which they were also part. Jean-Paul Roux, discussing the Turkish praetoria, writes: "They retained much of their pagan background and thus considerably influenced the development of Muslim society to an extent that has not yet been fully measured."[181] The slave trade formed a lucrative business and was systemized and expanded under the Sāmānid dynasty (819-1005 AD), which also established training centres to prepare the men for their future military and bureaucratic careers. They supplied not only themselves but also the 'Abbāsid caliphs with Turkish

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179 Bosworth, "Ilek-Khans", Enc. of Islam, 2nd. ed., v. 2:1, p.1115.

180 For the history of Turkish presence within Muslim armies, see D.Pipes, "Turks in early Muslim service", Journal of Turkish Studies, 2, pp.85-91.

181 Roux, Turkic Peoples (Ed. M.Bainbridge), p.10. See also B. Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and the Muslim polity", Islam in History, p.189.

slave soldiers.[182] The Sāmānids, descendants of the Soghdians or the Sassanids, accredited with having instigated the Persian revival,[183] were overthrown by their Turkish military factions who established the powerful Ghaznavid dynasty (977-1186). This type of take-over from within by a slave soldiery illustrates the second pattern of Turko-Islamic polity formation of the medieval period. The Ghaznavid dynasty represents a further reinforcement of theTurko-Islamic prototype characterized by a Turkish army, a Perso-Islamic cultural and bureaucratic model, and an adherence to Sunnism. The Ghaznavids accepted and perpetuated the cultural model of their former over-lords. Roux declares: "It was under Turkish domination, as was often to be the case, that Persian culture was reborn; threatened for a time by Arabization, it was never to disappear again."[184]

Ghaznavid art, although it displays a certain amount of individuality, forms an integral part of medieval Islamic art and as such examples of pre-Islamic Turkish elements will be drawn from this period under the appropriate headings. It should however be mentioned that French and Italian archaeological missions have accomplished great work in the field of Ghaznavid art history, numismatics, epigraphy, and archaeology. If the Sāmānid and general Islamic influence on the Ghaznavids tempered the Turkish indigenous elements in art, other factors may have reinforced it. For example, Turkish presence in the region had already existed for five hundred years by the time of the establishment of Ghaznavid rule.[185] or, the reference in the historical sources to a local woodcarving tradition.[186] Bosworth noted that the culture of the Ghaznavid court, even if Iranized and Islamicized,

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182 The modern sense of the term "slave" with its ultra-negative and cruel connotations is not fully applicable to the relative freedom and the standard of life of these medieval soldiers.

183 Golden, Introduction, p. 361, writes: "The islamicization of the area was due, in large measure, to their (Sāmānid) activities. The government and cultural styles set by them would be, in varying degrees, the legacy of every Muslim state in the region... The eventual absorption of the nomads, by the pre-existing civilization, however, was the product of the Irano-Arab-Islamic synthesis, one of the most enduring achievements of Sāmānid rule."

184 Roux, The Turkic Peoples of the World (Ed. M. Bainbridge), p.12.

185 A. Bombaci, "Les Turcs et l'art ghaznavide", First International Congress on Turkish Art, p. 66.

186 See B. Rowland, Art in Afghanistan: Objects from the Kabul Museum, p. 52.

nonetheless showed Turkishness and "traits of its own." [187] He also admits that Fuad "Köprülü was right in drawing attention to the fundamental fact of the Turkishness of the Sultans and of a large part of their military following."[188] The Ghaznavids were overthrown and pushed into India by the Seljuqs.

The eruption of the Turkish Seljuqs (1040-1194 AD) onto the scene of Islamic history is a culminating moment in the general process of Islamicization of the Turks, and not an isolated phenomenon. The Oghuz Seljuqs migrated to the Aral Sea and Syr Darya areas from the eastern lands of the T'u-kiue in the eighth century although some movement may have begun in the sixth century.[189] They inhabited the region both nomadically and sedentarily; tenth century sources such as Mas'udī and Ibn Ḥawqal refer to the Turkish cities to be found in the area.[190] Bosworth introduces the idea that the Oghuz inherited and perpetuated the earlier Mongol Hephthalite culture, itself based on the previous cultures of the Syr Darya, and that they therefore possessed a heritage with "some fairly advanced elements" even if they were less advanced than the Khazars or Qarakhānids.[191] Seljuq history is replete with Turkish elements such as shamans, astrologers, the cult of Tëngri, eponymous ancestors, and the possession of a magical *yada*, or rainstone, ensuring success in battle. After a conflict with their overlords (or with other tribes), the Seljuqs, from the Qïnïq tribe, arrived in Jand before the end of the tenth century, converted to Islam, and soon became frontier warriors, first for the Sāmānids, then for the Qarakhānids, and both times against their fellow Turks, the Ghaznavids. In 1038, the Seljuq Ṭughril Beg attacked the Ghaznavids and seized Nishapur and two years later, Merv, at the famous

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187 Bosworth, The Ghaznavids, p.133, p. 3 and pp. 56-7 where the author writes: "Nevertheless, the fact that the early Ghaznavids were racially Turkish and, at least down to Mas'ūd's time, Turkish-speaking, with only a generation or two separating them from Central Asia, cannot be ignored. We hear little about this Turkish side from the historical sources, for these are all Arabic and Persian Muslim ones, but it is unsafe to assume from this that its influence was negligible. The Ghaznavid army was a great stronghold of Turkish nationality and feeling, for a considerable proportion of it was Turkish."

188 *Ibid.*, p. 3. See also p. 56. The author also mentions F.Köprülü's complaint that the Ghaznavids have usually been studied from the vantage point of Indian history.

189 *Ibid.*, p. 211.

190 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

191 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

battle of Dandanqan. The Ghaznavids were forced to retreat into Afghanistan, and the Seljuqs began their astounding ascent to power. In 1051, they annexed Ispahan which they chose as capital, and in 1055, Ṭughril Beg entered Baghdad, and "delivered" it from the *shi'ī* Buyids (932-1055). He was granted the title "King of East and West" by the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Qa'im (r.1031-75) who retained only a nominal or symbolic power.

In true nomadic fashion, the Seljuqs kept the administration in place, appointed such outstanding viziers as Niẓām al-Mulk and ruled as a minority military aristocracy which was obliged to exert much force in curbing the revolts of neighbouring family members. They also adopted the medieval Islamic cultural model of public works, patronage and court life although the latter was much more sober than that of the Ghaznavids or the Sāmānids. The lands under central Seljuq rule (map E) did not undergo Turkicization: however, names and epics reveal a memory of their pre-Islamic past. The *Malik-Nāmeh*, written for the Sultan Alp-Arslān (r.1063-73), recounts Seljuq origins and refers to a certain Duqāq, also called Temür-Yalïgh or "Iron bow" for his bravery and strength, as progenitor of the clan.[192] In Anatolia, where the Turkomens roamed freely after the battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) in 1071, the Turkish population formed also a minority. The dynasty which ensued, the Seljuqs of Rum (1081-1302 AD), adopted the Persian language and also subscribed to the Perso-Islamic model. However, referring to the latter, René Grousset purports: "But this somewhat artificial veneer should not deceive us, nor conceal from us the fundamental Turkic transformation brought about by the Ghuzz bands in Cappadocia, Phrygia, and Galatia."[193] And effectively, we shall see a greater degree of Turkishness in the art of Seljūq Anatolia.

Problems in Islamic art history

The importance of both Iran (Khurasan) and Central Asia to Islamic art has been recognized. Many excavations have been undertaken and yet many of the results have still

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[192] See C.Cahen, "Le Malik-Nameh et l'histoire des origines Seldjukides", Oriens , 2 , pp. 31-65.
[193] Grousset, Empire , p. 157.

not been analyzed, remain unpublished and have not proved as useful as expected.[194] When monuments and artefacts are to be found in archaeology, art history manuals, or travel literature, the historical context is often ignored and the dynasty not cited, complicating the issue even further as it is often difficult to find sources affirming, for example, who was governing a certain small border town in the early ninth century. Therefore for the sake of expediency, many authors assume a purely Persian origin for the art of Western Central Asia, based on the false, because oversimplified premise, that Soghdiana housed only Indo-European dynasts and presented a unified culture.[195] Soghdian art is very much a Central Asian art as it draws upon the Sassanid, Achaemenid, Parthian, but especially the Indo-Buddhist artistic traditions; and as shall be shown, the artistic hey-day of Soghdiana took place under both Hephtalite and Turkish rule. The intention is not to deny the tremendous Soghdian and Sassanid influence on Islamic art, but to simply query, whether due to the complexity of the steppe during this period, historians have not over-simplified matters and not bothered to actually delve into the history of Khurasan and outer Iran with its manifold artistic influences. The goal is rather to draw attention to the diversity of this region allowing one, free of *parti pris*, to reconsider its artistic history. If the Turks were local emirs and conscious of imperial ideology, one may assume that they were also aware of the accoutrements and iconography of imperial symbolism which had been devised and propagated throughout their history, whether indigenous or influenced by Indian, Chinese and Persian cultures. Even if the western steppe Turks were doubly Iranized, historically and now geographically, they undoubtedly also transported iconic elements of their culture with them, whether religious, clanal, or political. To support this thesis, one may state that

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194 For the unresolved problems of the period, see Grabar's "The visual arts" in The Cambridge History of Iran 4, pp.305-329. The chapter, although written in 1975, remains relevant. It begins thus: "At this stage of our knowledge it is impossible to write a coherent history of Islamic art in Iran before the appearance of the Saljuqs." He then gives the reasons: many monuments some known only from literary sources are no longer extant or have been utterly transformed at later dates. Few monuments can be precisely dated, the excavations have not been able to clearly establish the "development of styles."

195 See Cahen, "Tribes, cities and social organization", CHOIr. 4, p. 306 ,where the various Indo-European groups of the area are named, Dailimites, Gilites, Kurds, etc.

virtually all historians concur that the Turks preserved much of their heritage,[196] or point to pre-Seljuq Islamic artefacts illustrating the mixture of the Iranian and Turkish cultures, for example a tenth century painted stucco wall panel from Iran, portraying a falconer on horseback (ill.40). The style of the painting connect it with the Central Asian tradition, whether Persian or Turkish, while the belt clearly denotes the Turkish tradition.[197] That this motif adorned a wall of the Sāmānid palace at Nishapur helps decipher the drawing as the Turks held powerful military offices within the Sāmānid establishment which they eventually overturned. The subject of falconry may also be revealing as its practice stems back, in Turkish history, to the Hsiung-nu. A more intriguing and yet still unresolved wall panel from the same site seems to evoke a Turkish or primeval steppe tradition (ill.32). An abstract zoomorphic design bearing stylized leaf and scale patterns exhibits a strong symbolic aesthetic, reminiscent of Germanic or Celtic art (ill.39).[198] This visual parallel may be due to other historical and art historical factors. Grabar proposes that the strange composition stems from textile patterns or from the incrustation style while still honestly admitting that "the exact sources of these panels and the meanings which can be attached to them still escape us."[199] W. Hartner and C.K.Wilkinson, the men responsible for the Nishapur excavations, in light of the strange schematized hands forming part of the motif, tentatively suggest that the designs manifest "some ancient cult" or else the *shī'ī* sect.[200] Although it is not certain whether Emel Esin is referring to the same site, she attributes a (the) Nishapur palace to the Turkish Simçurid dynasty (Nishapur and Qayin, 922-90), who were renowned for their artistic patronage. The author also declares that Sam'āni (d.1166)

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196 Bosworth, "Barbarian Incursions", Isl. Civ.:950-1150, p.11, where the author writes in regard to the Turkish migratiions that "so many of these Turks came in as tribal groups, with a strong consciousness of their patriarchal organization and of their barbarian culture and religious attitudes...."; but on p.2 he states: "Some Turkish historians have seen Turks lurking everywhere in that part (Transoxiana and Khwārazm) of the world."

197 Ettinghausen and Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250, pp.250-51.

198 Grabar, CHOIr., 4, p.350.

199 *Ibid.*, W.Hauser and C.K.Wilkinson in "Excavations of the Īrānian Expedition in the Ḳanāt Teppeh, Nīshāpūr", Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 37,4, p. 99, mention that identical scale patterns were employed on the dresses of dancers at Sāmarrā.

200 Hauser and Wilkinson "Excavations", Bul.of the Met. Mus. of Art, 37, p.100.

speaks of Simçurid monuments which had spread as far as Dihistan. The point is that the boundaries between Iranian and Turkish on the western steppe, despite the legendary *Shah-Nāmeh*, had long been if not erased, at least largely subdued.

However, the best example illustration of the oversimplification of Central Asian art history is to be sought in the pre-Islamic Turkish period, and specifically in the famous Soghdian site of Panjikent, which art historians refer to as a Perso-Central Asian artistic prototype or precedent for early medieval Islamic iconography. The possibility of Turkish influence on the magnificient villa frescoes, due to the fact that Panjikent was ruled at one time by Turkish kaghans, has been raised by Turkish historians such as Esin or Aslanapa, as it has also found support in a number of, but not all, contemporary specialized works dealing specifically with Central Asian history and art.[201] Soghdiana and Panjikent will be placed in their historical context, based on a very recent source, namely the *History of Civilizations of Central Asia III* published by UNESCO in 1994. Soghdian society only began to flourish between the third and fifth centuries AD, when nomadic-type burials and coins suddenly ceased and a ceramic ware typical of settled societies began to be produced. In the fourth century Soghdiana was overtaken by the Huns, and in ca. 509 by the Mongol Hephthalites. It was during this latter period that the town of Panjikent (situated 60 km east of Samarkand), built in the fifth century, expanded and "its fortifications were strengthened and temples were rebuilt." [202] The region then passed over to Turkish rule, when the Western T'u-kiue vanquished it in ca. 580. The native Soghdians managed to regain their independence in the mid-seventh century, and yet "as early as the end of the seventh century the principality of Panjikent had a Türk ruler Chikin Chur Bilge." [203] The Soghdian tradition of houses adorned with interior murals dates to the sixth century, and thus to the Hephthalite period, and by the early eighth, when the city was ruled by a Turk known as

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201 The problem is often one of language as many sources in both Russian and Turkish exist.

202 B.I.Marshak, "Sughd and adjacent regions", His. of Civ. C. Asia, v.III (Ed.B.A.Litvinsky), p. 236.

203 *Ibid.*, p.238. Golden, Introduction, p. 229. The same author on p. 212 also states: "The Chinese historical work, T'ung-tien (ca.801) mentions the T'ê-chü-meng in Su-tê (Sogdia) which has also been viewed as a rendering of this name (Türkmen)."

Dīvāshtīch, B. I. Marshak claims that one house in three was decorated in this manner.[204] The murals often reproduced many types of scenes, daily activities, eclectic religious themes, or the hunt and the feast cycles (ill. 42). In view of Turkish input, the above-mentioned contemporary work adduces the rendering of architecture, and of weapons and costume which remained faithful to the fashion of those who ruled. When the native Soghdians held power in the fifth century, the type of costume depicted resembled those in vogue in the Kushan empire; under the Hephthalites appeared a Sassanid type, and finally under the Turks, the Inner Asian tunics with belts bearing metallic plaques, were rendered.[205] The author also acknowledges, but unfortunately without further elaboration, that "military clothing and equipment and, to some degree, vessels used in banquets also showed Turkic influence."[206] Esin is more specific and effectuates a Turkish reading of the murals. The author corroborates her thesis by the painted scene of a *yog* or funeral ceremony where mourners follow Turkish custom by slashing their faces and pulling out their hair (ill. 41).[207] The portable domed funerary structure depicted in the Panjikent frescoes is also representative of Turkish tradition. The body of the deceased was placed in it and then incinerated. Esin also mentions that the *tamgha*, or tribal marking, on the coins of the rulers of Panjikent during the seventh and eighth centuries is that of the Turkish Khalaj clan. E. Knobloch and M. Hrbas, confronting the same issue of Turko-Mongol influence on Soghdian art, somewhat ambiguously write:

"In the Ephthalite, and similarly in the succeeding Turkish period, Soghd art comes very close to South Siberia and the Altai. The influence of the steppe peoples permeated the former cultural tradition, replacing certain elements, and giving new life to others. The classical architectural features (capitals, friezes) disappear and the refined and carefully wrought sculptures are replaced by coarse representations in the archaic style. On coins, realistic portraits give way to the primitively incised features of barbarian chieftains."[208]

The statement is ambiguous because the authors then proceed to mention Varakhsha, another Soghdian archaeological site, near Bukhara, whose frescoes, equal in importance

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204 *Ibid.*, p.242.

205 *Ibid.*, p.250.

206 *Ibid.*, The author also states that there is a Turkish influence, amongst others (Byzantine, Iranian, Chinese) evident in the motifs present in the metalwork, but does not decribe it.

207 Esin, History, p.137 and p.168.

208 E.Knobloch and M.Hrbas, The Art of Central Asia, p.13.

to those of Panjikent, as having supplied the most "notable finds from the Ephthalite and Turkish periods".[209] One may then infer that Turkish rule in Soghdiana simultaneously caused the reduction of certain artistic features - including artefacts directly related to the power holders- to a more primitive level, and yet it provoked also the execution of refined wall paintings, some embodying Turkish elements. Identical scenarios occurred, whereby the Turks appear as catalysts, for example during the T'opa Wei period, the Uighur period in Turfan, and in the later Seljuq period. Perhaps, Knobloch and Hrbas are implying in addition that steppe traditions were perpetuated by the Turks, while high culture artefacts and monuments were executed by native Soghdians and foreign craftsmen for the Turkish élite; a theory which can neither be completely validated nor rejected due to the little information on Central Asian artisans. Or else, they are referring to the two-tiered Turkish art, the one popular and still steeped in steppe traditions, and the other sponsored by the court and merchants, which issued naturally out of the political evolution of the Turks, the adoption of new religious frameworks, and the general unique experience of Central Asian diversity. If Soghdiana, as did the Uighur empire, raises the possibility of a Turkish specificity to an art catering to the more prominent families, indigenous traditions coexisted alongide. Nevertheless, the point is that to put forth Panjikent to prove Persian influence is somewhat fallacious, due to the complex history of the site. The art of all of this area belonged to the larger Indo-Buddhist school of art which travelled along the Silk Road, and which was further shaped by local traditions present in Inner Asia, the Turks included. Whether or not one espouses the ideas or conclusions of the Turkish school of historians on this issue or others, their views must be taken into consideration to further the research and analysis [210] of this crucial region. This is essential in order to understand the formation of the medieval Islamic artistic typology and iconography, since the ignored elsewhere

[209] Esin, History, p. 261, also considers the murals at Varakhsha as Turkish.

[210] Ettinghausen and Grabar, write in Art and Architecture, p.406, note 167: "The study of Seljuq Anatolia has been very much modified by recent Turkish scholarship, including the creation of an Institute for Seljuq History and Civilization in Ankara which publishes occasional volumes of articles and discussions. New ideological and intellectual positions have been developed ... it is clear that any further work on Seljuq Anatolia must take this research into account." The Institute's publications do not treat the Anatolian Seljuqs only, but also address the larger issue of pre-IslamicTurkish history as a means to understand Turko-Islamic art and imagery.

historical facts concerning the eastern frontier of *dār al-islām* are found largely in their works.

A last example of a method for re-reading the art on the pre-Islamic Western steppe is to be found in another work by Knobloch. The author, in the chapter on the Syr Darya and Ferghana valleys, which as has been shown was once the abode of the Soghdians, the Hephthalites and the Western T'u-kiue, proposes another hypothesis as to how the steppe aesthetic may have been transmitted to Islamic art. The author writes:

"As for the ancient period, it is worth quoting Rempel, who says that in the Tashkent oasis, in Ferghana, and also in the lowlands of Syr Darya which remained virtually unaffected by Hellenism, older art forms were preserved much longer, as may be judged by the pottery. These forms are linked partly with cultures of the Anau type (neolithic), partly with the culture of the steppe nomads. On the Syr Darya there emerged, in the course of time, the so-called 'culture of marshland villages' with its original ornament-geometrical, floral, and animal, which is genetically linked to the ancient culture of the 'steppe bronze', and to that of the early nomads, and which developed its own independent motifs, related to the culture of the peasant population of Khorezm and Soghd."[211]

There are many venues for a reassessment of medieval Islamic history and art. The popular, nomadic, and folk-type of influence intimated above, no matter the provenance, may play a greater role than one imagines in Islamic art as a whole. The notion immediately brings to mind Lisa Golombek's theory of the "textile metaphor", supported by the artefacts themselves if not by historical records, whereby the visual models of Islamic art were largely textile-based.[212] This notion suggests that a nomadic, and therefore popular, aesthetic was present since the earliest period of Islam because, although textiles were of the utmost importance in Islamic sedentary society, it is only in nomadic cultures that one finds the unclassical juxtaposition of motifs so characteristic of Islamic art from its earlier Umayyad (661-750 AD) period. The influence of nomadic, popular and vernacular artistic expressions may have been reinforced by the Islamicization of various populations, as well as by the inherent ideology of the new religion.

Unfortunately many essential questions will remain unanswered until more historical and archaeological work is conducted, compiled and published. Our era of specialization

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211 Knobloch, Beyond the Oxus, pp.215-16, referring to L. I. Rempel's Arkhitekturnyi ornament Uzbekistana, Tashkent, 1961.

212 L.Golombek, "The draped universe of Islam", Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World, pp.25-51.

perhaps hinders this objective as few Islamic art historians are well-trained in Sassanid and Soghdian art, and *vice versa*. One major problem is of course demographic; what percentage of populations were Turkish even when Turks were ruling? It is usually acknowledged, as in most cases of nomadic take-overs that the Turks formed a minority ruling over a majority, composed of the native population(s). Such was the situation in the time of the Great Seljuqs or in the dynasty of the Seljuqs of Rūm where the Turks are said to have represented only ten percent of the population.[213] And so one tends to consider this a generalised phenomenon blind to exceptions like that of early seventh century Ghazna which is said to have been one third Turkish.[214] No doubt, the tracing of history that has been attempted would logically assume other Turkish enclaves. The issue is not to prove that the Turks were a majority in the Muslim frontier region but simply to stress that an important Turkish presence existed by the time of their Islamicization and that this would logically have had some repercussions on the art created on the steppe and under Turkish rule.

The Turkish Heritage

It was necessary to retrace Turkish history afresh in the light of both contemporary and past scholarship and to thoroughly assess a variety of commonly accepted notions, in an attempt to inventorize facts and artefacts and to discern the general lines of Turkish artistic evolution. The historical emphasis was necessary to weigh the conventional wisdom regarding, for example, the steppe or Buddhist heritage of the Turks, or the purely Soghdian and Sassanid nature of the western steppe in the early medieval period. Several conclusions may be confidently drawn. The existence of early or pre-T'u-kiue Turkish history, though still sometimes contested today,[215] has been demonstrated, allowing us to accept steppe art as an integral part of the Turkish heritage, but also obliging us to accept a commonly shared heritage of Inner Asian traditions and iconography. The tenacity of the traditional

213 Roux, Histoire, p. 177. The author claims the Turkish population of Anatolia amounted to ten percent by the 13th c., while he disagrees with Cahen who stated the figure at two or three hundred thousand. Golden, in Introduction, p.218, quotes Eremeev's estimate for the 11th c. at five to seven hundred thousand, and suggests that the Turks were maybe one million in Anatolia on the eve of the Mongol conquest.

214 Esin, History, p. 164.

215 Uzbekistan: Heirs to the Silk Road (Ed. J. Kelter), p. 43 .

Turkish lifestyle, religion and art makes it seem plausible that certain autochtonous elements survived after Islamicization. The Indo-Buddhist artistic traditions to which the powerful pre-Islamic Turkish empires subscribed confounds the issue further as the Turks, like the Soghdians, were perhaps the transmitters of this culture to *dār al-islām*, the former having formed an undeniably important element in ninth and tenth century outer Iranian settled society. Thus, when discussing Seljuqid art, the general Inner Asian or Central Asian prototype will become once again applicable in many cases where it is impossible to trace with absolute certainty, in the art of the eastern provinces, the origin of certain stylistic or iconographic devices. This generalization of the term "Central Asian" without providing additional details, is thus understandably often employed in art history works, for example, the stylized stucco plaque from the eleventh century Ghaznavid palace at Tirmidh (before 1030) depicting a fantastic zoomorph "whose origin may perhaps be traced to older images of central Asia (ill.43)."[216]

Another vast problem which confronts any art historian dealing with what is termed "traditional cultures" and which makes any essay at an exclusively art historical discourse impossible, is the nexus between the arts and the body of native beliefs which are held in greater esteem than the formal or aesthetic quality of the artefacts. In the venture to isolate pre-Islamic Turkish steppe elements, one is effectively discussing the indigenous Turkish religion and its totemic, shamanistic, and cosmological aspects.[217] The recurrent Turkish themes, despite a seeming eclecticism on the formal level, revolve around a belief system which persevered even after the adoption of various other faiths. Unfortunately, there is no opportunity to discuss this subject at length in this study. However, to exhibit the importance of this issue, the introductory paragraph of Roux's *Etudes d'iconographie islamique* shall be quoted, the author being the most impartial contemporary Turcologist interested in Turkish influences on Islamic art:

"Quand, en 1975, j'ai entrepris l'examen de quelques objets numineux des Turcs et des Mongols je n'avais d'autres préoccupations que l'étude des représentations religieuses et

216 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p. 289.

217 see Roux, La religion des Turcs et des Mongols. Or, Köprülü's Influence du chamanisme turco-mongol sur les ordres mystiques musulmans, which discusses the integration of shamanistic elements into Sufism.

para-religieuses des peuples "altaïques" de l'Asie centrale et de la Sibérie. C'est peu à peu que j'ai été amené, presque malgré moi, à me pencher sur l'iconographie islamique tant il me paraissait aller de soi qu'elle faisait partie du sujet.

"Dans la grande révolution que connut au IXe siècle la civilisation musulmane, on accorde en général le premier rôle à l'Iran et à la Mésopotamie, elle-même largement sous obédience iranienne. En dehors des chercheurs turcs et de certains chercheurs d'autres nationalités, mais sous influence du nationalisme turc, rares sont ceux qui ont pensé qu'il fallait aussi en accorder un aux mercenaires turcs des califes abbassides et de leurs grands vassaux, avant même que ce rôle ne s'accroisse aux XIe et XIIe siècles avec les invasions seldjoukides. Ils n'ont guère été entendus jusqu'alors et ceci pour deux raisons de valeur bien différente. La première c'est que tout en constatant la mainmise presque totale des mamelouks sur les armées et le gouvernement arabes, on a, par pétition de principe, affirmé que les Turcs n'avaient guère gardé de souvenirs de leur culture pré-islamique. On peut sans peine soutenir une thèse diamétralement opposée. La seconde c'est que les historiens de l'art islamique, même quand ils sont turcologues, ignorent à peu près tout de la religion turque et mongole, celle-ci étant inséparable de celle-là, telle qu'elle existait entre le VIe et le XIIIe siècles et qu'en conséquence ils sont impuissants à démontrer son impact. Il leur est arrivé d'utiliser si mal à propos les rares connaissances qu'ils en avaient qu'ils ont enlevé toute crédibilité à leurs hypothèses: ainsi ont fait par exemple Mme Otto-Dorn et ses élèves en voulant retrouver sur les monuments seldjoukides d'Anatolie une illustration du calendrier des Douze animaux."[218]

Islamic art historians unaffected by Turkish nationalism have also broached the topic of Turkish influence which, as has hopefully been demonstrated, is a logical inquiry.[219] Ettinghausen and Grabar raised the issue under a small heading entitled "The Turks" in their joint work *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250*, where they evoke the difficulty of attributing Turkishness to art because "no specifically Turkish examples of the decorative arts survive from the period preceding the invasion of the Seljuqs" and they emphasize the Turkish inclination towards the adoption of Persian culture.[220] This is perhaps the type of generalization necessary in survey works such as *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250* , which is of the most excellent order, but for those interested in Turkish history the statement is not fully accurate. The authors however concede the fact

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218 Roux, Etudes d' ico. isl., p. 7.

219 This statement is not meant to undermine all research accomplished by Turkish historians or those inspired by them. This paper largely consults their works and, as has already been expressed, many of them and their findings are unduly ignored . Another school of authors , typified by J.Strzygowski, interested in steppe history was propelled by the ethnocentrism of "humanism" with its total disregard for nomadic or "northern" cultures.

220 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture , p. 332. This work was begun by both authors but was only completed after the death of R.Ettinghausen by Grabar, assisted by the Islamic art historians S. Blair and E. Whelan, and as such the book may reflect more the views of these last three authors.

that small personal objects such as jewelry, weapons and horse trappings may exhibit Turkish aspects because their "owners might have insisted on certain traditional features."[221] The authors also acknowledge the bevelled style, which will be discussed later, as well as indigenous carpet designs as Turkish input.

Although certain authors may question if the Turkish military élite, apart from the sultans themselves and their families, were patrons, at least one find, consisting of almost forty small silver objects belonging to the *ḥājib* Abū Shujā' Injūtagīn, [222] has been discovered, indicating that craftsmen were native or developed elements and styles to suit the needs of a Turkish ruling class, as the pieces strongly exhibit the steppe heritage. Unfortunately no other cases which so clearly denote a direct relationship between a Turkish patron and artefacts that he had commissioned have not been found.

Islamic Art of the Seljuqid Period

Basil Gray indicates in the first chapter of *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia*, that two schools exist with regards to Seljuqid art: one of which states "that all the formal and decorative elements can be seen earlier and that they represent basically a resurgence or revival of the classic arts of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate" (or of the Perso-Islamic model promoted through well-trained viziers) and the other which replies that Seljuqid art is a turning point largely due to the "traditions brought by Turkish invaders from their homelands in Central Asia." [223] Truth usually resides in the middle of most debates, and yet this old debate or polarization cannot withstand the test of time or scholarship, and it is for this reason that it does not concern this study except in so far as the factionalism has largely contributed to the advancement of the issues, regions, and epochs involved.

Most of what is associated with the art of the Seljuqid period in terms of forms and style was originally esteemed an innovation of the period until comparable artefacts and monuments dating from the pre-Seljuq period emerged, and hence altered this notion. In the present state of knowledge, many architectural elements and techniques, such as "mosques,

221 *Ibid.*

222 Ettinghausen, "Turkish Elements on Silver Objects of the Seljuq Period of Iran", Art and Archaeology: Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), pp.1034- 46.

223 B. Gray, "Saljūq art: problems of identity, patronage and taste", The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia (Ed. R. Hillenbrand), p.1. The former view is represented by J.Sourdel-Thomine, while the latter is best exemplified by K.Otto-Dorn (see biblio.).

mausoleums, baked brick, muqarnas, from one to four *aivāns* around a courtyard, *pīshṭāq*," or decorative themes [224] were to be found in the pre-Seljuq period but had not yet become standardized, systematically repeated, or combined to form the classical Iranian style. And yet innovations were also present. Amongst the latter, Grabar lists all ceramic techniques, most ceramic designs, baked brick architecture, the utilization of brick for decoration, and a number of shapes in metalwork, especially in bronze.[225] This raises an issue aptly pointed out by Grabar, namely the question of the degree to which the new Islamic society altered and transformed earlier traditions or perpetuated them unaffected by the transition, except superficially. The art historian replies both: "At the same time, however original some of its works may have been, the essential process is not Iranian alone but only one aspect of the complex ways in which Islamic art was formed all over the world it had taken over."[226]

The Seljuq period of Islamic art corresponds to a veritable "artistic explosion": it was an intense period of artistic activity and productivity, and many beautiful monuments and artefacts have survived to testify to this fact. Questions of course then arise, for both art and social historians, which have not yet been answered due to the little documentation available on the place and training of the artisan class within the society, and on the extent of control or influence that the Oghuz patrons had on their work. Ettinghausen in a short article on Seljuq art [227] investigates the incentive of this flourishing and its link to the Seljuq dynasty. The author puts forward the idea that social changes occuring contemporaneously gave rise to a wealthy merchant class which not only made possible the proliferation of luxury goods, but also demanded them. However, the existence of ceramic

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224 O.Grabar, "The visual arts", CHOIr 5, pp. 348-9.

225 *Ibid.*, p.362.

226 *Ibid.*, p.363. On page 329, the author writes; "The fundamental question is whether in matters of functional needs and of artistic taste the Muslim conquest was a revolutionary event which radically and permanently transformed earlier traditions or whether it was but a peculiar spiritual and cultural overlay without major visually perceptible consequences which merely transformed or channelled into new directions an artistic language which had existed before." The author of this study believes that the former overpowered the latter, and that no civilization evolves *ex nihilo*.

227 Ettinghausen, "The flowering of Seljuq art", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), p. 963.

ware decorated simply and obviously for popular use, led the author to conclude that this alone could not explain the phenomenon. To solve the problem, Ettinghausen then turns to Ibn Khaldūn's (d.1406) theory of strong dynasties which encourage the arts, or towards the new trend of manuals for merchants in which profit-making was endowed with an Islamic ethos, thus creating an atmosphere conducive for trade. Barbara Finster, looking also to economic change, explains the creativity of the era by the decline of the caliphate.[228] The latter weakened the centralization of patronage, therefore "broadening the basis of endowments" so that the merchant classes, empowered by having become themselves patrons, were able to express their needs and their identity. This thesis however does not seem to consider the strong programs of building and works devised and implemented by many of the sultans' viziers. These issues of taste may seem irrelevant to the issue of Turkish influence, although they are of major importance in trying to assess Turkish input and how exactly it penetrated. The point here is that the Seljuqs entered an already decentralized largely citified culture where artisans, formely despised, had suddenly gained recognition and thus took pride in their work judging from the signing, dating and often self-laudatory inscriptions of some of the objects.

The Seljuq period remains associated with a certain number of architectural and iconographic forms such as the four-*iwān* court with domed-chamber structure used mainly for mosques and which can be traced back to the Zoroastrian fire-altar, the Khurasanian house, or perhaps back even further to Parthian times and the palace of Assur.[229] Mausolea, also predating the Seljuqs, gained as much importance as mosques. The inventive brick technique known as *hāzārbaf* (thousand weaves) first observed at the Sāmānid Mausoleum of Ismā'īl (before 943) at Bukhara, evolved in beauty and complexity and was widely used throughout the period. These forms and techniques all reached a pinnacle during this period as did architectural decoration, especially stucco and tile work which was applied for the first time to cover large surfaces, the earliest and indubitably the most beautiful example of which is to be found at the *madrasa* of Jalāl al-dīn Qaratā'ī in

228 Finster, "The Saljūqs as Patrons", The Art of the Saljūqs (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), see pp.17-23.
229 Ettinghausen, "Originality and conformity in Islamic art", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), p.102.

Konya (1253) (ill.44). Perhaps the two arts whose florescence originated in Seljuq times proper are pottery and sculpture. The former was elevated to a major art form; many new techniques (*minai*, lustre) were invented or introduced, and Seljuq ceramics have been classified among the greatest pottery ever produced. Even the poet and mathematician 'Umar Khayyām (d.1123) is said to have tried his hand at pottery to fashion a bird scarer. Figurative imagery (ill.45, 47, 48) and sculpture, both of which had appeared in earlier periods of Islamic art, persevered and increased. The trend may best be illustrated by the head of a Seljuqid prince now in the Metropolitan Museum (ill.46) or the almost lifesize stucco figures of princes or of court officials. Mastery was also pursued and attained in metalwork and a number of exquisite pieces are displayed in museums worldwide. New techniques such as the inlaying in bronze or brass with silver or copper, and new forms of ornementation were explored. A new calligraphic script was developed and slowly *naskhī* replaced the once preferred *kūfī*. Few illustrated manuscripts exist from the Seljuqid period, but more than a half-dozen *Qur'āns* have survived, whose illumination one would already equate with the fully mature Islamic style. It was a full renaissance in all fields from the palaces, to the state supported programs of social building, including schools, hospitals, bridges, caravanserais and certainly mosques, to household items of glass, ceramic or metal.

Chapter III. Turkish Elements in the Art of the Seljuqid Period
Architecture

The architectural structure most commonly surmised to have been influenced by Turkish presence is the mausoleum, and it is this type of monument alone which will be treated under this heading. Funerary structures began appearing regularly in the Muslim world in the tenth century and were concentrated in Iran, Central Asia, and Fāṭimid Egypt. In the first two regions, no single variety existed, although the mausolea may be summarily divided into two types: cylindrical or polygonal structures with a conical or polyhedral roof or those of the domed square variety, of which the Sāmānid mausoleum of Ismā'īl is the best known example. The emergence of the first type has often been explained by the coming of the Seljuqs, especially in the 1940's when the emphasis of Islamic art history shifted from the central lands and began exploring the history of the eastern borders of *dār al-islām* and that of Central Asia in general. A readjustment of this view was proffered by Janine Sourdel-Thomine in her article *Renouvellement et tradition dans l'architecture saljūqide* where she discusses the mosque, *madrasa* and mausoleum, not as innovations of the Seljuqid period, but as the continuation of forms elaborated during the classical period.[230] Sourdel-Thomine attributes several factors to the development and proliferation of funerary monuments, which did effectively begin in the pre-Seljuq period, from *shī'ī* beliefs to princely commemoration. The same article nonetheless concedes "une place à des traditions proprement turques revivifiées à cette occasion."[231] The author thus considers the Turks a reinforcing factor of a trend which had existed since the Qubbat al-Ṣulaybīya, dating to the mid-ninth century, and which was due to a multiplicity of factors, internal and external to the Islamic tradition, and her assessment is no doubt correct. However, the author's argument is perhaps flawed in that by seeking to refute the theory of a new art due to the Seljuqs themselves, she seems to be herself assuming that artistic changes, as in the earlier periods of Islamic art, necessarily occur and stem from the ruling classes. The

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230 J.Sourdel-Thomine, "Renouvellement et tradition dans l'architecture Saljūqide", Isl. Civ.: 950-1150, (Ed. D.S. Richards), pp. 251-65. Grabar in "The earliest Islamic commemorative structures, notes and documents", Ars Orientalis, 6, pp.40-42, also observed that frontier zones created military and religious conditions propitious for mausolea.

231 Sourdel-Thomine, "Renouvellement ", Isl. Civ.: 950-1150, (Ed. D.S. Richards), p. 258.

Seljuqs certainly enjoyed court life, and yet it is generally believed to have been more sober and less organized than that of the Sāmānids or the Ghaznavids, a factor to be understood in light of their steppe origins. Rudolf Shnyder wrote about the Seljuqs in 1973: "The desire to take root in a definite place, and to glorify external power by a representative monument in a representative centre seems hardly developed."[232] More recently, Robert Irwin in his *Islamic Art in Context* reported the Seljuq sultans' "lack of personal interest in art or architecture."[233] This view may now be altered by the increased information, through excavations and reports in literary sources, of Seljuq secular, especially palatial, architecture. The point is that Turkish elements may have penetrated from a more grass-roots level, by newly empowered groups- such as soldiers-, especially as Islamic art, has, as a whole, fully encompassed several vernacular artistic idioms. It should however also be indicated that several of the Turkish and Mongol Muslim sultans themselves exercised a craft, and one may assume that it was a prerequisite of rulers or members of élite amongst these two peoples.[234] Unfortunately, in the history of the Turks that has been traced, no examples from the pre-Islamic era have been found, with the exception of the T'opa Wei, unless the definition of craft is extended to its anthropological meaning and may thus include the hunt or other such type of activities important in traditional cultures.

Robert Hillenbrand, who shares the same view as Sourdel-Thomine with regards to the origins of the mausoleum, raises an important factor, namely that orthodox Zoroastrianism could never have been responsible for the trend, due to its eschatological beliefs. [235] How-

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232 R.Schnyder, "Political centres and artistic powers in Saljūq Iran", Isl. Civ. 950-1150 (Ed. D.S.Richards), p. 203.

233 R. Irwin, Islamic Art in Context, p. 75.

234 *Ibid.*, p.79. G. Necipoğlu, in The Topkapi Scroll, p.4., basing herself on Persian and Arabic medieval sources describes the Mongol ruler Ghazan (r.1295-1304) as an expert woodworker, goldsmith, painter as well as bridle and spur maker. She also lists the Ghaznavid ruler Mas'ud I (r.1031-1041) as having devised his own building plans and as possessing a good knowledge of geometry; and the Anatolian Seljuq ruler 'Ala' al-Dın Kay-Qubādh (r.1219-1237) who drew up his own plans for the palace of Kubadabad in 1236. Also Irwin, Islamic Art, p.92.

235 R.Hillenbrand, "The development of Saljūq mausolea in Iran", The Art of Iran and Anatolia (Ed. W. Watson) 4 , p.43. Esin, History, p.137, points out that the Soghdian custom was to let prey animals devour the corpses to the bones which were then placed in ossuaries, and claims that the latter developed into tent-like structures in largely Turkish Mazdean communities .

ever, Zoroastrian protrotypes for Islamic mausolea are often presumed. Grabar suggests, when discussing the 61m high original tomb tower the Gunbad-i Qābūs (1006-7) in Khurasan built by the local Ziyārid prince Qābūs Ibn Vashmgir- apart from ascribing a political function to the monument- that there is a connection "with Zoroastrian funerary structures which have disappeared" because of the use of Pahlavī and of the solar as well as the lunar calendar in the epigraphy .[236]

Although Hillenbrand acknowledges Turkish pre-Islamic burial customs, based upon the archaeological evidence of pre-Islamic Central Asian temples and the previously discussed portable domed funerary structures depicted in the Panjikent frescoes, he believes mausolea to have issued out of the syncretic heterodox forms of Zoroastrianism practised in Central Asia.[237] The difficulty of the Panjikent murals has already been discussed: although they are commonly judged as Soghdian, and hence as Persian or Iranian, there exists the possibility of a Turkish reading due both to the imagery of the frescoes and to the fact that Panjikent was largely ruled by Iranized Turkish leaders. The portable domed structure in which the body was placed and then cremated is recorded in the Turkish past, amongst the Kök-Türks, [238] or in connection with the Oghuz according to Ibn Faḍlān's account.[239] Al-Ṭabarī (d.923) also describes a *yog* under a domed tent or structure at the occasion of the death of the Turkish Türgis prince Kūr-Ṣūl (d.738).

With regard to the single tomb-towers, or *türbes*, with conical roofs, especially prevalent in Anatolia, Hillenbrand concludes: "The most likely explanation seems to be not that the form copied Armenian churches or Turkish tents, as has often been suggested, but that

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236 Grabar, "The visual arts", CHOIr. 5, p. 342. Grabar is no doubt encouraged by the literary accounts which tell of the body of the deceased being suspended from the roof in a glass coffin, which does in fact conform to the religion's avoidance of inhumation and its views on the nature of flesh. The same author in his earlier joint work with Ettinghausen , Art and Architecture, p. 222, and perhaps due to the latter, comments upon the same monument, stipulating "that its background may be sought in some Mazdean commemorative monument or in the transformation into permanent architecture of a transitory building such as a tent."

237 Hillenbrand, "Development ", The Art of Iran and Anatolia (Ed. W.Watson) 4, p. 43. Although the author is discussing the domed structure as a prototype for the domed square mausoleum, it was decided that it should be included as it is relevant to the issue raised earlier with regard to Panjikent and the western steppe as a whole.

238 See Esin, History, pp.113-14. Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p. 139.

239 See Ibn Faḍlān, Voyage chez les Bulgares, p.71 and p.78.

it was originally an Iranian invention, which only at a later stage began to reflect the influence of alien architectural traditions."[240] This conclusion seems too exclusive, especially in view of the traditional burial rites of the various Turkish peoples. The Polovtsians, also known as the Cumans, were a Turkish grouping that had originated in the Altai and had found their way to the western steppe in the early medieval period.[241] Friar William of Rubruck (d.1253-55) informs us that the wealthy amongst them were given mausolea "in the form of pointed huts or brick towers, or forms of stone houses" [242] which oddly enough could correspond to the three structures attributed to the Seljuqs in the past, namely the two types of mausolea earlier mentioned as well as the minaret or victory tower. This could, doubtful as it seems, denote a foreign "import", if the whole ceremony described by the friar weren't so specifically Turkish with its offerings of kumiss and meat, and its poles placed upon the cardinal points on which were affixed horses' hides to serve in the hereafter.

However, in a much more recent publication Hillenbrand accords a much greater role to the possibility of Turkish influence on Islamic funerary structures, which again may imply that the time is ripe for a more logical and objective writing of history devoid of nationalistic tendencies or other types of partialities. The few examples of Turkish burial customs offered are enough to suggest that historical facts were being overlooked or remained undisclosed due to the relative infancy of the field of Central Asian history. In *Islamic Architecture*, [243] the art historian explores all sides of the mausoleum issue, avowing a place to Roman and Byzantine *martyria* prototypes as well as to Turkish ones. In view of the latter, and indicating the increasingly finer assessment of the history of outer Iran, he writes:

"Could it be that the crucial influences were those from the world of the steppe to the north and east of Central Asia? By this reckoning, the nomadic Turkic peoples would have introduced the idea of the mausoleum to the Iranian world, and indeed their geographical

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240 R. Hillenbrand, "Development ", The Art of Iran and Anatolia (Ed. W.Watson) 4, p. 56.

241 For information on the Cumans, see Golden, "The peoples of the south Russian steppes", CHEIA, pp. 277-84.

242 Barthold, "The burial rites of the Turks and the Mongols", CAJ, 4, p.198.

243 R. Hillenbrand, Islamic Architecture (1994).

proximity to the very area where the earliest Iranian Islamic mausolea are to be found is a powerful argument in favour of the idea. In pre-Islamic times the steppe peoples of Central and Eastern Asia practised quite complex funerary rituals, some of which have survived into modern times. Excavations of the complex of buildings at Tagisken in Central Asia, datable to the 3rd century BC, suggest that the tombs of that time took the form of gigantic *yurts* executed in durable materials and surrounded by circular walls or set on high plinths." [244]

The author proffers other arguments, all of them very much paralleling the original group of writers who attributed a Turkish origin to the tent-like tombs. The author, still cautious, adds: "Nevertheless the question remains an open one, for it has to be conceded that the earliest surviving tomb towers were built by princes of Iranian rather than Turkish stock, and in pre-Saljuq times."[245] Although this is a true statement, it purports that the *türbes* and the tomb towers possess one and the same precedent, [246] which may not be the case, and it assumes the unlikelihood of Turkish influence on Iranian culture.

To turn to the monuments, an illustrative example is to be found in the two brick-style octagonal Kharrāqan tombs (1067-8 and 1093) which were built by Muḥammad Ibn Makki al-Zanjani for "sub-princely Turks or Iranians" [247] in northern Iran during the Seljuq period (ill.49, 50). On a formal level, both the general shape and the small aperture motifs around the band between the body and the roof, which from a distance resemble tent ropes or fixtures, recall the tent. Each side is 4m long and one tomb possesses a double dome, the first example in Iran, which is thought to be derived either from wooden architecture or from the nomadic tent. Hillenbrand presents these tombs as illustrations of Turkish influence.[248] The author mentions that the remote location of the monuments may indicate the region's historical role as a favourite grazing ground. The visual metaphor is also presented as he compares the wicker lattice patterns of the nomadic *yurt* to the tomb's decoration

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244 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

245 *Ibid.*

246 *Ibid.*, p. 282. However, the author, discussing tomb towers specifically, as opposed to the *türbes*, lists the various protoytpes suggested for them: "Turkish tents, Sabian temples, Chinese watch-towers and Palmyran tower tombs". Hillenbrand states that arguments may be found against each proposition, and that therefore it "seems better to admit ignorance".

247 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p.2 69.

248 R.Hillenbrand, Islamic Architecture, p. 277.

rendered in brick.[249] The latter is more often considered to reproduce the textile aspects of Turkish princely tents, an idea to which the scholar alludes with regards to the Radkan tomb (1206).[250]

Professor Grabar observed the alignement of the tombs from the Seljūq period and wondered whether or not it was accidental. The largest number of them are found in "a line from Urgench,... across Balkh and Merv, in and around the mountains south of the Caspian Sea, and into Azerbayjan." [251] Clarification of the regions' medieval demography may in the future explain this emplacement. Azerbaijan was a starting point for many incursions of the Turkish nomads and was "largely Turkicized in the Seljūq era", mostly by Oghuz and some Kipchak Turks.[252] On the eve of the Mongol invasion (1258), the Central Asian Iranian population had nearly undergone the process of Turkicization, and yet without further study, no final conclusion can be drawn as Iranian "high culture" continued to have an impact on the Turks of the western steppes. This notwithstanding, scholars have sought to demonstrate that the Turks participated in the latter, and also possessed a high culture of their own.

In Azarbaijan and Anatolia, one finds many two-storied tent-shaped mausolea. This design has been connected with pre-Islamic Turkish Central Asian burial rituals which were carried out in two stages; first, the dead was placed in a tent which the family and friends circumambulated on horseback, lamenting and paying homage to the deceased. Later, the deceased was buried. The literary sources cite this practice in reference to both the T'u-kiue [253] and the Huns, whose leader Attila's (d.453) funeral took place in this manner although his sarcophagus was particularly extravagant:

"...it is said that his body was first laid out in a tent of costly Chinese silk, around which his followers gathered to perform the ceremonial lamentations, singing and reciting his heroic deeds. Not until these duties had been carried out in full was the dead king interred,

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249 *Ibid.*

250 *Ibid.*

251 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p. 267. The proliferation of tombs in Azerbaijan has been explained by the fragmentation of the Seljuq state, creating a situation of local rulers vying for power with each other, and hence erecting symbols of power.

252 Golden, Introduction, p .221 and 225.

253 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.149. referring to W. Schmidt, "Sur les pratiques funéraires des T'ou-Kiue" in Der Ursprung der Gottesidee 19,3,1949.

in a combination of three coffins, one of iron, one of silver, and the innermost of gold."[254] The *türbe*'s two levels represent tent and tomb. Hillenbrand, discussing the two-storied monument at Radkan (1206) (ill.51), purports that, in light of the indigenous Turkish customs and of the literary accounts, the Central Asian explanation is persuasive.[255] Other examples of this type of structure may be seen at the also Iranian Gunbad-i Surkh (1148) or the Gunbad-i Qabud (1197), both at Maragha or the tomb at Nakhichivan (1162).

Numerous are the scholars who accept the tent prototype as a likely influence: E.Kühnel, K.Otto-Dorn, G.Öney, and A.U.Pope. [256] The contemporary author, Roux, unlike Sourdel-Thomine, still remains convinced that the emergence and importance of mausolea in the Muslim lands, is ultimately due to the arrival of the Turks.[257]

The mausolea, which came to equal mosques in importance during the Seljuqid period, grew into public places of worship and prayer. The first example of the mosque-mausoleum, although here originally joined to a palace complex, is the mausoleum of the last Great Seljuq sultan Sanjar in Merv, dating to ca. 1152. Again, this tendency of combining sepulchre and place of worship, if developed out of the necessity or tendency within medieval society to erect monuments to power (or in the case of Sufi or *shī'ī* saints, to piety), was easily assimilated by the Turkish past with its ancestor cults, or its oaths of allegiance to its leader seen as endowed with heavenly *kut* or charisma.

Many of the authors who view the tent as the prototype for the *türbe* or *gunbad* find confirmation in two decorative factors. Firstly, the brick technique which, although predating the Seljuq period, reached its peak in the Seljuq period.The decorated bricks are then considered as a transposition of the colourful felt tent textiles which the literary sources

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254 C. J. Du Ry, Art of Islam, p. 90.

255 Hillenbrand, Islamic Architecture, p. 277.

256 E. Kühnel, Islamic Art and Architecture, p. 78. K. Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.139, A. U.Pope, "Tents and pavillions", A Survey of Persian Art,v.4, p.1412. T.T. Rice, Seljuks, p. 94, apart from citing the custom of venerating the dead amongst Turks, suggests that although the Seljuqs no longer buried horses with their masters, they continued to relate the two as when Kay-Kā'ūs I (r.1210-19) reburied his father in 1210, he ensured that the father's charger be present at the memorial feast.

257 Roux, The Turkic Peoples of the World (Ed. M. Bainbridge), p.11, writes: "...it was certainly they who brought in both funerary art, condemned in principle by Muslim orthodoxy, and also many aspects of a new aesthetic." Or see his Histoire des Turcs, p.135.

describe.[258] This technique, although it was occasionally employed early in the centralized regions of *dār al-islām*, such as the Baghdad gate at Raqqa (796 or 772), or at the court of honour at the 'Abbāsid palace at Ukhaidir, datable no later than the second half of the eighth century, is surmised to have developed in Central Asia though its exact origins remain obscure. Again, a meticulous history of building techniques employed in the various Central Asian dynasties would constitute a worthwhile topic of research. It is also possible that the brick technique was an innovation of Islamic art and an outcome of the meeting of Central Asian and Islamic cultures. The elegant brickwork has been attributed both to Persian and to Turkish influence. For example, E. Schroeder views it as a Persian Sassanid input into Central Asia, while G.Fehervari, considers it as unequivocally Central Asian, and maybe even "Turkish." [259] The brick technique,[260] called *hāzārbaf* meaning a "thousand weaves or ropes", has nonetheless been unanimously connected with textiles, by Grabar, Golombek, Otto-Dorn, Strzygowski, amongst others. The visual parallel is stunning, yet what is more difficult to assess is whether the resemblance to nomadic patterns, as the brickwork does not imitate the more complex textiles associated with the royal nomads, is due to the constraints of the material which diminished with the use and freedom of stucco work, and whether this textile aesthetic is not an internal quality, albeit reinforced by nomadic input, of Islamic art as a whole.

Many *türbes* evince a more overt characteristic from the tent-culture, namely the replica of the tent's adornment of the seam, pennants and lambrequins included, which covers, in the case of the tent, the joining of the body of the tent with its roof. The existence of this ornamental band is confirmed by the tent descriptions of the Friar William of Rubruck who noted: "The felt on the collar they decorate with various beautiful pictures (ill.53)." [261] The Radkan monument (ill.51) is an excellent example of this feature with its lobed stone pennant (ill.52). Otto-Dorn lists also another Iranian monument from the Seljuq period, the

258 Otto-Dorn, , L'art de l'islam, p.139.

259 Schroeder, "The Seljūq period", A Survey of Persian Art, vol.3, p.984. And Fehervari, "Some problems of Seljuq art", The Art of Iran and Anatolia (Ed. W.Watson), 4, p. 7.

260 It was also employed by the Qarakhānids, the Ghaznavids, the Mongols and the Khwārazm Shahs.

261 Pope, "Tents and Pavilions", A Survey of Persian Art , v. 4, p.1414, note 3,quoting from M. Komroff's Contemporaries of Marco Polo, London, 1929, p. 80.

mosque at Gulpayagan (ca.1116), with its band bearing lozenges and from which a carved fringe appears to be suspended. Strzygowski devoted an article to the topic of the lambrequin whereby, through this feature, he attempts to prove the influence of the tent-culture and Central Asia on Islamic art, thus seeking to expose the Hellenocentric (and anti-"barbarian") bias of much of Western history.[262] His article is extremely convincing, and instigates such debates as the possibility of a northern nomadic influence on Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Greek art.[263] The author also reminds us of the perishability of wood, a material of predilection among the Central Asian nomads. But more importantly, he illustrates the article with photos of murals from the caves of Tun-huang (ca. 7th c.), Yün-kang (ill. 60), and the Uighur site of Bezeklik (ill.36, 37) which reveal the painted transpositions of lambrequins.[264] The temple interiors, with their allover aesthetic and their unclassical juxtaposition of a plurality of motifs, interestingly enough parallel the aesthetics of Islamic art (ill. 56) to a much greater degree than any Sassanid palace, and would seem to confirm a strong Central Asian influence which in these specific examples typify a marriage of Indian, Chinese and nomadic styles. As for the carry-over into Islamic art, he evinces the frieze above the windows of the Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlun mosque (879) (ill.58) in Cairo which was built on the model of the Sāmarrā (ca.836) mosque and commissioned by the Turkish founder of the dynasty.[265] The frieze with its festoons, unlike the other bands of palmette ornaments, does effectively mimic the tent-seam's covering.

Art historians may tend to disregard the tent as architecture and yet to study it within Islamic history, accompanied by the detailed accounts of the lavish tents of the Seljuq sultans, or especially of the Turko-Mongol khāns such as Hūlegū (r.1256-65) or Tīmūr, renders one cognizant of the tent's importance in all social strata of the nomadic universe.

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262 Strzygowski, "Le lambrequin", Revue des Arts Asiatiques, 3. On p. 73, one reads : "Le lambrequin est un des rares indices sûrs de l'art proprement asiatique."

263 *Ibid.*, p.75.

264 The author gives earlier examples such as the sculpted caves of Yün-kang from the T'opa Wei period, and receding back even further, the author believes lambrequins to have been represented on ancient Chinese ritual bronzes found in the province of Shansi and dating from ca. early 3rd c. BC. The murals at Tun-huang, although often considered Chinese (D.Carter, *op. cit.*, p.120), have been considered Turkish by authors such as Esin.

265 Strzygowski, "Le lambrequin", Revue des Arts Asiatiques, p. 79.

The tent played an important role from the earliest periods of Islamic history and began acquiring imperial traits with the luxury-loving Umayyads (661-750), who continued, despite their pleasure palaces, a semi-nomadic lifestyle to a certain degree. The Persian and the Turko-Mongol cultures reinforced the importance of this structure, as a simple habitat , as a garden, hunting, or party pavilion, as a military headquarters, or even as an imperial palace. Ibn Khaldūn (d.1406) in his *Muqaddimah* presents the tent as a symbol of royal authority.[266] This trend endured as late as the Tīmūrid period (1370-1506). The royal tents were not composed of bare black goat hair or monochrome felt, but were elaborate huge costly structures of charm, beauty and opulence, fabricated of luxury textiles such as brocade or appliqué embroidery encrusted with precious gems. Marco Polo described the tent of the great Mongol Khān as being made up of lion skins lined with fur and silk ropes. The Arghū Āqā entertained the Hūlegū in 1256 in a tent "of golden tissue, pinned down by 1,000 golden pegs. It had a rich pavilion as an ante-chamber, while the hall of audience was furnished with gold and silver vessels, decked with precious stones." [267] The Turko-Mongol imperial nomadic tradition and aesthetic prevailed for a long time within Islamic culture. The study of the tent in medieval Islamic society truly belongs to architectural history as complex forms and lattice structures were developed, and if the tents no longer exist, many miniatures still witness their inventiveness and significance. Although the typical Central Asian tent, the *yurt*, was conical and round, imitating the form of the withe hut with reinforced latticed side walls, many elaborate and varied forms of tent structures were devised, some of the most beautiful being inspired by Chinese pagoda architecture. The interior and exterior of the tents displayed an array of rich fabrics and patterns revealing the nomadic multi-patterned aesthetic, appreciated by all social strata and still present in nomadic cultures today.

The tent-pole in nomadic law is of such importance that leaning on it guaranteed the death penalty. [268] In all traditional societies, as physical and spiritual reality are intertwi-

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266 Ibn Khaldūn (tr. F.Rosenthal) The Muqaddimah, vol.2, p.67.

267 Pope, "Tents and Pavilions",SPA, p.1417 , note 8, quoting from H. H. Howorth's History of the Mongols, III, London, 1888, pp.101-2.

268 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.163.

ned, the tent-pole functions not just as a material support but also, like the cosmic pole or sky pillar of the shaman, as *axis mundi* (*siruq*), between the three spheres of Turkish cosmology: the aquatic, the terrestrial, and the heavenly.[269] The tent-pole was thus often granted special attention, and was gilded and beautified from at least the T'u-kiue period. Persian miniatures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries reveal the perpetuation of this trend, and portray golden tent-poles, which could have been considered a purely artistic device, had contemporary reports not confirmed the continued existence of carved and gilded tent pillars; for example, the descriptions of Tīmūr's tent by Gonzalez de Clavijo, Spanish ambassador to the Timūrid court confirms the custom: "These poles were painted in colours blue and gold and otherwise....." [270]

For many of the art historians seeking to define Turkish input in Islamic art, the use of wooden pillars in monuments is deemed a further element of Turkicization. It was already present in pre-Seljuq times and was strongly reinforced by the later Mongols. Otto-Dorn declares the earliest carved wooden mosque pillars to be from Western Turkestan, as museums in both Tashkent and Samarkand exhibit a great number of carved wooden columns from sites such as Khiva and dating from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.[271] A group of Anatolian mosques from the Seljuq of Rūm period include this feature, which is thought to stem back to the columns of audience and assembly tents, and which effectively seems to create a nomadic type of atmosphere, such as the Afyūn Qarahiṣārī mosque (ca.1273), the Sivrihisar mosque (ca.1231), or the Eshrefoghlu mosque at Beyshehir (1296).

Friar Rubruck specifies another element of the Turko-Mongol tent: "Before the door, they hang a felt curiously painted with vines, trees, birds and beasts."[272] This feature, placed on the threshold -which held a significant place in traditional beliefs- no doubt served an apotropaic function and may have perhaps influenced the quintessence of Islamic

269 Esin, "The Oghuz Epics and Saljūq Iconography" , The Art of the Seljūqs (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), p. 203.

270 Pope, "Tents and Pavilions", SPA, p.1418, quoting from Le Strange (tr.), Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane, London,1928 p. 238.

271 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'Islam, p.162.

272 Pope, "Tents and Pavilions", SPA, p.1414, note 3, quoting from M.Komroff's Contemporaries of Marco Polo, London, 1929, p. 80.

art, the prayer rug. Siegfried Gassong in an article on Turkoman prayer rugs [273] analyzes different types of rugs bearing *miḥrāb* or niche shapes, only to conclude that although the niche in Turkish and Persian prayer rugs is a *miḥrāb*, for it is considered as such by Muslims, the same cannot necessarily be claimed for the niches in Turkoman *namazlyk* rugs (ill.54). The Turkoman rugs are still to be interpreted in light of pre-Islamic spiritual beliefs and therefore serve a protective function; the niche representing a cross section of the tent or the gate to paradise, with flowers and other related motifs. This thesis would be confirmed by the prevalence of the stylized ram horns motif (ill.54), the "homestead guardians", often woven into these rugs but also into a motif widespread in oriental rugs, the *göl* (ill.57). In fact even in this century, ram horns, are still sometimes placed in front of Central Asian mosques, sometimes in an altar-like fashion (ill.55), evincing once again the resilience of the native Turkish set of beliefs.[274] Islamic prayer carpets began bearing the prayer niche in the Seljuq period and, although this development may be rightly ascribed to the impact of the theologian and mystic al-Ghazālī's (d.1111) book, the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (a commentary on the famous Qur'ānic light verse), and therefore indirectly to the *Qur'ān* itself, it may also be proffered that an ancient symbolism of the "sacred door" might also have played a role in this development. This acceptance, integration and transformation of primeval universal symbols constitutes perhaps the greatest strength of Islamic art.

Architectural Decoration

The greatest consensus amongst writers concerning abstract designs originating in Central Asia is found *vis-à-vis* what is known as the "bevelled style." It is a decorative technique, which, although employed early in *dār al-islām*, is generally associated with the art of Sāmarrā, the new capital that the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Mu'ṭasim (r.833-42) had built for his "unruly" Turkish guards in ca. 836. The style, also called Sāmarrā style C (or 1st) is found in wood, stucco, or stone, and is characterized by several tendencies: repetition and

273 S.Gassong, "Turkoman prayer rugs" Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies, 3.1, pp. 83-94.

274 M. Hrbas and E. Knobloch, Art of C. Asia, p.10, referring to Rempel suggest that the scroll and spiral are directly connected to the ram horn motif.

symmetry of curved abstracted leaf forms with condyloid endings or "S" shapes, the whole composed not of single units, but as an allover design rendered in the "slant style of carving" (*Schrägschnitt*) (ill.64). A Central Asian source for the design was first proposed by Kühnel, and many other art historians have since accepted,[275] or rejected, his thesis. M.Dimand intimates that court-sponsored Iranian or Turkish artists brought in this new technique in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r.786-809), and that it was directly connected to the "Scytho-Siberian" animal style, [276] whereas others, like E. Herzfeld [277] and G. Marçais, view Sāmarrā C, as having evolved from Hellenistic and Sassanid precedents. Its origin has been actively sought, partially because, after its appearance at Sāmarrā, the style became a quick success throughout various regions up until the early fourteenth century, but perhaps especially as it is generally deemed to be the first example of the arabesque in Islamic art. Grabar, in his joint work with Ettinghausen, remains tentative as on the one hand, he asserts the possibility of a "Turkish origin" for the bevelled style, and on the other, he speculates that the trend was perhaps the natural development of two fundamental characteristics of Islamic art, simplification and abstraction (of earlier motifs) respectively.[278] To counter the latter, one may simply make the point that, although the process of Islamicization in the visual arts does effectively entail an ever-increasing abstraction, its method is mathematics and geometry, simple or complex. The somewhat archaic, spontaneous and asymmetrical variants of the Sāmarrā C style could in no way typify this process (ill. 63). Grabar's greater difficulty resides in the "the assumption that Turkish soldiers of

275 G. Öney, "The Tur kish contribution to Islamic Decorative arts", Islâm Sanatında Türkler, p.131. Ettinghausen, "Turkish elements", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), p.1036. Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.89. G.Fehervari,"Art and Architecture" , The Cambridge History of Islam, v.2, p.710 : "The latter style (C) displays for the first time Central Asian elements, obviously introduced to Mesopotamia by Turkish artists. Certain elements in this style even reveal Far Eastern motives as well."

276 M. Dimand, "Studies in Islamic Ornament", Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld (Ed.G.C.Miles), p.64.

277 See Ettinghausen, "The 'beveled style' in the post-Samarra period", Archaeologica Orientalia , p.183. Some authors follow Herzfeld, for example Marçais, see L'art musulman, p.35. Or Necipoğlu, The Topkapi Scroll, pp. 93-5, K.A.C. Creswell, in Early Muslim Architecture, p. 376, quotes Herzfeld's economic thesis which stipulates that the use of moulds allowed large surfaces to be decorated quickly and therefore drastically cut the enormous labour costs of Sāmarrā (from Herzfeld's Der Wandschuck, p.10).

278 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p. 332.

central Asian descent created a style of decoration based on their memory of their homeland, or on objects brought from it."[279] This is a critical and relevant observation as one would tend to believe that the role of a caliph's slave-army, no matter how powerful, remained minimal in the artistic decision-making of an Islamic royal city. The pre-Islamic and non-Islamic customs of the praetorians were however known and perpetuated by the court. Historical accounts document in detail Turkish investitures with belt and tail-standard, both with variations indicative of rank, or the bestowing of gold jewelry and luxurious colourful robes of honour, differing from the more sober Islamic 'Abbāsid imperial garb.[280] Most of the Turks came from areas like Soghdiana with its mixed Turko-Iranian high culture, and an awareness of their history can be said to have existed amongst them. For example, a certain Ḥaidar ibn Kāvūs ibn Qara-qara ibn Qara-bughra, a Turkish prince, who was allotted an eastern section of Sāmarrā called Matira, where he built his palace, possessed some religious sculpture and illustrated books which he had inherited from his ancestors.[281] The clarification of the relationship between the Turkish guards and 'Abbāsid art (750-1258) may be sought in an article written by Esin who, based on a number of medieval texts, puts forth evidence of the Turks' active involvement in the architecture of Sāmarrā. She confirms that the Turkish commanders oversaw much of the construction of the city, and not only that of the Turkish quarters.[282] For example, the author notes:

"Balāḍurī states that the builder of the whole city of Sāmarrā had been no other than Asnas. Ya'qūbī however attributes to Asnas only the construction of Karḫ, the area which formed the western part of Sāmarrā: '(Al-Mu'ṭasim), having isolated the Turks from all others and forbidden their intercourse even with the *muwallid*, allowed them to become the neighbours of the Fargānī by alloting to Asnas and to his companions the construction of Karḫ. And to him (to Asnas) he adjoined as assistants some Turkish *qā'ids* (officers) and their men,

279 *Ibid.*, p.105.

280 Esin, "The Turk al-'aǧam of Sāmarrā and the paintings attributable to them in the Ǧawsaq al-Ḫāqānī", Kunst des Orients, 9, p.55 and pp.58-9. These pre-Islamic customs were perpetuated by the Sāmānids and persisted into Ottoman times (1280-1924).

281 *Ibid*, pp.56-57. Sources do not specify if these were Buddhist or Manichaean.

282 *Ibid.*, pp. 46-88. The author of this thesis is not sure if the three Sāmarrā styles, A,B, and C, were found equally throughout the whole city or whether the C style was more concentrated in certain areas or buildings. It is usually illustrated, I think, with reproductions from the Balkuwārā palace, built by the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil (r.r.847-861) for his son in 854-9.

ordering them to build a mosque and bazaars'." [283]

The princely Ḥaidar mentioned above was also appointed by al-Mu'ṭasim to build, with his compatriots, a bazaar, mosques and baths in Matira. The article abounds with other various examples and therefore strongly buttresses the thesis of the existence of Turkish craftsmen within medieval *dār al-islām*, such as the Turk Wasīf, builder of a bridge and of Sāmarrā's Third Avenue, who was also recorded as a specialist in the manufacture of armours and weapons.[284] One may observe that no specific mention concerning the buildings' decoration has been made. Esin acknowledges the presence of the hundreds of craftsmen, imported by the caliph, but in fact the main purpose of her study is to prove that the Turks were also responsible for the decorative features, and in particular for the frescoes of the famous Jawsaq al-Khāqānī palace, often judged as evincing Hellenistic, Persian, and Central Asian traditions (ill.59).[285] As evidence the author provides several excerpts from Ya'qūbī (d.897), which insist upon the complete isolation of the Turks, not only from the Muslims, but also from foreign visitors, and more importantly from tradesmen, within the new city.[286] The aim, as in the case of the funereal *türbes*, is not to fully resolve these issues, since each would require a separate study, but, for the sake of a greater comprehension and enrichment of future research, to re-examine assumptions which are no longer ever questioned, and which are taken as historical truths.

In the post-Sāmarrā period the bevelled style is mostly encountered in Turkish-ruled dynasties.[287] The doors of the Mausolem of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd ibn Subuktagīn com-

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283 *Ibid.*, p.56. Asnas became governor of the Hijaz.

284 *Ibid.*, p.66.

285 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p.124, purport that the paintings at the Jawsaq pala ce, reveal a stronger Persian infuence if compared to the pronounced Hellenism of Umayyad frescoes. The authors however state that the physiognomies are Oriental but also hearken back to Turfan, and to Varakhsha and Panjikent. Other Central Asian features noted, p. 394, note 84, are "the pearled frame, animals with non-naturalistic all-over spots, and the monochrome background." They also mention, p.124, the mother of the caliph al-Mu 'tazz (r.866-69) as the designer of the cycle.

286 *Ibid.*, p.54.

287 With the exception of Fāṭimid Egypt where the style is thought to have continued from Ṭūlūnid times. Many examples of the heart-shaped and "S" motifs, typical of the bevelled style, were employed in glassware; they are also seen on the beams and doors of the caliph al-Ḥākim's mosque (1003) in Cairo. See Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, pp. 186-97.

missioned by Turkish patrons and carved in ca. 1030-35 AD, form a good example of Sāmarrā C (ill.67, 68). Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, a Turkish slave who grew up in Sāmarrā, later became governor of Fustat and then founded the Ṭūlūnid dynasty (868-905) is often attributed with bringing the Sāmarrā style as a whole to Egypt. His mosque is clearly based on that of the 'Abbāsid city of Sāmarrā with its ziggurat-like minaret. Central Asian features, like Sāmarrā C or the lambrequin, have also been observed and they may have been perpetuated simply because they formed the new idiom of power. However, the wooden panels from the mosque or from private residences evince not only the bevelled style of Sāmarrā but also integrate new features such as clear zoomorphic representation, for example the oft-reproduced panel of a duck whose beak, legs and wings all terminate in spirals (ill.65, 66).[288] The age-old fantastic animal composed of volutes, once common ground between Scythians and Turks, had survived only in Turkish milieus despite sedentarization, and for which either large remaining nomadic components or a greater attachment to the traditional religion and culture were responsible. Otto-Dorn parallels the bevelled style, through its arabesque-like designs, not only with the animal style but also with Avar art, Uighur art, and Turkish tent ornamentation.[289] The pre-Seljuq pottery from Samarkand, which suddenly manifested for the first time a decoration based on the "S" motif (ill. 62), has also been hypothesized to be connected with Sāmarrā C "because of its propinquity to Turkish areas, from which this style is often assumed to be derived." [290]

A more concrete testimony from which a causal relationship between Turkish patrons and their commissions may be inferred, exists in the find, made in Iran, of thirty-nine silver pieces, dated to the Seljuq period, of which several are inscribed to the Turkish official Abū

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288 Some authors have surmised concealed animal forms in the stucco ornamentation at both Sāmarā and the Sāmānid palace at Nishapur. See K. Otto-Dorn, *op. cit.*, p. 88. It should be mentioned that some early authors considered the development of the Ṭūlūnid style due to Coptic influence: see G.Marçais, *op. cit.*, p.75. Some authors also originally understood the renaissance the art of the Seljuq period as Fāṭimid influence and not *vice versa*.

289 K.Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'Islam, p.90.

290 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p. 227.

Shujā' Injūtagīn.[291] The find consists of small objects, a ring, an amulet case, some coins, buckles, and mostly ornamental gilded niello[292] belt plaques, some with filigree "S" shapes (ill. 69) which B.Gray associates with Persia and Mesopotamia, while the other plaques demonstrate the bevelled style "typical of Seljuq work" and clearly indicate the pure steppe heritage (ill. 70).[293] The belt plaques prove to be almost completely identical to those of the T'u-kiue period. Ettinghausen observes in this "hoard" three types of surface treatment, the bevelled style included, generally connected with Inner Asia and the Turks, and with the Altaic Pazyryk (ill. 61) graves specifically. The other two decorative styles are the often "S" shaped "linear arabesque designs of even width" (ill. 71, 72, 73) and the silhouette animal design, both of which probably originate from steppe appliqué designs of leather or felt.[294] The former category of arabesque usually embodies a motif which fully developed in the tenth century,[295] and has been singled out as the hall-mark of Seljuq workmanship: [296] the two-lobed, sometimes three-lobed, leaf, depicted in profile and elongating into a condyloid shape, clearly exemplified by the twelfth-century minbar of the Ulu Djami (Great Mosque) of Malatya, now in the Ethnographic Museum in Ankara. This design is affiliated with the "dot and comma" one, also stemming back to the art of Pazyryk. During the Seljuq and the Seljuq of Rūm periods, the bevelled style was also much employed in the carving of zoomorphs. Generally speaking, Sāmarrā C may be associated both with the increase of Turkification and with regions of Inner and Central

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291 This is an irrefutable example of Turkish taste directly affecting art created within the Muslim lands. Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p. 332: "It is quite possible, however, that there is a Turkish aspect to jewellery, weapons, and horse trappings- all personal objects whose owners might have insisted on certain traditional features and that the silver pieces represent a Turkish influence but that this influence did not extend to pottery, metalwork, glass, and textiles."

292 Ettinghausen, "Turkish elements ", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), p.1037. The author links the technique to the nomadic peoples of the eastern steppe (or Scandinavia) and proposes that it was reintroduced or favoured by the Seljuqs as it related to their own taste and past.

293 See Gray, "A Seljuq hoard from Persia", The British Museum Quarterly, 1939, p. 76.

294 Ettinghausen, "Turkish elements ", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), p.1037.

295 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p.108.

296 Rice, Seljuks, p.165. Other historians may consider this feature as the stylization of the classical acanthus leaf, see Marçais, L'art musulman, fig. 4, p. 84.

Asia where, originally, Turkish tribes had lived.[297]

Other motifs typical of medieval Islamic art have been ascribed a Turkish Central Asian origin, amongst them the four-fold braid motif,[298] axe-head like shapes or plaited designs.[299] No doubt others exist, many of Far Eastern provenance and yet the study of ornamentation requires painstaking research due to its ubiquitous and universal nature. The dangers, which also hold for this study, have been articulated in a concise article written for this purpose [300] which cautions against concentrating primarily on formal comparisons. The author, to illustrate the problem, offers an effective, even if aggressive example: "A third millenium potter, a 16th century Islamic tile designer, a 19th century Native American basket-maker, or weavers in parts of the Caucasus, the Zagros Mountains, or China, where swastikas commonly appeared in weavings, would have been amazed that anyone could view this motif as we do: a symbol of brutality and inhumanity." [301] Social, religious and cultural contexts must be scrutinized as well as the shifting of meanings attributed to symbols in a given historical and geographical context. Along the same lines it should be said with regard to the bevelled style, that works on Sassanid and Soghdian art were consulted, but due to the constraints of time, the same amount of material was not covered as for the checkered complicated history of the Turks. This should be undertaken at a later date.

The only other undisputed Turkish abstract motif present in Islamic art revolves around tribal signs and property marks know as *tamghas* (ill.74), which were often woven, painted, or sculpted on all of a person's or a clan's possessions. They are often deemed to be a natural development from the various shaped ear incisions on cattle, used to indicate ownership and found as far back as Pazyryk, to the the technology of the branding iron:[302] modern cattle brands still display the same types of angular or geometric designs. These markings are not unique to the Turkish peoples; they are also found amongst the Sarmatians, the Indo-European tribe which displaced the Scythians, the Finno-Ugrians,

297 Ettinghausen, "Turkish elements ", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon) , p.1036.
298 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p.50 . He associates the motif with the Turkish Qarakhānid dynasty.
299 Rice, Seljuks , p.159.
300 J. Opie, "Approaching rug motifs as 'a language'", Or. Car. and Text. St., 4, pp. 239-44.
301 *Ibid.* , p.241.
302 S. Day, "Tales of totems and tamghas", Or. Car. and Text. St., 4, p. 255.

the Lapps and the Sassanids:

"As early as the first century A.D. tamgas appear among the Sarmatian tribes north of the Black Sea as petroglyphs, carvings on gravestones, graffiti in tomb chambers, and marks on metal objects such as cauldrons, belt buckles, and bronze mirrors. The contexts indicate that they were symbols of magic power, signs of authority, and also marks of property comparable to family crests, though these different uses were evidently assigned to distinct types of tamgas." [303]

Settlements, pastures, watering places, caves, rocks and personal items were thus identified in this way. Their graphic origin is unknown and many hypotheses have been proffered; that they stemmed from monograms of Greek deities, from runes, or from a "magical system of numbers, presumably of Greek derivation." [304] However, V.S. Dračuk, the fore-most specialist on the subject, believes that *tamghas* originally formed clan badges but, in accordance with social changes, were transformed into family and individual property marks. The author also states that the cross-cultural similarity of the markings is due, not to mutual influencing and borrowing, but to basic common prototypes perhaps no longer extant.[305]

Tamgha is a Turkish word whose origin and meaning are unknown, and many *tamghas* from the T'u-kiue period, sometimes in the shape of animals, have been identified on their stelae. It is generally acknowledged that in full Inner Asian tradition, the Turks used them as tribal marks but also as cognizances on banners and tents. Historically, Turkish society employed a whole system of signs to convey religious, political, and military ideas or rank. This social stratification, along with the conservative nature of the Turks and the nature of their history, explains why they constituted the sole upholders of the *tamgha* within *dār al-islām*. One of the manuscripts of Kāshgarī's *Dīwān lughāt al-Turk* illustrates the twenty-two *tamghas* of the Oghuz tribe, as does a later work by Rashīd al-Dīn (d.1318), (ill. 76) although the latter offers twenty-four *tamghas* which present some variations as compared to the earlier text. In Anatolia, during the Seljuq period, *tamghas* were still being carved on

303 H. Nickel, "Tamgas and runes, magic numbers and magic symbols", Bul.of the Met. Mus. of Art, 8, p.166.

304 *Ibid.*, pp.167-71

305 *Ibid.*, On V. Dračuk, see Nickel's Postcript, p.173. See his Systems of Signs in the Northern Black Sea Area, Kiev, 1975.

tombstones and monuments, such as the tomb of Turumtay (1279) and the eleventh century Ulu Djami mosque in Sivas.[306] During the later Mamlūk period, *tamghas* figure on many artefacts, such as the ceramic jar from the Victoria and Albert Museum (ill.75), as they also figured on many Mamlūk military banners. The link between *tamghas*, blazons and totemism has been articulated in an article by Susan Day [307] which proposes that the markings are intrinsically related to heraldry, imperial insignia, and other symbols of authority and rank, and no doubt gave rise to the Seljuq, 'Ayyūbid, and Mamlūk blazons, such as the Mamlūk badges of office, which reveal not an influence of the Crusaders, but again a perpetuation of the pre-Islamic Turkish tradition (ill.77).[308] That such signs existed historically is communicated by Esin who, describing the Kök-Türk army, writes:

"Feathers, or silken badges, called beçkem, were worn both by warriors and the chargers, whose tails were traditionally knotted. The use of the double falcon wing was reserved to those who with equal dexterity could shoot both forward and backward. Together with with the tuġ (tail-standard, or flag) and totemic ensigns (tös), each warrior had a personal fanion (batraḳ) attached to a spear."[309]

Tamghas or personal insignia were cultivated into imperial emblems. A three circle motif known as the triple bezant formed the emblem of a Turko-Mongol ruler, Tīmūr (r.1370-1405) and was engraved on all of his possessions. Its meaning was elucidated by a Spanish ambassador, Gonzalez de Clavijo who recounts that the design expressed the ruler's world domination.[310] The presence, appreciation and proliferation of this type of emblem continued throughout all of the Turko-Islamic dynasties right up until the Ottoman period (1281-1924), and may thus be called a Turkish phenomenon.

More importantly, one of the wonders of Islamic art, the *ṭughrā*, developed from these early brand-marks. The *tamgha* of the Seljuq tribe, namely the Qïnïq, was according to

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306 Day, "Tales", Or. Car. and Text. St., 4, p. 256. For illustrations, see A. Gabriel, Monuments turcs d'Anatolie, v.2, p.145 and p. 61. , fig. 45.

307 Day, "Tales", Or. Car. and Text. St., 4, p.265.

308 For a brief summary of Mamlūk blazons, see (with some reserve for points of view) W. Leaf and S. Purcell, Heraldic Symbols: Islamic Insignia and Western Heraldry, pp. 57-82.

309 Esin, History , p.115.

310 Day, "Heraldic devices of Turkish peoples and their relationship to carpets", Or. Carp. and Text. St., 3, p.236

Rashīd al-Dīn's manuscript, a bow and three arrows, and according to Kāshgarī, a similar pattern if not self-explicit. The Oghuz *tamgha* appeared on Seljuq coinage minted by Ṭughrīl Beg (d.1040).[311] Sources report Malikshāh (r.1073-92) as the first Seljūq sultan to use his emblem as a signature, thus giving birth to the *ṭughrā*, which is usually associated with the Ottoman period, when it was fully elaborated. Ibn Bībī (d. after 1284) described Malikshāh's monogram as a bow, under which the sultan's name was written. The bow and arrow has also been interpreted as a Turkish symbol of political authority. That history has retained the name of one of the most famous masters of Seljūq *ṭughrā*, the writer Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Abū Ismā'īlī Jawzaqānī, proves its importance and immediate appeal.[312] In fact, a special post, first called *ṭughrāyi* and then *ṭughrā čekmek*, whose duty was to draw the head all of the courtly correspondence, was created at the court, thereby becoming the institution responsible for the most beautiful signatures in history. The *ṭughrā*, like the blazon, also transformed into the coat of arms or escutcheon of the state, again manifesting the prevailing heraldic nature of Turkish society.

To conclude, one may say that this tendency towards insignia continued to evolve in Turko-Islamic society and that they carried a three-fold implication corresponding to the tripartite division of power glorified in traditional Turkish society: the spiritual, the political and the military. Visual signs served as protective seals or totems, imperial seals and blazons. The first category was born out of the ritualism and symbolism of a shamanistic society; the second was endowed with power as a symbol of the royal authority of the khān, and effectively the seal keeper or *tamghashi* formed one of the T'u-kiue classes of dignitaries. And the third consisted of military insignia and badges of office, conferring status and indicating rank.

Animal Imagery

Representational imagery, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic, in Islamic art predates the Seljuq period whether in Umayyad secular art, Fāṭimid or 'Abbāsid art, and especially in

311 Esin, "The Oghuz", The Art of the Saljūqs (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), p. 202.

312 Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p. 328. Rice, Seljuks, p.126: "Malik Shah of Persia was probably the first to use it as his crest, having had it designed for him by the poet and calligrapher Mul'aiyid al Din Fakhr al Kuttab who succeeded Nizam al Mulk as Vizir."

eastern Iran, where it developed intensively during the period just prior to the Oghuz incursions. Its pre-Seljuq phase in Iran was less cohesive and less widespread and its iconography had not yet fully crystallized into a prototypical set of signs as it did during the Seljuqid period. Grabar analyzes this shift by describing the earlier period's production as reflections of folk art or of the Sassanid-type princely cycle, whereas in the Seljuq period, the imagery seems to have evolved into a meaningful vocabulary of signs.[313] The author attributes this change to an increased social unity - the former period had been overly eclectic with Sogdians, Turks, Arabs and western Iranians- as well as to a newly acquired taste of a growing Arab gentry. Iconography forms an integral part of the evolution of Islamic art,[314] but it also embodies vestiges of various multicultural heritages, and as such it possesses several levels of interpretation and possible readings. An attempt to view certain motifs in their Turkish, as opposed to Armenian, Sassanid, Hittite, or Islamic aspects will be presented.

In the Seljuqid period, zoomorphic imagery appears in all media, even in individual animal-shaped bronze or ceramic objects, and in different contexts; animals may be represented alone, in pairs, in combat, as part of the astrological or princely cycle, in heraldic-type emblems, or may form part of the mythical animal repertory, such as griffin, siren or dragon.

The animal motif constitutes a leitmotif throughout Turkish history, and throughout the medieval period of Islamic art. It occured in every period of Turkish history, from that of the Inner Asian nomad through all of the dynasties that have been presented, whether it be in the visual arts, in the titulature or in the religious or epic literature. And in fact, its impor-

313 Grabar, "The visual arts", CHOIr. 5, p.645. In view of the "folk" connection, Hrbas and Knobloch, Art C. Asia, p.15, discussing the same period states that the new "abstract Islamic style" developed and was propagated in the few cities of western Central Asia : "The clash between the highly civilized peoples and the more primitive tribes from the steppes, however, also left its mark on Islamic art. Islam first established itself in the urban centres, while in the country the older customs and traditions prevailed. Geometric and floral motifs, typical of Islamic ornament, are still rare outside the towns; on the other hand, Zoroastrian and Manichaean motifs and representational elements (the sun, moon, and stars, sacred trees, animal symbols, etc.) still persist and form a link between the old Soghd art and the art of Islam." The integration of figurative imagery would thus represent an input of popular culture. (Compare with footnote 211).

314 Roux, in "Le combat d'animaux dans l'art et la mythologie irano-turcs", Arts Asiatiques, 36, p.5, observes that figural art in Islamic society is always due to the foreign stimulus of a people for whom it was traditional and who preserved it along with the pre-Islamic notions it expressed.

tance for the Turkish peoples lies not in plastic representation but in the Turkish traditional world view including shamanism, totemism and animal ancestry. Authors who surmise Turkish input in Seljuq zoomorphs [315] do so because of the significance of animals in the Turkish tradition, and because of their visual link with steppe art, both in form and in technique: the bevelled style (*Schrägschnitt*), the stipple, the dot and comma markings, or the accentuated articulations.

Jean-Paul Roux dedicated a short but concise article to animal combat scenes within Islamic art.[316] Our study of the same topic, specifically the lion and bull theme, will be largely based upon it. Examples of the lion-bull motif abound in the Seljuq period, such as the relief at the Ulu Djami at Diyarbakir (ca.1183-84) (ill.80), or at the palace of the same city (1201-02), or even on the city gate (1206-7).[317] Roux investigates the difficult question of meaning, and exposes the diverse theories. Hartner and Ettinghausen, in a joint article, accord the theme an astrological or astronomical interpretation, proposing that the motif was born at Persepolis when the constellation of Leo replaced that of Taurus in a given year at the spring equinox, and from there it would have evolved into a symbol of

315 For example Ettinghausen, "Turkish elements", Collected Papers (Ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon), p. 1037, Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, pp. 88,142-7, Roux, Histoire, p.196. Rice, Seljuks, pp.170-73. In Rice, Ancient Arts of Central Asia, p.33, however she writes: "The Altaian convention of using dot and comma markings both in their metal and felt appliqué work as a means of indicating the muscles of the animals portrayed, may on the other hand be a mannerism which they adopted from the ancient orient, which they used far more than the Scythians." For a refutation of Turkish input in Anatolian Seljuq art, see J.M.Rogers, "Recent work on Seljuk Anatolia", Kunst des Orients, 6, p.152.

316 Roux, "Le combat", Arts Asiatiques, 36, pp. 5-12.

317 The fact that this same motif appears earlier on Armenian churches raises many questions, as to who the Seljuq craftsmen were, and what the theme meant in its previous context. The fact that the theme was perpetuated during the Seljuq period places it in a "Turkish context, especially in view of their own "animal art." Another issue to be explored is the "steppe" past of Armenian art. Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs on Seljuq sacred architecture in Anatolia", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.110, pp.113-4. The author mentions the similarities between Seljuq and Armenian and Georgian zoomorphs, and raises the possibility that the two latter may have served as prototypes of the former. Hillenbrand, in Islamic Architecture, p.308, proposes that, although the Seljuq animal imagery may have taken on meanings in line with Turkish astrological, totemistic or shamanistic beliefs, it was clearly based on Armenian precedents, especially as the very same animals were used in both cases. However, Roux, in "La coupe", Etudes d'iconographie islamique, p.89, alludes to the Armenian adoption of Islamic iconography. More investigation is needed to clarify this issue.

power and royalty.[318] Roux refutes this theory, while Otto-Dorn accepts it with some reserve. The latter rather considers the lion-bull combination as a depiction of the ancient symbolic dichotomy of the sun and the moon, while also accepting the second part of the Hartner theory. Van Berchem and Strzygowski also advocate the imperial role of the motif, and offer as proof the Kufic inscriptions which flank the relief at the Ulu Djami and announce the local Nisānid vizier's take-over from the Inālid amīr Maḥmūd, affiliated with the Seljuqs.[319] The association of a "solar" animal with the king or ruler is an ancient concept which often assumed the traits of a combat proclaiming victory over darkness, chaos, or the enemy, the latter often representeded by a "lunar" symbol, in this case the bull. This is a universal theme found cross-culturally in hero-centered myths, or in religious guise, for example, the Anatolian St. George slaying the dragon, a theme of predilection in Western medieval and Renaissance art.

The lion motif entered Turkish culture through Buddhism in the period of the T'opa Wei, and the animal quickly took on "kingly" associations. The first to adopt it as a name was not the Seljuq sultan Alp Arslan (r.1063-73) but a T'u-kiue kaghan. In pre-Seljuq Islamic art, the animal had held similar royal connotations such as the statue of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid II standing atop two lions at the Khirbat al-Mafjar (ca.743), or in the animal combat floor mosaic of the same palace. This imperial aspect of the theme persevered under the Seljuq princes; sources describe a Seljuq monarch's tent bearing the lion, the sun blazon and the bird of prey on the black draperies of its golden cupola.[320] Otto-Dorn suggests that the lion also possessed an apotropaic purpose. Grabar, when discussing "astrological images and the zoomorphic shapes of objects" also clearly announces this prophylactic function.[321]

To return to the animal combat, Roux discusses two other propositions often upheld but which he regards as invalid in the Seljuq context; namely that the combat motif served

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318 Ettinghausen and Hartner, "The conquering lion. The life cycle of a symbol", Oriens, 17, pp.161-171.

319 Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.113.

320 Esin, "The Oghuz epics ", The Art of the Saljūqs (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), p. 203.

321 Grabar, "The visual arts", CHOIr. 5, p .647.

as a charm to ensure the success of the hunt (which is obviously no longer applicable), or that it represented tribal battles through a depiction of the tribes' various totems, which the author deems implausible as many totems like squirrels or earthworms were not predators.[322] The Turcologist, in fact, proposes that the motif is to be interpreted within the context of the Turko-Mongol ancestry myths, such as the Qarakhānids' involving a lion and a camel. The author thus understands the motif as portraying the sexual union of ancestors, expressing all at the same time such universal notions of origin, human polarity and mankind's relationship with his animality. The objection to this theory is that not all the pairs of species represented correspond to ancestor myths, as the latter often concern a human and a celestial principle sent down in the form of an animal.

The challenge of imagery is to estimate how much it clearly told as opposed to evoked; even in the Christian medieval West, where there was a highly developed codified system of iconography, the general population, aside from the familiar biblical scenes, simply sensed "meaning" which it could not necessarily formulate. Symbols differ from allegory in that they are less literal and more elusive.[323] The danger for writers exists in the over-interpretation of images and in the assumption that artisans always consciously selected their motifs in an intellectual fashion. Nonetheless, one has to acknowledge that such themes as the animal combat, depicted also in Mesopotamian, ancient Egyptian, or Assyrian art, may have conveyed a specific message beyond the onlooker's subjective aesthetic response. One may tentatively suggest that many motifs originally possessed the extensive and almost general meanings of universal themes, which then acquired more specific connotations. It thus seems possible to accept the widest, most general, meaning of the animal combat motif, and view it as an characterization of the ancient antagonism of the sun and the moon, or even more essentially as early man's experience of the duality present throughout nature and the universe, while still remaining open to other more exclusive or established definitions, whether astrological, mythical, political, or other.

The dragon present in Seljuq art is also a polysemous theme. Like the lion, it is intrisically bound up with Turkish history on the borders of China, and with steppe art in

322 Roux, ."Le combat ", Arts Asiatiques, 36, p. 9.

323 For the definition of the term "symbol", see Initiation à la symbolique romane, pp. 95-116, by the French medievalist M. M. Davy.

general. The marked Far Eastern tendencies of the Turks is due to Chinese influence and perhaps also to a yet unknown common origin. In China, the dragon possessed a plurality of meanings which tended to be more benevolent than in the ancient Near East.[324] In China, dragons were considered responsible for the yearly rotation of stars,[325] protectors of the tree of life or some other treasure, as they were also connected with fertility, water, and renewal. In the Turkish past, representations of dragons are found as early as the Hsiung-nu period, as well as in the later T'u-kiue period, for example, the four dragon masks discovered in the tomb of Tonyukuk.[326] There is not only a steppe dragon prototype but also one from Soghdian art such as a "fighting dragon pair with knotted bodies" which has been found at Panjikent.[327] The earliest references to dragons are, however, "Western" and can be traced back to the the Sumerians and the Egyptians and to the third millenium BC, [328] and hence in the case of Seljuq art, one cannot ascertain without additional study their origin in Islamic art, and as many motifs, they may have been invigorated by both earlier Near and Far Eastern traditions. Rice in *The Seljuks in Asia Minor*, while attributing the frequent occurence of the dragon during the Seljuqs of Rūm dynasty to the passage in the *Shah-Nāmeh* -which compares the Turks to dragons- also recognizes the feasibility of an influence stemming from Christian painting.[329] The dragon motif in Islamic art is found on city walls, royal residences, on caravanserais, on crafted artefacts, on tombstones, and ceramics and it often bears the same characteristics: a wolf-like head(s) with pointed ears, almond-shaped eyes, and open mouths, a long knotted body with a head at each end (ill.79). The dragon is also sometimes represented at the tips of wings and tails of other animals, such as birds or lions.[330]

[324] Encyclopedia of Religion, s.v "Dragon", p.432.

[325] Esin, History, p. 203. The author mentions the double-headed dragon (or pair of dragons) regulating the cosmic wheel, called Evren in Turkish and which is associated with time, and the Indian pair of dragons Rahu and Ketu, also known to the Turks.

[326] G.Öney, "Dragon figures in Anatolian Seljuk art", T.T.K.Belleten, 33, p.194.

[327] Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.129.

[328] *Ibid.*, The dragon motif in the west shares some definitions with the Far East, yet it occured more frequently as an interference of chaotic forces to be surmounted, as seen in the Bible, the Epic of Gilgamesh, or the Indian Rigveda.

[329] Rice, Seljuks, p.171.

[330] Öney, "Dragon", T.T.K.Belleten, 33, p. 193.

A good example of the dragon representation during this period is the thirteenth century Persian doorknocker now in the Staatliche Berlin Museum, which is often used as an illustration to evince Turkish input in Islamic art by its Scytho-Siberian bevelled technique, hieratic style and volute-type (or "dot and comma") wings (ill.84).[331] The doorknocker depicts two confronted dragons [332] between which is carved a lion head. The dragons' bodies with their typical pretzel twist terminate with eagle heads rendered in the steppe style.[333] A quasi-identical door knocker exists on the great Mosque of Cizre from the Seljuqs of Rūm period (ill.78). These compositions should be interpreted as another rendering of the sun-moon antagonism especially as the dragons, here representing the moon and chaos, are eating their own wings, threatened as they are by two "solar" animals symbolising, the eagle and the lion. This astrological or mythical content of the dragon in Islamic art is recognised by a variety of authors, Otto-Dorn, Öney, or Hillenbrand,[334] and is more clearly expressed in other monuments or objects such as the the Anatolian Sultan Han (ill.82), or caravanserai, near Kayseri or the cover of *The Book of Antidotes* of Pseudo-Galen, presumed from northern Iraq and dated 1199. In the first case, the carved stone bas-relief displays two confronted dragons whose bodies, instead of being composed of knots, are composed of a heart shape wavy pattern, and whose tails end with another dragon head. Otto-Dorn, regarding this composition, states:

"The crucial point in the conception of the dragons at the 'Kiosk mosque' is however their menacing attitude. It is directed towards a rosette motif with an inscribed eight-pointed star, centered just above the dragon's heads as part of a twisted band, suggesting another stylized dragon frieze, obviously the indication of a planetary symbol."[335]

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331 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.151.

332 The confronted animal motif is thought to be Near Eastern. Ettinghausen and Grabar, in Art and Architecture, pp. 236-7 write: "The common motif of paired animals flanking a tree reflects an ancient oriental scheme much less used in Sasanian times." However, Day in "Tales", Or. Car. and Tex. St., 4, p.265, calls for the necessity of a new reading of the double animal motif within the light of a "totemistic concept of duality."

333 This bird tail can be seen on a Chinese axe head of the Han period, ca. 300 BC.

334 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.151. Öney, "Dragon", T.T.K.Belleten, 33 , p. 201, Hillenbrand, Islamic Architecture, p.18.

335 Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs on Seljuk sacred architecture in Anatolia", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.130-1. Another good example of "the antagonism between the celestial luminaries and the terrestrial light-devouring dragon" is the gate of the citadel of Aleppo (1183-84) (ill.81).

That the dragon actually came to be schematized as a heart or pretzel-shape motif or interlacing has been more than convincingly demonstrated, through manuscript illustrations, building decoration, and literary sources, by Hartner in an interesting article which places the representation of the dragon in Islamic art in an astronomical, astrological and mythical perspective, whereby the dragon, accompanied by a solar symbol reflects "the antagonism between the celestial luminaries and the terrestrial light-devouring dragon". [336] Perhaps the greatest example of the dragon from this period is the the now destroyed Talisman Gate in Baghdad built in 1221 by the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Nāṣir (r. 1180-1225). Tradition narrates that it portrays the caliph victorious over his two enemies, the Khwārazm Shahs and the Mongols. [337] The gate may once again exemplify a mythical theme transformed into a royal one. Other examples of the dragon as princely emblem exist, for instance the dragon reliefs on the walls of Diyarbakir dating from the Turkish Artuqid dynasty (ca.1101-1409) as their coins bore the same design. [338] All of these dragons adorning walls and gates are considered to have served an apotropaic function as well. The twelfth century frontispiece mentioned above reveals a central medallion, composed of interlaced dragons, which surround a cross-legged seated personification of the moon who is holding the moon crescent. [339]

One last type of design in which dragons may figure is a heraldic type of composition found especially in Anatolia. On the façade of the thirteenth century post-Seluūq Chifte Minareli Medrese in Erzurum one finds, within a niche, a three-tiered composition consisting of two interlaced dragons joined by a crescent-shaped leaf, out of which juts a tree (ill.85). A double-headed eagle presides over the whole scene. These three levels correspond to those of Turkish cosmology. Esin writes: "All these allegories are expressed in Saljūq and post-Saljūq literature and art, the aerial bird, the terrestrial tiger and the aquatic

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336 Hartner, "The Pseudoplanetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconographies", Ars Islamica, 5, pp.114-54.

337 Rice, Seljuks, p.172. Otto-Dorn "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.133. The author mentions another possible vanquished enemy, Ḥasan III, the head of the Assassins.

338 Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.125.

339 *Ibid.*, p.133.

fish and dragon having kept their significance with remarkable tenacity."[340] The dragon may also simultaneously hold two other functions in this case; that of chaos and darkness in opposition to the eagle, and that of tree guardian. Otto-Dorn, discussing a similar type of scene on the entrance gate of the Gök Medrese in Sivas (1271), affirms:

"This close relationship of the eagle with the Tree of Life suggests another shamanistic aspect of the eagle and the "cosmic tree". It is based on the identification of the eagle with the highest heavenly deity and at the same time refers to the eagle as the shamam-ancestor, sometimes envisioned as a double-headed bird, placed on the "cosmic tree", as the intermediary to heaven." [341]

This theme was common and showed variations, confirming a then still readable definite message or significance. These ciphers, linked initially to shamanism or astrology, might have already become, as Day suggests, blazons of sovereignty which had found their way onto mosques, madrasahs, city walls, royal objects, and every-day objects. This heraldic tendency can be discerned throughout the whole Seljuq period and increases proportionately with future Turkish militaristic dynasties, such as the Mamlūks or the Ottomans, where it played a key role.

Dragons sometimes form part of a composite zoomorph where they end wings or tails, as illustrated by the relief on the western side portal of the Divriği mosque (1228-29); a composition also often reproduced to evince Turkish input by its high abstraction, the use of profile and the shape and treatment of the spiralling decoration, representing a double-headed eagle with dragon-tipped wings (ill.85). The bird of prey in all of its varieties was a theme favoured by the Seljuqs, as is indicated by its usage in titulature: for example, Ṭughrīl Beg, meaning "Lord Falcon" (or goshawk) which was also the name of the sultan's totem; the six sons of Oghuz were each granted a totem or *ongun* in the form of a bird of prey. Birds of prey also denote the "heavenly origin of the royal souls", [342] which could explain the use of the eagle as a political emblem. The bird, in general, connotes the

340 Esin, "The Oghuz epics", The Art of the Saljūqs (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), p. 204. This "trinity" exists amongst other Siberian peoples.

341 Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.116. The author cites as the source of this information what remains the best source on shamanism, namely Mircéa Eliade's Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase, Payot, Paris, 1951.

341 Day, "Heraldic Devices", Or. Car. andText. St., p. 235.

342 Esin , "The Oghuz Epics" , The Art of the Saljūqs (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), p. 202.

shaman's guide to Heaven, the soul or the celestial plane of Turkish cosmology. It is also the "soul bird"; the soul of the deceased is often represented as ornithomorphic. Birds decorate the tombs of the Seljuqid period, such as the late twelfth century Emir Saltuq *türbe* or the Seljuq Khudāvand *türbe* in Niğde (ca.1312). The pre-Islamic Orkhon inscriptions allege that "on leaving the body the soul of a dead person turns into a bird or insect", and Barthold observed the continuation of this belief in modern times "in the speech of the Ottoman Turks, who often announced a death in the phrase "he has become a gire-falcon."[343]

The Divriği portal's zoomorphic design may be interpreted like the animal combat as the light victorious over an ever-threatening darkness. It was no doubt also believed to grant power and protection, which would explain its heraldic nature. Öney, however, interprets the composition as a tree-of-life motif where the tree has become virtual in the form of the arabesque background.[344] The double-headed eagle served also as an imperial emblem and Otto-Dorn atrributes a political content to the Divriği relief. [345] The monument was built by the local Mengüjekid dynasty, and the eagle motif, a Seljuq device, expressed Aḥmed Shah's loyalty to Seljuq suzerainty. This argument is buttressed by the fact that inscriptions honouring the Seljuq sultan 'Alā'-ad-Dīn Kay-Qubādh I (r.1219-1237) are to be found on the main portal of the mosque. In the same sultan's summer palace at Kubadabad (1226-1236), some of the many decorated tiles found exhibited double-headed eag-les, some of which bear the inscription "*al-Sulṭān.*" [346]

The double-headed eagle has an Inner Asian precedent in the seventh century paintings of Kizil, East Turkestan, where they form part of an Indian myth cycle.[347] In the Islamic world, the motif also pre-existed the Seljuqs and was employed by the 'Abbāsids, Būyids (932-1062), and the Ghaznavids, where it is thought to have possessed royal con-notations. The eagle motif also had forerunners in tenth century Armenian stone carving

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343 Öney, "Dragon", T.T.K.Belleten, 33 , p. 209.
344 Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.121.
345 *Ibid.*, p.119.
346 *Ibid.*, p.125.

such as the cathedral at Ani (989-1001).[348] The study of the eagle, like the other animals approached in this section, is complicated by its relatively universal use as a symbol.

All three zoomorphic designs, the lion, the dragon and the eagle, share much common ground. All three may be read from a mythical, apotropaic, and political perspective, and yet one needs to remember that their exact significance can still only be inferred.

During the Seljuq period, the astrological cycle was very much in vogue, and it decorated many monuments and household artefacts such as plates or pen-boxes. Astrology itself enjoyed great popularity amongst both the general population and the ruling classes. The emphasis on the stars was a worldwide phenomenon at the time, both East and West, and although un-Qur'ānic and un-Biblical, it produced a visual meeting ground, acknowledged or not, between the three Abrahamic religions.[349] Astrological motifs had already been present for some time in Islamic society, but it was during the Seljuq régime that they became an essential ingredient of representation. To adduce Seljuq interest in the discipline, one need only cite a famous female astrologer, the mother of the Seljuq chronicler, Ibn Bībī (d.after 1284), or Qutalmïsh Ibn Arslan Isrā'īl. Ṭughril Beg's cousin, who was himself a skilled astrologer.[350] It should be remembered that this type of divinatory discipline, concerned mainly with predictions of the future and self-preservation, has a long history amongst the Turks. The belief in charms and amulets also continued to play an important role throughout all Turko-Islamic (or simply Islamic) dynasties, and took on many forms such as the magic robes and magic bowls of later sultans.

Many of the authors who have sought evidence for Central Asian Turkish tendencies in the art of the Seljuqid period, have affirmed the presence of the Chinese duodecimal animal calendar in Islamic iconography, existing concurrently with the planetary zodiac signs.[351] That the pre-Islamic Turks used this calendar is attested to by the T'u-kiue Orkhon inscrip-

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348 *Ibid.*, p.117.

349 Hartner, "The Pseudoplanetary Nodes", Ars Islamica, 5, p.143.

350 Bosworth, The Ghaznavids, p.217. The author remarks that "Qutalmïsh represented conservative Turkmen feeling, and (that) he may have retained the customs and lore of older tribal life particularly tenaciously".

351 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, pp.145,164-7; E.Diez, "The zodiac relief at the portal of the Gök medrese in Sivas", Artibus Asiae, 12, pp.99-104.

tions and by Uighur official documents.[352] However, the assertion that monuments or artefacts display this cycle is more problematic according to Roux who, in an article on the topic, points out its difficulties. The author discusses the history of the calendar and its mention in Turko-Islamic sources which he deems as rendering its presence in Islamic art "theoretically possible."[353] The argument he employs against those who posit its existence on various monuments is their ease in accepting that neither the animals nor their number were normative.[354] He cites the Gök Madrasa at Sivas (1271-72), the monument usually put forward to prove the use of the Chinese calendar, as an example. Roux traces the history of how art historians, despite numbering the animals at nine and unable to identify exactly many of the species represented, still arrived at the conclusion that the relief clearly illustrated the calendar.[355] This idea came to be accepted blindly by future writers,[356] and was applied to other works despite similar discrepancies. The author concludes that the Chinese calendar was never reproduced in Islamic medieval art. However, he did not unfortunately address the issue of the strange aesthetic of the Gök *madrasa*'s bas-relief with its spiral-shaped tendrils bearing various animal heads in profile (ill.86). On a purely visual level, certain "animal tendrils" exhibit a style close to certain native American totem-pole zoomorphs by the heavy outlining of the eyes and mouths, while others recall Germanic or other styles termed "northern." Ettinghausen and Grabar, in their joint work, speak of the "spectacular group (which) includes the façades of the main buildings of Sivas and Divrik."[357] The authors proceed to comment :

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352 K.Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.143. The latest scholarship attests to its usage among the Hsiung-nu. See Ishjamts, "Nomads", His. Civ. of C. Asia (Ed. J.Harmatta), v. II, pp.151-171.

353 Roux, "La prétendue représentation du calendrier des douze animaux dans l'art islamique médiéval", Journal Asiatique, 267, p.237.

354 The animals of the Chinese calendar are, in order: the rat, the cow, the tiger, the hare, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the lamb, the monkey, the rooster, the dog and the pig. *ibid.*

355 *Ibid.*, p.241, .Roux is referring to Diez, "The zodiac relief at the portal of the Gök medrese in Sivas", Artibus Asiae, 12, 1-2, pp.99-104. Diez jumps from nine to twelve assuming that the other three had been destroyed.

356 Roux , in "La prétendue représentation", J. Asia., 267. mentions Esin's "Influences de l'art des anciens nomades eurasiens et de l'art du Turkestan pré-islamique sur les arts plastiques et picturaux turcs", First Int. Cong. of Tur. Art, p.119, and Aslanapa, Turkish Art, p.133, as well as two other Turkish authors Öney and Ögel. See also K.Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.144.

357 Ettinghausen and Grabar, Art and Architecture, p. 325.

"The decoration includes both the traditional Islamic epigraphy, and geometric or floral arabesques and fantastic combinations of vegetal and even animal forms which, in their tortured violence, recall Celtic miniatures and Romanesque façades. Even the geometric designs-like the ones on the Sultan Hans - are not always of the Islamic symmetrical and organized type but recall the endless meandering of northern, so-called 'barbarian' jewellery."[358]

One is again confronted with the difficulty of specifying the origin of motifs in an exact manner. The two authors mentioned above grant the development of the original aesthetic particular to the Seljuqs of Rūm monuments, to Iranian, Mesopotamian, Syrian, and indigenous Christian Anatolian traditions.[359] Otto-Dorn suggests additional influences, an Inner Asian one (Soghdian and Uighur) and a Chinese one reinforced by the proximity of the Buddhist Qara-Khitay dynasty.[360] As in eastern *dār al-islām*, one is faced with a dynamic complex geographical and historical context. Further research should be accomplished to identify the channel through which the "Scytho-Siberian" style penetrated. However, whether it entered from East or West, it was essentially reinforced by the Turks who, had they wished, could have commissioned monuments and their decoration in the Irano-Islamic style only. Also, no matter the provenance, the salient point is that again it is the fertile Siberian aesthetic which is being discussed and which invigorated medieval art East and West.[361]

Figurative Iconography

In terms of figurative iconography, three themes are most often introduced to exhibit Turkish influence on Islamic art. They are the tradition of depiciting the Turkish guard, the adoption of the representation of the monarch sitting "*à la turque*" with a cup in his hand, and the emergence of Asiatic-type physiognomies in the minor arts.

The first theme predates the Seljuq period as it was already to be found at Sāmarrā according to Otto-Dorn. That a Turkish praetoria composition existed in the caliphal palace as part of the princely cycle, is attested to by a fragment found illustrating a hanging belt

358 *Ibid.*,

359 *Ibid.*, p.326.

360 Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs ", Kunst des Orients, 12, pp.146-7. the author throughout the article cites relevant Armenian artistic parallels.

361 Strzygowski, "Les éléments proprement asiatiques dans l'art", Rev. des arts asiatiques, 6,1, pp.24-39.

strap.[362] The belt was both a symbol of submission to the ruler as well as an emblem of rank, and throughout history, the accessory seems to have formed a key element of Turkish identity. Although on the steppe, the belt possesses a long history as it was represented as early as prehistoric times on the stag warrior stones, the artefact fully developed into a tradition by the Turks, a tradition that was upheld right up into the Ottoman period. The same type of Turkish belt decorated with precious metal plaques and hanging straps excavated in T'u-kiue sites and carved on the many Turkish funerary statues throughout the steppe, was rendered in Islamic art. Unfortunately, little endured at Sāmarrā of the painted princely cycle. However in the same city, strange cylindrical clay receptacles bearing images of Turks have survived. Otto-Dorn considers the latter funerary stelae, whereas other art historians have deemed them amphoras or wine bottles.[363] Herzfeld, in light of an identical *kūfic* inscription located above each figure, surmised that these portraits depicted an élite corps under the command of the well-known Sāmarrā General Muflih.[364] Each stele portrays a Turkish mercenary and his function through a specific object or attribute symbolic of his post (ill.87), sometimes quite similar to the emblems of Mamlūk insignia. A strict hierarchy of officials and the idea of one's office as an integral part of one's identity are symptomatic of Turkish society from the earliest periods. Chinese sources corroborate that these tendencies were already present amongst the Hsiung-nu.[365] Most of the emblems of function on the clay Sāmarrā structures, for example, an animal around the neck signifying a royal hunter, a sword, the sword-carrier, are self-explicit. Another artefact illustrating the court assembly scene is a large stucco panel discovered at Rayy, whose inscription bearing the name Ṭughril had led to it being attributed to the Seljuq sultan

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362 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'Islam, p. 81. The fact that the architecture of the Ghaznavid palace cited below, whose frescoes portray the Turkish guard, is judged as exhibiting the Sāmarrā style, seems to testify to the theme's existence at Sāmarrā.

363 *Ibid.*, p. 82. The author states that if they are not funerary steles they may have been exhibited in the castle's famous tavern. She compares these portraits to those of the Uighur officials in Turfan.

364 *Ibid.*, The author is referring to Herzfeld's Die Malereien von Samarra, Berlin 1927, pp. 90-1.

365 Esin, in "Court attendants in Turkish iconography", CAJ, 14, 1, p.87, writes: "The Chinese sources describe the Kök-Türk Ḳaġan's court in terms rather similar to the courts of the Hsiung -nu and of European Huns. The king was surrounded mainly by his relatives among whom the companions of the cup and of the quiver were the highest in rank."

Ṭughril II (r.1134-34) or III (r.1176-94). The ruler, flanked by two small figures, is centrally positioned in the middleground, while in the foreground four guards, each holding an attribute, are symmetrically arranged on either side (ill.91).[366]

Perhaps the greatest or most impressive example of the theme is formed by the wall paintings in the throne room of the eleventh century Ghaznavid palace of Lakshar-i Bāzār. Although the latter are in a fragmentary state, of the sixty original figures, forty-four are extant (ill.88), though only one full head has survived. The soldiers wear garments composed of luxury textiles adorned with the ever-present Turkish belt. Schlumberger, who headed the Ghaznavid excavations, observed the Turkish and Central Asian components present in the frescoes. The bodies are portrayed in a frontal hieratic pose, while the feet are drawn in profile, only the latter element is indicative of the Near Eastern artistic tradition. The one face extant is seen from a three-quarter view and displays similarities with some of the Sāmarrā paintings. Lakshar-i Bāzār offers us an important historical document as it reenacts the formality of the Turkish court. The historian Baihaqī (d.1077) relates that a reception of ambassador took place upon the sultan Maḥmūd's death (d.1030) in which appear a dazzling forty thousand men military élite.[367] The medieval historian also details the strict protocol followed during these ceremonial occasions and the disposition by rank around the throne, the soldiers' grades being evident through the bearing of silver or gold arms, the different stripes or braids of the headgear, and the belts with silver or gold plaques, or still yet embossed with precious stones.[368] Small marble reliefs from the same palace also display figures with Asiatic-type faces, a feature to be associated with the Turks according to various contemporary Muslim sources.

The theme of the ruler and attendants has a long history among the Turkish peoples. The traditional assembly consisted of the the ruler sitting with his attendants, composed of family or confederation members, placed in a hierachical fashion around him. In the section on the T'u-kiue, the configuration of a Western Kök-Türk leader's assembly was offered.

366 For an interpretation of the different offices portrayed on the panel, see *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

367 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.106. This figure may be a historical hyperbole for Hillenbrand, Islamic Architecture, p. 413, mentions only four thousand guards around the sultan.

368 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.106. For an excerpt describing the lavish court and personnel, see Bosworth, The Ghaznavids, pp. 135-7.

Esin traces this type of formation back to the Hsiung-nu, relying on both Chinese sources and Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) representations of "Western and Northern barbarians", some of which depict an enthroned ruler with his attendants, and often a saddled horse.[369] Interestingly enough, the author observes the stylistic evolution of these compositions; if in the early periods, the attendants were portrayed in profile, they began to be rendered in a three-quarter view after the influence of Buddhism, such as in the art of the T'opa Wei or of the Uighur. This delineates another instance of the meshing of the nomadic and Buddhist cultures. Esin declares that symbols of office also appeared early, and with regard to the T'u-kiue period, she writes: "Since the Kök-Türk period, throughout the centuries, the performance of some personal service to the king bestowed the right to the related surname or title and to its insignia (weapon-bearer, cup-bearer, seal-bearer). All court attendants received a a surname or title, a seal, a horse, trappings, hierarchic insignia, vestment."[370]

If the compostion is a combination of Turkish custom and Indo-Buddhist iconography, the issue is how the iconography penetrated into Islamic art. If one considers the origin of these processional scenes, one does not encounter precedents in the earlier periods of Islamic art, such as the Umayyad period, where judging by what has survived, the monarch was portrayed on a full throne surrounded by classical allegories such as at the Quṣayr 'Amra (ca.724-43).[371] Thus, before Sāmarrā, and therefore before a large Turkish presence within the Muslim lands, the theme of the "cosmic" king existed, but was based on Byzantine, Hellenistic and Sassanid prototypes. That Turkish soldiers were depicted in either Turkish Islamic dynasties or in non-Turkish Islamic dynasties where the Turks wielded the effective power is no doubt tell-taling, and it must be rather a question of Turks imposing their taste onto Islamic art, as opposed to Arab or Persian Muslims subscribing to a Turkish aesthetic or custom, unless the phenomena reveals an early type of "exoticism of the other."

The second theme indicating Turkish input is intimately related to the first; it is the cross-legged, sometimes throneless monarch which first emerged in Islamic art during the ninth century. When the throne does appear, it is of a small-legged variety, or sometimes

369 Esin, "Court attendants", CAJ, 14, 1, p. 79.

370 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

371 See K. A. C. Creswell, Early Muslim Architecture, p.109.

simply a small platform (ill.90, 91). Otto-Dorn ascribes to Turkish influence the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Muqtadir's (r.908-32) coinage minted with the caliph represented in this position, "*à la turque*." [372] Again, the difficulty rests in understanding how and why the most powerful man of the empire came to emulate the pre-Islamic traditions of his soldiery, especially since Muslim sources assessing the Turks diverge in opinion, from elogious to derogatory. It may be that the popularity of the new motif can be explained by the presence of Turkish or Khurasanian craftsmen. Could it have been used in an attempt to cultivate greater loyalty from the all-powerful army, or were the Islamic iconographic codes of the princely cycle not yet fully established, allowing for a receptivity of foreign influence, and still searching for its most adequate expression? To the question of how and when the theme entered Islamic art, both Roux, and Otto-Dorn trace this input back to the Sāmarrān Turks. [373]

That this new variation of the kingly theme had become the standard by the tenth century is demonstrated by the stone reliefs on the Armenian Church of the Holy Cross at Achthamar (915-921) whose upper frieze illustrates 'Abbāsid court life. The seated caliph holding his cup is surrounded by his guards wearing their Turkish belts, while other rulers, the Armenian king among them, are rendered in other poses. The theme proliferated in the central lands, especially in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, but it was also employed by Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Egypt as well as by Umayyad Spain. The composition largely disappeared in the thirteenth century from the Muslim Near East, with the exception of Egypt where it survived for another century. [374] It however persevered in miniatures as late as the sixteenth century, and was particularly favoured by the Turkish Moghul dynasty (1526-1858) in India. Roux attributes the relative disappearance of the motif to the coming of the Mongols, who, sharing many customs with the Turks, considered the motif theirs and thus forbid its usage. [375]

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372 Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p. 82.

373 Roux, "La coupe", Et. d'ico. isl., p. 96 and Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, pp. 83-84.

374 Roux, "La coupe", Et. d'ico. isl., p. 94.

375 *Ibid.*, p.108.

The Turkish aspects of the new compostion are both the seated position and the cup.[376] The first may be traced back to nomadic custom but also to Buddhist art, as it was in the lotus position that monarchs and holy men were portrayed in the Indo-Buddhist Central Asian tradition. The second feature is perhaps even more significant. Roux claims that the cup constitutes the essential royal attribute of the scene. This would explain why only the objects held, and not the bodily position, were modified when the theme was usurped by local princes from the tenth century onward.[377] These variants of the theme were designed in an era in which patronage figured greatly in the vying for power. The seated king motif itself, without modification, may sometimes have been used to rival caliphal power, such as in Ṭughril's stucco panel mentioned above.[378] In the decorative arts, the variations of the theme perhaps sought to express the theme of the prince *in abstracto*. The roundish cup was sometimes replaced by a branch, a flower or a triangular cup (ill.87).

However, variations of the caliphal theme itself also existed, such as at the Talisman Gate at Baghdad (ca.1220), where the ruler is subduing dragons. An alternative Turkish emblem of power could also replace the cup, like the bow and arrow, such as can be seen on the frontispiece of an Iraqi *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (ca.1218-19) (ill.95), or like a small still unidentified circular object common in the Seljuqid period, as seen in the Anatolian stone relief from Konya (ca.1221) (ill.89).[379] Artefacts like the early fourteenth century Ibn al-Zayn basin display both a prince with bow and arrow and one bearing a cup.

Both Otto-Dorn, and Roux interpret the symbol of the cup in light of the traditional cup-

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376 *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5, presents also the napkin or handkerchief as an important attribute of royalty which is often depicted very clearly as part of the scene of the enthroned monarch. The author does not state its origin or significance, although he does imply, p. 92, the Turks' attachment to the motif. This item will not be discussed as it is also possible that its importance stems directly from the Islamic tradition and from the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad. Esin, "Court attendants", CAJ, 14, 1, p. 93, also places the item within the framework of Turkish history: " The ob jects attached by Uygur dignitaries to their belt straps included a purse, a fan, a handkerchief. The latter remained an emblem of dignity in Islamic Turkish representations of kings."

377 Roux, "La coupe", Et. d'ico. isl., p.85.

378 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

379 *Ibid.*, p.93. The author considers the demographics of the "*prince en majesté* " (with cup) theme", and concludes that it was never used by the Turks of Anatolia, or the Caucausus. The latter replaced the cup with other symbolic attributes.

holding funerary statues of the Turkish tradition, which date back to at least the sixth century, and both refer to stele of the T'u-kiue Bilge Kaghan (d.734), where the ruler, who was sympathetic to Buddhism, is sitting cross-legged, with a cup in his hand, accompanied by two attendants also holding cups (ill.96). The latter author addresses the issue of the seemingly tenuous link between funerary statues and representations of caliphal power, or of the cosmic king:

"La filiation entre les unes et les autres semble évidente, mais pourrait se heurter à la difficulté que représenterait le choix par les musulmans d'une effigie funèbre pour exalter le souverain dans sa gloire terrestre, si ces statues étaient vraisemblablement funéraires: Nous avons la conviction que, tout en étant placées sur les tombeaux, elles n'évoquaient pas le prince mort, mais le prince vivant éternellement."[380]

The author proceeds to explain the Turkish burial rites with their offerings of kumiss, and states that it is because the statue bears a cup that the deceased is also granted one and not *vice versa*. This argument seems a little convoluted, and it is perhaps more coherent to simply accept the above statement that the statues represented the warrior's continued existence, and to examine the cup as a royal emblem in light of its importance in early steppe societies, Turkish or Scythian. The artefact formed an integral symbol of the "oaths of allegiance sworn to the monarch and to elders over swords and cups." [381] That ceremonies of allegiance persisted throughout at least the Seljuq period is substantiated by the chroniclers Ibn-Bībī and Yazici-zādah.[382] The cup was also involved in religious rites, as well as in "blood-brother" ceremonies.

Roux broaches the question of the theme's Iranian aspects. The original oneness of the two cultures surfaces again, as the cup possessed similar functions within both Turkish and Scythian society. And effectively, Scythian iconography did encompass a cup-holding figure, but it represented a god, not a monarch.[383] The theme persevered in "Iranian" art, even throughout the Sassanid period which, no doubt justifies why the theme has been

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380 *Ibid.*, p.98.

381 Esin, History, p. 204

382 Esin, "Court attendants", CAJ, 14,1, pp.102-3.
The author often quotes from the works of the Qarakhānid authors Kāshgarī and Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib who also describe Turkish court protocol.

383 Roux, "La coupe", Et. d'ico. isl., p.105.

ascribed to Persian influence on Islamic art by authors such as R. Ghirshman.[384] Roux also mentions a seventh or eighth century Panjikent fresco of a ritual feast as an Iranian prototype,[385] but as has been shown, although the Soghdian lifestyle emerged out of an Iranian-syle societal structure based on wealthy land-owners, it is plausible that Panji-kent iconography was influenced by its Turko-Mongol rulers and their traditional heritage. The author presents the few Sassanid artefacts, belonging to the late or post Sassanid pe-riod, which display the theme, only to conclude that they constitute exceptions and that they never formed the official representation of the ruler.[386] The traditional Sassanid ruler sits on a high throne, his feet firmly fixed to the ground, and his arms holding a sword between his legs (ill.92). Roux construes that Iran, like Islam, borrowed the theme of "*le prince en majesté à la coupe*", especially as it often concurs with figures bearing long Turkish braids and Asiatic-type faces, which brings us to the third and last theme of this chapter.[387]

The art historian Ernst Diez believed that the Asiatic-type face was transmitted to Islamic iconography by the Seljuqs,[388] and this feature does in fact crystallize during the Seljuq era (ill.90, 93). However, as most of the elements that have been analyzed, and as witnessed by the marble Ghaznavid relief discussed above, the Far Eastern physiognomies are most probably inextricably bound up with the more general Central Asian Turkish history that this study has attempted to delineate. That this type of physiognomy was equated with the Turks is proven by an excerpt of the Qābūs-Nāmeh cited in an article by A. Bombaci: "Si vous observez, trait par trait les Turcs, ils ont de grandes têtes, des visages élargis, des yeux étroits, des nez plats et des lèvres et des dents pas jolies. Les traits ne sont pas jolis mais l'ensemble est joli."[389]

The idea of the Asiatic physiognomy being Turkish or having penetrated into Islamic art

384 R.Ghirshman, Iran, Parthes et Sassanides, p. 204 and p.433, quoted in Roux, "La coupe", Et. d'ico. isl., p.95: "Ghirshman a dit que cet attachement et ce gout 'dépassèrent largement la fin du royaume sassanide et que les artisans islamiques s'en inspirèrent pendant les siècles'."

385 Roux, "La coupe", Et. d'ico. isl., , p.95.

386 *Ibid.*,

387 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

388 Esin, "Quelques aspects des influences de l'art des anciens nomades eurasiens et l'art du Turkestan pré-islamique par les arts picturaux turcs", First Int. Cong. on Tur. Art, p.110.

389 A. Bombaci, "Les Turcs et l'art ghaznavide", First Int. Cong. on Tur. Art, p. 69.

via the Turks, is heavily contested, as it again implies that the Turkish presence "aurait eu dans ce cas une influence vraiment remarquable dans l'art."[390] It has been questioned in the past whether or not the moon-like face stemmed from Chinese influence, as Chinese porcelain was greatly admired in the Islamic world, and fragments have been found as early as Sāmarrā. In fact, the name given to painting by the Sāmānids was *kar-i-Chini*, "Chinese work." It should also be remembered that many regions of Central Asia fell in and out of Chinese control, and that a long tradition of Chinese artists working in the sedentary pockets of the steppe existed. To dispel this notion of Chinese influence, one simply has to turn to an oft-referred work on Islamic painting, though its outdated ethnocentricity is so outlandish as to seem like a caricature. E.Blochet, who connects the facial type with Turko-Mongol rule, in his *Musulman Painting* writes:

"For centuries the Altaics, who lived in Central Asia and in Persia, clothed and armed themselves after the fashion of the Celestial Empire; the characteristics of their races, their ethnic types, bring them singularly near to the type of northern Chinese, whose blood contains a mixture of many Turkish and Tunghuz elements, and which may easily deceive one; so easily that, at the present day, it is possible to mistake Uzbeks from the provinces of Bokhara and Samarkand for Northern Chinese. Even now, on the roads of Southern Persia, in the suburbs of Yazd, are living populations which preserve the Mongolic type of the Altaics who overran Persia.

"These circumstances give the paintings in which they are represented by Persian artists a deceptive appearance of being Chinese pictures; this illusion vanishes if their type is compared with that of the Southern Chinese, from a part where there was no such influx of elements from Central Asia, identical with or closely resembling those which appear in Persian illuminations from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, which might make a careless observer think that they have another ethnic quality than their compatriots who live to the north of the Yellow River." [391]

If the possibility of Chinese influence has been discounted, there is another school which seeks the precedent of the new facial type in the Buddhist culture of eastern Iran. A.S.Melikian-Chirvani stipulates that the Indo-Buddhist culture of Persian Khurasan had penetrated *dār al-islām* from early Sāmānid times.[392] The author claims that originally it was an internal phenomenon which was then appropriated *en bloc* by the western regions. He denounces "the often repeated theory according to which the idealized type known from

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390 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

391 E. Blochet, Musulman Painting, p. 60.

392 A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "The westward progress of Khorasanian culture under the Seljuks", The Art of Iran and Anatolia 4 (Ed.W.Watson), p.110.

Buddhist and Manichean frescoes in Turkestan oases was introduced into Iran at the time of the Mongol invasion" for three reasons.[393] Firstly, the author adduces the continuity of the pre-Islamic Buddhist artistic tradition of eastern Iran. Secondly, he points to the parallels of the literary and artistic traditions of Persian Khurasan, observing that poets and painters alike promulgated the canon of ideal beauty based on the "moon-face Buddha." And finally, he claims "that the likelihood of nomads exercising their influence on such a highly developed and hypersophisticated art and culture as that of Iran is remote." [394] The art historian states that the Turks were not only well aware of Persian culture but that they readily adopted it, which is, of course, true. To the question of the Turks being the transmitters of Khurasanian culture, Melikian-Chirvani concludes that although the Turks indubitably heightened Persian influence, Khurasanian culture also flourished in areas where the Turks played no political role.[395] The author cites Georgia as an example.

The first argument holds but needs to be qualified. The matrix of Indo-Buddhist culture was not Khurasan, but the Turfan region, and it was not, as has been repeatedly demonstrated, an exclusively Iranian phenomenon. The heterogeneity of Khurasanian culture with its syncretic religious cults and populations also seems to have been ignored or overlooked by Melikian-Chirvani. He may also be challenged on the grounds that the apparently Far Eastern aesthetic was reinvigorated in the arts by the arrival of the Mongols and their participation in Islamic culture. The Uighurs, who constituted the administrative, cultural, and intellectual élite of the Mongols, may have played a role in this renewal. The second argument is weakened by its intimation that, because Persian poetry was born in Eastern Iran, the moon-shaped face was first idealized in Khurasan. This is however not the case, as Uighur texts already eulogize the type: "Her face is lovelier than the lunar orbit. Her eyelids are wholly flat."[396] This memory of Turfan still prevailed in Ottoman times as poets

393 *Ibid.*, p.120, note 13. In view of the topic of his article, the statement is also equally applicable to the Seljuq period.

394 *Ibid.*

395 *Ibid.*, p.112.

396 Esin, "Court attendants", CAJ, 14, 1, p. 99.

describe beauty as a "painting from Khotan" or as "Bud", meaning Buddha.[397] And as for the third idea, it perhaps reveals the knot of the more general debate, namely the general disbelief of the possibility of nomads influencing sedentary cultures. This nomad-sedentary opposition, whereby the Turk is the primitive nomad, is somewhat of a myth, as Turkish history has also revealed. However, it is this strongly engrained preconceived notion that has perhaps prevented or hindered the study of Uighur culture or the history of Khurasan, and other research which would indeed unveil an image of the Turk as influential and not just influenced.

The exact type of moon-face delineated on Islamic artefacts is unique and differs from its Central Asian precedents. The style may have sought to depict the new Turkish power-holders of Islam. This would be confirmed not only by contemporary descriptions of the Turks, but also by the presence of other Turkish traits such as long and braided hair. Kāshgarī in his encyclopaedic work describes long hair as a distinctive feature of the Turks.[398] If effectively, these depictions are "self-portaits", it would imply that the Turkish patrons directly influenced the course of Islamic art. If the round faces with almond shaped eyes, delicate mouths and long black braids are traces of Buddhism or Indo-Buddhist culture, the question is what the transposition of a former ideal signified in its new Islamic context. Whatever the answer to the origin of the Far Eastern aesthetic, its meaning within Islamic society remains elusive. It is perhaps for this reason that many Islamic art historians simply remark on the new typology without further comment. Grabar, analysing the iconography of Seljuq and Mongol period ceramics, observes that "the facial types are usually distinguishable by their heavy lower jaws, very simplified facial features, and narrow slit eyes."[399] The fact that the art historian mentions that these type of figures appear in scenes which he has termed the cycle of "love or meditation" may point to an assimilation of the previous Indo-Buddhist tradition by Islamic art. The provenance of many of the ceramics

397 Esin, "Quelques aspects des influences de l'art des anciens nomades eurasiens et l'art du Turkestan pré-islamique par les arts picturaux turcs", First Int. Cong. on Turk. Art, p. 110.

398 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 113 and p. 114.

399 Grabar, "The visual arts", CHOIr. (Ed. J.A.Boyle), v. 5, p. 646. The whole issue of the development of physiognomy types within Central Asian art should be studied. After all, it was the Turkish T'opa Wei that introduced Buddhism into China. Before then, the facial types of Buddhist art were in the Indo-Hellenistic style.

from important formerly Buddhist centres, such as Kashan, further supports this train of thought.

The Asiatic-type face no doubt possesses several levels of reading, and should be associated with Central Asian culture as a whole, as well as more specifically with the Turko-Mongol presence within *dār al-islām*. In other words, a pre-Islamic ideal of spiritual beauty was integrated into, and no doubt transformed by, the new culture, while at the same time, the Asiatic-type figures also functioned as historical portraits and depictions of the new Turkish ruling classes (ill. 94).

Conclusion

The history of the Turks has been traced as accurately as possible in order to ascertain if the Turks are to be connected with steppe art, a thesis commonly proposed by Islamic art historians. The answer is not only yes, but research reveals that steppe art was strong enough to contribute a certain amount of its features to the larger Indo-Buddhist tradition, whether during the period of the T'opa Wei or that of the Uighur in Turfan. Examples of such artistic influence were noted in the importance given to the representation of the horse, the depiction of court attendants, the use of animal symbolism or the rendering of physiques and of apparel typical of the Turkish tradition. Steppe elements are, however, not only to be associated with technical or stylistic questions, such as animal motifs and methods of carving, but also revolve around a body of native beliefs and an attachment to a traditional lifestyle which perservered even after Islamicization. In fact, the pre-Islamic Turkish religious, military and administrative traditions continued, with incredible tenacity, right up into the Ottoman period. The latter, despite its unique origin, possessed a sense of "Turkish" history. This can be demonstrated, not only by many traditional customs which were upheld but also by the figures of speech noted above. Another corollary of the study is the awareness of the strong relationship between the proto-Turkish tribes and those which founded China; the two groups may indeed be intimately related. Chinese culture played an important influential artistic, social, cultural and religious role on the Turks throughout history. Any future research on the cultural history of the Turks would have to fully explore this historical link, especially in light of the great progress made in the field of Chinese archaeology in the last decades..

Chinese archaeology in the last decades..

More important, perhaps, is the fact that the Turkish past is not to be connected exclusively with nomadism, even if in all of its phases a conservative element in its various populations remained clearly attached to that way of life and its implications. Turks also established empires on the steppe, and a certain amount of urban-type culture evolved.The strongest impetus of this development seems not to have been only a hankering after power and wealth, or an imitation of wealthy state-like neighbours, but was rather due to the more profound changes brought about by the adoption of more codified religions which fostered the necessity of sedentarization. Turkish high culture spread over an enormous territory from the time of the T'u-kiue and was not impermeable to non-Turkish cultural precedents. The Uighur culture has been adequately studied, and yet its implications for the Muslim lands may seem geographically remote. Its influence on Islamic society is sometimes mentioned with regard to the thirteenth century Mongol invasions. However, if one views Uighur culture as part of the more encompassing Indo-Buddhist culture, even with its Manichaean tendencies, another vision emerges. This Central Asian culture was generalized over the steppe and was propagated even after its Turkicization. By observing maps and seeing how close the Mongol Hephthalite dynasty or the Western T'u-kiue kaghanate were to *dār al-islām*, one is obliged to reconsider the former bias of steppe history correlating only the Indo-Europeans steppe groups with the various expressions of high culture. The field of Central Asian studies remains an exciting one, and has already begun to reappraise steppe history in light of the new discoveries and of its re-reading of historiography. If the ethnic and religious diversity of medieval outer Iran is now being presented in the most recent scholarship, hopefully the same approach will be taken with regard to the area's art, over and above any ethnic considerations.

The history of Khurasan and Transoxiana prior to the Muslim conquests should remain a focus for art historians, as to attribute a general Central Asian origin to artefacts without fully understanding the implications of the term may blind one to the historical circumstances, especially those concerning Turkish impact, but no doubt also those demonstrating the importance of the Indo-Buddhist culture as a whole in the development of Islamic civilization. For example, if one considers all the Turks as pure nomads living the type of

influence on Islamic art is narrowed. Turkish elements did not first appear with the Oghuz Seljuqs but began having an impact as early as the art of Sāmarrā. The artistic influence of the Sāmarrā guards cannot be explained except by the particular history of "Turkish" outer Iran with its high culture. A lack of knowledge of the historical reality of the eastern frontier of the Muslim lands would inevitably lead one to dismiss as romantic or fanciful speculation the idea of a possible strong cultural influence of the Turkish praetoria. This point emerged as the crucial point of the research; it would be more than worthwhile to devote a detailed study to the cultural history of the Sāmarrā Turks alone. Certain works, such as those of W. Barthold or C. E. Bosworth, dealing with the demography of outer Iran, should also be brought forth and reanalyzed. Particularly the lead given by Emel Esin in her article on the Jawsaq al-Khāqānī should be seriously pursued. The article clearly reveals that the Arabic medieval sources discuss the Turks in quite a detailed manner and offer a different perspective than that of seeing the Turks as uncultured "slaves" or even the most probably exaggerated derogatory descriptions of Ibn Faḍlān. Emel Esin, quoting medieval Muslim authors, paints a picture of historically conscious Turks, mainly from Soghdiana, and capable as builders, metalsmiths, and architects. These facts of steppe history along with the perpetuation by Muslim rulers and officials of the pre-Islamic customs of their soldiery as well as the actual power gained by the Turkish guards are good indications of the real possibility of the Turkish army exerting a strong impact on an Islamic civilization still in its making. Esin's article seemed almost revolutionary in its implications as it is the only text found which clearly offers a concrete venue for explaining how Turkish culture penetrated *dār al-islām*. The first step of Sāmarrā set precedents for all future Turko-Islamic groupings and dynasties.

If one accepts the plausibility of Turkish influence on Islamic art and questions how it manifested itself - and none of the issues raised in this study claims to be fully resolved- the difficulty resides in "proving" it. Until more research is done, many of the elements ascribed to Turkish influence remain a matter of logical speculation, with the exception of the miltary insignia, the *ṭughrā* and perhaps even the bevelled style. The other features discussed are more controversial, as their origins may be multifold. The origin of the tent-like mausolea is still debated. However, as was shown, the most recent Western scholarship is

mausolea is still debated. However, as was shown, the most recent Western scholarship is more apt to accept, even if tentatively, the idea of a Turkish origin for these structures. Undoubtedly reevaluation and reconsideration of the evolution of Central Asian history will shed more light on the issue. The intent of this study has not been to ascribe a Turkish origin to all the points raised, but to redress what seemed an unfair bias in both Islamic history and art history. The notion of Turkish influence had been propagated by a school of historians and art historians which had focused on the penetration of the Oghuz into the Muslim lands, but this school had been rebutted, and the matter appeared resolved. This closure did not seem to correspond to the historical reality whereby the Turks so obviously played such a major role over a huge territory and over centuries within *dār al-islām*. In fact, the aim of this paper is not so concerned with ethnicities as it is with an objective process which alone allows for true history and its evolution.

The military symbols such as blazons and insignia were mostly perpetuated by Turko-Islamic dynasties, which constituted a large part of the Muslim empire for many centuries and exist somewhat outside of the artistic sphere. However, the *ṭughrā*, which developed out of the tribal markings, by both its beauty and the type of mastery it exudes, forms an integral part of what is quintessentially associated with Islamic art. The debate over the origin of the bevelled style has subsided as even more positivist-type art historians have been willing to concede to the idea of its steppe origin. Perhaps continued research along the lines of Emel Esin's, may prove itself fruitful in this regard as well. Until then, the notion of the bevelled style possessing a Turkish origin prevails as the most likely hypothesis. The style is often considered as the precursor for the arabesque, and the past theory of the rinceau evolving out of zoomorphic patterns may need reexamination. It nevertheless should be remembered that the process of abstraction, if it took place, belongs to the realm of Islamicization and not Turkicization. Furthermore, unlike other students of art history, the present author does not necessarily place the origin of the arabesque at Sāmarrā, but rather sees its first visual inklings already in the art of the Umayyad period. Instead of stepping out of the bounds of this study to examine the mathematical filtering of non-Islamic elements as the fundamental process of Islamic art, it should simply be observed that, perhaps akin to the medieval art of the West, the northern traditions fertilized

the south with their primeval world view, and that it was this meeting of polarities within the matrix of a new world order which brought a remarkable new world art into existence.

Upon consideration of the zoomorphs, it is probable that some of them may have retained their original meanings for certain Turkish groups, even up to the present day as ethnologists have indicated. As has been demonstrated, the Turks preserved many of their traditional practises though transformed by Islamicization. However, within the general framework of Islamic art, animal motifs are also to be associated with the influence of Sassanid and Christian art. The Turks, if not the sole origin of the propagation and increase of animal imagery in Islamic art, nonetheless constituted an important factor in its reinforcement. Within the new Islamic context, animal imagery came to form an integral part of the medieval artistic repertoire and generally appears to be connected with the princely cycle or with astrology, with the exception of the more symbolic Anatolian Seljuq zoomorphs. The fact that Armenian art may have played a role in the adoption of the Anatolian zoomorphic imagery, or whether the continuation of steppe imagery may be explained by the more nomadic-type Turks that invaded Anatolia necessitates more research. Regardless of origin, the animals seem to revive or perpetuate the world view of the steppe. Medieval Turko-Islamic epics, proper names and literary sources inform us of the perpetuation or pre-Islamic animal symbolism. In this vein, access to the scholarship stemming from the famous Institute of Turkish History in Ankara would be beneficial.

The final point studied, the Asiatic-type physiognomy, is the most puzzling. Two theories seem the most likely. Firstly, the Far Eastern look was due to the larger Indo-Buddhist culture of Central Asia which encompassed both Indo-European and Turkish groupings. This idea is further confirmed by poetic metaphors of beauty in Central Asian literature, yet it does not explain how this type originally came to be idealized, for when Buddhism first entered Central Asia, its art manifested Hellenistic tendencies. The Asiatic type may have come about when Buddhism was introduced to China by the T'opa-Wei. However, the moon-shaped faces depicted do not correspond to the Chinese type and do not seem to have an exact replica in Turfanese or Central Asian art. The subject of facial types in Central Asian art shall at a later date be investigated more thoroughly. If the round physiognomies with their delicate features do indeed emanate from the Buddhist world view, how they

were interpreted in the new Islamic society or why they were adopted is unknown. That the figures sometimes bear haloes would seem to communicate that the figures were integrated into the new art as symbols of a spiritual ideal. The second theory to decipher the Asiatic-type physiognomies is that they may have sought to represent the new Turkish rulers of *dār al-islām*. This notion is confirmed not because the type coincides with the arrival of the Seljuqs, but because it was reinforced by the later invasion of the Mongols in which the Uighur played a key cultural role. As previously mentioned, the faces depicted are not Chinese but are rather more typical of the northern Chinese tribes to which the Turks generally belong.

It would be impossible here to resolve or reiterate all the other issues raised, but many venues are still inviting us, such as the influence of textiles, or the integration of shamanistic symbols such as the ram horn motif into the realm of Islamic art. The cultural history of Central Asia is complex and greatly impacted Islamic society and culture (as well as China and the West). And as such its study offers many possibilities for a rereading of Islamic art to better perceive all the elements present in its making.This of course does not divulge the method and reasons of its choices. However, no civilization develops *ex nihilo* and a new culture with all its originality still transforms what preceded it, adopting, choosing and receiving what is most apt to express it. To understand Central Asian art means to better grasp the process and meaning of Islamic art.

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List of Maps

List of Illustrations

24-25-Gold plaques from Tonyukuk's harness, from Rinčen. "Mélanges archéologiques,: Les inscriptions inconnues sur pierre et les plaques d'or ornamentées du harnais de Tonyoucouc", Central Asiatic Journal 4, fig.5 and 6.
26-T'u-kiue gilt silver plaque, 8th c., found in the T'ie-shan mountains, from Esin, A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Turkish Culture, Pl.49d.
27-Portrait of the prince Kültegin, from his grave in Mongolia, from Esin, The Culture of the Turks: the Initial Inner Asian Phase, fig.4 .
28-T'u-kiue funerary statue clearly exhibiting the Turkish belt, Yenisei area, from Esin, A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Turkish Culture, Pl.48b.
29- Gold harness plaques, 7th-9th c., from article "Turkic art", Encyclopaedia of World Art, pl.220.
30-Iron stirrup with T'u-kiue inscriptions, from Esin, A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Turkish Culture, Pl.46A/c.
31-Warrior, detail of an Uighur mural, 9-10th c., from Esin, The Culture of the Turks: the Initial Inner Asian Phase, fig.13.
32-Bezeklik, fresco depicting a Turkish prince, ca. 850-950, from Le Coq, Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan, pl.20b.
33-Bezeklik, fresco depicting Asiatic-type monks, ca. 850-950, *ibid.*, pl.21a.
34-Fragment of Uighur mural from Kosho, depicting Buddha renouncing the world, 9th c., from Rice, Ancient Arts of Central Asia, p.196, fig.185.
35-Folio from Uighur Manichean manuscript, written in Uighur and dedicated to a Uighur monarch, from Esin,The Culture of the Turks: the Initial Inner Asian Phase, fig.22 .
36-37-Two ceilings from Bezeklik showing painted lambrequins, from Strzygowski, "Le Lambrequin", Revue des arts asiatiques, 3, pl.26, fig.6 and 5.
38-Funerary-type statue bearing statue attributed to Karakhānid dynasty by E.Esin, from Esin, A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Turkish Culture, Pl.95a.
39-Wall panel from Nishapur, 9th c., Metropolitan Museum of Art, from Ettinghausen and Grabar,The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250, p.249, fig.264.
40-Nishapur painted stucco wall panel, ca.10th c., *ibid.*, p.251, fig.267.
41-Panjikent mourning scene, 7th-8th c., from Esin, "The Turk al-'Aǧam of Sāmārrā and the paintings attributable to them in the Ğawsaq Al-Ḫāqānī", Kunst des Orients, 9, p.79, fig. 17.
42-Panjikent princes, from T.Rice, Ancient Arts of Central Asia, p.108, fig.91.
43-Ghaznavid stucco zoomorph, Palace of Tirmidh , from Ettinghausen and Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250, p.290, fig.306.
44-Detail of Interior dome of Jalāl al-dīn Qaratā'ī *madrasa*, glazed brick and faience decoration, Konya, 1253, from Grube, The World of Islam, p.78.
45-Enamel inlay dish, made for early 12th Artuqid regent of Seljūqs, Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, from Du Ry, Art of Islam, p. 103.
46-Stucco head clearly depicting the Asiatic features, perhaps of a Seljūqid prince, Metropolitan Museum of Art, from Rice,"Some reflections aroused by four Seljukid statues", Anatolica, 2, Pl.14, fig.1.
47-Top of a Seljuqid bronze mirror, early 13th, Topkapi Museum, Ettinghausen, "The Islamic period", Treasures of Turkey, p.165.
48-Fragments of glazed tile from Anatolian Seljūq palace of Qubādābād, early 13th c., from Du Ry, Art of Islam, p. 103.
49-Kharrāqan tomb, later tower, from Hillenbrand, Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning, p.277, fig. 191.
50-Kharrāqan tombs, 1067-8 qnd 1093, from Ettinghausen and Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250, p.268, fig. 281.

51-52-Radkan *türbe*, from K.Otto-Dorn, L'Art de l'Islam, p.144 and "detail of fringed frieze", *ibid.*, p.140, fig.79.

53- A drawing made by Friar Rubruck when he visited the Mongol court, from Rice, The Seljuks in Asia Minor, fig. 33.

54-Double-niche *namazlyk* rug with ram horn motifs, from Gassong, "Turkoman Prayer Rugs", Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies, 3, p.91, fig.7.

55-Ram horn 'altar' outside the Afaq Khoja Mosque, Kashgar, 1930, from Jarring, Return to Kashgar: Central Asian Memoirs in the Present, p.193.

56-Central Asian aesthetic, early 20th c. apartment in the Hindukush region exhibiting similar atmosphere as many mosques with wooden columns, from Le Coq, Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan, p.146, pl.46.

57-Example of a *göl* with ram horn motif, from Day, "Un singulier tapis turkmène dans les collections du musée des Arts décoratifs", Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France, n.5/6, p.340, fig.8.

58-Lambrequin frieze from Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque, Cairo, from Strzygowski, "Le lambrequin", Revue des arts asiatiques, 3, pl. 28, fig.12.

59-Cup-bearers, mural from the Jawsaq al-Khāqānī, from Esin, "The Turk al-'Aǧam of Sāmārrā and the paintings attributable to them in the Ǧawsaq Al-Ḫāqānī", Kunst des Orients, 9,p.80, fig.23.

60-Yün-kang, detail of stone pennant from cave 4, from Strzygowski, "Le lambrequin", Revue des arts asiatiques, 3, pl. 29, fig.11.

61-Pazyryk, bevelled style plaque, 5th c. BC, from Ettinghausen,"Turkish elements on silver objects of the Seljuq period of Iran", Islamic Art and Archaeology: Collected Papers , pl.77, fig.2.

62-"S" style pottery, Samarkand, 10th c., from Ettinghausen and Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250, p.228, fig.236.

63-Spontaneous bevelled style, detail of beam from the Fāṭimid Mosque of al-Ḥākim, 1003 AD, from Ettinghausen, "The 'beveled style' in the Post-Samarra period", Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld, pl.10, fig.2.

64-Sāmārrā c style, Sāmārrā, 9th c., from Ettinghausen and Grabar,The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250, p.104, fig.80.

65-66-Ṭūlūnid panels, bevelled style, vegetal and zoomorphic motifs, *ibid.*, p.108, fig. 85 and 86.

67-68-Details from door of the mausoleum of Maḥmūd of Ghaznam after 1030 AD, from Ettinghausen, "The 'beveled style' in the Post-Samarra period", Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld, pl.16, fig.2, pl.15, fig. 2.

69-Small silver plaques with filagree design, from Gray, "A Seljuq hoard from Persia", The British Museum Quarterly 13, p.77, pl.32b.

70- Seljuq-period bevelled style plaques, from Ettinghausen,"Turkish elements on silver objects of the Seljuq period of Iran", Islamic Art and Archaeology: Collected Papers, pl.77, fig.1.

71-Example of "even-width" arabesque on artefact from Pazyryk, 5th c. BC, *ibid.*, pl.82 fig.12.

72- Seljuq example of "even-width arabesque", glazed tile from Ṣāḥib 'Aṭā' mosque, Konya, 1258, from Rice, The Seljuks in Asia Minor, p.167, fig.37,

73- Seljuq example of 'even-width arabesque', *miḥrāb* of Ṣāḥib 'Aṭā' mosque, 1258, Konya, built by Kelük Ibn 'Abdullah, *ibid.*, pl.69.

74-*Tamghas* on steppe petroglyph, from Rinčen, "Mélanges archéologiques,: Les inscriptions inconnues sur pierre et les plaques d'or ornamentées du harnais de Tonyoucouc", Central Asiatic Journal 4, fig.3.

75-Mamlūk jar with *tamgha*, from Day, "Heraldic Devices Of Turkish Peoples and their Relationship to Carpets", Oriental and Textile Studies, 3, p.245, fig. 22.

76-Detail of Rashīd al-Dīn's manuscript illustrating the *tamghas* of the Turkish tribes. the bow and arrow of the Oghuz may be seen, *ibid.*, fig. 21.

77-*Tamghas* employed on blazons by Mamlūks, from Day, "Tales of Totems and Tamghas", Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies, 4, p.257, fig.7.

78-Dragon door knob from Ulu Djami of Cizre, from GOney, "Dragon figures in Anatolian art", T.T.K.Belleten, 33, fig. 17.

79-Example of Seljuq dragon, originally from Konya's citadel, ca.1221, from Rice. The Seljuks in Asia Minor, pl. 57.

80-Animal combat motif, from Great Mosque of Diyarbakir, from Roux, "Le combat d'animaux dans l'art et la mythologie irano-turcs", Arts Asiatiques, 36, p.7, fig. 4.

81-Dragon bas-relief from the Aleppo citadel, from Ettinghausen and Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250, p.311, fig.337.

82-Dragon with heart-shaped bodies bas-relief, Sultan Han, from Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs on Seljuq sacred architecture in Anatolia", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.127, fig. 24.

83-Double-headed eagle, Ulu Djami of Divrigi, *ibid.*, p.120, fig. 18.

84-Bronze dragon dook knocker, from Ettinghausen, "The Islamic period", Treasures of Turkey, p.160.

85-Tree of life motif with dragons and eagle. Chifte minareli medrese, Erzurum, from from Otto-Dorn, "Figural stone reliefs on Seljuq sacred architecture in Anatolia", Kunst des Orients, 12, p.127, fig.25.

86-Zoomorphs from Gök Medrese, from Roux, "La prétendue représentation du calendrier des douze animaux dans l'art islamique médiéval", Journal Asiatique, 266, fig.1.

87-Turkish guard, Sāmarrā stele, from Otto-Dorn, L'art de l'islam, p.73,

88-Turkish guards, from Ghaznavid Lashkar-i Bāzār palace, *ibid.*, p.105.

89-Wall relief from the Seljūq of Rūm period, Konya, from Roux, "Le bonnet et la ceinture", Etudes d'iconographie islamique, pl.7, fig.9.

90-Frontispiece of the *Māqāmāt* of al-Harīrī, Asiatic-type enthroned prince, Egypt, 1334, from Ettinghausen, Arab Painting, p.148.

91-Stucco panel from Rayy, from A Survey of Persian Art (Ed.Pope and Ackerman), v. 8, pl. 518.

92-Example of Sassanid representation of ruler, detail of the Chosroes cup, 6th AD, from Roux, "La coupe", Etudes d'iconographie islamique, p.13, fig. 15.

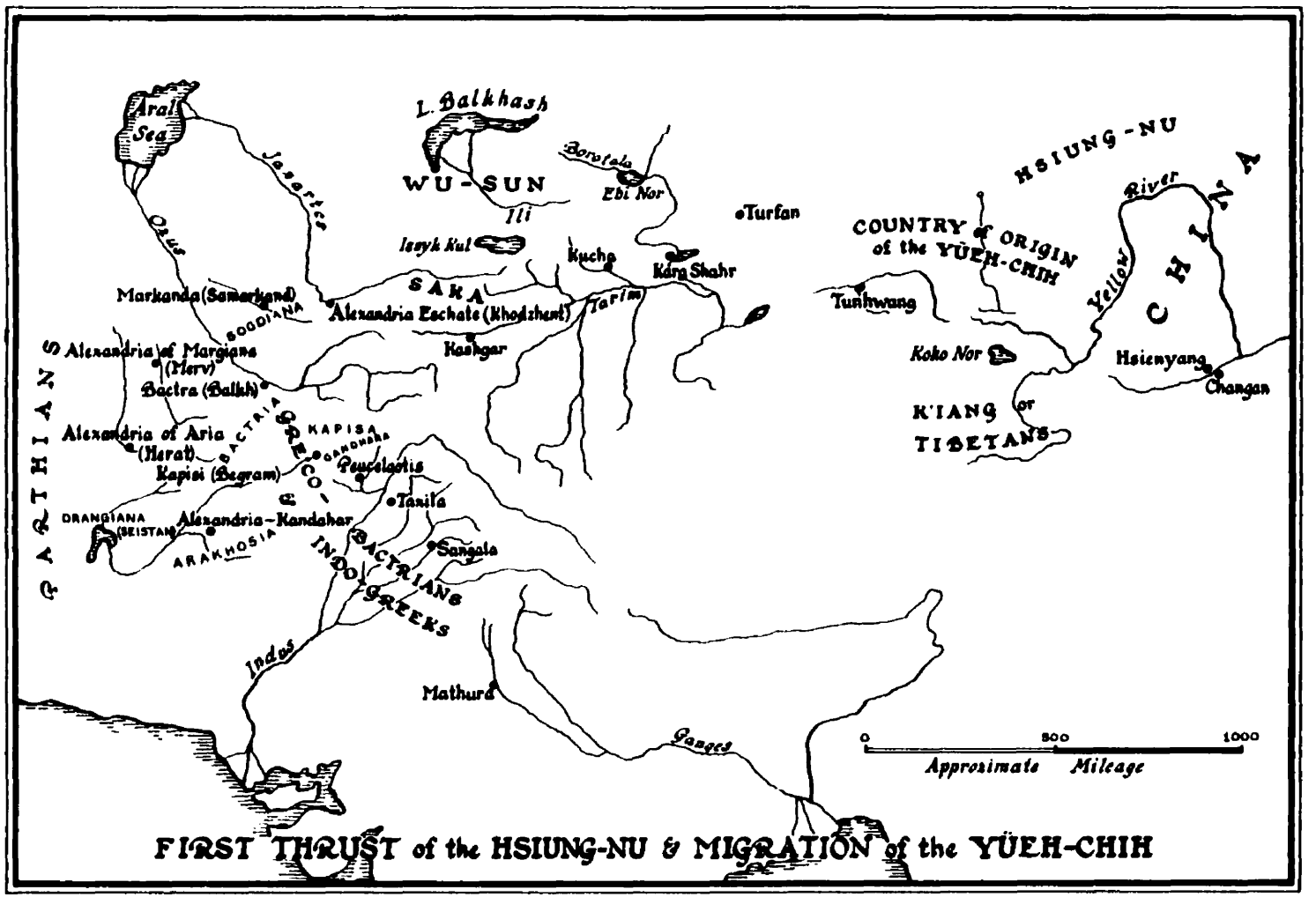
93-Dish from Seljuqid period exhibiting Asiatic-type figures, 1187, from Watson, "Mīnā'ī and Abū Zaid's bowls", The Art of the Seljūqs in Iran and Anatolia (Ed. R.Hillenbrand), fig.165.

94-Dish depicting battle scenes and representations of heroic deeds, the Turkish names of the figures depicted are clearly indicated revealing a type of portraiture, mid-13th c., from Ettinghausen and Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250,

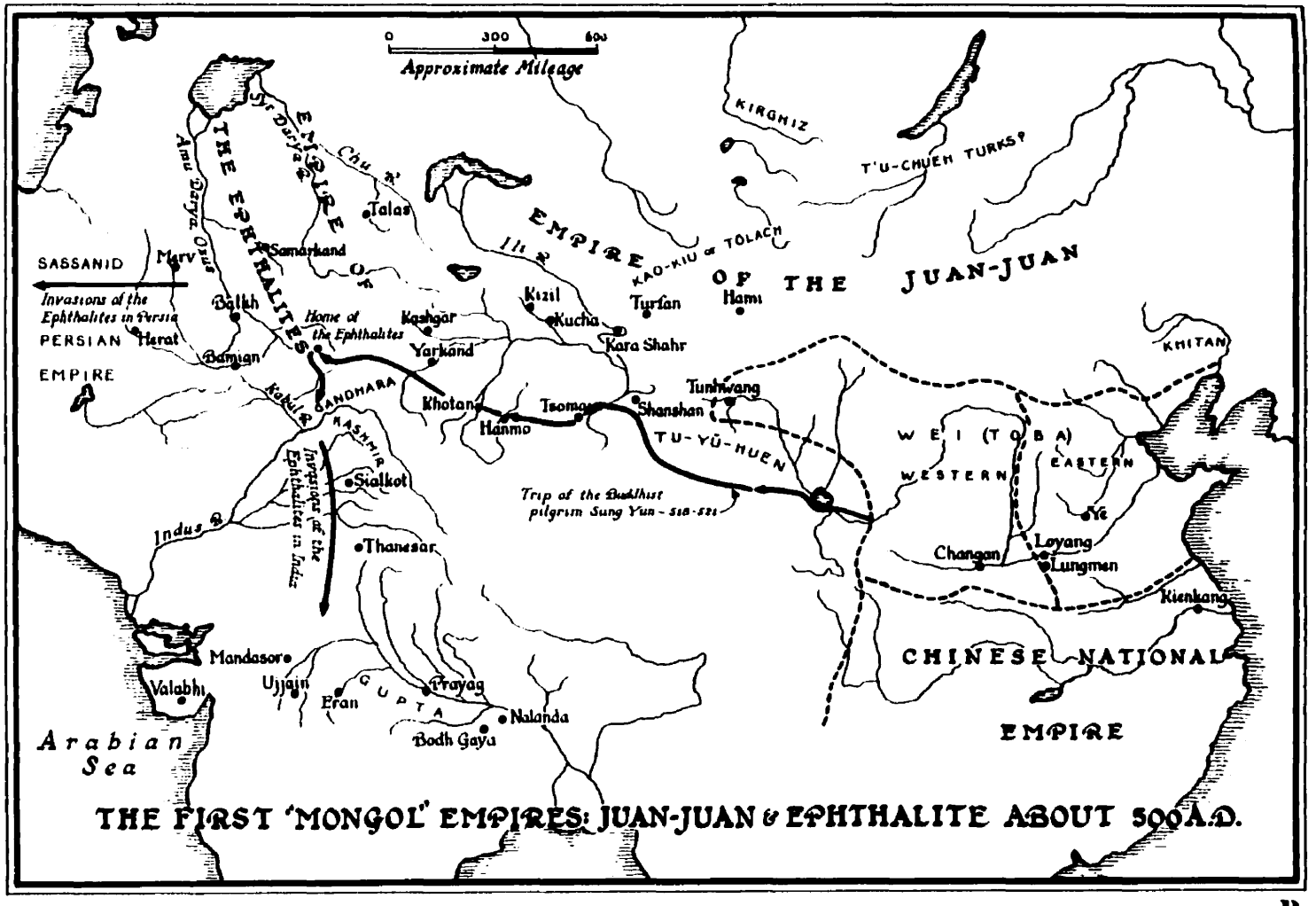
95-Frontispiece of the *Kitāb al-'Aghānī*, showing the ruler with bow and arrow, Iraq, ca.1218-19, from Ettinghausen, Arab Painting, p. 65.

96-Stele of the T'u-kiue Bilge kaghan, from Esin, "The court attendants in Turkish iconography", Central Asiatic Journal, 14 p.97, fig. 2.

97-Musician, example of nomadic-type figure and dress in medieval Islamic art, ivory, Iraq (10th-13th c.), from Roux, "La coupe", Etudes d'iconographie islamique, pl.1, fig. 9.

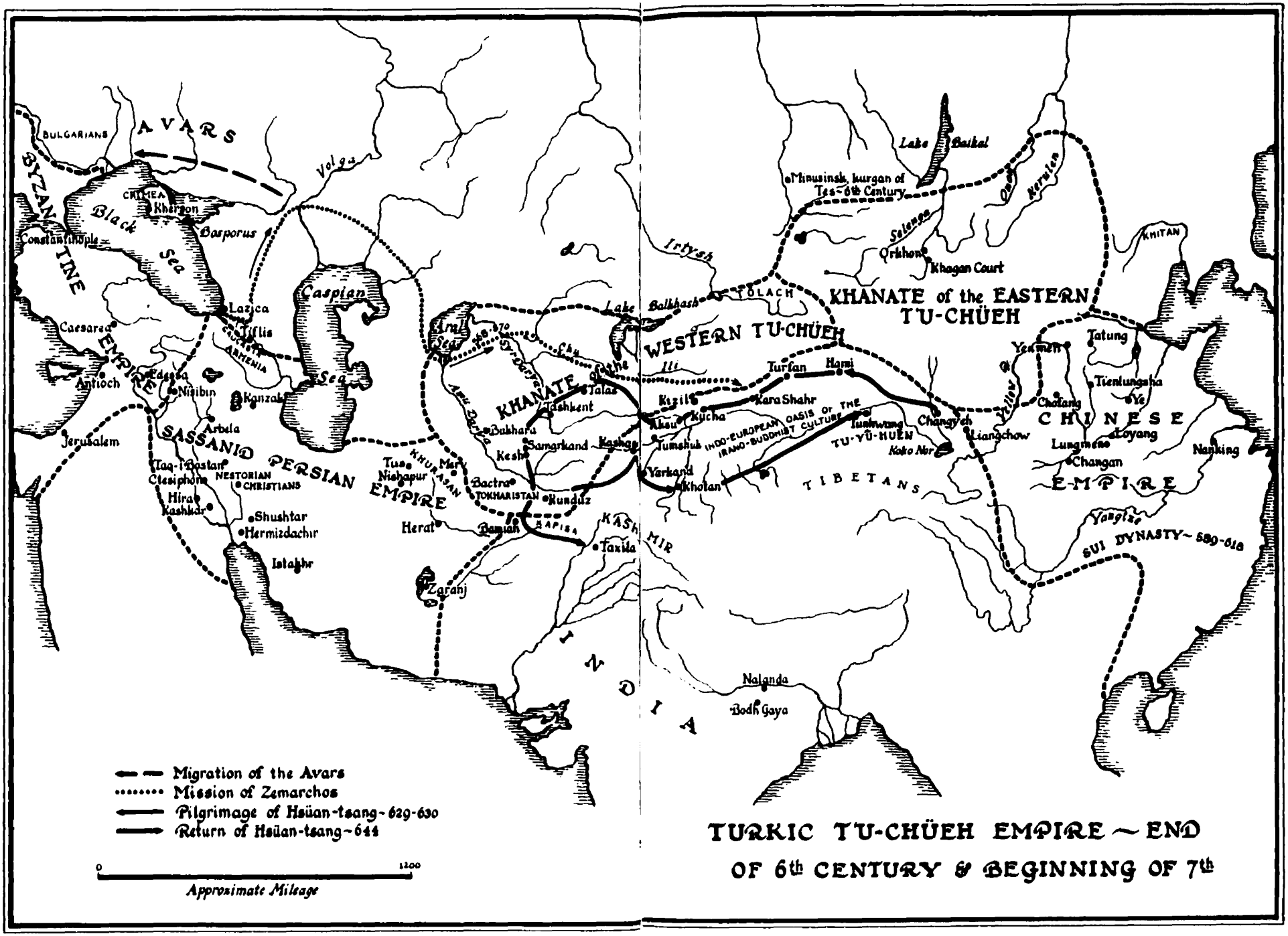

Aral Sea
L. Balkhash
WU-SUN
Ili
Issyk Kul
Borotala
Ebi Nor
Turfan
HSIUNG-NU
COUNTRY of ORIGIN of the YÜEH-CHIH
Yellow River
CHINA
Kuche
Kara Shahr
Tunhwang
Oxus
Jaxartes
Markanda (Samarkand)
SOGDIANA
SAKA
Alexandria Eschate (Khodzhent)
Tarim
Kashgar
Alexandria of Margiana (Merv)
Bactra (Balkh)
Koko Nor
Hsienyang
Changan
K'IANG or TIBETANS
BACTRIA
KAPISA
Alexandria of Aria (Herat)
Kapisa (Begram)
Peucelaotis
Taxila
GRECO-INDO-BACTRIANS
DRANGIANA (SEISTAN)
Alexandria-Kandahar
ARAKHOSIA
Sangala
Indus
Mathura
Ganges
0
500
1000
Approximate Mileage
FIRST THRUST of the HSIUNG-NU & MIGRATION of the YÜEH-CHIH

A

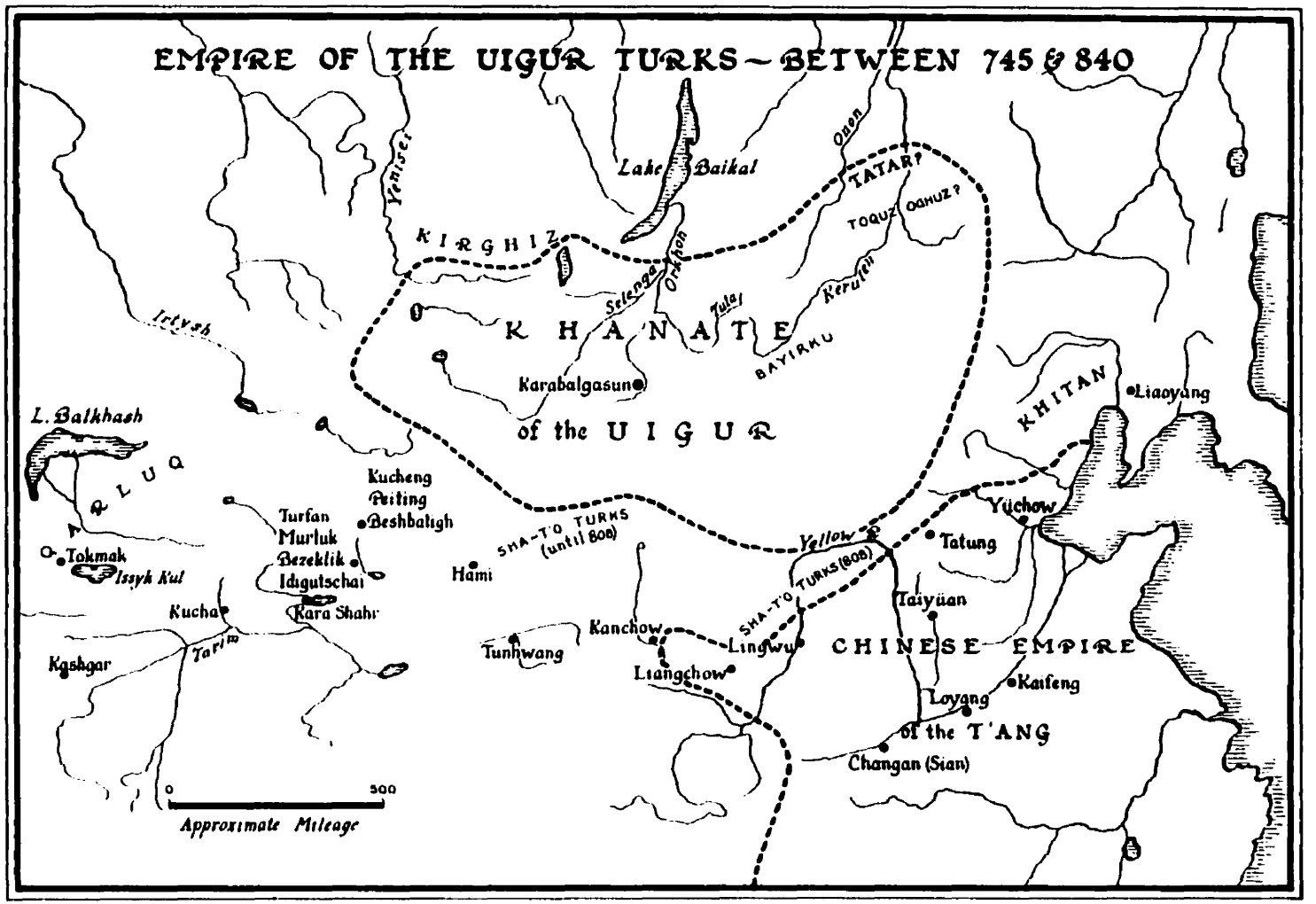


THE FIRST 'MONGOL' EMPIRES: JUAN-JUAN & EPHTHALITE ABOUT 500 A.D.

B



TURKIC TU-CHÜEH EMPIRE ~ END OF 6th CENTURY & BEGINNING OF 7th


EMPIRE OF THE UIGUR TURKS ~ BETWEEN 745 & 840
Lake Baikal
Yenisei
Orkhon
Selenga
Tula
Kerulen
Onon
TATAR?
TOQUZ OGHUZ?
KIRGHIZ
KHANATE
BAYIRKU
of the UIGUR
Irtysh
Karabalgasun
L. Balkhash
ARLUQ
Kucheng
Peiting
Beshbaligh
Turfan
Murluk
Bezeklik
Idigutschai
Kara Shahr
Kucha
Tokmak
Issyk Kul
Kashgar
Tarim
Hami
SHA-T'O TURKS (until 808)
Tunhwang
Kanchow
Liangchow
Lingwu
SHA-T'O TURKS (808)
Yellow R.
KHITAN
Liaoyang
Yüchow
Tatung
Taiyüan
CHINESE EMPIRE
of the T'ANG
Loyang
Kaifeng
Changan (Sian)
0
500
Approximate Mileage

D


THE SELJUK SULTANATE about 1094
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
Constantinople
Nicomedia
Nicaea
Dorylaeum
Amaseia
Trebizond
Tiflis
Sinope
Ankara
Sivas
Erzerum
Kars
Ani
Ephesus
Konya
Iconium
Kayseri
Khilat
Malazgirt
Amida
Edessa
Tabriz
Antioch
Aleppo
Mardin
Mosul
Maragheh
Zenjan
Alamut
Qazvin
Rai
Damghan
Hamadan
Qum
Tyre
Damascus
Tikrit
Acre
Baghdad
Kermanshah
Ispahan
Jerusalem
Alexandria
Cairo
Shushtar
Yezd
Basra
Shiraz
Kerman
Merv
Tus
Nishapur
Herat
Ghazni
Kandahar
Zaranj
Multan
Lahore
Bhatinda
Thanesar
Balkh
Kunduz
Lamghan
Kabul
Peshawar
Nagarkot
Khodzhent
Bukhara
Samarkand
Kesh
Amul
Urgench
Hezarasp
Otrar
Signakhi
Talas
Tashkent
Andizhan
Kashgar
Yarkand
Khotan
Aksu
Kucha
Toksmak
Almalik
Qayaligh
L. Balkhash
Issyk Kul
Chu
Syr Darya
Amu Darya
SELJUK KHANATES
FERGANA
TRANSOXIANA
KHURASAN
GHAZNAVID SULTANATE
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
ARMENIANIA
DIYAR BAKR
AZERBAIJAN
IRAQ AJAMI
IRAQ ARABI
FARS
KERMAN
SEISTAN
GHOR
KASHMIR
KATHIAWAR
Somnath
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
FATIMID CALIPHATE
Euphrates
Tigris
Indus
The Seljuk Sultanate about 1094
Territory recovered by the Byzantines under Alexius Comnenus or by the Franks after the First Crusade
0
600
Approximate Mileage

E