

COMPETING NARRATIVES BETWEEN NOMADIC PEOPLE AND THEIR  
SEDENTARY NEIGHBOURS

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# Competing Narratives between Nomadic People and their Sedentary Neighbours

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## Contents

István Zimonyi	
Preface .....	7
Augustí Alemany	
A Prosopographical Approach to Medieval Eurasian Nomads (II) .....	11
Tatiana A. Anikeeva	
Geography in the Epic Folklore of the Oghuz Turks .....	37
Ákos Bertalan Apatóczy	
Changes of Ethnonyms in the Sino-Mongol Bilingual Glossaries from the Yuan to the Qing Era .....	45
Chen Hao	
Competing Narratives: A Comparative Study of Chinese Sources with the Old Turkic Inscriptions .....	59
Edina Dallos	
A Possible Source of 'Tengrism' .....	67
Andrei Denisov	
Scythia as the Image of a Nomadic Land on Medieval Maps .....	73
Szabolcs Felföldi	
Personal Hygiene and Bath Culture in the World of the Eurasian Nomads .....	85
Bruno Genito	
An Archaeology of the Nomadic Groups of the Eurasian Steppes between Europe and Asia. Traditional Viewpoint and New Research Perspectives .....	95
Zsolt Hunyadi	
Military-religious Orders and the Mongols around the Mid-13 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	111
Éva Kincses-Nagy	
The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of <i>Oghuznāma</i> .....	125
Irina Konovalova	
Cumania in the System of Trade Routes of Eastern Europe in the 12 <sup>th</sup> Century ...	137
Nikolay N. Kradin	
Some Aspects of Xiongnu History in Archaeological Perspective .....	149
Valéria Kulcsár – Eszter Istvánovits	
New Results in the Research on the Hun Age in the Great Hungarian Plain. Some Notes on the Social Stratification of Barbarian Society .....	167

Ma Xiaolin	
The Mongols' <i>tuq</i> 'standard' in Eurasia, 13 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> Centuries .....	183
Enrico Morano	
Manichaean Sogdian Cosmogonical Texts in Manichaean Script .....	195
Maya Petrova	
On the Methodology of the Reconstruction of the Ways of Nomadic Peoples .....	217
Katalin Pintér-Nagy	
The Tether and the Sling in the Tactics of the Nomadic People .....	223
Alexander V. Podossinov	
Nomads of the Eurasian Steppe and Greeks of the Northern Black Sea Region: Encounter of Two Great Civilisations in Antiquity and Early Middle Ages.....	237
Szabolcs József Polgár	
The Character of the Trade between the Nomads and their Settled Neighbours in Eurasia in the Middle Ages.....	253
Mirko Sardelić	
Images of Eurasian Nomads in European Cultural Imaginary in the Middle Ages .....	265
Dan Shapira	
An Unknown Jewish Community of the Golden Horde .....	281
Jonathan Karam Skaff	
The Tomb of Pugu Yitu (635–678) in Mongolia: Tang-Turkic Diplomacy and Ritual .....	295
Richárd Szántó	
Central Asia in the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna .....	309
Katalin Tolnai – Zsolt Szilágyi – András Harmath	
Khitan Landscapes from a New Perspective. Landscape Archaeology Research in Mongolia.....	317
Kürşat Yıldırım	
Some Opinions on the Role of the Mohe 靺鞨 People in the Cultural and Ethnical Relationships between Tungusic, Turkic and Mongolian Peoples....	327
Ákos Zimonyi	
Did Jordanes Read Hippocrates? The Impact of Climatic Factors on Nomads in the <i>Getica</i> of Jordanes .....	333
István Zimonyi	
The Eastern Magyars of the Muslim Sources in the 10 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	347

# The Mongols' *tuq* 'standard' in Eurasia, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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A standard or flag (Turkic-Mongolian. *tuq/tuγ*) serves as a symbol of power among nomads. The Mongol Empire established nomadic standards which were passed down to the modern Ordos region in Inner Mongolia.<sup>1</sup> As the Mongols' expansion created Khanates throughout Eurasia, their standards spread from Mongolia to China, Central Asia, Persia, and Eastern Europe. Various forms of standards are demonstrated in eastern and western sources. This paper intends to examine the standards of the Mongol Empire and their multicultural backgrounds.

## The standards of Chinggis Qan

Turkic and Mongolian *tuy/tuq* "flag, standard" is a word borrowed from Old Chinese at a rather early period.<sup>2</sup> The nomads' *tuq* (Tibetan *thug*; Persian *tūq*, *tūgh*, *tūq*, *tūgh*) was customarily made of yak tails or horse tails. The number of tails ranged from one to nine.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Secret History of the Mongols* (hereafter *SHM*), the word *tuq* (禿黑) was translated into Chinese as 'flag with tails' (旄纛). The deity of *tuq* is called *sülde* (苏勒迭儿) or *sülde* in modern Mongolian, and translated in the *SHM* as a good omen or powerful spirit,<sup>4</sup> which served as the symbol of securing and ruling a clan.<sup>5</sup> After the death of Temüjin's father Yisügei, his widowed mother Hö'elün held up the *tuq* (Mong. *tuqlaju*) to persuade the subjects not to abandon their

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1 Elisabetta Chiodo, "The Black Standard (*qara sülde*) of Činggis Qayan in Baruun Xüree," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* 15, 1997/1998: 250-254. Elisabetta Chiodo, "The White Standard of Chinggis Khaan (*čayan tug*) of the Čaqar Mongols of Üüsin Banner," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* 16, 1999/2000: 232-244.

2 Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran*, Chicago 1919: 564-565.

3 Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, vol. 2, Paris, 1959: 860-861. Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, II, Wiesbaden 1965: 618-622. G. Tucci and W. Heissig, *Les religions du Tibet et de la Mongolie*, Paris 1973: 189.

4 Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Vol.1, Leiden 2002: 329.

5 T. D. Skrynnikova, "Sülde - The Basic Idea of the Chinggis-Khan Cult", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47, 1992/1993: 51-59.

ruling family.<sup>6</sup> In 1206 Temüjin was enthroned as Chinggis Qan, and raised the white standard with nine tails (*yesün költü čaqa'an tuq* 九游白旄纛/九游白旗),<sup>7</sup> which stands for the rule of the *yeke mongqol ulus* "Great Mongol State". An illustration from an old manuscript of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BN254, f.44b) dating from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates Chinggis Qan's enthronement scene showing six flagpoles, each with a white tail. As Sugiyama interpreted,<sup>8</sup> the painter didn't need to depict all nine tails because everyone knew the number.

Besides the white standard, Chinggis Qan had other ones. In one battle, Jamuqa told Ong Qan that Temüjin(=Chinggis Qan)'s troops of Uruqud and Mongqud tribes "have black and multicolored standards – they are the people of whom we must be wary."<sup>9</sup> Until today in the Ordos region of Inner Mongolia, we can find the White, Black and Mottled Standards as the most important objects in traditional offerings related to Chinggis Qan.



*The Enthronement of Chinggis Qan*

<sup>6</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz, *op. cit.*: 350-351.

<sup>7</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz, *op. cit.*: 133.

<sup>8</sup> Ono Hiroshi 小野浩, Sugiyama Masaaki 杉山正明, and Miya Noriko 宮紀子, *Yūrashia chūō-iki no rekishi kōzu: 13-15 seiki no tōzai* ユーラシア中央域の歴史構図: 13-15 世紀の東西, Kyoto 2010: xxv.

<sup>9</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz, *op. cit.*: 90.



Back in ancient times, both in China and in the steppes, making offerings to the standards was a ritual signifying the beginning of a campaign. As Rashid al-Dīn recounted, Toqtai, chieftain of the Merkit Tribe, anointed the *tuq* before he mounted for battle.<sup>10</sup> Jamuqa and Chinggis respectively consecrated their own flags (the *saculi* ritual, i.e. sprinkling *kumis* or milk wine) before setting forth on a campaign.<sup>11</sup> The anointment and sprinkling ritual served also as a symbol of legitimacy. In the sixth month of 1257, Möngke Qan visited the encampment of Chinggis Qan, and made a sacrifice to the standard and drum 谒太祖行宫, 祭旗鼓.<sup>12</sup> When Qubilai was a prince, he established his standard and encampment on the bank of the Luan river, and began to build his city and palaces (世祖皇帝在潜藩, 建牙纛、庐帐于滦河之上, 始作城郭宫室),<sup>13</sup> which were the origin of Shangdu or Xanadu, the first capital city of Qubilai. This indicates that by establishing his standard, Qubilai proclaimed his rule over North China.

### The Various Standards of the Mongols

Although tails were considered the most significant feature, other models for a standard existed. Zhao Gong, a Southern Song envoy to the Mongols in 1221 recorded, Chinggis establishes the great pure white flag as his symbol, besides which, there is no other flag or standard (成吉思之仪卫, 建大纯白旗以为识认, 外此并无他旌幢). Zhao Gong continues, for now the King (*Guowang*) only establishes a white flag, with nine tails, and a black moon in the center, and raises it up when setting forth on campaign (今国王止建一白旗, 九尾, 中有黑月, 出师则张之).<sup>14</sup>

The title *Guowang* (pronounced *Gui ong* in Middle Chinese) "King" refers to Muqali, who was entrusted by Chinggis Qan to rule over North China from 1217. In the eighth month of that year, Chinggis Qan bestowed on Muqali the great standard with nine tails which the Qan himself had established, and ordered the generals, "Muqali establishes this standard to promulgate decrees, like I do in person."<sup>15</sup> This standard was established in 1206 by Chinggis Qan to declare his supreme power. If Muqali and Chinggis held exactly the same standard, it would be oddly akin to indicating two rulers in East Asia. Thus between the two standards there must have been some significant difference, which as I would like to propose was the image of a black moon on Muqali's standard.

10 Rashid-ad-Din, trans. L.A. Smirnova, *Sbornik letopisei*. Vol. I, part 2, Moscow 1952: 40.

11 Igor de Rachewiltz, *op. cit.*: 115, 416.

12 *Yuan Shi*, chap. 3, Beijing 1976: 50.

13 Yu Ji 虞集, "Shangdu liushou He huimingong miao bei 上都留守贺惠愍公庙碑", In: *Daoyuan xuegu lu* 道园学古录 chap. 13, Sibu congkan edition.

14 Zhao Gong 赵珙, *Mengda Beilu* 蒙鞑备录, In: *Wang Guowei Yishu* 王国维遗书 vol.13, Shanghai 1940: 16.

15 *Yuan Shi*, chap. 119, "Muqali": 2923.

Judging from Eastern and Western sources, each Mongol leader or prince had one standard of a specific model.<sup>16</sup> I would like to present some examples.

As Qubilai's two leaders of the army for conquering the Southern Song, Marshall Aju had the image of double red moons on his standard 旗画双赤月,<sup>17</sup> and Marshall Bayan held a red standard 赤旗.<sup>18</sup>

When the Mongol army led by Jebe and Sübe'etei raided Transcaucasia in 1222, Armenians and Georgians at first believed the rumor that the Mongols were Christians who owned a tent-church and a Cross.<sup>19</sup> The Georgian Constable Ivané reported that the Mongols had a standard with the Cross.<sup>20</sup> As previous scholars have suggested,<sup>21</sup> the Mongols probably pretended to be Christians in order to decrease the vigilance of the Armenians and Georgians. However, we should not exclude the possibility that the standard of Jebe and/or Sübe'etei presented a cross-like image.

Marco Polo describes how the rebelling Prince Naian (=Nayan) "was a Christian baptized, and in this battle he had the Cross of Christ on the standard".<sup>22</sup> Since previous scholars have confirmed the fact that Nayan was a Christian,<sup>23</sup> we can accept the Cross on the standard as Nayan's specific symbol.

The Persian historian Juvaini wrote that when the Sultan of Khwarazm carried out a sudden attack, "Travelling light [he set out] with a few picked horsemen carrying banners of white cloth like the Mongol army".<sup>24</sup> This might indicate the Mongols' white standard. Persian paintings under the Ilkhanate frequently illustrated Mongol battle scenes, where the long standard held by a horseman often reached out of the frame line of the illustration (e.g. Edinburgh University Library, MS. Or. 20 f.124v, 125v).

The various standards we discussed above mainly belong to generals and princes. Sources provide more information about Chinggis Qan's successors' standards. Evidenced by a poem titled "Accompanying the Qa'an's Winter Hunting 扈从冬狩" (1233) by the Mongols' Khitan consultant Yelü Chucai with the verses: "The Emperor's Winter Hunting is like a battle, as soon as the white standard

16 Xu Quansheng 许全胜, *Heida shilue jiaozhu* 黑鞑事略校注, Lanzhou 2014: 132.

17 *Yuan Shi*, chap. 128, "Aju": 3123; chap. 9, "Qubilai 6": 183. I would like to thank Prof. Wang Xiaoxin 王晓欣 of Nankai University to draw my attention to this material.

18 *Yuan Shi*, chap. 127, "Bayan": 3107.

19 Kirakos Ganjakets'i, *History of the Armenians*, Erevan 1961: 202. Robert Bedrosian trans., *Kirakos Ganjakets'i's History of the Armenians*, New York 1986: 166.

20 C. Rodenberg ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum selectae*, Berlin 1883-1894, vol. I: 179 (no. 252).

21 Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, Harlow 2005: 49. Bayarsaikhan Dashdongdog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, Leiden Boston 2011: 49-50.

22 A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, *Marco Polo the Description of the World*, London 1938, Vol.1: 199.

23 Yao Dali 姚大力, 'Notes on the Rebellion of Nayan 乃颜之乱杂考', in his *Mengyuan zhidu yu zhengzhi wenhua* 蒙元制度与政治文化, Beijing 2011: 403-419.

24 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, J.A. Boyle trans., Cambridge, Massachusetts 1958: 420.

gives the signal, the encirclement is completed 天皇冬狩如行兵，白旄一麾长围成”，<sup>25</sup> Ögetei Qa'an's standard must have been white. However, it is not confirmed whether Ögetei Qa'an's white standard was the same as that of his father Chinggis. After the death of Chinggis, the White Standard with nine tails is never mentioned. Chinggis did not leave all his things to his son and successor Ögetei, but distributed them to his sons, brothers and uncles. Here I'd like to emphasize the relative independence of Chinggis' Four Great Ordos managed by his widows. The Four Great Ordos were encamped on the upper Kerulen where Chinggis grew up, rose up and got enthroned. They existed even after the Yuan collapsed. It is reasonable that the White Standard was kept in Chinggis' Ordos.

### Standards of the Yuan

In the parade of the Yuan Emperor, there was a black standard. As the *History of the Yuan* (*Yuan Shi*) attests, “The Black Standard, read as *tuq* in the Mongolian language, is a pure color lacquered pole with a tassel installed on it. Once the emperor marches, the vanguard raises the standard, along with the Drum on horseback. When the emperor stays [in the palace], the standard is put in the corner room to the west of the Yuehua gate 皂纛，国语读如秃。建纛于素漆竿。凡行幸，则先驱建纛，夹以马鼓。居则置纛于月华门西之隅室。”<sup>26</sup> A contemporary Chinese poem recounts similar information by relating that “In the corner room to the west of Yuehua gate, the six standards that are preserved are the deity's residence 月华门里西角屋，六纛幽藏神所居”。<sup>27</sup> The usage of the term *six standards* probably comes from Chinese classical rhetoric, as the *six standards* along with *twelve standards* usually refer to the royal parade of an emperor. Since nomadic standards usually had odd numbered tails, the Mongols' Black Standard could hardly have had six tails. In the famous painting *Qubilai Qa'an Hunting Scene* (1280) by Chinese artist Liu Guandao 刘贯道, in the lower right there is a horseman holding a long spear-like standard with a black tassel below the spear point which recalls the Qara Sülde in modern Ordos. Thus it is Liu Guandao's depiction of Qubilai's Black Standard. However, there is no drum on horseback in the painting. It is reasonable to assume it is a simplified depiction.

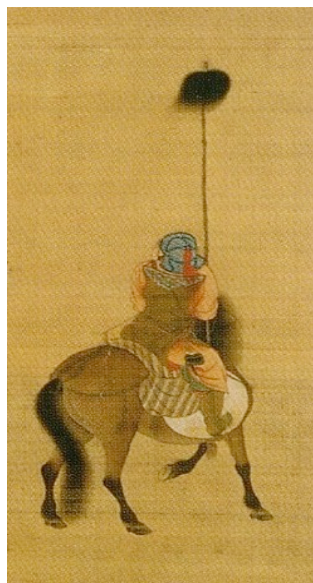
25 Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材, *Zhanran Junshi Wenji* 湛然居士文集, chap. 10, Beijing 1986: 214.

26 *Yuan Shi*, chap. 79, 1957: 1974.

27 Zhang Yu 张昱, *Poems of Zhang Guangbi* 张光弼诗集, chap.3, Sibugongkan edition, f. 12b.



*Qubilai Qa'an Hunting*



*Horseman with the Black Standard*

Another feature of the standards of the Yuan is the image of the Sun and Moon. In G. B. Ramusio's (1485–1557) Italian redaction of Marco Polo's *Description of the World*, a unique account concerning the war between Qubilai Qa'an and Prince Nayan reads:

Cubilai era sopra vn castel grande di legno, pieno di balestrieri, & arcieri, & nella sommità v'era alzata la real badiera con l'immagine del Sole, & della Luna. Et questo castello era portato da quattro elefanti tutti coperti di cuori cotti fortissimi, & di sopra v'erano panni di fera, & d'oro.<sup>28</sup>

[Qubilai was upon a grand wooden castle, which was full of crossbowmen and archers, and on the top he had his royal standard with the image of the Sun and the Moon raised up. And this castle was carried by four elephants all covered with boiled leather very hard, and above there were cloths of silk and of gold.]<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, Libro Secondo, Cap. 1, Venetia 1583 : 20.

<sup>29</sup> For an alternative English translation, see also A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, *op. cit.*: Vol.1 : 197. For Japanese translation, see Takada Hideki 高田英樹, *Sekai no ki: Tōhō kenmonroku taikō-yaku* 世界の記 : 「東方見聞録」 対校訳, Nagoya 2013: 180.

This passage cannot be found in other manuscripts, and presumably was copied by Ramusio from a rather early manuscript which was probably of a family close to the Latin Z manuscript. The fact that Qubilai was fond of mounting on a castle carried by elephants is attested in various historical sources, including Odoric of Pordenone who confirms the four elephants.<sup>30</sup> The *real badiera* indicates the Qa'an's ensign or standard. It is noteworthy that Marco Polo mentions the Sun and the Moon on the royal standard.

While according to Chinese tradition there are the flag of the sun, the flag of the moon, and the flag of the stars in the imperial parade,<sup>31</sup> Qubilai's royal standard with the image of the Sun and the Moon is likely to come from nomadic culture.

While *Tengri* as the highest god is not visualized, the sun and the moon as the two biggest celestial bodies could aptly be representative. John of Plano Carpini in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century reported in his *History of the Mongols*, "In addition they venerate and adore the sun, the moon, fire, water and the earth... When the moon is new, or at full moon, they embark on anything fresh they wish to do, and so they call the moon the great Emperor and bend the knee and pray to it. They also say that the sun is the mother of the moon because it receives its light from the sun."<sup>32</sup>

The sun and the moon have connections with the mandate of Heaven and rulership. In the *SHM* §103, young Chinggis escaped from the pursuit of the Merkid tribe onto the Burqan-qaldun mountain. Saved by the Burqan-qaldun mountain, Chinggis stated that his descendants should never forget to make a sacrifice to it every day. Then Chinggis faced the sun and kneeled down nine times, and sacrificed and prayed. In this way Chinggis swore to Heaven. The direction of the Sun stands for Heaven.

The Sun and the moon were considered a good omen and the symbol of the mandate of Heaven. In the *SHM* §21, Chinggis' great-grandmother Alan Qo'a explained her pregnancy as god's enlightenment. God entered her tent by the light of the sun and moon. In *SHM* §62, Chinggis' father-in-law Dei-sechen said he dreamed of a white falcon holding the sun and the moon landing on his hand, which corresponded with the arrival of Chinggis. As discussed by scholars, the *SHM* owes a certain dramatic license to its author(s).<sup>33</sup> The good omen of the sun and the moon mentioned by Alan Qo'a and Dei-sechen, consciously declares the mandate of Heaven.

30 Cf. Wang Ting 王颀, "Marco Polo's account of Great Khan riding an elephant re-explained 马可波罗所记大汗乘象补释", in *Yuan Shi Lun Cong* 元史论丛, vol. 8, 2001: 24-32.

31 *Yuan Shi*, 1967, 1979.

32 Christopher Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, New York 1955: 11-12.

33 Christopher P. Atwood, "Six Pre-Chinggisid Genealogies in Mongol Empire," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 19, 2012: 5-57.

In the *SHM* §189, when Tayang Qan wanted to attack Chinggis Qan, he used a metaphor: “While there are the Sun and the Moon in the Sky, how can there be two Qans on the earth?” The Sun and the Moon were connected directly with the supreme ruler. This concept can be traced to earlier nomadic powers. The ruler of the Xiongnu was entitled the Great *Chanyu* who was born of Heaven and Earth and created by the Sun and Moon (天地所生日月所置匈奴大单于). The image of the Sun and Moon appear on the crown of the statue of Niri Qaghan 泥利可汗 (r. 587–604) of the Western Turkic Khaghanate. The Khitan empire built the Sun and Moon Palace in the capital city 辽上京, established the Flag of Sun and Moon 日月旗 to stand for the emperor, and forbade people to wear or use the image of Sun and Moon.<sup>34</sup> In Yuan law, the production of the image of the sun and the moon was banned except for the Mongol court.<sup>35</sup>

The annual imperial sacrificial ritual to *Tengri* declares the mandate of Heaven and the legitimacy of the Mongol Empire. Chinese sources describe how Möngke Qan made sacrifices in 1252 on the Sun Moon Mountain 日月山. In a previous paper I have proposed that the location of this mountain was in the upper Kerulen region.<sup>36</sup> However, no such phonetic or semantic name can be identified in this region or even in the whole of Mongolia. From where, then, did the Sun Moon Mountain derive its name? I assume that Möngke Qan already had the image on his royal standard, so that the Chinese literati participating in the sacrifice in 1252 used the image to denote the mountain.

## Standards of the other Khanates

After 1260, the Mongol Empire dissolved into four parts. As the basic function of a standard is to command troops and subjects, every leader has his own *tuq*, such as Bayan’s red standard, Aju’s double red moon standard, Muqali’s pure white standard with a black moon, Prince Nayan’s standard with the cross, Jebe and/or Sübe’etei’s cross-like standard, and Qubilai’s black standard with the image of the sun and the moon as described by Marco Polo. Theoretically every khanate had its own specific standard. And every Khanate would have faced the issue of localization or compromise.

Among the earliest world maps, the Catalan Atlas produced by Abraham Cresques’ cartographic school in 1375 remarkably shows portraits of rulers of kingdoms, depicts each city as a castle, and uses a flag above every castle to display its political allegiance. Along the north coast of the Persian Gulf, five cities including “Hormissiom” (Ormis) share the same yellow flag with a red square in

<sup>34</sup> *Liao Shi* 辽史, Beijing 2016, 32: 1517, 281.

<sup>35</sup> *Yuan Dianzhang* 元典章, chap.58, Beijing and Tianjin 2011: 1962, 1965.

<sup>36</sup> Ma Xiaolin 马晓林, “On the location of the Mont Ri-yue 蒙元时代日月山地望考”, *Journal of Chinese Historical Geography* 中国历史地理论丛 2014-4: 49–54.

the middle. The same flag is also depicted on two huge ships off the Persian Gulf in the Indian Ocean. Another nine can be found on the Atlas from western Iran to central Asia. Thus we can safely consider the yellow flag with a red square in the Catalan Atlas as a representation of the Ilkhans' impact on the silk road, which stretched from Inner Eurasia through the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean.

In 1375, the Persian Gulf, the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia were in fact ruled by various powers. The only government that used to rule over all these lands and control the maritime trade between the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean was the Ilkhanate (1256–1335). Despite the Ilkhanate having collapsed four decades before the production of the Catalan Atlas, the Spanish cartographers didn't renew the information probably because the chaos after the Ilkhanate hindered the transmission of new politico-geographical knowledge. Nevertheless the Catalan school appears to make use of the yellow flag with a red square in the middle to symbolize the Ilkhanate.

As Yuka Kadoi pointed out, medieval Spanish sources are particularly relevant to the identification of the flags in the Catalan Atlas. The key treatise is the work entitled *El libro del conocimiento de todos los reinos* (*The Book of Knowledge of All Kingdoms*), attributed to an anonymous Franciscan missionary who claimed to have travelled in the Far East, the Middle East and Africa, that is, the entire world as far as medieval Europeans knew. The Book states: "The Emperor of Persia has for his device a yellow flag with a red square in the middle",<sup>37</sup> and this is identified with the Catalan Atlas. Kadoi follows the idea of Markham in 1912, thinking the book was compiled sometime between 1350 to 1360, and proposes that "it would make sense to consider it as one of the references for the use of a yellow flag with a red square for the area of the Persian Empire in the Catalan Atlas of 1375".<sup>38</sup> However, as Nancy F. Marino already noted in 1999, the Book mentions Avignon as a city where the Pope of Rome resides, and Clement VII moved his court there in 1378, thus the book could not have been composed before 1378. And the Catalan Atlas of 1375 cannot refer to the book. In fact, at least part, if not all, of the travels of the anonymous Franciscan missionary should be considered imaginary. The actual author(s) of the book must have made use of various available sources including an atlas of the Catalan school, although not specifically the famous 1375 version.<sup>39</sup>

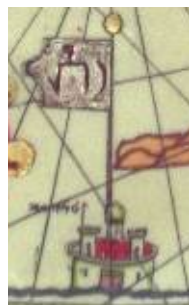
For the book and the Catalan Atlas, Kadoi is right in identifying the white flag with a red square in middle with that of the Chaghatayids in central Asia, and identifying the white flag with a red sign with that of the Golden Horde. The

37 Clement Markham trans. & ed., *Book of the Knowledge of All the Kingdoms, Lands, and Lordships that Art in the World, and the Arms and Devices of Each Land and Lordship, or of the Kings and Lords who Possess Them*, London 1912: 52–53; pl. 17, 80.

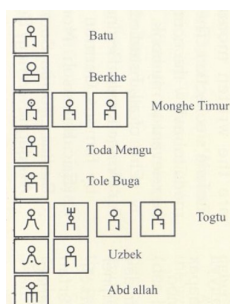
38 Yuka Kadoi, "On the Temurid Flag," In: Markus Ritter and Lorenz Korn ed., *Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie*, Wiesbaden 2010: 148.

39 Nancy F. Marino, *El libro del conocimiento de todos los reinos* (*The book of knowledge of all kingdoms*), Tempe, Arizona 1999: xxxviii.

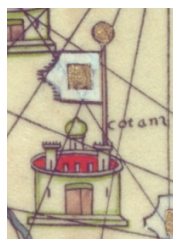
Spanish cartographers' drawing must have based on certain source. The sign on the flag of the Golden Horde resembles the tamghas of the Batu family which can be found on coins.<sup>40</sup>



*Golden Horde city in the Catalan Atlas*



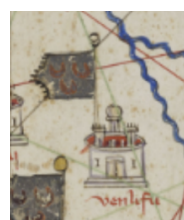
*Tamghas of Batu's family*



*Ilkhanate city*



*Chaghatai Khanate city*



*Temurlane city*

It is not easy to determine the cultural meaning of the flags of the Ilkhans and the Chaghataiyids. As is well attested, the Persian tradition of flag (*drafs̄/deraf̄s̄*) dates back to Pre-Islamic period.<sup>41</sup> During the Middle Ages, the word *alam* in both Arabic and Persian was commonly used in almost the same sense, besides which there were Arabic *lewā'* and *rāya*, Turkish *beyraq* (Turkman *beydaq*) and *sanjaq* (Persian *sanjāq*).<sup>42</sup> While Iranian and Turkish emblems had combined with Islamic designs, the Mongols came to Persia with their *tuq* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which

40 Nyama, *The Coins of Mongol Empire and Clan Tamgha of Khans (VIII-XVI)*, Ulaanbaatar 2005: 83.

41 A. Shapur Shahbazi, "Derafs̄," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. VII, Fasc. 3: 312-315.

42 J. Calmard and J. W. Allan, "alam va 'alāmat," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. I, Fasc. 8, 785-791.



increased the diversity of flags.<sup>43</sup> For the Mongols, the colors gold and white stand for the imperial family.

As for the Ilkhanate, the Mongolian White Standard, Black Standard or Mottled Standard cannot be found in historical sources. Hulagu (Hülegü) clearly had a standard different from that of his brothers Möngke and Qubilai. A miniature in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113, fol. 177) illustrating Hulagu's march depicts a horseman holding a red standard riding in front of Hulagu. The same red *tuq* appears in the siege of Erbil in 1258/9 (fol. 187). It is the typical Mongol form of standard. The red color might explain the red square in the center of the Ilkhanid flag in the Catalan Atlas. In addition, a canopy (Mong. *sügür*) of Hulagu is held aloft by his attendant as attested by miniatures. The colors in red and gold correspond to the Spanish source.



*Hulagu's March*

## Conclusions

The Mongols' standards came from the steppe, flying over Eurasia during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, presenting various forms featuring tails, colors and images. There were the White Standard with nine tails, the Black Standard, and the Mottled Standard in the time of Chinggis Qan. The Mongol warlords held their own emblems, for example, Muqali's black moon, Aju's double red moons, Bayan's red flag, Nayan's cross, and so on.

<sup>43</sup> Phyllis Ackerman, "Standards, Banners and Badges," In: Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman eds., *Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present* VI, 1939: 2766-2782. A. Shapur Shahbazi, "Flags i. Of Persia," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. X/1: 12-27. Yuka Kadoi, "Flags," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edition, Leiden 2014: 119-123.

Chinggis Qan's White Standard was not passed on to his successors but was kept in his Ordos on the upper Kerulen. While Qubilai's Great Yuan Empire flew a Black Standard, it is evidenced by Marco Polo and other sources that the Great Qa'an who succeeded to Chinggis' East Asian heritage started to put the image of the sun and the moon on his standard. The tradition to consider the sun and the moon as symbols of the mandate of Heaven can be traced to the Xiongnu, Turk, and Khitan empires.

In the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the standards of the Mongol Khanates experienced a process of transformation and localization. According to Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*, Hulagu Qan's *tuq* eventually turned into Ghazan Qan's *rāyat-i humāyūn* "auspicious flag", indicating a kind of localization. It is not only a change of expression but a combination between Islamic Persian culture and Mongol tradition. Such a combination was illustrated in the Catalan Atlas and the Spanish source *El libro del conocimiento de todos los reinos* from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Meanwhile, as can be seen in a miniature depicting the funeral of Ghazan Qan (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113: fol. 245v), a black *tuq* was carried by a horseman, which represented the Mongol culture in the Ilkan court. The forms of the Mongol Khanates' standards might have changed through time while they kept some of the Mongols' favorite colors, tamgha, or images.