Kingship and City Culture in Southern Central Asia

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Introduction

In early September 1920 the emir of Bukhara, Mohammed Alim Khan (see figure 1), was forced to flee the Red Army. He headed South, to Afghanistan via the Iron Gates, Hissar and Kuljab, avoiding the more direct route via Termez [Fraser 1988]. At the time Termez was a young, predominantly Russian city, which had expanded around the Tsarist fort of Patta Hissar built in 1894, in an area previously inhabited by semi-nomadic Turkmen tribes. In 1920 it had a church and was linked by rail to the rest of the empire.

Mohammad Alim Khan was the last Chingizid ruler of Central Asia. Despite having spent three years in Saint Petersburg and ruled one of the great cities of Central Asia, much of his pride and legitimacy laid in him being a direct descendant of Genghis Khan. Exactly 700 years earlier, in autumn 1220, Mohammed Alim Khan's illustrious ancestor took a similar route. He, however, was conquering, not fleeing, and far from avoiding the Early Islamic Persian city of Termez, he stormed the city after a siege of 11 days and reduced it to a pile of smouldering ruins.

Fig. 1 Photograph of Mohammad Alim Khan in 1911 by S. M. Prokudina-Gorskogo

Why did a ruler, living in a city, base his legitimacy on his distant pastoral nomadic past and did this have an influence on the City Culture? What is the link between the Early Islamic culturally Persian Termez of 1220 and the Late Tsarist culturally Russian Termez of 1920?

It is now accepted that in order to understand the long term relation and evolution of Kingship and City Culture in Southern Central Asia we need to take into account the tribal, pastoral, semi-nomadic world of the steppes. However, whilst the nomadic world has been studied as part of an integral whole, which cannot be fully isolated from the sedentary one [Khazanov 1994], the converse is not true.

In this article, I will describe the origin of some of the main dynasties to have ruled Termez and the Surkhan Darya province[1] and the basis for their legitimacy. I will then analyse the long term evolution of City Culture in the province before reviewing the geographical constraints that help to determine the problems faced by cities and kings. In conclusion, I will suggest that in Central Asia the complexity and continuity of City Culture and the urban nature of Kingship never reach a comparable level to China or the Mediterranean and that this was due to geographical constraints and the constant interaction between cities and the nomadic pastoral world.

Legitimising Kingship in Central Asia

From Gengis Khan up until the Soviet period, the main form of legitimising Kingship was based on descent from Gengis Khan, be it direct, by marriage or invented. Elite Turkic and Turco-Mongol dynastic clans fought for control over the cities, which remained centres of Irano-Islamic civilization representing a sedentary, oasis culture dependent on irrigation agriculture and international trade [Subtleny 1989: 103].

Ultimate political authority usually rested with agnatic descendants of Gengis Khan but other positions of power were also derived from status within Turco-Mongol tribal organizations [McChesney 1983: 34-35]. And right up until the XXth century rulers granted appanages to their family and supporters, following the traditional nomad system (according to which Gengis Khan's empire was divided between his four sons).

Mongol Tribal law took root in Central Asia, and the importance of the Yasa is well documented not only in the Chaghatai khanate[2] but right up to the contemporary period. McChesney thus writes that in the XVIIth century: "Accompanying this adherence to the primacy of Chingīzids in temporal affairs was implicit obedience to the law regulating that authority, the *yāsāq, yāsā,* or *yāsā* and *yūsūn*".[3] The same is true of other customs such as that of hanging cloth streamers to a tree, which was practiced by the first Mongol rulers[4] and is still practised in shrines throughout Central Asia (including those situated within cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara or Termez).

The link with the steppe was true even during the apogee of the Timurid renaissance at the end of the XVth century in cities such as Herat, which changed hands 3 times in one year in the 1450's (because of conflict between Turkic and Turco-Mongol dynastic clans) and for people as imbued by City Culture as was Babur,[5] who was related to almost all his rivals in Central Asia – including the nomadic Uzbeks led by Shajbani Khan [Subtleny 1989]. Indeed, the recurring conquest of sedentary areas by new nomadic groups ensured that the relationship of the ruling dynasty with the steppe was constantly renewed and reinforced (for example when during the early XVIth century, Babur was expelled by Shajbani Khan and later in the early XVIIIth century after the Kazakh invasions)

The Mongol invasion thus shaped laws, customs and kingship legitimacy right up to the XXth century.

It profoundly affected the main institutions of Central Asia and from 1220 onwards, City Culture and Kingship in Central Asia cannot be understood without reference to the tribal, nomadic, pastoral world of the steppes.

What happens if we turn to the pre-Mongol period? Was the Mongol conquest really so influential that it lead to the emergence of new forms of legitimising Kingship and to the appearance of steppe elements in City Culture? or did a similar situation prevail previously?

The Achaemenid period is the first for which we have relatively detailed written sources. We know that the satrap of Bactria was often a member of the Persian royal family, but the social basis and political structure of the Achaemenid state was profoundly tribal. As Herodote I, 125 explains: "Now there are of the Persians many tribes, and some of them Cyrus gathered together and persuaded to revolt from the Medes, (...) the Panthaliaians, the Derusiaians and the Germanians, these are all tillers of the soil; and the rest are nomad tribes, namely the Daoi, Mardians, Dropicans and Sagartians". And throughout the Achaemenid period the court itself was itinerant [Briant 1996: 200] and it is likely that the king slept more often in tents than in his palaces.

The Kushans, despite founding many cities, clearly traced their origins to the nomadic world of the Yuezhi and visibly kept an important ideological inheritance from the Steppes [Stavisky 1986: 77]. This is particularly true of the trappings of Kingship displayed by the Kushan emperors [Fussman 1989]. Thus steppe influence can be seen in the adoption of the horse or horse rider on the coins of the first Yuezhi rulers (Heliocles and Heraus in particular), in place of the divinities which characterised Hellenistic coins, in the use of the term yabgu by Kujula Kadphises, in the costume which remained that of the steppe nomads with trousers tied round the ankles, a tunic, long sleeved coat, felt boots, pointed hat and whip and in other elements such as the practice of cranial deformation [Mustafakulov, Khodzhajov 1992].

The contemporary Parthian Arsacid Dinasty, which may also have ruled Termez for a short period, also laid as much if not more emphasis on their nomadic origin. The ruling elite thus maintained their traditions and appear to have continued to lead a mainly nomadic lifestyle.[6]

The collapse of the Kushan empire led former Bactria to be divided into a series of semi-autonomous states, many of whose ruling dynasties were presumably also of nomadic origin. As Xuanzang (I. 37-38) wrote in the early VIIth century: "For many centuries past the royal race has been extinct. The several chieftains have by force contended for their possessions, and each held their own independently, only relying upon the natural divisions of the country. Thus they have constituted twenty-seven states, divided by natural boundaries, yet as a whole dependent on the Tuh-kiueh tribes (Turks)" [Beal 1884].

After a break of a few centuries, Turkic dynasties once again ruled the area from the early XIth century onwards, under the Karakhanids, Ghaznevids, Seljukids and Khorezmshah. These dynasties were all of nomadic pastoral origin, despite being profoundly influenced by Persian Culture. As D. Sinor says: "the Karakhanids, like the Orkhon Türks and many of their own Turkic dynastic contemporaries, viewed this conglomeration of tribes, tribal unions and sedentary areas that recognized their overlordship, as a family possession" [Golden 1990: 357]. Indeed, according to V. V. Bartol'd, it is during this period, that the kingdom ceases to be conceived as an independent entity and becomes the personnel propriety of the Khan and his family, who is entitled to subdivide it into appanages which he can hand out to his family and allies

[Bartol'd 1968: 17]. This led to a decline of the main structures of the state (bureaucracy, centralisation, etc.), the autonomy of the different appanages and sometimes to an increase in the importance of pastoral to the detriment of irrigated agriculture.

The periods during which the rulers of the cities of Central Asia did not base their legitimacy on their nomadic pastoral tribal origin are thus few. Apart from the Early Islamic Period (in particular under Samanid rule), they usually correspond to periods when Central Asia was ruled from a distant heartland such as the Greek World under Alexander, the Near East under the Late Umayyad and Early Abbasids or more recently Russia under the Tsarist and Communist regimes. This is probably because a purely urban kingship based on an opposition with the nomadic world was not adapted to the Central Asian reality.

Thus various authors have argued that the revolts against the conquest of Alexander the Great was caused by the fact that the Greeks were endangering the economic complementarity and the system of interaction that existed between nomad and settled populations. This system had been preserved by the Achaemenid power but was questioned by Alexander the Great who wished to establish an urban state clearly separated from the nomadic world [Mandel'shtam 1977: 219].

The foundation of the colony of Alexander Eschatè would in this case have been a tangible sign of the will of Alexander to create a militarised frontier along the Yaxartes, separating Sogd from Scythia and destroying the militaro-economical interaction between the two worlds. According to F. Holt, his decision, born out of the Greek model of opposition between civilised world and barbarian world was meant to stop future alliances between the Sogdians and the Scythian nomads. It resulted in the opposite: a generalised revolt against Alexander by both the nomads and the sedentary Sogdian rulers [Holt 1988: 53-57]. The situation only stabilised when Alexander reached an agreement with the local population and ceased attempting to impose a frontier between nomadic and sedentary worlds.

The Samanid case is different, although here too the rulers defined themselves as walls against the steppe nomads ([Golden 1990: 347], citing Nakhshaki). Their success in leading expeditions into the steppes, converting part of the nomads to Islam and their promotion of Turkic slaves to positions of power within the army, conversely created an ever increasing tribal Turkic presence in the heartland of their empire and eventually led to the Karakhanid conquest of Central Asia [Golden 1990].

Throughout history most of the ruling dynasties governing Termez and the other cities of Central Asia were thus closely linked with the pastoral nomadic world. This has, of course, deep consequences on the nature and long term continuity of City Culture in Central Asia.

Termez and City Culture in Southern Central Asia

The continuity of City Culture in Central Asia is often taken for granted, both between periods and over the long term. G. A. Pugachenkova thus writes that : "In Orient [=*Central Asia*] the continuity of traditions has always been one of the distinguishing features of artistic development" [Pugachenkova 1991: 213] whereas R. Frye defines continuity as one of the characteristics of Eastern Iranian culture and even affirms that there is greater continuity in Central Asia than in the West [Frye 1984: 213].

Studies on the development of City Culture over the long term stress the existence of various phases, each of which marks a logical evolution. Thus in the Surkhan Darya province different authors have stressed different stages of urban development, with V. M. Masson distinguishing two main stages[7] and

other authors three,[8] four,[9] five[10] or even six.[11] However, the ideas of long term continuity and lineal development of City Culture sit ill at ease with that of a Tsarist Termez founded in 1894 succeeding an Early Islamic Termez destroyed in 1220. And although it can be claimed that the Tsarist city is an exception, the fact that none of the proposals just mentioned take into account the cities of the last thousand years calls for caution.

The first archaeological and textual evidence for the emergence of complex settlements with fortifications, citadels, monumental architecture, dense occupation and other "city like elements" is usually considered to date to the end of the first half of the first millennium BCE,[12] either shortly before or around the time when Southern Central Asia was incorporated into the Achaemenid empire under Cyrus. However, cities were far from being characteristic of southern Central Asia at this period. Thus, in the Surkhan Darya province, Termez was a small settlement, if it existed at all [Pidaev 2000], whilst Kyzyl Tepe, often referred to as an example of an urban site, lacks many of the basic characteristics of a city.[13] It seems all the more unlikely that mature cities existed at this time in Central Asia, when we consider that in the heart of the Achaemenid world, the imperial cities of Pasargadae and Persepolis were themselves more ceremonial centres than cities stricto-senso.[14]

The first clear evidence we have for City Culture and Kingship in Central Asia dates back to the Hellenistic period and in particular to the city of Aï Khanum and the textual and numismatic evidence for the Greco-Bactrian kingdom.

Aï Khanum itself, with texts of Aristotle, jars of olive oil, a 6000 seating theatre, sculptures and other typically Greek elements appears to be a good example of a colonial implantation. Although it does include Iranian and Central Asian features, in particular in the architecture of certain buildings, the city cannot be claimed to be representative of Central Asia any more than the coins of the Greco-Bactrian rulers are representative of Central Asian Kingship. Hellenistic Kingship and City Culture would appear to have been relatively limited beyond Aï Khanum, its plain and a few other major foundations. Surveys in the Surkhan Darya province have shown that Hellenistic sites are few and far between, whilst excavations of the main sites indicate that the Hellenistic remains only occupy part of the area, in particular at Dal'verzin Tepe and especially at Termez where P. Leriche concludes that the site was probably only a small military fort [Leriche 2001: 94-95], despite various authors having identified it as Alexandria Oxeiane [Grenet, Rapin 2001].

The first undoubtedly Central Asian cities emerge early in the Ist millennium under the Kushan empire. In the Surkhan Darya province, for the first time, we have a complex, hierarchical settlement pattern (see figure 2), important irrigation systems, major sites of dozens, and in the case of Termez, hundreds of hectares. The sites exhibit all the hallmarks of cities, with fortification walls, citadels, monumental palatial and religious buildings, as well as a complex inner structure.

City Culture is present in texts written in various scripts and languages,[15] artistic production such as wall paintings and sculptures, stone working and ceramics. It derives from the urban, sedentary world of Hellenistic Bactria, from India, from an Iranian world where city and steppe appear closely interrelated and from the Steppes themselves. Kingship is exalted through the construction of Dynastic Temples under the rule of Kanishka at sites such as Surkh Kotal, Rabatak, Ajrtam [Fussman 2001: 260-261] and maybe also Khalchajan ([Sims-Williams, Cribb 1996: 109-110], but [Fussman 2001: 260]) and Termez itself. As G.

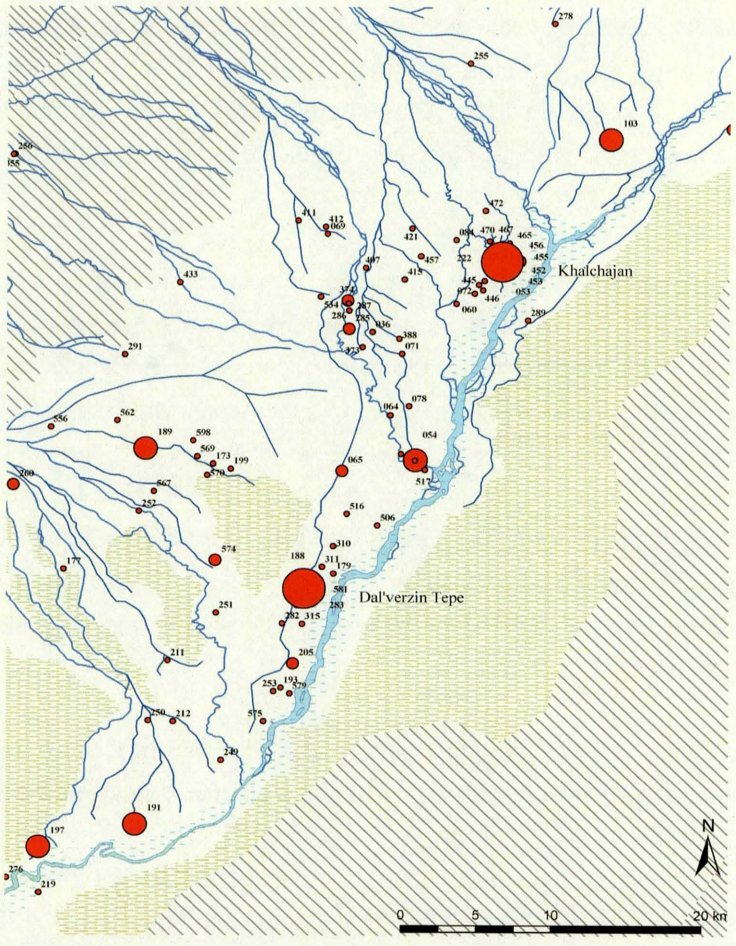

Fig. 2 Kushan Period Settlement Pattern of the Upper Surkhan Darya Plain

Fussman says (talking of Kanishka): "One is astonished by the megalomania of the ruler and the scale of the work, which he ordered" [Fussman 2001: 260]. This said, rather than one unified Kushan City Culture, there seem to have existed a patchwork of regional City Cultures (the Kushan are Iranian in Bactria and Indian in India) with intra-regional variations (for example the ceramic types between the north and south of the Surkhan Darya province clearly show differences [Schachner 1996]).

City Culture disappears completely in the Surkhan Darya around the Vth century. Most sites are definitely abandoned and those that are reoccupied show a clear hiatus in the archaeological record (as at Termez [Zejmal 1999], [Stride 2001: 128]). The emergent settlement pattern is based on small fortified castles, either built ex-nihilo or on top of the abandoned citadels of Kushan sites.

Cities reappear in the Surkhan Darya province around the time of the Arab conquest. They rapidly grow and by the XIth century the whole region is once again covered by a complex, interlinked network of cities. However, the settlement pattern and the cities themselves have little relation to those of the Kushan period (see figure 3). Chaghanian/Budrach the new capital of the northern part of the province emerges in a different location to the previous centres of Dalverzin Tepe and Khalchajan, whilst, in Termez, the main area of Kushan occupation around Chingiz Tepe is abandoned and Early Islamic Termez develops westwards.[16] Termez is estimated to have covered close to 500 hectares and completely dwarfs the rest of the sites. The city includes a citadel, a *shahristan* and two walled *rabats* with various specialised areas for metallurgy and ceramic production amongst other products. Culturally the city is home to a number

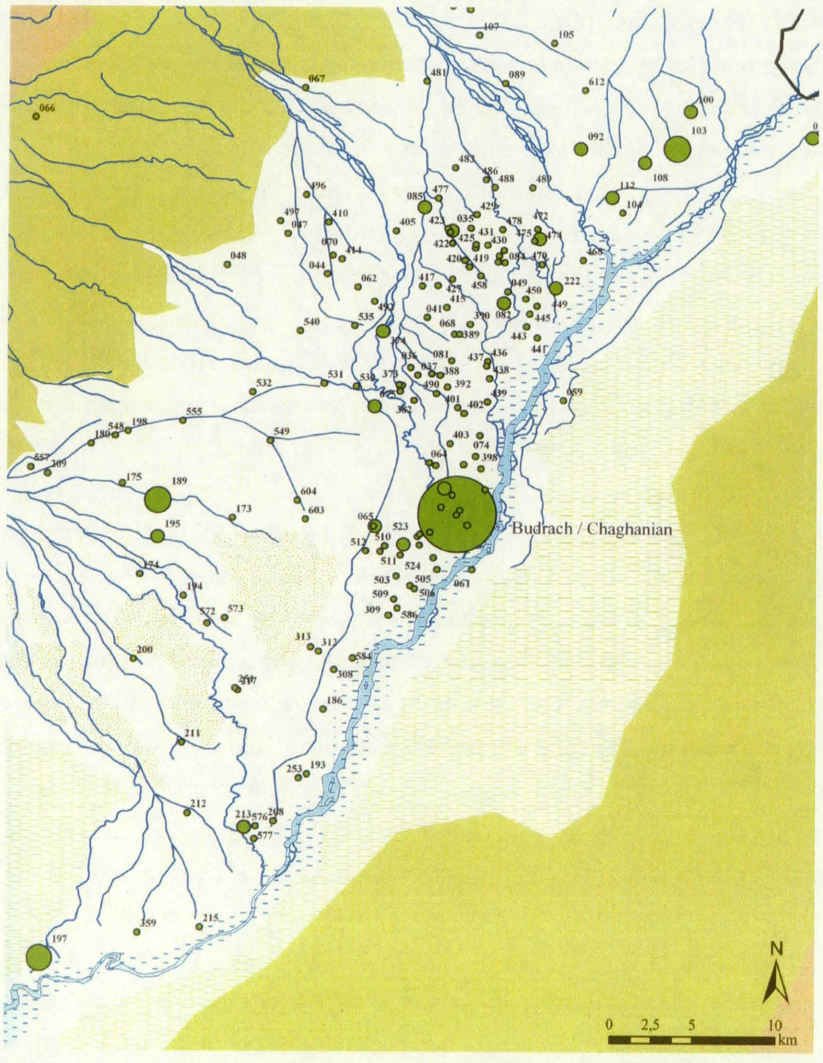

Fig. 3 Pre-Mongol Period Settlement Pattern of the Upper Surkhan Darya Plain

of important figures such as Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi and al Imam al-Tirmidhi whose influence extended throughout the Islamic world.

Gengis Khan's conquests led to the destruction not only of most major cities of Central Asia but also of the whole settlement pattern. Most excavated sites show a clear break in occupation after c.1220, whilst surveys reveal the almost complete absence of any archaeological sites for at least one century and probably more. In the plain of Denau (north of the Surkhan Darya province) the number of sites thus decreases from 57 for the pre-mongol period to 8 for the post mongol period (up to the XVth century) and most of these are probably from the later part of this period. All the major sites are abandoned including the cities of Ancient Termez and Chaghanian / Budrach.

By the early XVth century, at the time of Amir Timur's death, City Culture seems to have been only just starting to revive since surveys undertaken in the Surkhan Darya province but also in the heartlands of the Timurid renaissance, around Herat (pers. Comm. U. Franke) and Samarkand (recent Franco-Italo-Japano-Uzbek surveys), offer little evidence of a dense Timurid period settlement pattern. Termez was probably little more than a large provincial village and even Samarkand does not seem to have been fully formed city under Amir Timur. Ruy Gonzelez de Clavijo (VIII, 4), the ambassador of the king of Castilla,

thus describes how his meetings take place not in the city of Samarkand but in gardens surrounding the city and more mentions are made of tents than houses, as can be seen by the following characteristic extract: "On this plain the lord ordered many tents to be pitched for himself and his woman; and that all his host, which was scattered in detachments over the land, should be assembled together, each man in his place, and that their tents should be pitched (...). After three of four days, twenty thousand men were assembled round the tens of the lord (...). Every division of the horde is provided with all that the troops require and they are arranged in streets". Clearly in Samarkand itself, under the rule of Amir Timur, pastoral nomadic culture seems to have been as important as City Culture.

From the death of Amir Timur up until the flight of Mohammad Alim Khan, City Culture fluctuates as successive waves of pastoral nomads make their way across Central Asia, from the Uzbeks of Shajbani Khan in the early XVIth century to the Kazakhs of the early XIXth century.

In the Surkhan Darya province, the only period during which cities re-emerge is in the XVII-XVIIIth century when new foundations such as Deh-i Nau are created [Stride 2001]. However by the XIXth century cities are once more on the wane[17] and Russian travellers to the Eastern Provinces of the Emirate of Bukhara do not mention Termez as a city but as an area inhabited by semi-nomadic Turkmen tribe...

The Surkhan Darya finally regained a degree of urbanisation comparable to the pre-Mongol period around the middle of the XXth century. The current city of Termez was created *ex nihilo* around a military fort built by the Russian Empire at the end of the XIXth century[18] and it is planned around the first Russian buildings (fort, church, market and train station). Apart from the original, sedentarised Turkmen, the population includes immigrants from the rest of the Surkhan Darya province (mainly Chaghatai, Qungrat and Juz Uzbeks and Tajiks), the rest of Central Asia (in particular Kazakhs) and the whole Soviet Union (notably Russians and Ukrainians but also Armenians, Koreans and many more).

In 2001, the city of Termez officially celebrated it's 2500 jubilee. This was cause for stressing the continuity of City Culture over time. However, the great Kushan period Buddhist monasteries of Fayaz Tepe and Kara Tepe, the major Early Islamic Intellectual Centre of Termez with Imam al-Termizi and al-Hakim al-Termizi, the small Timurid renaissance city and the late XIXth century Russian fort are neither proof of long term City Culture continuity (language, religion and art have little in common), nor of the progressive development of different urban phases. Indeed, little City Culture has been transmitted over the long term in a specifically Central Asian urban setting. Elements such as Islam, architectural and artistic styles, literature, city plans are either part of a much vaster *koine* englobing the Eastern Iranian lands, the Islamic world, Inner Eurasia, or /and cultural elements which can be transmitted in a non urban context and even, in some cases, in a nomadic one. It would be equally justified to stress the continuity between the tribes roaming the area in the Vth century, the hordes of Gengis Khan and the semi-nomad Turkmen who were described by XIXth c. Russian travellers as the inhabitants of the area.

In Europe (and certain other parts of the world), the landscape is shaped by a superposition of elements dating back to classical antiquity, the middle ages and even the Neolithic period.[19] In Central Asia, the distribution of sites is not indicative of continuity and the apparent long term continuity of irrigation systems [Gardin 1998: 166] is simply due to natural constraints: i.e. the fact that to irrigate a given area of land, water will have to be taken from the same source. Continuity is limited to natural constraints and remains almost unaffected by cultural parameters. City Culture in Central Asia is paradigmatically different

from the Mediterranean or Chinese worlds.

In order to understand the reasons for which Central Asia was usually governed by dynasties of nomadic origin and did not become one of the major centres of City Culture in Eurasia, we must turn towards the geographical setting.

The geographical setting

Regional Isolation

Central Asia is sometimes compared to the great centres of civilisation of the arid belt such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus and Huanghe valleys. Because each of these rivers witnessed the development of major urban civilisations, it is tempting to suppose that similar processes took place in Central Asia and surprising that the nomadic pastoral part played such a strong role in Kingship and City Culture.

Superficially, the comparison may seem valid: the Surkhan Darya river flows through the province, the Amu Darya flows through Bactria and Amu Darya and Syr Darya create a Centralasian "Mesopotamia".

This is of course an illusion: not only are the two rivers separated by the Kyzyl Kum desert – and not by a fertile alluvial plain – but neither the Syr Darya nor the Amu Darya was ever used for large scale irrigation along their middle stretches before the XXth century. Well into the Soviet period, sedentary life in Central Asia was still almost exclusively confined to the oasis which developed either in the endoreic deltas formed by small rivers and streams at their exit from the piedmont or at the end of their course in the sands of the deserts. Balkh, Merv, Bukhara, Khiva, Samarkand, Tashkent are all examples of this. Whilst cities situated along the middle course of the Amu Darya depended on its affluents for their water (the Surkhan Darya for Termez, the Kokcha in the case of Aï Khanum).[20]

The size of these oasis was limited and this in turn limited the size of the cities and probably also the need for complex systems of government. Thus the irrigable area of the upper Surkhan Darya plain is slightly superior to 50 000 hectares, whilst that of the land around Termez barely reaches 15 000 hectares, including the left bank of the Surkhan Darya. The largest area of continuous irrigation in Central Asia, the Middle Zeravshan Valley, with Samarkand at the centre, is far smaller than that of heartlands of cities such as Mesopotamia, the Huang He or the Indus.

City Culture therefore exists in Central Asia in a world of small isolated oasis, most of which have clearly limited potential from a productive point of view and can therefore not sustain populations comparable to other heartlands of cities. (see figure 4)

Agricultural and Pastoral interaction

Each of these irrigated oasis was in close relation with the steppe and mountains surrounding it. Economically it makes sense to combine different modes of exploitation of the landscape so as to maximise use of different ecological niches and potential synergies between approaches. Indeed, nomads and sedentaries can interchange services (for example herds manuring fields after the crops), people and especially products (food, clothing, artefacts, etc.) to the extent that some specialists have spoken about the differentiation between nomads and sedentaries as a kind of social division of work on a vast scale or even as different professional groups coexisting within the same economic system [Digard 1990: 101].

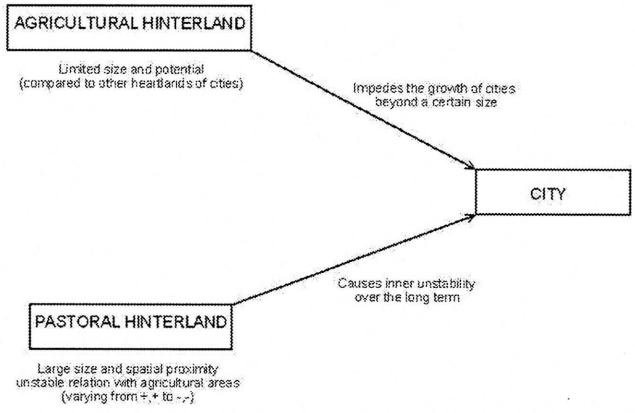

Fig. 4 Inner Structure of a typical Central Asian oasis, showing the inner instability and the limited potential of cities.

The variety of landscapes thus encourages the coexistence of pastoralism and agriculture and this seems to have been the norm during most periods in the Surkhan Darya. From Quintus Curcius who speaks of fields and pastures, deserts and orchards (vii, 4, 26-31) to the *Hudud al-'Alam* (25.25 and 26.10-11) that describes the sedentary peasants and nomadic tribes that cohabitated within Chaghanian, to post-mongol texts, which mention nomads and sedentaries as two social groups within the same society [Paul 2001: 289-296].

The problem is that this coexistence, logical from an ecological perspective, does not imply that relations between the different groups were stable. Indeed, in a situation of crisis, conflict will regularly arise. For example, when drought causes the pastoralists to lead their herds towards fields which have yet to be harvested. [Khazanov 1994: 34-36]. Thus, at the end of the XIXth-beginning of the XXth century, the Surkhan Darya province was described by B. Kh. Karmysheva as a region of forced and conflictive coexistence between sedentary, semi-sedentary and nomadic groups, sharing the same ecological niche. [Karmysheva 1976: 145, 164, 190, 263].

As A. M. Khazanov elocuently writes, coexistence between nomads and sedentaries can thus be symbiotic (+,+), commensalist (+,0 or 0, +), predatory (+,– ou –,+) or competitive (–,–) [Khazanov 1994: 36] and this leads to instability over the long term, in particular for City Culture.

This instability is accentuated by the military advantage enjoyed by pastoral nomads right up until the last centuries. This advantage, in a world as divided as Central Asia proved fundamental time and time again throughout history and led to the domination of newly arrived tribal groups over the more ancient settled population throughout Central Asia (see figure 5).

Continentality

Each oasis is thus a world on itself, isolated from the rest, more or less autonomous and linked by a land based network of routes, whose importance weighed on the development of cities and political structures: "Clearly, the extent and nature of communication between oases settlements is of critical importance for an understanding of the economic and political organization within Central Asia" [Lamberg-Karlovsky 1993: 31]

However, unlike in other parts of the world, there is in Central Asia neither sea, nor rivers through which to exchange goods. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya lead nowhere: they are landlocked rivers leading to a landlocked sea beyond which stretches hundreds of kilometres of semi-desertic steppe which progressively gives way to the vast grasslands of Eurasia. And the Great Silk Road may have been

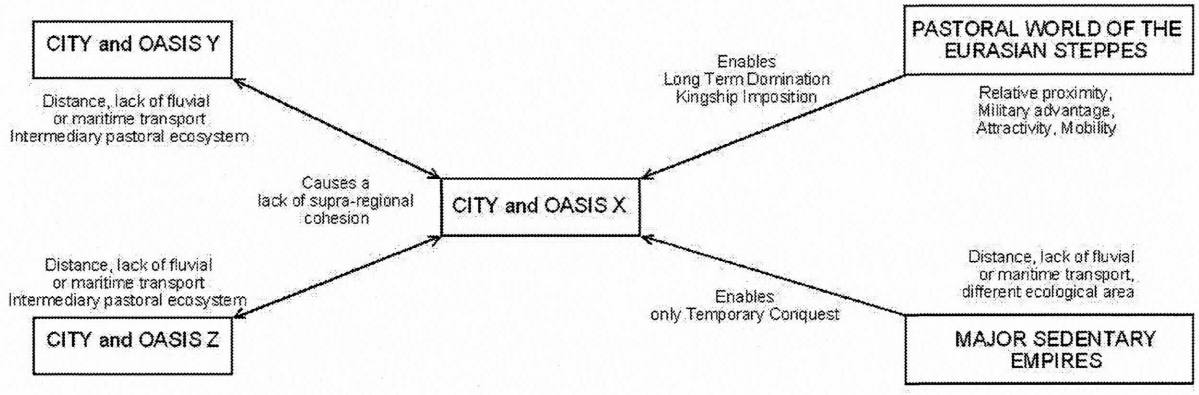

Fig. 5 Regional structure of Southern Central Asia, showing the lack of regional cohesion and the influence of the Nomadic World on City Culture and Kingship.

fundamental from a cultural and technological perspective but it did not result in an influx of products as is attested by the extremely few imported objects found in Central Asia (in the Surkhan Darya only a couple of roman coins and a few objects of uncertain provenance have been found), especially when compared to southern India, Yemen or other areas with access to the sea.[21]

As Braudel writes : "For centuries (...), continentality was an obstacle, continentality meant inferiority" [Braudel 1969: 53].

Conclusions

Terms such as "City", "Kingship" or "City Culture" are loaded with strong implicit meaning. When we use these terms in a southern Central Asian context we necessarily do so through the prism of the places where these terms have been defined, that is major urban centres such as the Mediterranean World or China.

Cities such as Greek Aï Khanum, Kushan Termez, Sogdian Samarkand, Samanid Bukhara or Soviet Tashkent, cannot be compared in terms of size or urban complexity with Athens, Rome, Chang'an, Baghdad or Shanghai and yet, as we have just seen, these cities are exceptional in the history of Central Asia. Most of the time, cities were either rural in structure and small in population or simply inexistent.

Viewed from an urban perspective, the long term history of City Culture in Central Asia is therefore a failure: failure to develop sufficient size and complexity, failure to be sustainable or to resist exterior and interior instability, failure to integrate at a supra-regional level and most importantly failure to definitively pass from a Kinship based Tribal System to a Kingship based Urban State.

Viewed from southern Central Asia however, cities and kings are just two actors in a complex world caught between the "Eurasian steppes" and the great "urban civilisations". Their relationship with the rest of the main other actors, is expressed in figure 4 and figure 5.

City Culture in Central Asia can only emerge within irrigated agricultural oasis but these are relatively few, small and isolated. Not only is any given city limited in size by its agricultural hinterland, but it entertains a complex relation with its pastoral hinterland. Furthermore, supra-regional cohesion is fragile

due to the different oasis being isolated and badly communicated. The development of City Culture is therefore exposed to strong internal limits.

The main external factor is doubtless, the proximity of the Eurasian steppes and the pastoral nomadism and tribal structures associated with this world. Like China, southern Central Asia is in direct contact with the steppe world, however unlike China, much of southern Central Asia is suited to a pastoral nomadic lifestyle.

In his analysis of China and Inner Asia, T. Barfield defined four interactive spheres of which the two extremes were the Eurasian steppe sphere, marked by seasonal migrations, extensive economy, low population density and tribal political organisation and Chinese society with sedentary lifestyle, intensive irrigated agriculture, high population density, and a centralized bureaucratic government [Barfield 1991: 29]. Southern Central Asia, fits in with his definition of Turkestan, which incorporates a number of different ecological zones adapted to either/both nomadic or/and sedentary people.

Southern Central Asia can therefore be conquered and controlled by rulers coming from either the steppes or an urban world, it can give birth to tribal confederations and urban centres. However, when it is not under the control of an exterior dynasty such as the Mongols or the Greeks, it will tend to find a balance somewhere between the two extremes. Like the relation between nomads and sedentaries, this will be a deeply unstable state of equilibrium, which can pass rapidly and easily from one extreme to another.

To return to our initial questions, Mohammad Alim Khan based his legitimacy on his distant pastoral nomadic past because this was the basic legitimising factor throughout history in Central Asia: urban kings were an exception, not the rule, Kingship never forgot the steppe. The city of Termez, which he avoided on his flight South had little to do with the Early Islamic culturally Persian Termez of 1220 nor with the great Buddhist centre of the Kushan period. This is because the cities of Central Asia are not characterised by a continuous history of aggregation, ever increasing urban complexity and long term continuity – the steppe never forgot them for long enough.

The cities and kings of Central Asia need to be considered within their environment as complex experiences of an integrative approach to environmental constraints, internal and the external factors.

One of the best description of these cities was written by N. I. Vavilov in the XIXth c.: "The town [of Herat] has merged with the fields ; minarets, mosques, and cemetaries have become intermingled with the orchards and fields. The walled townproper represents an insignificant area. (...). The entire oasis represents one continuous cultivated region ; one village adjoins the next, creating as it were one whole, solid, huge town-orchard and town-field" (N. I. Vavilov cited in [Subtelny 1993: 183]). I would go further and add that the town-orchard and town-field melt into the steppe-herds and mountain-pastures, creating a complex, interrelated and unstable space in which cities appeared, grew and disappeared time and time again.

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[1] The Surkhan Darya province is situated in southern Uzbekistan and considered part of North Western Bactria from a historico-cultural perspective (which does not necessarily imply that it was so from a political perspective). The northern part of the province was systematically surveyed by the author of this article. [Stride 2005]

[2] al-Umari states that the Yasa was maintained in the Chaghatai Khanate [Amitai-Preiss 1996: 5], Juwayni I, 29, I, 227 and Rashid al-Din add that Chaghatai was chosen by his father to administer and enforce the Yasa [Morgan 1986: 170-171]. Ibn Battuta relates that the Chaghatai sultan Tarmashirin was indeed deposed for infringing a Yasa regulation about the holding of an annual feast [Morgan 1986: 173]

[3] [Morgan 1986: 173] writes: "The Yasa remained, apparently, in the Mongol consciousness as a symbol of the Shamanist, primitive, simple and perhaps (to some) ' purer ' past, which had gradually been eroded by conquest and world-empire"

[4] Rashid al-Din describes such a ritual, undertaken in traditional Mongol manner by Ghazan Khan despite his conversion to

Islam [Amitai-Preiss 1996: 9] and Ibn Taymiyya insists that traditional beliefs were more important to the Mongols than Islam. (idem: 10)

[5] Babur, for example, considered that the attributes of sovereignty were calligraphy, music and poetry combined with an authentic Timurid lineage. He distinguishes himself from simple steppe nomads (even within his own family) and ridiculises them as "having never entered a civilised country" but expresses his nostalgia for Central Asia [Dale: 641, 657-658]. As Dale says, this is similar to many accultured nomad rulers such as the aging, sinicised Kangxi emperor's desire to escape Beijing and go hunting in the fine climate of the Mongolian regions.

[6] This view is accepted by most scholars (for example [Wolsky 1993]) although some authors have suggested it may be partly exaggerated [Hauser 2005].

[7] End IIIrd-mid Ist millennium BCE and IIIrd-IVth c. CE [Masson 1974: 6]

[8] IIIrd-IInd millennium BCE (ancient), first half of Ist millennium (archaic) et IVth c. BCE.-IVth c. CE (antique) [Askarov, Burjakov *et alii* 1988]

[9] End IIIrd millennium (proto-cities of Altyn Depe and Namazga Depe), Early Iron Age (El'ken Depe II ; Jaz I ; Dal' verzin/Ferghana ; etc.), VIth-IVth c. BCE and IIIrd c. BCE-IV/Vth c. CE [Zadneprovskij 1995: 156-159]

[10] For example : first half of IInd millennium -beginning Ist millennium BCE (oldest urbanisation), beginning Ist millennium-IVth c. BCE (formative cities), IIIrd c. BCE-IIIrd c. (developed cities of the Antique period), second half IIIrd-first half Vth c. (transition phase cities), second half Vth-scond half VIIIth c. (Early Medieval cities) according to [Rtveladze 1986] or : proto-cities followed by major developments at the end of the IInd-first third Ist millennium BCE, VIth-IVth c. BCE, IVth-IIth c. BCE and Ist c. BCE-IVth c. according to [Litvinskij, Sedov 1983].

[11] Protocities (First half-mid IInd millennium BCE), oldest urban settlements (end IInd-first third Ist millennium BCE), formation of the antique city (VIth-IVth c. BCE), dualism in city structure and beginning of the synthesis between Centralasian and Hellenistic types, apogee of the Antique city (Ist c. BCE-IIIrd/IVth c.) and formation and development of the Early Medieval city (Vth-VIIth c.) [Litvinskij 1999: 183-184]

[12] Settlements of the Bronze Age BMAC culture (Bactro-Margian Archaeological Complex) have sometimes been classified as cities, however most specialist consider that this qualification is not valid (for example Francfort 1996, p.69). In the Surkhan Darya province, recent excavations by a German-Uzbek archaeological team at Dzharkutan have shown the absence of fortification walls, the discontinuous nature of the settlement and the presence of tombs throughout the settled area. This would appear to confirm that these sites cannot be considered urban and that C. C. Lamberg Karlovsky's suggestion that they could be comparable to the XIXth century feodal forts of local strong men in Afghanistan is more appropriate [Lamberg-Karlovsky 1994].

[13] Kyzyl Tepe is qualified by most authors as a proto-city, however it is relatively small (16 hectares) and the only important architectural evidence is currently the fortification wall surrounding the lower city, the inside of which appears devoid of constructions [Pugachenkova 1989: 8-9]. Furthermore, it is situated in a small peripheral territory, not in a major alluvial valley and the irrigable land around the site is extremely reduced (250 hectares according to the excavator [Sagdullaev 1987: 8], which would suggest a maximal population of well under 500 people.

[14] "The permanent residence which Cyrus erected at Pasargadae still retains the character of a settlement of a nomad chief" [Frankfort 1954: 216] (but see [Boucharlat, Benech 2002]). "Whilst beyond the ceremonial terrace, most of Persepolis was never densely occupied and the terrace itself was not finished at the death of Darius and could not have hosted all activities linked to the administration of the empire" [Boucharlat 1997: 222].

[15] Languages and scripts used at Termez during the Kushan period include Brahmi, Bactrian (Aramaic), Bactrian (Greek), Kharoshṭhi and Middle Persian.

[16] Most references to continuity of urban culture are not based on any quantifiable data. S. Khmel'nitskij, for example, claims that new work contradicts the idea of urban crisis but he goes on to show how Early medieval cities emerge around isolated castles, which then become the nucleus of the new settlement, thus denying any link between these cities and Kushan cities [Khmel'nitskij 2001: 120].

[17] This is probably due to Dzhungar pressure on the Kazakhs which forced these to move, pushing in turn other people like the Qungrats in front of them.

[18] The third brigade of the Amu Darya installed itself here on the 12th of December 1894 [Shejko 1989 : 122]

[19] According to some sources, "One starts to perceive the importance of the creation of the parcel map of the land in the Neolithic period" [*Les formes du paysage* 1996: 8], however even if this is questionable, noone would deny the influence of the Roman parcel plan and settlement distribution on our contemporary world.

[20] This has been clearly proven for the Dasht-i Qala plain, where Aï Khanum, is situated thanks to analysis of the sediments deposited by ancient canals and for Termez because of the depth at which the river runs compared to the main terrace and the difficulty of canalising the water from the Amu Darya. Indeed, canalising the Amu Darya is so difficult that even in 1925 a hydraulic engineer could still write in a specialised review that the river was impossible to regulate [Syromjatnikov 1925: 83].

[21] In Southern India there are 112 sites in which 5400 *denarii* and 800 aurei have been found, tamil texts include references to ships and houses of foreign merchants, etc. [*Ancient Rome and India* 1994 : 251-256]

南中央アジアにおける王権と都市

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中央アジアは，コントラストの地，偉大な都市のゆりかごと遊牧帝国のゆりかご，王の土地と部族の土地，灌漑農耕地の国と馬の国と考えられている。これらの世界は相いれない対極としてみられることはないものの，いまだに二つの別世界とみられている。すなわち，南中央アジアは基本的に王権と都市に適した土地であり，そのため古代の中央都市たちに匹敵すると見なされているのにたいし，北中央アジアがユーラシアステップの遊牧部族の圏域とみなされているのである。

本論では，南中央アジアの一地域を支配した主な王朝たちの起源と，彼等の正当性の根拠をとりあげる。そしてこの土地における都市文化の長期的進化を解析し，次に都市と王たちが直面した問題を把握するためにその地理的制約を検討する。結論として，都市文化の継続と複雑化と王権の都市的な性質は，中国や地中海に匹敵するほどのレベルに到らなかったと論じ，これはまた牧畜遊牧的世界との絶え間ない交流と地理的制約に起因すると論じる。