

The State and the Military – a Nomadic Perspective

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Statehood is one of the problems which immediately come to mind when the interaction of pastoralists and sedentary societies is the issue. Interaction, interdependency and mutual adaptations, acculturations and so on between nomads and settled people are indeed at the center of our common research program, and it is thus only natural that one of the seminars to be held in the framework of this program should deal with statehood.¹

I must of necessity start with a series of qualifications. The object of this paper is to present some of the perspectives of research; it would be overly ambitious to propose a state-of-the-art paper. The focus of the paper is on Central Asia², the Middle East coming in now and then. But since the Middle East presents an altogether different picture, even the questions asked from a Central Asian perspective may not hold any value for the Middle East. Even if the paper draws on debates in social anthropology, it is historical in outlook and does not aim at interfering with the ongoing debate surrounding issues of tribe and state in anthropology. However, the paper does not proceed chronologically, and neither are different cases discussed one after the other; on the contrary, it tries to show some of the ways in which nomadic states and nomadic armies worked.

There is another restriction: I am dealing chiefly with the Mongol and post-Mongol periods, 13th through 17th centuries. Thus, the period when modern

¹ This paper is a very much revised version of my contribution to the seminar „Statehood and the Military“, held under the auspices of the *Sonderforschungsbereich* „Differenz und Integration“ in Halle, April 29–30, 2002. I want to thank all those who generously accepted to discuss earlier drafts with me: Anke von Kügelgen (Bern), Michael Kemper (Bochum), and the participants in more than one *Sonderforschungsbereich* meeting: Ulrike Berndt, Kurt Franz, Wolfgang Holzwarth, Doris Mir Ghaffari, Oliver Schmitt, Irene Schneider. Special thanks to Anatoly Khazanov whose kindness and expertise have encouraged me to once more rework the paper. Needless to say, all mistakes and inaccuracies are mine.

² In this paper, I use a (very) broad definition of Central Asia, which includes much of the arid zones of the Eurasian continent.

states (using firearms and standing armies) definitely got the upper hand in their dealings with steppe and desert is not part of my considerations. This occurred at different moments in different regions, but the process was well under way in the 18th century at latest. On the other hand, even if some examples are taken from ancient and early medieval times, these periods are not within the scope of this paper.

The central question is whether nomadic states and armies are an extension of the primary forms of social organization in most nomadic contexts, that is, of tribalism. But before the implications of the questions can be shown and before it can be fleshed out, two preliminary notes seem advisable. The first is on concepts and definitions, the second on general ecological and economic preconditions for statehood. It will be noted that larger definitions are preferred throughout; one of the reasons is that both the Great Steppe and the “mixed region” are considered, and this broader perspective should not be hampered by too rigid definitions.

Since it seems that nomadic statehood in all but very exceptional cases emerges in close interaction with settled economic structures, one of the central questions to be studied is the relationship of extraction and redistribution of resources. While the extraction mechanisms can only be hinted at in this paper, it will be argued that on the expenditure side, the forms of redistribution are instrumental in shaping nomadic statehood.

The next step in the analysis concerns the military structures in a stricter sense. In both ecological areas, the Great Steppe and the “mixed zone”, two fundamental forms seem to be extant. Whereas the tribal host is a result of the diffusion of military skills within society (soldiering not having emerged yet as a specialized occupation within the division of labor), the warband is a typically non-tribal fighting force. The paper then argues that nomadic statehood is more closely linked to the warband type of military organization than with the tribal host.

Concepts

Statehood among pastoralist nomads has been an issue for a long time. Most publications dealing with the topic offer a definition of the central concepts, the state, the tribe (as the most obvious form of social organization not tied to the state) and pastoralist nomadism, before the authors get into the subject matter. I am quite convinced that most of the definitions given are useful in their context. In my view, the interaction between sedentary states and their

pastoralist counterparts, whether states, empires or chiefdoms, is best analyzed if we assume that statehood should perhaps be seen as a process, it does not come into being in a kind of qualitative leap (or parthenogenesis), but evolves slowly, and of course there are degrees within its evolution. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that some specialists propose two definitions of the state, a minimalist and an extended one. In the minimalist definition, states are “social organizations capable of exerting a *considerable degree of power* [...] over *large numbers of people, and for sustained periods*”.³ Even in this minimalist understanding, states are “distinguished from chiefdoms by their ability to prevent fission along tribal lines”.⁴ This implies a degree of inequality (in the distribution of power) not present in chiefdoms. Other definitions stress the principle of territory, which characterizes all states as distinct from other forms of social organization; power is often personal, whereas statehood always belongs to the realm of territoriality.⁵ The extended definitions add more features, such as “large surpluses controlled by the state, a clearly marked-out territory, urbanization, a complex division of labour” and so on, ending up with the often quoted state monopoly of legitimate means of coercion (Weber).⁶ Lewis rightly argues that extended definitions tend to mix up the problem; he proposes to return to the core issue, that is, to “the presence and/ or absence of regularized *rule*”.⁷ That there have to be degrees seems quite commonsensical, but was stressed also by specialists.⁸ Finer, therefore, also bases his monumental study on a twofold definition of the state.⁹

³ Christian, “State Formation”, 53, (emphasis in the original); other authors including Khazanov, *Nomads and the outside world* and Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, see also the debate: Cohen, “Evolution, Fission, and the Early State”. Cohen argues that statehood begins where there is an organism that is capable of preventing fission or the splitting up of a great unit into smaller ones which are similar in most respects to the bigger one (though not in size, of course).

⁵ *Istorija Kazakhstana*, 100–101.

⁶ Weber’s well-known postulate that a state should be able not only to claim, but also to enforce its monopoly of the legitimate use of violence in a given territory is evidently a maximalist one, seldom if ever met with in pre-modern societies, and it has to be disregarded for the purposes of this study. Tapper’s definition of statehood also has proved very influential: „The state, finally, is a territorially-bounded polity [...] with a centralized government and a monopoly of legitimate force, usually including within its bounds different social classes and ethnic/ cultural groups“ (Tapper, “Introduction”, 10).

⁷ Lewis, “Warfare”, 209, emphasis in the original.

⁸ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, 131, and Bradburd, “Influence”.

⁹ Finer, *History*, 2–3; Finer gives a set of five characteristics, the first three are general, the other two apply only to modern states (and even there, only partly). These are: „1. They [states] are territorially defined populations each recognizing a common paramount organ of government. 2. This organ is served by specialized personnel; a civil service, to carry out

Tribes, then, are frequently seen as the opposite of the state. Where there is no state, there are tribes; where there are tribes, there is no state – to put it extremely. Tribes are groups which use a kinship-based vocabulary to organize their social relations; they are not necessarily based on real or fictitious kinship, and especially in the Iranian context, examples abound where neither is the case – people belonging to a tribal group are quite conscious that they are not related by ties of blood, and they do not bother to “create” such ties.¹⁰ Thus, there seems to be no innate dichotomy between tribes and the state.

Modes of organization along kinship lines include the “segmentary lineage organization” which is often seen as a determining factor in “tribal” politics. Closer kin stand together against more remote relations, and all stand together against outsiders.¹¹ Recently, it has been proposed to regard the segmentary lineage as a discursive mode of kinship rules with no real links to political behavior.¹²

The question is whether the social organization of Central Asian (and for that matter, Middle Eastern and North African) nomads is in any meaningful way the basis for their political organization, or, whether nomadic states extant in these areas can be said to be more or less the extension of the social organization attributed to the nomads who made up the (military) manpower of

decisions and a military service to back these by force where necessary and to protect the association from similarly constituted associations. 3. The state so characterized is recognized by other similarly constituted states as independent in its action on its territorially defined – and hence confined – population, that is, on its subjects. This recognition constitutes what we would today call its ‘sovereignty’.“ [...] „4. Ideally at least, but to a large extent in practice also, the population of the state forms a community of feeling – a *Gemeinschaft* based on self-consciousness of a common nationality. 5. Ideally at least, and again to a large extent in practice, the population forms a community in the sense that its members mutually participate in distributing and sharing duties and benefits.“ Finer, for all his elaboration, decides to leave „tribes“ alone; it seems that for him, „tribes“ are the non-state entity *par excellence*.

¹⁰ In this, I follow Tapper’s definition (Tapper, “Introduction”, 10–11), and see the discussion in Tapper, *Frontier nomads*, 10–18. Even if the situation is somewhat different in Transoxiana and beyond, many of the points Tapper makes seem to be relevant outside Iran also. In his discussion of „the tribe and the state“, Tapper stresses that tribes and states are perhaps best seen as ideal types in the Weberian fashion, and he states that neither can exist in its pure forms. – Rowton, “Enclosed Nomadism” also points to the irrelevance of biological kinship in the process of forming tribes.

¹¹ Lindholm, *Islamic Middle East*, 57. Lindholm states that this model is typical of the Middle East (and thus for Arab tribalism), but not for Turkic peoples. The only example from the Iranian and Turkic world he adduces is the Ottoman Empire, and the corresponding chapter is therefore named „The Ottoman exception“ (120–6) where the Mongol roots of the early Ottomans are left aside (see Lindner, “How Mongol?”).

¹² Baştuğ (“Segmentary lineage system” and “Tribe, Confederation and State”), and Kuper (*Invention*).

these states. More closely to military history, it has to be asked in this context whether, or to which extent, the military organization of nomads is an extension of their social organization, and to put it more bluntly, to which extent nomadic armies are “tribal” in the sense that groups defining themselves as kin (or using kinship-based vocabulary to structure their social relations) form the military units as well.

What, then, is a nomadic state? It certainly is not a state whose population is made up more or less entirely of nomads; this would be too narrow. Neither could it be a state where nomads live in great numbers. In this paper, a “nomadic state” is a state ruled by people (this includes the ruling family as well as military and civilian elites) with a clear nomadic tradition in their culture (which includes a nomadic lifestyle), and an army made up mostly of such people. Thus, it is clear that mixed systems must be expected. For the purposes of this paper, though, a state based on an economy which includes agriculture, crafts, trade and so on as well as mobile pastoralism will still fall within the “nomadic state” as long as its rulers and at least a significant part of the ruling elite (in most cases, the military part) continue to adhere to a nomadic lifestyle.¹³ This definition is entirely pragmatic and does not aim at solving the immense conceptual problems inherent in the combination of the two terms “nomadic” and “state”. I am well aware that many will find the definition much too broad, but I find it easier to work from a concept which includes at least part of the “mixed” cases.

To continue with definitions: In the context of this paper, people are called “nomadic” who, in a given period of time, rely at least for a significant part on mobile stockbreeding for their livelihood (with seasonal movements between, as a rule, summer and winter pastures), and interact (sometimes very closely) with settled people; the definition thus includes all kinds of semi- and other not fully nomadic people.¹⁴ A “nomadic army”, last but not least, is an army made up of nomads; only in some cases is the nomadic army itself nomadizing (that

¹³ The importance of mixed economies can hardly be overstated. See Noonan for a well-argued case study (Khazars), and multiple examples in Kychanov.

¹⁴ In the Central Asian as well as the Iranian contexts, mixed forms of gaining a living are so frequent that narrower definitions make the concept (nomad) hard to handle indeed. Another difficulty lies in the fact that it can be very difficult to decide whether a group named in a written source was in any way (let alone the full way) nomadic. This is the case in at least Turki and Persian, see Holzwarth (“Nomaden und Sesshafte”) and Paul (“Nomaden”). The focus is on mobile pastoralism, excluding other forms of mobile economics and lifestyles. – It will be noted that the choice of broader, inclusive definition continues here.

is, taking the womenfolk with it as well as the flocks).¹⁵ This qualification has to be made since for short raids or in cases where speed was decisive, the armies could not be “nomadizing” when on campaign.

Nomads and warriors

Since nomadic pastoralists are generally credited with overwhelming military skills, particularly in Central Asia, and since they indeed seem to have had an advantage over settled states and their armies for quite a long time in the very long history of their interaction, it is not surprising that the military aspect is thought to be central.¹⁶ Moreover, there is an ongoing debate about the place and function of the military in the formation of European states, a debate which has spilled over into the field of Middle Eastern and Central Asian studies during the last decade or so; but for the *problématique* of nomad-sedentary interaction and their military dealings the question has not yet been posed in a sufficiently systematic fashion.¹⁷

It should perhaps be stressed from the start that nomadic pastoralists are not at all alike. This also applies to their military skills. First of all, not all animals herded make acceptable mounts. You cannot ride sheep and goats, and even though you can ride oxen, there is no point in doing so for military purposes. Small livestock and cattle breeders thus can be expected to behave very differently from horse and camel breeders in military matters.¹⁸ Thus, a first

¹⁵ „Temür’s was a nomad army, accompanied by the wives and children of its soldiers and requiring large quantities of food. To provision it he had to renew his stock by taking animals from the nomads he encountered along the way.“ (Manz, *Rise and rule*, 101–2).

¹⁶ An overview of European as well as Chinese sources stating the superiority of the Central Asian warrior: Sinor, “Inner Asian Warriors”.

¹⁷ Finer’s and Tilly’s propositions on the role of the military in the formation and history of states have proved very influential in European history, but they are also beginning to have an impact on Middle Eastern historians. Fahmy, *Pasha’s Men* and Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare* are good examples. Further contributions include Paul, *State and Military*. Haldon, “Pre-industrial States” also gives some clues. The most important contribution to military history in the nomadic Central Asian context still is Sinor, “Inner Asian Warriors”. Hildinger’s monograph must be disregarded because of its many omissions, mistakes and flaws even in basic matters. The recently published volume in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* (di Cosmo, *Warfare*) offers a good historical survey of the pre-Mongol period (Golden, “War and Warfare”) and a number of case studies, but no theoretical framework. On the whole, historians of military questions in the Central Asian context have been more interested in weaponry and tactics than in the impact of military organization on statehood.

¹⁸ In a way, this corresponds with the distinction between „excluded“ nomads who only rarely come to the sedentary world (whose animals are mainly camels) and „enclosed“ nomads

starting point should be that whoever does not have sufficient numbers of either horses or camels does not count as a military factor (in the regions under study).¹⁹ Hence, ecological problems come to the fore: Regions where horse (or camel) breeding is not possible on a large scale make less probable centers of nomadic states.²⁰ Moreover, ecological factors also determine how man animals, and therefore people, can live in a given area (in the steppe more grass is available, and above all, there is more and better water than in the desert). Where a sedentary region borders on desert and there is next to no transitional climatic zone, that is, no savannah or steppe, the state based on this sedentary region is likely to prevail over its nomadic neighbors for most of its history (the paradigmatic example here being Egypt). Mountainous areas with perennial streams or other surface sources also provide good ecological conditions for stockbreeding. Population density certainly has an influence on the state formation potential a given region holds.

Thus, ecological conditions in regions predominantly used for stockbreeding differ widely, and it stands to reason that some of the ecological factors at work are also important in determining the potential for state formation in a given setting. The Central Asian imperial tradition of great nomadic states is based in present-day Mongolia, where agriculture can be practiced only marginally; moreover, the steppe regions are separated from China proper (south of the Great Wall) by the Gobi desert. Farther west, the landscape known as Eastern Turkistan (Hsinking) is made up of small oases surrounded by inhospitable stretches of semi-desert, but high mountains are not far. The great steppes of what is now Kazakhstan plus the Western Eurasian steppes²¹ offer better

who have to spend a significant part of the year within the sedentary zone. See Rowton, "Enclosed Nomadism". This is, however, a Middle Eastern model. In Central Asia, the part of horses in the herds kept by nomads in the Great Steppe and in the mixed area alike seems to change the picture. Tapper mentions „encapsulated“ nomads (Tapper, "Introduction", 51), but this refers to a certain kind of state politics.

¹⁹ Hill, "The role of the camel and the horse"; Kennedy, *Armies* for camels and horses in the early Islamic armies.

²⁰ The main question in this context is the availability of water; whereas sheep do not have to be watered every day, horses do (Togan). Horses need better water than either sheep or camels (they are more sensitive to salty water, and they tolerate salinity only to a degree comparable to humans). But since horses can move faster than sheep, they can do with more distant sources of water. In Kazakhstan, the percentage of horses in the flocks varied according to the availability of water, going up to 25–35% in the northern steppe and forest-steppe regions on the one hand and in the mountainous areas in the south-east on the other hand, whereas in the south-western regions of the country, their percentage dropped accordingly. The average percentage of horses seems to have been around 13% or one million head (*Istorija Kazakhstana*, 86–88).

²¹ Golden, "War and Warfare" for a definition of the geographical areas.

conditions for stockbreeding, above all along their northern rim where the ratio of horses in the flocks increases, but most of Kazakhstan is plain with only limited potential for horses. However, this did not prevent Kazakhs from keeping as many horses as possible; cultural preferences can be decisive, and no mechanical link from natural conditions to society can be established.

To the south-west of a line running roughly from Khwarazm to the Syr Darya²² an area of mixed economic activities begins²³ with oases surrounded by smaller or larger stretches of steppe or desert, but high mountains often close at hand; this zone continues into modern Afghanistan and Iran and even Anatolia. The mixed ecological nature of this large region is also stressed by its linguistic make-up: Iranian and Turkic languages are to be found in close contact, and bilingualism is frequent even today.²⁴ This region has a great tradition in irrigated agriculture as well as in stockbreeding. The consequences of these ecological features will be discussed below; evidently, in the mixed zone, many people practice mixed economies (mostly combining agriculture and mobile pastoralism), and for many more, close interaction between pastoralists and agriculturalists is the rule.

One of the few things on which most scholars in the field seem to agree is that there is no spontaneous evolution of statehood among pastoralist nomads in neither Central Asia nor the Middle East nor North Africa. Peter Golden states: “There are no examples of the *spontaneous* generation of a state in the steppe”²⁵. The reason is that the sources of surplus production in the steppe are not sufficient for statehood to emerge, at least not in its more elaborate forms. Even those writers who think that nomads can attain economic autarky do not suggest a spontaneous process of state formation on the steppe.²⁶ At any rate, it

²² This geographical borderline is well known, for a description see Bregel, “Turko-Mongol Influences”. See also Khazanov, “Nomads and oases”.

²³ This „mixed zone“ is not quite what Rowton implies with his concept of „enclosed nomadism“, the main difference being the potential for horse breeding in this „mixed zone“.

²⁴ For a history of the ongoing Turkification of this region, see Bregel, “Turko-Mongol Influences” and Khazanov, “Nomads and oases”.

²⁵ Quoted in Christian, “State Formation”, 70, footnote 62; in the same vein: even Krader, “Origin”; above all Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 7 with examples from African and SW Asian cases. The references could easily be multiplied.

²⁶ *Istorija Kazakhstana*, 84: „The most important particular feature [of nomadic stockbreeding] [...] is that it attains an autarkic level of evolution within a framework of small (by number of livestock) economic unities and the private-familiar ownership of herded animals“ (translation mine, JP; „autarkic“ is *samodostatochnyi i samoobespechivaiushchii*). Kychanov also stresses the internal elements in the development of statehood amongst nomads. – In much of recent Russian scholarship, the traces of evolutionist models of the Soviet type still are very visible.

seems that state structures among pastoralists are designed mainly to organize their exchange relationships with the sedentary world, peaceful or otherwise, and that they are shaped in turn by these exchange relationships.²⁷ This is evident from the forms of political organization adopted by Iranian tribes – or forced on them by the central government: they regularly show a higher degree of elaboration towards the outside than they do towards the inside.²⁸ In this vein, tribal leaders function in a way as “mediators between the central state and the ordinary tribesmen”²⁹, and thus, it is altogether possible that tribal leadership was created to serve the needs of the state.³⁰

It is a truism that exchange between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary economies is more important for the nomads than it is for the settled people.³¹ There seem to be at least two levels of exchange, however: one for the ordinary nomads who want access to cereals, products of handicraft needed for the camps (it is well known that camping implements are often produced not by the nomads, but by specialists working for a nomadic market), textiles and so forth; in sum, they need access to frontier markets where they can buy or barter these products for money or for such products as they can offer. On the other hand, rich nomads – the steppe aristocracies, as they are sometimes called – want luxury and prestige goods, but also weapons and armor. These cannot be acquired through frontier markets alone, but getting them presupposes contacts

²⁷ Very clearly stated by Khazanov: “In so far as a nomadic state emerges only if it has specific relations with the outside world and for certain kinds of such relations, it cannot exist for any prolonged period just because of the internal development of the nomadic societies. To exist and maintain stability over a prolonged period a nomadic state must incorporate within itself a part of this outside world in the form of its sedentary population or, either directly or indirectly, it must subjugate that sedentary population.” (Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 296). Even if Khazanov is far from explicitly advocating a conquest paradigm, it is quite obvious that most of his examples for nomadic state formation come from scenarios of conquest. Common to most patterns of interaction is their asymmetry. – The discussion inside Soviet (and today, Russian) scholarship is summarized by Markov (“Social Structure”, with many references to earlier writings); Markov’s article also is indicative of the very particular forms of debate that characterize this scholarship whose main feature still is its isolationism. Markov’s position is summarized in *Istorija Kazachstana*, but ignored by Kradin, “Kochevye”. For an extended version of Markov’s position, see Markov, *Kochevniki*.

²⁸ The higher degrees of organization are often activated only in dealings with the state.

²⁹ Caton, “Anthropological Theories”, 99.

³⁰ Tapper repeatedly made this point: „It would appear that the major tribes and confederacies in Iran were chiefdoms created or fostered by governments, rulers and chiefs themselves [...]“ Tapper, *Frontier nomads*, 16.

³¹ This also seems to hold for mixed economies. Noonan shows that a mixed economy could serve as a basis for a state, which was deeply rooted in nomadic traditions. Thus, his study reinforces the emphasis on interaction models.

with the sedentary state. This is particularly true in the case of China, where the government jealously watched over its monopoly on such commodities.

Since the focus of this paper is on the state and the military, weapons are a central issue. It must be kept in mind that most arms were produced not on the steppe, but in settled contexts.³² There is evidence that soldiers had to bring their own weapons, but of course they did not have to produce them – there were regular markets for this.³³ Therefore it is no wonder that the exportation of iron (in all forms) and weaponry was strictly prohibited by Chinese law.³⁴ Whenever a newcomer in the steppe was trying to build up power, he had to get control of at least one settled center where weapons were produced. In some cases, it is reported that blacksmiths and other craftsmen were made to work day and night in order to deliver what the nomad chief needed.³⁵ It can be surmised that, along with the need for goods to distribute, it was the need for weapons that made nomadic states viable only if they either included sedentary regions or else had sufficiently sustained access to their resources. Thus, supply problems should have occurred much more frequently in the great steppe than in the mixed zone.

Redistribution (expenditure)

Redistribution of wealth, and particularly of prestige objects, is one of the central strategies for creating lasting bonds between ruler and retinue.³⁶ This

³² But metallurgy (even itinerant metallurgy) was not unknown: The Kök Türks are said to have been blacksmiths (doubtlessly producing weaponry and armor), but they were slaves. Golden, “War and Warfare”, 149ff., states that in the pre-Chingisid western steppe regions, armored cavalry was no exception, and that these items were produced in settled regions.

³³ Biran, “Mighty wall”, 65–66, with an enumeration of weapon bazaars functioning in Turkestan in the Mongol period.

³⁴ Jagchid/ Symons, *Peace, War, and Trade*; but the authors also make it clear that these prohibitions were most honored in the breach. Smuggling, and first of all smuggling of iron and weapons, was very widespread indeed (182–185).

³⁵ Biran, “Battle of Heart”, 183. Slave labor was widely employed in the production of weaponry (Golden, “Terminology”) as well as in other fields including agriculture.

³⁶ This is made quite clear in the Qutadgu bilig, where distribution of wealth to the ruler’s retinue is one of his foremost duties. There are some Mongol cases as well: recall the well-known story of Hülägü and the last Abbasid caliph. Other stories show Mongol rulers giving away the treasures which had been accumulated in the state coffers. A return to the „old Mongol” style in Ilkhanid Iran was marked by Arpa Ke’ün when he distributed all the wealth he could find in the state coffers to his troops, Aubin, “*Quriltai* 179 – The caliph Mu’āwiya, in a different context but with similar rules underlying the stories, is praised for

has recently been forcefully stated and exemplified by Togan who defines redistribution as one of the main processes going on between a ruler and his retinue, the retinue including kinsmen.³⁷ Redistribution as a basic feature of royal behavior is contrasted to accumulation, which is seen as the principle on which the administration of sedentary states is founded. Only rarely does a transition from the redistributive mode to the accumulative mode of government take place, and I'd like to take this, when it occurs, as indicative of the transition of a nomadic state to a sedentary one.

It stands to reason that many of the administrative forms present in states founded by nomads are determined by the ways in which this redistribution takes place. There seem to be three basic forms in which such wealth can be distributed: direct redistribution of booty, allocation of territories or the revenues thereof, with varying degrees of central control and accounting, and salaries paid to the army from a central treasury. Forms of statehood depend in a certain way on the degree of control central government or rulers could retain over redistribution processes.

Booty

The basic form seems to be the distribution of booty between the leader of a warband and his followers. Most of the spoils in fact went to the warriors, the leader enjoying little more than a right to a first pick.³⁸ In more regularized contexts, redistribution can take on various forms, the most primordial are

his quality of *hilm* meaning basically his policy of balance between various tribal leaders; this of course included forms of redistribution of wealth.

³⁷ Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation*, 146–148, and see index s. v. “redistribution” and “ülüş”.

³⁸ Timur was known to distribute all the proceeds of pillaging in a number of cases, Aubin (“Comment Tamerlan prenait les villes”, in particular p. 108 with the example of Aleppo). The Turco-Mongol concept of *ölgä* („booty“) is central for the understanding of Central Asian politics. The difference between pillaging and ransom money is that in the latter case, the position of the military leader is enhanced because he is the active subject of redistribution. — The „first pick“ regulation is mentioned for the Khazar leaders, Golden, “War and Warfare”, 142. — Another example is recounted by Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo*, 50: When the Uzbek leader Abu l-Khair conquered Urgench in 1430, he let all the military leaders, those close to the khan and also the ordinary warriors enter the treasure house (of the defeated Timurid governor) in pairs and let them take away from there as much as they could carry. This is a programmatic story — it shows how a steppe ruler ought to act, even if we may have doubts about what really happened.

gifts, banquets and generally speaking largesse³⁹. Therefore, in every “tribal” situation, one of the prime qualities required in a leader is hospitality: he should be able to feed and entertain large numbers of followers. Distribution of booty in most cases is the only form to pay the army, and thus the leader, pretender or ruler cannot afford to hold back more of it than is essential for his personal needs (defined rather narrowly).

Allocation

There are several more complex modes of redistribution; they differ in the degree of control the ruler retains over the goods he is handing over to his followers. One of these modes is more closely related to the concept of booty because it involves an act of partition. It has been stated many a time that in the Turco-Mongolian mind, conquest made the conquered territories the booty of the ruling clan (which, however, was under the obligation to use the newly acquired means to feed the warriors). Often, when territory – or the revenue thereof – was partitioned out, the ruler lost control over the revenue, at least in the long run. Examples are the “appanage system”⁴⁰, which is a result of redistribution of territory. In fact, the partitioning of territory or of income from agriculture seems to have been one of the standard forms of redistribution, whether or not linked to the obligation to perform military service; these forms have been taken for “feudal” by some authors.⁴¹ But the redistribution of booty after conquest need not take the form of allocation; the ruler (or the central government) may either try to build up a central redistribution mechanism, which is responsible of taking in all the revenue and handing it out to who can make a legal claim on it⁴², or there may be some form of accounting for the

³⁹ Tarmashirin Khan, one of the rulers in the ulus Chaghatai, was overthrown partly because he did not arrange the regular banquets, Biran, “Chaghataids and Islam”.

⁴⁰ Dickson, “Uzbek Dynastic Theory”, Woods, *Aqqoyunlu*, McChesney, *Waqf*. Both kinsmen and followers of the ruler or chief or pretender are given appanages, Manz, *Rise and rule*. The much-debated problem of *iqta* can only be evoked here (Cahen, “Evolution”; and in CHIr); it has recently been discussed in a broader framework of reference by Jurrado, *Hidma*. The allocation of districts (or of the revenue thereof) to members of the ruling family or leading military figures is only one form of organizing the relationship between ruler and retinue. See also Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*.

⁴¹ This is the case with most of Soviet scholarship. I am not going to dwell upon the „feudalism“ paradigm in Middle Eastern history here.

⁴² In the aftermath of the Mongol conquest, direct allocation of territory was achieved only in the second or even third generation (Jackson, “From *Ulus* to Khanate”).

allocated revenues (reckoned in their tax value).⁴³ But more often than not, the military leaders (members of the ruling family) can enjoy the fruits of the allocated district(s) without any bureaucratic impediments; this of course is one of the inbuilt lines of fission in nomadic states. Armies fielded in such cases tend to be coalitions even if there is a general command.⁴⁴

Salaries

Other forms permit the ruler to keep very close control of the distribution process, and this control in some cases comes close to a monopoly: Besides the partitioning of conquered territory (which evidently presupposes conquest to have taken place and thus accounts only for one scenario of getting wealth into the system), there is the distribution of subsidies or other proceeds of extortionist policies. This can lead to downright salaries the nomadic ruler could offer his retainers; in this case, no conquest needs to have taken place. Other forms of extraction can also yield important amounts of wealth for redistribution.⁴⁵

Salaried armies are an exception on the steppe. The Qarakhitay rulers had one, and for that reason, they did not give appanages to their army leaders, and neither did they allow their soldiers to plunder. The size of this salaried army is given in a range between 80 to 100.000 men, an enormous number. Even in this case, however, equipment and mounts seem to have been provided by the warriors themselves. There is no information about the salaries paid, but it is evident that these put considerable strain on the Qarakhitay administration.⁴⁶

Taxes taken in by the central administration (the ruler, for that matter) are distributed among the warriors. An example for this is provided by the Khazars. Gardīzī writes: “Every year, the Khazars take in something from the wealth of the Muslims, according to everybody’s fortune [...] The Shād

⁴³ This seems to be what the Great Seljuqs (and Niẓām al-mulk) were after.

⁴⁴ A striking example is the siege of Herat by the Uzbeks in the late 16th century (McChesney, “Conquest”).

⁴⁵ This point is made forcefully by Barfield who stresses that the Mongol conquest of China in fact was a unique case and by no means typical of steppe policies towards China. Even if this may have to be qualified, the argument is thought-provoking, and it is quite obvious that downright conquest sometimes was not a good affair, and that nomadic leaders were quite conscious of that.

⁴⁶ Biran, “Mighty wall”, 54, 55, 63–4. It has to remain open whether these salaries were paid on a regular basis.

[Khazar title] takes the taxes [*kharāj*] himself and distributes them among the army". This can be taken to mean "salaries", but it also shows how salaries originate out of booty.⁴⁷ In fact, raids are mentioned immediately after this form of salary. The Khazars, it should be remembered, ruled over a country with a mixed economy.

Salaries also can stem from subsidies paid to nomadic rulers by neighboring sedentary states, whether or not they are linked to defined services to be performed by the recipients; in every case, the debtors imply that they be spared raids or even, that the nomadic rulers, together with their retinues, fight other nomads.

Extraction mechanisms

One of the main goals of a chief or ruler (including would-be rulers) thus should be to gain and maintain access to prestige goods such as silk,⁴⁸ precious metals, choice weapons and horse furniture, jewelry, titles and even manuscript books, but also other, less spectacular goods needed for consumption on a daily basis: rice and other cereals, metal goods, garments, utensils and the like, in short, everything that cannot be produced on the steppe. Methods to acquire them vary from trade⁴⁹ to raids and downright conquest. The situation, thus, could be called an extortionist market strategy. In another set of circumstances, rulers can obtain these goods by offering services; military or otherwise. The terms of trade as well as the price for services are matters of political negotiation, in this, the military might of both parts, the sedentary state or empire, and the nomadic warriors, are decisive factors in defining the bargaining power of either side.⁵⁰ In all of these scenarios, surplus from the sedentary world is being transferred not to the nomads in general, but to a small group (ultimately one person) who holds power in the steppe and uses this surplus in order to further build up power; the leading group or man thus gets enough wealth to start the redistribution process essential for state

⁴⁷ Gardīzi/ Ḥabibi, *Zain al-ahbār*, 272; Göckenjan/ Zimonyi, *Ġayhānī-Tradition*, 167, 54; Golden, "War and Warfare", 143.

⁴⁸ Allsen, *Commodity and exchange*.

⁴⁹ Trade may be on unequal terms, and under the conditions of state monopolies on exportation and importation it generally is; the terms of trade are a more or less direct expression of the power relations between the two trading „partners“. A good example is the Chinese horse trade during the Tang period, see Beckwith, "Impact".

⁵⁰ Barfield argues against Khazanov in *Perilous Frontier*, 7.

formation, and of course, to keep it going. Unlike conquest, extortionist market strategies do not have to be short lived, but can last for generations, if not for centuries (as Barfield has shown), and they do not have to transform the nomadic society to the point that it has to give up nomadism.

At any rate, military power is required to gain and maintain access to prestige and common goods, even in the case of trade. Sedentary states were not always prepared to allow trade with the outlying nomads, and even if the Chinese reluctance concerning trade may be more of a Confucian ideological figure, this figure nevertheless may well have been an obstacle to the development of commercial links.⁵¹ Because of this very particular situation, China may have been exceptional in its emphasis on frontier markets, the opening of which was a continuous issue between China and the northern nomads, leading to conflict to a degree unknown in other regions.⁵² However, trade is not the focus of this paper even if it most probably is the “normal” form by which pastoralists extracted surplus from sedentary societies.

It is not altogether clear whether nomads paid taxes to nomad rulers. No Kazakh ever seems to have paid any taxes to a Kazakh overlord; they clearly preferred departing from such a khan to submitting. In the mixed zone, however, taxation of nomads was much more frequent. For Iran after the Safavid period, there is good reason to think that nomads were taxed, but it does not seem that the Qajars themselves were. In the Shibaniid khanate, nomads seem to have been taxed as well; but it is not clear how they were related to the conquering groups.⁵³

⁵¹ Beckwith, “Impact” on the horse trade. Jagchid/ Symons, *Peace, War, and Trade* however make it clear that ideology was a very real and powerful factor in the way China defined its policy towards the Northern barbarians (and all other barbarians, including the British).

⁵² Jagchid/ Symons, *Peace, War, and Trade* time and again underline that military confrontation between the nomads from the Northern steppe and the Chinese empire ensued whenever China closed these markets. For other regions, I only have the example of Shibani Khan denying his Qazaq enemies trading opportunities along the Syr Darya (see below); Khazanov, *Nomads and the outside world*, 207; Abuseitova, *Kazakhstan*, 82. The source for this is the *Mihmān-nāma-yi Bukhārā* (Khunji). As for Iranian states or Russia, no examples have come to my attention. It should be kept in mind that commercial restrictions would be very hard to implement in the mixed ecological zone, where there is no real frontier that could be compared to the Mongol-Chinese one. In the case of the Qazaqs, such restrictions were an option because the Qazaqs would have difficulties in replacing the cities along the Syr Darya with any other trading points. Such a situation is hardly imaginable farther into the mixed zone.

⁵³ Paul, “Documents”.

Warband and tribal host

It can be argued that the formation of states, the overthrow of existing dynasties or rulers and the establishment of new ones is no direct outgrowth of “tribalism”⁵⁴: both on the great steppe, distant from sedentary regions, and in the mixed zones there seem to be at least two ingredients to this, both required for a successful outcome. Both are military structures: the warband⁵⁵ and the tribal host; in some cases an intermediate structure appears, the “inner” army as distinct from the “outer” one.

The tribal host is a society in arms; for a number of reasons, pastoral nomads in Eurasia (and particularly horse-breeders) can serve as warriors with practically no additional training. Fighting and soldiering, at this stage, is no profession within the social division of labor. Most nomads, thus, serve as light cavalry, but it has to be noted once again that heavy cavalry (armored, sometimes including horse armor) was by no means exceptional.

The warband is devoid of any territorial attachments, it is an exclusively personally defined group. Tribal attachments can be shown to have existed in some cases, but not always. The leader and his retainers try to get access to any wealth and positions, it is altogether unimportant where this may be.

Bonds created between leaders of warbands and their retainers are often stronger than bonds of kinship, real or fictitious, to the extent that they have been approached to slavery.⁵⁶ In other instances, they can be clad in kinship terms (brotherhood).⁵⁷ They are essentially mutual obligations, services and

⁵⁴ Barfield’s tribal confederacies are in fact non-tribal entities using tribal structures as components; in other contexts the components themselves can be tribal or non-tribal as with the *aymaqs*; Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 27. – Markov (“Social Structure”) very closely links nomadism to tribalism; he dismisses political ambitions („empires“) as short outbursts due to some extraordinary reasons, and he distinguishes a „communal-nomadic“ from a „military-nomadic“ mode. In this, he systematically underemphasizes the duration and importance of states founded by nomads

⁵⁵ Military structures of the warband type seem much less frequent in the Middle East.

⁵⁶ Nizam al-mulk, *Siyāsat-nāma*, 143: „One obedient slave is better than three hundred sons* for they wish for their father’s death, whereas he wishes for his master’s glory“. The whole problem of military slavery in the history of the Islamic Near East is ultimately linked to the fact that created bonds of loyalty (between rulers and retainers, i.e. their „slaves“) were deemed to be more reliable than bonds of kinship. That many rulers were cruelly mistaken in this respect is quite another question. The Iranian conception of slavery did not preclude slave soldiering; in the pre-Islamic Turkic world, however, retainers in the warband could not be slaves. See Golden, “Terminology” for a detailed debate on Turkic terminology of slavery.

⁵⁷ Several types of artificial brotherhood are known, most prominently the Mongol *anda*, „swom brother“.

loyalty are bartered against gifts or a part in the expected spoils, from booty to high offices in the conquest state yet to be formed.⁵⁸ Bonds of personal loyalty thus can antedate the remuneration: People think that a given man will probably come out as a great military leader, and thus they support him in his early stages even if their lot is hardship and dangerous campaigning; the rewards come later.⁵⁹ The band of personal retainers in what is called *qazaqliq* in Central Asian Turki indeed functions and is intended as a nucleus of the later conquest state.⁶⁰ This relationship between ruler or pretender and retainer can take on contractual forms sanctioned by oaths; it is indeed one of the most important instruments for building power.⁶¹ The best example for a conceptual presentation of this relationship is the “Qutadgu Bilig” where it is made very clear that the leadership of the Qarakhanid army was not “tribal”, and that on the other hand, the army was not a slave army, but that “les domestiques formant la garde royale et la ,gent du serail’ des Ilig étaient recrutés parmi les hommes libres se ,commendant’ de leur plein gré au service du Roi”.⁶²

Some leaders of warbands met only with qualified success, and some of them were what we would call robbers; examples for such “rebel” or “robbers” are very frequent indeed. This shows that founding a warband was a generally accepted line to military success, and that many more engaged in it

⁵⁸ The groundbreaking study still is Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*.

⁵⁹ Beatrice Manz has given a brilliant (and detailed) study of the transformation of a warband to an army of conquest; Timur rewarded his early retainers whom he made the pillars of his state alongside with his sons (Manz, *Rise and rule*). Timur’s army, thus, is one of the best-studied examples for an essentially non-tribal army formed by nomads. The armies of the Timurid successor states have received far less attention (and in fact are seriously understudied).

⁶⁰ *Qazaqliq* has been studied by Wolfgang Holzwarth, “Nomaden und Sesshafte”.

⁶¹ Beckwith, “Aspects”, has shown that one of the roots for the guard corps in the service of the Abbasid caliphs lies not in Eastern Iran so much as in the Central Asian worlds. He argues that people called *chākar* are sworn retainers of a given leader, loyal to them including ritual forms of suicide. He links this institution – as indeed seems appropriate – to the German *comitatus*. The Mongol equivalent would be *nöker* (too well known to require references). Scholars from the former Soviet Union, looking for general terms to characterize the relationships between leaders and retainers in the Kazakh context, have turned to the vocabulary of patronage and clientelism (Erofeeva, *Khan Abulkhair*, 48). This offers the advantage of greater flexibility.

⁶² Grignaschi, “Monarchic karakhanide”, 587, with quotations from the original. The Qutadgu Bilig does not discuss slave soldiers. Grignaschi also uses the German *comitatus* as a point of reference. He continues saying that in fact this personal subservience of freeborn nobles to the khan was typical not only for the Qarakhanid army, but also for the civil service. The leaders of the army brought their own warbands to the royal service, and they are admonished in the same terms to be generous (that is, to distribute and redistribute whatever wealth accrued to them).

than the great heroes such as Chingis Khan and Timur who were emulated to an extent which still has to be elucidated.⁶³

In situations where the warband is not the starting point, the ambitious man starting a politico-military career nevertheless does not base his first steps on his closest kin (as should be expected in the segmentary model). He can use factional strife in order to promote his own interest⁶⁴ or he can call in outsiders⁶⁵.

Even in the least “political” contexts, where statehood is fragile and not always present, leaders in the steppe tend to have personal followings made up from both pauperized nomads and sons of noble families. These followings serve as personal bodyguard but also can be used as a kind of task force, they are always available since they do not depart the leader’s person.⁶⁶

The warband and the “inner army”

In the Mongol context, examples for both warband and “inner army” abound. To quote only one: Qaidu’s endeavor to rebuild power for the Ögedeid line was based on troops raised “from every quarter”, and his army later on was modeled on the decimal system.⁶⁷ The extended bodyguard established by Chingis Khan (the *keshig*) also is a case in point.⁶⁸

⁶³ Limited success: Biran, “Mighty wall”, 58–9), Paul, *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler*, 127–8.

⁶⁴ Tapper, “Introduction”, 49: „When a strong leader seeks to control a whole region, he usually gains support first from one bloc alone and forms it into a coalition or confederacy to overcome the other“. A clan united behind a talented leader and working for domination in a given faction seems to be the sole „tribal“ scenario; but for the second step, overcoming the other factions, help from outside seems essential.

⁶⁵ Numerous examples for this in Woods, *Aqqoyunlu*, e.g., 43. See also Manz, *Rise and rule*, who again and again elaborates on this point.

⁶⁶ They are called *tolengut* in Kazakh, Kushkumbaev, *Voennoe delo*, and *Istorija Kazakhstan?*, they can be discerned in almost every case. Tapper states that they tend to come from pauperized nomads. Other personal retainers, maybe more respectable, come from good families, but their lot oscillates between retainer and hostage.

⁶⁷ Biran, *Qaidu*, 81. Biran thinks that there is something pejorative about this (natural enough in the source’s perspective). *Qazaqliq* can certainly be a topos, something a young ambitious man of convenient background has to go through in order to make a career. Thus, there would be nothing despicable about having an army „from every quarter“.

⁶⁸ Extensive presentation of the structure and history of this guard troop in Kychanov, (185–196). Kychanov states that *keshig* troops in Yuan China were paid only after 1281 (*ibid.*, 196), and it is well known that the obligation to perform military service in regions where

There are numerous examples for the warband serving as nucleus for the, army of a nomadic state in the mixed zone and based on a mixed economy. Sometimes the warband seems to have evolved into what some authors suspect of being a standing army. Besides the Qarakhanids (where the main evidence comes from the Qutadgu Bilig and therefore concerns representation rather than the facts behind it), there is the Khazar army as described by Golden. There evidently was an elite force which Golden links to the German *comitatus*⁶⁹; this force is said to have counted either 4000 or 40000 warriors – an impressive number even for the lower one. Moreover, a guard corps is mentioned.⁷⁰

The Khwārazmshāh's army evidently was composed of an "inner" or "sultanic" army and an "outer" one; a case could be made for the "inner" army being the personal army of the sultan, and the outer army the tribal host.⁷¹ The two parts of the army did not act alike during the Mongol invasion; on the contrary, it seems that the Khwārazmian army was divided in its attitude, and that attitudes depended on whether a given detachment belonged to the "inner" or the "outer" army. Buniyatov states that at least part of the "inner army" was made up from slave soldiers (*ghulāms*), an institution the Khwārazmshāhs evidently had taken over from their erstwhile Seljuq overlords.⁷²

Timur's army has been analyzed in detail. Manz has described the process by which Timur set about to transform a tribal host into a more disciplined army. He created a new elite which he put in control of all the important positions he could distribute after his rise to power in 1370, and the larger part of this new ruling group came from his personal following, "serving him from his youthful days of brigandage".⁷³ The essentially non-tribal character of

pastoral nomadism was not or only marginally possible led to massive pauperization of Mongol warriors in China.

⁶⁹ This force is called *bōri* in Turkic, taking up the word for „wolf“ (the totem animal of the Turks). In Arabic sources, the equally Turkic *ṭarkhān* is to be found as well as *ḥāshīya* (retinue) (Golden, "War and Warfare", 142–144).

⁷⁰ Golden ("War and Warfare", 142–144). This guard corps is called *al-ursīya*, the fighters are of Khwārazmian origin, and Golden calls it „the standing army (*jund*) of the King“. – I am not convinced that *jund* has to be rendered by „standing army“. Göckenjan/ Zimonyi, *Ġayhānī-Tradition*, 54) have „Lāris ya“ and translate neutrally: „Er [the Khazar military ruler] zieht an der Spitze von zehntausend Reitern ins Feld, mit solchen, denen er einen festen Sold gezahlt hat, und denen, die er unter den Reichen ausgehoben hat“.

⁷¹ Paul, "Invasion mongole", 39, notes 6 and 9.

⁷² Buniyatov, *Gosudarstvo*, 92. Buniyatov's analysis of the Khwārazmian army clearly is an attempt at showing how „civilized“ they were, the tribal aspect is systematically being played down. – Slaves were apparently not employed as soldiers in a Turkic context, Golden, "Terminology".

⁷³ Manz, *Rise and rule*, 74–5.

Timur's army again implied that Timur was unable to integrate conquered tribes into his army. Timur's own tribe, the Barlas, was reduced to a position of only medium influence after Timur's conquest got under way.

Perhaps it is possible to link the "inner" army, at least in some cases, to the personal following of the ruler, those warriors present in the *ordu*. As is well known, some Ilkhāns were really – not only symbolically – nomadizing together with the *ordu*, and the military following present in the summer camps often was quite impressive.⁷⁴ The ruler's following also can be called by a term like *mawkib-i humāyūn* ("the highest following"), and this also seems to denote the "inner army".⁷⁵ In another source, "the inner ones" are mentioned as an elite fighting force.⁷⁶

The "inner army" is not a tribal structure. It is more like an extended warband. All tribal groups will wish (or be required) to have their representatives in it. Its leadership is at the ruler's orders. It thus is closer to a standing army than any other group present in the sources. Since in some cases, the sources convey the impression that the "inner army" marks the transition towards "sedentary" types, case studies should be rewarding.

Conquest

"Conquest" is used as a generic term for both "real" conquest: a sedentary area is taken over by a nomadic army and administered by a structure centered on the nomadic ruler, whether or not he chooses to reside in the sedentary zone, and for situations where conquest is a threat, but not really undertaken, as well as raiding pursued in a systematic fashion. For the differences do not seem crucial as far as the military format is concerned. The strength of the nomads in either case, whether the aim was extortion (raiding in order to come to a peace treaty which was to put the nomads at an advantage over the sedentary state, e.g., China, regarding terms of trade or subsidies or both) or downright conquest was their mobility and thus their capacity to concentrate their army at any given spot so as to outnumber the defenders.⁷⁷ China was conquered from

⁷⁴ Melville, "Itineraries", on Öljeitü.

⁷⁵ Fadlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunj , *Mihmān-nāma*. Thanks to Ulrike Berndt for detailed information on this subject.

⁷⁶ *Siban Han Divani*, 127. Thanks to Wolfgang Holzwarth for this reference.

⁷⁷ One of the most important questions with regard to the Mongol conquest indeed is how this not very numerous people could succeed in its conquests. But apart from the Mongols, it

the northern steppe only once: by the Mongols.⁷⁸ In the case of Mavarannahr and Iran, conquest occurred much more frequently than it did in China: Mavarannahr was conquered (in Islamic times) by the Qarakhanids (around 1000 C.E.) who chose to come into the region, then by the Qarakhitay (from 1141 C.E. to the Mongol invasion) who stayed outside, by the Mongols (beginning with 1217–8) and by others still, less prominent; the last conquest of (at least parts of) the mixed region was the Uzbek one at the beginning of the 16th century C.E.⁷⁹

The army needed for the conquest of sedentary regions can be analyzed according to Tilly's triangle: loyalty, efficiency and cost.⁸⁰ At the first stage, the candidate for a career in conquest or raiding typically relies on a personal retinue, the first objective often being to gain control over the tribal host and to eliminate its traditional hereditary leaders. This often is the most difficult part of the story.⁸¹ As mentioned above, both Chingis Khan and Timur have started like that⁸² and in the later Timurid period, conflicts between pretenders in the succession crises, which regularly developed after the death of a ruler took on the form of conflicting personal retinues.⁸³ Loyalty is high and highly personal,

has to be asked how the northern steppe region (present-day Mongolia) where the population probably never exceeded one million, could be a military match for China. Chinese armies of course were much greater than the nomadic ones in absolute numbers; the advantage of the nomads was that they could decide when and where to strike. This numerical superiority can be achieved only due to the much higher mobilization ratio („society in arms“) which also implies well diffused fighting skills within the society, and the higher mobility of the army coming.

⁷⁸ This is one of the main results of Barfield's study from outside.

⁷⁹ The Qazaqs never succeeded in taking over significant parts of Mavarannahr for sustained periods of time; they had to make do with some places along the Syr Darya and occasionally Tashkent and parts of the Ferghana valley. – Ancient nomads are outside the scope of this paper, otherwise, more conquests would have had to be enumerated.

⁸⁰ Tilly's theory is very briefly summarized: Almost anybody will try to have the most efficient – depending on the purpose – and most loyal army he can afford. The idea initially seems to go back to Finer (in Tilly, *Formation*) who also has developed his position in extent (*History*). See above for examples in non-European settings. – In contrast to what I first intended, this paper is not a test of Tilly's paradigm in the nomadic context. For this, individual cases would have to be selected.

⁸¹ Khazanov, *Nomads and the outside world*, 235, with reference to the Secret History; see also Manz, *Rise and rule*, for Timur. Beckwith, „Aspects“ gives a general appraisal of personal retinues as the initial core of military careers in the steppe.

⁸² Other examples include Mao-tun, the founder of the Hsiung-nu Empire, Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 33; the story of how he got his retainers to help him kill his fathers is frequently quoted; and Iltirish, the founder of the second Turk Qaganate (Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 147) and elsewhere.

⁸³ This seems to be the high tide of *qazaqliq*. Muḥammad Shibāni Khan also started his career in this way, see Kiliç, „Change“.

efficiency is according to purpose: raids can be carried out easily with such a group; cost is low; the method used for the upkeep of the group is raiding, failure in raiding leads to failure of the undertaking either by military defeat or by defection of the no longer loyal retainers. Retainers at this stage are loyal because they expect their labors to be greatly rewarded in the future. Loyalty thus is not unconditional, it is linked to success.

Once first decisive battles have been won, the whole process becomes self-sustaining, and followers flock to the charismatic leader in large numbers.⁸⁴ Sometimes, thus, this enables him to replace the tribal leaders with his own men. Anyhow, he now can take control of the tribal host. Thus, it is not surprising that sometime strong regimes crumbled in a matter of a couple of years or even months in the face of a new candidate.⁸⁵ The erstwhile warband now begins to function as a leading group in the tribal host. Even in more tribally defined contexts, the confederate tribes can be made to pay for the warband (or the inner army).⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Göckenjan/ Zimonyi, *Ĝayhānī-Tradition*, 120–1, note 127, comments on a passage in Gardīzī (on the Qirqiz): „Meisterhaft schildert G[ardīzī] an dieser Stelle die Entstehung und den Aufstieg eines Nomadenreiches, wie er sich Schritt für Schritt entwickelt: Aufstieg des künftigen Herrschers (Khagan), Anschluss einzelner Gefolgsleute, Erweiterung der Gefolgschaft durch Aufnahme und Versorgung fremder Elemente, Bündnisse mit anderen Fürsten, siegreiche Raubzüge (Beute, Gefangene, Lösegeld), die den Gefolgsleuten Anteil am Gewinn sichern, Schaffung eines Identitätsbewusstseins durch Annahme eines Stammesnamens, Zusammenschluss heterogener Elemente und deren politische Einigung.“ In foundation legends as retold in the sources quoted by Göckenjan (among others, the Orkhon inscriptions, the Secret History of the Mongols and the legends reported by the Arab geographers), it is indeed striking to see that in most cases, the „tribal“ group in question is not traced to a common (even legendary) ancestor, but only its founder is (in some cases), whereas the group itself is explicitly stated to be of mixed origin. One of the Orkhon inscriptions (Köl Tegin, east, line 12–14) reads: „Dadurch, daß der Himmel ihnen Stärke gab, waren die Soldaten meines Vaters, des Kağan, wie Wölfe, und seine Feinde waren wie Schafe. Nachdem sie gehört hatten, daß Eltäriš marschierte, kamen die, die in den Städten lebten, in die Berge, und die in den Bergen lebten, kamen herunter; so kamen sie zusammen und zählten 70. Nachdem er (Eltäriš) Eroberungszüge hierhin und dorthin unternommen hatte, sammelte er seine Leute. Sie alle zusammen zählten 700. Als sie 700 zählten, organisierte und befehligte (mein Vater, der Kağan) das Volk, das die türkischen Einrichtungen, die den Gesetzen meiner Vorfahren entsprachen, aufgegeben hatte“ (quoted from Scharlipp, *Frühe Türken*, 31). There is no hint that the followers of the future *qaghan* are in any way related, by kin or otherwise. This is quite typical of legendary narratives relating the foundation of a nomadic empire.

⁸⁵ As an example, the Turkmen dynasties in 15th-century Iran could be adduced. The rapidity in which former Qara Qoyunlu tribes switched their allegiance to the Aq Qoyunlu is remarkable; and some of these groups are found, one generation or two later, in yet another army of conquest, the Safavid one.

⁸⁶ Woods, *Aqqoyunlu*, 12. This goes back to a complaint presented to Shah Ismā‘il by a military (tribal) leader who „had been required to support additional contingents of imperial

Conquest almost inevitably is the outcome of the successful formation of a supra-tribal structure.⁸⁷ Big armies are needed; light cavalry is superior to infantry and armored cavalry only when very clearly superior numerically.⁸⁸ It should be noted, too, that nomad warriors to some degree also carried armor, and the bow was far from being their only weapon, even if it certainly was their main one.⁸⁹ It goes without saying that not only don't the warriors get any pay, but they have to bring their equipment as well.⁹⁰ Cost, therefore, is extremely low for the ruler and his retinue; the warriors of the tribal host come for honor and for booty.

Anyway, since at this stage the nomad army is a society in arms, the mobilization ratio in nomadic societies is much higher than it can be in agricultural contexts.⁹¹ Loyalty is mixed: the personal retinue is another issue

retinue (*nukar, mulazim*) from his own uncertain financial resources“.

⁸⁷ Christian's Level 6 (Christian, "State Formation", 58) the highest level of political and social organization conceivable in a pastoralist context. There is one caveat about Christian's diagram, however: Confederacies seem to proceed out of „lower“ levels of organization quite naturally, and this is not the case – they are, more often than not, brought into existence by factors external to the tribal world.

⁸⁸ Tactics and weaponry have been studied by Denis Sinor, "Inner Asian Warriors", ecological issues are well served by John M. Smith ("Mongol Society", „Mongol Nomadism" and "Nomads"). There seems to be an ecological borderline which pastoral armies cannot cross as long as they stay pastoral, that is, as long as the army is moving along together with its supply in horses, sheep and so on. This borderline is defined by the availability of pasture and water. See also Aubin, "Réseau". Water (for the animals) seems to be the most important logistic issue in nomadic warfare, more important even than pasture. There is a debate (involving Amitai, "Whither the Ilkhanid Army?", and Smith ("Mongol Nomadism" and "Nomads") in the first place, but also Morgan, "Mongol Armies") surrounding the military implications of Ain Jalut. Smith's point is that whatever the military outcome of that battle, the Mongols could not possibly have stayed on in Syria in force since they would not have been able to tide their horses over the summer. It has to be recalled, however, that in other regions, the Mongols fought very successfully far outside their primordial ecological habitat. – Other nomadic armies have been assessed at similar sizes, e.g., Collins, "Military organization" thinks that the Crimean Tatars really could have put to the field armies in the vicinity of 80 000 men.

⁸⁹ Barfield, *Perilous Frontier* for East Asia, Biran, "Mighty wall", 66, for the Qarakhitay, Collins, "Military organization" for the Crimean Tatars, Golden, "War and Warfare", 149ff. for the pre-Chingisid Pontic steppes; illustrations (miniatures in manuscripts) often show armored and heavily armed cavalymen who, by the same token, also did not use the steppe „pony“ favored by light cavalry and often described in literature. – I cannot tell whether the „inner“ army tended to be better equipped (more like heavy cavalry).

⁹⁰ This could cause hardship for some of them who were too poor to bring the necessary string of horses (up to five) as well as the weapons. Reports of how such an army was mobilized in Collins, "Military organization", Manz, *Rise and rule*, and Kushkumbaev, *Voennoe delo*.

⁹¹ Agriculture begins to suffer as soon as more than a rather limited percentage of men is drafted (this percentage differs but does not exceed one in ten), whereas in nomadic

than the army at large. The tribal host is organized according to two contradictory principles, one of them tribal, the other non-tribal in principle, though not always in practice, the decimal system. Sometimes, when the decimal system is applied, it serves as a screen for the tribal form, and sometimes, bigger tribes fight together (in tens, hundreds, and thousands, to be sure) whereas other tribes are lumped together.⁹² In the long run, new “tribes” may emerge out of the hundreds and thousands of the non-tribal army.⁹³

Tribalism is one of the main obstacles in forming an army of conquest. One of the instruments to overcome tribalism is religious charisma. The Safavids in their early stages are a particular case. The loyalty of the Qizilbash warriors included forms of submission unknown in Turkmen tribal contexts⁹⁴, and clearly the religious component was instrumental in keeping the Safavid state alive during those periods in the 16th century when it was reft by tribal conflicts. Charisma certainly also had its share in the Mongol case – the successful leader is indeed endowed with a heavenly mission⁹⁵. Efficiency is high (pastoral armies more often than not have achieved great victories over sedentary empires), cost still is low: The warriors provide their mounts and weapons and still, they do not get paid.⁹⁶

When the imperial stage is reached, it gets much harder to draw a general picture. The leader now takes control of the extraction mechanisms which were working in the conquered sedentary zone(s). This does not necessarily imply that the leader of the nomadic army becomes the actual ruler of the sedentary region if this means that he gets involved with administration. Perhaps we should make a difference between overlord and actual ruler at this point. Several nomadic leaders have preferred to stay in the steppe.⁹⁷ The extracted

societies, the ratio can rise up to one in four or even more. Later reports affirm that „all“ able-bodied men are supposed to follow the call to arms (Collins for the Crimean Tatars, Kushkumbaev for the Kazakhs), but this certainly carries a note of ideology. *Levée en masse* armies recruited from peasants are no viable alternative at this point because the peasants lack military training.

⁹² Collins, Manz.

⁹³ Manz, Aubin („Ethnogénèse“, „Khanat“, *Emirs*).

⁹⁴ Including being beaten with a stick (and agreeing to the punishment, seeing it as a form of purification), Morton, „*Chub-i țariq* and *qizilbash* ritual“.

⁹⁵ Many examples for this. The heavenly charisma, *qut* in Turkic and *ugur* in Mongolian, is the main quality in the leader’s person enabling him to gain victory over his enemies. The Iranian concept of *farr* or *khwama* is related. On charisma as a precondition for rule, see Kychanov. – Charisma has to be treated very differently in a Middle Eastern context. Thanks to Kurt Franz for this observation.

⁹⁶ Morgan, “Mongol Armies” and others about the Mongol armies; and see above on salaries.

⁹⁷ Golden Horde related to Russia (Ostrowski, *Muscovy*), Qarakhitay related to Transoxiana (Biran, “Mighty wall”), pre-Mongol steppe warriors with respect to China (Barfield,

wealth could then be redistributed to the retainers and army in various forms (see above).

In the times of Chingis Khan, the Mongols did not create new states in the sedentary regions apart from the Mongol empire run jointly by the Chingisid family (whose center was in none of the conquered territories but in Mongolia with its capital of Qaraqorum); the conquered sedentary territories (Northern China, Transoxiana, parts of Iran) were exploited jointly by the ruling clan⁹⁸ who used this wealth in the traditional manner (for retainers); I have mentioned some of the forms above (consumption, appanages, salaries). Thus, the Mongol empire in its first stages can be said to have stayed indeed outside the sedentary world.⁹⁹

Other conquerors entered the conquered territories and finally took control (more or less directly) of the administration. But even here, they more or less consistently tried to keep a distance from the sedentary populations.¹⁰⁰ This was in some cases even consciously decided by nomadic rulers.¹⁰¹ One reason

Perilous Frontier), diverse Turkic groups with respect to Byzantium (Golden, “War and Warfare”). – This idea was first systematically formulated by Kradin, “Kochevye”, but is present already in Khazanov, *Nomads and the outside world*. – The Orkhon inscriptions warn against coming too close to China (as in Scharlipp, *Frühe Türken*, 33) and they explicitly state that „Wenn du im Lande des Ötükän bleibst und Karawanen von hier aussendest, wirst du keine Schwierigkeiten haben (türkisches Volk!). Wenn du in den Ötükän-Bergen bleibst, wirst du ewig leben und die Stämme beherrschen“ (Köl Tegin south, line 8; quoted from Scharlipp, *Frühe Türken*, 35). The admonition stresses the sacred character of the Ötükän mountains, to be sure, but no less does it stress the dangers of entering China.

⁹⁸ Smith, Morgan, Jackson and many others.

⁹⁹ Barfield stresses that Qubilai was the first Mongol ruler to adopt a Chinese dynastic name – a very different behavior from other nomadic conquerors of China (mostly of Manchurian stock) who claimed to be Chinese emperors as soon as possible. For the general history of the Mongol empire and its changing attitudes toward the sedentary world, see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, and Jackson, “From *Ulūs* to Khanate”.

¹⁰⁰ Cases in point are the early Arabs, the Qarakhanids, the Seljuqs, the Mongols in Iran under Hülägü, the Chaghadaids in Transoxiana after 1330 and so on. Even in cases where the warriors were de-pastoralized rather quickly, they were kept together (in the garrison cities *amṣār*); the Arabs were de-pastoralized to a very large extent, but not really de-tribalized; thus, the early Islamic army stopped being a pastoralist army very early; it has to be added that it was only partly pastoralist from the start. This has been analyzed in detail by Kennedy, *Armies* and others. – It is a moot point whether the erstwhile nomadic army stops being nomadic from the moment when its members stop living as pastoralists, that is, that they do not attend their flocks in the seasonal grazing cycle any longer. I think it is too rigid not to presuppose a certain continuity in behavior and value orientation. Central Asian armies tend to become de-tribalized, but not de-nomadized (in the Arab-early Muslim case, it was the other way round).

¹⁰¹ One example are the Orkhon inscriptions quoted note 97, another one are the Mongols in the *ulus* Chaghatay who, during a *quriltay* held in 1269, decided that they would henceforth

for this was that they had learnt that economically, they would be better off if they exploited the sedentary economy in this fashion, but another one seems to have been that they wanted to keep their cultural distinctness.¹⁰²

Only in rare cases was the wealth extracted from the conquered society used to build up a professional salaried army on pre-existing models, and the attempts at doing so were short lived; the only examples that come to my mind are the Seljuqs under the aegis of Nizām al-mulk and the Safavids under ‘Abbas. In both cases, considerations of loyalty led the decision making group to try a model based on personal (as distinct from tribal or, in the Safavid case, religious) loyalty, in both cases, some sort of slave soldiery was proposed as a solution.¹⁰³ In both cases was the slave army organized to provide a counterpoise to the tribal host. For the Khwārazmshāh’s slave army, no detailed study is available. At any rate, the servile status of the inner army seems to be a sure sign of a – at least stylistic – sedentarization. The Ottoman case (fascinating though it is) is beyond the scope of this paper.

Acculturation and synthesis

Thus far, the story is well known. What is considered much less frequently is the question of what becomes of the army of conquest after success. Whereas military skills and duties were well diffused throughout society in the pre-conquest situation, this is not necessarily so after so much wealth gets into the system. Whenever the conquerors decide to enter the sedentary world (for good), they are confronted with the political and administrative heritage of the states they had destroyed. Even if they may choose to reject this heritage, some of it almost certainly resurfaces. This process has been extensively studied in the case of the early Islamic state and its armies.¹⁰⁴ In the Central Asian and Turco-Iranian context, acculturation also took place, albeit probably at a slower pace than had been assumed in earlier scholarship; the result at least in places was some kind of synthesis. The case of Ilkhanid Iran has lately been the

stay in the steppes and mountains (Biran, “Battle”, 183, Stroeva, “Bor’ba”, 208).

¹⁰² This can be sensed in the Orkhon inscriptions, but also in the deeply rooted suspicion of China in Mongol and Turkic sources.

¹⁰³ Another example would of course be the slave ‘Abbāsīd slave army, but the Middle Eastern context cannot be dealt with here. Suffice it to say that the creation of a mamluk-style army has often been the answer to questions of efficiency and loyalty. This concerns not only tribal armies, but also gentry-led peasant armies. The issue of the salaried professional standing army will be taken up below.

¹⁰⁴ Kennedy, *Armies* and many others.

subject of some reflection, with the result that acculturation comes to be seen as a two-sided affair; the Iranian elites adapted themselves to Mongol ways at least as much as vice versa, and it seems likely that Mongols actively took part in the classical “Iranian” field of administration.¹⁰⁵ It stands to reason that during the 14th century at latest, a close symbiosis between Mongol *amirs* and Iranian administrators had developed, and that changes from one group to the other were not infrequent.¹⁰⁶

Beginning with the Seljuqs, a Turco-Iranian cultural pattern emerged which was at least as distant from the earlier Irano-Islamic one as it was from the previous Turkic one; in particular in the mixed zone, thus, a particular brand of cultural codes developed. This included special forms of administration and warfare. For many scholars, these cultural codes are definitely beyond or outside the nomadic sphere; it has been stated above that in this paper, a more inclusive position is tested.

Professional soldiers and standing armies

It may take long before full-time soldiering emerges as a separate activity within the social division of labor (as it did in the early caliphate only a couple of generations after the initial conquest). In the Central Asian context, the “society in arms” is the starting-point, and there is absolutely no difference between the warrior and the “ordinary” nomad in the tribal host. But even in the Central Asian context, professional warriors appeared who either no longer relied on pastoralism for their living, but on revenue extracted from the sedentary economy, or else were separated from their economic base and no longer tended to their flocks themselves. Both groups, thus, stopped being nomads, even if they continued in a nomadic way of life, including the seasonal migrations implied by nomadic stockbreeding. The personal following

¹⁰⁵ Aubin, *Emirs mongols*, Morgan, “Mongol or Persian”, and Melville, *Fall*. It also has to be accepted today that the Ilkhans stayed nomadic in a real sense, that is, that their peregrinations along favorite routes were dictated not by military considerations, but by the „normal“ seasonal nomadic cycle. Morgan agrees with Melville’s results (“Itineraries”) in this respect, and he raises the question whether a similar case might be made for the Seljuqs.

¹⁰⁶ Aubin, „Khanat“, “*Quriltai*”, and Manz, “Military Manpower”. – In older Soviet scholarship, the acculturation process is a one-sided one: Mongols become „Persian“ when they enter the mixed zone, and before, their relationship to sedentary economy is a purely predatory one. Stroeva, “Bor’ba” with references to earlier writers.

in the *ordu* is a case in point, the ruler and his retinue, and even the inner army; other professional soldiers are those on duty in garrisons and fortresses, and of course the technically specialized corps, e.g., naphta throwers. But the last groups at least partly seem to have been recruited from the sedentary population.¹⁰⁷ In periods when campaign followed on campaign, professional soldiering must have developed; thus, fighting as a profession certainly was an issue in Timur's time, but there seem to have been professional warriors in the *ulus* Chaghatay before Timur.¹⁰⁸

In the mixed zone, warfare stops being entirely mobile, fortresses, and therefore siege warfare, become more important than they ever were on the great steppe. Garrisons and soldiers coming from a sedentary background constitute a non-negligible part of the army. But garrison duty and siege warfare seems to have been the lot of nomadic warriors, too.¹⁰⁹

At any rate, the men forming the personal retinue of a nomadic leader may be called professional warriors; groups may range from a rather simple and small bodyguard to much larger groups which come close to standing armies. Professional soldiering thus includes both the warband and the inner army. The size of such groups evidently depended on the resources at the ruler's disposal. Another crucial point is control of these revenues. A standing army could evolve out of the warband only if the ruler was able to maintain the salaried form of redistribution as the main form of payment; and this presupposes not only large revenues extracted from all quarters, but also a high level of control over them (redistribution process not modeled on the booty or allocation scenarios).¹¹⁰

Research along these lines has made some progress in the Mongol, Timurid and Safavid¹¹¹ cases. Sources on pre-Chingisid empires are much scantier than those for the later periods. For the Central Asian states founded by Uzbeks and Kazakhs and so on, research is still in its infancy¹¹²; we simply do not know at which point, if at all, professional soldiers emerged after 1500.

¹⁰⁷ The extent to which sedentary people were enrolled in an otherwise nomadic army awaits further study. Manz, "Military Manpower" is a starting point.

¹⁰⁸ See Manz, *Rise and rule*, Appendix A on the Qa'uchin (161–2).

¹⁰⁹ Timur as shown in Aubin ("Comment Tamerlan prenait les villes", "Réseau"). Yet to be studied for Timurid successor states. For later periods, see McChesney, "Conquest" and Matthee, "Unwalled Cities".

¹¹⁰ See above on the Qarakhitay and the Khazars, notes 46 and 70.

¹¹¹ The Safavids also form an interesting transitional case.

¹¹² McChesney (*Waqf and* McChesney, "Conquest") for the Uzbeks, *Istorija Kazakhstana* and Kushkumbaev, *Voennoe delo*, for the Kazakhs. Material for Kazakhs tends to stem from later periods, mostly 18th and 19th centuries, when official reports and other writings by Russian authors become the main source.

Why was the creation of a professional salaried standing army precluded in most cases? It seems that the redistribution code did not leave room for that, that is, of all the wealth extracted from the sedentary economy, not enough was left at the ruler's personal disposal for him to create a military machine at his orders. He had to share out whatever came in to his retainers (not to his tribesmen, but to his personal retainers, including the inner army as well as the members of the original warband) who in turn needed this wealth in order to keep their followers. Moreover, considerations of efficiency, loyalty and cost make the creation of a professional salaried army unattractive in a pastoralist context. Regarding loyalty, there was little to gain from a salaried army; as long as the ruler was successful, he could count on his retainers, and if he failed, a professional salaried army certainly would not prove to be better in this respect. The "inner army" still is made up of personal retainers, even if it comes closest to a professional standing army; only in a few cases was it salaried, and it was loyal to its leader personally.

As far as efficiency is concerned, one of the most important incentives to build up a salaried professional army is its mobility. Sedentary "peasant" armies or rural nobles are either unable or unwilling to fight in theaters far away from home.¹¹³ As long as they are not professional soldiers, one has to give them a reason for fighting, and of course, as a general rule, the only reason that everybody will accept is that he is going to fight for his homeland in a rather narrow sense, the only notable exception being religion. Moreover, in many cases rural noble or peasant armies will be able to take the field only for a limited period of the year in order to be back in time for agricultural work (this is the case of the European feudal host). All this strongly worked for the creation of a salaried professional (standing) army in a sedentary context, but it simply does not apply with a pastoralist army. Pastoralist armies time and again have been used – and very successfully – in offensive warfare in very distant and varying locations; there was no obstacle in time either, since the source of livelihood could be taken along. Scale is an important point: Conquest and large-scale raiding can be carried out only with very large armies. For these purposes, the tribal host is evidently needed, the inner army does not suffice.

And of course, a salaried army is much more expensive, or more precisely, cost is differently structured. In the redistribution mode, the ruler is obliged to

¹¹³ I have developed this argument in the Samanid case, Paul, *State and Military*. – Ottoman and other examples to the contrary presuppose elaborated imperial structures (among other things), and then, the Janissaries were founded just because of the restraints inherent in the *timariot* system.

give what has been gained, much or not so much, but in the salaried mode, he is obliged to give what he has promised, and he may prove unable to deliver.

There is yet another point: A salaried professional army would mean a radical change in tactics, since the numerical superiority which is the basis of pastoralist victories cannot be achieved with salaried armies – they have to be much smaller; no pre-modern state could afford paying armies the size the Mongol armies were, to give but the most obvious example.¹¹⁴ Thus, the creation of a professional salaried army simply seems not to have been an issue, and the instability going with the model of redistribution mentioned above kept bedeviling all states founded by pastoralist conquerors.¹¹⁵ Thus, for a number of reasons, the nomad states and empires did not create what sedentary states and empires quite frequently did in the medieval Middle East and Central Asia (not to mention China): they did not create the coercive apparatus *par excellence* which is the professional standing army.

One of the most fascinating questions that can be asked – and hopefully analyzed – in this context is the gradual development of a pastoralist conquest state and its army after the conquest of a large sedentary region has taken place. A sort of transition society emerges, no longer pastoralist in the pure sense - resources now come mainly from the settled economy the pastoralists have entered as conquerors, and not yet a sedentary state as perhaps its predecessors were. Efforts to make subjects, tax-paying subjects, out of the erstwhile conquerors, are visible in a couple of cases, even if the means employed in the process are not yet altogether clear. Changes introduced into the redistribution code put the mutual loyalty between rulers and retainers into jeopardy: It was very difficult to achieve the transition from the redistribution code to the accumulation code, which perhaps forms its opposite on the sedentary side. But on the whole, detailed study of this process has yet to be undertaken.

Of course, increased surplus also increases the degree of inequality within a given society. The long process leading to the exclusion of nomads with a Central Asian background not only from power, but also to a large extent from the army, can be studied in the history of the Iranian Safavid Empire. The later Timurids and their contemporaries, the Aq Qoyunlu in Western Iran, also tried centralizing reforms in order to regain control over taxation, but the purpose seems not to have been to get money in order to build up a professional

¹¹⁴ There has been some discussion around the size of nomadic armies, for example in the context of the battle of Ain Jalut: Amitai-Preiss (“Whither the Ilkhanid Army”), and Smith (“Mongol Nomadism” and “Nomads on Ponies”) on the Mongols in Syria in general.

¹¹⁵ In this respect, the Ottomans were not Mongol at all, see Lindner, “How Mongol?”.

standing army, but to return to earlier forms of redistribution, which are better controlled by the central government.¹¹⁶

Military service, integration and submission

Whereas the stories of nomadic conquest have been told many a time, nomads (or leaders of pastoralist groups) gaining access to agricultural surplus through military services have been the focus of historical research much less frequently, perhaps because nomadic conquest is so much more spectacular.¹¹⁷ Yet it is evident that this type of interaction between sedentary states and pastoralists on their periphery is not exceptional at all, on the contrary, that it was the normal type of interaction over extended periods of time.

Services, including military services, can be positive-active or negative-passive, they may consist in doing something or in refraining from doing something. Payments may take the form of presents or subsidies, they even may be at least partly immaterial (titles and the like), and they may take the form of payments for commodities.

Not all of the services performed by pastoralists are of necessity military. Guiding and guarding caravans is a good example of how military and non-military services are linked. Guarding caravans means that not only the group serving as caravan guards will not attack, but that it will also see to it that nobody else does.¹¹⁸

Unlike raids and conquest, however, services are negotiated between partners. The terms of the contract depend largely on the power relationship between them. When the pastoralists are strong, they can force the sedentary side of the contract to buy their services even if they are unwelcome.¹¹⁹ This is

¹¹⁶ Subtelny, "Centralizing Reform" for the late Timurids, Woods, *Aqqoyunlu* for the Aq Qoyunlu.

¹¹⁷ Military services offered by nomad peoples seem to be much more frequent in the Middle East.

¹¹⁸ Khazanov on mediating trade (*Nomads and the Outside World*, 209).

¹¹⁹ Golden, "War and Warfare" on Byzantine relations with nomads in the Pontic steppes. The nomads all wanted treaties with Byzantium, offering their military services, and made it clear that the offered services could well be turned against their prospective „partners“. By no means did the nomads imply „conquest“ of Byzantine territory. Golden's description of the Huns and their attitude towards Byzantium seems paradigmatic: They „quickly established a pattern of raiding alternating with military service in both the Roman and the Persian Empire, exploiting as best they could the ongoing Roman-Sāsānid rivalry“. Even Attila did not aim at conquest (which might well have been precluded given the narrowness

a form of extortion, to be sure, and it occurs most frequently perhaps with what I have termed negative-passive services - that is, the pastoralists promise not to do something, e.g., not to perform raids on border regions, caravans, or pilgrimage routes. In some cases, services may turn out to be largely fictitious; the empire then uses them as a pretext to pay the pastoralists who otherwise would be hard to manage. There were nomadic states who succeeded in getting subsidies from several quarters: The Crimean Tatars were paid by the Ottomans (their overlords), but they extorted large sums from Poland and Russia as well; the northern neighbors hoped that they would not be raided.¹²⁰

In other cases, sedentary states tried embargoes as a means to subdue pastoralists.¹²¹ This can imply the closing down of frontier markets, but also the cutting off of supplies to outlying areas.¹²²

Quite frequently, cooperation is seen as the best way to deal with the restless nomads. Sedentary states prefer striking a bargain with them in order to gain a measure of control to fighting them.¹²³ The forms vary. The empire can choose to integrate the pastoralist leaders into the state structure, to this purpose it confers titles on them (China is the most prominent example).¹²⁴ In some cases, submission of the pastoralists to the sedentary empire seems to have been implied more or less on paper. In other cases, the submission was real enough. Competition between two neighboring empires could largely enhance the bargaining power of the pastoralists living in the interstices; this can very well be shown in the case of Safavid Iran and the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁵

The empire also can conclude treaties of mutual succor, and there are instances when a nomad empire saved a sedentary dynasty against internal

of his ecological base in the Pannonian plains), but at extortion or the regularization of „subsidies“ (p. 109). See also Lindner, “What was a Nomadic Tribe?”.

¹²⁰ The Tatars were mainly interested in slaves and livestock; Fisher, “Rappports”, “Ottoman Crimea”) The influx of wealth into Crimea was essential in maintaining the Khans in power, the main tribal groupings otherwise would have gone their way.

¹²¹ Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 207, Shibani khan – what is interesting is that this ruler had himself a very distinct nomadic past and thus knew very well how he could put pressure on his Kazakh enemies; see above at note 52.

¹²² See above at note 52. During the „revolt“ of Arig-Böge (who used the steppe region as his main area of support), his capital, the steppe city Qaraqorum, was subdued because Qubilai Khan stopped the shipments of grain there (Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 218).

¹²³ Golden, “War and Warfare”, 111: „It was, on the whole, cheaper and certainly less dangerous to buy the nomads off [...] Ideally, one group could be supported and encouraged to check the others.“

¹²⁴ Many of the titles used in the steppe can be traced back to Chinese origins, e.g. the Qalmaq *taishi*.

¹²⁵ Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*. This is not untypical: See above, Golden and Lindner on the Huns (note 119).

rebellion (the Uighurs and the An Lu-shan rebellion)¹²⁶. Mutual succor can be a bone of contention later on: the empire may take this treaty to be a document of submission whereas the pastoralists may think that it was concluded for a limited period of time and could be renegotiated, as in the famous case of the “submission of the Kazakhs” to the Tsar in the 18th century.¹²⁷ This is close to patterns of “calling the nomads in” against internal or external enemies¹²⁸; this frequently led to the final overthrow of the ruling dynasty in the sedentary state and its replacement with a leadership coming from the pastoralist side.¹²⁹ Other treaties were designed to keep the nomads out: They were hired against other nomads in the remoter parts of the steppe or desert.¹³⁰

Tasks assigned to the pastoralists also varied. First, the pastoralists were asked to help the empire in its dealings with other pastoralists or to take over the protection of the steppe or desert frontier. Pastoralists can also be integrated into the imperial armies (as the Turks were into the Chinese army under the Tang). Nomads served as auxiliary forces in a great number of imperial armies, including the Roman, the Byzantine, the Sasanian, the Ottoman and the Russian. Russia used the Qalmaq against the Crimean Tatars¹³¹ who in turn were in the service of the Ottomans (among other battles, at Vienna in 1683). Russian use of the Qalmaqs was not restricted to fighting other nomads, however: Qalmaq battalions participated in wars in distant parts of the world, for instance in the 1813 campaign which led them all the way to Paris.¹³²

The sedentary partner in the bargain did not have to be an empire. Thus, the Sogdian city states in Mavarannahr “called the Turks in” against the Arab-

¹²⁶ See Allsen, *Commodity and exchange*, Beckwith, “Impact”, and Jagchid/ Symons, *Peace, War, and Trade*

¹²⁷ Istorija Kazakhstana, Erofeeva, Khan Abulkhair, Kushkumbaev, Voennoe delo.

¹²⁸ Some examples: the Qarakhanids were called into Mavarannahr by Samanid leaders engaged in factional strife; the Ghaznavids at first tried to use the Seljuqs as auxiliary forces; the Khwarazmshahs (themselves steeped in nomadic traditions) served as a sort of conveyor belt for Qipchaqs moving into Iran where they pursued their own interests, to be sure, but in the name of their Khwarazmian overlord.

¹²⁹ Both the Samanids and the Ghaznavids are cases in point. – When the Ashtarkhanid rulers in the Bukharan khanate tried to use Qazaq tribesmen as auxiliaries (they were available because they were on the run from the Qalmaqs), this proved to be a disaster, and this can be said to have contributed to the demise of the dynasty.

¹³⁰ Best known examples: Byzantine and Sasanian vassal states on the desert fringes, another example is the Turks in the service of the early T’ang emperors (Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 145f).

¹³¹ Collins, “Military organization”, Fisher, “Rapports”, “Ottoman Crimea”, Khodarkovski, “Virtues”.

¹³² Schorkowitz in this volume

Muslim onslaught in the second half of the 7th century; but it has to be noted that the Turks were their overlords.¹³³

Cooperation between pastoralists and sedentary empires also can lead to state formation on the pastoralist side. There are several reasons for this. First, the subsidies involved enable the leadership on the pastoralist side to redistribute wealth hitherto unavailable, and it is the leadership (some sort of chief) who retains control over this influx of wealth. By the same token, pre-existing hierarchies in the pastoralist society are accentuated where they existed, and created where none existed previously. This is because the state wants to deal with persons or structures responsible for the terms of the contract with a view to ensuring their validity over time. A time-honored device to ensure this has been to appoint chiefs over populations who up to then had had no need for them; thus it can be affirmed that states created tribes. Such “tribes” can evolve into more complex structures to which the minimalist definition of the state can meaningfully be applied. This has important repercussions on the political situation in the pastoralist society. Decision-making moves away from the consensus-oriented mode, since of course the sedentary side interferes, for instance in succession disputes.¹³⁴ Such states have been called vassal states, and they were numerous indeed on the steppe and desert frontiers of many an empire. Despite their vassal status, they were at times able to pursue quite independent policies, much to their patrons’ alarm. Interference in steppe affairs is so frequently reported that it is not necessary to go into detail here.¹³⁵

Conclusion

Nomadic statehood (in the large understanding used in this paper) in the vast majority of cases presupposes the interaction of nomadic and sedentary economies, whether within the state borders or not; the sedentary economy providing much of the surplus needed for state construction (in often asymmetrical forms of interaction). In the nomadic context even more than in the sedentary world, statehood and the military are closely intertwined;

¹³³ Golden, *Introduction*.

¹³⁴ Khodarkovski, “Virtues”.

¹³⁵ Timur and the Timurids interfered regularly in steppe affairs, hoping thus to come to terms with the Great Steppe which they otherwise were unable to control. The results were however deceiving; the candidates they supported often turned against them as soon as they could afford to do so.

statehood seems to be linked to the military mobilization of the “society in arms”.

The overview given in this paper shows that transformation processes within the military as well as the state structure have received much less scholarly attention so far as “pure” types of either nomadic or sedentary states. Time and again, nomadic armies as well as states underwent significant change due to their intense interaction with the sedentary world. Thus, the “society in arms” was in some cases gradually doubled or even superseded by more specialized forms (professional warriors). In all this, nomads entering what has been called the mixed zone in this paper or an altogether sedentary region did not differ from those nomads who started their political careers within the mixed zone.

Military as well as political structures depended on the redistribution mechanisms prevalent within a given nomadic group. It is here that differences between the great steppe and the mixed zone can be expected, with the more elaborate forms prevailing in the mixed zone. Transition processes ending in the adoption of altogether sedentary models like the professional standing army (and its civilian counterpart, the professional fiscal bureaucracy) form the sedentary end of the scale, whereas ephemeral nomadic states, collapsing after the death of a charismatic military leader or after the first decisive defeat, never even had a chance to get a transformation process going.

On the other hand, the transformation of nomadic states through their interaction with the sedentary world was no one-sided affair. In the Turco-Iranian world, that is, in large parts of the mixed zone, a particular kind of cultural synthesis emerged which also included specific forms of waging war and of organizing the military.

Broader concepts of the nomadic state and minimalist definitions of state are perhaps helpful in bringing such transformation processes more into focus.

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