

**OSMANLI ARAŐTIRMALARI
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İSMAIL E. ERÜNSAL — CHRISTOPHER FERRARD
CHRISTINE WOODHEAD**

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POLITICAL GENEALOGIES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Barbara Flemming

The political implications of the «Oghuzian theme» for all the Turkmen powers in the fifteenth century are by now a familiar theme. After the pioneer studies by Paul Wittek who pointed to a romantic revival of steppe traditions, while acknowledging the political aims which the Oghuzian tribal genealogy clearly served¹, Halil İnalcık put the Ottoman interest in Oghuzian matters in the perspective of the fateful defeat of 1402. Struggling for the survival of their state, the Ottomans had to show themselves the equals of the Timurid Khans of the East, not only to escape the vassalage established by Timur, but also to claim supremacy over the Turkish principalities in Anatolia².

John E. Woods, from another angle, made the claims on Oghuz lineage more comprehensible by showing that not only the Ottomans, but many competing Turkish dynasties found it necessary to invoke Oghuz genealogies in support of their claims to the loyalties of all the Oghuz Turkmens of Anatolia, Syria, Irak and Iran³. Recently Cornell H. Fleischer re-emphasized the significance of nomadic political notions for the Ottomans in the fifteenth century⁴.

1 P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1938, and especially the same author's «Yazıji'oghlu 'Ali on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja», *BSOAS* 14 (1952), 646-647.

2 H. İnalcık, «The Rise of Ottoman Historiography», in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962, 155-156.

3 J. E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu. Clan, Confederation, Empire. A Study in 15th/9th century Turko-Iranian Politics*, Minneapolis & Chicago, 1976, p. 186.

4 C. H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire. The Historian Muşafa Âli (1541-1600)*, Princeton, 1986, p. 275, 277, note 8, and 288.

Even in Mamluk society, where the sultan's or emir's household was held superior to the natural family⁵, there was a consciousness of the Djingizid Yasa⁶, and the stories of the Oghuzes and the Djingizids were highly valued for their mythical content. As early as the thirteenth century Arabic versions or revisions of Turkish and Mongol lore were copied and read in Mamluk circles⁷.

What had medieval authors written about the Oghuz and Turkish ancestry? Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī described it as early as 1077 in his encyclopaedic lexicon. It was he, too, who made it serve a political purpose by distinguishing the Oghuz tribe of Kınık, «to which our present sultans belong», referring to the Seldjuks⁸.

However, the political genealogies of the fifteenth century had their origin in the classical account of Oghuz history which had been written down and disseminated by the Ilkhanid minister Faḍl Allāh Rashīd al-Dīn (1247-1318) in his «Compendium of Histories». By claiming descent for Turks and Mongols alike from the biblical Japheth as well as from the Turkish national hero Oghuz, Rashīd al-Dīn had helped to consolidate the sultanate of Maḥmūd Ghāzān (Ilkhan from 1295 to 1304), who had been brought up as a Buddhist but had converted to Islam shortly before his accession. The union of Mongols and Turks under the first Muslim Ilkhan could thus be seen as the return to an ancient tradition in which Turks and Mongols were united under one ruler.

Oghuz had conquered the world, and had died at the age of a thousand years. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the kings tracing their

5 P. M. Holt, «The exalted lineage of Rīdwan Bey», reprinted in the author's *Studies in the History of the Near East*, London, 1973, p. 226.

6 Cf. the conflicting views of A. N. Poliakov, «The Influence of Chingiz Khān's Yāsa», *BSOAS* 10 (1939/1942), p. 862-876; and D. Ayalon, «The great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān», *Studia Islamica* 36 (1972), p. 146-158, and 38 (1973), p. 107-142.

7 M. F. Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında ilk mütesavvıflar*, 2nd ed., p. 213, and F. Sümer, *Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri, Boy Teşkilatı, Destanları*, 2nd ed., Ankara, 1972, p. 377-378; U. Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, Freiburg, 1969, p. 73; U. Haarmann, «Altun Hān und Čingiz Hān bei den ägyptischen Mamluken», *Der Islam* 51 (1974), passim.

8 R. Dankoff, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī. Compendium of the Turkish Dialects (Dīwān Luḡāt at-Turk)*, I, Harvard Printing Office, 1982, p. 82, 101-102.

origin from Oghuz were the descendants of his six sons, the eldest of whom was Gün Khan, and whose eldest son was ayı⁹. Rashīd al-Dīn saw sovereignty vested in the tribe of ayı. Not only did he provide the first Ghaznawid with a ayı pedigree, but he incorporated the Seldjuks, the Khwārizmshāhs and, significantly, the emerging Turkmen dynasties of the Anatolian marches: the araman, the Eshref oghulları, «and others»¹⁰. The Ottomans, whom he did not mention, always emphasized their ayı descent¹¹. At the turn of the fifteenth century, Timur had claimed to be reconstituting the empire of the Mongols under the auspices of Islam. The notion of Turks and Mongols joined under the rule of a single prince had also been brought forward by Timur's writers in justification of his policies¹².

A desire to discover continuity permeates the Ottoman restoration after Timur. This is seen in the Ottoman claim to be the successors of the Rūm Seldjuks¹³. But there was the Timur problem. Yazıdjoghlu 'Alī, writing for Murād II in 1423, tackled it head-on. The audacious passage runs as follows, «After his father, ayı was Khanlar Khanı for a long time. And according to this custom the greatest pādishāh ... Sulṭān Murād Khan who is the most noble of the house of 'Osman, is the most suitable and the most worthy of sovereignty of all the remaining clans (*wruk*) of the Oghuz Khans, yes, even of the clan of the Djingizid Khans, he is the highest in origin and «bone» (ancestry). Therefore it is fitting by holy law

9 K. Jahn, *Die Geschichte der Oguzen des Rašīd ad-Dīn*, Vienna, 1969, p. 44, 66-68; T. Baykara (ed.), *A Zeki Velīdī Togan. Oğuz Destanı. Reşideddīn Oğuznāmesi, Tercüme ve Tahlili*, Istanbul, 1972; F. Sümer, *Oğuzlar*, p. 210-211. For concepts of authority see O. Turan, «The Ideal of World Domination among the Medieval Turks», *Studia Islamica* IV (1955), p. 77 sq. Oghuz's six sons were Gün, Ay, Yıldız, Gök, Dağ, Deñiz. Gün's sons were ayı, Bayat, Alka evli, Kara evli; Jahn, *Geschichte*, p. 45; Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, p. 188.

10 Jahn, *Geschichte*, p. 66-68.

11 M.F. Köprülü, «Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Etnik Menşei Meseleleri», *Belleter* 7 (1943), p. 219-303.

12 M. Kafalı, «Timur», *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 12 (1974), p. 336-346; Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, p. 189; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 276.

13 H. İnalcık, «Rise of Ottoman Historiography», p. 156; I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes des regnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I*, Munich, 1967, p. 64-74; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 288.

as by customary law that not only Turkish Khans but also Tatar Khans come to his Porte to salute and to serve him»¹⁴.

In this way the actions of the Ottomans, their conquest of so many countries, their wars not only against unbelievers but also against fellow-Muslims, were no completely new departures, but were justified and had been foreseen in Oghuz Khan's testament and the prophesy pronounced by Korkut Ata. That «consummate soothsayer of the Oghuz» had said that in time to come the sovereignty would again light on the Kayı and none would take it from their hands until the end of time. This prophecy had found its way into the Book of Dede Korkut, where a later narrator had added, «This of which he spoke is the House of 'Osman and behold it continues yet»¹⁵. Later historians such as Rūhī recalled this utterance¹⁶.

Ottoman writers were not the only ones who argued that Oghuzian rule was intended to be accomplished by one of their clan; rather, this claim had to be defended against the Karaman and the Akkoyunlu, who also stressed their affiliation with the Oghuz past by having genealogies constructed to prove their descent from the stock of Oghuz. Ottoman sultans emphasized this connection by naming their sons Korkud (Bāyezīd I and Bāyezīd II), and an Ottoman prince (Djem) named his second son Oghuz.

After the great events of the second half of the fifteenth century, Uzun Hasan's overthrow of the Karakoyunlu and the Timurids, the collapse of the Golden Horde, and Mehmed Fātih's awe-inspiring conquest of Constantinople, nomadic legitimizing principles began to lose persuasion; it could not be denied that elaborating the

14 Yazıdjoghlu 'Alī, *Tevārīkh-i āl-i Seldjūk*, Leiden University Library, Cod. 419 Warn., fol. 19b; cf. P. Wittek, «Yazıdjoghlu 'Alī on the Christian Turks», p. 646.

15 G. Lewis, *The Book of Dede Korkut. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes*, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 190; M. Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı. Metin-Sözlük*, Ankara, 1964, p. 1; Turan, «Ideal of World Domination», p. 78.

16 H. İncik, «Rise of Ottoman Historiography», p. 156. J. R. Walsh, «The Historiography of Ottoman-Şafavid Relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries», in Lewis and Holt, *Historians of the Middle East*, p. 198 note 4.

«middle links» was a task which wearied the genealogists, just as in contemporary Western Europe¹⁷. And yet genealogical controversy was a form of political argument, in an age where innovation often had to be disguised as a return to the past¹⁸.

The conceptions of the ruling houses of the Akkoyunlu and Ottoman states underwent considerable modification as the basis of their power changed. The virtues of the mythical Oghuz ceased to form the basis for a universal appeal to the loyalties of all Oghuz Turkmens. In Persia Shāh Ismā'il imposed Shī'ism on a country which was still predominantly Sunni. He annihilated the Akkoyunlu. The Khans of the Crimea had become Ottoman vassals. The Ottomans, abandoning the traditions of the marches, had assumed their new style as sultans of an empire in the traditions of the ancient Near-Eastern states. Their sultan, not content with the title *khalīfa*, claimed that he had acquired the dignity of Inheritor of the Great Caliphate by the will of God¹⁹. Such revolutionary doings of contemporaries called for a demonstration of their legitimacy. Genealogical links had to be established between contemporary rulers and ancient forerunners, and prophecies also played a part. Against an older and more «modest» lineage of the Ottomans a more elaborate and ambitious pedigree was now supplied²⁰.

Japheth

As is well known, many Turkish, Mongolian and indeed European genealogies lay within the tradition of Japheth. The Muslims

17 K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England*, Harmondsworth, 1971, p. 507 and passim.

18 I have dealt briefly with this subject in an unpublished paper entitled «In search of forefathers. Political functions of genealogy in Herat and Istanbul in the 16th century», «Workshop on Central Asian Studies», Utrecht, 16 December 1985.

19 H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300-1600*, London, 1973, p. 3; idem, «The Ottomans and the Caliphate», *Cambridge History of Islam I*, p. 320-322; M. A. Cook, «Introduction», *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976.

20 H. İnalcık, «Rise of Ottoman Historiography», p. 161.

regarded him as the ancestor of the «white» race²¹. Among his descendants, besides the Turks, figured the Gog and Magog. Like others before and after him Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī considered *Türk* the son of Japheth, that is the grandson of Noah²², or he spoke of him as the son of Noah²³. Rashīd al-Dīn stated that Noah, when he distributed the world among his sons, gave the East to his eldest son Japheth, whom he declared identical with the Khan whom the Turks named Uldjay (or Abuldja, Buldja), and whose son was Dib Yavku (Yabghu) Khan²⁴.

The Ottomans, too, had at an early stage taken their place in this tradition. All Turks descended from Abuldja Khan who was Japheth himself (Yazıdjioghlu) or Japheth's son (Neshrī). Abuldja's son was Dib Yakuy whose eldest son was Kara Khan, the father of Oghuz²⁵. Neshrī gave «Buldjas» three sons, Türk, Oghuz, and Moghul. Again in Neshrī, Buldjas's successor was Dib takuy, who had four sons, the eldest of whom was Kara Khan, Oghuz's father²⁶. The light of Islam shone on Oghuz; he lived in the time of the Prophet Abraham and believed in him²⁷. All this has for a long time been known in Europe²⁸.

21 A selection, in Turkish translation, from medieval Islamic sources concerned with Turkish origins has recently been published by R. Şeşen, *İslam Coğrafyacılarına göre Türkler ve Türk Ülkeleri*, Ankara 1985.

22 Dankoff, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī* I, p. 82; B. Atalay, *Divanü Lügat-it-Türk Tercümesi* I, Ankara, 1939, p. 28.

23 Dankoff, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī* I, p. 274; Atalay, *Tercüme* I, p. 350.

24 Jahn, *Geschichte*, p. 17. V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia. III. A History of the Turkman People*, Leiden, 1962, p. 114-116. This was taken over by Neshrī and (directly from Rashīd al-Dīn) by Kemāl-pashazāde, who paraphrased it, with invectives against the Tatars; see the edition by Ş. Turan, *İbn-i Kemal. Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman. I. Defter*, Ankara, 1970, p. 201-204.

25 Yazıdjioghlu 'Alī, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Seldjūk*, Leiden Cod. 419, fol. 7b.

26 For a list of Ottoman chroniclers following the Japhetic tradition see Turan, *İbn-i Kemal. I. Defter*, p. 21; cf. also p. 12-28, 44-45.

27 F. Taeschner (ed.), *Ğihānnumā. Die altosmanische Chronik des Mevlānā Mehmed Neshrī*, I and II, Leipzig, 1951 and 1955; see below, notes 52-53.

28 V. L. Ménage, «The Beginnings of Ottoman historiography», B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962, p. 179; J. Klapproth, *Abhandlung über die Sprache und Schrift der Uiguren*; reprint of the 1820 edition by W.-E. Scharlipp, Hamburg, 1985, p. 36-43.

In the fifteenth century there was a divergence between Ottoman genealogists over the parentage of Ertoghrul. Who was his father, Süleymān Shāh or Gündüz Alp? In the sixteenth century the discussion was closed; Süleymān Shāh was declared Osmān's grandfather. But writers like Neshrī and Kemālpashazāde seem to have felt uneasy about this. The latter took the precaution of working backward from the present, not forward from Noah. He brushed aside the long list of names between Japheth and Kayı with their obvious discrepancies, surely for the reason that the Oghuz question was losing much of its former actuality.

At the time the *Şubhat al-ahbār* was compiled (the original work was dedicated to Sultan Süleymān), the family tree followed the pattern Noah, Japheth, Ottomans, but the dubious (or by now less relevant) nature of the genealogical connection between Japheth, the Djingizids, and the Ottomans is marked by a line on fol. 7a-b, which fades out in the middle of the folio (*bu chizi Âl-i 'Osmāna chīkar*)²⁹.

Djingiz Khan

In the sixteenth century the empire of the Great Mongols had left as its enduring legacy the intense genealogical pride of the Djingizids, although only the Timurid Moghuls could cherish realistic ambitions to extend their rule. The Secret History of the Mongols had also contained a prophecy: that the Khanate would pass to another branch than the descendants of Ögedei; a prophecy that had been fulfilled³⁰.

Shaybānī Khan Uzbek (he became prominent about 1500, and died 1510 near Marw) had commissioned Faḍl Allāh b. Rūzbihān Khundjī to compose an impeccable Djingizid pedigree for him³¹.

29 MS. A. F. 50 of the Austrian National Library, Flügel II 00 nr. 868. See the edition by K. Holzer, *Rosenkranz der Weltgeschichte*, Graz, 1981.

30 J. A. Boyle, «Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn as sources on the history of the Mongols», B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962, p. 136.

31 U. Ott, *Transoxanien und Turkestan zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts. Das Mūhmān-nāme-yi Buḥārā des Faḍlallāh b. Rūzbihān Hunjī. Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Freiburg, 1974, p. 61-62.

Djingiz Khan's eldest son Djoči was the ancestor not only of the Shaybānids, rulers over the peoples that came to be called Uzbek, but also of the Crimean Khans. Their ruling house, the Giray (Kerrey) family, was descended from Togay Timur, a younger son of Djoči. Although their state was now subordinate to the Ottoman Empire, they remained influential rulers, who laid claim to being the rightful heirs to the patrimony of the Golden Horde³². Sunni Muslims and Turkish-speaking, these Djingizid rulers had no reason to revise their illustrious lineage.

A passage from the *Ta'rikh-i Şāhib Giray*, containing a personal account, illustrates this. «Travelling through the world, I came to Istanbul. I saw that mankind had gone out to watch the *khūdā-vendīgār* of the Ottoman dynasty, Sultan Süleymān Khan - may God make perpetual his sovereignty and eternal his government - mounting his horse to ride for pleasure. Next to the Padishah I saw a handsome young man of radiant beauty ..., thirty years old, with the crown of government on his head... he kept the Padishah company. I asked, 'Who is this young man?' and they said, 'He is of the family of Djingiz Khan, whose forefathers have been khans for seventy-two generations'³³. This was said of the Crimean Khan Şāhib Giray Khan (1532-1551). Writing of Meḥmed Giray II (reigned 1577-1584), Muştafā 'Ālī put a mere «thirty or forty generations» between him and the world conqueror³⁴. The place of the Djingizids, and of Timur, in genealogical works such as the *Şubḥat al-akhbār* deserves to be studied.

In Herat, at the other end of the Islamic world, historians like Khwādamīr drew on the rich fund of the Turkish-Mongol tradition introduced by Rashīd al-Dīn and modified by Timur's historians³⁵. There all genealogical discussion - in the seventeenth century to be

32 M. E. Yapp, «The Golden Horde and its Successors», *Cambridge History of Islam* I, p. 495-502; H. İnalcık, «Giray», *EI*, 2nd ed.

33 Ö. Gökbilgin, *Tarih-i Sahib Giray Han*, Ankara, 1973, p. 19-20.

34 Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 277, note.

35 Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kwādamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrād al-bashar*, ed. Dj. Humā'i and M. Dabir-Siyāki, Teheran, 1954, III, 4 sq.; Barthold, *Four Studies*, p. 115 sq.; Woods, *Aqqyunlu*, p. 24, 189.

summed up by Abū l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khan³⁶ - was conducted on the assumption of an unchanging, Japhetic, genealogical structure. Türk, with Oghuz, and Moghul were the substance of the Turkish *raison d'être* in the political situation in which they found themselves in the sixteenth century, cut off from their old connections in the West and from world politics³⁷. No ideological changes were needed as yet. Their opponent, emerging in the North-West, more important than Timur or even Djingiz Khan, was to be the Emperor of Russia, a King of the *Banū l-Aṣfar* who will be mentioned below.

'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

In comparison with the audacity of Murad II's genealogical claims, the Ṣafavid mandate for sovereignty may have seemed less hubristic than it would be seen now. Coming from native Iranian stock, and speaking Azeri-Turkish, the Ṣafavids constructed a genealogy connecting them with the Prophet. Not only did they trace their descent from the seventh of the Twelver Imāms, Mūsā al-Kāzim, but also, through him, the Shāh of Persia was descended from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Fāṭima, the Prophet's daughter³⁸. In this way their religious leadership was formally legitimized; Sheykh Ṣafī al-Dīn and his descendants were a truly holy family³⁹. They set themselves completely apart from the Ottomans, relying upon heterodox Turkmen tribes in the Ottoman empire, who saw in Shāh Ismā'īl both their temporal ruler and their spiritual guide.

36 Abū l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khan, *Shedjere-i Terākime*, ed. and transl. A. N. Kononov, *Rodoslovnaja Turkmen. Sočinenie Abu-l-Gazi*, Moscow, 1958.

37 B. Spuler, «Central Asia from the sixteenth century to the Russian conquests», *The Cambridge History of Islam*, I, p. 468-470.

38 For a summary see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, IV, Cambridge, 1924, 6th ed. 1969, p. 36-38; J. R. Walsh, «Ottoman-Ṣafavid relations», p. 202-203; H. Sohrweide, «Der Sieg der Ṣafaviden in Persien und seine Rückwirkungen auf die Schiiten Anatoliens im 16. Jahrhundert», *Der Islam* 41 (1965), p. 117-124; R. M. Savory, «Ṣafavid Persia», *The Cambridge History of Islam* I, Cambridge, 1970, p. 394-401; A. Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Ṣafavid Conflict*, Berlin, 1983, p. 157-166.

39 Walsh, «Ottoman-Ṣafavid Relations», p. 203; Cf. P. M. Holt, «The Coming of the Funj», reprinted in P. M. Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, London, 1973, p. 79; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 274-275.

Being himself a branch of the tree of prophecy, a seed of the sheaves of saintship, belonging to the children of the Prophet of God and of Fatima the Resplendent⁴⁰, Shāh Ismā'īl might well brush aside the nomadic legitimizing principle, calling the descent from Djingiz Khan «a branch from the tree of unbelief»⁴¹. Conscious of the religious force of his claims, the Ottomans at first did not refuse Ismā'īl the title *sayyid*⁴²; the forgery took some time to be exposed, and even after Ebū-su'ūd's *fetvās* had left no doubt that the Şafavid lineage was fictitious⁴³, this was seldom alluded to⁴⁴.

Alexander

Shaybānī Khan's political hopes were sustained by prophecies gathered by his «court ideologue» Faḍl Allāh b. Rūzbihān. The Khan had among his books the Turkish *Iskendernāme*, written by the Anatolian poet Aḥmedī around 1390. In the manuscript which Shaybānī took with him on his campaigns, a piece of Persian verse had been found, which prophesied that a conqueror would come out of the steppe, with whom Shaybānī liked to identify himself⁴⁵.

There were much older steppe traditions in connection with the arrival of Alexander of the «two horns» or «two kingdoms», *Dhū l-ḳarneyn*, in the lands of the Turks. Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī quoted from them and linked the life-span of the ancestors of the Oghuz

40 Cf. B. Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muḥammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, I New York/London 1974, p. 103.

41 Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, p. 182, 296.

42 J. R. Walsh, «Ottoman-Şafavid Relations», p. 208; A. Allouche, *Origins*, p. 77.

43 E. Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik gegen die Şafaviden im 16. Jahrhundert nach arabischen Handschriften*, Freiburg, 1970, p. 165 f., 207; J. R. Walsh, «Ottoman-Şafavid Relations», p. 207-208.

44 H. Schrweide, «Sieg der Şafaviden», p. 96; J. R. Walsh, «Ottoman-Şafavid Relations», p. 208.

45 Ott, *Transoxanien*, p. 156; E. Birnbaum, «The Ottomans and Chagatay Literature. An Early 16th Century Manuscript of Navā'ī's Divān in Ottoman Orthography», *Central Asiatic Journal* 20 (1977), p. 163. The first complete edition of the *Iskendernāme* was published by İ. Ünver, *Aḥmedī. Iskender-nāme. İnceleme-Tıpkıbasım*, Ankara, 1983.

tribes to Alexander's expedition to Central Asia⁴⁶. Kāshgharī's concern was with Alexander and the Turks, not with the Dhū l-ḳarneyn of Revelation (Koran, Sūras 18 and 21), who built a barrier against the warlike Gog and Magog, whom early Arabic exegetes had situated in the country of the then infidel Turks or even identified with the Turks⁴⁷. Al-Kāshgharī, writing at a time when Turkish supremacy was recognized, demonstrated his independence from the older view, mentioning only that the language of Gog and Magog was «unknown because of the Barrier and the interposition of the mountains and the sea»⁴⁸.

Aḥmedi's epic poem *Iskendernāme* was widely read inside and outside Anatolia. Motifs from the Alexander legend, especially that conqueror's quest of the Water of Life and the discovery of that water by Khidr, had of course long been stock images of Persian and Turkish poetry, and rulers were pleased to be compared with Iskender⁴⁹. Inevitably, Meḥmed the Conqueror, heir to the Oghuz and the Ghāzī tradition of the Ottomans, also exploited the fact that he was now also Caesar, Emperor of the Romans⁵⁰. The title, *Ḳaysar-i Rūm*, was indeed used by Persian historians. But for an imperial precedent the Ottomans turned to Alexander.

Ṭursun Beg, one of Meḥmed Fātiḥ's historians, felt it appropriate to introduce this sultan's exceptional conquests with an evocation of Iskender. The opening line of his *Ta'rīkh-i Ebū l-Feth* is a quotation from Sūra 18: «And they will ask you of Dhū l-ḳarnayn,

46 R. Dankoff, «The Alexander Romance in the Dīwān Lughāt at-Turk», *Humaniora Islamica* I (1973), p. 233-244; idem, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgarī* I, p. 5.

47 R. Şeşen, «Eski Arablar'a Göre Türkler», *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 15 (1969), p. 11-36; for a spirited refutation of anti-Turkish hadiths see İ. Cerrahoğlu, «Ye'cüc-Me'cüc ve Türkler», *İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 20 (1975), p. 97-126.

48 Dankoff, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgarī* I, p. 83.

49 E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, I, 1900, 2nd ed. 1958, p. 284; T. Kortantamer, *Leben und Weltbild des altosmanischen Dichters Aḥmedi unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seines Diwans*, Freiburg, 1973, p. 17, 370, H. Özdemir, *Die altosmanischen Chroniken als Quelle zur türkischen Volkskunde*, Freiburg, 1975, p. 170-171.

50 J. H. Mordtmann in *Der Islam* 13 (1924), p. 165 note 2; J. R. Walsh, «Ottoman-Şafavid relations», p. 201; İnalçık, «Rise of the Ottoman Empire», p. 296-297. For a critical view of this Ottoman claim see Cook. «Introduction», p. 4.

the two-horned. Say: I will recite to you an account of him». And the author proceeds, in his introduction, to hold Dhū l-ḳarneyn up as a model for imitation, showing that he had behaved in a perfectly Islamic manner⁵¹.

Neshrī scrutinized ancient traditions of the nomadic Turks with a view to extracting from them some justification of Turkish affiliations with Alexander. He stated in the first draft of his *Djihān-nümā*, «The nomadic Turks (*etrāk*) believe that Oghuz is that Dhū l-ḳarneyn of whom God speaks in His holy Book as the man who built a wall against Gog and Magog»⁵². This was written in 1493. Sometime after 1512, Neshrī's oldest copyist modified this text as follows, «the nomadic Turks believed that Iskender Dhū l-ḳarneyn whom God mentions in His Revelation was perhaps this [Oghuz] and said so»⁵³. This was written under Selīm I, whom Faḍl Allāh b. Rūzbihān wanted to see as Dhū l-ḳarneyn and Caesar in Rūm, and who added the dominion of Persia to his own⁵⁴. This is not the place to embark on a summary of Alexander and the Gog and Magog, who remained significant in Turkish historical writings for a long time.

Esau

Esau, 'Iṣū, the son of the Prophet Isaac, and Jacob's elder brother, was the ancestor of the Rūm in the Arabic tradition. His designation *aṣfar* «yellow, red» was customarily applied to the Greeks, who

51 A. M. Tulum, *Tursun Bey. Tarih-i Ebu'l-Feth*, Istanbul, 1977, p. 3 sq., 20; H. İnalçık and Rhoads Murphey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Bey*, Minneapolis & Chicago, 1978, p. 2b, 15b.

52 For Neshrī's draft, the manuscript Mz, dated February 1493, see V. L. Ménage, *Neshrī's History of the Ottomans. The Sources and Development of the Text*, Oxford, 1964, p. 20-30. For the text see F. Taeschner, *Ġihān-nümā. Die altosmanische Chronik des Mevlānā Meḥammed Neschrī I*, Leipzig, 1951, fol. 5a.

53 Text: F. Taeschner, *Ġihān-nümā. Die altosmanische Chronik des Mevlānā Meḥammed Neschrī II*, Leipzig, 1955, fol. 4-5. For the manuscript, Mn, see Ménage, *Neshrī's History*, p. 45-47.

54 For the text see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, IV, Cambridge, 1924, 2nd ed. 1969, p. 78-80; for the authorship of the poem in question see Ott, *Transoxanien*, p. 24.

were called *Banū l-Aṣfar* «Sons of the Red One» in Arabic traditions and poetry⁵⁵. Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī alluded to this when he drew a parallel between Turkish and Greek genealogical notions: «As the Turks were called by the name of their ancestor *Türk*, so the children of Rūm were called by the name of *Rūm*, the son of Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, God's blessing be upon them»⁵⁶. This medieval tradition, which Muslims shared with the Jews who had identified Esau first with their enemy Edom (Obadiah 8-20) and then with Rome⁵⁷, acquired new political significance after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks.

This triumph was hailed by Ottoman writers as the fulfilment of prophecies uttered by the Prophet. Muḥammad had foretold that that vast city, that lofty fortress, would be subdued by the exertions of his followers: «Verily Constantinople shall be captured. How excellent a commander shall be that commander, and how excellent an army shall be that army»⁵⁸. But there were also hadiths which made the fall of Constantinople a preamble to eschatology. In the end of days, before the advent of the Dajjal, the sons of Ishāḳ (or of Abū Ishāḳ) would take the city with the call «God is most great». But were the Turks descendants of Isaac?⁵⁹

The historian whom we know as the Oxford Anonymous or Pseudo-Rūḥī asserted that this was so. He showed 'Osmān's father Ertoghrul to be descended, not from Japheth, but from Shem through Gök Alp b. Oghuz b. Kara Khan b. Dib Takuy Khan,

55 I. Goldziher, «Aṣfar», *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

56 Dankoff, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī* I, p. 82; Atalay, *Tercüme* I, p. 28. Cf. Atalay, *Tercüme* III, Ankara, 1941, p. 369; Dankoff, *Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī* I, p. 274; Atalay, *Tercüme* I, 351.

57 G. D. Cohen in A. Altmann (ed.), *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, p. 20-21, 44-45.

58 M. Canard, «Les expéditions des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et la légende», *Journal Asiatique* 218 (1926), p. 106. L. Massignon, «Textes prémonitoires et commentaires mystiques relatifs à la prise de Constantinople par les Turcs en 1453», *Oriens* 6 (1953), p. 11.

59 Medieval Arabic commentators had assumed that «sons of Isaac» designated *Arabs*; cf. Canard, «Les expéditions des Arabes», p. 110. For the Turks see J. H. Mordtmann in *Der Islam* 13 (1924), p. 163-164; P. Wittek, «Der Stammbaum der Osmanen», *Der Islam* 14 (1925), p. 99.

«whose name in the Coptic tongue means Esau (‘Īṣ), who is the son of the prophet Isaac»⁶⁰. The relevance of the «Semitic» genealogy could directly be understood in conjunction with the hadith just quoted.

Neshrī, at the very end of the fifteenth century, rejected the Esau pedigree «because Esau is the father of the Lesser or Second Rome» and a descendant of Shem, whereas, according to him, Oghuz, Türk and Moghul were all descended from Japheth, «just as the First Rome»⁶¹. Neshrī also took exception to those who argued that the Seldjuks were descended from the Prophet Abraham.

With all this, he did not succeed in demolishing the new Esau genealogy of the Ottomans. Idris Bidlisi gave it his authority, though not omitting to mention the old Japhetic lineage of the Turks; he told the story of how Jacob deprived Esau of his birthright, whereupon Esau went to Turkestan and there became the ancestor of the Turks. «And most historians say that Kayı Khan who was famous in Turkestan is Esau (‘Īs), whom they call ‘ĪṢṢ in the Coptic language»⁶². Kemal-pashazāde, while disregarding the more obscure Oghuzian ancestors, could not avoid the Esau issue and seemed baffled by it⁶³. Professing the Semitic Esau thesis - Kemal-pashazāde checked on it in the Oxford Anonymous - meant putting an end to the hallowed tradition that the Turks were descendants of Japheth. On the other hand, a Semitic pedigree made Turks

60 Wittek, «Stammbaum der Osmanen», p. 99f.; according to Ménage, *Neshrī's History*, p. 12, the relevant chapter «consists mostly of the story of how Jacob cheated Esau of his birthright, the relevance of which appears in a long genealogy (but without Kayı!) showing ‘Osmān's father Ertoghrlul to be descended from Shem». — For the Esau tradition in Ebu l-Khayr-i Rūmī's *Saītuḡnāme* see A. S. Erzi, «Akkoyunlu ve Karakoyunlu Tarihi Hakkında Araştırmalar», *Belleten* 14 (1954) p. 192-202; especially p. 200.

61 Neshrī's text: Taeschner, *Ġihānnümā* I, p. 19, and II, p. 23; Erzi, «Akkoyunlu», p. 200.

62 M. Şükrü, *Osmanlı Devletinin Kuruluşu. Bitlisli İdris'in «Heşt Bihişt» adlı eserine göre tenkidi araştırma*, Ankara, 1934, p. 29; in the Turkish translation of Idris Bidlisi's work which P. Wittek consulted in the Vienna manuscript, Esau is identified with Dib-takuy, who is the predecessor of Kayı Khan; Wittek, «Stammbaum», p. 95-96.

63 Turan, *İbn-i Kemal. I. Defter*, p. 21-22; 27-28.

in some ways akin to Arabs. This is significant in view of the fact that the Ottomans had not chosen to adopt a genealogy linking them to the Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet⁶⁴.

There remained a minority of critics. At the end of the sixteenth century, the learned Khwādja Sa'd el-Dīn pointed to the historians who connected the Ottomans with Japheth⁶⁵, and his contemporary Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, too, showed himself still aware of Neshrī's refutation of the Esau pedigree. Drawing on a wide variety of written sources⁶⁶, 'Ālī tried to reconcile the conflicting views. Based on «trustworthy books», he offered the following solution: Esau was one step ahead in coming into the world, and that was why his descendants became kings on earth, whereas the offspring of Jacob became the prophets and messengers of God⁶⁷. As descendants of Esau and thus of Isaac, the Ottoman rulers could now exploit not only the Oghuz myths, but also the Islamic tradition to their own advantage. Their ruling house was descended from Esau; the Turks were Japhetids like the Mongols, and the inhabitants of their empire, the people of Rūm, were of mixed origin⁶⁸.

And there we may let the matter rest for the moment, knowing that there is much more in the *Künh* and other sources, which has yet to be sorted out and queried.

64 Cook, «Introduction», p. 5.

65 Cf. Wittek, «Stammbaum», p. 97.

66 'Ālī mistakenly cites 'Āshīkpashazāde as identifying Uldja Khan with Esau, whereas in reality 'Āshīkpashazāde followed the Japhetic tradition; Wittek, «Stammbaum», p. 95-96, see also R. F. Kreutel, *Vom Hirtenzelt zur Hohen Pforte*, Graz-Vienna-Cologne, 1959, p. 10.

67 'Ālī, *Künhü l-akhbār*, Leiden, University Library, MS. orient 288, fol. 14b-15a.

68 'Ālī, *Künhü l-akhbār*, vol. I of the printed edition, p. 16. With thanks to Jan Schmidt, Den Haag, who is preparing a study of the *Künhü l-akhbār*. The passage on the Rumis has been translated by C. H. Fleischer in his *Bureaucrat and intellectual*, p. 254.