To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Bruce G. Privratsky entitled "Turkistan: Kazak Religion and Collective Memory." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in anthropology.

Benita J. Howell, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of The Graduate School

TURKISTAN:

KAZAK RELIGION AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Bruce G. Privratsky

August 1998

Copyright © Bruce G. Privratsky, 1998

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

This study in the anthropology of religion examines the relationship between Kazak ethnicity and religion, exploring how the collective memory is mediating Muslim values in Kazak culture in the 1990s. Ethnographic field research was conducted in the Kazak language from 1992 to 1998 in the city of Turkistan (Turkestan) in southern Kazakstan (Kazakhstan). Turkistan is the site of the Timurid shrine of Ahmet Yasawi (Ahmed Yasavi), a key figure in the Turkic Sufism of Central Asia. Today it is also a cultural center of the new Pan-Turkism and the site of a Kazak-Turkish international university.

The findings of the study are that Kazak religion in Turkistan is affectively experienced as five elements: (1) an ethnic identity that is conceived as a Muslim identity, because the Kazak steppe has been sacralized by Muslim architectural landscapes; (2) normative Islam idealized as the "pure way," which the Kazak elders and Qojas *(khojas)*, a religious honor group with roots in the Sufi tradition, are expected to practice as surrogates for the Kazak community; (3) an ancestor cult energized by dreams and dream-visions and expressed in domestic and neighborhood rites that reflect the Islamic cycle of funerary meals; (4) pilgrimage *(ziyarat)* to the tomb of Ahmet Yasawi and the peripheral shrines of other Muslim saints, whose spirits are associated with the spirits of the Kazak ancestors; and (5) folk medicine associated with Muslim therapeutic values, the blessing *(baraka)* of Muslim saints, and the healer's ancestor-spirits.

In five descriptive chapters these elements are substantiated with verbatim interview data in Kazak, with English translations. The problem of normative and popular Islam (folk Islam), the Islamization of Inner Asia, the

syncretic interpretation of Turko-Mongolian shamanism, and the semantic fields of Kazak religious discourse are explored.

The persistence of Kazak religion in the Soviet Union is accounted for by the strength of the contextualization of Islam in the nomadic period and the capacity of the collective memory to store religious values in attenuated ritual forms. The study concludes that religion identified with sacred habitus and ethnic identity will persist in the collective memory even under severe deculturative pressure.

PREFACE

Permission to conduct the research and time to write was given by Prof. Murat Jurinov, President of Yasawi University and former Minister of Education of the Republic of Kazakstan. Scholarly counsel was provided by Prof. Ağın Qasımjanov of the Kazak National University (KazGU) in Almaty. Both men have supported my work for seven years. Thanks to them I have faced few of the bureaucratic obstacles that tend to hamper crosscultural field research. Gaũhar M. Sızdıqova, senior lecturer in the Department of General History, Yasawi University, served as research associate; her role is highlighted throughout the study and in the section on methodology in Chapter 1.

Long-term fieldwork was made possible by support from a program of United Methodist ministries in Central Asia established by the Holston Conference, Knoxville, Tennessee. From the outset I revealed the sources of my financial support to anyone who asked. Research expenses, however, came from personal funds.

I am committed to the contextualization of Biblical proclamation according to an anthropological model that "looks for God's revelation and self-manifestation within the values, relational patterns, and concerns of a culture" (Bevans 1982:49; cf. Donovan 1982; Sanneh 1989, 1993). Ethnography is one way to begin learning. Strong cultural systems, I believe, are resilient enough that culture contact between honest individuals will not normally disrupt or distort them (Hallowell 1955:316ff.); ideally, it opens before them a world of intercultural understanding which should not be denied to them if they choose to have it. Post-colonial hegemonism is

not a matter I take lightly, but in the end I have come to feel that my Kazak hosts knew rather better how to handle me than I knew how to handle them.

Perhaps by studying religion, where moral values are assumed to apply, I had the advantage of *naïveté* and transparency; by contrast, when Peneff tried to do an ethnography of Algerian industrialists (1985), his very openness was treated as "tacit proof of his fundamental dishonesty" (Mitchell 1993:38). Crosscultural research tends to be suspect in post-colonial contexts for good reason, but it is also unfairly resented by social groups protecting their interests. Some of the Turkish educational leaders treated me as an intruder in their Pan-Turkic space. If my life in Turkistan was ever an affront to the dignity of the Kazak people, who graciously hosted me and my family and helped us learn to live among them, I beg their forgiveness.

Colleagues and mentors assisted me from the United States by email. Without their faithfulness to me, I would have lost my way. Profs. Benita J. Howell, Rosalind I.J. Hackett, and Thomas N. Turner of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville; and William Y. Adams of the University of Kentucky (emeritus), read and commented on drafts of these chapters as a members of my doctoral committee, as did Dr. Devin DeWeese of Indiana University, who also provided source materials on the history of Inner Asian religions and influenced my understanding of conversion and syncretcism. I take this opportunity to thank all of them.

Most of all I thank Emy, who grew broccoli and lettuce in the desert against all odds, conducted a competent and remarkably sensitive professional program of her own, and supported me in mine. Through it all

our daughters ministered to us: Ada, who cheerfully helped us survive our first hot summer and very cold winter in Turkistan; Joanna, who learned from Kazak girlfriends how to take care of a mud-brick house; and Katie, our youngest, who became so utterly bilingual in Kazak that in the end she became, at 14, my live-in consultant and toughest critic on linguistic problems. Joanna and Katie made the first draft of the regional map, which was finished by Lars Huttar, who also produced the city map. I thank him for permission to use the maps and several of his photographs.

When the ethnographer does his write-up on the field, data never stops coming in. As I neared the end of the work, a Kazak colleague told me how her grandfather had had to change their family name when her great-grandfather, a mullah, was denounced as an "enemy of the people." It is grievous to have to confess to her that social scientists were participants in the persecution of people of faith. Whatever the ethnographic value of this study, I hope it will be received by her and Kazak friends as an apology from the profession and a tribute to their ancestors who suffered for their faith.

Turkistan, January 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

1. COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND THE PROBLEM OF KAZAK RELIGION.....1

The Historical Setting.....2

An Outline of the Study.....10

Religion in Anthropology.....12

The Problem of Kazak Religion.....20

Collective Memory Theory and Kazak Religion.....43

Methodology.....59

2. *KIYELI JER:* MUSLIM LANDSCAPE AND KAZAK ETHNICITY.....66

The Ethnic Demography of Turkistan.....72

Local History: Turkistan and Kazak Ethnogenesis.....89

Muslim Burial Grounds and Kazak Ethnic Identity.....95

Sacred Landscape: Yasawi and his Pilgrims.....105

Muslim Values and Kazak Ethnic Markers.....116

Conclusion.....130

3. *TAZA JOL*: THE PURE WAY OF ISLAM AMONG THE KAZAKS.....135

The Names of God and the Kazak Idea of Islam.....139

The Daily Experience of Purity and Impurity.....142

Upholding the Five Pillars of Islam.....149

Observing the Islamic Rites of Passage.....167

The Qojas: Guardians of the *Taza Jol*.....175

The Legacy of the Local Sufi Tradition.....181

Conclusion.....192

4. *ARUAQ:* REMEMBERING THE ANCESTORS.....197

Kinship, Lineage, and the Ancestor-Spirits.....198

Dreams of the Ancestors.....205

The Quran Recital and Blessing.....213

The Thursday Ritual of Quran and Oil.....220

Occasional Ceremonial Meals.....241

The Funeral Cycle and Memorial Feast.....244

The Kazak Ancestor Cult and the Persistence of Religion....252

Conclusion.....257

5. *AULIYE:* REMEMBERING THE SAINTS.....260

The Saints.....264

The Shrine Center and Its Periphery.....274

Pilgrimage at the Yasawi Shrine.....283

Living Saints: Kazak Tradition and New Age Religion.....305

The *Ayan* Complex: The Symbiosis of Ancestors and Saints....312

Conclusion.....317

6. *EMSHI:* THE KAZAK HEALER.....321

Qoja and Mullah: The Muslim Way of Healing.....324

Three *Täwips*: Botajan, the Aspiring Shaman.....335

Three *Täwips*: Uljalġas, the Muslim Eclectic.....343

Three *Täwips*: Zulfiya, the Spitter.....348

Palshı: The Fortune-Tellers.....353

Baqsı: Remembrances of the Kazak Shaman.....360

Semantic Problems in the Healing Tradition.....375

Today's *Emshi* and Yesterday's Shaman.....382

Conclusion.....387

7. KAZAK RELIGION AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY.....391

The Kazaks and Their Religion.....392

Collective Memory and Religion.....406

Collective Memory and the Origins of Religion.....415

Kazak Religion and the Ethnographic Experience.....421

REFERENCES CITED.....424

APPENDIX.....466

Principal Informants.....467

VITA.....470

LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

Figure 1. Map of Southern Kazakstan.....6

Figure 2. Map of the City of Turkistan.....7

Figure 3. The Shrines of Turkistan (list).....278

TRANSLITERATION: A KAZAK-LATIN ORTHOGRAPHY

Kazak Alphabet	*Transliteration*	*Pronunciation Notes*	*Russian-Latin and ASCII Variants*
А	a	(as in English *father*)	
Ә	ä	(as in *cat*)	a'
Б	b		
В	v		
Г	g		
Ғ	ġ	(back-velar fricative, as in the gutteral French *r: raison*)	gh
Д	d		
Е	e	(slightly palatalized: *ye*)	ye
Ё	yo		
Ж	j	(as in French *jeune,* English *pleasure*)	zh
З	z		
И	ıy	(schwa + *ee* as a back diphthong)	i
	iy	(short *i* + *ee* as a front diphthong)	
	ī	(as in *feet*, in words from Arabic)	
Й	y	(semivowel, as in *yellow, boy*)	i (j)
К	k	(velar or soft *k*)	
Қ	q	(back-velar or hard *k*)	
Л	l		
М	m		
Н	n		
Ң	ng		
О	o	(with a glide in initial position: *wo*)	
Ө	ö	(as in German but with a glide: *wö*)	o'
П	p		
Р	r		
С	s		
Т	t		
У	ũ	(as in *moon,* Turkish *su*)	u (oo)
	w	(intervocalically, and in foreign words)	

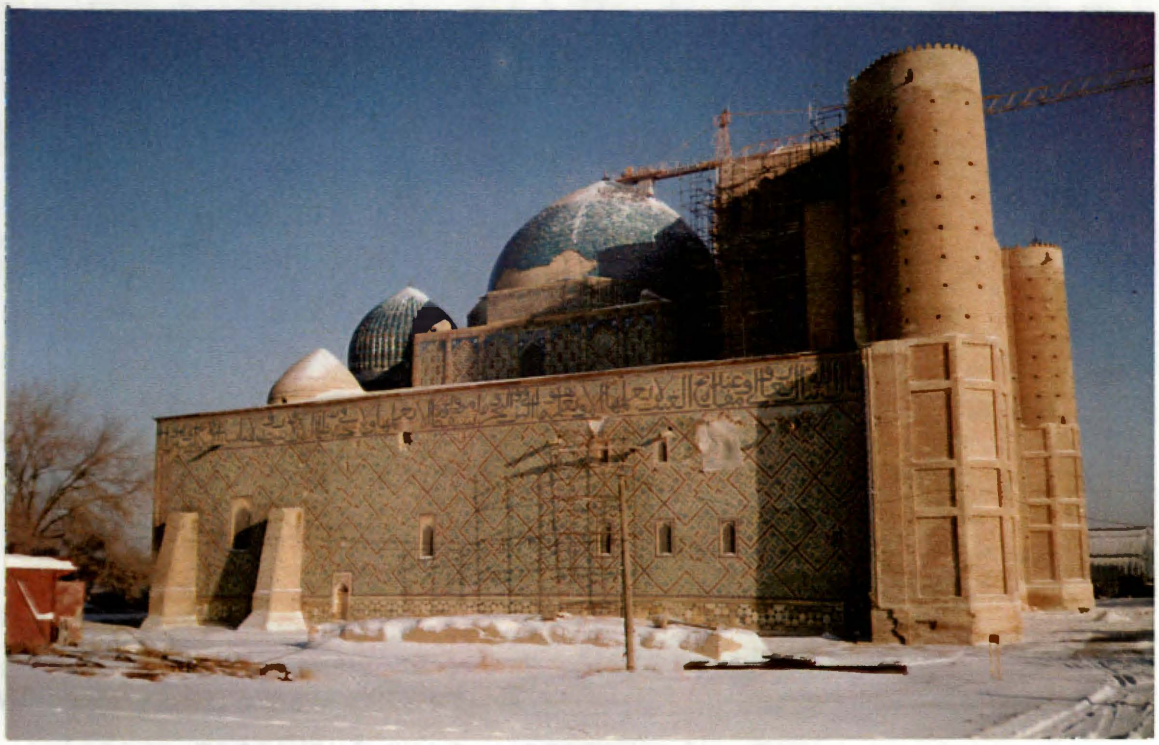
Ұ	u	(very low, rounded back vowel)	u
Ү	ü	(as in German, but closer to *ö*)	u'
Ф	f		
Х	ḫ	(as in German *ich*)	kh
һ	h		
Ц	ts		
Ч	ch	(in foreign words only)	tsch
Ш	sh		
Щ	sch	(in Russian and a few Kazak words only)	shch
ъ		(hard sign, in Russian words only)	'
Ы	ı	(schwa, as in Turkish *hanım*)	y
І	i	(shorter than English short *i*)	
ь		(soft sign, in Russian words only)	'
Э	e	(unpalatalized short *e* in foreign words)	
Ю	yu		
Я	ya		

Note on Transliteration

Systematic transliteration as above is used for Kazak-language material. In the English text, however, I bow to new conventions, e.g. Kazak instead of Qazaq or Kazakh, Almaty instead of Almatı, Alma-Ata, etc. Despite a new proposal for a common Turkic alphabet that leans heavily toward Turkish (Kaydarov 1997, cf. *KTLS*; Landau 1995:212), Kazak has not yet been standardized with a roman alphabet designed both for Kazak distinctives and for readability by speakers of Turkic and European languages. The new Uzbek alphabet is a good model.

Unlike Uzbek, however, Kazak adheres strictly to Turkic vowel harmony (except in words of foreign origin). To make this graphically obvious, I have given diacriticals to all front vowels except *e*, and left all the back vowels bare. As in Turkish, *y* represents the semivowel *jumsaq i (i kratkoe)*; so *shay* is pronounced like English shy, and *peyil* like pail. Depending on position and function, *ıy, iy* and *ī* replace the Cyrillic *i*; likewise *w* and *ū* for Cyrillic *u*. The dotted *ġ* and *ḫ* are retained for the gutterals. Doubled consonants *(ch, ng, sh)* follow the new romanized Uzbek.

Transliterations for Persian and Arabic words are given on first occurrences, but common English or Kazak spellings (cf. *OEMIW*) are used thereafter. Diacriticals are dropped from upper case characters.



The Shrine of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi, winter 1998, with restoration in progress (Photo by Lars Huttar)



The author with friends at the Arstan Bab Shrine, May 1996



Approaching Qusshı Ata Cemetery near Turkistan, April 1998



A tomb at Qusshı Ata Cemetery with a relief of the Yasawi Shrine built into the façade of the tomb.



Kök Tondı Ata Shrine at Shobanaq, with associated graves fenced in immediately in front of the door, April 1998



Kazak and Russian faces



Alim Qoja, May 1995 (see "Principal Informants" in the Appendix)



A mendicant mullah at the Yasawi Shrine, May 1995

> What is horrifying in totalitarian regimes is not only the violation of human dignity but the fear that there might remain nobody who could ever again properly bear witness to the past.
>
> —Paul Connerton (1989:15)

CHAPTER ONE

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND THE PROBLEM OF KAZAK RELIGION

This study examines the relationship between Kazak ethnicity and religion and explores how the collective memory is mediating religious belief and behavior in Kazak culture in the 1990s. The dynamics of religion and ethnicity are nowhere more powerfully felt by the Kazaks than in their historic city of Turkistan,[1] where the research for this study was conducted. An historic center of a religious life associated with the Sufi legacy, Turkistan is often described by Kazaks as the "holy hearth" *(kiyeli oshaq)* and the "axis" (*kindik*; Ar. *quṭb*) of their culture. To call it a hearth is to

---

1. Unless otherwise indicated, Turkistan here refers to the city. More commonly it designates the Inner Asian region inhabited by Turkic peoples, though the precise referent has been variable. Turkistan was an administrative region of the Russian Empire that included Central Asia and the Syr Darya and Jetisu ("seven rivers," Rs. Semireche) regions of southern Kazakstan. Earlier, Turkistan was simply the northern steppe — roughly present-day Kazakstan — occupied by Turkic nomads who had not yet accepted Islam, as distinct from sedentary Mawarannahr and Khorezm (Transoxiana) to the south.

Turkistan is better spelled Türkistan, with an umlaut, emphasizing the Turkic front vowels as in Turkish, which accurately transliterates the Kazak-Cyrillic spelling. Bowing to common usage, I have eliminated diacritical markers from toponyms and common proper nouns in the English text. According to transliteration rules used by the government of Kazakstan, Turkestan with an *e* is incorrect, because it transliterates Russian rather than Kazak spelling; for the same reason Kazakh with an *h* is now incorrect.

summon the evocative power of Kazak domestic culture, and to call it the *quṭb* or axis is to compare it, as Sufis often did, to Mecca, where the *Ka'ba* stone is the Islamic *axis mundi*, the center of the world (*OEMIW* 3:353). The city has mythic dimensions when Kazaks speak of it.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Taking a new approach, this study views the Kazaks from the perspective of Turkistan instead of from Kazakstan's Russian and russified cities. The city has now emerged from the dramatic social changes of the 20th century, laying hold again of a religious heritage that has been tested but not destroyed. At least until 1930 public *zikir* (Ar. *dhikr*) or Sufi chant ceremonies were still held on Fridays at the shrine of Ahmet Yasawi that dominates the old part of the town (see the photographs before page 1). Families claiming Arab descent from Ali and Muhammad, called Qojas (Pers. *khoja*, teacher), ran the shrine and led the *zikir* and prayers there. The integrity of "pious endowments" of lands and enterprises (Ar. *waqf*; Kz. *waqıp*; cf. McChesney 1991) that provided its economic infrastructure had been eroded even before the Russian occupation of the town in 1864 (Gordlevsky 1932:63); these were contested, according to DeWeese's recent reconstruction (1997b), by various Qoja groups throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, and were finally seized by the Soviets.

Late 19th century reports show that the Kazak *baqsı* (shaman) was a visible, but more and more marginal, figure in Kazak communities, his rhetoric Islamized, and his role as healer eclipsed by *täwips* (Ar. *tabib,* doctor) practicing Muslim healing arts. The advent of the Soviet medical system

was accompanied by an attack on the old healing traditions as superstitious and obscurantist. The *baqsıs* seem to have been brutally suppressed.

When Stalin's program of collectivization began in 1929 and all nationalist opposition was purged beginning in 1927–28, it was the public face of Muslim life that was attacked. In Turkistan all mosques were closed for a time — one was allowed to reopen in 1943 (Stalin eased up on religion for the sake of a unified war effort). *Zikir* was now held at home instead of in public, or it gave way to less exuberant household rites — Quran recitals, sacred meals, rites of passage — that had always been part of Islamic practice in Inner Asia.[1] Fearing arrest, many of the Qojas of Turkistan and the surrounding area fled to Tashkent, where it was felt that they would not be harmed if they hid among the Uzbeks. Turkistan was left virtually without specialized religious leadership; the religious services which the Qojas had performed on their behalf — Quran recitals, making amulets, healing in the Muslim way by breathing on the sick — were now taken up by *dümshe moldas* (mullah fools), who lacked pedigree, knew only a verse or two of the Quran, and were suspected of pecuniary motives. Some Qoja families later returned to Turkistan when the heat was off, but by then the Kazaks had learned to live without mosques or patrons.

The transition of the 1930s as remembered by our elderly informants

---

1. Inner Asia includes the cultural region of Turko-Mongolian culture that is roughly coterminous geographically with Asian inland drainage, as opposed to its littoral regions such as Anatolia or Moghul India. Inner Asia is a broader designation than Central Asia, which is the area of sedentary Muslim (Turko-Persian) culture centered in Mawarannahr (Tranxoxiana) and including southern Kazakstan. The city of Turkistan lies in the northern border region of Central Asian culture. Soviet Central Asia was a culturally problematic term for the four southern republics of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan only, excluding Kazakstan (cf. DeWeese 1994:7ff.).

is the baseline for most of the diachronic comparisons that will be made in this study. A history of the city from medieval times will be included in DeWeese's work (forthcoming) on the Yasawi Sufi tradition.

The domestic cult of Inner Asian religion (DeWeese 1994:39ff.) and its symbiotic relationship with the shrines of the Muslim saints defines Kazak religion today. Islam among the Kazaks is best understood not, as is commonly supposed, in terms of a syncretic interaction between shamanism and Sufism, but as a subdued Muslim piety practiced vicariously by the Kazak elders (including women) on behalf of their children, sheltered in the family life of a now wholly sedentarized Kazak society. The Qojas remain as a religious honor group with limited spiritual authority and often only a shadowy awareness of their own Sufi heritage.

Turkistan was a village called Yası (Yassī) before the 16th century, whence Yasawī, the Arabic *nisba* (name indicating home town) for its Muslim saint, Ahmet Yasawi. He is formally called *Qul Qoja Ahmet Yasawī* — Ahmet, the servant *(Qul)* of God, a descendent of the Arabs *(Qoja)*, a man of Yası *(Yasawī)*. Another popular title, Eminent Sultan *(Äziret Sultan)*, indicates that he was renowned as a *shaykh* or founder of a Sufi community whose spiritual power (Ar. *baraka*; Kz. *bereke*) is believed to reside at the place where he is buried. Yasawi, therefore, is not only a *nisba* for the man but also a toponym for the shrine and the city itself. To visit Turkistan is, for Muslims, to make a make a personal visit to Yasawi, a pilgrimage to the "Second Mecca" *(ekinshi Mekke)*.

Geography, demography, and culture. Located on a flat desert-steppe between the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) River and the Karatau (Qaratau) Moun-

tains[1] (see Figure 1), Turkistan is a traditional Central Asian oasis town of sun-baked mud-brick homes. There are modern concrete buildings only along the main streets, in a decrepit Soviet-style housing project and factory row built in the 1970s and '80s, and on the sparkling new '90s-style campus of Yasawi University[2] (see Figure 2). Turkistan is five hours north of Tashkent by train or a two-hour drive northwest of Shymkent on a two-lane highway that leads eventually to the Aral Sea, the Volga, and Moscow. Both culturally and geographically, Turkistan is far indeed from Almaty, the showcase of Soviet Kazakstan, with its large Russian population, Soviet architecture, alpine scenery, and cosmopolitan ambience. A fertile crescent north of the Syr Darya and the Alatau (Tien Shan) Mountains, stretching 600 kilometers through a string of oasis towns from Qızıl Orda (Kzyl Orda; Aq Meshit) to Taraz (Dzhambul; Aũliye Ata), is the heartland of Muslim culture at the northern edge of Central Asia, and its spiritual center is the blue dome over the tomb of Ahmet Yasawi (cf. T.Qongıratbaev 1996).

Overshadowed in the early medieval period by the important Syr Darya city of Otrar,[3] Yası grew into a commercial town where nomads and

---

1. Transliteration of Turkic languages has not been satisfactorily standardized. In this study familiar English spellings without diacriticals are used in the English text; when Kazak texts or words are cited, the Transliteration Table (pp. xi-xii) is followed.

2. Founded in 1991, Turkistan State University *(Türkistan Memlekettik Universiteti)* was re-organized with an intergovernmental governing board of Turks and Kazaks and renamed the Hoja Ahmet Yasawi Kazak-Turkish International University *(Qoja Ahmet Yasawi atındağı Ḥalıqaralıq Qazaq-Türik Universiteti)* in 1993 (Jurınov 1993).

3. The mound of Otrar (Farab) near Turkistan is the most extensive archeological site in southern Kazakstan (Nusqabayulı and Jänibek 1997). The insult to Genghis Khan offered by its Khorezmian ruler was the proximate cause of the Mongol invasion of Central Asia in 1219. Smagulov suggests that the final demise of Otrar in the 16th century contributed to the growth of Yası (1991:11).

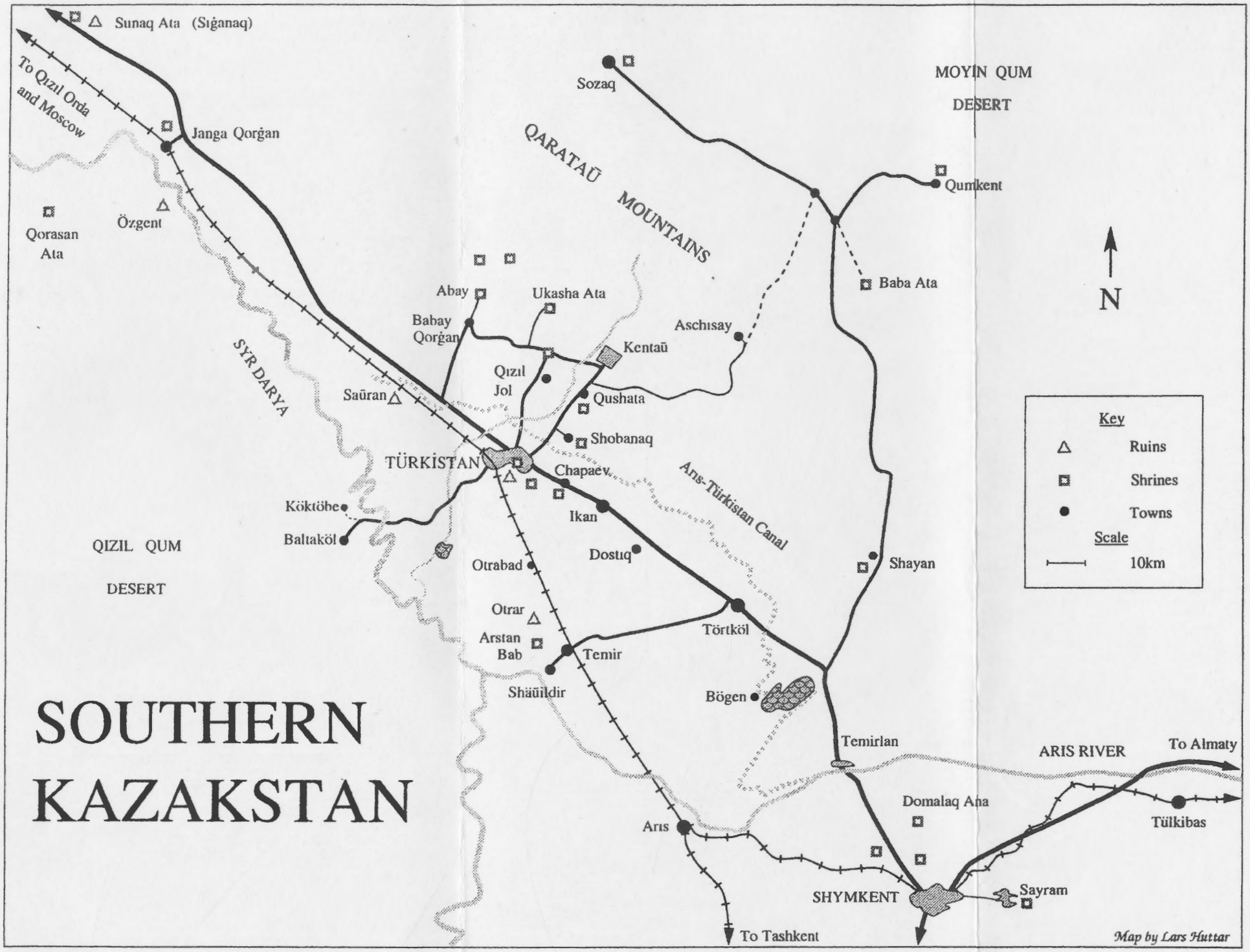


FIGURE 1: MAP OF SOUTHERN KAZAKSTAN

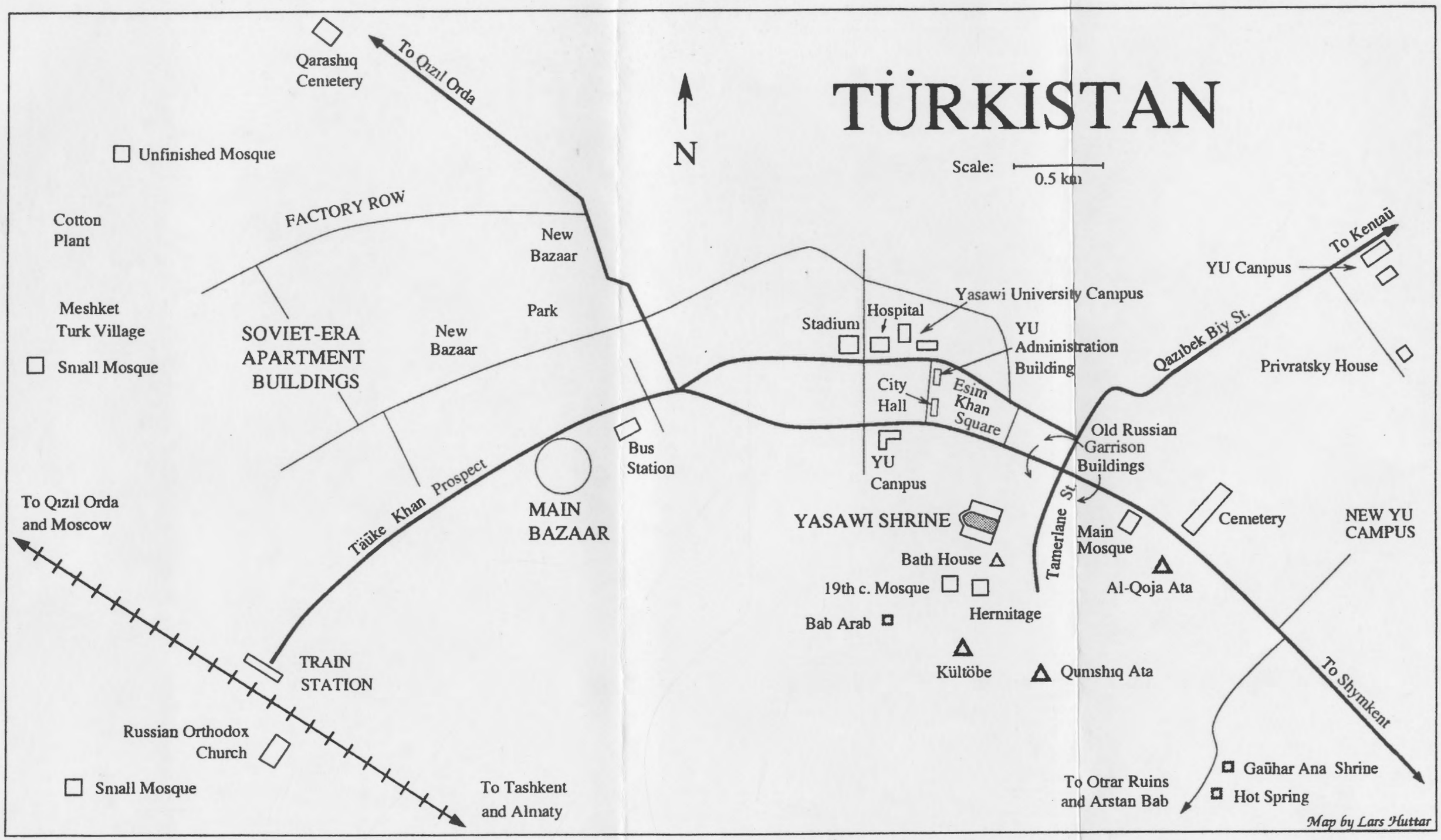


FIGURE 2: MAP OF TURKISTAN

townsmen met at the bazaar around the Yasawi Shrine, built in the late 14th century by Emir Timür (Tamerlane). A century later the Kazak khans occupied it, and Esim (Ishim) Khan made it his capital in 1599. In the 17th and 18th centuries the invasion of the Kazak steppe by Jungar (Mongolian) tribes brought devastation to the Syr Darya towns. After a short-lived revival of the Kazak khanate under Ablay (Abylai) in 1771, Turkistan was claimed by the Emirs of Bukhara and Khoqand, profited in the early 19th century from Khoqand's expanded trade relations with Russia, and after 1864 grew rapidly during a half-century of direct Tsarist rule. It became a station on the new Moscow-Tashkent railroad line in 1903.

During nomadic times and well into the Soviet period only a small portion of the town's population was Kazak: in the 1897 population of 11,253 there were only 1,415 Kazaks (Dobrosmyslov 1912:126). Though identified with the Kazaks since the early 16th century and included within the borders of Kazakstan when the Russian Empire was reorganized into constituent Soviet "republics" in 1924, the town was dominated by "Uzbeks" (including Sarts and Sunaqs; see Chapter 2). In the early years of the Soviet economic experiment, collectivization brought Kazaks to town, impoverished, their herds confiscated (Abdirayimov et al. 1991). A flourish of economic growth and the rekazakification of the city intensified in the 1950s and '60s when a few factories were built; cotton production was intensified at the same time by the building of the Arıs-Turkistan Canal (see demographic detail in Chapter 2).

Nomadic lifeways — the pastoral trek between *jaylaū* and *qıstaū* (summer and winter pastures) — are now a romantic memory celebrated in song and poetry by the Kazaks, like tepees and buffalo hunts among the

Plains Indians. Kazak nomadism still exists marginally in China (Hoppe 1988). Very few Kazaks know how to erect a *kiyiz üy* (lit. felt house; yurt) any more. One elderly Kazak informant remembered living as a child in a yurt in her father's village *(qıstaũ)* near Turkistan, and elderly Uzbeks remember when Kazak commerce was limited to visits to town to trade sheep on the hoof for flour and sugar. Today the Kazaks live in town and dominate its political and administrative functions, with growing economic clout alongside the Uzbeks (see Chapter 2). Today Turkistan has a population of around 85,000, about 60 per cent Kazak, and is a commercial *êntrepot* for the transfer of foreign goods from China, India, and Turkey to the villages and towns of southern and central Kazakstan.

Kazakstan and Pan-Turkism. Two dramatic sociopolitical changes have impacted religion in Turkistan in the 1990s. The first is that the city is located in the newly independent Kazakstan, its Islamic heritage claimed by the nation as a prized possession. The Yasawi Shrine is pictured on the back of the banknotes of the Republic of Kazakstan, and Turkistan is the only Kazak city that is "on the money." It has been designated by UNESCO as a 1500-year-old historic site (*KP* June 11, 1996).[1]

Secondly, Turkistan has become a focus of the new Pan-Turkism (Landau 1995), which will be explored in Chapter 2. Turkish teachers, educational administrators, and construction engineers have come to work in Turkistan since 1993 and have brought with them a deep sense of Turkic

---

1. Recent excavations at the Kültobe site near the Yasawi Shrine suggest Scythian occupation as early as 2,000 years ago (Isabekov 1998), but the figure provided to UNESCO was 1500 years, based on excavations during the Soviet period (*SPIKK* 1994:268-271 [Smagulov]).

identity. Kazaks hospitably encourage them to read an ethnic epic into the name of the city. In this intercultural discussion Turkistan has become a kind of "home town" of the Oghuz hordes and Seljuk sultans, who migrated westward toward Anatolia (modern Turkey) a millenium ago. The Turkish government and Islamic charitable foundations in Turkey are investing in the restoration of the Yasawi Shrine and in Yasawi University. The romantic name, Turkistan, frozen in place during the Soviet period,[1] has become "hot" again.

AN OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The present study describes the culture-change process in Kazak religious life as evidenced in Kazak language and cultural behavior in the 1990s. By addressing the problem of the persistence of religion under deculturative pressure, I thereby engage the nature of religion itself. The Muslim culture of the Kazaks in their most important religious environment will be presented under five headings: Muslim landscape and Kazak ethnicity (Chapter 2); the pure way of Islam among the Kazaks (Chapter 3): the cult of the ancestor-spirits (Chapter 4); saints and pilgrimage in Turkistan (Chapter 5); and the Kazak healers (Chapter 6). In each case our theoreti-

---

1. When Moscow, in its fight against Pan-Turkism, erased the Turkestan Governship of the Russian Empire and carved it up into "autonomous soviet socialist republics" along ethnic lines, it failed, for reasons that are unclear, to change the name of the *city* of Turkistan. Changing place names to suppress political and religious memories was Soviet policy: *Aq Meshit* (White Mosque) became Kzyl Orda (Red Center), and *Aliye Ata* (Father Saint) became Dzhambul (a Kazak bard who was an ardent Stalinist). Neither local informants nor historians could shed any light on why Turkistan was allowed to keep its controversial name.

cal interest is the social force of each cultural domain to evoke the memory of the Islamic tradition and the Muslim identity of the *ethnos*, as follows:

Chapter 2 establishes that the evocative power of the Islamic architecture of Sufi shrines and common cemeteries has provided evocative images of Muslim life by means of which the Kazaks have come to identify with Islam. Ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in the city of Turkistan are identified and set in historical context, and local knowledge of the Yasawi Sufi tradition is specified. Not religious knowledge, I will show, but religiously textured landscapes are the forces that define the most salient Kazak ethnic markers, which they call "land" and "blood."

In Chapter 3 the Islamic lexicon in the Kazak language is introduced, and the influence of the Islamic concept of purity is explored. Kazak observance of the Five Pillars of Islam and the Islamic rites of passage is documented. Because the role of the Kazak elders as surrogates of faithfulness for the community is reinforced in Kazak culture by the Qojas, this sub-ethnic religious honor group is described and its origins discussed.

The domestic context of Kazak religion is explored in Chapter 4, focusing on the role of the ancestor-spirits in the religious life of the household. The central place of dreams and dream-visions in evoking the memory of the Kazak ancestors is explored. Then the ritual elements of the spirituality of the Kazak household are described, concluding with a discussion of the social force of the ancestor cult in the preservation of Kazak religion through the Soviet period.

Chapter 5 presents the Sufi saints, who for the Kazaks are not only historical figures but a category of ancestor-spirits. The pilgrimage tradition associated with the Yasawian shrines in and around Turkistan is de-

scribed. A brief section on the "new saints" of the 1990s is included. The chapter concludes with a historical discussion of the experience of illumination that is sought by Kazaks both at home and at the shrines, which I have termed the "*ayan* complex."

Finally, the problem of Kazak shamanism is dealt with in Chapter 6. Portraits of Kazak healers are provided under four rubrics, with the shaman treated as background for the other three kinds of folk practitioners that are far more important today. Despite some shamanic elements, Kazak folk medicine is presented as a local expression of the Islamic therapeutic tradition.

First, however, I will examine in this introductory chapter the problem of religion in anthropology, the literature on Kazak religion, and the theory of collective memory. The Kazak collective memory is a prism through which Muslim life in Turkistan is refracted in the light of the local landscape, its sacred personages, its spirits and ancestral powers. A comment on methodology concludes this chapter.

RELIGION IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Religion consists in "culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings" (Spiro 1966:96). Spiro's premise that in religion we are dealing with the transcendent, "culturally postulated" though it may be, is so traditional — in anthropology it goes back to Tylor in the 19th century, and in religious studies to the phenomenology of van der Leeuw, Otto, and Eliade — as to be fiercely controversial today. With modifications, however, Spiro's approach was accepted by Horton in perhaps the best

discussion of the definition of religion that British social anthropology has produced; he defines religion as "the extension of the field of people's social relationships beyond the confines of purely human society" (1960:211).

Reductionist theories of religion. This is far from the standard definition in social theory, where religion has been carefully circumscribed as a secondary reflection ("representation," "projection," "symbol") of other values. Durkheim found the origin of religion in social structure, Marx and Lenin found it in economic processes, Freud found it in psychological complexes, and by doing so all of them reduced religion to something else (Bellah 1968:408). During anthropology's functionalist period, all studies were variations on these themes, e.g. Malinowski on kinship and economic patterns reflected in the magical spirits of the Trobriand Islands (1954 [1916]), or Hallowell on the psychology of Ojibwa religion at Lake Manitoba (1992 [ca. 1950]). Later, semiotic approaches extended the options by reducing religion to dizzyingly circular systems of signs and meanings that "confirm and support one another" (Geertz 1968b:406). Then post-modernism, a Marxian step-child of semioticism, began to view all culture as "texts," and textuality in terms of the "power relations" by which social groups seek "hegemony" over one another (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Semioticism and post-modernism were new pegs on which to hang essentially the same socioeconomic and sociopsychological understandings of religion that had been provided by Marx, Durkheim, and Freud. After a century of anthropological research, religion had been reduced to an epiphenomenon of culture.

Religion thus cut down to size as a sub-culture was part of the program of 19th-century evolutionary posivitism where anthropology had its

origins, promising that religion would wither away as science and technology triumphed. But the resurgence of aggressive fundamentalisms and broadly popular secular mythologies at the end of the 20th century made these interpretive frameworks seem more and more implausible. Once again religion had begun to *act upon* culture instead of always and only reflecting it. Pastner notes that in segmentary tribal settings "religion, contra the classic functionalist view, is everything society is not," an integrating force in the midst of divisive forces (1978:232). What happens when religion meets society and culture where they are failing or, as in Kazakstan, where a social utopia has already failed?

Anthropological explanations of religion rightly "seek complexity and order it," but in the ordering they have usually reduced complexity to monolithic causes. This is to forget the complementary mandate of natural science to "seek simplicity and distrust it" (Geertz 1973:34, quoting Whitehead). Collective memory theory will help us escape the untrustworthy simplicity of sociopsychological reductionism in religious studies.

Religion and origins. In his classic essay on the theory of religion, Evans-Pritchard (1965) argued that religion is distorted when it is explained in materialist or rationalist terms and lamented that anthropology, by insisting on these terms, had achieved "very little progress" in understanding religion (1965:112). Looking to continental philosophy for a corrective, he commended Pareto and Weber for their insight on "the role of the non-rational in social life" (1965:118; cf. Wolin 1981), and especially Bergson, for whom religion is "a product of an instinctual urge, a vital impulse which, combined with intelligence, ensures man's survival" (1965:116). Religion provides evolutionary balance for humans, in whom reason would otherwise

overwhelm the instinctual faculties that have governed the evolution of other species. Religion is "a defensive reaction of nature against the dissolvent power of intelligence" (Bergson 1956:151 [Evans-Pritchard 1965:116]).

The biological origins of religion and culture are beyond the scope of this study (cf. Boyd and Richerson 1984, 1989; Reynolds and Tanner 1983). Here the issue is raised only to argue, first, that the search for the sources and therefore the meaning of religion, somewhere closely intertwined with human nature or origins, is required of anthropology as a discipline that proposes to explain the nature of *anthropos*, and, secondly, that the effort must be made in the Kazak case in terms other than those propounded in the evolutionist dismissal of Kazak religion as a "survival" of the nomadic symbiosis with nature.

In an effort to study the Kazaks with an open analytical paradigm, the coherence of the religious and social affections will be explored in this study by way of the theory of collective memory or *anamnesis*. This framework has been chosen, first, because it emerged out of the "radical empiricism" of the research context, my "lived experience" among the Kazaks (Jackson 1989), and secondly, because it is a model that occurs both in social theory and in theology, both Christian ("Do this in remembrance of me") and Islamic (*dhikr* in the Quran means remembrance of God). Because of these rich sources and evocations, collective memory theory is capable of avoiding the procedural fallacy that assumes *a priori* that religion is to be explained from social processes alone. Religion as collective memory is capable of acting on other cultural domains, instead of always and only being acted upon by them. Symbolic interactionism rightly suggested that symbols do not merely represent, but also act and react upon their refer-

ents (Eickelman 1977:4), but it failed to identify a process by which this interaction happens. Collective memory theory provides the processual mechanism and suggests that the nature of religion, like memory, is to reach as far back and as deeply into life as necessary to make sense of it.

Integral religion. Inner Asian religion has been interpreted in any terms except its own. The singular force of Islamization is minimized by looking for qualifying variables elsewhere — sky god cults, shamanism, the antinomian values of illiterate Sufis, etc., and the religious domain itself is attributed to the economic adaptation of nomads to sedentary cultural values, etc. (see below: The Problem of Kazak Religion). Evolutionary theory looks for sources in antecedent stages, never allowing religion to emerge in its contemporary light in any historical period, and never accessing ultimate origins in a way that is less mythic than religion's own creation stories. Inner Asian religion, DeWeese argues, will never be properly understood without an "integral conception of the religious life" (personal correspondence). History and social theory need a concept of "integral religion" — religion that acts as well as being acted upon.

The active force of religion in relation to other social variables is broached by Horton (1960:219–224), who argues that religion occurs in two forms: (1) an instrumental form (sometimes called "practical religion" [Leach 1968]) in which the spiritual world is manipulated for social or personal benefit; and (2) a "communion" with spirits or gods which seeks pure meaning and assurance in the spiritual relationship aside from its practical or social benefits. The two forms interact, as the "communion strivings" of charismatic prophets and mystics inspire the "'worldly' manipulative approach of the rabble." The latter, being more socially stable than the

former, perpetuates it: "manipulative relevance . . . is crucial for [religion's] survival in a particular society" (Horton 1960:224). The "communion" principle in religion also despises the "manipulation" it inspires, which is the source of religious reform movements. The necessary desiccation of spiritual vitality *qua* "communion" into diachronic social forms is what accounts for the persistence of religion.

Whatever its social relations, religion itself -- what I am calling "integral religion" -- demands a verdict in anthropological terms. Our "communion strivings" are as intimately related to the sources of our humanity as are the social relations within which they are embedded. The longer I studied the Kazaks, the more I became convinced that I would be unfair to them and myself not to grant the scientific possibility that people make religious choices — or at least some of them — for religious reasons. So this is not a study of the political economy of Kazak religion, but of religious experience among the Kazaks. Altoma (1994) has done a competent study of the political ramifications of Islam in Almaty, but in Turkistan, located far from the seat of power, the politics of religion is a marginal issue (except perhaps in its Pan-Turkist dimensions, which I present in Chapter 2). In my relationships with Kazak colleagues, neighbors, and informants, I was determined to avoid the tenor of Soviet-era sociological research that made religion an epiphenomenon of economic processes, and to look instead for the integral spiritual experience of Islam which Kazaks had been assumed to lack.

Science and transcendence. Though religion is "culturally patterned" (Spiro 1966:96), it lays claim to realities "beyond the confines of purely human society" (Horton 1960:211). The place of "superhuman *beings*" in the

definition of religion has been challenged on the grounds that "no single ontological or epistemological category . . . accommodates all religious entities" (Horton 1960:205). This, of course, must be granted. Spirits and spiritual forces are variably conceived. Horton found three varieties, including "material spirits," among the Kalabari in West Africa, and the Kazaks have an archaic concept of spirit *(kiye)* which is an impersonal force like the Polynesian *mana*, not a being.

Describing the cultural patterns by which gods, spirits, and spiritual forces are conceived is straightforward, but the metaphysical boundary of knowledge which they imply has been an uncomfortable region for modern science. Kroeber, for example, sternly warned anthropologists against "reservations, overt or concealed, as to exclusions from nature" (1952:129). A metaphysics of Kazak religion is beyond the scope of this study, but it is nevertheless true that, Kroeber's scruples notwithstanding, believers with "reservations as to exclusions from nature" do practice anthropology (Hiebert 1983, 1994; Gilliland 1991; Leenhardt 1979; cf. Clifford 1982), and I am one of them.

Kroeber's was the restricted empiricism of the Enlightenment, not of quantum physics and molecular biology where the boundaries of empirical phenomena are now regularly explored. The sociologist Peter Berger suggested that the limits of natural reason open the way to the construction of credible religion: his most elegant book on the sociology of knowledge was provocatively entitled *A Rumor of Angels* (1970). More recently, the Muslim anthropologist Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1993) has joined the German philosopher, Frithjof Schuon (1975), in arguing *The Need for a Sacred Science*, the reclamation of science's metaphysical foundations. Far from fundamentalist,

these are mediating explorations seeking an accommodation between metaphysics and natural science. In traditional social science, theology has been viewed as as a non-rationalist enterprise that tries to "jealously guard the specific nature of religion but eschew any explanation of it" (Bellah 1968:408). This, however, leaves science with its own conundrum: to explain religion in naturalist terms that are not incompatible with religion's engagement of the nonrational and transcendent. Naturalism fails at this point and so has come to be called "naïve realism" (Barbour 1974:34f.).

A newer, critical realist epistemology recognizes, as Einstein and Neils Bohr did, that scientific theory cannot logically exclude religious propositions, because all empirical observation is influenced by the observer's personal perspective (Barbour 1974:37f.; Hiebert 1994:25). When critical realist science postulates various patterns of reality, it leaves open the question of the metaphysical boundary of reality. Critical realism is more open than the naïve realism of Newtonian science. It is an epistemology of dialogue, because it requires metaphysical coordination of different patterns of data covering the entire range of human experience, e.g. scientific and theological/spiritual models of reality. Metaphysics is the necessary extension of both science and religion (Barbour 1974:64-67).

Spiro insists, of course, that anthropology rationally pursue cultural patterns in religion, and Kazak religion, as we shall see, is embedded in the Kazak cultural pattern. But in this empirical discussion of Kazak ancestor-spirits and Muslim saints I will not shy away from the ways collective memory accommodates ontological variation. In seeking understanding at the boundaries of observed phenomena, science becomes truly explanatory. When spiritual worlds are culturally conceived, they are conceived in the

collective memory, and memory is a biocultural process connecting human beings with their historical and prehistoric — and therefore, potentially at least, even ultimate — origins, the search for which is what ultimately makes anthropology the "science of man."

But before we turn to collective memory theory, the general problem and antecedent discussions of Kazak religion must be introduced.

THE PROBLEM OF KAZAK RELIGION

For Kazaks, a Turkic identity is a Muslim one, and those who have one tend to have a strong sense of the other. In Almaty and the big cities there are Kazaks who feel more like Russians than Turks and may even deny that they are Muslims, but from the perspective of the Kazak steppe, its towns and villages and vast reaches, such cosmopolitanism is an aberration, and there are very few Kazaks in Turkistan who fit this description. In Turkistan Muslim self-ascription is universal, but Kazaks also confess ignorance of Islam and laxity at religious performance, distinguishing themselves from other Muslim peoples, especially the Uzbeks, whom they consider more proficient in their practice of the Five Pillars of Islam (cf. Altoma 1994:167). Religious ambivalence was a strategic advantage for the Soviet Kazaks, who could apologize to the Russians that, in comparison with the Uzbeks, they had never really been religious at all.

Ethnicity and Kazak religion. Culture theory[1] usually posits a closer

---

1. Culture is shared experience manifested in social structures that integrates human behavior, the material objects humans produce, and their values, beliefs and ideas, adapts to endogenous and exogenous pressures for change, and is communicated from

relation between religious and ethnic identities[1] than is usually attributed to the Kazaks. The oppositional context required for the persistence of ethnic identity (Barth 1969; Spicer 1971) has been very strong in the Kazak case and has been a prime factor in the formation of Muslim identity and the Islamization of Kazak religious conceptions and behavior. But discussions of the relationship between Kazak ethnicity and religion have a tortured history. The Russian Orientalist, V.V. Bartol'd (Wilhelm Barthold, d. 1930), believed that the Turkic peoples of Russian Asia lacked ethnic self-consciousness, thinking of themselves as Muslims in general or regional "Turkestanis" rather than as separate ethnic groups (Lemercier-Quelquejay 1984:27). While it is surely true that national feeling in Central Asia was newly energized in the Russian period by the eurocentrism of wave after wave of Russian immigrants (Abduvakitov 1993:94ff.), Shahrani (1984) argues persuasively that Barthold mistook Muslim solidary over against himself, a Russian, for ethnic non-differentiation. Carrère d'Encausse (1979, 1988, 1990) argued that Soviet ethnic identities were strong and on this basis prophesied the collapse of the USSR a decade in advance (cf. Moynihan 1993). Attacks by the Kazaks on Uzbek towns in the 16th century, their resistance to Jungar (Mongolian) incursions on the Kazak steppe in the 17th

---

one generation to another by teaching and learning (cf. Linton 1936; Kroeber 1952, 1963).

1. An *ethnos* or people is a social group who share the same culture perpetuated by the descendents of such people who identify themselves and are identified by others as belonging to the same social group. Ethnicity "is a matter of a double boundary, a boundary from within, maintained by the socialization process, and a boundary from without established by the process of intergroup relations" (Isajiw 1974:122). Notwithstanding the reservations of Castile (1981:xv), I use *people* as a synonym for ethnic group.

and 18th, uprisings against Khoqandian rule and against the Russians in the 19th, culminating in the anti-conscription riots of 1916, the Alash Orda government of 1917-20, and a series of revolts against collectivization, including one by rebels from Sozaq who attacked the Turkistan telegraph station in 1930, indicate that Kazak ethnic identity has been strong for a very long time. When Stalin was gone and national identities within the Soviet Union were again allowed limited expression, an aggressive public resurgence of Kazak culture occurred, including the national reclamation of the Yasawi Shrine in Turkistan.

But does an intensification of ethnic values in religious terms really amount to religion at all? Krader and Wayne (1955:211) observed the "cultural revival" among the Kazaks in the 1950s but interpreted it as mere "nativism" or revitalization without religious substance:

> But it is not the old religion which is being revived among the Kazakhs; rather, the old traditions are being treated in a religious fashion. These traditions become religion, and the renewed interest in them a religious revival.

In modernizing societies many individuals and groups will negotiate their religious values in non-controversial or cultural terms — in the West it is called secularization — and this strategy was undoubtedly comfortable for Kazaks in their encounters with the Soviet system. The revitalization model invoked by Krader, however, was an interpretation of the religious upheavals among Plains Indians at the end of the 19th century (Wallace 1956; Kehoe 1989), and the same conditions — the severe cultural pressure that brought on the Ghost Dance — cannot be said to apply to the Kazaks at the end of the 20th century (indeed, they no longer applied in the 1950s). At

the time Krader had never been in Kazakstan, was dependent on Soviet sources, and so missed the complexity of Muslim life among the Kazaks. He was inclined to view ethnic and cultural processes as "a kind of religion," a model which, unfortunately, still influences those who have now seen the Kazaks first hand.

"Great" and "little" traditions? Today the Kazaks of Turkistan are inceasingly aggressive in recovering and defending their Muslim identity. They do it in two ways. First, they insist that their indigenous "little tradition," having been received once and for all from their ancestors, is *ipso facto* a legitimate expression of the "great tradition" of Islam which the ancestors also professed. Kazak language affirms this classical distinction of Evans-Pritchard (1949:63) and Redfield (1960:41ff.), using the Arabic *din* for large-scale religions *(iri dinder)* as distinct from *nanım* (ancient beliefs [*ejelden kelgen nanımdar*]) and *ırım* (magical beliefs and taboos). Secondly, Kazaks argue that the flexible or tolerant Muslim values of the Kazak steppe are actually preferable to the traditional rigidities and modern fundamentalisms in other Muslim societies. Both tropes are imaginative defenses of what "normative Islam"[1] calls innovation (Ar. *bid'a*), and Western scholars call heterodoxy. The two strategies show that Kazaks value and defend their particular appropriation of Muslim life and identity, which they call

---

1. The term "normative Islam" is used here and *passim* to characterize the Shariah or law of Islam, however variably interpreted by Muslims themselves. Elsewhere the English terms "classical," "scripturalist," "essentialist," "official," and "orthodox" have been used to describe this central tradition of the Quran and *hadith* as interpreted by the *'ulama* (cf. Vrijhof and Waardenburg 1979). I retain the quotation marks throughout the study, because "normative Islam," while preferable and more inclusive than the other terms, is itself a problematic concept in relation to local norms; further discussion is presented at the end of this chapter.

musılmanshılıq ("Muslimness"). Although this is a study of Kazak "Muslimness" rather than of Islam *per se*, it is also true that in Turkistan the local tradition of Muslim ancestors and saints "is perceived by the local population as their 'true' Islam" (Muminov 1996:356).

Kazak religion is usually described as "folk" or "popular" or "parallel" Islam, or, using a term popularized by Soviet-era historians and social scientists (Mustafina 1992; Poliakov 1992), as "everyday" *(bytovoi)* Islam. It is, in other words, less than "real" Islam, or, in the unfortunate categories of the political analysts, it is "ritual" rather than "doctrinal" (Olcott 1987:197,251,256) — implying that "everyday" religion has rituals but no teachings. In English-language ethnographies of the Kazaks (Murdock 1934:135–162; Hudson 1938; Krader and Wayne 1955; Krader 1963), Kazak Islam is dismissed with the problematic premise that its nomadic provenance makes it a marginal expression of Islam (cf. Khazanov 1994). Toward the end of the Soviet period Akiner perceptively noted that "anti-Islamic attacks in the Kazakh press would seem to indicate that, orthodox or not, they are still firmly Muslim" (1983:301), but the standard view, endlessly repeated, was that "the Kazaks were only superficially converted" (e.g. *OEMIW* 2:407 [Olcott]), except perhaps the "ruling elite" (Golden 1992:343). The corollary thesis is that the Kazaks have retained "many pre-Islamic shamanist traditions" (Wixman 1984:99), including especially the "steppe spirit cult and practices" (Almtoma 1994:167). Here it is enough to note that such characterizations of the Kazaks are regularly subjected to various qualifications, such as the observation that "indifference to Islamic practice and values" has planted "a seedbed for religious revivalism among the youth" (Svanberg 1990:205).

Influenced by learned analyses, Kazaks themselves may insist that they are a people of two syncretized religions *(qosdindi ḫalıq)*, an ancient shamanism and their Muslim values (Valikhanov 1985 [1862–64]:197; Mıngjan 1994:372–375). In doing so, however, they describe themselves in the light *not* so much of their own religious experience, but of the ethnographic literature about them (see below). Even though there are very few or no traditional shamans today and Kazak shamanism was moribund before the Soviet era (see Chapter 6), such views persist. Kazaks believe they are shamanists because Soviet scholars have told them they are!

In the interpretation of Kazak religion a dominant core of local and primordial values has been assumed to be capable of persisting indefinitely in a two–tiered relationship with Islam. The problem is that an interpretive paradigm which assumes the preservation in perpetuity of archaic values is theoretically incapable of identifying a unitary religious system when one emerges. The Kazak experience of "Muslimness" *(musılmanshılıq)* is an integral system of religious values; it calls into question anthropology's great/little paradigm in the interpretation of religious traditions. In Chapter 3 I will show how a model that acknowledges not only syncretism but "anti–syncretism" provides a better basis for understanding the Kazaks than the two–tiered paradigm of great and little traditions.

Early treatments of Kazak religion. The evaluation of the Kazaks as marginal and syncretizing Muslims derives from Chokan (Shoqan) Valikhanov (d. 1865), the first Kazak ethnographer (McKenzie 1989; Futrell 1979), about whom I will have more to say below. His view has been repeated, not least of all by Kazaks themselves, ever since. Following Shoqan, Tsarist–era students of Kazak religion were preoccupied with shamanism and specialized

in recording the discourse of *baqsı* performances and related popular legends (Miropiev 1888; Divaev 1899; Castagné 1923, 1925, 1930).

The nomadic culture of the Kazak steppe was richly recorded by 19th and early 20th century observers. Among the most remarkable chroniclers was Bronislav Zaleskii, a Polish soldier in the Russian Army, who visited the Caspian region in 1848 and drew valuable pen-and-ink landscapes, later published in Paris, that inform our understanding of Kazak cemeteries and Muslim shrines. He advanced the viable thesis that the Kazaks honor the ancestral hero *(batır)* as a worldly, military figure, and the Muslim saint *(aũliye)* in counterpoint as an ascetic who lives the pure life. Drinking *ayran* (watered yoghurt) instead of the more potent *qımız* (fermented mare's milk) was the gastonomic sign of the difference (1991 [1865]:121). (The symbiotic relationship between Kazak ancestors and Muslim saints will be taken up again in Chapter 2 and *passim*.) Zaleskii was disapponted that the Kazaks could tell him little about their saints, and he viewed Kazak reverence for trees located near cemeteries as nature-worship (Zaleskii 1991 [1865]:67ff., 76ff., 121ff.).

Mid-19th-century works by Bekchurin (1866), Pashino (1868), and others (summarized in Dobrosmyslov 1912:139ff.) offer brief descriptions of the Sufi leadership and ceremonies at the Yasawi Shrine in the 1860s, but they paid little attention to specifically Kazak ritual behavior. Similarly, Radloff, the most prolific 19th-century ethnographer of the Kazaks, worked for twenty years in the Altai region at the northern edge of Kazak territory, but had little to say about Turkistan in the south (1890).

Castagné, on the other hand, was very interested in the Kazaks and knew Turkistan. His two major articles on Muslim shrines and cemeteries

(1911, 1951) are rich in architectural and cultural detail: he toured the Kazak steppe and Central Asia before the Russian Revolution and collected materials on the funerary practices and, to a lesser extent, the pilgrimage customs of the Kazak nomads. He attributes most features of the Muslim culture of the Kazaks to shamanism (1911:69) — without, however, citing evidence that specific practices had anything to do with shamanic performance. As it was for Valikhanov, "shamanism" for Castagné was a convenient religious gloss on the term "nomad."

At about the same time Lykoshin (1916) spent an evening with Kazak pilgrims at the Yasawi Shrine and briefly described their "superstitions" *(sueberiya)*, which consisted chiefly in a Sufi *zikir* and public meal *(ḥalim)* served by dervishes after the Friday prayers. This locates the Kazaks within in the world of Islamic ritual performance. Unfortunately, however, Lykoshin failed to distinguish these events from the beliefs or ritual behavior of the sedentary ethnic groups: Qojas and Uzbeks go unmentioned. Then in 1929 Gordlevsky carefully recorded another Sufi ceremony in Turkistan — his fine description in both German (1932) and Russian (1962 [1929]) is our last sympathetic and published testimony about Sufi institutions and rituals before they were suppressed in the 1930s. But Gordlevsky, like Semenov (1926:128), who had visited Turkistan in 1922, was uninterested in ethnic variation in ritual behavior. Similarly, Masson's article on the architecture of the Yasawi Shrine (1930) only briefly mentions pilgrimage and Sufi ceremonies and again ignores the Kazaks. Except in the case of Lykoshin, we sense we are reading descriptions of the Qojas, or of Uzbek and Kazak town dwellers, but nothing in particular about Kazak nomads and the special attraction which, according to Castagné (1911:52),

Turkistan held out for them.

Our images of the Kazaks in Turkistan are therefore rather blurred. These works fell at the end of an era: the curtain fell on foreign visits to Turkistan after 1930. Notably, most of the pre-soviet works display weak or inconsistent knowledge of Kazak language. Castagné, for example, recorded Kazak oral texts in French transcription (1930), but he did not grasp the meaning of the basic Kazak term for ancestor-spirit *(arūaq)*, mistakenly calling it a mysterious disease (1951:63). The exceptions are Divaev (1898, 1899), who was a Tatar and knew Kazak well but was preoccupied with Kazak shamamism instead of Kazak Islam, and, of course, Valikhanov, a Kazak, who, however, wrote in Russian.

Soviet interpretations of Islam in Central Asia were Marxist attacks on religious lifeways as "survivals" of obsolete social systems (Snesarev 1958, 1970-72, 1974; Sukhareva 1960; Poliakov 1992). The evolutionary meanings of shamanic experience have been carefully studied by Russian scholars (Basilov 1984a, 1995), but they involve a bifurcationist analysis that is incapable of engaging Kazak religion as an integral or unified system. "Presentism" was the enemy of Marxist historical consciousness; religion was viewed as a repository of ideological strata from the past. As Gellner put it provocatively, Soviet anthropology was interested in the tail of the comet (1975:595).

For Kazak scholars studying their own people, an antiquarian focus that ignored contemporary lifeways was one convenient way to dance around the problem of religion. Kazak and Turkic culture in remote periods could be assigned to a primitive evolutionary pigeonhole to reduce the likelihood that an academic interest in religion would be interpreted as an endorse-

ment of Islam. Marġulan, the Kazak dean of Soviet-era ethnographic studies, specialized in epic history (1985), where he avoided suggesting that Islamic values have any significance today. A. Qongıratbaev (1987, 1991) used Kazak folklore studies in the same fashion. Awezov produced a captivating portrait of Kazak life using the historical novel in a similar strategy (1975 [1953]). Each of these men helped make Kazak studies an academic field but avoided facing the problem of Kazak religion in the ethnographic present. When Kazak religion was finally engaged by Kazak scholars after the Khrushchev thaw and into the period of *glasnost* (Dastanov 1967; Shülembaev 1972, 1975, 1978, 1983, 1987; Saidbaev 1978; Amanturlin 1977, 1985; Töleũbaev 1991), the influence of the evolutionary paradigm was never absent, and it persists even in the post-soviet period: heteroprax aspects of Muslim lifeways in the 1990s are still categorized as "pre-Islamic" by Kazak ethnographers (Mustafina 1992; Sızdıqova 1997).

Kazak "popular" Islam in comparative perspective. Local expressions of "popular Islam" have tended to be treated as aberrations by Western Orientalists, whose preoccupation with texts put them in touch — and often in sympathy — with "normative Islam." It is still common, for instance, to cite the Wahhabi view that the veneration of saints is the "excrescence" of Sufism (Schimmel 1992:121); so the study of Muslim peoples with a Sufi heritage is saddled with stereotypes before it begins. "Islamics" thus understood tended to overshadow the early 20th-century ethnographies of Muslim lifeways, e.g. Snouck-Hurgronje in Aceh (1906) and Westermarck in Morocco (1926), which contained volumes of valuable description of how Muslims live and think about their world. Geertz's comparative interpretation of Javanese and Moroccan Islam (1968a) was a watershed and began to

redress the balance. By arming a crop of young ethnographers with "semiotic" theory, Geertz encouraged the "thick description" of Muslim cultures, not in evolutionary or doctrinal or positivist, but in "interpretive" terms. This provided a new approach to Muslim lifeways. The so-called "peripheries" of "popular" Islam, it turned out, span the Muslim world.[1]

There have also been good interpretive studies of Muslim lifeways among Central Asian peoples ethnically or geographically related to the Kazaks.[2] Except for the Soviet expeditionary ethnographies mentioned

---

1. Examples would include the work of Simmons in West Africa on local processes that mediate conversion to Islam (1979); in sub-Saharan Africa the work of Stewart on Muslim political movements engendered by local pieties (1985); in the Comorro Islands the work of Lambek on how the Quran functions without textuality (1990); in Morocco the work of Eickelman on a pilgrimage town (1976), and of Dwyer, who illustrates Sufi patron-client relationships with a life history (1982); in Egypt the work of Gilsenan on saints and Sufis (1973); in Iran the comparative study by R. Tapper (1984) of religious observance in three tribal societies, and of Fischer and Abedi on the factional debate among Muslims in local mosques that led to an Islamic Revolution (1990); in Turkey the work of N. Tapper on *ziyarat* and gender relations (1990), of Tapper and Tapper on fundamentalist and secular values in a small city (1987). South Asia is a region with historic Turco-Mongol (Moghul) influence, so the work of of Schubel on Shi'i rituals in Pakistan (1993), of Pastner on Sufi masters *(pirs)* among the Baluch (1978), of Ernst on Khuldabad, a Sufi center in India (1992), and a thorough review of Muslim shrines in India in a volume edited by Troll (1989) are comparable with our data. Laderman's study of the Islamic sources of shamanic practice in Malaysia (1991), and Gladney's work in China on Muslim shrines and Hui ethnic identity (1987) suggest direct parallels with Muslim life in Turkistan.

2. Studies of the Uzbeks have displayed the best ethnographic depth, e.g. the work of Shalinsky in northern Afghanistan (1990), on sexuality and Muslim spirituality (1986), and on Islam and ethnicity (1980); of Chylinski on circumcision and domestic ritual (1991); of Fathi on the "unknown women clerics" who preserved Islam in the home during the Soviet period (1997); of Akiner on Uzbek nationalism and its religious dimensions (1990); and of Centlivres, Centlivres and Slocum on a case of "Muslim shamanism" (1971).

Irons' study of Turkmen kinship structure (1975) gives the English reader traditional ethnographic background for Basilov's study (1984) of the Turkmen *hodjas* and religious honor groups (cf. Tyson 1997).

Benson's history of the Uyghur rebellion against Chinese nationalist and communist rule (1990) is complemented by Benson and Svanberg's survey of the Kazaks in China (1988). Svanberg has studied ethnic persistence and religion among the Kazak *emigré* community in Turkey (1989).

above, however, there have been no full-length ethnographies of the religious life of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia based on long-term participant-observation research in the native languages. (Shahrani's excellent ethnography of a Kirghiz village in Afghanistan [1979] is a notable exception.) This paucity of valid observation nullifies dismissals of Islamic observance among the Kazaks and others. The surveys by Olcott on the Kazaks (1987) and Allworth on the Uzbeks (1990) are political and cultural area surveys, not ethnographies (cf. Allworth [1989] on Central Asia in general). As Tolmacheva (1993:533) has noted, Soviet ethnographies of the religion of the Central Asian peoples were always the work of short-term expeditions of imposing (usually male) ethnographic teams with an ideological axe to grind against the religious traditions of their (often female) informants (e.g. *NSAK* 1962-63). For example, the Kazak ethnographer Arġınbaev's work on the Kazak family (1996) includes a description of domestic religious rites but cites no literature except the reports of a series of such expeditions. Until recently foreign scholars also had to rely on this Soviet data which prejudices the case against Muslim lifeways and leaves the reader wondering what was missed because of the heavy-handed approach. Not surprisingly under such conditions, the anthropology of religion in the West simply lost track of the Kazaks.

If Kazak religion is to be understood, what must be grasped is the theoretical implications of its cross-cultural similarity with Muslim lifeways

---

On the Tajiks Rakowska-Harmstone (1983) produced a substantial study with good ethnographic observation on religious identities under the difficult research conditions of the Soviet era before *glasnost*. Her work is complemented now by Atkin's (1989, 1992).

elsewhere. Gellner concluded that "popular Islams" in various societies are comparable precisely to the extent that they find common ground in Islam itself (1981:80f., italics added):

> [It] is only now becoming conspicuous, as a result of the accumulation of social anthropological research [that] it is not only the urban and literate Great Tradition which is significantly similar in Islam, [but] the rural and folk tradition also displays astonishing similarities. In the past, there was a tendency to explain this questionably orthodox Little Tradition in terms of local 'pre-Islamic survivals'. But it would be strange if the pre-Islamic stratum in, say, Southern Arabia and the Moroccan Atlas were as similar as the non-orthodox elements of custom in these regions, and others, seem to be. Perhaps heterodoxy of practice was diffused like the orthodoxy of theory; or perhaps, as I am inclined to suspect, the complex of cultural and organisational traits, great and little, formed one unity which, if diffused at all, was diffused as a whole, and in which the less orthodox elements are a kind of *socially necessary complement* to the orthodox, and are *naturally engendered* by it.

In Java as in Kazakstan, a woman holds her left hand behind her back as she sweeps with her right, and lays the broom flat on the floor instead of leaning it in a corner. It is inconceivable that these are independent pre-Islamic "survivals," and the only common variable in Javanese and Kazak culture is the Sufi tradition of Islam. The broom custom is one of many such signs of an Islamic conception of purity and cleanliness that diffused together with Islam as surely as the Islamic confession and ritual prayers. It is the Islam of the household.

Pre-Islam is, of course, an issue in the history of Islamization of any people or region, but two tendencies must be rejected: assuming that what *was* still *is* (survivals of shamanism, etc.), and that what *once* was new *still* is new (Islam as a foreign object poorly absorbed). This leads to a bifurcationist analysis that is unable to identify integral expressions of religious life.

It is a premise of this study that local expressions of Muslim life are best understood as contextualizations of Islam, not as survivals of pre-Islam. In the positivist language of the 19th century, Goldziher noted that "one of the most curious phenomena in the development of Islam [is] the ease with which orthodox theology also adapts itself to the needs of popular belief, though this entails open contradiction to the unambiguous teaching of the Koran" (1971a [1890a]:261). Today we know that this process, far from being "curious," is the nature of successful religious movements. Contextualizations, in Gellner's words, are "socially necessary" and "naturally engendered" by the multicultural character of the "world religions," including Islam. Goldziher answered his own objection to local contextualizations as "contradictions" of the Quran, when he noted that the "power of *ijma'*," the consensus of local Muslim scholars, is very strong in shaping the limits of acceptable Islamic applications in community values. In the Muslim world religious authority is legitimately claimed by local *'ulama* or groups of scholars. Local mosques and madrasas, Sufi masters, even neighborhood mullahs, assume this authority when theological controls are missing or unknown. No Kazak says he adheres to the "Hanafi rite," but the authority of local mullahs is freely acknowledged and freely debated. So Islam is a diffuse religion, with variable local consensuses asserting themselves as mullahs and other persons of religious sensibility interpret the meaning of Islam.

Sufism and Kazak religion. The history and geographic diffusion of the classical Sufi movements is beyond the scope of this study (cf. Schimmel 1975; Trimingham 1971; for the Yasawiyya, DeWeese 1996a), but an ethnographic distinction between three dimensions of the Sufi phenomenon is

fundamental to our discussion (Chapters 3 and 5). The first two dimensions — the "*wali* complex" (the cult of Sufi saints) and the "*tariqa* complex (Sufi orders or brotherhoods) can be helpfully distinguished (William Y. Adams, personal correspondence). I here propose a third element which I will term the "*ayan* complex." This is the illuminationist experience with roots in the Sufi mysticism and that persists today in Kazak religion without the trappings of Sufism in the elemental form of dreams and visionary experiences that impel religious behavior in the household (Chapter 4), at the shrines (Chapter 5), and in healing practices (Chapter 6).

As for the "*tariqa* complex, there are no Sufi brotherhoods in Kazakstan; except for scholars, Kazaks do not know the Arabic word *ṭarīqa* (way, brotherhood) and have no equivalent of their own. Clearly Ahmet Yasawi was a Sufi, but it less certain that he was related, as usually claimed, to the Naqshbandi tradition of Yusuf Hamadani in Bukhara (Köprülü 1918). DeWeese (1995b, 1997b) has proposed the variation that Yasawi was related to the Suhravardi Sufis and that the Yasawi Sufi brotherhood was a later development. It was eventually absorbed by the Naqshbandiyya. The Yasawiyya had several centers, including Turko-Persian communities in central Mawarannahr, not only in Yası/Turkistan. The Qojas, who have their roots in the shrine tradition and the Sufi brotherhoods, are still important in Turkistan today, but they are no longer a Sufi brotherhood. The contemporary legacy of the Yasawi Sufis is to be found not in a Sufi organization but in what DeWeese calls "communal affiliations," or more generally in the religious life of the household and neighborhood.

The "*wali* complex" occurs in Kazak religion in connection with the shrines of the *aũliye* (saints), which is the same word as *wali*. I will show

how devotion to these saints has been "architecturalized" in Kazak religion, because the heirs of the saints no longer administer them. The "popular" or "practical" Islam of the Kazaks has a historical but now attenuated relationship with Sufism. It is widely recognized (Brenner 1993:26; Adams 1990:x; Gellner 1969:8) that an error in the Western understanding of Islam was introduced by Trimingham (1952, 1971), who identified "folk" Islam with Sufism.

Shamanism and Kazak religion. Atwood (1996) has recently recast the problem of shamanism in the interpretation of Turko-Mongolian religion. In outline, the common view is that Buddhism (in the case of the Mongols) and Islam (in the case of the Kazaks) are defined by their classical texts and propositions, and that anything in actual religious practice that does not square with the Pali Canon and the Noble Eightfold Path, or the Shariah and the Five Pillars of Islam, must therefore be identified with a lower stratum of pre-Buddhist or pre-Islamic shamanism (e.g. Basilov 1984a, 1995). There may be no evidence that the ritual practices in question were ever performed by shamans themselves, who may have occupied only marginal corners of the culture for a very long time (as Atwood believes they have in Mongolia since the 18th century), but still the shamans get credit for all "folk" beliefs and "popular" practices. Significantly, the household fire ritual, usually ascribed to shamanism even though shamans never performed it, is always identified by Mongols themselves with Buddhism (1996:124). For this reason, Atwood argues, Mongolian domestic rites are better understood as a "chameleon" devotion whose purpose is "to identify the house with the powers that be," not as shamanism (p. 126). Shamans occupied a specialized religious niche in Mongolian and Siberian culture, but "shaman-

ism" was not a religion in and of itself (Humphrey 1996:183-260).

Kazak, like Mongolian, religion is lived out in the events of the household. Its visible form is a pattern of ceremonial meals where food and a Quran recital are dedicated to the ancestor-spirits (see Chapter 4). Studies of domestic religion show that its rites are usually autochthonous in the sense that they do not require specialists; so, wherever else they come from, they may not be laid at the feet of the very specialized shamans (DeWeese 1994:39ff.). Against Heissig (1980) and Vreeland (1954), Atwood concludes that in Mongolia there has been "a remarkably complete replacement of the original shamanist rituals" and that "the categories of ritual found among most of the Mongols are largely comprehensible in terms of a multifaceted Buddhist tradition" (1996:136). He discovered that it is hard to find a Mongol who has seen or heard of a shaman, and the same may be said of the Kazaks today (see Chapter 6).

Atwood traces the two-tier theory of Mongolian religion to the same 19th-century intellectual circles from which the early interpretation of Kazak religion emerged. In 1862[1] Valikhanov, the father of Kazak ethnography, began his work on the "survivals of shamanism among the Kazaks" (1985:169) by citing the Buryat scholar, Dorzhi Banzarov. Banzarov had written a seminal article sixteen years earlier that "portrayed shamanism as a natural outgrowth of the nomadic way of life," and assumed "a simplistic identity of nomadism with an unchanging shamanism" (Atwood 1996:113; c.f. Banzarov 1981-82 [1846]).

---

1. Valikhanov's major articles on Kazak religion (1985:169-202) were written between 1862 and 1864 (cf. editor's notes in Valikhanov 1985:546,549).

Both Valikhanov and Banzarov were remarkable young men, the first scholars from among their people to be drawn into the world of Enlightenment rationalism. Though both died young, each made a lasting impact on the study of Inner Asian religions. They were both trained in Russian academies and imbibed fashionable evolutionary assumptions. They learned from Max Müller that "the earliest level of religion existed as a direct and virtually precultural response to nature," which led Banzarov to conclude that shamanism is "a universal stage of religion that any nomadic people must adopt naturally" (Atwood 1996:130). For Valikhanov and Banzarov, shamanism was a "nature religion" which was natural to nomads, who were incapable of the "higher" religions by virtue of their ecological adaptation — a 19th century construction of religion that survived only where Marxism set evolutionary theory in concrete. The essence of the religion of nomads must be its "primitive" features, and wherever these surface they are assumed to be "survivals" of indigenous religion.

Shoqan Valikhanov was an officer in the Russian Imperial Army and hoped his Kazaks would accept the benefits of Enlightenment rationalism from the Russians, as he had. For this he was lionized by the Soviet Kazaks as the first of the *aġartūshı* (enlighteners), and his life and works became an grand object of academic study (*Shoqantanū*, Shoqan Studies). As an easy concession to Russian sensitivities, Valikhanov appears in his Russian Army uniform on the 10 Tenge banknote of the Republic of Kazakstan. He was a progressive young man who thought of Islam as obscurantist. Chagrined by the encroachment on Kazak culture of the Tatars and Sarts (Uzbeks), he encouraged the Tsar to take subtle measures against them by allowing the title *mullah* on the Kazak Steppe only to the "Qojas of

the Kazaks" (1985 [1862-64]:197-202). With this comment he reveals the close relationship between Qojas and Kazaks. As an alternative to the Tatar *madrasa* schools (cf. Algar 1992), Shoqan urged the Tsar to establish government schools for the Kazaks like those the United States was providing for the Indians (1985 [1862-64]:197ff.); the first such "Kirgiz-Russian school" was established in the town of Turkistan in 1888. Shoqan would surely be surprised that the Kazaks, in spite of terrible suffering, emerged at the end of the 20th century with a more viable native culture than the Native American tribes he thought were being treated so well.

Shoqan hoped the Kazaks would be able somehow to skip Islam and make a direct transition from primeval steppe culture into the modern world. Because he advocated russification, he also minimized evidence of Muslim behavior among the Kazaks. Even where the evidence was weak, as we shall see in Chapter 4, he teased out connections between Kazak and Mongol nomado-shamanism in order to establish a primordialist foundation for russification. His view became Russian policy with enduring effect (*QÜ*, December 1994, pp. 4-5 [Mübäräkqızı]), but the failure of the Kazaks to abandon Islam raises the question whether the policy's ethnographic basis was well grounded. Among Kazak healers today, shamanic discourse has been largely abandoned and Muslim rhetoric is strongly attested. Traditional shamanic recitations are preserved in literary form and for sale at bazaar book stalls to any folk-healer who might want to use them (Daũrenbekov and Tursınov 1993), but instead it is Quranic tracts the healers buy and memorize (e.g. Shalapov 1995b, 1996, 1997b). A shell of the shaman's art — primarily its material artifacts, the shaman's ceremonial whip and knife — surrounds the culture of Kazak traditional medicine (see Chapter 6), but

these *täwips* are more like folk healers (Ar. *tabib*) elsewhere in the Muslim world than they are like the Siberian shamans idealized in the phenomenology of religion (Eliade 1964 [1951]) and evolutionary ethnology (Shirokogoroff 1935; Basilov 1984a, 1989; Balzer 1990; cf. Hoppál 1984). Valikhanov's thesis that Kazak religion is a Muslim veneer laid over a shamanist core has gained wide currency but is disconfirmed by today's ethnographic evidence -- one of the themes of this study.

DeWeese's studies of Islamization in Inner Asia (1994, 1998) argue persuasively that the two-tier model must be discarded. His major work on the "decisive Islamization of the Golden Horde" under Özbek Khan in the early 14th century (1994) -- ascribed in hagiographical materials to an ordeal of fire between a group of shamans and the Muslim saint, Baba Tükles -- lays to rest any notion of a residual shamanism in Inner Asian domestic spirituality. Our evidence confirms that indigenous elements such as the offering of food to ancestors in the hearth ritual were long ago "encountered and overcome or assimilated" by Islam (DeWeese 1996b:113). Kazak domestic rites are shared with other Turkic peoples as a "celebratory and self-affirming 'affective' evocation of the living community's bonds to the [Muslim] ancestors" (DeWeese 1994:524). What matters, as we shall see, is that the Kazak ancestors are thought of as Muslims.

Ethnographic studies demonstrate that religious conversion in any society generally begins with a change in social allegiances based on communal considerations (Simmons 1979; Goody 1975); this was surely the case for the nomads of Inner Asia (Golden 1996a:27ff.), for whom sustaining necessary relationships with sedentary society required that they adopt Islam (Khazanov 1994). Personal experience of an inward transformation

comes later and must be experienced anew by subsequent generations and, indeed, by each individual. Instead of two tiers, therefore, we find two contexts for conversion: social life and personal spirituality. In Nigeria Gilliland sees "first" and "second" conversion in this sense (1991). Though "first conversion" occurred long ago, "second conversion" is still occurring today in Kazakstan as a re-Islamization process. And it is not shamanism the Kazaks are converting from, but communist ideology, which denied the possibility of inner religious states in the New Soviet Man (cf. Rywkin 1987).

Nomadism and Islamic minimalism in Kazak religion. Religious minimalism is often ascribed to nomads, usually in defense of an economic interpretation of religion, *viz.* that nomads use only as much religion as they need for economic advantage (Khazanov 1984; 1994). Barth suggested that the Basseri in Iran evidence a "poverty" or "paucity" of ritual, even proposing that the nomadic trek has such an emotional intensity for them that it constitutes a kind of religion in its own right (1961:146). Peters (1984:211) chided Barth for passing too lightly over Basseri religious behavior, such as shrine worship, Islamic weddings and burials, and blood sacrifice. Barth, he observed, was too eager to reduce religion to economic strategies. Revealing her own rationalist predilections, Mary Douglas used Barth's data as evidence of "secularism" among the nomads. The Kazak evidence, as we shall see, confirms Peters' conclusion from Cyrenaica that religious values act directly on cultural behavior in ways that confer no economic advantage (1984:213).

Abandoning the economic argument, Gellner (1969, 1981) follows the medieval scholar, Ibn Khaldun, and explains religious minimalism among the Berbers sociologically, arguing that nomads need and therefore produce a

"surrogate" for the urban culture of Islam, whose literacy they admire even though they are incapable of it. Cities have theological scholars *('ulamā)*, and tribes have saints *(awliyā)* (1969:8). It is an engaging hypothesis which, however, begs the question whether the religion of nomads is always so minimalist and static. The religion of nomads, after all, has now encountered the 20th century, and it has displayed complexity and changeability in response to the Islam of the towns and the world.

Variability in the intensity of religious life is not very well explained by standard sociological interpretations of religion. Adams has noted that religious minimalism needs better explanation. Though the Egyptians are "religious people," he says, they cannot be called particularly "pious or devout."

> It may be true, as Durkheim and his followers insist, that all societies need religion to legitimize the demands that they place on their members, but *this does not necessarily imply that they need a large amount of religion*. Everybody needs a certain amount of food to survive, but food need not be a great focus of interest. It clearly is for some individuals and for some societies, but not for others. (Adams 1990:x, italics added.)

The intensity of religious communion with the spirits and gods is minimized, controlled, and manipulated by societies, but it is felt and expressed by individuals. So when Kazaks apologize that "we have no religion" *(bizde din joq)* or, less drastically, that "we don't keep our religion very well" *(dindi ustaġanımız nashar)*, the observer must remember that the intense spiritual crisis of the individual can surface again at any time. Minimized practical religion may be re-maximized in the "communal strivings" of individuals, as Horton teaches us.

Diversity in the Muslim world and its "popular Islams" are only now

surfacing in the Kazak awareness of the world. Because of the isolation of the Kazaks during the Soviet period, and because they did indeed fraternize with the Russians rather closely, the Kazaks tend to think of themselves as the only minimalists around. For many today, this is an impetus to become better Muslims.

Horton's theory of communion phasing into practical religion and then back again is processual and therefore preferable to Ibn Khaldun's static theory of nomadic and urban essences — one of the original "two-tier" theories of religion. However the convergence of Islam and the indigenous religions of nomadic Inner Asia may have been accomplished in the past (c.f. Roux 1984a,b, 1987, 1993; Golden 1992, 1996a; DeWeese 1994), Kazak religion at the turn of the 21st century is a single and evolving religious system and deserves to be studied ethnographically as such.

Reprise: Islam and Kazak religion. Like other religions Islam undergoes reform and reaction; so it has not always been the Islam we know today. The Kazaks were only briefly touched by 19th century Islamic reformism (called Jadidists in Russian Asia [Lazzerini 1992]); so if there is superficiality in Kazak Islam, it is in the extent of this exposure. In the mid-20th century the Kazaks were also cut off from the emerging post-colonial fundamentalisms of the modern states of the Muslim world. Waardenburg has noted that, until the advent of these movements of reform and confrontation, "normative Sunni Islam was less known and [wide]spread than today [and] restricted to a limited number of Muslim communities and groups" (Vrijhof and Waardenburg 1979:367); thus, local versions of "popular Islam" were "normal" and construed less pejoratively in the past than they are today. *It is local, not "normative" Islam, that is traditional.* Islam

in Central Asia survives in local forms that were once traditional and typical of the Muslim world. Only recently has "normative Islam" begun to profilerate by means of new communications media and culture contact initiated by reformist and fundamentalist groups.

Kazak religion today is an awakened expression of pre-modern Islam. In the end, we should anticipate, it will turn out to be not so much a survival of shamanism as a survival and resurgence of Islam.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY THEORY AND KAZAK RELIGION

Collective memory is a sociopsychological process that evokes a cultural present from its historical sources, and vice versa. It is not mere recall or recollection. By means of the collective memory the past is idealized and the future is expressed as aspiration, bidirectionally. Commemoration is one of the standard public expressions of the collective memory, but collective memory itself runs deeper. It is a processing mechanism by means of which people reach back into their past and articulate a future for themselves. Collective memory is thus a theory of culture and enculturation that has particular value for the study of religion. It helps us explain devotion that seeks "direct access to the sacred past [in order to] engage the holy in immediate time and space" (C.Taylor 1990:80).

The history of psychological studies of memory is chronicled for the benefit of social scientists and historians by Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (1989) and Fentress and Wickham in *Social Memory* (1992). We know now that memory is not simply a mental capacity or a personal affair. A person's memory is social because it depends on having other people

around to provide a context for recall and its articulation. It is cultural in the sense that the things it recalls are contextualized in relation to the values, conceptions, and habitual practices which the person holds in common with others. To avoid confusion with Durkheim's "collective representations" and Jung's "collective unconscious," Fentress and Wickham suggest "social memory" as a better term (1992:ix), but "collective memory," which goes back to Maurice Halbwachs' *Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* in 1925, covers both the social and cultural dimensions and is retained in this study.

Fentress and Wickham postulate that "social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future" (1992:25). That which *identifies a group* is, of course, what anthropologists have come to call culture. Collective memory theory thus shares ground with the culture concept itself and helps define the anthropological problem of change and continuity. It is a reflexively constructive process that gives shape to and is shaped by culture and therefore religion. If the culture concept is an abstraction and is thus laden with theoretical problems (Kluckhohn 1962 [1945]:21–73; Geertz 1966, 1973), collective memory provides some specificity. In Kazak also, the term for culture *(mädeniyet)* is unsatisfactory as a scientific category, but Kazaks know that they remember things in common with others and know how to conceptualize the process in everyday speech. Collective memory, which can be rendered in Kazak with the expressions *kollektivtik jad* and *ḫalıqtıq sana*, is a processual concept and suggests religious vitality better than the culture concept.

Theoretical antecedents. Collective memory theory must be set in the context of earlier concepts to which it gives new focus. A generation ago

Spicer wrote that a persistent culture is "a system of beliefs and sentiments concerning historical events" (1971:799); it is "an individual's belief in his personal affiliation with certain symbols or, more accurately, with what certain symbols stand for" (1971:795f.). Collective memory theory goes beyond semiotic theory by positing a sociopsychological process by means of which cultural symbols are reclaimed and projected into the future. The concept of symbol is static, defining collective identities in terms of "a relationship between human individuals and selected cultural elements" (Spicer 1971:796). Social interactionism is a variant of semiotic theory that sounds more dynamic but still assumes "direct one-to-one correlation between ideology and social action" (Eickelman 1978:486); in other words, people act on symbols they believe in.

Since Durkheim (1915), "collective representation" or the symbolization of social phenomena has become a kind of meta-theory that is absorbed by each succeeding theory of society and culture. Halbwachs was a faithful disciple of Durkheim but introduced a new conceptual framework that broke free of theoretical dependence on symbolization, seeing individuals in dynamic interaction not only with their society and culture, but with the history that formed it. If a people is "a determinable set of human individuals who believe in a given set of identity symbols" (Spicer 1971:796), they must be capable of processing symbols in a diachronic way; a persistent people, in short, must have a collective memory. Spicer touched on this problem when he wrote that idealized conceptions of "land" and "heroes" are among the factors that allow a culture to persist. Kazak religion, however, demands a more vigorously diachronic theoretical framework. Collective memory helps explain how the symbolic framework of Kazak reli-

gion today emerged from nomadic and then Soviet culture.

A half century ago Hallowell argued that the "symbolic or representative principle" is built into the human "psychobiological structure," and that its variations define "personality structure," which in turn is a "mechanism" for the "evolution of the mind" (1955:5). In his discussion Hallowell touched on the basic issue that collective memory theory is now addressing again:

> Thus skill in the manipulation of symbols is directly involved with the development of man's rational capacities. But *symbolization is likewise involved with all other psychic functions*—attention, perception, *memory, dreams, imagination,* etc. [which are] at the root of man's capacity to deal with . . . the possible or conceivable, the ideal as well as the actual, the intangible along with the tangible, the absent as well as the present object or event, with fantasy and with reality. Every culture as well as the personal adjustment of each individual gives evidence of this, both at the level of unconscious as well as conscious processes. (1955:7, italics added)

These "psychic [sic] functions" Hallowell calls "intervening variables," both conscious and unconscious, and among the latter he mentions memory and is particularly impressed by the cultural power of dreams. (He had done fieldwork on Ojibwa religion and noted that dreams impel social action and religious behavior.) When he says ambiguously that symbolization is *"involved with"* each of these variables, he has hit upon an important problem. Are these "intervening variables" perhaps just as salient for anthropological theory as the concept of symbol (c.f. Coser 1992:25)?[1]

Collective memory is a theoretically potent concept because it spans

---

1. Hallowell does not seem to have known the term "collective memory," though Halbwachs, in sociology, wrote his first work on collective memory in 1925, and Bartlett had published a major work in 1932.

both sociocultural and psychological processes. Anthropology, along with sociology, social psychology and historical hermeneutics, has discovered the theory of collective memory, and although it has thus far been used primarily for radical postmodernist projects, it is a promising theory of religion if it can be relieved of its heavy deconstructionist baggage.

Religion as collective memory "reproduces the past" (Halbwachs 1992 [1925]:87) when the sacred appeared *in illo tempore*.[1] Religion thus lays claim to historical validity, permanance, even eternity, on behalf of the believing community. Collective memory in social theory embraces *anamnesis,* a theological conception. *Anamnesis* is devotion, ritually enacted, and experienced as remembrance of the sacred past when the holy touched the human in a decisive way. It is when we "do this in remembrance" in response to a mandate from the distant past ("time immemorial") that the future makes sense and its uncertainties are resolved. At its best, religion as *anamnesis* makes life less uncertain and precarious and so more liveable.

The human memory is dynamic and transformative. Memory "is not a passive receptacle, but instead a process of *active restructuring*, in which elements may be trained, reordered, or suppressed" (Fentress and Wickham 1992:40). Memory has to "decontextualize" and then "recontextualize" information in order to remember it (1992:79):

Unless a society possesses means to freeze the memory of the past, the

---

1. In religious studies Mircea Eliade (1961:80ff.) popularized the Latin phrase *in illo tempore*, "in that (former) time." It refers to the time of origins in "time immemorial" when foundational events (social covenants and charters of identity) are understood as "hierophanies," the appearing of the sacred in history. The Arabic equivalent is *bəkri* (early times, cf. Eickelman 1976:164), and in Kazak *bayağıda* or *ejelgi zamanda*.

> natural tendency of social memory is to suppress what is not meaningful or intuitively satisfying . . . and interpolate or substitute what seems more appropriate or more in keeping with [its] particular conception of the world. (1992:58f.)

If sacred origins are to mean anything in the galleries of our lives, they must be hung on familiar pegs. Halbwachs "argued that it is through their membership in a social group -- particularly kinship, religious and class affiliations -- that individuals are able to acquire, to localise and to recall their memories" (Connerton 1989:36). In light of the development of ethnicity theory after Halbwachs, other social contexts must now be added to his list, such as generational and oppositional contexts (Barth 1969; Spicer 1971), because ethnicity, as we shall see (Chapter 2), shapes religious identity in the collective memory.

Four parameters of collective memory. The parameters of collective memory theory can be summarized under the following four rubrics, which also help us focus the theory on Kazak religion:

(1) Collective memory is primarily affective, only secondarily cognitive. Since Halbwachs and Bartlett it has been well understood that "remembering is very largely a matter of feeling or affect," or, more particularly, that our memory depends on what the social psychologists Lakoff and Johnson call "image-schematisms" (Shotter 1990:122). This overturns the traditional theory of memory as recall, where memory is thought to pursue cognitive "traces", however elusive they may be to pin down. Now we know that remembering is a process of attributing "shared sense" to individual "feelings" and only thus "constructing" or "negotiating" the past at a cognitive level (Shotter 1990:131). Our "feeling" that something "was" is possible only to the extent permitted by an initial "attitude" which is

formed and reformed in our interactions with others, as we observe their behavior, absorb their language, even feel their feelings with them. Commemorative events produce "a grip of virtuous emotion" that cements social bonds (Schwartz 1982:378).

For the Kazaks, these affective image-schematisms include such things as a dream in which one sees one's mother or father or another ancestor, or a sense of warning or doom, or passing by a cemetery or shrine in a car. These trigger affective connections with personal aspirations and social experiences. Together such images have emotive and directive power which, when acted upon or simply mentioned to another person or group, become a "shared affection." Such collective memories may then constitute or confirm a religious and ethnic identity and impel collective action.

Clearly this process is not related primarily to "knowledge" of the religious tradition. Rather than knowledge of Islam, a shared affectivity in relation to vaguely defined historical values has been the process by which individual Kazaks have identified with Muslim lifeways and preserved them. Theologizing and historicizing processes go to work only when allowed to do so by social feelings. The religious memory, in particular, may be quite "non-specific," its symbols and their referents only weakly specified in cognitive terms. Eickelman (1978, 1992) has shown that traditional Muslim education was a *mnemonic experience* of the oral text of the Quran (c.f. Lambek 1990) and that it was only post-colonial education that taught *knowledge* of Islam to the masses. In this sense Kazakstan is more traditional Muslim society than countries that have had a longer experience of Islamic mass education.

(2) Collective memory is "embodied." Kazaks who are ignorant of the

Five Pillars of Islam will nevertheless open their hands automatically when an elder begins to say a blessing (e.g. at the end of a meal) and then brush their faces when the blessing is done. This *bet sıypaũ* ("face stroke") may happen without a word, the receiving of the blessing being implied in the act. It is a habit founded on the example of the Prophet Muhammad. Connerton calls it the "mnemonics of the body," "bodily automatism," and a "keeping of the past in mind" in "culturally specific postural performances," because "the past is, as it were, sedimented in the body" (1989:72ff.). "Habit-memory" is "a knowledge and a remembering in the hands and in the body; and in the cultivation of habit it is our body which 'understands'" (1989:95). It is habit-memory we are observing when "each event precipitates an appropriate successor without an alternative appearing to offer itself and without reference to the conscious will" (1989:101). "Incorporating practices . . . are acquired in such a way as not to require explicit reflection on their performance" (Connerton 1989:102); so a social group remembers in this way more readily than it does in discourse or texts.

Attacks on the "Cartesian captivity of the West" in post-modernist epistemologies, which seek to establish non-analytical or sensualist connections between affectivity and corporeality *to the exlusion* of cognition and discourse, are popular today. But a balanced theory of collective memory does not demand a sensualist valuation of culture. It argues only that the affective "mnemonics of the body" have primacy over analytic or cognitive discourse and thus provide a cultural mechanism for the persistence of religion. When science finds itself surprised that religion is still around in the absence of theology, and after reason was supposed to have won the

day, neglect of the affective dimension of culture is probably the source of the problem.

The religious mnemonics of the body were crucial for the Muslim peoples of the USSR when their literate and articulate leaders were purged or fell silent. In the Soviet period Muslim peoples like the Kazaks were at an advantage for having learned to live their religion at an affective and "bodily" level. A mosque cannot function without an *imam* to read, preach, and lead the prayers, and an Orthodox Church cannot celebrate the liturgy without a priest or deacon, but the "affective" and "corporeal" Muslim life of the Kazak nomads required no specialists and little doctrine or Quranic knowledge.

(3) Landscape evokes collective memories. Spicer listed "land" as the first "symbol of identity" in the persistent cultural systems of 10 severely enclaved ethnic groups (1971:397). Larcom discovered that the Mewun of Malekula (New Hebrides) value "place," their spiritualized landscape, even when it brings economic disadvantage (1980, 1983). A hundred years ago Maurice Leenhardt found that spatiality was so strongly felt by the Canaques of rural New Caledonia that personal identity itself was weakly formed, overwhelmed by "cosmomorphism" (1979 [1947]). The evocative power of the religious landscape of the Kazak steppe, especially its Muslim shrines and cemeteries, is another example of how textured landscape evokes collective memories.

Both when it was enclaved in the USSR and now that it has emerged as a nation-state, Kazakstan has been a powerful concept for Kazaks. "What becomes meaningful [as a symbol of identity] is probably a function of the oppositional process," Spicer noted (1971:798). Widespread Kazak opposition

to the privatization of land is due primarily to the fear that Russians and other foreigners -- non-Muslims -- will buy up Kazakstan. The defense of the Kazak steppe has been such a serious challenge since the end of the 17th century -- in opposition primarily to the Jungars and then the Russians -- that Kazaks frequently express fear of extinction and lay charges of genocide. Ecological devastation in some regions of Soviet Kazakstan has contributed strongly to these fears.

Landscape evokes dormant memories and reshapes active ones (Schama 1995; Halbwachs 1992[1941]:191-235). Connerton (1989:87) notes that a chateau or manor house is not only a home but a repository of cultural skills (bottling wine, fishing, gardening, hunting, etc.); so the French nobility in 1789 were defending not only their property but the collective memory of a social class. Similarly, the traditional mud-brick house *(jer tam)* of the Central Asian sedentary peoples, often called a "Muslim house" *(musılmansha üy)*, provided the Kazaks a stopping place between nomadism and urbanization, between the yurt *(kiyiz üy; qara üy)* and the apartment block *(dom)*. The Muslim house models for the Kazaks a full range of Muslim cultural skills. In 1992 our family lived at the very edge of the city of Turkistan, with empty steppe beyond; by 1998 we were looking out on two kilometers of new mud-brick homes in various states of completion -- a process of home-building inspired largely by the desire of Kazaks to get out of the Soviet-style tenement section of town and into their own "Muslim house." The delineation of sacred space enlivens the religious memory (Coser 1992:10).

(4) Languages are collective memories. Discourse may be secondary to affectivity, but affectivity is often expressed in language. When a new

generation learns less of a language than its forbears, it is already remembering the past and anticipating the future differently (Padden 1990:191f.). As a consequence of changing linguistic identities, personal identities can change very quickly — within a single generation — and this in turn impacts religious values and behavior. However, change may come more slowly at the affective level where collective memory and religious values are primarily grounded. Today Kazak is the language of preference for a smaller percentage of the younger generation than ever before, but because Kazak is the language of religion, it remains as part of the individual's cultural identity, so long as he or she maintains ties with family and kin who express their religious identity in Kazak. Young Kazaks who so much as ask for the blessing *(bata)* of their father or mother will never hear such a blessing except in Kazak, and if they wish to pass the blessing on to their children, they will learn to do it in Kazak, however haltingly. An aversion to "going it alone" keeps these religious and ethnic vistas open even for quite russified Kazaks. Religious affectivity powers the collective memory of the mother-tongue.

A "thick description" (Geertz 1973:3ff.) of Kazak religious language is attempted in this study. Ethnomethodology has taught us that semantics are an avenue of access to cultural affectivities, including, of course, religious life, because language is used to sustain felt-needs (Wardhaugh 1992:239,249-255). My "lived experience" (Jackson 1989) among the Kazaks gives me an affective identification with them, but it is unrealistic to think that as an outsider I can *feel* their culture better than I can *hear* it. There is no substitute at the methodological level for mulling over the meaning of words, because cross-cultural boundaries are crossed most effi-

ciently by listening. For this reason, extended verbatim wordings of religious conceptions used by Kazaks in every-day conversation are featured in this study.

Three limitations of collective memory theory. In addition to the four parameters of collective memory theory discussed above, three problems limit its range as used in this study:

(1) Beyond innate ideas and group mind. Collective memory theory suffers under the burden of association with ethnopsychological theories of a reified group-mind or a "quasi-mystic soul with its own existence" (Douglas 1951:16). Indeed, native studies of the Kazak "mind" *(sana-sezim)* use ethnopsychological conceptions to argue that Kazak culture is "eastern" and fundamentally incompatible with Russia and the West (e.g. Abũshärip 1996). Proposals are regularly made that the nation needs an ethnic ideology to replace Marxism (Elikbaev 1992; *ZG* August 5, 1995, p. 12 [Jarıqbaev]), including a series of articles in a Shymkent newspaper devoted to the concept of ethnic "spirit" *(ruḥ)* (*SK*, April 24, 1998, pp. 6-7). Because of lingering Marxist frameworks, many of my Kazak colleagues hold to a mystogogic theory of group-mind. Expressions such as *ḥalıqtıng sanası* (the mind of the people) and *esimizde qalıp qalġan* (stored in our memory) are often used by Kazaks to justify their Muslim identity. Such reifications are static concepts and, though revealing, they lack explanatory power. Why, I must ask my Kazak colleagues, is your "ethnic mind" the way it is? And has it always been so?

Halbwachs was more careful. Always faithful to Durkheim, he rejected Bergson's theory of "innate ideas" (Douglas 1951:16ff.), which was the French source of ethnopsychology theory. It is individuals, not groups or

societies, who remember. It is Kazaks who remember, not "the Kazak." Unfortunately the Kazak language lends itself to the collective misconception: *qazaqtıng sanası* (the mind of the Kazak) is a more natural expression than *qazaqtardıng sanası* (the mind of individual Kazaks). But, strictly speaking, there is no "Kazak religion," only the religion of specific groups of Kazaks, even when the shorthand term is used as representative. This study features a cast of Kazak characters (see the Appendix) and quotes their verbatim statements as exemplary, not as definitive for the whole people. I let the personalities of these partners in dialogue shine forth and develop their characters cumulatively beginning in Chapter 2.

(2) Beyond "imagined communities" and "invented traditions." Imagination, invention, and social construction are themes widely used in social theory to describe how societies conceive of themselves as communities and cultures. Anderson's "imagined communities," for example, include European nation-states that have no real claim to primordial peoplehood but were constructed artificially or "imagined" on the basis of newly printed languages and the new capitalist economic configuration ("print-capitalism," 1983:43ff.). Hobsbawm argues along the same lines that nationalism is created by "inventing traditions," by which he means "a process of formalization and ritualization" of a new national idea (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:4). All ideologies are thus explained as "mythological" constructions. Collective memory, according to postmodernist theory, is the mother of invention.

The consequences in Muslim studies can be startling. Because the Uwaysi Sufis of Eastern Turkistan (China) invented their *silsilah* (spiritual lineage), Baldick calls them *Imaginary Muslims* in the title of his recent book (1993; cf. DeWeese 1996b). What can this mean, in the end, except that

Baldick views -- or will be viewed as viewing the Uwaysis as less than "really" Muslim? The postmodernist theory of "reification," the child of Durkheimian "representation," thus leads rather quickly to the nihilist conclusion that there are no "real" Muslims. Anthropology cannot accept such dismissals of the "real," because the crosscultural study of Muslim societies would thus become an enemy of Islam, and the dialogical method would have to surrender to nihilist epistemology.

(3) Beyond postmodernism: A balanced epistemology. In sociology, psychology, the history of religions, and philosophy, a balanced epistemology is now emerging. One of its premises is that collective memory does not normally construct mere "fictions." Schwartz has argued that a valid sociology of knowledge cannot be built from obscure historical problems "whose recollection is especially sensitive to extraneous social and political developments" (1982:396). Halbwachs, he argues, made the collective memory of shifting Palestinian place-names seem so flexible in service of later religious ideologies as to reflect no historical substance at all. Schwartz himself, in his studies of the historiography of Abraham Lincoln (1990) and of American commemorative art in the US Capitol (1982), gets better results which, he suggests,

> do not permit us to go as far as Maurice Halbwachs in denying the objectivity of history . . . Given the constraints of a recorded history, *the past cannot be literally constructed; it can only be selectively exploited.* Moreover, the basis of the exploitation cannot be arbitrary. The events selected for commemoration must have some factual significance to begin with. (1982:396, italics added)

Schwartz calls this residue of original meaning the "internal significance" of historical events.

Secondly, social psychology now assures us that individuals do have some pure memories that are not social constructions (Fentress and Wickham 1992:ix). As eyewitnesses to their own lives, people have personal memories that may be quite "real" or "true" (1992:48). The negative evidence for this is the way unpleasant or hurtful memories are consciously suppressed and never spoken about, because their very historicity is painful or embarassing. Induction from this empirical foundation yields the epistemological conclusion that there are such things as historical facts and social realities. Critical realism recognizes that, while "the personal factor of the observer inevitably enters into scientific knowledge," science investigates a natural world that is real and that yields at least some knowledge that is rightly called "true" (Hiebert 1994:21,25). In philsophical epistemology James F. Harris argues "in defense of method" (1992) for this reason, showing that the postmodernist *doyens*, Wittgenstein, Kuhn, Ricoeur, and Bourdieu erred in making human perception so uncertain that nihilism is the only possible outcome. Nihilism, of course, makes everything, including postmodernism, untenable.

Thirdly, DeWeese argues as an historian of religion that it is a mistake to postulate that communities organize their religious experience as "reliable" history and then distort it later; rather, important events are "more likely to be structured in memory and in narrative with essentially religious language" more or less from the outset (1994:161). In other words, it is precisely in the act of social construction that religion assumes its essential meaning. "Facts" and "realities" are complexes of meaning from the outset. *Anamnesis* is where spirituality begins, not simply how it is recalled.

For such reasons Fentress and Wickham (1992:76ff.) challenge ethnohistory theory, which delves into oral tradition on the assumption that the collective memory contains "residues" or "factual traces" of history that can be used to write the history of preliterate societies. In this study I make no such claims; this is not an ethnohistory of Kazak religion. Instead, collective memory theory is used to examine the sociopsychological processes by which Kazak culture is being shaped today. If this helps us arrive at a sense of where Kazak religion comes from, so much the better (see Chapter 2), but this result is based not on the ethnohistorical method seeking "factual traces" in social memories, but on the comparison of contemporary processes with documentable origins.

The most basic approach to the problem of the reality-status of ethnographic data is the Platonic dichotomy of the ideal and the real (Linton 1936). This paradigm remains the foundation of a critical realist epistemology. Constructed or negotiated religious patterns and processes occur when ideal conceptions exert influence on behavior. Idealizations activate cultural processes for all kinds of purposes, but they are limited by real contexts. The collective memory is seldom written on a blank page in spite of its constructive creativity, because the realities of social life are capable of exposing lying ideals. Like all religion, therefore, Kazak religion is an idealization of realities which are no less accessible to empirical investigation for being constructed domains of culture.

METHODOLOGY

It had been more than 70 years since the last foreign ethnographer had set up residence anywhere in Kazakstan. Castagné lived 11 years "in the region of the Kirgiz [Kazaks]" (1923:309, n.1), working out of Orenburg and later Tashkent before the Soviet period. Hudson's brief visit to Almaty in 1936 and Krader's in 1956 had little to do with religious studies. When I came to Kazakstan in 1991 I began by observing that, since Valikhanov in the 1860s, the semantics of Kazak religion had not been systematically explored. I determined to find out how Kazaks describe and categorize religious things in their own language — the stuff of traditional ethnography. The procedures of the research were as follows:

♦ Long-term, part-time field research was conducted over seven years beginning in June 1991. I lived in Turkistan beginning in April 1992, teaching at Yasawi University and doing research on the side. The write-up was also done in Turkistan during 1996-98. Email and annual trips to the United States kept me in touch with colleagues who helped shape my research strategy and theoretical focus.

♦ I worked in the Kazak language, achieving professional fluency near Level 4 on the ACTFL scale (Hadley 1993:501-511; cf. Privratsky 1996). Because Kazaks instinctively speak Russian to European faces, I avoided learning much Russian to make them speak Kazak to me. I considered it a fair trade that colleagues sometimes had to translate for me when Russian was spoken and give me Kazak or English renditions of Russian literature

unavailable in translation.[1] Being able to consult the Kazak literature in the original language was groundbreaking in crosscultural Kazak studies. Not only Kazak academic works but popular tracts and newspaper articles on Islam and Muslim culture are cited throughout the study. Cheap newsprint booklets are especially salient for the study of Islam in local contexts, where tradition is no longer passed on primarily in oral form but by means of modern publicist processes (cf. Shahrani 1991).

♦ Gaũhar Sızdıqova, senior instructor in history at Yasawi University, served as unpaid collaborator in the planning and interview phase of the research. She appears as *IK* (Interviewer: Kazak) in dialogical quotations from the interviews; her crucial role is indicated by the way I appear less often as *IA* (Interviewer: American). Aside from normal uses, I also write in the first-person plural where I feel Sızdıqova and I are speaking together.

♦ Open-ended interview questions were prepared in English and Kazak in 1994, and 37 semi-structured interviews were taped with a purposive sample (Bernard 1988:97) of Kazak and Qoja residents of Turkistan and one village nearby between January and June 1995. The transcriptions came to 2,400 pages of Kazak-Cyrillic text written out long-hand by four university students who were paid for their work.

♦ Fieldnotes reflect my friendships and professional contacts, which, though far from random, represent a socioeconomic cross-section of the

---

1. Though the highpoints are reviewed, a thoroughgoing appraisal of Russian studies of the Kazaks is beyond the scope of this study, which claims independent value, however, precisely for striking a new path. I trust that the Kazak linguistic detail presented here will provide a new basis for approaching the Russian and Soviet literature. Soviet-era assessments of Kazak culture would have been very different had they been grounded in a linguistic methodology that did not privilege Russian over Kazak.

Kazaks of the city, plus some Uzbek neighbors on the street where we live. Of particular importance were conversations overheard and events serendipitously observed (some of these by my wife and children) in which my presence distorted the data little if at all (Kirk and Miller 1986:18,31). Classes I taught in religious studies and ethnology sharpened my emic analytical focus. An "eclectic strategy" of this type buys a high degree of internal validity (Bernard 1988:95; Pelto and Pelto 1978:34).

♦ I lived in Almaty for seven weeks in 1991 and in Kentau for six weeks in 1992. I made other trips to Almaty, Shymkent, and Tashkent and did significant observation and/or interviews in seven villages and towns near Turkistan: Atabay, Qızıljol, Chapaev (also called Otız Jıldıq and Intımaq), Törtköl, Otrar/Arstan Bab/Shäũildir,[1] Otrabad, and a camel farm on the Syr Darya near Arıs. Although urban and rural control groups were not systematically established, these trips provided comparative distance from the local context of Turkistan.

Spirituality and ethnographic method. Clifford's book on Maurice Leenhardt (1982; cf. Crapanzano 1979) inspired me to attempt an ethnography-as-dialogical-encounter in the pre-Malinowskian tradition, when anthropology and theology could still be friends. Leenhardt, a French missionary-ethnographer, lived for 25 years at the beginning of the 20th century in New Caledonia, then succeeded to Mauss' chair at the *École Pratiques des Haute Études* at the Sorbonne, and was in turn succeeded in 1951 by Lévi-

---

1. Cynthia Werner did a major research project in economic anthropology at ShäŨildir during the time I was in Turkistan. Her work on agricultural privatization (1994) and feasting and gift exchange processes (1997, 1998) accurately describes Kazak culture in the '90s.

Strauss. Both his descriptive work, based on a personally transformative experience of *la vie profonde* of Melanesian "cosmomorphism" (1979 [1947]), and his methodology for training native collaborators (theology students) to record the "undifferentiated" religious experience of Canaque dreams and visions, are applauded by Clifford as ground-breaking models for ethnography. It was a controversial proposal that was written off by the post-modernist mainstream (Rabinow 1983), but I determined to make a personal investment in it to see whether I could adapt Leenhardt to the Christian-Muslim encounter. The fundamentals were long-term residence, language fluency, a spiritual devotion to science, and research collaboration with local people based on transparent religious commitment.

During 1993-94 Sızdıqova and I discussed the possible conflict between my Christian identity and the Kazak feeling that Christianity is an enemy of their culture. To her own satisfaction she resolved the problem of her association with me, in spite of criticism from one or two colleagues, and in spite of the fact that she shares the Kazak fear of Christian encroachment. She liked that I distinguish my ethnographic "treasure hunting" from the "pearl merchant" approach of 19th-century Russian missions (Bevans 1992:49; cf. Batunsky 1994:216ff.; Kreinder 1969:164, n.4). She decided that the opportunity to learn ethnographic and religious-studies methodologies and pursue her *kandidat nauk* degree would balance any difficulties of working with me. Sızdıqova would introduce us to informants as believing scientists, announce self-confidently that it is good for science when a Muslim and a Christian work together, and soothe suspicious informants with the argument that belief in God makes science clean, unlike Soviet ideology that contaminated it. In such an atmosphere of seeking after

openness, I felt free to object to informants' statements on occasion, e.g. misunderstandings of Christianity, or anti-semitic remarks. Suspicion, when it is modulated by faith and science together, may give way to dialogue, belying the nihilist premise that there is an "absolute difference" that separates the Western scientist from the Muslim believer (Rabinow 1977:161). Instead, belief may meet belief and thus complement the meeting of science and religion. On a few occasions when informants were reluctant to talk with us, we sensed they feared that we, like Soviet social scientists, had to be working for the government.

Nevertheless, a foreign ethnographer's presence in a community like Turkistan is an ethnographic datum, a constructed cultural domain in its own right. Despite my commitment to transparency, I discovered that I, like "all social actors, researchers included, choreograph concealment and disclosure" (Mitchell 1993:v). Kazak colleagues and sponsors also choreographed their relationship with me, heaping on me varying degress of honor and criticism, but always granting me wide latitute for my work. Occasionally they tried to steer me in directions they were comfortable with. They encouraged me, for instance, to interview only academic specialists *(ülken mamandar)* and the best informed and honored of the traditional Kazak "white beards" *(aqsaqal)*, worrying that my plan to discover Kazak culture by talking to the *hoi polloi* (Kz. *jurt*) would discredit both Islam and the Kazak nation. I did not follow their advice, but Kazaks aspire to a place of national honor in the world community, and I could at least promise to help them be recognized. No American had ever lived in Turkistan before, and this, in the end, was enough to make the study possible.

Textuality and reality. Because the semantics of Kazak religion have been neglected, this study features a heavy dose of Kazak-language texts and lexical comments in systematic Kazak-Latin transliteration. This reflects both a moral commitment to let Kazaks speak for themselves and a formal commitment to give area studies specialists, including Kazak colleagues, a solid basis for evaluating my sources.

I am not fascinated, however, by textuality in the post-modernist sense, where nothing is real except power, and words are fictions that cultures force on themselves or others. Phenomena that are experienced religiously and observed scientifically are human realities, not fictions. The focus on the language of Kazak religion in the pages below is a traditional interpretive strategy that records the real words of real people attempting to make a real point about their spiritual realities. I have, of course, translated and therefore "reconstructed" their world for them in English and in the conceptual terms that I understand. To the extent that this is judged to have been a "hegemonic" exercise of crosscultural representation, other ethnographers (including, I hope, my Kazak colleagues and students) will want to "deconstruct" my work. Even then, however, a certain value attaches to the linguistic data and observations assembled here. Stocking's comment on the history of anthropology (1991:13n.) provides motivation for the ethnographic enterprise:

> [A]t the same time that one recognizes that much of what we deal with as historians is perhaps at some level irreducibly "mythistorical," . . . ethnographies . . . are many of them at least as valuable and permanent contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the variety of humankind as the efforts of those who would deconstruct them.

I have attempted what I think is a reliably "thick description" of the way

Kazaks think, feel, and live as a Muslim people in Turkistan. In anthropology description, after all, is still the best place to begin.

Türkistan – eki düniye esigi ġoy,
Türkistan – er türikting besigi ġoy.
Tamasha Türkistanday jerde tuġan
Türikting tängiri bergen nesibi ġoy.
—Maġjan Jumabaev, 1923

Turkistan is the door to two worlds,
The cradle of the heroic Turk.
To be born in wondrous Turkistan
Is a blessing of Tengri, God of the Turks.

CHAPTER TWO

KIYELI JER: MUSLIM LANDSCAPE AND KAZAK ETHNICITY

Every edition of the Kazak-language newspapers features poetry composed by school children and poet laureates alike. Collections of poems are sold at the Yasawi Shrine; the best ones become songs set to traditional tunes on the Kazak *dombra* and are sold on cassette tapes at the central bazaar, played live over the salesman's loudspeaker to attract customers. An honored guest is always treated to a recital of Kazak poetry and song. Harking back to the artistic tradition of the Kazak bard *(aqın)*, today's Kazak poetry is replete with religious and ethnic themes. One genre celebrates the holy ground of Turkistan and the memory of its saints and ancestors:

Pir tutqan Qoja Aḥmet Yassawīim,
Sıyınıp arüaġınga bas iyemin.
Ġasırlarġa küä bop Türkistan tur,
Qasiyetti topıraġıngdı basqan jerim.

Qoja Ahmet Yasawi, you are my master,
I worship and bow my head to your spirit.

On your sacred ground I have walked,
O Turkistan, witness of the centuries.

Babtardıng babı bolġan Arıstan bab,
Qoja Aḥmet Yassawī tübing arab.
Eki özen qosılıp tengiz bolġan,
Ḥalqım-aũ sıylamasang tübi qarab.

Arstan Bab, you were *bab* of the *babs*,[1]
And Qoja Ahmet Yasawi, you came from the Arabs.
Joined in an ocean sea, these two rivers will dry up
If you fail to honor them, o my people.

Keremet ärũaġıng bolmasa eger,
Salġızbas zäũlim saray qolbasshı er.
Saũrannıng topıraġınan kirpish iylep,
Ämir-Temir ḥalıḳtı oymen biyler.

Because of your wonder-working ancestor-spirits
The heroic chieftan built your towered courts;
Pressing bricks from Sauran's slurried soil,
Emir Timür planned to rule the people with a thought.

Köp ulttıng basın qosıp saraptadıng,
Älemdi bir özinge qaratqanıng.
Ekinshi Mekke ataġan türki ḥalqı,
Atıngnan aynalayın Türkistanım.

Here you have brought many nations to confer
And made the world gaze upon you,
Whom the Turks call the Second Mecca:
O my Turkistan, let me walk around you.

Ziyanat[2] *etip kelũde tarıqqanı,*
Perzent tiler, özingnen zarıqqanı,
Tümen bab ataġan ḥalqıng seni,
Atıngnan aynalayın Türkistanım.

Calling you the legion of *babs*,[1]
Pilgrims flock to you in desperate need.
Childless, they beg you for children:
O my Turkistan, let me walk around you.

---

1. *Bab* is a Turko-Persian title for a famous Sufi saint and is related to *baba* (grandfather, forefather; cf. Indo-European *papa*) (see Chapter 5).

2. *Ziyarat*, a visit or pilgrimage to a shrine, as distinct from the *hajj*. The local mispronunciation, *ziyanat* (see Chapter 5), is printed uncorrected in the poem.

Türki tildes ḫalıqtıng jüregising,
Muḫammed paẏġambardıng tiregising,
Tayqazanıng elingdi toyındırıp,
Shıraġdandar shashadı nur säũlesin.

The longing of all people of Turkic tongue,
You are the pillar of the Prophet Muhammad.
Your bronze cauldron is a feast for your people,
The light of your glory shines in its vigil lamps.

Jangẏırıp Türkistanım tülep, bügin,
Jastarım öner qũıp, aldı bilim.
Qushaġıng ayqara ashtı san ultqa,
Joġarġı oqũ ornı Yassawīding.

Now restored, you have come alive, my Turkistan,
Your youth have come to learn the arts and wisdom.
Yasawi's school of higher learning
Opens wide your embrace to many nations. (Translation mine)

This poem by Saylaũbay Saũranbaev was published unobtrusively in the local weekly (*TT*, August 8, 1997:4). The quatrains *(rubāʿī)* are rhymed *aaxa*, a familiar device of Turko-Persian poetry, and express themes evoked in the Kazak collective memory by the cultural landscape of Turkistan, the holy ground *(kiyeli jer)* of the Kazaks. The domed mausoleum of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi was built in the 1390s by order of Emir Timür (Tamerlane),[1] who made a policy of honoring Sufi saints (Manz 1989:17). A marvel of Timurid architecture, it still stands 600 years later, and the largest of its two blue-tiled domes remains the largest brick dome in Central Asia (Nurmuḫammedov 1988:148). In the late 16th century it was provided with an imposing towered portal by Abdullah Khan, Emir of Bukhara. But there is more here than architecture, as the poem reveals.

The title, "May I walk around your name, my Turkistan" *(Atıngnan*

---

1. In Kazak he is called *Ämir Temir* or *Aqsaq Temir*, Timur the Lame, where the Kazak reflects the same etymology as Tamerlane in English.

aynalayın Türkistanım), invokes the memory of the domestic healing rites of Inner Asian religion, where the shaman or head of household would run around the outside of the yurt to offer himself in place of the sick child inside. To this day *"Aynalayın"* (lit, let me go around) is a Kazak greeting expressing the affection of elders for children. Its cultural origins give it a subtle suggestion of self-giving by the old on behalf of the young, or, in the poem, of self-giving devotion to the saint and his memory. The poet weds the steppe tradition to the Muslim custom of pilgrimage *(ziyarat)*, where circumambulating the shrine of a saint mimicks the Meccan pilgrimage *(hajj)*. Walking around yurt and shrine further suggests both the circle of men in the *zikir* (Ar. *dhikr*, remembrance) ceremony of the Sufis, their arms locked and revolving in a circle, and the ten-thousands of saints *(tümen bab)* whose spirits are believed to circle the Yasawi Shrine overhead. In the poem the holy ground of Turkistan has become an *axis mundi* (Kz. *kindik*; Ar. *quṭb*), the center of the Turkic world.

The poet's references to Mecca, Muhammad and the Arab lineage of Ahmet Yasawi associate Turkistan with Arabian Islam. The Persian terms *pir* (Sufi master), *bab* (saint), and *qoja* (lord) are all religious titles from the Sufi tradition of Central Asia. The poet bows *(sıyınũ)* to the spirit *(arũaq)* of Ahmet Yasawi; reflecting the regional cycle of pilgrimage sites, his teacher, Arstan Bab (Lion Saint), is also mentioned. Tamerlane is portrayed not as a merciless butcher, as in the West, but as a wise world-conqueror who, in honoring Yasawi with a palatial monument, hoped to rule the nomads "with a thought" *(oymen)*, the way of Islam and the Sufis.

From Tamerlane's bronze cauldron *(tayqazan)* at the shrine people are still fed spiritually today, the poem intones, reflecting the Sufi rite of

hospitality, a free meal on Friday that was held at the Yasawi Shrine till the end of the 1920s (see detail in Chapter 5). The poet also tells us about the presidents of nations who have held recent meetings in the shadow of the Yasawi Shrine, and about the new international university named for the saint. Turkistan is a "witness of the centuries" of the Kazak encounter with Islam and the world.

Such romantic invocations of the glories of Turkistan, the land of the Turks, play on the name of the city as an undisguisedly Pan-Turkic synecdoche. The poem by Mağjan Jumabaev cited at the head of this chapter is an example of an earlier generation Pan-Turkist literature in Central Asia (*SQ*, April 13, 1991 [1923]). Jumabaev's verse is on a billboard at the Turkistan city limits, followed by another with a quote from President Nazarbaev announcing that Turkistan is becoming the spiritual capital of the Turkic world *(türik düniyesining rūḥanī astanası)*.

Kazaks variably conceive of their ethnic and now national identity as identical with, or entirely separate from, Pan-Turkic and Muslim identities. Kazak cultural processes, its Muslim values, and the new Pan-Turkism are a fluid mix now in the 1990s. This fluidity is hardly unusual for a modern *ethnos*. The ethnicity concept is shifting sand, and each new case study seems to demand new definitions (Barth 1969; Isajiw 1974; Cohen 1978; Castile and Kusher 1981; Royce 1982; Roosens 1989; Romanucci-Ross and DeVos 1995). Our poem provides a better framework for understanding Kazak religion and ethnicity than any of them, although the standard ethnicity theories must also be evaluated at the end of the chapter. For now, however, the problem under discussion is how Kazak ethnic identity is impacted by sacred landscapes like Turkistan.

To analyze Kazak ethnic identity in one city or region is, of course, a partial approach to the problem. Even a national approach cannot define an *ethnos*, because ethnic boundaries are flexible and permeable, responding to the strategies and lifestyles of individuals, not of societies only. However, Turkistan's local partialities typify a cultural process by means of which sacred landscapes affect Muslim peoples everywhere, especially in Central Asia. The Kazak case in Turkistan elucidates how Islam can become an ethnic marker for a Muslim people even in the absence of the supposed requisites of a theological and ritual nature that are usually associated with Muslim societies. Because land is spatial and therefore spreads outward from a locale, ethnicity also begins locally.

So the next section is a survey of the ethnic groups in the city. Secondly, a brief essay on local history is offered, analyzing the place of Turkistan in the history of the Kazak people. In a third section some preliminary conclusions are drawn about sacred landscape and Kazak ethnicity, but their relationship needs parameters to set aside extraneous cultural issues; so the purpose of the two ethnographic reports that follow is to circumscribe the problem. One (the fourth section) spells out the limits of popular knowledge of the Yasawi narrative tradition and thus clarifies the way Kazaks value the Yasawi Shrine. Another report (the fifth section) presents local understandings of Kazak culture traits and shows that most of these are no longer salient as ethnic markers. "Land" and "blood," we shall see, together constitute a symbolically meaningful culture in the Kazak collective memory.

THE ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHY OF TURKISTAN

Turkistan today is city of about 85,000 residents.[1] At least 90% of the population is Kazak or Uzbek, with a small remainder of Tatars, Meshket Turks, and Russians. In a demographic reversal, the Kazaks, once a nomadic people, are stronger in town today than the Uzbeks.[2] In the 1989

---

1. A population history for Turkistan in the modern period be constructed from Dobrosmyslov (1995 [1912]) and census figures (see "Censuses" in bibliography):

1864:	4,911	The Russian conquest; 1,200 houses were counted
1897:	11,253	First Russian Imperial Census; intensive cotton production
1910:	15,236	Russian Imperial Census; rail transport opens in 1903
1926:	21,787	First Soviet Census
1939:	35,506	Collectivization and famine brings Kazaks to town
1959:	38,152	Little growth reflects Kazak depopulation everywhere
1970:	53,965	Local factories flourish, including one for aircraft parts
1979:	66,741	Growth in the Qonaev period
1989:	77,692	On the eve of the Soviet collapse
1994:	85,100	Three years after independence: 9.5% growth in five years

Thus, Turkistan grew by a factor of 15 during the 125-year Russian colonial period (1864-1989). In 30 years from 1910 to 1939, the population more than doubled, then remained static for two decades, then doubled again by 1989. From 1939 to 1959 Turkistan's growth was slower than any of the 34 cities in Soviet Kazakstan with a population over 20,000. This stagnation reflects a policy decision to build Kentau as a mining and industrial city nearby. The corresponding policy *not* to invest in Turkistan is felt in the Muslim community to have been part of the Soviet anti-religious campaign. Industrialization did eventually come to Turkistan, however, and local growth after 1960 also reflects a national trend when the Kazak population began to recover from Russian encroachment on their grazing lands, then famine, collectivization, purges, and war that had decimated their numbers by at least a third, and by 22% during the period 1926-1939 alone (Sarkizyans 1972:256).

Excellent treatments of Kazak demography are available in English (Khazanov 1995; Olcott 1981). Demographic data showing severe decline of the Kazak population in the 1920s and '30s encouraged the US Army to think that the Kazaks might prove to be a helpful fifth column against the USSR, a fanciful military scenario that led the US Army to support Krader and Wayne's archival ethnography of the Kazaks (1955).

2. In 1897 there were 1,415 *"Kirgiz"* [=Kazaks] in a population of 11,253, or 12.5%; the majority were Uzbeks at 8,918, or 79.2%, with only 312 Russians, 498 Jews, and 512 Tatars (Dobrosmyslov 1995:24 [1912:126ff.]). In 1926 there were 5,574 Kazaks in a population of 21,787, or 25.5%, with Uzbek numbers at 11,002, or 50.4% (1926 Census).

census there were 43,022 Kazaks in Turkistan, or 55% of a population of 77,692; in the surrounding county *(raion)* of large Uzbek villages, Kazaks were only 42% (Amandıqov 1990:15). During the reign of Dinmuhammed Qonaev (Kunaev), First Secretary of the Kazakstan Communist Party for a quarter century (1962-1986), Kazaks came to dominate employment opportunities as civil servants and educational, medical, and industrial professionals. Few were skilled laborers, but when Turkistan was industrialized in the 1960s, many Kazaks came to town as factory workers. The cotton processing plant is the only factory that has survived the collapse of local industry in the 1990s, but the population of the city has swelled nonetheless. Opportunities at the new university and in the thriving post-socialist mercantile economy at the Turkistan bazaar have brought more Kazaks to town. Despite some out-migration by young people looking for work (and in part because of it, since Russians are among those leaving), Kazaks will probably constitute two-thirds or more of the city population in the next census. The Kazak demographer, Tätimov, is announcing (1996) that the repopulation of the nation heralds the coming of a new Kazak "golden age."

Kazak kinship groups in local perspective. The division of the Kazak horde into three *jüz* — the *Ulı Jüz* (Great Horde), *Orta Jüz* (Middle Horde), and *Kishi Jüz* (Little Horde), which are segmented into clans and sub-clans (*rũ* < *urıq*, seed), is well documented in other studies (Olcott 1987; Krader 1963). These hordes are the "pure" Kazaks of Turkic lineage, called the *qara süyek* or "black bone," as distinct from the *aq süyek* or "white bone" ruling classes, who are considered to be of different patrineal "blood" *(qanı basqa)*, do not belong to the three hordes *(jüzge jatpaydı)*, and so are sometimes labelled, and label themselves, as "not Kazaks" *(qazaq emes)*. The

aq süyek consist of two groups, the *töre* and the *qojas*.[1] As putative Arabs the Qojas are very important to our discussion of religion and will be discussed below and in the following chapters. The *töre* were the Kazak khans and their families claiming Chinggisid inheritance, i.e. sacralized Mongolian descent from Genghis Khan via the khans of Golden Horde. Despite their Arab and Mongolian "blood," the *aq süyek* are thoroughly Kazak in culture, the emic explanation for which is that they took Kazak women as wives. Both groups were thoroughly Islamized in self-concept.

The Syr Darya basin is the traditional territory of the Middle Horde, and in Turkistan the largest group is the Bojban sub-clan of the Qongrat clan of the Middle Horde. However, Turkistan was also a political center *(orda; astana)* of the Kazak Khanate and therefore of all three hordes in their common Kazak identity. By the early 19th century the khanates of all three hordes were abolished by Russian imperial decree, and the *töre* subsequently suffered severe attrition. Kene Sarı Khan, who mounted the last Kazak resistance to Russian domination in the 1830s, was hunted down, decapitated, and his army destroyed (Qasımbaev 1993; Qasımbaev et al. 1993; Düysenbay 1993). The *töre* survived marginally in Soviet times, often in diaspora,[2] but they had set in motion a process that made Turkistan a

---

1. A third group, the *tölenggit*, are usually listed in discussions of Kazak social structure alongside the *töre* and *qojas* as a "non-Kazak" group. They were an indentured military class called slaves by Radlov (Hudson 1938:58ff.). We met no *tölenggit* in Turkistan nor anyone who knew of them. As soldiers they would have been special targets of the Tsarist and Soviet governments.

2. Bayan Qasımjanova, the wife of Professor Ağın Qasımjanov (Kasymzhanov), is a *töre* descended from Kene Sarı Khan. She was raised in Tashkent where her family had fled Stalin's purges. Qasımjanov must have loved me, she says, because marrying an aristocrat was not a good career move for him as a young communist.

center of sacred meanings for the Kazaks, as we will explore more fully below. Today as in the past, Kazakstan's ruling class in the Great Horde finds Turkistan an attractive symbol of the nation. The sacred landscape of Turkistan is a kind of national property, with the Yasawi Shrine pictured on Kazakstan's currency.

A local ethnic symbiosis: Uzbek and Kazak. Kazaks and Uzbeks live side by side in many Central Asian towns and cities. In the neighborhood where I lived in Turkistan, they live on opposite sides of the street. Uzbeks say you can identify their houses because they have carefully planted tall poplars in front, and my Kazak neighbors confess that the Uzbeks are more industrious. "On the other side of the street the Uzbeks all dug wells long ago," my Kazak neighbor Baqıtbergen said when the public utilities in the city fell into disrepair, "but here on our side we sit hoping the government will restore our water supply." Uzbeks are also considered more religious, as we will see in Chapter 3.

"Uzbek" is a complex ethnic designation that assumed its present shape gradually (Schoeberlein-Engel 1996). Before the Russian period Uzbek was the tribal name of the ruling class of Mawarannahr (Transoxiana) descended from Muhammad Shaybani Khan (16th century) and Özbek Khan (14th century) of the Golden Horde. Because of their prestige the Uzbeks absorbed, among others, the Sarts, a Turko-Persian population of Central Asian peasants and merchants. Turkistan's Uzbeks include Sarts, Sunaqs (see below), and several clans of Qojas, but few if any actual "Uzbeks" in the Shaybanid sense. The relationship between Kazaks, Uzbeks, and Sarts is revealed in the curious Kazak proverb, *"Özbek - öz ağam, Sart - sadağam"* (*SQ*, April 13, 1991, p. 3), which can be interpreted to mean, "The

Uzbek is my elder brother, but the Sart I would give away as alms." According to Muqanov (1974:21) the term *qızılbas* (red-head) often applied to Sarts indicates that they were of mixed Iranian and "Turanian" (Turkic) blood. Although there are some red-headed Uzbeks in Turkistan, they no longer call themselves Sarts, because it became a term of derision, a Central Asian equivalent of the bourgeois *kulaks* in Russia. In oppositional contexts Kazaks sometimes raise the issue of how Uzbek the Uzbeks of Turkistan really are, but the criticism runs the other way, too. The Kazak bard Abay's most famous poem about his countrymen criticized them for their crude efforts to appear as polite and economically sophisticated as the Sarts *(Qaydan ġana buzıldı sartsha sırtıng)* (Qunanbaev 1977 [1886]/I:50f.).

When some Kazaks, including the two *aq süyek* groups, fled to Uzbekistan during the '30s, some registered as Uzbeks in order to better assure the prospect that they would be allowed to stay. The Soviet nationalities policy encouraged ethnic boundary crossing for socioeconomic advantange (Barth 1969). A Kazak family who returned to Turkistan from Tashkent told me they would like to change their ethnic registration back to Kazak but are afraid now of offending their Uzbek neighbors. A Kazak colleague born in Uzbekistan says that his Kazak kin there went to Uzbek schools, speak Uzbek better than Kazak, and acknowledge their Kazak ethnicity only when they are visiting in Kazakstan. Clearly some Kazaks did become Uzbeks, but there is no evidence that Uzbeks in Turkistan have become Kazaks. Uzbeks traditionally view Kazaks as less civilized because they were nomads, so, notwithstanding Barth's study of downward ethnic mobility among the Pathans (1969:117-134), Uzbek-to-Kazak ethnic transitions are not to be expected.

While the Uzbek and Kazak languages are mutually intelligible, they have lexical and phonetic distinctives, and under Soviet influence they assumed distinct Cyrillic orthographies as well. Kazak television features Uzbeks speaking their own language, but Kazaks resist any suggestion — now frequently made by Turkish propagandists — that Kazak, Uzbek, and other Turkic languages are simply dialects (*KTLS* 1991). Ethnic groups *(ult)* have become nations *(memleket)* with nationalist sensitivities; so it is two "nations" who live side by side in Turkistan today.

Kazak ethnic complexity: The Qojas. Kazak and Uzbek dominance in Turkistan masks a deeper ethnic complexity which has religious dimensions. Two descent groups with their own culture and history, the Qojas and Sunaqs, were not allowed official ethnic status in the Soviet Union and therefore had to register as Kazaks or Uzbeks.

The Qojas claim descent from Ali, the fourth caliph and nephew of the Prophet Muhammad, and one of two of his wives, either Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, or a second wife called al-Hanafiyah (the Hanafi woman); so the Qojas call themselves Arabs, though they are not Arabic-speaking. They are a local manifestation of the long tradition of the *khojagān* (De-Weese 1996a). Beginning as a spiritual lineage of Naqshbandi (Sufi) teachers, the Qojas emerged over time with variable identities in various places: in Xinjiang/East Turkistan, where they assumed the role of khans and rebel leaders (I.Togan 1992; Benson 1990; Masami 1978); in India, where they became a heterodox sect (*OEMIW* 2:423-426 [Sachedina]); and in Turkmenistan, where they are only one of several religious honor groups claiming sacred descent lines (Tyson 1997; Basilov 1984b). Turkistan's Qojas are not conversant with these comparable traditions, but they identify strongly with

their ancestors' role in "opening religion" in Central Asia.

Late-18th-century accounts by Pallas and Georgi describe Qojas living among the Kazaks, and, though their origins are in the Sufi centers and towns, it is clear from 19th-century sources (DeWeese 1997b:27, n.36) and the memory of our informant, Jolbarıs Qoja, that some of the Qojas nomadized with the Kazaks. The Qojas are a religious honor group to whom the Kazaks of the "black bone" defer socially and compensate for religious services, such as Quran recitals in the home. Patron-client relationships between Kazaks and Qojas were once important and are still evident in attentuated ways we shall explore (Chapters 3 and 5). Soviet influence, however, has converted many Qojas into modern men and women who no longer know how to perform the services of a mullah. Baũrjan Ashirbaev, who has been a faithful friend to me in Turkistan, is a modern Qoja businessman and hardly a mullah. Several Qojas are prominent in the city and university administration, including Murat Jurınulı (Zhurinov), President of Yasawi University. The son of Jolbarıs Qoja, mentioned above, works as a junior staffer in the office of President Nazarbaev.

The Qojas of Turkistan divide themselves into three lineages claiming descent from Ahmet Yasawi through his daughter, called Gaũhar Ana (Mother Diamond) by the local people. The three groups are the *azizler, naqibler,* and *shayḫ-ul-islamlar*; there are about 100 families of the latter in Turkistan today, with fewer in the first two lineages.[1] These terms were once

---

1. Apparently there was once a fourth local Qoja lineage, the *Aq Jelũ*. The sources of the Qoja traditions in Turkistan are presented by Zikirya Jandarbekov in his article on the redactions of local genealogical manuscripts *(nasabnama)* (in Mırzahmetulı 1996:60-75) and his forthcoming *kandidat nauk* dissertation.

titles for the guardians of the Yasawi Shrine (Gordlevsky 1932:63f.), who became hereditary descent groups with economic and political privileges. DeWeese argues persuasively that "the *khojas* of Central Asia are in all likelihood called *khojas* because of claimed descent from specific saints bearing the appellation *'khoja'*" (DeWeese 1997b:27, n.35; 1996a). Exaggerating but making the same point, Muqanov said that everyone who preached Islam ended up claiming to be a Qoja (1974:20).[1]

In the 1920s the Qojas of Turkistan lost their public roles at the shrine, and they have not recovered them. The eclipse of religious specialization had the effect of flattening out their self-concept; so it is the general Qoja identity, not the status of being a *naqib*, that matters in Turkistan today.

In Turkistan there are other Qoja groups who claim no relationship to Yasawi and whose origins are in other localities. The Qorasan (Khorasan) Qojas trace their history to Abdijalīl Bab (Khorasan Ata) and identify with his shrine on the south bank of the Syr Darya near medieval Jend (Dzhent) about 200 km. to the northwest of Turkistan (Jandarbekov 1994); there is a strong population of Qorasan Qojas in the town of Janga Qorġan (Yani Kurgan), and Turkistan's Qorasan Qojas have roots there. Nurali Qoja, a Qorasan Qoja, recounts a legend that Ahmet Yasawi made a pilgrimage to

---

1. A spiritual lineage of Sufi masters (Pers. *khoja*; Ar. *shaykh*) is called a *silsila*; whereas blood-line genealogies are called *shejire* in Kazak (Pers. *shajara*). In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Qoja families were producing the requisite *shejire* showing that they were descended from Ahmet Yasawi by blood in a complex process of competing claims for political and economic privileges, *viz.* control of the Yasawi Shrine's *waqf* lands and enterprises, from the Khoqand and Tsarist rulers of the city (DeWeese 1998). In Kazak the term *silsila* and the Sufi concept of spiritual descent does not occur; only blood descent from the prophets and saints as recorded in the family *shejire* is acknowledged as a Qoja pedigree.

visit Abdijalīl Bab, establishing to Nurali's satisfaction that the latter is the greater of the saints. Smaller groups include the Duwana Qojas, the Aqqorġan Qojas, and the Qarakhan Qojas (Jandarbekov in Mırzahmetulı 1996:39–44).[1]

Typical of the Qoja elders, Alim Qoja (of the Duwana Qojas) recited the disclaimer that, "We are not Kazak, not Uzbek, not a Turkic people, we belong to the Eminent Ali" *(Qazaq emespiz, özbek emes, türik emes, Äziret Älige jatamız).* But this Arab descent may be minimized depending on the context. After he himself had suggested the idea, Alim Qoja then rejected his friend's attempt to exclude him from Kazak affairs, saying, "Knock it off, we're all Kazaks, of course" *(Qoyshı, bärimiz qazaqpız ġoy).* He specifically identified himself with Kazak resistance to russification, saying, "One good thing about our Kazak history is that in 250 years we never once gave in to the Russians" *(Bizding qazaq tarīḥımızdıng bir jaqsı jaġı — 250 jıl ishinde bir orıstarġa berilgen joqpız).* So the Qojas are Kazaks by language and cultural identity when it feels right, especially in oppositional contexts, but they reserve a collective memory of a separate religious and quasi-ethnic status which the Kazaks themselves reinforce by honoring them for it. The Qojas are signposts in the collective memory of the Muslim identity of the Kazaks. By preserving the memory of their religious status despite Soviet anti-religious policy, they guaranteed the persistence of Islam in the collective memory of the Kazaks.

---

1. Jandarbekov believes THAT the Aqqorġan Qojas are the legitimate heirs of Ahmet Yasawi and the local Sufi tradition. The three groups claiming descent from Gaūhar Ana, he believes, are simply local Sarts and Uzbeks who invented their claim during the Khoqand period (personal conversation).

Kazak ethnic complexity: The Sunaqs. If the Qojas are putative Arabs, the Sunaqs are putative Qojas. Ablas Abulqayır-uli, the *imam* of the Turkistan mosque for many years, calls himself a Qoja-Sunaq, although the Sunaq claim to be Qojas and descended from the Arabs is not usually acknowledged by others (Dosjanov 1991:24). The Sunaqs trace their history and name to Sıġanaq, a medieval city 140 kilometers to the northwest of Turkistan that served as a capital for Toqtamish Khan of the Golden Horde in the 14th century. The names of cities often marked the identities of Inner Asia's ethnically indeterminate or mixed sedentary populations, and the Sunaqs seem to fit this category. More recently, Babay Qorġan village near Turkistan has been a Sunaq center; so the Sunaq tradition is sometimes called *Babaylıq*. Before the 20th century upheaveals the memory of Sıġanaq provided an honorable identity for this people apparently descended from the Turko-Persian populations that lived in the Syr Darya basin before the coming of the Qipchaq (Uzbek and Kazak) peoples of the Golden Horde. The Sunaqs are reviving their tradition: the shrine of Sunaq Ata has been recently rebuilt near the ruins of the old city, and a history of the city was commissioned by a gathering *(qurıltay)* of the Sunaq clans in 1994 (Erjanov 1996).

Neither Qojas nor Sunaqs have linguistic distinctives, but they have preserved their historical identities. This is somewhat surprising when we note that the Sarts failed to preserve theirs. The ethnonyms of all three groups were excluded from the registration laws of the Russian Empire and the USSR, which issued internal passports that included a line for ethnic group ("nationality"). Choice of ethnic registration by Qoja and Sunaq families surely reflected political and economic strategies. As a rule, Qojas

and Sunaqs who lived in agricultural towns chose to register as Uzbeks; whereas they chose to be Kazaks when their primary associations were with Kazaks as religious patrons of nomadic clients. Therefore, the three Yasawian clans of Qojas in Turkistan say, "We're Uzbeks on our passports," and the other Qoja groups, e.g. the Qorasan, Aqqorġan, and Duwana Qojas, say they are Kazaks. Ethnicity is seldom merely biological; people construct kinship to confirm cultural connections with one another (Schneider 1968) and to secure advantage (Barth 1969).

The Russians. In Turkistan there are three centers of secular activity that suggest an ethnic balance of social forces: the new university, a Kazak institution; the bazaar, dominated by Uzbeks; and the train station on the Moscow railway, the traditional preserve of the Russians. After 1864 a small Russian militiary garrison occupied Turkistan, but it was the building of the railroad 4½ km. from the old town in 1903 that brought Russia to Turkistan in force (cf. Demko 1969). Skilled Russian laborers built not only the railroad but a whole new railroad village in the 19th-century Russian style. Public buildings of the Tsarist period are still in use in Turkistan, including the station. Their durable fired-brick façades provide a striking contrast with the crumbling concrete slabs of Soviet-era structures and the traditional mud-brick houses, plastered and whitewashed in the Central Asian desert style, that dominate the town. A Russian Orthodox Church, built after 1900 for the imperial garrison across from the Yasawi Shrine, was turned into a gym by the communists and is unrecognizable today. A local newspaper recently proposed that it is dishonorable to "hide" it in this way and that it should be restored (*ÄT*, February 20, 1998, p. 2 [Säkenuli]). A second church across the railroad tracks was built in the

1950s but is poorly attended today, the Russian neighborhood around it having been bought out by Kazaks. Architectural contrasts are reminders of the footprint of Russian culture in a Muslim town.

The Russians were never many in Turkistan compared to other Kazak cities, and only a few Russian households remain at the time of writing. No matter how small their numbers or how complete the reversal of political fortunes, however, Turkistan cannot be understood without reference to the Russians. While Kazak religion is defined primarily by the Kazaks' symbiotic encounter with Qojas and Uzbeks, it is also highlighted by their boundary relationship with Russian culture. In contrast to the Russians and other Europeans, Kazaks and other Muslims are called "black haired, black eyed" *(qara shashtı, qara közdi)* people. Cultural diffference is envisaged as a physical one, and, indeed, it takes only a short time for the visitor to distinguish Kazak and Russians by their facial features.

Kazaks frequently lament they have crossed over into Russian cultural space so often during the last 250 years that it has affected their memory of the Muslim tradition. In 1995 Uljalġas, a Qoja woman and Muslim healer, put it this way:

> *U: Orıstar satıp aldı bizdi. Qazaq - qazaq emes, musılman - musılman emes, sonday dep bizdi satıp aldı. . . . [Qazaq] quday, arũaqqa umıta bastadı. . . . Qudayġa shükir, üsh jıl boldı bizding egemendik alġanımızġa, üsh jıldan beri öz dästürimiz kele jatır.*
>
> U: The Russians bought us. "Kazaks aren't really Kazaks, Muslims aren't really Muslims," they said, and in this way they bought us. Kazaks began to forget God and the ancestor-spirits. Now it's been three years since we gained our independence, and thank God our tradition has been reviving these three years.

This statement echoes the feeling of many Kazaks in Turkistan that Russian

colonialism denied them both their ethnic identity ("Kazaks aren't really Kazaks") and the integrity of the Muslim tradition ("Muslims aren't really Muslims"). In one moment Kazaks will defuse such feelings by insisting that they always got on well with the Russians, but the next moment the bitterness surfaces again. Strikingly, the new national anthem of Kazakstan begins with the word "wounded":

> *Jaralġan namıstan qaharman ḫalıqpız,*
> *Azattıq jolında jalındap janıppız.*
> *Taġdırdıng tezinen, tozaqtıng özinen*
> *Aman-saũ qalıppız, aman-saũ qalıppız.*
>
> A valiant people of wounded honor,
> On freedom's way we have burst into flame.
> From the anvil of fate and the fire of hell
> We have been saved, and all is well. (Translation mine)

"Wounded honor" is also evident in the movement of Kazaks discarding their Russian-style patronymics and the Russian ending *-ov* or *-ev* on their family names. But complaints that Russians are mistreated in Kazakstan are vigorously denied; on its front page, for example, the Kazak newspaper, *Ana Tili*, argued as proof of Kazak warmth toward Russians that more Russians are coming into Kazakstan than are leaving (*AT*, May 12, 1994, p. 1).

The few Russians who live on in Turkistan are pensioners who have nowhere to go, or families who have commercial connections with Russia. Russian skilled labor is still valued by the Kazaks, but most of Turkistan's factory row has been closed down since 1992, so few Russians have reason to stay for this reason. Kazakstan's new language policy is an aggravation for many of them. Turkistan's Russians lived in Kazak- and Uzbek-speaking neighborhoods, but only a few speak the local languages. Among Russians of middle age or older, those who understand everyday Kazak or

Uzbek still tend to reply in Russian — Russian was glorified as the best of all possible languages in Soviet schools (Kreindler 1991) — which leaves Kazaks feeling they are still being looked down on in their own country. Remembering when the Russians ran things, Fatima, an old Qoja woman, counseled patience and hope of paradise:

F: Orıstıng bu düniyesin bergen. Kiyed' te, ished' te, shalqıyd' ta, jüred' te, araq ished', basqa qıla ma, ne qılsa o qılsın, al musılmannıng o düniyesi bar.

F: [God] gave this world to the Russians. They dress up and drink their fill, they run around and fool around, they drink vodka and do all kinds of things, so let them have their way, but the other world belongs to the Muslims.

Two kinds of Jews. All of Turkistan's small community of Jewish families emigrated to New York and Israel in the 1980s and '90s. (A few remain in Kentau 30 km. away.) They were almost all European Jewish professionals, especially doctors, who had been exiled to Central Asia, and a few Bukhara Jews of lower economic status who worked as storekeepers and cobblers.[1] The primary language of the European Jews was Russian, and the Bukhara Jews were Tajik-speaking. Anti-semitism was strong in both the Russian and Muslim communities (Wheeler 1962); in Turkistan as elsewhere children were taught to fear Jews because they sacrifice children and drink their blood. It is a widely held belief that the Jews are named for Judas and therefore evil.

---

1. In 1864 there were only three or four families of Bukhara Jews in Turkistan, but by 1897 the Jewish population had increased to 498 (Dobrosmyslov 1912), reflecting the exile of European Jews to Central Asia. According to the first Soviet Census in 1926, the Jewish population of Turkistan was down to 260, and all but 44 of the 3,610 Jews in the Kazak ASSR, or 98.6%, were of European origin.

Before they emigrated I met five Jewish families in Turkistan. They had Jewish first names but Muslim family names, e.g. Moishe Abd-rahmanov. The Jewish cemetery lies neglected today.

Small Turkic ethnic minorities. The Tatars came to Turkistan with the Russian administration as interlocutors with the local Kazak and Uzbek populations, and they eventually became important Bolshevik organizers or "Red activists" *(qızıl belsendiler).* Only once have I been addressed as Comrade Privratsky — by a very officious Tatar woman in the city administration whom Stalin himself would have obeyed. Once I made the mistake of thinking a Tatar plumber was a Russian. "No," his Kazak co-worker corrected, "he is a Muslim, a Tatar." Tatar *madrasas* in the Volga region trained many Kazak mullahs, but progressive Tatars also became the Muslim face of the Russian imperial idea (Lazzerini 1992, 1994). There have never been more than several hundred Tatars in Turkistan, but their numbers have always been small in Central Asia compared to their influence. Dobrosmyslov offers the interesting note that the small Tatar community in Turkistan in 1872 was having trouble competing in trade with Jewish merchants (1912:126f.), which suggests that their first foray into the middle Syr Darya region occurred only with the Russian invasion.

Kazaks resettled from Iran after 1993 are called *Īrandıqtar* (Iranians) by the Soviet Kazaks. The clothing, speech patterns, and religious behavior of the Iranians hark back to pre-Soviet days, which can make the local Kazaks uncomfortable. One "Iranian" Kazak peddles Islamic literature in the bazaar, walking around and preaching in full voice the merits of his books and their message. I watched school officials respond with utter surprise when an Iranian Kazak woman rushed forward at the end of a parent-teach-

ers meeting and asked to be allowed to conclude with a *bata* (Muslim blessing). In the Soviet fashion the school director had already dismissed the crowd without religious formalities, but everyone listened, stunned, to what must have been the first *bata* ever pronounced in a school building named, until recently, after Lenin.

One of my neighbors derisively called these returning diaspora Kazaks *tsygan* (gypsies), because they are obviously different from the Soviet Kazaks. They speak Farsi to each other in the bazaar when they prefer not to be understood by the local Kazaks. Notably, the Iranians have replaced Turkistan's Jewish cobblers. Having prospered as merchants in the city of Gorgan in Iran, they have also bought up Jewish and Russian homes in Turkistan. The government has built a new village called *Dostıq* (Friendship) for the Iranian Kazaks about 30 km. from Turkistan.

A group of Meshket Turks were forcibly resettled in 1944 near the railroad tracks at the edge of Turkistan. The Turkish quarter's small repair shops have helped the neighborhood prosper, and it built itself the first new mosque in Turkistan in 1993. The old people still speak Turkish. Contact has been re-established with their original home in the Caucasus, but the government of Georgia has opposed repatriation; so there has been no out-migration of Meshkets from Turkistan. The interethnic violence that broke out in 1989 between Uzbeks and Meshkets in the Fergana Valley (Paksoy 1994:165-170) and betwene Kazaks and Chechens, Ingush, and others in Novyi Uzen in western Kazakstan (Ro'i 1991), has not occurred in Turkistan, but intermarriage between the Meshkets and the dominant Uzbeks and Kazaks is rare. Turkic ethnic identity does not guarantee assimilation.

Most importantly, Turkish students, teachers, and educational adminis-

trators from Turkey itself have come to Turkistan since 1993. They are part-time residents, returning to Turkey in the summer, but their cultural and religious impact has been significant. The local Kazak-Uzbek symbiosis began to assume a more active Pan-Turkic dimension when the Turkish Turks arrived. Abduvakitov's claim that in Uzbekistan Pan-Turkist feeling is the preoccupation only of elites (1993:95) does not apply in Turkistan, but it is true that Pan-Turkist feeling has drawn strength from the recent arrival of the Turkish Turks. Under Turkish direction and using Turkish literature (Yuvalı et al. 1993; Şeker and Yılmaz 1996; *Bilig*), Yasawi Studies *(Yasawītanū)* is a required course at Yasawi University. All students at Yasawi University take Turkish as well as Kazak, and the best Kazak students are sent to Turkey to study. Kazak teachers receive a salary supplement from the Turkish side, which has created good will among the faculty. Secular Turks predominate, but Turkish teachers teach Islam in university classes and local homes in Turkistan; some Turks attend Friday prayers at the mosque, swelling the crowd.

The Turkish presence has produced both gratitude and reaction. I have heard Kazaks wonder whether they have been released from the Russian yoke only to assume a Turkish one — an uncomfortable development for Kazak professionals who were proud of the achievements of the USSR and hardly thought of Turkey as a benefactor or source of foreign aid. A recent article in the local press (*TT*, October 31, 1997, p. 4) invoked the image of neo-colonialism, challenging the Turks for questioning the separate ethnic identities of the Turkic peoples and raising the spectre of a "Turkish period" in the wake of the period of Russian domination.

These, then, are the Kazaks of Turkistan and their neighbors. Their

relationship is best understood in terms of their common ground in its Muslim landscapes and the history of the city, to which we now turn.

LOCAL HISTORY: TURKISTAN AND KAZAK ETHNOGENESIS

There is still no critical history of the city of Turkistan, but DeWeese's forthcoming book on the Yasawi tradition promises a review of the documentary evidence.[1] Problems of historical completeness cannot be resolved here, but a survey of Kazak history from the perspective of Turkistan will help illuminate the problem of Kazak ethnic identity and its religious element.

The Kazak occupation. That Turkistan is special to the Kazaks is to be explained from the fact that the Kazak khans made it their base of operations in the 16th century at the time when the Kazak hordes were defining themselves over against the Uzbeks of Muhammad Shaybani Khan (Dughlát 1898 [1550s]:272ff.). The first amalgamation of these Qipchaq clans around Kazak khans migrated into the Syr Darya basin in the 1470s.[2] In

---

1. The best pre-soviet history of the city is a report by Dobrosmyslov (1995 [1912]; cf. Barthold 1965:66-97). At about the same time Mirjaqıp Dulatov published a brief historical sketch (*Qazaq* 1913, no.16-17) that has been widely reprinted in the press in the 1990s (Dulatov 1992; cf. *AT* July 12, 1997) and has inspired other journalistic (Nısanulı, *EQ*, February 1, 1992, p. 3) and encyclopedic efforts (*SPIKK* 1994:263-268). A medieval (pre-Russian) history of the city has recently been compiled by Smağulov and Tuyaqbaev in Kazak (1998) from Soviet-era articles. Sources for the Soviet period archived in Shymkent are yet to be researched.

2. Muqanov (1974:34ff.) is representative of Kazak ethnographers who accept the 15th century as the time of the emergence of the Kazak nation. Everyone grants that the word Kazak was first used as an ethnonym at this time, but some Kazak scholars have felt the pressure of their nation-building ideology to look for earlier origins. These are usually found in early Turko-Mongol clan ethnonyms still used by the Kazaks. Another example of the nation-building pressure is Muqanov's implausible ethnohistorical argu-

1510 the Kazak ruler, Qasım Khan, left his retinue behind in Yası/Turkistan and raided Tashkent and Samarkand. By then the Yasawi Shrine built by Tamerlane was more than a hundred years old. It changed hands several times during the 16th century, but by 1599 under Esim Khan, Turkistan was firmly established as a Kazak town.

For the Kazak khans to settle down in Yası was to lay claim to two different but related identities. One was the Sufi heritage of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi. The other was the Timurid legacy, the memory of Tamerlane who had built the Yasawi Shrine. Together with the Uzbek khans, the Kazak *töre* claimed descent from Genghis Khan and the Chinggisid rulers of the Golden Horde. This in itself involved a Muslim identity, because the Golden Horde had been decisively Islamized at the time of Özbek Khan in the 14th century (DeWeese 1994), but now, in addition, they could claim their share of the Central Asian and Timurid inheritance in the architecture of Turkistan, saying in effect to the Shaybanids, "You conquered Tamerlane's grand mosque in Samarkand, but we have occupied his Yasawian stronghold in your wake." Wrapping oneself in the religious authority of the Sufi shrine was a well-known strategy of Central Asian emirs and sultans seeking to shore up their legitimacy (DeWeese 1995a:633). It had been the strategy of Tamerlane himself when he built the Yasawi Shrine. Now in the 16th century the Kazak khans claimed Islamic political authority in the same way. They came to Turkistan and in time became spiritual clients of the Qojas,

---

ment (1974:29) that the etymology of "Kazak" is *qas* + *sak* (true *sak*), from which he elaborates the theory that the Kazaks are descended not only from the Turks but also from the *Saka* (Scythians), who for this reason he speculates must have been a Turkic-speaking people.

the family of the Prophet and the heirs of the "Eminent Sultan," Ahmet Yasawi.

During the glory days of the Kazak khanate in the 15th–17th centuries, the Kazaks established their power in the classic pattern of nomadic–sedentary rivalry by periodically invading and occupying the Uzbek domains in Mawarannahr to the south. The Kazaks ruled Tashkent and threatened Samarkand and Bukhara intermittently. In addition to these military confrontations, the cultural negotiation of the sedentary–tribal difference eventually set ethnic boundaries in concrete. After the 16th century "Uzbeks and Kazaks lived side by side, but they never again considered themselves one people" (Olcott 1987:9).

Notably, the hagiographic narrative of a certain Ötemish Hajji, used by DeWeese for his study of the Islamization of the Golden Horde, is a 16th-century source (1994:5) — the very time when Kazak ethnic identity was solidifying around khans making Yası/Turkistan their Mecca. It is a legend of conversion, an ordeal of fire between indigenous shamans in the court of Özbek Khan (1313–1341) and a Muslim holy man who provokes the confrontation to gain an audience with the Khan. Baba Tükles survives the fire without singeing a hair (*tük* means hair), thus defeating the shamans and bringing the tribes of Özbek Khan into the *dār al-Islām*. The memory of this Baba Tükles is preserved in the Kazak doublet of his name (*Baba Tükti Shashtı Azīz* [Hairy Father, the Beloved Hairy One]) and at a shrine to the north of Turkistan across the Karatau Mountains (Turantegi 1996). Notably, in the Tashkent rescension of the *Diwan-i Hikmet*, Ahmet Yasawi tells his disciples that he has offered himself to be burned in the fire for them (Qıraūbaeva 1991:113,123), which, notwithstanding other parallels (Schimmel

1975:84; Book of Daniel), suggests that the saintly legacy of Baba Tükles is commensurate, perhaps even identifiable, with that of Ahmet Yasawi himself.[1]

By occupying Yası when they were becoming a people distinct from the Uzbeks, the Kazaks lay claim to the town's Sufi tradition. Statements that the Kazaks were Islamized only in the 18th or 19th century are therefore based on a misreading of the evidence.[2] A more judicious reading is that the Kazaks "had converted to Islam by the 16th century, but the details of their conversion process are unknown" (Magnarella 1984:395). It is a reasonable proposition that the Kazaks are Muslims because their origins are in the Golden Horde that had already converted to Islam before they became a distinct *ethnos*, and because they then occupied cities like Turkistan in the Syr Darya region over the next century, absorbing and preserving Islam there. Basilov and Zhukovskaya have recently conceded that "by the sixteenth century [Islam] was firmly established among the nomads, including the Kazakhs and Kirghiz" (1989:170).

About the same time Yası came to be called Turkistan. The name-

---

1. The idea that Baba Tükles and Ahmet Yasawi are commensurate figures was suggested to me by Devin DeWeese during his visit to Turkistan in April 1995.

2. Catherine the Great's policy in the 18th century of using Tatar mullahs to Islamize and thereby "civilize" the Kazaks (Rorlich 1986), and Valikhanov's criticism of this policy in the 1860s (1985 [1862-64]:197-202) (see Chapter 1), have been taken as evidence of the weak and late Islamization of the Kazaks (e.g. Golden 1992:343,391). Catherine's Tatar policy actually tells us little about Kazak religion *per se*, and analysis based on this source tends to ignore the importance of other, earlier Islamizing processes. Akiner noted the ambiguity when she wrote that Islam among the Kazaks was "*firmly*, albeit it rather superficially established" before the coming of Russian Orthodox missions to the Kazak Steppe in the mid-19th century (1983:301), but her attempt at balance has been ignored by those who cite her, e.g. Dewdney's incorrect statement that, "The Kazaks became Muslims relatively late, *mainly* during the nineteenth century" (in Bainbridge 1993:240; both italics mine).

Like the Islamization of the Kazaks, their ethnic consciousness is often said to have emerged only in the 19th century. This is a separate issue discussed in Chapter 1.

change probably happened because "Turk" had come to mean "nomad," i.e. Kazak, in contrast to the sedenary Uzbeks who were identifying with the Persian culture of Mawarannahr. Where else would these remaining "Turks" have their capital except, naturally, in "Turkistan"? Today the Kazaks are accused by the Uzbeks of unfairly claiming the legacy of the town for themselves, but the Kazak case has some historical merit. It is not that Turkistan has always belonged to the Kazaks, but that the Kazaks — as long as they have been Kazaks — have belonged to Turkistan. It is likely that the town was first called Turkistan because of them.

Pan-Turkists have their own repertoire of speculations about why Yası came to be called Turkistan. In the new dialogue of Kazaks with their Turkish visitors, the Turks are congratulated for having originated in the Syr Darya region a millenium ago. Our informant, Amal Qoja, thinks Yası came to be called Turkistan as the Turkic language came to be spoken there (presumably as opposed to Persian); but, as we have seen, it was probably not because the Kazaks were *like* other Turks, but because they were different from them — at least from the newly sedentarized Uzbeks to the south — that their city came to be called Turkistan. In the period of Kazak ethnogenesis, ethnic distinctives rather than Pan-Turkic similarities marked the town.

Invasion: The struggle for Kazak ethnic identity. At the end of the 17th century there began 300 years of conflict between the Kazaks and non-Turkic peoples that threatened the survival of the Kazaks as an *ethnos*. Kazaks retain a feeling that they were almost exterminated. Invasion first

by the Mongolian Jungars,[1] then by the Russians in response, has finally been reversed only at the end of the 20th century. When independence came, Kazaks were utterly amazed; there was serendipity, almost giddiness, in the air when I returned to Kazakstan in April 1992, because independence meant that three centuries of assimilative pressure had come to a dramatic end.

The Jungar invasions are sometimes characterized by Kazaks as the assault of Buddhism on Muslim life, and the invasion of the Russians, even in its Soviet phase, as the invasion of Christianity. From the late 17th to the early 20th century the Kazaks were intermittently in flight from or open warfare with Buddhists and Christians. Kazak resistance to the encroachment of non-Muslims on their lands definitively established them in a Muslim identity. The meaning of Muslim landscapes around pilgrimage towns like Turkistan was intensified by the oppositional context, and Islam was doubly impressed in the Kazak memory. Thus, the evolution of Kazak ethnic identity began with a nomadic claim on the Muslim landscape in the first two centuries of the Kazak nation, and solidified around a series of wars and boundary events with religious implications in the next three centuries. Today's accusations of genocide against Stalin's lieutenant, Goloshchekin, who came to Kazakstan on 1927 to collectivize the nomads, reverberate in the context of the earlier wars with the Jungars.

The Jungar Wars lasted into the 1740s, and the strongest assault in 1723 resulted in the Kazak evacuation of Turkistan and the Syr Darya

---

1. The Jungars are called Kalmyks in their Caspian settlements and Oirats in western China. They still appear on maps at the Dzhungarian Pass, a break in the mountains between Kazakstan and China.

towns. This event, called the *Aqtaban Shubırındı* (barefoot flight), left a permanent scar on the Kazak collective memory and inspired its literature of lament (Arınov 1990). Even after the defeat of the Jungars, the Kazaks were so weakened that their control of the Syr Darya basin was intermittent. The small numbers of Kazaks in the town of Turkistan in the Tsarist and early Soviet periods can be traced to the Jungar Wars. In 1771 Ablay Khan came to Turkistan to be acclaimed khan of the three Kazak hordes, but his base of operations was in the north, not in the Syr Darya towns in the south.

After Ablay's death in 1778 the occupation of Turkistan first by the emirs of Bukhara and then in 1819 by the emir of Khoqand revealed the weakness of the Kazak hordes, but Kazak resistance to taxation by these Uzbek rulers flared up repeatedly (Olcott 1987:73f.). The Russians took Turkistan in June 1864 after a three-day siege during which cannon shot was fired at the Yasawi Shrine. One trope portrays the Kazaks as heroic warriors who swooped down from Sozaq to the north and defended the town while the Uzbeks dithered (Qulımbetov 1992:18-19). In this way the Kazak ethnic claim on the city was defined over against its last Muslim rulers as well as its new Christian ones.

MUSLIM BURIAL GROUNDS AND KAZAK ETHNIC IDENTITY

When we asked a Kazak pilgrim why he had come to Turkistan, he responded effusively, "Because this is the most glorious place in Kazakstan!" For him, the Kazaks are Muslims because of their relationship with the Yasawi Shrine: "Ahmet Yasawi is the Kazaks', the Muslims' place-of-saints" *(biz-*

ding qazaqtıng, musılmandardıng äũliye jeri ġoy). The custom of pilgrimage has "soaked into the blood of Muslims" *(musılmannıng qanına singgen);* just as other Muslims have their local holy places, Kazaks have their Yasawi. The collective memory both spatializes the sanctity of the saint and sacralizes the land which the people have claimed for themselves. "If you have not seen Turkistan, it is shameful to call yourself a Kazak" *(Türkistandı körmegen qazaqtıng özin "qazaqpın" dep aytũı uyat)* (*SK*, December 2, 1994 [Oljabaev]).

Burial grounds serve a defining purpose for nomadic peoples everywhere; so it is not surprising that, for the Kazaks, Turkistan evokes memories of the ancestors and saints who made the town sacred. Its landscape and architecture help define Kazak ethnic identity in religious terms. As the poet says, it was Tamerlane's plan to rule the nomads "with a thought" by building a grand Sufi monument at the edge of the steppe. The plan was effective in the long term, enduring in the Muslim identity of the Kazaks.

For Kazaks and other Turkic peoples related to the Yasawi Sufi tradition, Turkistan is an object of pilgrimage that produces religious or ethnic or even nationalistic meanings. To the foreign visitor the religious meanings are surprising, because Kazakstan today is not a country which, at first sight, suggests religiosity. In the south its mud-brick towns and villages are typically Central Asian, but its cities are Soviet cities, its *lingua franca* is Russian, and its public administration still bears the stamp of tsars and commissars. Kazaks complain that it is hard to be a Muslim and live in a Russian-style apartment block, just as they have a hard time expressing their spiritual sensibilities in Russian. And since foreign

visitors usually have contact only with urban Kazaks who live in apartment blocks and speak to them in Russian or Western languages, it is easy to jump to conclusion that the Kazaks are not very religious (cf. Privratsky 1997). Seeing few mosques and hearing little religious language when I visited Almaty in June 1991, I also was surprised by the strong feeling that welled up from the urban and sophisticated Kazaks I was traveling with as we approached Turkistan on an Intourist bus. Catching a glimpse of the blue dome of the Yasawi Shrine from Chapaev 9 km. away, they became animated, talkative, using language I had not heard in Almaty or Shymkent. What is religion for these Soviet Muslims, I wondered? And what do they mean when they say this place is holy ground?

Horizons of mosque and shrine. The ethnographer's clue is the extent to which Kazaks focus their religious affections on Muslim shrines and cemeteries rather than mosques. The Kazaks, like other Muslim peoples of the USSR, were deprived of mosques and, as nomads, had never become widely accustomed to them in any case. To this day Turkistan's mosques are dominated by Uzbeks. In the crowd of men attending the festival prayers at Turkistan's main mosque on Id al-Adha in 1998, there were far more Uzbek hats *(taqiya)* than Kazak ones.

During Stalin's *repressiya* and purges in the 1930s, all the mosques in Turkistan were closed, including a 19th-century mosque located about 100 meters south of the Yasawi Shrine. Jolbarıs Qoja remembers that in the 1920s there was a mosque in every neighborhood; indeed, we know that in 1864 there had been 20 mosques in Turkistan, or one for every 60 houses (Dobrosmyslov 1912:135). In 1943 a single mosque on the Shymkent highway was reopened under Stalin's war-time relaxation of anti-religious repres-

sion, and it has remained the only "Friday mosque" *(juma meshiti)* in Turkistan, so-called because it is where men go for Friday prayers. Most village mosques were also torn down in the 1930s.

Today several neighbhorhoods in Turkistan, and most villages, are getting a new mosque, often thanks to gifts from wealthy Muslim visitors from abroad. The new mosques are beginning to play a more important role in Kazak society than they once did. Old men are attending the Friday prayers in higher numbers, not least of all because the public *namaz* is a way to validate the responsibilities and honors of eldership. Crowds of men and boys, including Kazaks, overflow the main mosque in Turkistan on the mornings of the two annual Islamic festivals. In the 1997-98 school year the public high schools in Turkistan introduced religious instruction for children in 10th and 11th grades, which will eventually produce a crop of young Kazaks who know how to say the *namaz*. Kazak university students are among those who attend the Friday prayers at the main mosque of Turkistan.

Nevertheless, the mosque in Kazakstan has been the lesser public venue for the expression of Muslim values. Like the Pakistanis described by Geijbels (1978), Kazaks are Muslims of the shrine, not (yet) of the mosque. Mosques may be attached to the shrine of a local saint, as in the case of the shrine of Abdimalik Aũliye in the village of Chapaev near Turkistan, because when the mosque came along, the village's sacred space had already been marked off by the saintly tradition. The mosque-room inside the Yasawi Shrine and the old mosque up the hill from it provide a mere comment on the grand mausoleum of Tamerlane. So mosques on the Kazak Steppe were assimilated to the pilgrimage culture of the shrines. Not

the *namaz* at the mosque but *ziyarat* at the shrines is the public expression of Kazak religion that most strongly survived the Soviet repression.

Visually, mosques fail to dominate the landscape like cemeteries and mausoleums do. Any observation about Kazakstan's mosques, whether present or absent, tends to miss the point that its horizons are punctuated everywhere by Muslim cemeteries (see photographs before page 1). Mosques and minarets dominate the skylines of the great cities of the Muslim world, but on the vast stretches of the Muslim hinterland where there are no skylines, the shrines of Muslim saints and the graves of Muslim ancestors are the most accurate markers of the Muslim identity of the people. "Cemeteries and funerary monuments are the single aspect of Islamic culture that is immediately conspicuous in Kazakhstan; I was immediately struck by this on the occasion of my first visit" (W.Y. Adams, personal correspondence, September 1996).

Pious behavior and attitudes associated with shrines and cemeteries has been known for centuries among the nomadic peoples of Inner Asia — Turkmen and Kyrgyz as well as Kazaks — and among the sedentary Uzbeks as well. It is only among the latter that we see a tradition of mosques to rival the cultural power of shrines and cemeteries. Though the Uzbeks were once nomads themselves, they inherited the urban mosque from the Persian cultural tradition of sedentary Central Asia. Kazaks marvel that there are now mosques, most built in the 1990s, in every neighborhood in Tashkent. In Kazakstan, however, it is the shrine that gives shape to the religious landscape, and when Kazaks criticize themselves for impiety, it is negligence in taking care of cemeteries ahd shrines that is highlighted (Serikbayuli 1990).

The Yasawi Shrine in Turkistan is the largest in Kazakstan and has inspired an extensive and well-illustrated Kazak literature (Argınbaev 1980; Nurmuhammedov 1988; Nurmuhammedov and Bice 1991; Tuyakbaeva 1989; Nasırova 1993; Dosjanov 1996), but there are other shrines in the region (see Chapter 5) and of course numberless local cemeteries. These dot the roadways at the edge of every town and village on the Kazak steppe and all across the Muslims lands of Inner Asia, from the homeland of the Golden Horde on the Dasht-i Qipchaq to the north and west, to the fabled Islamic architecture of Bukhara and Samarkand to the south. The common cemetery is treated with a reverence that is in the same cultural domain as the shrine cult. Many cemeteries feature a special tomb of an ancestor or holy man held in special reverence by the local people. When they are able, relatives build elaborate domed mausolea in honor of their ancestors buried there, thus elaborating the landscape in the image of the major shrines of the Sufi tradition and identifying their Kazak ancestors with Islam.

The Yasawi Shrine has heightened meaning because it is representative of all the sacred space of the Kazaks. Of course Kazaks who live far away from Turkistan will attach less meaning to it than those who live within its pilgrimage "catchment area" (V.Turner 1974:179), but this field has always been a wide one. Over a century ago Eugene Schuyler, the first American visitor to "Russian Turkistan," reflected local opinion still heard today when he commented that the Yasawi Shrine "is considered the holiest in all Central Asia, and . . . pilgrims of all ranks, even khans and amirs, assembled there from all quarters" (1877:I,72). Potanin visited Turkistan in 1830 and noticed that the Yasawi Shrine was also a burial ground for these same princes and luminaries, including the Kazak khans

Esim, Tauke, and Ablay (*QA*, June 5, 1992, p. 4) and the leader of the resistance to the Jungars, Qazıbek Biy (*TT*, October 3, 1997, p. 4).

The greenish-grey sarcophagus[1] of Ahmet Yasawi himself is well preserved inside the shrine, but there is no cemetery around his shrine today. One 16th-century domed tomb of uncertain identity has been unearthed, but Soviet archeologists are accused in local yore of having botched the excavation of other graves. To the embarassment of the Kazak nation, the bones of their khans are stored in small, unmarked boxes on the floor next to Yasawi's sarcophagus.[2] Efforts have been made to restore the environment of the "architectural complex," as the museum officials call it. The small domed mausoleum of Rabiġa Begim, daughter of Tamerlane's grandson, was razed in 1895 (*EQ*, February 1, 1992, p. 3) and has been rebuilt now from the ground up based on sketches made by Bekchurin (1866; cf. Elgin 1992; *ÄT*, September 12, 1997, p. 2). A new shrine in honor

---

1. According to local belief the bones of Ahmet Yasawi remain buried under the jasper sarcophagus at his shrine. "For all the damage done by the Communists, at least they did not touch his bones," a guide at the Yasawi Shrine told me. This means that Yasawi's tomb is a sarcophagus (housing human remains; Gk. *sarx*, flesh; *phagein* to eat, i.e. flesh-eating; a stone tomb that leaves bones behind [*CED* 1963:463]), not a cenotaph (Gk. *keno*, empty; *taphos*, tomb). There are well-known "epiphanic shrines" where a monument has been erected because someone saw the saint in a vision there, in which case the tomb is a cenotaph by common consent, e.g. Aswan's epiphanic shrine of Badawi of Tanta (Reeves 1990:77). In other cases the "sarcophagus" is a cenotaph by consensus of the informed community, because the popular tradition that the saint is buried there is doubtful, e.g. the Shrine of Ali at Mazar-i Sharif (McChesney 1989). There is no evidence that the burial of Ahmet Yasawi in the late 12th or early 13th century was anything but a historical event; so it is, as far as we know, his sarcophagus. A caveat is that we know nothing of the original tomb which Tamerlane visited in the 1390s and decided to replace.

2. In 1996 the Kazak anthropologist, Orazaq Ismaġulov, was assigned the task of identifying the remains of Ablay Khan from among the jumble of bones stored at the shrine. A report based on genetic evidence is forthcoming (Ismaġulov, Isabekov, and Qojaev).

of Esim Khan remains unfinished at the left of the front portal. Despite its monumental dimensions, only the spirit of burial remains around it.

To receive the *baraka* (Kz. *bereke*) of the place of the dead, at common graveyards as well as the Yasawi Shrine, passers-by brush their faces *(bet sıypaū)* silently or with a quiet invocation of the blessing of the saint for personal intentions *(niyet)*. The same act performed after meals at home (see Chapter 4) links the textured landscape of Muslim shrines and cemeteries with the everyday domestic rites of the Muslim family. This linkage makes the sacred landscape a social force that impacts not only the religion but the ethnic identity of the Kazaks, suggesting the following preliminary conclusions about Kazak ethnicity and religion.

Reprise: Religion and ethnicity in a shrine town. Ethnicity "is a matter of a double boundary, a boundary from within, maintained by the socialization process, and a boundary from without established by the process of intergroup relations" (Isajiw 1974:122). The historical encounter of the Kazaks with neighboring peoples, first with the Uzbeks, then more traumatically with the Jungars and Russians, has come to define the external boundary of Kazak ethnic identity in the collective memory, as we have noted. The difficulty in ethnicity theory, however, lies in the problem of the "internal boundary," i.e. the primordial values and reifications by means of which a people insist upon defining themselves culturally.

There is a small core of symbolically meaningful culture (Spicer 1971:798) that defines Kazak ethnicity from within. As I will demonstrate in detail below, the primary factors are the land, textured by Islamic architecture which makes the desert steppe into a sacred landscape, and a set of "descent-based cultural identifiers" (Cohen 1978:387) related to the Kazak

conception of "blood" or patrilineal descent. This configuration of Kazak ethnic markers goes back 500 years and has its proximate roots in the revival of the national cultures of the peoples of the Soviet Union after Stalin, and now in Kazak independence and the Pan-Turkist resurgence. The end-product is that the landscape of Turkistan and its Sufi shrines have become legitimating memorials of ethnic identity and national territoriality. Even Kazak patrilineal descent legitimizes itself in religious remembrance evoked by Muslim shrines and the domestic rites related to them, as we will see in Chapter 4.

Ironically, religious values related to the sacred landscape have a defining power for an *ethnos* which is often thought to be — and often thinks of itself — as impious or unreligious. The salience of a limited range of symbolic identities in defining ethnic identity, specifically an ethnic attachment to the spirit of the land where the ancestors lived, and live on as ancestor-spirits, is confirmed in the Kazak case (cf. Larcom 1983).

Turkistan, we have noted, is claimed by other Muslim peoples also. Local Uzbeks remember that Shaybani Khan claimed the city in 1509 before the Kazak khans did, and that an Uzbek emir of Khoqand was the last Muslim ruler of Turkistan before the Russians came. Tajik and Turkmen pilgrims visit the Yasawi Shrine. And the Turks have now come from Turkey and feel that Turkistan somehow belongs to them, too. The Kazaks are generous in offering up their Turkistan as a Pan-Turkic Mecca, because their claim to the city is now guaranteed for the first time in history inside

internationally recognized borders.[1] With the geopolitical issues resolved, the Kazaks have several good reasons for accommodating themselves to Pan-Turkism.

First, their military conflict with the Uzbeks happened so long ago as to pale in significance before the ethnic boundary with the Russians. Secondly, the Turks have come to town bearing gifts, extolling the Yasawian Sufis as the source of Anatolian Islam,[2] and preaching the Pan-Turkic doctrine that Turkic peoples from the Balkans to China are a people of one heart *(dil)* and blood *(qan)*, speaking one language *(til)*, and believing one religion *(din)*.[3] Schooled in Marxism, many Kazaks are convinced, thirdly, that a nation needs an ideology and that a new one will have to be found

---

1. In 1924 when the Kazakh ASSR and the Central Asian republics were formed as administrative units within the USSR, the city of Turkistan was still heavily Uzbek; so assigning it to Kazakstan was controversial. Today this historical grievance is still felt by local Uzbeks. Kazaks likewise resent Khrushchev for handing back three southern *raions* to Uzbekistan.

2. This premise is based on dated Ottoman-era scholarship (Köprülü 1918 [1991]) but is unchallenged in Turkish popular journals such as *Yesevî*, *Türk Yurdu*, and *Bitig*, and in most scholarly works (Yuvalı et al. 1993; Şeker and Yılmaz 1996; *Bilig* 1997, No. 1). A critical perspective is offered by Karamustafa (1994).

3. These four words define Pan-Turkism, although the religious element *(din)* was not emphasized in the original movement. Pan-Turkism can be dated from the first publications of the Tatar propagandist, Ismail Gaspralı, in 1883, who called for the unity of Turkic peoples on a secular platform of "unity of mind, thought, and work" *(dilde, fikirde, ishte birlik)*. In 1778, a century before Gaspralı, the Ottomans negotiated for treaty rights to protect the "Turkish *millet*" in Russia — an antecedent of Pan-Turkism. Pan-Turkism did not become a politically viable movement until the Muslim Congresses of 1905-1906, when, however, the Kazak delegates opposed much of the program for fear of being dominated by Tatars and Uzbeks. Like the first Russian *Duma*, the Pan-Turkist congresses were anticlerical; they hoped to modernize Muslim life in Inner Asia. After the October Revolution Moscow quickly recognized the danger of reconstituting Russian Turkistan within the USSR; so in 1924 Kazak, Uzbek, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Tajik republics were created as Soviet administrative units in a classic example of divide-and-rule. Pan-Turkist leaders were purged or fled to Turkey and Europe, where Pan-Turkism sustained itself until *glasnost* gave it new life again in Central Asia and Turkey. The standard histories in English are by Landau (1995) and Zenkovsky (1960).

to replace the legacy of Lenin (e.g. Abuov 1997:96). Pan-Turkism fills the void for some, especially for those for whom Turkish financial incentives are attractive after the collapse of the Soviet economic system. For the Kazaks, the idea that their very own Muslim saint, Ahmet Yasawi, is honored as far away as Turkey helped restore their national identity at the very time when Soviet patriotism suffered a terminal blow.

In 1402, five years after Tamerlane had ordered that a new tomb for Ahmet Yasawi be built in Turkistan, he captured the Ottoman Sultan Beyazid in battle near Ankara. Today, Beyazid's children are coming on pilgrimage to the blue domes of Yası that Tamerlane built, The Kazaks find themselves in possession of this monument, and the attention it gets from others reinforces their sense of themselves. Tamerlane would not be surprised that sacred landscapes and the memory of Ahmet Yasawi still rule the nomads "with a thought."

The next two sections circumscribe the limits of the salience of religious narrative and Muslim landscapes in Kazak ethnic consciousness.

SACRED LANDSCAPE: YASAWI AND HIS PILGRIMS

About 200,000 pilgrims and tourists visit Turkistan every year. This does not compete with the teeming throngs who, in better times, visited Mazar-i Sharif in Afghanistan (Canfield 1993) or Karbala in Iraq (E.Fernea 1965:216-248). But a daily average of 700 visitors still makes Turkistan the dominant center of a vast periphery, where local shrines in remote villages or on the open steppe may be visited only sporadically. The Yasawi Shrine rises 40 meters from the flat desert-steppe, its blue domes and façade visible for

10 kilometers or more, making the town quite literally an attraction.

Kazak pilgrims we interviewed described Turkistan with a consistent vocabulary of devotion. It is holy ground *(kiyeli jer)*, a city of saints *(äũliyeli qala)*, and the "Second Mecca" *(ekinshi Mekke)*. Blessings *(bata)* pronounced in Turkistan are more likely than those pronounced in other places to carry the force of supernatural causation *(baraka)*. A detailed discussion of the cult of the saints and its ritual practices must be left for Chapter 5, but because the evocative power of Muslim shrines and cemeteries impinges on ethnic processes, the problem of what Kazaks in Turkistan know about their local saint must be explored here. Our findings below are negative, showing that it is not the story about Yasawi, but the meaning of sacred space itself, that helps the Kazaks define themselves religiously.

Ahmet Yasawi in sacred narrative. Yasawian hagiographical narratives will be fully discussed for the first time in English by DeWeese in his forthcoming work, *The Yasavī Sufi Tradition*. While it is clear that Yasawi really existed, there is no unified biographic voice in these traditions. The historical-critical issues are of course unknown to non-specialists,[1] but the key problem is that the oral testimony of local witnesses seldom reflects the hagiographical tradition very fully. Our research did not focus specifically

1. In April 1995 DeWeese's guest lecture on methodological and documentary problems in the construction of a Yasawi biography caused a stir among history and religion students at Yasawi University, because it broached issues of historical criticism. DeWeese controversially refused to accept the work of the early twentieth century Turkish scholar, Fuad Köprülü, as definitive for Yasawi studies. A year later I was challenged by a Turkish advocate of Yasawian spirituality, Namık Kemal Zeybek, chairman of the Yasawi University board of directors, for my association with DeWeese. He was especially concerned about DeWeese's views that Yasawi (a) probably lived a generation later than Köprülü believed and (b) may have been associated with the Suhravardi Sufis whose conflict with the Khorezm Shah set the stage for the Mongol invasion in 1219 (DeWeese 1995b).

on hagiographical problems, but we did ask our informants what they know about Yasawi. Several "snippets" or "scenes" from the Yasawian narratives of the documentary legacy surfaced during our interviews with Kazaks, but our findings demonstrate that the Yasawi story was not passed on with any consistency during the Soviet period.

For example, Nurali Qoja's father was a learned Muslim *(alım kisi)* born in 1887, so he would surely have known legends of Yasawi as circulated locally, but Nurali says his parents never told him the story. It was the time of Trotsky, he lamented, and they were afraid; indeed, his father was sent to prison because the communists were arresting everyone who could read Arabic. Nurali is resentful that, had it not been for this family separation, he would have learned everything about Islam from his father instead of having to learn it now from television, books, and religious tracts on sale at the shrines. Old men who attend prayers at the mosque come home and repeat sermons they have heard that are based on these new resources. In this way Yasawian stories are again ramifying through the community. When people narrate legends of Yasawi, they are usually reciting what they have learned recently from religious tracts and pamphlets.[1]

The following summary represents the legend of Ahmet Yasawi as known among local Kazaks and Kazak pilgrims in Turkistan in 1995, excluding professional historians. These details of the story surfaced in our interviews in about the following order of frequency:

---

1. I thank Vernon Schubel for this insight. He shared with me that pilgrims at shrines in Uzbekistan, when asked how they came to know specific legendary accounts, produce hagiographical tracts purchased at the shrine as "proof" that it is so. Schubel feels that this is a deficient piety when compared with the vibrant wellspring of local religious knowledge he has documented in Pakistan (Schubel 1993; cf. Shahrani 1991).

(1) When we would ask Kazaks what they know about Yasawi, they would often assume we meant the building. They know that the shrine was built by Tamerlane a long time ago. They associate it with Islam, though not always with Sufism, and never with shamanism, as some observers have speculated (Subtelny 1989:599). Oshanov, a former communist official, reflected local knowledge when he said that Tamerlane knew the nomads needed the "one religion" as a counterforce to their steppe traditions *(qazaq bir dinge bağınũ kerek)* and so built the Yasawi Shrine as a reminder for them. Pilgrims usually know that the huge bronze cauldron *(tayqazan)* in the main chamber of the shrine was forged at the command of Tamerlane.[1]

(2) It is a widespread belief that Yasawi "opened religion" *(din ashtı)* in Turkistan, i.e. that he was the first preacher of Islam to the Turks and especially to the nomads. No details of this preaching are ever offered — except what people can read in new popular versions of the *Diwan-i Hikmet* in Kazak, Uzbek, and Turkish that are for sale at the shrine.[2] This is a poetic composition in Old Turkic which pilgrims and local people unanimous-

---

1. Its inscription refers to *Shaykh Aḥmad al-Yasawī* and states that it was forged in 801 A.H. (1399 C.E.), the earliest and surely the solidest reference we have to the saint. Variant readings of the date are discussed by DeWeese (1998).

2. Based on various published transcriptions from the pre-soviet period, several Kazak renditions have been published only in the 1990s. One variant was published in Istanbul in 1897 (Kazak: Jarmuhammedulı 1993); another in Kazan in 1904 (Kazak: Abdishükirov 1993); and another in Tashkent in 1911 (Kazak: B. Sağındıqov in QıraŪbaeva 1991:122-133). Brief selections have also been published in the newspapers and in small booklets (Jandarbekov 1991a,b; Abdirashev 1992). An Uzbek version is also for sale at the shrine (Abdushukurov 1992). Turkish versions include those by Eraslan (1983) and Bice (1993).

ly believe was written by Ahmet Yasawi in the 12th century.[1] Because people believe that Yasawi was a great philosopher and bard *(aqın)*, the first person to write on Islam in Old Turkic, the term "enlightener" *(ağartūshı)* is often applied to him. This is a rhetorical anachronism based on the Soviet-era tradition that portrayed the 19th-century Kazak scholars Shoqan Valikhanov, Abay Qunanbaev, and Ibıray Altınsarīn as the intellectual advance guard of European civilization among the Kazaks. Yasawi, likewise, must have been the advance guard of Turkish Islam.

(3) The biographical detail most commonly mentioned by pilgrims is the story that when Yasawi reached the age of 63 (the age of the Prophet Muhammad when he died), he chose to live the rest of his life underground in a cave. Some say he wrote the *Diwan-i Hikmet* during his years underground. Three underground structures that have been unearthed near the Yasawi Shrine — the Hermitage (Qılūet), the Qumshıq Ata Shrine, and a small cellar (see Figure 2) — are celebrated as confirmation (Tuyaqbaev 1991). Subterranean asceticism was a widely dispersed form of Sufi spirituality (Schimmel 1975:105).

(4) The story that Arstan Bab was Yasawi's teacher is known by everyone. Arstan Bab is sometimes identified with Salman-i Fars, one of the famous "companions" *(saḥaba)* of Muhammad. Frequently recited is the

---

1. The need for a critical edition of the divergent manuscript traditions of the *Diwan-i Hikmet* has been noted (R.Sızdıqova in Mırzahmetov 1996:21) and the history of its publication surveyed (DeWeese 1998). The tradition that Ahmet Yasawi was the author has been questioned by Meserret Diriöz (in Yuvalı 1993:93-99). DeWeese listed arguments against Yasawi's authorship in a lecture delivered at Yasawi University in April 1995 (1995b), causing a rumble of protest. The manuscript tradition is so diffuse that a single author is unlikely, and so late that advocates of Yasawian authorship bear the burden of proof. Bice's claim (1993, p. xvii) that he has identified the original couplets written by Yasawi himself is unsustainable.

story that Arstan Bab passed on to Ahmet Yasawi, then a seven-year-old boy, the Prophet's commission *(amanat)* to preach Islam to the Turks (cf. Qıraũbaeva 1991:132). The sign of the commission was a date pit Arstan Bab had received from the Prophet and kept safe in his mouth or tooth[1] since Muhammad gave it to him 500 years before. Clearly a "Methuselah factor" (Genesis 5:27) is operative: the legendary saints lived in the age of God's favor, so they lived long lives. On their way to Turkistan many pilgrims first visit the Arstan Bab Shrine, located 70 km. away near the Syr Darya and the ruins of ancient Otrar (Qojaev 1992, 1996).

(5) The legend of Ukasha Ata, another "companion," is as well known as any in Turkistan. The Sacred Well of Ukasha, a shrine in the foothills of the Karatau Mountains, is often visited by pilgrims as part of the circuit of Turkistan shrines. The founding legend is that, like Achilles, Ukasha's body was impervious to injury — except when he was praying; so one day while he was reciting the prayers, the enemies of Islam decapitated him. His head rolled down a hill and came to rest at the present site of the well. Pilgrims drop a bucket in the well in the belief that if it comes up with water in it, they are blessed, but if it comes up empty, God has judged them as sinners. It is a modest, understated, almost playful example of the pilgrimage ordeal known elsewhere in the Muslim world (Goldziher 1971b [1890b]). The Ukasha Ata Well is a picnic spot for school and family outings.

(6) Pilgrims may mention that Yasawi was related to the saints buried

---

1. According to DeWeese, Arstan Bab's *tooth* does not appear in any of the hagiographies; so this may be taken as a popular elaboration of the tradition.

at Sayram/Isfijab near modern Shymkent (DeWeese 1997a). Ibrahim Ata and Qarashash Ana, whose shrines are there, were the father and mother of Ahmet Yasawi. Further genealogical details are seldom mentioned, but virtually everyone believes that Yasawi and his father Ibrahim were Qojas, descended from the Arabs.[1] Amal Qoja told us a colorful story about Ahmet's childhood. It tells how he left Sayram because Ibrahim, noticing that his son could weed a garden simply by waving his staff, felt that the town wasn't big enough for two saints with miraculous gifts *(darın)*, or, literally, "My son, two sheep's' heads don't fit in one pot" *(Balam, eki qoshqardıng bası bir qazanġa sıymaydı)*; so Ahmet mounted a white camel and set out, and when the camel stopped to drink at Shoytöbe near Yası, he settled there and began to teach Islam to the Turks. A feature of local geography, the hot spring *(emdik sũ)* outside Turkistan (a dilapidated Soviet-era spa is still in use there), is wedded to the story by Amal Qoja. A version recorded by Qurbanqojaev (in Mırzaḥmetov 1996:133f.) does not feature the hotspring, but narrative details confirmed by the landscape are

---

1. There is a minority voice. Both Nısanalı (*EQ*, February 1, 1992, p. 1) and Baqbergenov (1993) argue that Yasawi was of Turkic lineage and therefore not a Qoja. We have noted above that Sufi *shaykhs* tended to be absorbed into the lineage of the Prophet *(sayyid)* by common consent; so the minority voice is raising a legitimate critical issue. When we first hear of Yasawi, he is called *Ata* Yasavī and *Shaykh* Ahmad Yasavī; the title *Khoja* comes later (DeWeese 1998). The problem involves the whole question of the origin of the Qojas, not only of Yasawi. The motivation of Nısanalı and Baqbergenov, however, is not so much historical criticism as nation-building, a pressing need to make Yasawi a Kazak. Thus, the religious sensibility that Yasawi had to have been a Qoja and an Arab because he was a saint runs up against the ethnic feeling that Yasawi is so much a part of the landscape of the steppe that he must have been one of us. Because the title *Qoja* Ahmet Yasawi has been so heavily invested in, it is unlikely that the minority voice will ever ever be accepted in Turkistan. The name of the new university, after all, is the *Qoja* Ahmet Yasawi Kazak-Turkish International University. Denying that Yasawi was a Qoja by descent, Nısanalı nevertheless calls him Qoja, because he was "master *(qoja)* of his own destiny" — a very Kazak, but etymologically correct, definition of the term.

the most compelling ones for Amal Qoja.

(7) Pilgrims mention Gaũhar Ana and always call her the daughter of Ahmet Yasawi.[1] A few may visit her small shrine on a desolate stretch of steppe outside Turkistan, but it is possible to stop at her shrine and find nobody there. The devotion of the Qojas to her shrine is surprisingly limited, perhaps because it is a new shrine. The caretaker, Küläsh Düysenova, who lives next to the shrine with her son, a young mullah, dismisses the significance of the Qojas on the grounds that by now the blood of Gaũhar Ana is in the veins of every believer in Turkistan. The shrine was built by Nurġalī Aldıbergenov, a Kazak of the Bojban (Middle Horde), not a Qoja. Ill with cancer, he was told by his ancestor-spirits to build a mosque-room and a prayer room *(tileũḫana)*, which he did with help from Turkish friends. Gaũhar Ana is therefore an "epiphanic shrine," inspired by a dream-vision *(ayan)*, and the tomb constructed there in 1996 is a cenotaph.

(8) The ethnocentric opinion that Ahmet Yasawi is famous around the world is widely believed among pilgrims, local residents, and national commentators alike. Timur, a Kazak mullah who says blessings and recites the Quran for pilgrims, is impressed that Yasawi's fame is proven by the foreign visitors who come to Turkistan. A simple man, he thinks of himself as participating in world culture when he sits at the Yasawi Shrine, waiting for the world to come him. As I was sitting with a Kazak scholar in Domodedyevo Airport in Moscow in 1992, he asked me, because I speak some

---

1. The earliest documentary evidence refers to a Gavhar as Yasawi's sister; see DeWeese's discussion (1998) of her identity and of the title Gavhar Khushtadj (of uncertain meaning) that occurs in local genealogies.

Turkish, to ask a group of Turks who were also waiting there whether they had heard of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi. They had not, and it disappointed him. Raqiya Jüzbaeva, associate director of the Yasawi Museum, reflects in a more literary way how Yasawi's renown is locally understood: "Here lived Ahmet Yasawi," she writes, "and here is his tomb, the great Turkic bard of the Sufi way, whose glory as a saint has been heralded throughout the world" *(Osında ömir sürgen, sopılıq ağımdağı iri türik aqını, äüliye atanğan aytaqdanqı älemge jayılğan Ahmet Yasawī ding sağanası edi)* (manuscript).

(9) Pilgrims do not usually know, however, that Yasawi was a Sufi, or what Sufism was, probably because the word Sufi *(sopı)* was thoroughly discredited by Soviet propaganda. But they often say he was a "master" *(pir)* who had disciples — a definite mark of a Sufi legacy. The local history of Sufi brotherhoods and the relationship between the Naqshbandi and Yasawi Sufi orders is largely unknown in local discourse and went unmentioned even by our Qoja informants, who have historical roots in these movements. Even when on occasional Qoja cites the legend that Ahmet Yasawi was a disciple of Yusuf Hamadani, few know that the latter was an important Naqshbandi Sufi in the formative period. Sufism is not well understood by pilgrims or the local people, because in Kazakstan no Sufi brotherhoods survived beyond the early Soviet period.[1] It is not Sufism but a Sufi shrine that defines Kazak religion.

(10) Specific miracles performed by Yasawi himself are rarely men-

---

1. The "Bennigsen thesis" that Sufi bortherhoods sustained Central Asian Islam during the Soviet period (Bennigsen 1984, 1985; Bennigsen and Wimbush, 1985, LeMercier-Quelquejay 1983; Bennigsen and LeMercier Quelquejay 1967) must finally be laid to rest. The thesis has merit in the case of the North Caucasus, especially among the Chechens.

tioned by pilgrims or local people, which suggests discontinuity with the documentary traditionf Yasawian hagiography, where miracle-stories are lavishly told (DeWeese 1990; 1998). One key informant, Amal Qoja, told us a story found in the documentary hagiographies about Yasawi's miraculous skill in weeding his father's garden thaled to his departure from Sayram as a boy. Nurali Qoja mentioned that Yasawi flew to the distant shrine of Qorasan Ata to worship (miraculous flight is characteristic of Sufi miracle stories). Omar Qoja, Nurali's nephew, told us miracle stories about Abdi Jalīl Bab (Qorasan Ata) and Baba Tükti Shashtı Azīz (Baba Tükles), but he knew no miraculous details of Yasawi's life. Pilgrims visit the Yasawi Shrine precisely to access its miraculous powers, but they testify only about the resolution of their own personal or family problems because of the *baraka* of the saint, not about miracles he performed during his lifetime.

Thus, most of the narrative detail of the tradition about Ahmet Yasawi that DeWeese has collected (1990, 1998; cf. Mırzahmetov 1996) appears to have been lost during the Soviet period. The collapse of Sufi spirituality (see Chapter 3), along with Nurali's poignant description of how his pious parents, afraid of arrest, did not tell religious stories to their children, are the most plausible scenarios we have to explain the ignorance of the Yasawi tradition in the town where it was born. Local Qojas and Uzbeks can offer scarcely more detail than the Kazaks.

Reprise: The architecture of collective memory. When we introduced ourselves to pilgrims at the Yasawi Shrine, they would look up at the blue domes or the frontal towers and only then begin their comments about Kazak life or history or Muslim values, etc. The power of "place" to evoke the memory of both sacred and ethnic values is strikingly evident in

Turkistan. Limited Kazak familiarity with the Yasawian legendary materials does not limit the significance of the Yasawi Shrine for them. Indeed, they are most engaged with those details of the legendary tradition that are architecturally commemorated or associated with specific features of sacred sites. Stories about Yasawi's relationship with Arstan Bab, Gaũhar Ana, Ibrahim Ata, etc., and his subterranean retreat in old age, are all evoked by structures on the steppe landscape that people can see with their own eyes.

The blurred contours of Yasawi's biography among the Kazaks show that it is not Sufism that has preserved Kazak religion and Muslim identity in Turkistan, but the sacred landscapes themselves. Not the story but the place is holy, and the story is only now being recovered by literary means.[1] It was the building itself — the sacred landscape of the city — that sustained the collective memory of the saint in Turkistan. The building is held sacred despite programmatic attacks on superstition and credulity that people imbibed under communist influence.

It is important for the understanding of Kazak ethnic identity that the tomb of the saint *(aũliye)* coheres with the memory of Kazak ancestors *(ata-baba)* as well. The term *arũaq* (ancestor-spirit; Ar. *ruḥ, arwāḥ)* is applied indiscriminately to both, as we shall explore further in Chapters 4 and 5. The word *kiye*, which is an ancient Inner Asian conception of the inner essence or *animus* in every living thing (e.g. sacred animals such as

---

1. This interpretation would be consistent also with a different analysis of the data above, *viz.* that the provenance of the most important Yasawian hagiographies lay elsewhere, in a Persian-speaking milieu in the region around Samarkand and Bukhara, as DeWeese suggests (1995b; 1998).

the antelope or owl), is today used primarily in reference to sacred space *(kiyeli jer)*. Coupled with an Arabic word used with similar meaning in Kazak *(kiyeli de qasiyetti jer)*, the two adjectives always decribe a "doubly holy place," a center of Muslim pilgrimage. The most sacred of these is Turkistan, because it is here that the Kazak khans and heroic ancestors imbibed the Muslim way from their Sufi masters and Qoja patrons. Sacred space is thus a link to two parallel ancestral lineages of "Arabs" and Kazaks, a doubly sacralized past.

Islam is a "landscaped religion" for the Kazaks. It is a religion of sacred space before it is a religion of sacred narrative, or, as we shall see in Chapter 3, of religious law. This is an architectural theory of religious behavior and persistence which must figure also in our understanding of Kazak ethnicity. So now we turn to the Kazak idea of "blood," the bio-cultural force that is energized by this conception of sacred space.

MUSLIM VALUES AND KAZAK ETHNIC MARKERS

A variable set of perspectives, attitudes, and customs of the nomadic tradition are often claimed by the Kazaks as ethnic markers, but persistent inquiry establishes that most of these, though once vital, are now secondary. For any *ethnos* only a few cultural values have actual "issue salience" (Cohen 1978:397) as "identity symbols" (Spicer 1971:796). The rest are lesser ideals held by individuals or groups, often based on strategies of status-enhancement or socioeconomic self-maximization (Barth 1969), or as primordial sentiments. As the Kazaks have adapted to nomadic, socialist, and post-socialist economic niches, their repertoire of cultural values has

been compartmentalized by various social groups and manipulated for advantage (Moone 1981:236ff; Spicer 1962:514). Our purpose below is to establish how the Kazak valuation of the land in religious terms bears on their other "identity symbols" (Spicer 1971:796).

If we know "what people will die for or in what order they will sacrifice their values and possessions," we know, according to Kluckhohn, "the essence of their cultural allegiance," the cultural symbols they will actually enforce (Kluckhohn 1962:338). So Sızdıqova and I decided to apply Kluckhohn's theory as a way of clarifying the Kazak tendency to make undifferentiated claims for all kinds of customs and perspectives. First we posed an open question inviting instinctive responses about what makes a Kazak.[1] Then we asked a set of six negative propositions about Kazak cultural patterns we knew, from preliminary investigation, had religious meaning for the Kazaks. Informants were asked whether a Kazak can still be Kazak in the absence of the specified trait, *viz.*, if he or she (1) emigrates from the native land, (2) does not know the Kazak language, (3) cannot name his or her seven patrilineal ancestors, (4) marries into a different ethnic group, (5) remains uncircumcised (in the case of men), or (6) apostasizes from Islam.

---

1. This initial question put informants at ease and produced a delightful hodgepodge of personal opinions, such as Zulfiya's response that showing mercy to your mother and father *(äke-sheshege meyrimdi bolū)*, preserving modesty by not letting boys and girls run around together *(qız bala erkek bala bətimən ketpeū)*, and honoring guests by pouring water over their hands *(meymandı sıylaū, qolġa sū quyū)* are essential marks of Kazak culture because they are "the heritage left by my ancestors" *(ata-babalarımnıng qalġan dästüri)*. Similarly, Amal Qoja feels that wearing traditional long Kazak robes *(uzın shapan)* is very important and complains that everybody dresses like Russians these days *(orıssha kiyinip kettik)*. These idealizations of traditional culture are interesting personal agendas, but each informant's *sine qua non* of Kazak ethnic identity had to be fleshed out with specific questions.

We allowed discursive responses with low statistical reliability; so what follows is not an enumerated hierarchy of cultural values but an inventory of local voices on the range of ethnic values. As in the case of the Yasawi legendary tradition, our finding is again a negative one in the sense that culture traits usually identified as Kazak ethnic markers turn out to be dispensable. In the end only "land" and "blood," both of which are imbued with Islamic meanings in their association with each other, have strong issue-salience in setting the ethnic boundary for Kazaks in Turkistan.

Emigration and ethnicity. Business and study trips abroad are recognized by Kazaks as good ways of making money and improving one's lot, but Aybibi, an 80-year-old woman, cannot imagine leaving the land where her umbilical blood was shed *(kindik qanı tökken jerin tastap ketũ).* Jolbarıs Qoja views emigration as betrayal (Rs. *predatel'stvo*, Kz. *satqındıq*):

> *J: Shet elde nesi bar onıng? Özining Qazaqstanı tur, özining jeri-sũı tur, malı tur, ädet-gurpı tur, dini tur. Shetelde ne ġıladı ol barıp? Sheteldegi qayta qazaqtardı alıp kelũ kerek bu yerge.*
>
> J: What will going abroad do for him? Here is his Kazakstan, his land and water, his livestock, his laws and customs, his religion. What good is going abroad? Instead we should be bring Kazaks back to their land.

Uljalġas, a Kazak healer, cited a proverb: *"Ĩyt toyġan jerinde, adam tũġan jerinde"* (A dog [dies] where it has eaten its fill, a man where he was born). Dog and wolf are not mere currs in Turkic religion, but sacred

symbols; here the dog remains a model for proper behavior.[1] A Kazak must die and be buried in the land where he or she was born *(qasiyetti topraġında ölũ kerek)*, Uljalġas said. Her phrase *qasiyetti topraq* (sacred earth) is crucial: the land of the Kazaks has been sacralized as part of the *dār-ul islām*.

The evocative power of cemeteries and sacred tombs contributes to this feeling for the native land. A Kazak is expected to care for the graves of his or her forebears and visit them on Muslim holidays, such as Id al-Fitr *(Ramazan Ayt)*. Now in the post-soviet period clans and lineages are restoring their tombs and shrines, e.g. Sunaq Ata and Qorasan Ata to the northwest of Turkistan, and Gaũhar Ana near Turkistan, mentioned above. The cemetery at Qush-Ata between Turkistan and Kentau was recently spiffed up and its domes painted blue (see photographs before page 1). Such projects may be accompanied by large ceremonial gatherings *(qurıltay)* of lineages and religious honor groups, including one hosted by President Nazarbaev for diaspora Kazaks in 1992. The land and its memorials have an essential drawing power in defining the Kazak *ethnos*, which is consistent with patterns both of nation-states and enclaved ethnic groups (Schwartz 1982; Spicer 1971; Castile and Kushner 1981). It figured already in Halbwachs' original formulation of collective memory theory (1925).

This valuation of "land" is the one item in our list of negative propositions that informants consistently endorsed as necessary for a Kazak to be a Kazak.

---

1. The ambivalent place of the dog in Kazak culture is discussed by Sızdıqova (1998:75,81). Among other features, the dog is a scapegoat to carry away sickness (on the dog in Qipchaq religion, cf. Golden 1996b).

Mother tongue and ethnicity. As a consequence of Russian immigration and the Soviet nationalities policy, Kazak language has been a highly charged ethnic boundary issue during the 20th century. The debate between russophiles and mother-tongue advocates became intense during *glasnost* and after independence. Two weekly newspapers, *Ana Tili* (Mother Tongue) and *Qazaq Ädebiyeti* (Kazak Literature) have devoted themselves to the problem for decades. The latest version of the language law of the Kazakstan Republic makes Kazak the "state *(memlekettik)* language" and gives a strong second place to Russian as an "official language." President Nazarbaev spoke on television in March 1998 encouraging the city of Turkistan to model the use of Kazak language for the rest of the country.

Zulfiya told us that a Kazak who forgets the mother tongue has become a pagan *(ana tilin umıtqan, ol käpirlikke jatadı)*; she had been to Almaty once and was offended when Kazaks she spoke to on the street would answer her in Russian. Oshanov, a retired local official, lamented that learning Russian during the Tsarist period was a prelude to baptism; the mother tongue, he said, is what keeps Muslims from losing their religion. Nurali Qoja, inclined to strong judgments, went further, saying such a person isn't even a man. Omar Qoja calls non-Kazak-speaking Kazaks *mänggürt* (brain-washed slaves), *dübara* (half-breeds), *maqaũ* (mutes), and *ongbaġan* (fool, lit., someone who never got on the right track). Kengesbek, a teacher, was more careful and analytical, observing that the cultural treasury is never fully accessible in a foreign language; so a Kazak who does not know the mother tongue will be considerd a *shala qazaq* (half-baked Kazak) because of his or her lapses in cultural finesse. Mänsür is a Kazak camel herder who speaks no Russian but generously deflects the

language issue by playfully attaching Russian endings to Kazak words (*bolġan-ski*, it's done).

However the language issue is articulated, it is regularly compromised in practice. Another neighbor of mine, Baqıtbergen, may be almost right when he says there are no non-Kazak-speaking Kazaks in Turkistan, but it is also true that there are few who do not also speak at least a little Russian. In the Soviet period it was a common strategy of Muslim families to send sons to Russian schools and daughters to native-speaking schools. Sons would thus get ahead in the Russian world, and daughters would preserve Kazak culture at home. University departments run separate instructional tracks for graduates of the two school systems.

For Jolbarıs Qoja there are Muslim languages and Christian languages, just as there are Muslim and Christian cultures, and the struggle for Kazak language is a struggle for Islam. But as a veteran of the Red Army who has seen Moscow, he said colorfully that he prefers a "pale-faced Russian" *(sarı orıs)*, one who knows her religion and culture, to a "black Russian" *(qara orıs)*, by which he means a Kazak who has forgotten hers. This contrast highlights the way lack of fluency in the mother tongue is viewed as a matter of "forgetting" *(umıtū)*. In families where acculturative pressure was severe over two or more generations, an individual may never actually have learned enough Kazak to forget it, but he or she is now viewed as a representative of the Kazak people who have collectively forgotten.[1] The *ethnos* then forgives itself on the grounds that russification was

---

1. I fit this category also and have used this excuse. I am a third generation Czech-American but speak no Czech and often have to apologize to Kazaks that I do not know my "mother tongue."

unavoidable at the time.

So, despite endless national discussions on the issue, Kazaks make considerable concessions in their conception of language an essential ethnic marker.

Genealogy and ethnicity. The ideology of the *jeti ata* (one's patrilineal ancestors to the seventh generation) is often noted as a marker of Kazak culture. Comparing genealogies to the seventh degree was the traditional rule of exogamy (Qojabekova 1994; Arġınbaev 1974, 1996). As Omar Qoja put it to us succinctly, if you forget your seven ancestors, you may find yourself having married your relative.

Two Qojas, Alim and Jolbarıs, told us that Muslim devotion feeds on the knowledge of one's ancestral tradition, because after learning who one's own ancestors are, one can then learn the lineage of the Prophet. Knowing one's ancestors, Jolbarıs said, is "the first duty of a Muslim" *(musılmannıng birinshi shartı).* For Uljalġas, not knowing your *jeti ata*, like drinking vodka, is a sign you have sold your honor to the Russians. Kengesbek says, "We had forgotten [our seven ancestors] and have been learning them only recently as we recover our religion" *(onı umıtıp ta qalġanbız ġoy, endi-endi jeti atamızdı bilip kele jatırmız, dinimiz qayta oraldı degendey).*

In practice, however, there are many Kazaks who cannot list seven names. Zulfiya told us she knows five of her seven ancestors. Botajan knows seven of hers, but her husband does not know his. Even Aybibi, an old woman who, we thought, might have preserved the old custom, confessed she does not know hers any better than anybody else does. Kazaks compensate for the loss of the tradition by ignoring the *jeti ata* and appealing

instead to an alternate rule of exogamy. In practice marriage does not occur between a Kazak man and woman of the same clan *(rũ)*, because one's clan is easier to remember than the names of seven ancestors. (The *jeti ata* tradition is discussed again in Chapter 4 in relation to the problem of ancestor-spirits.)

Though not knowing one's lineage makes a Kazak uncultured *(sawatsız)*, Jolbarıs Qoja intones, it does not make one any less a Kazak these days. Lapses are blamed on the stresses of the Soviet period. The *jeti ata* tradition is an ideal pattern that lacks salience in defining the Kazak ethnic boundary, though the clan system persists in marriage and other matters of social obligation.

Intermarriage and ethnicity. Intermarriage was encouraged by Soviet policy as a way of erasing ethnic and religious boundaries and creating the New Soviet Man (Rywkin 1987). Progressive Kazak families encouraged their sons to marry Russian women, and a recent prime minister of Kazakstan is an example. Thirty years ago a Kazak army officer in Turkistan told his daughters to go find Chinese husbands if they liked; they were shocked, because they had been taught to fear China as Soviet patriots. But a Kazak woman who marries a non-Kazak man cannot bear Kazak children in the patriline, and if her husband is also non-Muslim, she not only dilutes Kazak "blood" but bears children who are "pagan" *(käpir)*. She is described as "lost" *(adasıp ketken)* or "disappeared" *(joq bolıp ketken)* in ethnic terms, or as a child of hell *(tozaq)* if religious judgments are applied. Nurali Qoja says that to marry a Russian or a Chinese is to choose another religion *(orıstıng dinin qalap ketedi)*, and a woman who does so is no longer a Muslim. Still, the one form of ethnic boundary crossing with

which Kazaks are most familiar is when a Kazak woman marries a non-Kazak. It may be scorned, but it is common enough. Progressive and conservative outlooks both survived the Soviet period.

Zulfiya feels marriage with a Turkish man is a very good thing, because Muslim peoples are relatives. Nurali Qoja snickers that more Kazaks should marry Turks in order to learn a little religion for a change. Kengesbek, however, is against "mixing the people's blood" even with Uzbeks and other Muslims, because it dilutes Kazak values *(är ḥalıqtıng qanı aralasqanın qalamaymın . . . [özbek] ol da musılman ġoy . . . biraq endi sonda da qazaq qazaq bop qalũ kerek).* Qalambay, a traditional Muslim, believes in free choice and says parents should not forbid intermarriage, but he is happy that none of his daughters married a Russian or an Uzbek. The former involves religious and the latter linguistic deculturation: Kazaks tend to resent the uzbekification of their language, which is notable in Turkistan.

Although not without a sense of cultural compromise, interethnic Muslim marriages between Kazaks and Uzbeks are common in Turkistan, and Kazaks are generally tolerant of most any exogamous marriage.

Circumcision and ethnicity. Circumcision is the rite of passage that makes a boy a Muslim *(musılman qılũ),* and it is widely observed among the Kazaks as a high ceremonial occasion. Circumcision feasts *(sündet toy)* involve elaborate processes of ritual exchange and service among relatives and friends (Werner 1997, 1998). The feasts usually happen in summer or fall when the boy is six or seven years old, to coincide with his going off to school. Circumcision and baptism are viewed as primary markers of Muslim and Christian identity, respectively. A homophonic play on words

(Kz. *kestirũ,* to cut; Rs./Kz. *krestit' etũ,* to christen) was Uljalġas' way of expressing the feeling that baptism and circumcision are ethnic markers.

But the fact that some Kazak men are uncircumcised is not hard to establish: I did so by visiting the public baths in Almaty with a group of them. Avoiding circumcision was a political statement against obscurantism by dogmatically communist families. In Turkistan, however, uncircumcision is viewed as a mark of russification to an offensive degree. Kengesbek insists that a Kazak man who is not circumcised is anomalous.

When asked whether an uncircumcised man can be called a Kazak, Fatima, an old Qoja woman, took a practical view, saying that of course you'll still call him a Kazak, because you can't know whether he is uncircumcised unless his wife tells you, and she won't. Qalambay made the scholastic argument that the Quran does not require circumcision and that, therefore, having a Muslim father and mother and reciting the Shahada makes one a Muslim regardless of circumcision. Even Nurali Qoja, usually inclined to incendiary judgments, surprised us by excusing uncircumcision; he and others pointed out that circumcision is the parents' responsibility, so their failure to do so should not reflect on the son. Zulfiya's statement that "absolutely he should be circumcised, if circumstances allow" *(äbezatelni, mümkindigi bolsa, [sündetke] jatqızġan durıs),* is an example of the "equivocal absolutes" that are common in Kazak discourse where the religious law is felt to be difficult for political reasons or expensive due to its ceremonial encumberments.

Aybibi's comment that an uncircumcised man will not be given a Muslim funeral *(janaza),* or if he is, that his mother and father will be made to ride backwards on a donkey to the cemetery, reflects an archaic tradi-

tion; today all Kazaks in Turkistan receive a Muslim funeral. This is evidence that circumcision is not absolutized as an ethnic marker.

Apostasy and ethnicity. In the Muslim world religiously definied ethnic minorities (Kz. *ult*; Tk. *millet*) live alongside Muslims, and the tradition of Islamic tolerance guarantees them a right to practice their religion as an ethnic group. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakstan promises freedom of religion also to individuals, but the *millet* tradition is still the cultural standard in places like Turkistan. Neglect of ritual obligations of the Muslim life is easily tolerated, but conversion is as likely to earn a Kazak the epithet *dinsiz* (religionless) as is outright atheism. During the Tsarist period starving Kazaks were enticed into Russian Orthodoxy by exemption from taxes and criminal penalties and offers of land and tools (Kreindler 1969; Neill 1964:378), causing Altınsarīn to lament at the time that "half the Kazaks" had become Russian Cossacks, i.e. Christians (*"Qazaq mungı"* [1884], reprinted in *QE*, May 18, 1995, p. 14). He exaggerated, but still today this is viewed by Kazaks as a nefarious episode in their colonial history (*ZK*, August 31 1994 [Sopıbekova]; Mırzaḥmetov 1993).

Post-soviet conversion is more varied. Among the Kazak literati in Almaty there is a new cult of a Turco-Mongol female spirit, Umay, whose cult is still alive among the Yakuts in Siberia (cf. Golden 1996a:17; Sinor 1990b:1771-81). Oljas Süleymenov featured Umay on the cover of one of his books that helped awaken Kazak national consciousness (1992 [1975]). A Kazak "prophet" who called himself Aq Beket (White Sentry) claimed divine inspiration for an Islamic-Christian synthesis based on the idea of love (Shamshatov 1992). By the mid-1990s several thousand Kazaks, mostly urban young people, had joined the Hare Krishnas (often misidentified as

Buddhists in the press), the Jehovah's Witnesses (sometimes misidentified as Jewish), the Russian Baptists, and various Pentecostal churches — rarely the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1995 a Bahai colporteur distributed literature in the Yasawi University dormitories.

Kazak journalists seem genuinely fascinated by the Muslim-background disciples and preachers who have emerged in the new religious movements. One major set of articles argued that Kazak young people are searching for spiritual and philosophical depth that the mullahs have been unable to provide (*QA*, September 2, 1997, pp. 3-5). Some have demanded legal action against conversion and foreign tutelage of these movements, or at least a better effort to educate Kazak young people in the Muslim way (*Iman*, September 9, 1994). One Kazak colleague lamented to me that the new Islamic Directorate of Kazakstan has been sleeping while 4,000 Kazak young people abandoned Islam. Women who attend Christian meetings may be forbidden to do so by their husbands or fathers, and some say they have been divorced for this reason. Violence against converts has been reported.

So we included a question about apostasy in our interviews. Sızdıqova asked the question: "If a Kazak says 'I have abandoned Islam,' 'I am not a Muslim,' is he still a Kazak?" *(Egerde bir qazaq ıslamdı tastadım, men musılman emespin dep aytsa, ol qazaq bola aladı ma?).* Informants usually fell back on the equation of Kazak and Muslim identities, but they struggled with it. Aybibi believes that all Kazaks are Muslims and to be anything else is to "commit paganness" *(käpirlik etedi).* For Jolbarıs Qoja anyone who rejects Islam rejects the basic human values *(adamgershilik)* in Islam and so becomes a pagan. Omar Qoja, however, was tolerant of conver-

sion. We would not drive the apostate away, he said, because we respect other peoples; so he would remain a Kazak even though we could no longer count him as part of our religion. Kengesbek believes in freedom of conscience but feels that conversion is odd and attributable to the convert's upbringing. The family, not the individual, is to blame. Collective responsibility produces a begrudging and uneven religious toleration that is capable of exonerating deviant behavior.

Kazaks equate their ethnic identity with Muslim values, but the imprint of the progressive values of the Soviet experience leads them to disclaim "fanaticism" and "fundamentalism," even in traditional Turkistan. Kazaks want to be able to espouse both freedom of religion and a communal sense of Muslim identity — an ambiguity that remains to be resolved in the new Kazakstan.

Reprise: Ethnic identity and sacred space. Kazaks are adept at negotiating the internal boundaries of their ethnic identity. Acculturation has produced a pattern of concession. What distinguishes traditional from urban or modern Kazaks is the extent to which primordial ideals are professed at all; when they are professed, however, there are primary and secondary definitions of what it means to be a Kazak. Whatever a Kazak's cultural deficiencies — poor command of the Kazak language, inability to recite a list of ancestors, intermarriage, even uncircumcision or outright apostasy — these can be forgiven so long as the person has is a Kazak in the patriline and either lives in the land of the Kazaks or would like to.

What matters in Turkistan is the spiritual sense that the ancestral "blood" coheres in one's bio-cultural person and that Kazakstan is a homeland long ago sacralized by Muslim saints and Kazak heroes. Jolbarıs Qoja

offers the quintessential conservative view of Kazak ethnicity:

> *J: Qazaq bolũ üshin eng aldımen musılman bolũ kerek . . . Islam dinin qabıldap, musılman bolsa, sol qazaq boladı. Qazaqqa ata-babasının qoldanıp kele jatqan tärtibi osı.*
>
> J: To be Kazak one must first be a Muslim. A Kazak is a Muslim, having received the religion of Islam. For the Kazak this is the way of life to which his ancestors have always lent their support.

The Kazak ancestors were Muslims, and their spirits are still present to "support" Kazaks in their Muslim homes, as we will explore in Chapter 4. Spiritual continuity with the ancestors is felt as a biocultural reality of "blood" and "place" even in the absence of religious experience or elaborate ritual performance. When Kazaks say that Muslim lifeways have "soaked into our blood," they are talking not only about biological descent but about an enculturation process. Historical values "seep" into people, and Kazak historical values are preserved in sacred landscapes. Kazaks have a spatio-biological sense of history.

The spiritual heritage of the land is evoked every time a Kazak passes a cemetery or shrine or receives the blessing of the elder of the family at the end of a meal. Lineage and landscape shape Kazak life because (a) the Kazak bio-cultural blood-line and (b) the landscape of the Kazak steppe are thoroughly suffused with Muslim sensitivities. These are felt also in (c) other secondary cultural domains, e.g. the tendency to think of Kazak as a "Muslim language," but these are more easily negotiated away when circumstances require it.

CONCLUSION

Sacred space so dominates the cultural horizon in Turkistan that is has ramified for Kazaks who live there into a sacral conception of ethnic descent. Turkistan is a community of Turkic peoples and has not always had a Kazak majority; so it was precisely as the Kazaks chose to join these sedentary Turkic peoples under the oppositional pressure of the Russian boundary context that the Muslim landscape of the city came to affect their ethnic self-consciousness. The Kazak case is thus a confirmation of the synthesis of current ethnicity theories proposed by Gross (1992:9), according to which "shared habitus" is the vehicle within which both primordial (ideational) values and instrumental (including oppositional) identities cohere.

In the collective memory of the Kazaks both Muslim saints and Kazak ancestors are associated spatially with their tombs, and the Yasawi Shrine is their axial reference point. Five centuries ago the Kazak khans laid claim to the Syr Darya towns and exploited the sacred habitus of Turkistan to ratify both their political authority and the religious status of the Kazak people. Burial grounds came to share in the sanctity of the Sufi shrines. On the open steppe almost any focal point becomes an *axis mundi*; so Kazaks call Turkistan their *kindik* or axis, like the Ka'ba Stone in Mecca. They also call it their *shangıraq*, which is the wooden ring that forms the yurt's smoke hole and holds it together. Over time the blue tiled dome of the Muslim shrine and the black felt tent of the Kazaks thus came to share the cultural affectivities on which Kazak identity has been built.

Minimally, for Kazaks who live under this primal *kindik*, or under any

shangıraq affectivelty associated with it, Kazak ethnicity involves (1) patrileneal descent from sacralized ancestors, and (2) a geographic source for this sacrality in the places where the Kazak ancestors worshipped. Neither the narrative context of the story of Yasawian Islam in Turkistan, explored in this chapter, nor the structure of Islamic observance, to be discussed in Chapter 3, have impacted the Kazaks nearly as strongly as have the Muslim landscapes of shrines and cemeteries. In the collective memory these have become spiritual places and marks of the Kazak way of life, because Kazak spirits live there, as we shall see in Chapters 4 and 5.

Kazakstan is a very large country; so not all Kazaks focus their lives or their identities directly on the axis of Turkistan. But for the many who define (or are now redefining) their identity in ethnic terms, the collective memory is more likely to lead them in the direction of Turkistan than in any other. Even secular souls may find self-definition in the affections that special monuments appeal to. For those who live far away, a *ziyarat* to Turkistan may be almost as difficult as a *hajj* to Mecca, but they have their own lesser Sufi shrines closer to home, and always a local burial ground with its smaller domed mausolea. Viewing the Muslim landscape requires a wide-view lens, but Turkistan has been a focal point for the Kazaks almost since they began to call themselves Kazaks.

Since Barth (1969), socioeconomic advantage and "self-maximization" have been understood to be somehow at the heart of ethnic "strategies." In the Kazak case, however, ethnicity is primarily a communal valuation of primordial sentiment, a "repertoire of common responses" (Gross 1992:9), a kind of implicit ethnic ideology in search of an explicit nationalist structure. It is experienced more along ideational and affective than along a socioeco-

nomic and manipulative lines (Spicer 1971; *contra* Barth 1967). Even, however, where the ethnic ideology confers only marginal socioeconomic advantage, self-maximizing strategies are seldom absent from the process of ethnicity formation. In Turkistan as everywhere, privilege accrues to those who can exploit cultural resources for personal advantage. Ethnic "styles" of individuals seeking to improve their social status (Royce 1982) are reflected both in the Kazak elite exploiting Islamic or Pan-Turkic rhetoric, and in the lower classes who visit Yasawi and pray that the ancestors and saints will give them this day their daily bread. In Turkistan it is no longer primarily russification but re-islamization, the "second conversion" (Gilliland 1991), that confers selective advantage.

The Kazak Steppe is now bounded as a modern nation-state with a secular constitution, and it celebrates its new national profile as other nations do. Michaels (1996) provides an excellent account of the crystallization of the ethnic consciousness of the Kazak intelligensia around the student revolt against Soviet policy in December 1986, when a police assault killed many unarmed demonstrators and arrested thousands (cf. Ötegenov and Zeynäbilov 1991-92; Kuzio 1988; Wimbush 1987; *Samizdat* 1987). Kazak nationalism thus found its founding martyrs, but ethnic sentiment runs deep and searches for heroes also in the recesses of primordial events; so the new Kazakstan draws inspiration also from the memory of the Kazak khanate and its Muslim holy places. For vast inland territories, moreover, there are always dispersed centers of meaning; so President Nazarbaev is building both a new national capital at Aqmola in the north, and a center of Pan-

Turkic and Muslim identity at Turkistan in the south.[1] Nomads were defined as much by their centers as their pastoral peripheries; so today as always, the Kazaks are defined by their longing for cities that will ratify their sense of themselves. Their centers include urban cosmopoles, of course, but remote pastures and traditional desert sites also have a special attraction in the formation of ethnic sentiment. Kazak ethnicity cannot be adequately circumscribed by one local case study, but the new research on Kazak ethnicity requires an account of the evolution of Kazak identity in places like Turkistan with historical depth.

I have noted above that the new Pan-Turkist internationalism does not usually threaten Kazak national identity but envigorates it. It provides a geocultural vision with economic benefits and deep mythic sources, a spiritual alternative to the old socialist and the new free-market internationalism. Like Pan-Turkism, Kazak nationalism is a relatively mild ideology. Kazakstan is constantly aware of its long and indefensible border with Russia and so cannot afford to pressure its Russian citizens with too much "Turkism" of any kind.

I have observed, finally, that Kazaks know little about Sufism or even the history of the Yasawi Sufi movement. But Turkistan still evokes the memory of the Kazak ancestors in their association with the Sufi saints. Over 800 years the home town of Ahmet Yasawi has withstood esoteric teaching and ecstatic rituals, conflict between saintly lineages, extreme isolation,

---

1. In April 1998 Nazarbaev made another of his many visits to Turkistan, dropped a large gift on the city intended for infrastructure improvements, and begged its citizens to forgive him for postponing for a few years a major rebuilding and national celebration of their city, so that Aqmola can be finished first. He also inaugurated a satelite link between Yasawi University and Ankara.

predatory mercantilism, war, evacuation, famine, colonialism, and socialism; yet Turkistan still displays the tomb of the saint to whom it was dedicated by a world conqueror 600 years ago. Shaping bricks into towers and domes, Tamerlane's craftsmen retextured the earth into a mnemonic sign-post. This is a cultural landscape — culture in its original sense, the transformation of nature.

Children in Kazak schools are taught a proverb that it is better to forget the name of your village than to forget the customs of your people *(Aũlıngnıng atın umıtsang da, saltıngdı umıtpa)*. The saying reverses the real process of ethnic formation and persistence. Customs have no priority over place; rather, sacred space is an anamnetic symbol by means of which the ethnic valuation of culture persists in the collective memory. The Kazaks of Turkistan are an example of how religion can flourish as a geographic spirituality, and how this in turn forms ethnic identity. Memory assumes the form of the landscape (Schama 1995:25).

The pilgrimage cult will be explored more fully in Chapter 5, but first we must examine in Chapter 3 how Islam is conceived by the Kazaks as the way of religious purity, and in Chapter 4 how their Muslim ancestors still touch their lives. The next three chapters are the ethnographic substance of the study, specifying the semantic, affective, and behavioral content of religious experience from which the Kazak *ethnos* draws its inspiration.

Äli namazġa niyet qılġanmenen,
shamamız biraz nağımay jatır.
—A Kazak pilgrim, 1995

It's in my heart to say the daily prayers, but I still don't quite know how.

CHAPTER THREE

TAZA JOL: THE PURE WAY OF ISLAM AMONG THE KAZAKS

When Kazaks speak of *din* (religion) and the *Quday jolı* (way of God), they mean Islam; but because these are formal terms heavily laden with theological substance, Kazaks also have an emotive and experiential way of expressing them: Islam is the *taza jol*, the clean or pure way. *Taza jol* is a Kazak rendition of the Quranic definition of Islam as the "straight path" (Ar. *sirāt al-mustaqīm*, Quran 1:6; Kz. *tũra jol*). But all roads, after all, are straight on the Kazak steppe; so for the Kazaks it is not not straightness but cleanness that appeals to the affections, making Islam the last and highest religion. *Taza jol* is never used to describe a religion other than Islam.

Two of the most frequently used words in the natural vocabulary of Kazak religion are the words clean *(taza)* and unclean *(taza emes)*. To live the religious life is to "walk clean" *(taza jürũ)*. Terms for purity and impurity derived from Arabic (*ḥalal, ḥaram*) are used also, but they are less common than the Turko-Persian words *taza* and *taza emes*. For Kazaks this simple language of purity is as important as the Arabic theological vocabulary of Islam — big words like religion *(din)*, prophet *(payġambar)*, confes-

sion of faith *(shaḥada),* etc. The *taza jol* with its appeal to ritual and moral purity is a frequently heard idealization of Islam in Turkistan.

Kazaks affirm the pure way of Islam even as they apologize for the ambivalent Muslim life they actually lead. Purity and purification are fundamentals of Islamic spirituality. They are important not only in Islamic orthopraxy but in local expressions of Muslim heteropraxy as well. Among the Kazaks purity is an ideal believed to be better approximated by the Qojas, or by other Muslim peoples such as the Uzbeks, or by the prophets, saints and Kazak ancestors of an idealized past. A collective sense of deficient purity is known in most Muslim societies. Kazaks imagine themselves to be less pure than others yet aspire to the purity they feel they lack.

Stewart and Shaw have noted that "notions of the 'purity' of traditions have not had much credibility" in anthropological circles (1994:1). Unities and purities defy both postmodern deconstructionism and our scientific inclination to make the simple complex. A recent summary by Tayob (*OEMIW* 3:370–372) cites only Denny's *Introduction to Islam* (1985:99–104) as a non-Muslim presentation of Islamic purity and purification. Anthropologists of religion have tended to focus on syncretic/synthetic processes because we specialize in "taking apart practices and identities;" we are preoccupied with "culture as collage, as creolized, as fragmented, as 'interculture', as subversive hybrid invention" (Stewart and Shaw 1994:2,23). Purity implies authenticity and appeals to the time of mythic origins; so it gets set aside as an "anti-synthetic" doctrine, the domain of fundamentalists defending religion against the corruption of local inculturations and also, of course, against us, against science and the West.

The purist or anti-syncretic appeal is made, however, even in

heterodox and synthetic mediations of Islam. Kazaks frequently appeal to holistic practices and pure identities. An emotive anti-syncretism interacts with a behaviorally diverse and syncretic religious system. Both the syncretism and the anti-syncretism must be explained, especially when the latter is perceived emically as part of the former.

Variabilities in the pure way. Usually it is only Qojas and Kazak elders — and by no means all of them — who claim actually to *live* according this "puritan" (Gellner) or "scripturalist" (Geertz) way of the *taza jol*, and it can be an ephemeral ideal even for them. Even the elders plead a variety of excuses (poor health, nomadic background, ignorance of Arabic, acculturation to Russian ways, etc.) why they cannot live by the *taza jol* as they should. But they are expected to do so, and because the expectation is an honorable one, their lapses are also overlooked. They bind themselves to the younger generation by carrying over into their honorable station the localized Muslim practices that they and their families have lived by all along. The Qojas and Kazak elders not only keep the fast and recite the five daily prayers prescribed according to the Five Pillars of Islam, but also sponsor memorial-feasts for the ancestor-spirits and recite the Quran in honor of the dead (Chapter 4), visit shrines as an alternative to the *hajj* (Chapter 5), and heal supplicants in syncretic rites that have both Islamic and Inner Asian sources (Chapter 6). By living according to *both* normative *and* heterodox values, they serve as vicars of faithfulness for the rest of the community that has not yet taken up the *taza jol*. There is little disjunction between the "Muslimness" of Kazak culture and the pure way as it is actually lived.

Cosmopolitan Kazaks, of course, find purity too much to manage. But

superficial stereotypes which divide the Kazaks into rural believers who adhere to Islam and urban secularists who are alienated from it are inaccurate. Olcott estimates that the urban and non-religious group constitutes 25-40% of Kazaks who are as frightened of Islam as are the Russians (*OEMIW* 2:408). But to anyone who speaks to Kazaks in their own language, religious values are visible not only in the villages and towns, but also among the best educated people in the cities. A high government official in Almaty announced to me several times in our first meeting in 1991 that he believes in God, and when his wife smirked that he ignores the ritual obligations of Islam, he invited me to go see the city mosque and introduced me to the mullah there. Urban families are burying their dead in the Islamic *janaza* rite.

Among the Kazaks the *taza jol* remains the norm despite these variabilities, not because the theologians say it is, but because it is felt to be so by Muslims even when they do not observe it. It is also important to them that their locally "syncretistic" practices are sometimes supportable from the Quran with creative exegesis, or (more often) from the *ḥadith* (traditions) of the life of the Prophet, as we shall see.[1] When this happens, the high tradition of classical Islam "plays host" to local variants and deviations from the norm, which itself is found to contain the seeds of syncretism (Musk 1989:224,233,238). Pure religion endears itself to the people in these alternate readings of scripture.

For the Kazaks the *taza jol* is a fluid pattern of faithfulness and

---

1. Several small collections of *ḥadith* have been printed recently in Kazak (Meyirmanov 1991; Särsenbaev and Seksenbaeva 1994).

humanitarian values *(adamgershilik).* It includes Sufi concepts even when these are not specifically identified as such, and everything else about Islam that is experienced as true and good. As Amal Qoja told us, one who has begun to "walk" or "fallen onto" the way of God *(Quday jolına tüsũ)* is one who says the five daily prayers, keeps the fast, recites the Quran, serves the people, and abstains from worldly excesses, especially the pursuit of wealth — a broadly Sufic conception of the humanity of the Muslim (cf. Schimmel 1981). This chapter, therefore, includes sections on (1) the Islamic vocabulary of Kazak religion; (2) the affective experience of purity and impurity; (3) the Five Pillars of Islam as practiced by the Kazaks; (4) life-cycle rituals and other Muslim behavioral patterns; (5) the iconic function of the Qojas as purveyors of the pure way; and (6) the problem of Sufism, because it was the vehicle of the coming of the pure way of Islam to Turkistan.

THE NAMES OF GOD AND THE KAZAK IDEA OF ISLAM

The names of God and other religious terminology in the Kazak language are evidence of the Islamization of the conceptual apparatus of Kazak religion. This basic linguistic evidence escapes the notice of scholars who approach Kazak religion through Russian sources.

The word for religion is problematic in Kazak. Religion *(din)* is identified with Islam; the plural *dinder* (religions) is seldom used except in academic circles. Other religions are called *nanım* (belief), or the Russian word *religia* may be used for them, because *din*, being of Arabic origin, is reserved for Islam. When other religions are called *din*, one suspects the

influence of Russian: I have overheard Kazaks say that Russians and Europeans "have no *din*," though this need not mean that the speaker thinks we have no *religia*. Even the word Islam is negotiable: Kazaks pronounce it variably as *ıslam* (back vowels) or *isläm* (short front vowels), never *Īslam* as they spell it, following the Russian.

In Kazak, as in all the Muslim languages of Central Asia, the most theonym comes from Persian. God is *Quday* (Pers. *Khoda*). *Alla* (Ar. *Allah*) — in Kazak the final aspirant is neither pronounced nor written — and *Täŋir/Täŋiri* (Old Turkic: *Tengri*) are invariably treated as synonyms of *Quday*, and all are used as names for the one God of Islamic monotheism. God is frequently invoked in the form *bir Quday* (the One God), e.g. *bir Qudayım qoldasın* (may my One God protect you); *bir Quday biledi* (only the One God knows). Monotheistic tones in everyday Kazak speech today are consistent with Kazak religious vocabulary recorded since the late 19th century (cf. Qunanbaev 1993 [1890s], Qudayberdiulı 1988a,b [early 20th c.], Altınsarīn 1991 [1884]). This is evidence that Persian and Islamic influence reached deep into the religious life not only of the sedentary societies of Transoxiana such as the Uzbeks, but also of the northern nomads of the Kazak horde. That Tengri is the least common word for God in Kazak speech suggests that Kazak religion long ago distanced itself from the cult of the sky god in early Turkic religion (Roux 1984a, 1984b, 1987, 1993).[1]

---

1. When Tengri came to be conceived as a "high God" among the early Turks of Inner Asia, it was a pretense of celestrial ancestry for the royal house of the Türk Empire. "Tengrism" was not a religion of the people (DeWeese, personal correspondence). Probably Tengri assumed the role of a high God only in response to the pressure of Middle Eastern monotheism. so Ömirseyit Shäriptegi's statement (*JQ*, June 1, 1993) that Allah and Tengri are the gods of two different religions is misleading.

The three divine names are seldom applied to the gods of other religions. There is a correspondence between the ethnic boundary and the incompatibility of vocabulary for the divine name. As a foreigner with a European name and face I am sometimes asked, "Do you believe in *Quday* or in Jesus Christ?", with *Iisus Khristos* pronounced as in Russian; the Islamic equivalents *Isa Mäsiḥ* (Jesus the Messiah) or *Isa Payġambar* (Jesus the Prophet) are not used in this kind of interaction. Or the Russian word for God *(Bog)* may be substituted for Jesus Christ in the same question. The query is an interethnic negotiation to determine whether, as one who speaks Kazak (a Muslim language), I may perhaps be Muslim, one who believes in *Quday* as opposed to the Russian God. Intellectual conversation is, of course, more generous toward other religions and allows expressions such as *orıstıng qudayı* (the God *[Quday]* of the Russians), but Kazak as commonly spoken lacks a word for a non-Islamic God. *Quday* is *Alla* is *Täŋgiri* who is the God proclaimed by Muhammad and the prophets, the Muslim saints and mullahs, and believed in by Muslim peoples. For the Kazaks, God is the God of the Muslims. Other religions have a "different god" *(qudayı basqa).*

The Turko-Persian word *payġambar* (prophet) is articulated most frequently with the first person plural ending. Kazak follows this pattern, so the Prophet Muhammad is *payġambarımız* (our prophet). Both an ethnic claim on the Prophet and a contrast with the prophets of other peoples is clearly implied. Though Moses and Jesus also are prophets of Islam, they are not usually called *payġambarımız*, our prophet, in the Turkic languages.

While it is common to hear Kazaks affirm, "We are all Muslims, our religion is Islam" *(Bärimiz musılmanbız, dinimiz islam)*, we have also noted that they usually call their religious life simply "Muslimness" (*musılmandıq;*

musılmanshılıq; or with a Persian infix, *musılmangershilik*). This reflects discomfort with the abstraction of Islam as an ideology and a preference for Muslim life as an experience of the community. But Islam and "Muslimness" are not contrasted domains; they are subtle expressions for describing aspects of the religious life. Islam, carefully defined by the theologians, is still the ideal toward which the community expects the elders to aspire; whereas "Muslimness" is the religious life of the people, including the elders but not excluding anyone except those who have "gone over to the Russians" *(orıs bolıp ketken)*.

In this study I follow the practice of the Kazaks, using the words Islam and Islamic to refer to the *taza jol*, and the words Muslim and "Muslimness" *(musılmanshılıq)* to include local understandings of the Muslim life. Kazak usage conforms to the Arabic distinction between Islam as the ideology of submission *(s-l-m)*, and Muslim as the people who submit *(m-s-l-m)*.

THE DAILY EXPERIENCE OF PURITY AND IMPURITY

Next to the Yasawi Shrine there is an elegant old bathhouse *(monsha, ḥamam)*, now restored as a museum piece. Until the 1950s it was the primary public bathhouse in the old Muslim city, and local residents of middle age or older remember bathing there before it was closed down. It was used as one of the models for the elaborate national bathhouse in Almaty, where Kazaks treat themselves and their guests to the high drama of Muslim conviviality in the nude. In Turkistan the association of the bathhouse with the Yasawi Shrine indicates that bathing was conceived traditionally as a semi-religious act, as it is elsewhere in the Muslim world (Pierce 1964:49-

52). Ideally the day before every Friday noon mosque service, and at least before religious holidays, going to the bathhouse is not only pleasurable but meritorious. When local elections were held in Turkistan in 1994, my colleague, Sızdıqova, said she would vote for any candidate who would build the city a new *monsha*; in the event Yasawi University did so and opened its nice new bathhouse to the public.

Islam is often presented as a strenuous system of truth (theology) and social order (politics), but these domains describe the Islam of the theologians and politicians, missing the experience of Islam for ordinary people. In Muslim societies, truth and social order are incomplete without the sense of being clean and pure — purer, at least, than other people. Islamic ideals, including the social order introduced by Muhammad at Medina, may be felt to be unattainable, and Islamic theology may be inconceivably abstract (also conceptually foreign for non-Arab Muslims), but all Muslims strive after the feeling of being clean, as Munson discovered with his colorful Moroccan informant, al-Hajj Muhammad (1984:43ff.). Even those who violate purity know what it is. It is taught by parents to children as a complex of daily habits of physical cleanliness and pure intentions. It is purity that distinguishes Muslims in their own minds from Christians, unbelievers, and the Western world.

A trip to the bathhouse restores the body to a state of ritual purity. More than just a scrub or shower that cleans the surface of the body, a steam or sweat bath clears out the pores of the skin and seals the body, at least for a short time, in an envelope of temporary purity which is felt to be appropriate for approaching God in worship or for other religious acts. For those who do not attend the mosque or worship in the prescribed ways,

the bath helps them identify with those who do.

Since Kazakstan has been largely without mosques since the 1930s, the details of the Islamic ritual washings prescribed for the daily prayers are not well known to most Kazaks. These are explained in popular manuals now appearing in Kazak at the rate of about one booklet per year (Lamasharipov 1990; Altınsarin 1991 [1884]; Jämishulı 1992; Soymen 1994; Shalapov 1995c; Meyirmanov n.d.). In his version, Ratbek Hajji Nısanbayulı, the Mufti of Kazakstan, acquaints his readers (1995:11) with the Arabic term *ġusıl*, the major ablution that is to be performed at least once a week before going to the mosque on Friday. The simplest expression of purity — and the one that distinguishes the Muslim emotionally from the pagan — is the daily habit of "clean living" — not entering upon any important activity of the day without having washed, and washing again when the state of purity is lost. In Kazak *jūınū* means to wash and *shomılū* means to bathe, but washing with an "intention" *(niyet)* in mind is *däret alū*, Muslim washing (Ar. *ṭahāra[t]*; Kz. *däretpen jürū*, to live in a pure state). Similarly, the polite term for urination or defecation is *däret sındırū*, to "break the wash," i.e. to terminate one's condition of ritual cleanness. To expel substances from the body, including spittle, vomit, blood, or semen, or touch unclean things, makes one unclean and must be followed a new act of ablution or *däret*.

In the Shariah the degree of pollution determines the required degree of ablution, but *däret* has become such a common term in Kazak that it suggests both the Islamic minor ablution *(wuḍū)* of splashing water on the hands, face, shoulders, neck and feet, or the complete bath of the major ablution *(ġusıl)*; distinguishing the two in Kazak requires one to use these

unfamiliar Arabic words. Although Islamic tradition prescribes specific washings in relation to the various acts that make one unclean (Denny 1985:99–104), any act of washing, e.g. washing one's hands and face, may be psychologically adequate in the individual case to persuade the conscience that spiritual purity has been restored. Hands are washed before a meal not only for hygenic reasons, but because others will not want to have table fellowship with someone who is unclean.

The body is polluted not only by excretion, but by contact with unbelievers or even Muslims who are "unwashed" *(däretsiz)* (Westermarck 1926: I,229–261). Though I am usually greeted warmly by Muslims, I have on occasion been refused a handshake; one such instance at the Arstan Bab Shrine, where the pilgrim obviously felt he would pollute himself by touching an infidel (or anyone?), was memorable. One Kazak healer said she cannot sit at table with an "unwashed person" *(däretsiz adam)*; she did not mean people who smell but those who are inattentive to purity. Bathing in the early morning is considered essential if sexual intercourse has occurred during the night, lest one go through the day in a state of pollution. Concerned about her single sister's social life, one Kazak woman visits the sister's apartment in the morning, feels her hair, and, if it is wet, suspects that she has been "out" the night before. Thomas (1994:284) reports an essentially identical story from Malaysia, commenting that "a prolonged state of ritual uncleanness following sexual intercourse was more unthinkable than adultery." Tayob explains this phenomenon with the note that "a *hadith* reports that angels do not enter a home in which there is a person who requires a bath after sexual relations" (*OEMIW* 3:371). That Kazaks, like other Muslims, have a rather high sensitivity to the *däret* complex belies

the usual notion that their religiosity is inferior.

In practice the *däret* rules are simplified among the Kazaks to a few occasions during the day that are specified for washing the face and hands: upon rising in the morning, entering a house as a guest, and before and after meals. Failure to wash in this way is considered the stinking habit of the infidel and the unbeliever. Sensitivity to ritual purity explains why Muslims of Central Asia, including the Kazaks, frequently call the Russians infidels (Kz. *käpir*; Ar. *kāfir*). Although Russian Christians are a "people of the Book" and so are Quranically distinguished from the *kafir*, it is inter-ethnic perceptions of the daily and down-to-earth habits, not theological distinctions, that determine where religious lines are drawn.

Kazaks organize life into Muslim and non-Muslim spheres according to the ideal of purity. In the everyday language of Kazaks in Turkistan, homes built of mud-brick are called Muslim houses *(musılmansha üy)* and thought of as clean, but Soviet-style concrete apartment houses *(etazhdı/qabattı üy; dom)* are not. Part of the reason is that the outhouse of the *musılmansha üy* preserves Islamic purity by its distance from the house, but Soviet/Western-style toilets in the *dom* pollute it. Similarly, Kazak is one of the "Muslim languages" *(musılman tilderi)*, and admixtures of Russian words embarass the sense of purity. The Kazak ancestors lived a clean life on the steppe, so they are classified as Muslims, but Kazaks who live like Russians compromise their Muslimness and so become unclean. They themselves may cross the line rather often, even habitually, but when they do, Russian influence is blamed, and the Muslim way is felt to have been sullied. Kazak assimilation of the purity complex is evidence of Islami-zation.

T.E. Lawrence may have loved the Arabian desert "because it is clean," but Kazaks joke that their nomadic forefathers bathed once a year when the rivers were high in the spring. (They also made sweat-lodge yurts similar to those of American Indians.) Even today bathing may be infrequent because facilities in the home are unavailable and trips to the public bath expensive; so the emphasis on daily cleanliness in Kazak culture must not be confused with mere bathing. The "barbarian" nomads became Muslims when they accepted the civilizing influence of Islam, including its citified standards of cleanliness. The contempt Uzbeks sometimes express for Kazaks as an unclean people is characteristic of the attitude of sedentary peoples toward nomads. Where bathing was not possible for the Kazaks or the ritual ablutions unfamiliar, the Muslim custom of washing of hands and face upon rising and before meals, especially when entering a house as a guest, probably emerged in nomadic times as proper behavior associated with Muslim purity. Whenever guests are received, the sons of Kazak and Uzbek families are deployed outside the house with a pitcher of water, a towel, and a basin. The washing is ceremonial but also functional and satisfying after walking down the dusty street of a desert town. Still today in Turkistan most homes do not have running water in the house.

Issues of purity and impurity along the ethnic boundary have a history. Russian soldiers came to Turkistan in 1864, turned the Yasawi Shrine into an armory, and built military barracks and a church next to it. Before the Russians came the other public buildings in Turkistan had been mosques and Islamic schools with running water in the courtyard for the prescribed ablutions. One removed one's shoes before entering any building, public or domestic. Muslims enter a mosque after first covering their

heads and taking off their shoes, whereas Christians take their hats off and walk into church with their shoes on. In this and other ways Russian civilization presented itself to Central Asia in new architectural configurations that were unclean on Muslim terms. Today in Kazakstan's government buildings one walks on rugs with shoes on — an act inconceivable for Muslims until the Russians introduced it.

Soviet Muslims had to find a way to accommodate a public world that was unclean. At work there was no place to pray and, even if places had been provided, there was often no running water in public buildings to do the ablutions. Kielbasa sausage *(kolbasa)*, made of pork, was the everyday meat of the proletariat, and vodka was the drink to wash it down with. Impurity was unavoidable under the system, and guilt feelings produced rationalizations to exculpate those who participated in it. What communism lacked in ritual purity it possessed in humanitarianism *(adamgershilik)* which, the Muslim communists argued, had been derived from Islam! This ingenious construction is frequently heard as an apology for the grand compromise. We heard old Qojas defend Lenin and Stalin as good men who must have been secret believers because their policies reflected the divine morality of the Quran.

The demise of the USSR has withdrawn the moral cover its social and economic ideals provided for feelings of impurity, but purity and impurity remain irreducibly Islamic values in Kazak culture. The strength of the purity complex suggests that Islam and Muslim lifeways cannot have come recently or merely superficially to Kazakstan. It had to have been thoroughly assimilated long before the first culture contact with the Russians. Most importantly, Kazak feelings of impurity are indistinguishable from the

same emotions in other Muslim societies (cf. Munson 1984:43, 47f., 54, 65f., 150).

UPHOLDING THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

When Kazaks lament that their religion is substandard *(nashar)*, they are talking about their minimalist performance of the Five Pillars *(bes irgetas)* of Islam — in Kazak more commonly called the five obligations *(bes parız)*. These are the confession of faith (Ar. *ash-shahāda*; Kz. *Īman keltirū*); the five daily prayers (Ar. *aṣ-ṣalā*; Kz. [from Pers.] *namaz*); the fast (Ar. *aṣ-ṣawm*; Kz. [from Pers.] *oraza*; Uz. *rúza* is also heard in Turkistan); the annual tithe (Ar. *az-zakāt*; Kz. *zeket*); and the pilgrimage to Mecca (Ar. *al-ḥajj*; Kz. *qaj[ı], äji, qajıġa/äjige barū*). When we asked our Kazak informants to list the Five Pillars of Islam for us, only a few could do so, or some would substitute the ability to recite the Quran or various moral obligations, such as honoring one's elders, for one or more of the Five Pillars.

In Muslim societies actual performance of the Five Pillars varies considerably, and exculpatory language is widely shared. Central Asia and the Hanafi school of law were influenced from the beginning by sectarian movements such as the Murji'ah, with the result that ritual observance was often substandard in practice. The profession of faith and allegiance to the community of Islam were the real norms. So it is not surprising that my neighbor, Baqıtbergen, protests that even "a pure Muslim cannot 'walk inside' [fulfill] what is written in the Book" *(taza musılman ol kitapta jazılġandardıng ishinde jüre almaydı)*; to do so, he argued, one would have to think about nothing but God all day and so get nothing done. Kazaks,

moreover, are still influenced by a residue of "scientific atheism" which preached that religious observance diverts people from investing themselves in the building of the communist utopia. For this reason Soviet Muslims tended to accept the argument that "fanatical" (devout) religion gets in the way of work; in 1948 this view was promulgated in a *fatwa* of the USSR's puppet Muslim Directorates that exempted working people from ritual obligations (Ro'i 1995:10). Typical of Kazaks, Baqıtbergen thinks the Muslim life can be rightly lived only by those who "sit [at home] worshiping God from morning to night" *(azannan keshke sheyin . . . Qudaygа sıyınıp otıra beredi)*.

Significantly, religion is here associated with the home (see Chapter 4) and the lifestyle of the elders, but as unmanageable for working people; so among the Kazaks observance of the Five Pillars is not so much neglected as delayed until retirement. Yasawi's retirement to a cave at age 63 may be cited as justification. The Kazak family is proud and happy when the elders practice the Five Pillars vicariously on behalf of everyone. While Kazaks are naïve in espousing this pattern as scripturally acceptable, essentially the same compromise has been negotiated everywhere in the Muslim world (Munson 1984:28,38). Most Muslims no longer live and work in peasant and handicraft economies, where provision for the daily prayers and the fast were more readily made. The Quranic view that the obligations of the Five Pillars are easy, and that time and place can be made for them even by working people, has been overwhelmed by the demand for productivity in modern terms.

More serious is Abay Qunanbaev's attack on the Kazaks as spiritual deceivers who are by nature indifferent to God. In the 1890s Abay wrote

the following words in his *Qara Söz* (Black Words) (1993 [1890–98]:37):

> *Qazaq qulshılığım qudayğa layıqtı bolsa eken dep qam jemeydi. Tek jurt qılğandı qılıp, jığılıp tursa bolğanı. Saũdager nesiyesin jıya kelgende, "Tapqanım osı, bittim dep, alsang — al äytpese sağan bola jerden mal qazamın ba?" deytuğını bolũshı edi ğoy. Quday tağalanı däl sol saũdagerdey qılamın deydi. Tilin jattıqtırıp, dinin tazartıp, oylanıp, üyrenip älek bolmaydı. "Bilgenim osı, endi qartayğanda qaydan üyrene alamın" deydi. . . . Onıng tili özge jurttan bölekshe jaratılıp pa?*
>
> A Kazak does not worry about whether his worship is worthy of God. All he does is imitate, prostrating himself behind the crowd. Like one who is paying off his debt to a trader, he says, "Here's all I can give you, take it or leave it, or am I supposed to produce livestock for you out of thin air?" He thinks he can treat God like that merchant. He takes no trouble to exercise his tongue or clean up his religious behavior, to reflect on life or learn anything. "This is all I know, and how am I supposed to learn anything else now that I am old?" . . . Was his tongue made differently from other people's?

Abay's criticisms of his own people are humbly acknowledged by Kazaks. As the father of modern Kazak literature, he was lionized by the communists as an "enlightener," and his criticism of Kazak religion was then exploited to remind the Kazaks that they never had had the proper spiritual credentials to be good Muslims (Muqanov 1974:45).[1] What the propagandists failed to mention was that Abay and his kinsman, Shäkärim Qudayberdiulı, wanted to reform Kazak Islam, not destroy it, and that both were influenced by Sufi ideas (Mırzahmetov 1996:1–13; 1994:39–92). But it is true that Kazaks in the large crowd that gathers at the mosque on the two big Islamic festivals

---

1. Quotations from Abay on Sufi obscurantism were featured in Soviet-era dictionaries of the Kazak language: "Every fool who claims to have entered a *tariqat* is a dissolute" *(Ärbir nadannıng biz tarīqatqa kirdik dep jürgeni — biz buzıldıq degenimen bir)* (*QTTS* 9:24). Similar attacks on Sufism by the Jadidists (pre-Soviet Muslim reformers) were picked up in Soviet anti-religious propaganda, associating Sufism with the illiteracy and mendicancy of the "mullah fools" *(dümshe molda)*. Similarly, Qoja Nasr (Tk. *Nasreddin Hoca*) stories, traditional across the Middle East and Inner Asia, continued to circulate widely during Soviet times; the legendary teacher's criticism of religious hypocrisy was turned into criticism of religion itself.

each year typically do not know the form of the *namaz* and can only mimick the prostrations silently, unable to pronounce the Arabic words; so the shame Abay intended to produce is still felt by Kazaks today. The shame also indicates that the ideal of religious performance is still felt to be normative.

So we turn now to the Kazak experience of each of the Five Pillars of Islam in turn, beginning with the five daily prayers and leaving the confession of faith till the end.

Namaz oqũ: Reciting the daily prayers. The pure standard of Muslim obedience includes worshiping God with the five daily prayers *(namaz)* and, in the case of men, attending the Friday noon service at the mosque. In Turkistan, there is growing Friday attendance at the main congregational mosque. Old men gather also at small mosques now being built in the neighbhorhoods. The daily *namaz* at the main mosque is attended by several dozen old men, and the Friday *namaz* by hundreds, still mostly old men, more Uzbeks than Kazaks, but including now some of the Kazak students from Yasawi University. In early 1995 a new *imam* was assigned to Turkistan, a young graduate of Mufti Ratbek's Islamic Institute in Almaty, before which a 90-year-old Sunaq mullah, Ablas Abulqayıruli, had served as imam for many years.

The form of the *namaz* is Arabic recitation and prostrations coordinated with it, precisely prescribed and identical across the Muslim world except for minor variations between the legal schools. In pre-modern times when most Muslims lived in peasant and handicraft economies, and when their formal childhood education occurred at the mosque or a *madrasa* (Kz. *medrese*) attached to it, the *namaz* was a coherent and plausible rhythm of

daily life. For nomads it was less urgent, but many Kazak boys were enrolled in *medrese* schools in the nineteenth century: Awezov's life of Abay Qunanbaev (1975) and Abay's references to his own childhood are the classical expression of traditional training for the Muslim life in Kazakstan. There was a *medrese* founded in Turkistan at the beginning of the 19th century that had 30–50 Sart (Uzbek) and "'Kirgiz" (Kazak) students during the visit of Dobrosmyslov (1912:134). Two recent attempts to re-establish an Arabic institute and an Islamic school in Turkistan have not done as well: secular education, one of the genuine accomplishments of Soviet policy, has won the day.

A Kazak village woman visiting the Yasawi Shrine told us that, though in her heart she has made a commitment or "intention" to learn the *namaz,* she does not know how *(namazġa niyet qılġanmenen, shamamız biraz nağımay jatır).* Similarly, Kengesbek said he felt embarassed when he attended the prayers in his village mosque: "We intend to learn to say the *namaz* and really want to pray, but we don't know how. If we knew how, we would do it, but we can't recite the Arabic" *(Namaz oqũġa niyet qılamız da, oqığımız keledi, biraq bilmeymiz de soni . . . Äytpese bilsek oqır edik, arabsha oqıy almaymız).* What is missing for Soviet-era Kazaks, of course, is the enculturative experience of having learned the prayers and the Quran in childhood. One must be a very determined 55-year-old to go to the neighbhorhood mullah and ask him to teach you the *namaz* late in life. Although I know older men and women who have done this, it is far from the norm, and Abay reminds us that even in old age making excuses is easier than learning something new. As the old imam, Ablas, put it, Kazak Islam is "prayerless and illiterate" *(beynamaz, sawatsız).*

To say the *namaz* the Muslim must be able to perform the minor ablution (Ar. *wuḍū, ṭahāra*; Kz. *däret*) and find a clean place to kneel and bow his or her head before God for a few minutes. Nurali Qoja, proud that he managed to say the *namaz* during work hours for 20 years during the Soviet period, described for us how he would sneak off to a friend's house next to his workplace with the connivance of his co-workers, because only there could he find running water for the ablutions and a few moments of freedom to pray. The difficulty of praying at work has not changed substantially in the '90s. Abu Farabi, a Qoja and professional man, told us that he cannot say the *namaz* in his workplace because people drink vodka there and thus make it unclean. Daily life is divided between the work place which is unclean *(taza emes)* and where religious observance is therefore excluded, and the home, a place of purity *(tazalıq)* where the religious life is capable of expression, at least if one lives in a "Muslim house" *(musılmansha üy)*.

The Kazak apology that they do not "have time" for the *namaz* means that they do not know how to organize modern lives to include it. When the old men see the theology students at Yasawi University attending the Friday noon mosque service, they are delighted, because it suggests that the process may be reversable. Still, Amal Qoja laments that there are five Uzbeks for every Kazak at his neighborhood mosque, and that the school-age boys who attend are all Uzbeks. Even Amal Qoja, however, fails to notice what the crosscultural observer picks up right away, that in Turkistan it is the Yasawi Shrine that is called "mosque" *(meshit)* more often than the mosques themselves, so that when someone says, "I am going to the mosque," they mean they are going to visit the saint (see Chapter 5),

not to the Friday prayers. Shame finds an alternate way for the restoration of purity.

Oraza tutũ: Keeping the fast. The annual fast *(oraza)* is the obligation of Islam that arouses the most interest today among the Kazaks. The Muslim fast is — like Christian fasts observed in an earlier era, e.g. Advent and Lent — limited to a short but intense annual season; so it is a duty one may fulfill and then be free of for eleven months of the year. The fast is kept in the daylight hours and becomes a time of feasting and high conviviality in the evenings. It is a mistake to focus only on the physical hardship of fasting; as much as possible fasters sleep all day and party all night. In Kazakstan as elsewhere, the three-day high holiday after the 30-day fast is comparable to Christmas with its focus on visiting family and neighbors and eating well and amply. Fasting thus offers the Muslim community an occasion both for discipline and celebration. For the past few years the month of Ramazan (Ar. *Ramaḍān*) has fallen in the winter, so, in the northern Muslim lands, it has provided a mid-winter relief from cold and dreary evenings, often passed with no electricity and therefore no TV in the post-soviet utilities crisis. All these factors help explain the growing Kazak fascination with the fast.

One Ramazan evening I was invited to a neighborhood meal in the home of a Kazak friend for the purpose of breaking the fast, lit. opening the mouth *(aũız ashar).* As the men gathered around the tablecloth spread with food on a low tea table, the old men who had been fasting that day, including Oshanov, a former communist, checked their watches several times before 7:20 p.m. when sundown would be official. Other, younger men offered me unsolicited apologies that they had not kept the fast that day,

but they waited to drink their first sip of tea with the fast-keepers. When the meal was over, one of the men who knew some brief verses from the Quran recited them, we all received Oshanov's blessing dedicating the meal to the Muslim ancestors, and departed. My wife had been in another room with the women, where the experience was similar, except that the women did not recite the Quran themselves but perked up their ears and listened to the men recite it from the other room. The female mullahs *(otin)* who preserved Islam in Uzbek homes (Fathi 1997) were largely unknown to the Kazaks.

The *aũız ashar* meal of remembrance and recital which all eat together in the evening makes Ramazan a holy month. In some kinship networks, an *aũız ashar* is held every evening during Ramazan at the home of a different member of the family in rotation. Even in households where no one is fasting, the family may hold an *aũız ashar* and invite the neighbors; a family needs only the financial means to put on a big meal for two rooms full of people, one for women and another for men.

Alim Qoja told us that Ramazan is the time of free passage to heaven for the ancestor-spirits, and Sızdıqova (IK) confirmed in her conversation with him that culinary and devotional practices associated with the Kazak ancestor cult (see Chapter 4) are thought of as specially appropriate during the month of fasting:

A: Otız kün orazada segiz peyishting esigi ashıq turadı . . .

IK: Oraza küni ölgen adamnıng joli boladı.

A: Oraza küni jeti tozaqting esigi tars jabıladı. Külli qorımnıng bärinde bostanshıldıq boladı. Suraq-jawap joq, ölgen adamda suraũ bermeydi oraza ayaqtaġansha. Suraũ bermeydi, odan suraũ almaydı Qudayda . . . Bul orazaning qasiyeti. Sol üshin orazada tarapa oqılũ,

kün sayın iyis shıġarıp turũ — vot soning bäri arũaq üshin boladı.

A: During the 30 days of fasting the doors of the eight heavens stand open.

IK: On fasting days the dead get free passage.

A: The seven gates of hell are tightly shut on fasting days. Liberty is proclaimed at all the cemeteries. There is no question and answer, no questions asked of the dead until the fast is over. No one has to give an account before God. This is what's special about the fast. For this purpose the *tarapa* ceremony is held during the fast and the fragrance is emitted; so you see all of it is done for the ancestors.

It is for this reason that a family that has not been able to fit a memorial feast for a recently deceased family member into the Muslim funerary cycle (see Chapter 4) will try to do so during Ramazan (Arġinbaev 1996:122). Amal Qoja told us that there are two times when the ancestors are most profitably remembered: on Thursdays following the death *(peyshenbilik)* and during the fast. So, after the meal on Ramazan evenings a *tarapa* or Quran recital may be held in the home, and it is focused on the passage of the ancestors into heaven. Traditionally the *tarapa* (Ar. *ta'ārafa*, to get acquainted, from *'arifa*, to know) was both a neighborly get-together and an extended, all-night, recital of as much of the Quran as is known by the neighborhood mullahs. It can last, however, only as long as their knowledge lasts; so descriptions we heard indicated that it is abbreviated in Turkistan homes. (An event called *tarapa* or *tarawih* is also celebrated in homes in other parts of the the Muslim world on the ninth day of the *hajj*.) Both Amal Qoja and Nurali Qoja said they had held the *tarapa* in their homes during the last Ramazan. Baqıtbergen said only the old men participate, and young men who are taking Islam seriously *(dinmen jürgen balalar)*. Our reports of *tarapa* ceremonies were associated with Qoja homes.

Where the *tarapa* is not held, a brief recital of a few Quranic verses is attempted by someone at the end of the meal.

The Ramazan dinners and the visiting of family and friends for three days at the end of Ramazan during Id al-Fitr (Kz. *Ayt*) are public events that were difficult to celebrate during Soviet times but were kept alive nonetheless. Oshanov remembers says that only old people went "Ayt-hopping," because it was impossible for people of working age *(qızmet istegende biz ayttamaytınbız)*. As indicated by the wide variety of popular manuals being printed, today again the biggest Muslim festivals of the year are the three-day *Ayt* at the end of Ramazan (Däurenbekov 1993; cf. Saparalı and Däurenbekov 1993) and *Naũrız* (Navruz). Though in Kazakstan these are not a government holidays, they are both very widely observed. *Naũrız* is an annual occasion for organizations and now businesses to entertain guests in yurts set up in the city square. It is often incorrectly called the Muslim Near Year by Kazaks,[1] because anything honorable that has come down to us from our ancestors, and that we share with other Muslim peoples, is *ipso facto* Islamic.

There is a more pervasive attempt to keep the fast — or the appearance of fasting — in other Muslim lands than in Kazakstan (with civil laws against fast-breakers in countries like Malaysia and Pakistan), but increasing participation in the fast among Kazaks is contributing, as Kengesbek told us, to feelings of pride in being a Muslim *(bıyıl orazada*

1. Navruz is the ancient Persian festival of the spring equinox that was taken over by Turko-Persian Islam and is now enjoying a revival all across Central Asia. Early 20th-century articles about Navruz by Kazak literati have been recently reprinted (*TA*, March 22, 1995), and there are several new popular booklets (Qazbekov 1991; Adamov 1993; Estenov 1993; Köpeyulı and Omar Khayyam 1993).

musılmanmın dep sezingen). A new Kazak blessing, "Congratulations on keeping the fast!" *(Oraza tutqanıngız qutti bolsın),* is now heard during Ramazan. Non-fasters who participate in a neighborhood *aũız ashar* may feel drawn to try to observe the fast next year. Always creative minimalists, some try to fast three days at the beginning of Ramazan, three in the middle, and three at the end. The month of Ramazan brings the pure way of Islam into home and neighborhood and sustains it in a celebrative way for 30 days. The collective memory runs in high gear during Ramazan.

Zeket berũ: Annual giving. Among the Kazaks the least strictly observed of the Five Pillars has been the *zeket* (Ar. *zakāt),* a financial obligation collected at the mosque once a year during Ramazan. The suppression of institutional religious life in the Soviet period meant that many Kazaks had never heard of the *zeket;* it was the only one of the Five Pillars of Islam that was actually made illegal by the Soviets (on the grounds that under socialism there were no poor to give it to). Like the system of *waqf* lands and enterprises that supported the Yasawi Shrine, any financial ("exploitative") aspect of religious life was crushed by the communists. Now, however, the Mufti's Office announces on television a set amount which the average family should give to the mosque to fulfill their annual *zeket* obligation; in 1994 it was 90 tenge per family, about US $7.00 (*SK,* February 25, 1994), but in 1997 it came down to 20 tenge per person, about 30 cents, or the equivalent in wheat. Oshanov, however, loves his freedom: "I take to the mosque a per capita amount I decide on myself *(Zeket qazir meshitke adam basına özingiz belgilegen zatı bar, soni aparıp berem).*

Other kinds of charity are more familiar to the Kazaks. They give alms *(sadaqa)* to beggars, and a loan which has not been returned after

three requests is to be declared *sadaqa* by the lender. Some may give a *pitir* (Ar. *zakat al fitr)*, an annual gift to the poor in atonement for failure to keep the fast (Denny 1985:113), as allowed in the Quran (2:184), and in Kazak the term *pitir* is used also for the *zeket* itself. Baqıtbergen and his brothers give the family's *pitir* not to the mosque but to their Qoja in return for service as family chaplain — a patron-client relationship.

Bowen outlines the cultural logic of Muslim charity that is characteristic of the Kazaks also (Bowen and Early 1993:218-221). A Moroccan baker, Abu Illya, gave his *zakat* not to the mosque but to Lalla Fatiha, the widow next door, and had to justify it as something more than kindness to a poor woman:

> "This isn't charity," he retorted. "This is zakat. Our honor is to proffer zakat, her honor is to use the zakat. All is provided by God, not by us. This time we have sufficient for our needs; later it may be Lalla Fatiha's turn to provide for us when her children are educated and work as doctors and engineers, and [my son] and I are worn out from working in the bakery. . . . Lalla Fatiha helps us be better Muslims, and in turn is a good Muslim herself. Isn't this the way Islam is to be lived?

A Kazak (Sunaq) trader I know is a spendthrift and generous with his profits, making loans he cannot hope to recover, to the point of angering his wife. Not unlike Abu Illya in Morocco, this man argues that his wife, who grew up among the Russians, doesn't understand that his Muslim debtors will help their little boy one day when he isn't around to do so.

Resistance to the formal *zeket* obligation is articulated in ways typical of believers everywhere who resent the misuse of their money by religious leaders. A neighbor complained that they had collected money at the mosque during Ramazan but then failed to provide awnings against the rain

for the *namaz* on the first day of the *Ayt* festival. There are persistent rumors going back to pre-Soviet times (Dulatulı 1913; Dobrosmyslov 1912) that the money pilgrims put into the bronze cauldron at the Yasawi Shrine is misused; when we told Oshanov we were studying local religious practices, he suggested a good errand for us would be to investigate where the money goes.

Qajıǧa barũ: Going on the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage to Mecca is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation and is undertaken only after the Muslim has accumulated enough wealth to do so, usually in the mature years. Not being enjoined on the poor, this obligation can easily be relegated easily to the edges of the Muslim life, though the devout person will usually make a vow or "intention" *(niyet)* to perform it. In Muslim shrine cultures, *ziyarat* is an alternative to the *hajj* (see Chapter 5); so Kazaks believe that three visits to Turkistan is equivalent to the hajj. Secular variants are also heard. Jolbarıs Qoja told us that military service in wartime is the equivalent of a hajj, and that a Red Army veteran like him has ten times the merit of a hajji — an innovative Soviet substitution! When this pillar of Islam is set aside by local interpretations, the obligatory has been made optional, but the ideal of the pure way is not denied.

The *hajj* is now possible again, and the Mufti's Office organizes official tour packages each year. A booklet has appeared to prepare Kazaks for the pilgrimage rituals (Lamasharipov 1993). Recently a history of the *hajj* among the Kazaks was published (Isabay and Bayjan-Ata 1996) with appendices listing Kazaks who are known to have made the pilgrimage between 1880 and World War I (when records were kept by Russian officials granting exit permits) and again since 1993.

Iman keltirũ: Confessing the faith. Couples are coached to recite the Shahada, the Islamic confession that there is only One God and Muhammad is his Prophet, by the mullah at the wedding ceremony *(neke qıyar).* I have heard a mullah lecture the new couple that their children will be Muslims; so they must learn to recite the confession lest they be shamed before their children. Still, reciting it once at your wedding with your head bowed for fear of the mullah is not the same as learning it, and many Kazaks cannot "produce the rule of faith" *(Īman keltirũ).* Lubin surveyed several hundred Kazaks and found that two-thirds could not translate the Shahada from Arabic (1995:57). Kengesbek, for example, knew that the first of the Five Pillars is the confession, but he could not recite it and did not know the Arabic word Shahada, calling it simply submitting to God *(Quday moyındaũ).*

The Kazak confession of faith is quintessential religious minimalism. If one knows the duties of the Muslim life, Oshanov said, one must perform them all, but if one does not, it is enough to fullfill the "principal obligation" *(bastı parız)* by repeating the simple confession, "Praise be to God, I am a Muslim" *("Alhamdu lilla musılmanmın").* This is a considerable abbreviation of the Shahada, but it is economical and so easily managed even by the most tongue-tied Kazak. This short confession is so characteristic of the Kazaks that it deserves detailed analysis.

First, Oshanov excuses inadequacy of ritual performance on the grounds of ignorance. There are, as Gellner argues (1981:115ff.), Muslim cultures where people need not just an *alternative* to the perceived spiritual inadequacy of the scholastic and ritualistic life of urban Islam (the usual urban alternative has been Sufism), but a *substitute* for it. Nomadic peoples look for plausible substitutes for the obligations they say they would

fulfill if they could but cannot. This makes them different from antinomian Sufis for whom the Five Pillars of Islam are rejected as unfulfilling, or at least supplemented with ecstatic experience and personal obedience to a living master. (I will discuss again below how "Sufism" fails to provide an adequate framework for understanding Kazak religion.) Within the living memory of people like Oshanov, the Kazaks were forced to make a transition from nomadism to collectivized and antireligious socialism, where "normative Islam" was doubly unavailable to them, but where the minimalist substitutes they had learned in nomadic times in their ignorance of the Five Pillars remained adaptive and adequate. Under severe acculturative pressure, minimalism is a strength.

Secondly, Oshanov does not reject the Five Pillars but asks one of the five to serve in place of the others. The short confession, "Praise be to God, I am a Muslim," is proposed as a substitute for *all five* of the Five Pillars! Sızdıqova espouses this same substitutionary obedience and spent considerable energy in our interviews trying to elicit agreement from Kazak elders and Qojas that confessing her faith without making a commitment to the other four obligations -- at least until she retires -- is an acceptable way for her as a Muslim. Though the Qojas tended to reject her pleas, arguing that a Muslim who does not say the *namaz,* keep the fast, etc., will pay for it at the Last Judgment, there was frequently a concessive tolerance for her views by other Kazaks and sometimes even by the Qojas themselves, after they had dutifully lectured her. Based on her study of European religious history, she sees faith -- and thus the Shahada -- as a substitute for the "works-righteousness" of the Five Pillars. She asked Baqıtbergen and other informants, "Do you believe you are a Muslim because

of your confession that Allah is God and Muhammad is his prophet, or because of your purity *(tazalıq)* and your good works *(is-äreketter)*?" To her consternation Baqıtbergen responded that it is his good works that make him a Muslim *(is-äreketteri jöninen musılmanmın dep sanaymın)*. Common people may plead for concessions only as a practical matter where Oshanaov and Sızdıqova have constructed a theological rationale. This kind of "Islamo-Protestant" adaptation has served as a concession to new Muslim converts in Inner Asia from the earliest times (Rahman 1985:197).

Thirdly, Oshanov's comments reveal that many Kazaks are simply unable to recite the Arabic Shahada. Oshanov reduces the Shahada to an affirmation of Muslim identity: "Praise be to God" *(Al hamdu lillah)*, followed by a Kazak affirmation, "I am a Muslim" *(musılmanmın)*. The Shahada is a rather more substantial statement of doctrine than this Kazak version. Even among the Kazaks it is well known that to be a Muslim one must, at least once in a lifetime and in full possession of one's faculties, recite in Arabic the words, "I confess that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the apostle of God" *(Asshadu al-la ilaha illa Allah; asshadu anna Muhammadan rasulu Allah)*. The Shahada is included in the call to prayer recited from the mosque five times day, but this mnemonic device is available only where there are mosques and minarets covering each neighborhood, and this condition does not obtain in Kazak cities. Even in holy Turkistan the call to prayer from the main mosque is heard in nearby neighborhoods only when the wind is in the right direction. Smaller mosques are now featuring the call to prayer, but it is notable how low the volume is, compared to the loud-speakers on minarets in Muslim cities elsewhere. Soviet Muslims were largely unexposed to the Shahada.

The expression *Al hamdu lillah musılmanmın* (Praise God I am a Muslim) is heard also in daily conversation, usually as an expression of ethnic identification with Islam in oppositional contexts. But Kazaks, even when they do not know the Arabic Shahada, can state its contents in their own language in various ways. They know that "our religion is Islam, our God is Allah, our Prophet is Muhammad," etc. *(dinimiz islam, Qudayımız Alla, payġambarımız Muḥammad)*, which affirms the same articles of faith.

The Five Pillars in old age. Delaying into old age the observance of three of the five obligations of Islam -- the fast, the five daily prayers, and especially the pilgrimage -- is common in the Muslim world (e.g. Munson 1984:124). The ritual laxity of youth is addressed with the "intention" *(niyet)* to do better in old age.

I have noted above that the family and neighborhood visits after Ramazan had to be done primarily by retired persons during Soviet times. Kazaks express pride in their parents and grandparents who sustained the pure way of Islam and thus "beat the system" on their behalf. Three Kazak families -- none of them Qojas -- provide examples. Oshanov, now in his 70s, has never been inside a mosque, says he has no recollection of hearing the call to prayer from a mosque in his childhood village, but remembers that his grandmother said the *namaz*. Kengesbek, now in his 50s, remembers that both his parents said the *namaz* and that his father, who was born in 1900, had studied the Quran at the mosque. Baqıtbergen, in his 40s, remembers that both his father and mother prayed the *namaz* their whole life and his father kept the fast. There was no mosque in their village; so people learned the *namaz* from the Qojas. When his father's friends came to their house to say the *namaz,* his mother would stand guard

outside and watch the road. None of these three men himself says the *namaz* today, and only Oshanov had said he kept the fast during the last Ramazan. Only one of the three men has ever been inside a mosque, but all three would say with Baqıtbergen, "I believe, and my religion is the Muslim religion" *(Senemin, dinim musılman dini)*.

"Setting out on the way of God" *(quday jolına tüsũ)* is the fulfillment of an "intention" *(niyet)* — or sometimes a conversion experience in a dream — entered into in middle-age or later. Old men in retirement spend much of their time visiting in each other's homes, where the Quran recited before anyone gets up from the tea table. There is thus social inducement in the pensioner's lifestyle to learn to recite at least a verse or two of the Quran and even the full text of the *namaz*, or, if the formulas were learned in childhood, to recapture the memory. To do so produces honor and admiration in Kazak homes. Not many learn enough verses to be called a Quran "reader" *(qarı)* who is asked to recite long sections of the Quran on high occasions, but the ability to recite a verse or two in Arabic before pronouncing a blessing in Kazak at the end of a meal is fairly common among the Kazak elders and widespread among the Qojas.

For children, youth and young families, the Muslim life consists in an apprecation of the pure way of Islam as practiced by the grandparents, and the whole family understands itself in relation to their devotion. Kazaks believe that honoring the elders is an attribute *(qasiyet)* of the Kazak "ethnic character" *(ulttıq sana)*; to honor one's parents and ancestors is to honor the Muslim way of life as they have understood and practiced it. There is, of course, a tendency to idealize the faithfulness of one's parents. In any Muslim society, declining health is an acceptable reason to

abandon the prayers, the fast, and mosque attendance. Old age can defeat the best intentions, but the elders are viewed as models of faithfulness nevertheless. A praying mother back home is reassurance for a son or daughter who has united with the workers of the world.

OBSERVING THE ISLAMIC RITES OF PASSAGE

In anthropology it has been conventional wisdom that life-cycle rituals are primary evidence of the sociopsychological or socioeconomic functions of religion (van Gennep 1960 [1909]). Often it is argued that marginally Muslim or tribal nomadic societies will observe Islamic life-cycle rituals cycle even when they avoid the Five Pillars of Islam that are normative in urban Muslim contexts (e.g. Chylinski 1991; Shalinsky 1990). The Kazaks, however, show the same ambivalence and creative adaptations in observing the Islamic life cycle rituals as they do in relation to the Five Pillars. Ambivalence does not suggest non-salience, however; both the Five Pillars and the Islamic rites of passage are honored indistinguishably as constituent elements of the pure way of Islam.

Azan shaqırũ: Childhood rites. Muslim life is ritually elaborate, covering all the significant movements of life. The naming of children is called *azan shaqırũ* in Kazak, which means calling the *adhan* (Kz. *azan*, call to prayer) in the ear of the newborn child. The naming ceremony and the call to prayer have the same name, because the naming ceremony is the first summons to the life of faithfulness the Muslim child hears. Among the Kazaks the naming rite is performed sporadically. As a communist Oshanov did not do it when his children were born, but he knows that his mother

named his children in this way without his notice. Baqıtbergen says he himself was named by *azan shaqırũ*, but he neglected to name his own children in this way. An older relative can usually be found who knows the words to say, and because no Kazak family would resist it, many more children will now be named by *azan shaqırũ* than in the past 70 years.

Kazak custom also features a series of infancy and motherhood rites that are shared in common with other Muslim peoples of Central Asia and were taken up into the Muslim life cycle from traditional culture (Kenjeahmetov 1994: Qalīev et al. 1994). Neighborhood women gather for a party in the home of a pregnant woman *(qursaq shashũ)*. A newborn is ceremonially presented to the paternal grandmother in a cradle ceremony *(besik toy)* that features the censing of the cradle with wild rue *(adıraspan)* and attaching Quranic amulets *(tumar)* against evil spirits. According to tradition the first child is given to the grandparents to raise, and this still occurs ceremonially at the *besik toy*. Reflecting the Kazak tradition of animal husbandry, a toddler's first steps are celebrated at a party with a cutting of a ceremonial hobble around the child's ankles *(tusaũ keser)*. Men either do not attend these ceremonies or are on-lookers from another room.

Sündet kestirũ: Circumcising a boy. It is proverbial wisdom that a Muslim father's three duties are to name his son, circumcise him, and find him a wife. In Chapter 2 I described circumcision as an ethnic marker and showed that is almost as universally practiced among the Kazaks as among other Muslim peoples. Printed notices are distributed by the family, saying, "We invite you to our circumcision party / Our boy has become a Muslim" *(Qurmetpen sündet toyġa shaqıramız / Musılman boldı mine mening ulım)*. Families may display their wealth by making the party last two or three

days. The circumcision is usually done well before the feast, so that the boy, having healed, may participate.

It is, however, a party for adults (Saparalı et al. 1993:47-77; Medeübekulı 1992). After an evening Quran recital separate parties may be held for men and women the next day, though these are often combined by modernizing Kazaks. There is much dancing and bestowing of gifts of money and candy on the boy, who rides on the shoulders of one of his uncles; he is then seated on a horse that has been grazed in front of the home, covered with a ceremonial rug as an announcement that a boy in the family has been circumcised. Vodka for the men and cognac for the women is consumed in abundance, after the mullahs and old men have dutifully departed.

The circumcision may be done surgically by a doctor at a clinic or by a traditional Muslim "cutter" *([sündet] kestirũshi)* at home. There are only two of these in Turkistan today. One is a well-known local barber, Muhammadrayim Qoja. (Skill with a razor makes the town barber an obvious functional choice as circumciser.) Muhammadrayim says his son is only now learning the art, not yet well enough to take over for him, and fears that Turkistan will end up like neighboring Kentau where all the boys are circumcised surgically in the hospital.

Neke qıyar: The marriage ceremony. The family of a Muslim bride and groom have the couple "'cut' the marriage-covenant with a mullah and drink the water" *(moldamenen neke qıyġızıp sũ ishkizedi).* The virilocal rite is called *neke qıyar* (Ar. *nikāh*; Kazak *qıyũ*, to make a covenant). Traditional Kazak weddings are a complex of events that take several weeks or months of interaction between the couple and the two families; so the

neke qıyar, which takes about a half an hour, is only one small part of a larger marriage event (Shınggıs Qajı 1996; Arġinbaev 1996:124–202; Saparalı et al. 1993:205–285). It takes place on the day when the bride is presented to the groom's family in a festive ceremony called the *bet ashar* or "revealing of the face." Standing at the front of the crowd, the bride bows and nods from behind a brightly colored veil to greet each member of her husband's family, who are summoned by the *dombra* player's improvised song to come forward and make a monetary gift. After many verses, much laughter and many gifts — used by the family to defray the cost of the wedding — the veil is lifted, the bride receives a kiss from her mother-in-law, who puts on her a white scarf symbolizing her married status, and she is thus welcomed to her husband's family. The *bet ashar* is sometimes said to be an old Kazak ceremony, but the veiling of the bride points to Islamic influence. This is the only use of the veil in traditional Kazak culture; only in 1998, after we had been six years in Turkistan, did a few young women appear veiled on the streets of Turkistan, a striking statement against the norm of fashionable modern dress.

Several hours later, when the guests have been fed, the mullah arrives for the *neke qıyar* ceremony, the specifically Islamic event of the day. Whereas the Kazak *betashar* will normally be performed outside the house in the courtyard with the gate open, the *neke* is performed inside the house with only close relatives present. Traditionally attendance was restricted due to fear of the evil eye, but in the USSR it was also dangerous for the mullah and the family to be caught performing a Muslim ceremony. A communist family described for me how they would sneak the mullah in the house after dark. The mullah sits facing the couple who are

also seated. He briefly recites verses from the Quran *(quran oqıtū)* and asks the couple to confess the faith of Islam (see above). He puts two coins in a bowl of water and passes it to the couple and then the witnesses, who all drink from it *(sū ishkizū)*. The mullah preaches to the new couple briefly on their impending roles a Muslim parents and gives them his blessing *(bata)*.

All Soviet couples had to appear at the city administration to register the marriage.[1] (This is not done, however, in cases of polygamy, which is illegal but common in villages, less so in Turkistan.) Called *zags* in Russian, this event features a procession of cars bedecked with ribbons which stop at the registry, then at scenic locations for photos (in Turkistan always including the Yasawi Shrine), and finally at a party for the young people only, often at a restaurant with much champagne and vodka laid up for the occasion. In the Soviet period it was possible to skip the *neke qıyar* and even the *betashar* and simply perform the *zags*, but Baqıtbergen insists that in Turkistan such neglect of the Kazak and Islamic ceremonies has always been unusual. "First we 'cut' the *neke*," he says of his own marriage, "and then went to the *zags*." Oshanov, trying to be less communist and more Muslim these days, feels that the *zags* is enough to make a marriage, but he will have a mullah come for the *neke qıyar* when his last daughter is married.

Janaza shıġarū: The burial of the dead. Mekemtas Mırzaḥmetov, a prominent Kazak scholar and national laureate for his works on Kazak

---

1. I have not observed the signing of the marriage contract in the Muslim *neke qıyar* ceremony, as is required in other Muslim societies.

literature and *Abaytanū* (the study of Abay Qunanbaev), told me within a few weeks of my arrival in Turkistan that the only part of the Shariah Law the Kazaks observe strictly is the burial of the dead *(janaza)*. Not to receive a proper burial is more unthinkable than lapses of obedience or ritual purity during this life. The Quran is a book of judgment and reward for the dead, and the law it prescribes for this life is eschatologically motivated. Muslim tradition prescribes how the body is to be prepared for burial, who is to do it, when the burial is to be done, how the grave is to be dug, and which verses of the Quran are to be recited. These verses are now available in Cyrillic script to help mullahs memorize them (Öseruli 1992, 1997b; Soymen 1991). Everywhere in the Muslim world, Muslim, Christian and Jewish cemeteries are separate. Interment in the burial grounds of one's people was maintained as an uninterrupted tradition in Turkistan and virtually all Kazak towns and villages.[1]

The Muslim funeral was a target of Soviet antireligious policy and at various times was forbidden in Turkistan as elsewhere. Workers were fired from their jobs for burying members of the family according to the Shariah. It often had to be performed secretly at night, but, because it requires a procession to the cemetery, people could be caught and punished at the very time they were grieving the loss of a family member. Enforcement depended, of course, on the whims of local officials. People were harshly

---

1. In the village of ShäQildir there is a Muslim cemetery where Christians are buried alongside Muslims — an exceptional case. An enclave of Russian railroad workers and farmers live there. I was told that the Russians asked for permission to bury their dead in the Muslim cemetery and sacrificed an animal at the site to make the cooperation acceptable to the Kazaks. Not far from the ruins of Otrar, the cemetery is on top the unexcavated mound of another medieval town.

critical of Kazak communist dignitaries who refused permission for the dead to be buried with religious dignity. The Kazak communists are more likely to be reviled as *mänggürt* (a term of high contempt meaning a brainwashed slave) for this reason than any other, except perhaps for their use of the Russian language instead of Kazak. One man told us that, when he joined the Communist Party, he secured his father's approval only by promising to give the old man a Muslim funeral. Bribes were paid to induce officials and employers to overlook a funeral.

The burial of the Muslim dead is related to the culture of the shrines, which are burial places themselves (Chapter 5). Memorial meals and Quran recitals (Chapter 4) are also part of the Muslim funeral tradition; so the above is a brief introduction to a broader topic to be covered in the next chapters. Now we turn to one last aspect of Muslim ritual, the most basic of all.

Sālem qılũ: The daily greeting. Everyday greetings exceed the periodic rites of passage in frequency and ease of performance. One must say hello to many people every day, and how one does it may be a symbolic and often a religious act (Firth 1973:299ff.). Among the Kazaks, men shake hands with men and women with women — women with men only in professional contexts where the woman offers her hand. Shaking hands is called *amandasũ*, lit. to pledge mutual well-being. The handshake is a Russian one when it is followed by a single kiss on the cheek — again, men with men and women with men. Kazaks men may also greet each other in Muslim fashion, which is called *sälem qılũ* or *sälemdesũ*, both Kazak uses of the Arabic noun, *salām* (peace, serenity). It may include an embrace and a kiss on *both* cheeks, but at least a handshake and the exchange of the Arabic

words, *As-salām ʿalaykum* (Peace be with you), and the inverted response, *ʿAlaykum as-salām*, by the person replying. This is taught to Kazak boys as the proper way to greet an older person; Oshanov called it "the elder's glory" *(ülken adamnıng izettiligi).* A man entering a room utters the *salam* after stepping across the threshold and is so greeted in return. Pilgrims visiting a shrine may say the *salam* to the saint buried there.

Even a less flowery hello requires an Islamic vocabulary. *"Sälemet siz be"* is the common hello in Kazak. Grammatically it is a question meaning, "Are you at peace?" and the answer is another kazakified Arabic word, *"Raḥmet"*, meaning thank you (lit. mercy). Kazak has no other vocabulary for hello and thank you. When Kazaks say hello to each other, they ask each other whether they are in possession of the Muslim experience of *salam*, and the response is to express thanks for the mercy of God. Combining the Arabic word for thanks and the Persian word for God, one may respond alternatively with the Kazak expression, *"Qudayġa shükir"* (Thanks be to God).

These everyday greetings suggest that, by the time their language a form strong enough to persist to the present, the Kazaks had already assumed a Muslim identity and self-concept. Except for the fact that Kazak retains no archaic lexicon of non-Islamic forms of greeting, it might be argued that contemporary practice reflects a recent adaptation, but the evidence as it is suggests deep roots for today's Islamic greetings. When Kazaks were still Qipchaq tribes in the Golden Horde, even before the time of a definite Kazak ethnogenesis, acculturation to Muslim lifeways had already begun, and the common Kazak hello became an encounter between Muslims. In the very first words Kazaks speak to each other each day, they

preserve a collective memory of the way of Islam.

Reprise: Two Shariahs?. In her study of Uzbek life in Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion, Shalinsky (1990) showed that the Islamic rites of passage are as important to Muslims as the Five Pillars of Islam. She calls these two faces of the Muslim life "Shariah A" (the law of Islam strictly interpreted) and "Shariah B" (ritual and moral norms of the community, with specifics defined locally). To call both of them "Shariah" assumes more elasticity in the concept than Muslim theologians would grant, but it rightly suggests that the moral norms of family and community have a social force that subsumes even non-believers in the sphere of religious law (Rakowska-Harmstone 1983:46; Saidbaev 1978). Both the Shariah and local religious norms are perceived by the Kazaks as aspects of the "straight path" and the pure way of Islam.

THE QOJAS: GUARDIANS OF THE *TAZA JOL*

Qoja is one of several religious titles used by Kazaks which are consistent with those used elsewhere in the Muslim world. A council of religious scholars is called *ġulama* (sing. *ġalım,* Ar. sing. *ʿālim,* pl. *ʿulamā*), which in Kazak may be used also for secular scholars. Kazaks confer the title *molda* (also *domla; damolla*; Pers. *mulla*; Ar. *mawlā,* master of religious science) on any elder who has learned to recite the Quran, who may be more properly called *qarı* (Ar. *qāriʾ*; *qirāʾah*, to recite, from which also the word Quran, The Recital, derives). The prayer leader at the mosque is called the *īmam,* as in Arabic, and the title *īmam-molda* is given to a mullah who serves his neighborhood as a shepherd of souls and leads groups of men in saying the

prayers. Any of these titles may be confered on a Qoja, who is considered well suited for any of them. In Islam there is no hierarchy of religious titles, but in Turkistan persons of Qoja "blood" are thought to have privileged access to sacred knowledge — a conception which has begun to change only in the 1990s as young Kazaks trained in Islamic studies begin to demonstrate levels of learning and ritual performance that rival or outclass the Qojas. In Chapter 2 the ethnic status of the Qojas has been noted; we turn now to their traditional and present-day role in the religious life of Turkistan.

Qoja (Pers. *khoja; khawāja*) is the usual Kazak term for the Arabic titles *sayyid* and *sharīf*, used in Central Asia to represent various religious identities, especially the descendents of Muhammad through Ali, his nephew and son-in-law, husband of his daughter, Fatima.[1] For this reason the Qojas are idealized as Arabs in Central Asian cultures, and this Arab status makes the Qojas icons of the purity of Islam. The Qojas are Ali's apostles to the Kazaks. The relationship of Turkistan's Qojas with the Naqshbandi Sufi movement is uncertain. The Naqshbandi Sufis absorbed the Yasawiyya after the 18th century and claimed the eponym *khojagān* for themselves, but among the Kazaks the title Qoja probably has more prosaic roots; as noted

---

1. The Kazak understanding of Qoja descent differs from a more multivalent conception of the titles in other parts of Central Asia, where the Qojas are descendents of the first three caliphs, not of Ali, whose descendents are given the Arabic title, *sayyid*, to distinguish them from Qojas. The complexity of six religious honor groups *(öwlät)* among the Turkmen, where Qojas are only one of the six, is unknown among the Kazaks (cf. Tyson 1997:17). There is a further genealogical problem that some Qoja lineages, including Ahmet Yasawi's, indicate descent from Ali by *"al-Hanafiah"* (the Hanafia woman), instead of by Fatima, Muhammad's daughter. This is a fine point that tends to get obscured by popular reverence for Fatima as the patron-saint of Muslim women and protector of mothers in childbirth. Cf. *OEMIW* 4:11-12 (Jafri); 4:50 (Antoon and Haddad).

in Chapter 2, the title was assumed by local families as a way of claiming their bloodlines from Sufi *shaykhs*, notably Ahmet Yasawi, who had themselves been called Qoja.

Traditionally the Qojas were patrons of Kazak clients who would retain them for religious services. In Iraq, similarly, the *sayyids* live among the Arab tribes "in a sort of *noblesse oblige* relationship" (Fernea 1965:40). Among the Kazaks the pattern persists today in more modest ways. Baqıtbergen's Kazak family has a special relationship with a family of Qojas, who he says are God's representatives on earth (Kz. *ökil* or *wäkil*; Ar. *vakīl*). His grandfather, a rich man who lived in the desert across the Syr Darya from Turkistan, was a client of the Polat Qojas who, he said, had come from Kazan or Ufa, the Volga cities of the Tatars and Bashkurts. Polat Qoja's descendent, Äsen Qoja, lived in Turkistan and was still considered the family's personal Qoja until his death in 1997; they called him "our Qoja" *(özimizding qojamız)* and "our master" *(pirimiz)*, the latter from the vocabulary of Sufism (see below). Asen Qoja traveled for a living "doing Qoja-ness" *(qojalıq qıladı)*; he was, in other words, an itinerant Quran reciter, maker of amulets, healer and sayer of blessings. Baqıtbergen's family had recently collected their *pitir* (see *zeket* above) and given it to Asen Qoja at the *Naurız* festival. In attenuated form this is the "*wali*-complex" of Muslim life which Reeves has studied in Egypt (1990; cf., for India, Troll 1989; for Morocco, Eickelman 1976). A Qoja may have a circle of devotés who visit him for blessings *(bata)*, amulets *(tumar)*, and healing *(em)*. Baqıtbergen seldom visits the Yasawi Shrine and is lax about attending the mosque even once a year during the festival, but his "Muslimness" *(musılmanshılıq)* is reinforced strongly by his access to a Qoja mentor.

The Qojas provide the Kazaks with a living explanation of the origins of Islam among them. And Qoja status in Kazak society both exonerates the Kazaks from their ritual laxity and encourages them to do better. Although the Qojas exemplify the pure way of Islam, they are also implicated in the entire complex of Kazak religious attitudes and behaviors, including the way of the ancestors (Chapter 4) and saints (Chapter 5), and in the healing cult (Chapter 6). The Kazaks praise the Qojas as exemplary Muslims not only because the Qojas are felt to observe the *taza jol* better than others, but because they do so in a way that is compatible with Kazak "Muslimness." According to the Kazak logic, the Qojas came from Arabia and therefore know their Arabic better than we ever will, because it's in their blood. So we may let them be the ones who keep it alive; when we need it, we can learn it from them, or just call on them to recite it for us. It's only natural that they say the *namaz* and keep the fast better than we do.

The Qojas of Turkistan today have little active leadership role in relation to the Yasawi Shrine, which is a national museum run by a government-appointed director. One of the Qojas who works for the museum, Muzaffar Shalapov, hosts groups of pilgrims for Quran recitals under the main dome next to the bronze cauldron. As we have seen in Chapter 2, three of Turkistan's Qoja clans claim to be descendents of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi *(Yasawīding urpaġı, äūleti)* and were associated with its administration before the Soviet era.

The time of origins *in illo tempore* is always an age of miracles. Among the Kazaks the Qojas represent the "special qualities" *(qasiyet; bereke)* of the time when the Arabs first came to Central Asia (Gibb 1928). Nurali Qoja's father had such miraculous powers. When he was imprisoned

by the communists, he caused the gates of the prison to open. And one time during a drought he called for a cup of water, covered his head a white scarf *(oramal)*, said a prayer *(dũġa oqũ)*, and made rain fall *(jaũın jaũdırũ)* on the single village that had asked for his services, but nowhere else. Nurali said that his mother was a witness of this event, but he laughed and said he had never learned to make rain himself. Rainmaking is especially associated with the Sufi saints and their shrines (Westermarck 1926: II, 256ff., 263ff.), though it is nearly universal magical practice and was well-known among shamans in Inner Asia (Golden 1990b:16).

True Qojas *(naġız qoja)*, Alim Qoja said, will not go blind or bald in old age, because their *qasiyet* makes them different, but today's Qojas are "impure" *(taza emes)* and do not measure up to the historic ideal. Qojas may accept this criticism with humility, confessing that they know their Arabic poorly and keep the Five Pillars weakly, and that their children are corrupted or russified. Even Qoja descent may be called into question. Nurali admits that there are many false genealogies around, though he believes implicitly in his own. Books, manuscripts and old notebooks written in Arabic or Arabic-scripted Kazak, left behind by Qoja ancestors and hidden away during Soviet times, are viewed as a spiritual legacy; indeed, one of the motivations for old men now learning Arabic from one another is to be able to read their genealogies.

Soviet criticisms of religious authority have had a wide and enduring effect. Sızdıqova chuckled doubtfully when Jolbarıs Qoja said that Kazaks are the Qojas' "moustache" *(murtı)* and servants *(qızmetshisi)*, but she did not dispute his claim that Kazaks are Muslims on account of the Qojas *(solardıng esebinen bular musılman bolıp otır)*. Historically the social status

of the Qojas is to be explained by their control of the shrine centers, where they were spiritual heirs of the Sufi masters. Some were dispersed among the nomadic hordes, and others lived in towns like Turkistan, supported by patron-client bonds between Qoja families and Kazak clans. As patrons of Kazak clients, some Qojas collected large herds and lands themselves and were subject to expropriation at the time of collectivization.

Oshanov, still a Muslim communist, argued with us that the Qojas are superior to no one and that everyone should be judged on character *(minez-qulıq)* and ethnic feeling *(ulttıq sana-sezim)*, not on their bloodline or religious authority. Any special respect shown to the Qojas — giving them places of honor *(tör)* at the table, slaughtering a sheep when they come to visit, showering them with them gifts, being careful never to "have words" with a Qoja, etc. — is nothing more than respect for elders, he insists. Such views are survivals of Soviet egalitarianism, but not all Kazaks are so brave. Jamal, the widow of a Soviet army officer, tells her daughter, Mira, not to argue with her Qoja husband. Mira laughs and says if she listened to her mother she would have to sleep at her husband's feet.

Though now for the first time in Turkistan there are Kazak students of religion learning the Quran and Islamic history at a university, the Qojas are the traditional repository of religious knowledge. Amal Qoja recited for us at length the story of Abraham as the background of the practice of sacrifice on Id al-Adha. He did it in rapid narrative form, as though he had so frequently recited it that he could hardly wait to finish one part of the story to get onto the next. Such material is shared and discussed after the prayers at the mosque, or around the dinner table at home, or among

groups of old men who gather for tea in the evening, or for clients who come to the Qojas for blessing and healing. That Turkistan's Qojas no longer figure as *shaykhs* at the Yasawi Shrine means that their religious function has become non-institutional and informal, but there are still Kazaks who say they have a Qoja *pir* (master). They neighborhood *Īmam-moldas* are mostly Qojas.

Islam has persisted among the Kazaks because both holy places and holy people have survived to remind them of it. The collective memory works through its architectural monuments and its living memorials. The survival of the Qojas is also an impressive testimony to perseverance under trial. Fragments of family lore we have collected suggests that their survival through Stalin's purges and the several phases of the Soviet anti-religious campaign (*OEMIW* 2:273 [Wimbush]) is an important story yet to be told. They remain as guardians of the *taza jol* and mediators of the relationship between the Kazak ancestors (Chapter 4) and the Muslim saints (Chapter 5).

THE LEGACY OF THE LOCAL SUFI TRADITION

One of the men who sits at the Yasawi Shrine, reciting the Quran and saying blessings over pilgrims, introduced himself to us as a Sufi: "God willing I am a Sufi of the Eminent Sultan [Ahmet Yasawi]" *(Äziret Sultannıng sopısı bolamın, Quday qalasa)*. Kazaks call any one who can recite the Quran a mullah, so when this man -- I will call him Sufi Timur -- rejects this title and calls himself a *sopı*, he feels the title *molda* is too common and Sufi more honorable. But do Kazaks still have Sufis? Sufi Timur notwith-

standing, the answer is no, but with a caveat that must now be explored.

Sufism has captivated the West, where it is romanticized as a grass-roots movement of spiritually esoteric and quixotically antinomian Muslims (e.g. Shushud 1983; Shah 1969). In Turkish and Western literature, Turkistan has been described as the homeland of the Yasawi Sufi movement (Köprülü 1918; Trimingham 1971; Mélikoff 1987; Yuvalı 1993; Seker and Yılmaz 1996). While widely believed both in Turkistan and Turkey, the evidence that the Yasawian Sufis bequeathed a Central Asian shamanic character on Anatolian Sufism (Köprülü 1918:133) has now been convincingly challenged (Karamustafa 1994; DeWeese 1997b,c, 1998). Today, in any case, the "*tariqa* complex" of Sufi brotherhoods is not known in Turkistan, and the "*wali* complex" of patron-client relationships between devotés and Sufi *pirs*, the heirs of the saints, is only weakly felt in relationships between a few Kazak families and "their Qoja." The more obvious legacy of Sufism is the Kazak pilgrimage cult, but this is a separate "complex" (see Chapter 5).

Sufi Timur is a self-appointed watchman *(qarawıl)* of the Yasawi Shrine, but he has no official role, and we were chastised by the director of the Yasawi Museum for talking with someone so disreputable and deranged. He cannot be dismissed so easily, however, because he articulates one of the few local understandings of the Muslim life under the heading of "Sufi" that survived the Soviet experience. Far from embodying a revival of a classical tradition, however, Sufi Timur is an idiosyncratic survival of a dormant Sufism only vaguely remembered. Similarly, a healer in Shymkent, Arḫat Anūr, advertises himself as a Sufi (*AS*, September 4, 1997). A truncated Sufi spirituality endured in small pockets well into the Soviet period, and in isolated individuals to the present day. It is the memories of Sufism

in Turkistan that must now be explored.

Memories of Sufism (Azan). Sufi Timur describes his basic service as reciting the call to prayer *(azan*; Ar. *adhān)* from the grounds of the shrine and singing a song of his own composition in praise of God. He believes that his words are drawn up into the air so all of Turkistan can hear. When asked what other qualities a Sufi must have, he could say nothing except that a Sufi must live clean *(taza)*:

> *T: Taza jürũ kerek, taza turũ kerek, ösek aytpaũ kerek, bireũding sırtınan ġaybat söz aytpaũ kerek. Basın kesse de tũra aytũ kerek.*
>
> T: You must "walk clean" and wash in the morning, not spread rumors, not slander anyone behind their back, and tell the truth even if they cut off your head.

Sufi Timur associates the Sufi with the mosque tradition: "To be a Sufi is to be a *muezzin*" *(sopı degen azanshı degen)*, he says; and with the *ziyarat* tradition of devotion to Islamic holy places (see Chapter 5). As a public museum, the Yasawi Shrine provides him with a place where he can recite the call to prayer without permission from the imam or elders at the mosque. Although he is a quixotic figure, Jolbarıs Qoja independently confirmed his understanding. A Sufi, he said, was a servant of the *domla* (imam) at the mosque who might be asked to recite the call to prayer in place of the imam, or heat his ritual bath water *(däret sũı)*. Amal Qoja also said that a *sopı* is a muezzin *(nuqıl azan)* who calls the people to prayer and confirmed that Islamic culture generates fellow travelers in the leadership entourage who perform humble duties for the merit of it *(onıng sawabı özine tiyedi)*. Nurali Qoja said the *sopı* is someone who is faithful to say the five daily prayers.

These statements show how the concept of the Sufi evolved locally during the Soviet period. Just as the Sufi disciple *(murid)* owed his master *(shaykh; pir)* the obedience of a slave, so the *sopı* of Turkistan became the servant of the imam at the mosque. Sufism was identified with the mosque tradition of the pure way of Islam, not primarily with esoteric doctrine or practice. Sufi Timur has internalized the experience of the Sufi adept without benefit of a Sufi brotherhood, master, or doctrine, which were largely lost to the active memory of Turkistan during the Soviet period.[1]

Today the term *sopı* usually produces a blank stare from Kazaks. Among our former communist informants, Kengesbek has heard the word as a title at the end of a man's name but does not know what it means. Omar Qoja says he has never met a *sopı* and admits he does not know what the word means. None of the Qojas we interviewed connected the term *sopı* with their Qoja heritage in general or with the Nashbandi or Yasawi traditions in particular. Oshanov reflected a moralistic understanding of the term when he said a Sufi cares for the people, gives no offense, and is "a clean kind of mullah who lives by one truth, the Muslim truth" *(sopı moldanıng bir tazasın aytū kerek, bir shındıqpenen jüretin adam, musılmandıq shındıqpenen)*. In Turkistan a few people retain a memory of the Sufis and their rituals, but the context of the memory is not "Sufism." For Sufi

---

1. Baqıtbergen defined *sopı* as a wandering mendicant, for which Kazak also preserves a Persian word, *dīwana*. Such a person "has no relationships with people and keeps to himself, doesn't recite the *namaz* and doesn't live like other people do" *(eshkimge qarım-qatınası joq, özimen özi eshnärsege aralaspaytın, namaz oqımaytın, jurttıng istegenin istemegen adamdı sopı deym men)*. Whether ascetic mendicancy was still characteristic of a Yasawian movement around Turkistan in recent times, as Kishibekov claims (in Yuvalı et al., 1993:247), is uncertain, and Baqıtbergen was alone among our informants in displaying familiarity with the antinomian character of one strain of the Sufi tradition.

Timur the Sufi way has been reduced to a self-portrait.

Memories of Sufism (Zikir). Sufi ritual is epitomized by the *dhikr* (Kz. *zikir*), a chanting of Quranic formulas in praise of God, sometimes accompanied by dance, hyperventilation, and ecstasy. The Yasawian vocal form of the *zikir* became popular in Central Asia, because of the ecstatic hyperventilation it induces. It was taken over by the Naqshbandiyya by the 18th century (DeWeese 1996a:200,206) and was practiced in Turkistan into the 20th century. Most Kazaks today, however, associate the term *zikir* with the ecstastic performance of the Kazak shaman (see Chapter 6), a confusion which derived from the appropriation of Islamic terminology by the shamans (see Chapter 6), and by the suppression of public Sufi ceremonies by the Soviets.

Gordlevsky (1932) described the Sufi *zikir* he witnessed at the Yasawi Shrine during his visit to Turkistan in 1929. Also around 1930 our informant Amal Qoja attended a ceremony at the Yasawi Shrine with his father (though he remembers only that it included the *namaz*). More substantial was the memory of Alim Qoja, who was born around 1922 and remembers that the *zikir* was regularly held at the Yasawi Shrine in his youth:

> *A: Zikir jaqsı zat qoy, Äziret Sultanda bolġan zikir. Zikir degen tek qudaydıng zikirin salıp otırasıng. Qudaydı aũzınga alıp, la ilaha illa alla dep, zikir aytıp otıramız. . . . Allanı zikir qıp, aũzıngnan tastama deydi, bizding Shariyatta.*
>
> A: *Zikir* is a good thing; they used to do it at Hazret Sultan. *Zikir* means sitting and chanting the remembrance *(zikir)* of God. You take God into your mouth and say, *"La ilaha illa Allah."* That's how we say the *zikir*. Our Shariah says to remember God and not neglect him in your speech.

When Alim Qoja uses the phrase *allanı zikir qılũ* with God as the direct

object of the verb "to do *zikir*," he shows that he knows that *zikir* means "remembering." The Kazaks and the Qojas found ways to remember God in spite of their minimimalistic performance of the Five Pillars of Islam. It is the "remembrance function" rather than the esoteric aspects of *zikir* that made it a vehicle for Kazak religion.

Amal Qoja participated in a secret *zikir* when his father, Ibaduilah Qoja, took him as a young boy in the 1920s to visit a village near Tashkent at Sarı Aġash. After the old men died, Amal said, we gave it up, because there are no *hafız* (memorizers) left who know how to recite it; his father had earned the title *Sultanqul Hafız* for having memorized the *Diwan-i Hikmet* of Ahmet Yasawi. Similarly, Jolbarıs Qoja had participated in a *zikir* in Turkistan when he was 30-40 years old, which would have been around the late 1950s. Together with Amal Qoja he recalled details of a vocal *zikir* of the names of God and Quranic formulas, including strenuous dancing in a circle. Together the two Qojas discussed the form of the *zikir* based on Jolbarıs' account:

A: Osı bar ġoy, ol - Asbīr rabbım jan alla, bireũ; la ilaha illalah, ekeũ; illala, illala, illala, üsheũ; sosın Alla tört jüz aytadı, törteũ; hũ, hũ, hũ jüz aytadı, beseũ; ya Alla ya hũ, ya Alla ya hũ jüz aytadı, altaũ. Bul altaũı. Eng aldımen bäri khormen aytıp shıġadı.

J: Bäri aytadı, taġı qaytalap aytadı.

A: Sosın aytıp shıqqannan keyin, barıp endi biy sıyaqtı hũ-hũge tüsip ketedi . . .

J: Türkistanda shal kisi edi Äbdiälim degen. Bir bes-altı shaldar bolatın, sol kiside . . . zikirdi uyımdastıratın. Ilġıy şaldar ülken bir tamġa jıynalġannan keyin . . . jazdıng küni köylekshenġ, dam-balshang, basqa kiyim bolmaydı üsterinde.

A: Üytkeni ıstıqtan [terlep] ketedi.

J: Terlep ketedi, aq dambalmen aq köylek aladı bäri de, söytedi de,

sosın otırıp, la ilaha illala dep bastap, hũ hũding bärin so zikir ġıp aytıp, barlıq mına kisi aytqandarınıng bärin aytıp, sol kädimgi terlep-tepship sharshaydı tünimenen.

A: Jılaydı.

J: Jılaydı.

A: They would say, *"Asbir rabbim jan Allah"* [Make me a patient soul, Lord Allah] - that's one; then *"la ilaha illa Alla"* [there is no god but Allah] - that's two; *"illa [Al]la[h], illala, illala"* [except for God, except for God, except for God] - that's three; then they would say Allah 400 times - that's four; *"Hoo, hoo hoo"* [(God is) alive] 100 times - that's five; *"Alla yahoo"* [God is alive] 100 times - that's six. To start [the evening] they would recite these six together as a choir.

J: They would all say it, then they would repeat it.

A: Then after they had said this, they would start saying the *"Hoo hoo"* in a dance.

J: In Turkistan there was an old man named Abdi Alim. He would organize a *zikir* for five or six men at his house. They would always gather at a big [mud-brick, Muslim] house in the summer and go without shirts and trousers, they had no other clothes on.

A: Because they would [sweat] from the heat.

J: They would sweat, sitting in their white shirt and undergarments, saying things like, *"La ilaha illa Alla"* [There is no god but Allah," and *"Hoo, hoo* [(God is) alive]," and the other things like he [Amal Qoja] just said, and sweating and wearing themselves out during the night.

A: They would cry.

J: Yes, they cried.

This dance and group recital of rhapsodic phrases was clearly a Sufi *zikir*. The ecstatic *hoo hoo hoo* in rhythmic combinations is a well-known Islamic mantra based on one of the divine names, Allah al-Ḥayy (God the Living). Though there were only five or six old men performing the *zikir* at the house of Abdi Alim Qoja, young men attended them, which preserved the memory of the experience. Jolbarıs went on to desribe how the young men

would pour water from a teapot over the old men saying the *zikir*, or give them a drink when they were thirsty, and this service was considered meritorious. Complementary religious roles for old and young is a pattern that survives today.

Amal Qoja said the *zikir* would begin with the sacrifice of an animal and a meal in the evening, that music accompanied the dance, that the recital of the *Diwan-i Hikmet* was done in tag-team fashion, with one man yielding the floor to another when his voice became hoarse, each putting a white scarf around his neck as he rose to recite, that the dancing and reciting was interspersed with preaching about the Last Judgment, at which the men would begin to cry and recite the *zikir* again. The old men would go home when they tired, he said, but the young men continued preaching, crying, reciting, and dancing until morning.

Finally, Alim Qoja supplied a memory of the use of the term Sufi in connection with *zikir* at the Yasawi Shrine:

> A: *Men özim qatısqanım joq. Biraq mening bir aġam sopı edi. Äbduäli Sopı deymiz. Mına yerde Maŭlan Pir Adar degenimiz boldı, Maŭlen Sopı deytin edik. So kisiler Qoja Aḥmetting qilawetine barıp, zikirden qalmaytın edi. Sol zikirge barıp, zikir salġandardı sopı dep kerekpiz.*
>
> A: I myself didn't attend, but one of my uncles was a Sufi. We call him Sufi Abdu Ali. We also had a relative here named Mawlana Pir Adar. We called him Sufi Mawlana. They never failed to go the shrine of Qoja Ahmet when a *zikir* was happening. So I would say Sufis are people who go the *zikir* and chant it.

When Alim Qoja says that the Sufis Abd Ali and Mawlana were devoted to *zikir*, he confirms the memory of Sufi worship in Turkistan. None of our informants remembers the institutional form of Sufism in Turkistan or its leadership, the *shaykh al-islam,* the *azīzler*, or the *naqıp*, although the

latter are now Qoja descent groups. Institutional Sufism is dead, but the memory of the remembrance ceremony lives on.

New forms of zikir? Nurali Qoja and his family identified a meeting they hold in their home as a *zikir*. It happens when neighbor men gather on evenings during the Ramazan holiday to learn to recite Quranic texts. Nurali describes it as an act of worship *(sıyınũ, tabınũ)* and a crying out to God *(qudayġa jalınũ)*. In a very limited way this suggests continuity with the *zikir* events witnessed by Amal and Jolbarıs during the Soviet period, when the *zikir* retreated from public view into the domestic environment.

Omar Qoja is one of a dozen or so young men who has attended Nurali's short teaching sessions during Ramazan for the past several years. He called the event a *tarapa* (see the section on the fast above) where men (no women) learned to chant a *zikir*, mimicking Nurali's Arabic intonation and reciting in chorus the words *"La ilaha illa allah"* [There is no god but Allah]. Nurali clarified by saying that he conducts a *zikir* after the recital of the *namaz* and the *tarapa*. Amal Qoja also distinguished *zikir* from *tarapa* as different parts of the evening ceremony. Alim Qoja explained that during Ramazan a Muslim is supposed to recite the entire Quran, and that, for those who cannot, the *tarapa* — a recital of a few key verses — is a substitute. From the learner's perspective, the *zikir*, i.e. the *"La ilala illa allah"*, is the key experience, because it is this that is learned in chorus by the participants. What happens at Nurali's house is apparently that (1) the Quran is recited by him and others who know it *(tarapa)*; then the young men are taught (2) the *namaz* and (3) the intonation of mantric phrases, the latter being called a *zikir*.

But *zikir* has another meaning, and a public one. Qulahmet, a elderly

Kazak man who lives near the main mosque, attends a *zikir* held there after the afternoon *namaz*. The men turn their string of 99 prayer beads *(täs-pih)* and recite the Arabic praise verses *Allahu akbar*, *Subhan Allah*, and *Al hamdu lillah*, 33 times each. Here Qulahmet associates *zikir* with the well-known Islamic practice — unrelated to Sufism — of intoning the names of God as a method of spiritual awakening. The method he has learned is a simplified version of the recital of the 99 Beautiful Names of God (Ar. *asmā al-ḥusnā*); substituting the three phrases is more practical for mass consumption. No Kazak we interviewed knew the 99 Beautiful Names, but about a year later a booklet appeared (Atımtay 1996) to acquaint the Kazaks with them.

Both in the household ceremony at Nurali's house and in Qulahmet's experience at the mosque, the participants are learning a modulated and simplified spiritual discipline they call *zikir*. Although both are surely more sedate than the Yasawian Sufi version, they are comparable as methods of "remembering God." But is this a '90s revival of Sufism among the Kazaks? Reciting Quranic phrases in mantric fashion is perhaps the most irreducible activity of Sufi worship from the popular point of view. Though only Qojas mentioned the neighborhood *zikirs*, they were Qojas from three different residential areas; so Nurali's evenings with the young men are obviously happening in other homes as well. Most participants probably do not identify the *zikir* with Sufism, and, Sufi Timur notwithstanding, they do not call themselves Sufis. For them the new *zikir* is simply an honest attempt to begin to walk on the straight path.

The Kazak equivalent of the Arabic *ṭarīqa*, the Sufi social institution of masters and disciples, is simply *jol* (way, path), but neither the Arabic

term nor the translation, *sopılar jolı* (way of the Sufis), it produced much response from our informants. For Kazaks there is only the *Quday jolı* (way of God) or *din jolı* (way of religion) or *taza jol* (pure way) and no other. It includes Sufi patterns and concepts when they are remembered, and everything else that is believed to be true and pure about Islam. Turkistan today identifies not so much with Sufism as with the *taza jol* of Islam. Indeed, characterizations of Sufism as an alternative or deviant Islam are historically problematic in Central Asia, where the Sufis and their heirs, such as Nurali Qoja, have always been in the mainstream of Muslim life.

The social forms of the Sufi "*tariqa* complex" are unfamiliar in Turkistan, except among academic Arabists; our queries elicited no familiarity with the Yasawi or Naqshbandi brotherhoods even among the Qojas. Indeed, there has been "no noteworthy surfacing" of post-soviet Sufis anywhere in Central Asia (*OEMIW* 3:229 [Algar]). In Turkistan in the 1990s all that can be said is that Qoja teachers have occasional or regular contact with circles of disciples, neighbors, pilgrims and other supplicants who come to them for counsel or cures. This suggests the persistence or revival of Sufism's "*wali* complex" in attenuated form, but not of the "*tariqa* complex." Three prominent Kazak professors, Wahīt Shalekenov, Mekemtas Mırzahmetov, and Seyitqalī Maduanov, have recently called for the propagation of Islamic science, historical research, and Sufi religious life at the Yasawi Shrine under the aegis of Yasawi University (*TT*, October 3/10, 1997). What they propose, in effect, is that a traditional residential center of Sufi discourse and spiritual discipline (Pers. *khānqāh*; Tk. *tekke*) be re-established in Turkistan, but they propose no method for reviving Sufi spirituality. Such

efforts would probably revive the shell without the substance. A genuine rebirth of Sufism in Turkistan will only be possible with a revival also of Sufism's social and intellectual heritage. This is what was lost under the communists (Tyson 1997:22), while ritual forms of Sufism survived in devolved and domesticated forms.

CONCLUSION

Kazaks have appropriated the *taza jol* of Islam in variable ways which are little different in its negotiable complexity from the religious life of other Muslim peoples. Even among the Arab peoples, "everyday Islam" is quite variable, as shown in Bowen and Early's recent selection of descriptive materials (1993). In a recent summary of "Popular Religion" in Muslim societies Woodward (*OEMIW* 3:337) has argued that,

> Lax observance of the formal ritual requirements of Islam should not . . . necessarily suggest impiety or secularism. While *sharī'ah* provides exemptions for those who find orthoprax ritual impossible, it does not provide alternatives. Popular Islamic practice fills this gap in the religious lives of many of the world's Muslims.

Lack of "alternatives" to the pure way has led to conflict in Muslim societies over the validity of local customs (Kz. *ädet, ädet-ǵurıp*; Ar. *'ādāt, 'urf*) when these are adopted as alternatives in the breach, conceived and perpetuated locally as viably Muslim practices. Local deviations from the Shariah as encountered everywhere in the Muslim world may be defended as legitimate expressions of Islam, or by Kazaks of their "Muslimness," a semantic justification of difference. In the classical articulations of Islam, Al-Ghazali allowed local variation and Ibn Taymiyah rejected it (*OEMIW*

3:338). In effect following Ibn Taymiyah, ethnographers have tended to assume that local variation is sub-Islamic and must be traced, as we have seen in Valikhanov's early studies (Chapter 1), to evolutionarily antecedent forms ("shamanism") or diffusion from non-Muslim neighbors (Mongolian religion). In Orientalist fashion, anthropological analysis has too often followed Islamic theological models deductively instead of thinking inductively from observed behavior and the language of the people.

In the empirical tradition of ethnography (and, in effect, of Al-Ghazali), I have here described the relationship between the way of religion *(din joli)* or the pure way *(taza jol)* that Kazaks affirm, and the equivocal Muslim life they have led. Despite arduous historical circumstances, their equivocations are seldom so overwhelming as to negate the basic affirmation. These are the ideal and the real in Kazak religion. The relationship between them, its continuities and compromised negotiations, involves a dynamic interaction in the collective memory that has allowed Kazak religion to persist to the present day.

Eickelman argues in his seminal article on the study of Muslim life in local contexts that our challenge is "to describe and analyze how the universalistic principles of Islam have been realized in various social and historical contexts without representing Islam as a seamless essence on the one hand or as a plastic congeries of beliefs and practices on the other" (1983:1). Muslim cultures, while locally articulated, are not so differentiated as to be unidentifiable with one another. The Kazak experience of Islam has been forged under the pressure of nomadic lifeways and various acculturative processes that are still ongoing; today the Islamization process continues in Turkistan under the aegis of Pan-Turkic influences and the internal

renegotation of the Sufi and Qoja heritage.

What I have confirmed in Turkistan in the 1990s substantiates the theoretical basis for the historical study of Islamization in Inner Asia laid down by DeWeese (1994). The "normative" way of mosques and madrasas, of imams and ulama, of Shariah and Quran, cannot be thought of as an unsuccessful superimposition that failed to master a more fundamental, pre-existing religious substratum of pre-Islamic forms ("animism," "shamanism," "sky worship," "ancestor practices," etc.) from ancient Turkic or nomadic Kazak culture. Instead, a "negotiated settlement" in which Islam was the clear victor produced thorough assimilation by the Kazaks of those expressions of Islam which were most easily understood. This did, of course, involve cognitive accommodations with Inner Asian conceptions of religious life -- in the ancestor and healing cults in particular -- which will be explored in the next chapters. In the case of the Kazaks this process began already during the period of their ethnogenesis at the end of the era of the Golden Horde in the 15th century.

It is also untenable to call pre- or sub-Islamic those local features, such as the Kazak ancestor cult that will be explored in the Chapter 4, that reflect a cultural process that is ongoing today and contains many Islamic elements. Drawing his conclusions from Muslim lifeways in the cultures of northern Sumatra, John R. Bowen has stated our argument succinctly: "Overreliance on an a priori distinction of official and popular religion risks obscuring the way in which mainstream religious forms become part of local religious systems" (*OEMIW* 3:342). Some of these processes have been pinpointed above in the linguistic acculturation of the Kazak language to Islamic conceptions, in the Kazak idealization of the Five Pillars of Islamic ritual

life, in their celebration of life-cycle transitions in Muslim forms, and in the Qoja and Sufi traditions.

What Kazaks are often surprised to hear — having naïvely believed what they were told and thinking themselves to be a uniquely aberrant Muslim people — is that their kind of religious system is found in other Muslim societies also. Sixty years after their nomadic economy was collectivized and sedentarized under Stalin, the role of the Qojas in Kazak religion still harks back to the tribal-nomadic pattern described by Gellner (1981:116f.):

> [A] tribal holy lineage [satisfies] a need for the incarnation of the Word in a milieu that through lack of literacy and of towns cannot use the *ulama*. . . . It provides an alternative and in effect serves and represents values other than those of the *ulama,* and yet at the same time indirectly endorses [them]. Tribal society has its values and attitudes, and these are served and symbolised by the tribal holy men. The tribesmen do not wish to be any different from what they are. But they are, in the eyes of their more learned urban folk, sinful and/or heretical. They know that this is how they are seen, and they do not really repudiate the judgment. They accept it, and yet wish to persist in their attitudes. At the same time, they do not in any way desire to opt out of the wider community of Islam.

In this statement we may substitute "Kazaks" for "tribesmen," "Qojas" for "tribal holy men," and "Uzbeks" and "Turkish fundamentalists" for "urban folk," and we would have an accurate representation of Kazak religion.

It is the nature of missionary religions like Islam to set in motion a perpetual moral reform (Burridge 1975). This is being taken up again by the Qojas of Turkistan and by young graduates of the new Islamic institutes. They do not lack foundations to build on.

When Geertz (1968a) postulated a "scripturalist" way for some Muslims (mosque, madrasa and ulama) and an "expressivist" way for others (subdi-

vided as "illuminationist" in Java and "maraboutist" in Morocco), he failed to note that Muslims may have it both ways. Syncretic and anti-syncretic processes continue in individual lives: so these processes may never resolve themselves at a societal level. Individual Kazaks dutifully associate the *taza jol* with the scriptural doctrine and ritual obligations of Islam, but, because many do not, or choose not to, pursue these with determination or uniformity, they may expand the norm in a way that makes Islam inclusive of "expressivist" values. Indeed, Geertz' illuminationist and maraboutist options are both subsumed in Kazak religion: the former in the Kazak ancestor cult (Chapter 4), the latter in the cult of the saints (Chapter 5). For the Kazaks, *musılmanshılıq* includes not only the Five Pillars of Islam but also a broad set of Muslim conceptions and behaviors I will describe in the remainder of this study under the emic headings, *arũaq* (ancestor), *aũliye* (saint), and *täwip* (healer). Above all, the pure way of Islam is the Muslim life the ancestors are thought to have led.

Ölse öler tabīġat, adam ölmes,
Ol biraq qaytıp kelip, oynap-külmes.
"Meni" men "menikining" ayrılġanın
"Öldi" dep at qoyıptı öngkey bilmes.
—Abay Qunanbaev, 1895

When they die, nature dies, not the man,
For they come back for real this time.
Only ignorance can call it death
when the eternal "I" sets aside
all claim to what is "mine."

CHAPTER FOUR

ARUAQ: REMEMBERING THE ANCESTORS

When asked how he honors the memory of his ancestors, Amal Qoja began listing the religious activities of the Kazak household: Quran recitals *(quran oqıtũ)*, the Thursday ritual after a death in the family *(peyshenbilik)*, and the breaking of the fast on Ramazan evenings *(aũız ashar)*. All these things, he said, we do for our ancestors who visit the house by the permission of God. He called them "the deceased 'woven branches' related to us, our father and mother, our great-grandfathers, our distant in-laws" *(ölgen ürim-putaġımız özimizge qarastı, äke-sheshemiz, babalarımız, quda jekjattarımız)*.

Kazak religion is largely a pattern of calendrical and occasional meals dedicated to spiritual beings; so the concepts of ancestor *(ata-baba)* and ancestor-spirit *(arũaq)*, and their semantic and cultural relationship with Islam and the Muslim tradition, must now be explored. Claims by purists

that the Kazak ancestor cult[1] has nothing to do with Islam (*JQ*, June 1, 1993 [Shäriptegi]) cannot be sustained. Although it is continuous with Inner Asian ancestor practices, it has been "reconfigured" in "a visibly Islamic mode of religiosity," an "Islamic synthesis" (Karamustafa 1994:11). The ancestor cult is a contextualization of Islamic belief and ritual that substantially defines the Kazaks and their acculturation to Islam.

This chapter's "ancestor" and the next chapter's "saint" are the basic concepts of Kazak religion. Kazak religious practice consists in a complex pattern of ceremonial meals in which the food and the reciting of the Quran are dedicated to the ancestor-spirits. These meals and recitals will be described in detail below. To set them in context, a brief introduction to Kazak kinship is offered, because the ancestors are kin in the collective memory.

KINSHIP, LINEAGE, AND THE ANCESTOR-SPIRITS

When Kazaks introduce themselves to one another, they recite at least some of their ancestral lineage. This happens especially when an elder asks a younger person who he or she is. To introduce herself to Amal Qoja, my colleague, Gaũhar Sızdıqova, replied to his traditional questions about her lineage:

A: Özing qojanıng qızı bop qalũıng mümkin endi, mınaũ Arabiyadan —

---

1. In Kazak the cultural meaning of "ancestor" cannot be understood apart from the ritual behaviors associated with it, and ritual is the proper meaning of "cult;" so "ancestor cult" is a reasonable and convenient term for the phenomenon.

S: Joq, ata, men orta jüzbin.

A: Orta jüzding qaysısıng?

S: Qongırat.

A: Qongırattıng qaysısıng?

S: Qulshıġashımın.

A: Boldı, taũıp aldıng endi.

A: Now let's see, are you a woman of the Qojas, the Arabian —

S: No, sir, I'm of the Middle Horde.

A: Which of the Middle Horde?

S: Qongrat.

A: Which of the Qongrat?

S: I am a Qulshıġash.

A: Good, now you've been located.

And now that she's been "located," the conversation can proceed. One's place in the ancestral kinskip network is one's identity, especially when in conversation with the elders.[1]

Three meanings of ancestor. Such simple exchanges are loaded with cultural meanings. Kazaks think of their lineage in two alternative ways, and the variability in the Kazak social pattern which this distinction implies indicates variable meanings in the collective experience of "ancestor" in Kazak religion. These two social aspects of "ancestor" *(ata-baba)* then relate to a third semantic field, the world of "ancestor-spirits" *(arũaq)*, the Kazak lineage as a religious experience. To begin, the two social meanings

---

1. Amal Qoja's own genealogy, going back to Ali, the fourth caliph, is discussed by Çınar (1996:57ff.), who also used Amal Qoja as an informant.

must be examined.

First, as already noted in Chapter 2, it is a matter of pride if not of actual performance that a Kazak can recite the names of his or her patrilineal forefathers back to the seventh generation *(jeti ata)*. If my colleague had given her full name in kazakified Russian style with patronymic as a middle name (Gaũhar Mänsürqızı Sızdıqova), it would have identified both her father (Mänsür) and her grandfather (Sızdıq), i.e. two of her seven *jeti ata*. Amal Qoja was not interested in these, but he would have been if any of his people had married into her sub-clan, the Qulshıġash;[1] then he would have inquired more thoroughly into the nearer range of Sızdıqova's *jeti ata* to determine whether he and she were *quda* (in-laws), because this involves social obligations, including the obligation to provide hospitality.

A Kazak of common lineage or "black bone" *(qara süyek)* is identified, secondly, by horde (*jüz*);[2] in the above example, *Orta Jüz*, Middle Horde) and two ancestral ethnonyms identifying his or her clan (*rũ*) and sub-clan[3] (*Qongırat* and *Qulshıġash* in the above example). Some of the clan names have deep roots in Turkic lineages from ancient Mongolia, before the migration of Turkic peoples into Central and Western Asia, and are reflected to

---

1. See Erimbetov (1993:25f.) for a Kazak version of the Qongrat lineage and the Qulshıġash sub-clan. See also Bregel's historical study (1982) of the early dynastic history of the Qongrats.

2. *Jüz*, horde, literally means "hundred." For the Kazaks it has always had a secondary and political meaning, *viz.* the union of clans under a khan, unrelated except as a distant military memory with the numerical meaning of the word.

3. Kazaks do not commonly use a specific term for sub-clan. Muqanov (1974:15) mentions several obsolete terms *(baũ, san, arıs)*, and Zeki Velidi Togan used *oymak, arıs, soy, tire*, and *ara* as descending subdivisions of the Kazak *uruk (rũ)*. *Juraġat*, technically a descendent in the ninth generation (*QTTS* 7:344), is cited by Shnitnikoff as a term for sub-clan (*KEDS*, p. 111).

this day in the names of parallel clans among the Uzbeks and others. So the usual pattern is that a Kazak will know the names of his or her father, grandfather and great-grandfather; his or her *jüz*, e.g. Middle Horde; a clan progenitor, e.g. Qongrat; and Qongrat's ethnonymic descendent, e.g. Bojban. But between Bojban and one's own grandfather there may be a lacuna of an unknown number of generations. Kazaks are now able to fill in the gap from genealogical tables in inexpensive booklets being published for the major clans (e.g. Erimbetov 1993; Köpeyulı 1993). Kengesbek, now in his 50s, admits that he grew up not knowing his *jeti ata* and is learning them only now; in other words, he has found a book of lineages.

Kazaks who do not know their seven ancestors will cite the excuse that during the famine of the '30s and war in the '40s the passing on of the names was interrupted. When he visited Almaty 60 years ago, Hudson found no one who could list seven names (Hudson 1938:44). Finding no one at all is odd, so probably Hudson did not look hard enough, or his informants were carefully withholding genealogical information during the dangerous days of Stalin's *repressiya*, but his evidence does suggest that the *jeti ata* tradition has for a long time been an ideal concept rather than a real measure of practice. However, even if the distant names must be transcribed from published genealogies, Kazak fathers usually try to pass on a written list of their seven grandfathers to their children. When I poll each new class of Kazak students I teach, nobody ever volunteers in the presence of their classmates that they do not know their *jeti ata* until I coax confessions out of them. A quite russified Kazak woman in Almaty joked that her father had taught her to recite her *jeti ata* every night before she fell asleep, but despite the twinge of cynicism she produced the

list of seven names from her purse. But it is far more consistent behavior for Kazaks in conversation to identify an absent third party by his or her sub-clan when the third party's family name is not known to the speakers: "You know who I mean: the *Nayman* who sells vodka down the street." "Everybody's *Bojban* in Turkistan; don't ask for help from them if you're not."

Thus, the *jeti ata* concept functions secondarily in social situations, but the *rũ* concept of horde, clan, and especially sub-clan, not the *jeti ata,* provides the practical units of kinship. Hudson noted that this disjunction means that the Kazaks have variable understandings of kinship, and that such variability is consistent with the history of Kazak origins as an amalgamation of Qipchaq nomads after the disintegration of the Golden Horde. In practice, moreover, *rũ* has come to replace *jeti ata* as the rule of exogamy, even though it excludes more potential marriage partners than the *jeti ata* tradition did. Theoretically, a young couple of the same *rũ* (sub-clan) related only in the eighth generation or higher might argue with their clan elders that they are eligible to marry, but I have never heard of such a case. *Rũ* is so firmly held as the practical rule of exogamy that it would never occur to anyone to challenge it on the basis of the *jeti ata* tradition.

Personal names, patronymics, and family names. Though there is a large repertoire of Kazak names from the heroic tradition of the Kazak *batyrs* (*batır*, hero), first or given names often have Islamic meanings. Some Kazaks have rather lamentable Soviet-style names (e.g. Marlen, conflated from Marx-Lenin; Mels, an acronym for Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin; Sovetbek, "Mr. Soviet;" or even Syezd, "Session [of the Party Congress]"), but few have Russian names. Most first names are traditional Kazak names

(*Esimḫan*, a Kazak khan; *Sansızbay*, inestimably wealthy; *Aynur*, moon light; *Qarlıġash*, swallow) or Muslim/Quranic names (e.g. *Maḫambet*, a Kazak intonation of Muhammad; *Nurġalī*, light of Ali; *Qojaḫmet*, a boy named after Ahmet Yasawi; *Fatima*, a daughter of Muhammad; *Gaũhar*, "diamond," Yasawi's daughter; etc.). Personal names enshrine religious values.

Patronymic middle names had been easily adopted by a patrilineal people like the Kazaks, even though they did not traditionally call themselves by their father's name, because primary identity was by clan. During the 1990s the Russian patronymic quickly fell out of style as Kazak language came to be used more and more in professional conversation. Moreover, both patronymics and family names are usually Islamic in content, even though in form they are accommodations to Russian practice, used on passports, diplomas, and official lists.

Kazaks did not have family names before the Russian period. In the present generation the Russian-style last name usually turns out to be a Russian spelling of the first name of one's grandfather or great-grandfather (depending on how many generations one is descended from the forefather who was first required to append a Russian-style family name), with a Russian ending, e.g. Jurinov, son of *Jurın*; Qasımjanov, son of *Qasımjan* [soul of *Kasim*]; Sızdıqova, daughter of *Sızdıq* [Abu-Bakr = *As-Ṣiddīq*, the first caliph].[1] But the traditional Kazak valuation of lineage treats all the patrilineal ancestors back to the seventh generation (or even further back to the ethnonymic clan progenitor) as of equal significance with one's own

---

1. In English the spellings usually reflect standard Russian-English transliteration; hence, Zhurinov, Kasymzhanov, and Syzdyqova, respectively, for the examples above. These spellings leave English readers wondering where the vowels are.

father and grandfather. The Russian tradition that artificially disrupts the meaning of Kazak ancestry is felt every time Kazaks say their names; so the Russian *-ov* and *-ev* endings on family names are being dropped by some Kazaks as a matter of ethnic pride.

In everyday matters involving kinship networks, horde and clan, not the patronymic or family name, are the most salient symbols of Kazak social identity.

Reprise: A disjunction. The custom of personal introduction with reference to horde, clan and sub-clan — with the seven ancestors functioning secondarily (and more theoretically than practically) in matters of marriage negotiations — is a fundamental Kazak tradition still salient in modern social life. But there is a caveat. Neither clan ethnonyms nor the *jeti ata* are prominent in the household rites by which the ancestors are remembered in Muslim fashion. Thus, there is yet another meaning of ancestry, the religious one, which varies from the domains of kinship discourse discussed above. The distinction is instructive for understanding the Kazaks as a Muslim people. Discontinuity between everyday Kazak discourse associated with kinship, on the one hand, and the reverential aspects of the ancestor cult, on the other, suggests that the former is a legacy of the Inner Asian nomadic tradition and the latter of the Muslim experience. The *jüz-rũ* tradition primarily, and the *jeti ata* tradition secondarily, reveal much about Kazak social life; whereas the Thursday tradition of ancestral remembrance and Quran recitals reveals patterns of Muslim devotion that occur in other parts of the Muslim world as well. The way Islam has transformed the kinship tradition into a Muslim domestic spirituality is the theme of this chapter.

DREAMS OF THE ANCESTORS

In their role as visitors in the home and agents of blessing, the Kazak ancestors are called *arũaq (ärũaq)*[1] or, more comprehensively, *ata-babalardıng arũaġı*, the spirits of the ancestors. *Arũaq* is translated here and *passim* as "ancestor-spirit." The ancestor-spirits are not summoned, they come to the home on schedule — on Thursdays and Fridays — and if they are not shown proper hospitality, they come in dreams as a reminder. The *arũaq* are the primary actors in the Kazak spirit-world, which is "a real but intangible universe, part of the greater reality in which the 'here and now' is set" (Musk 1995:129).

The appearance of the ancestor spirits. The religious psychology of the Kazaks includes a vivid sense of the possibility of spiritual revelation in dreams. While few expect to receive the illumination (Ar. *ilhām*; Kz. *darın*) that endued Sufi saints like Ahmet Yasawi with their special power, least of all the angelically mediated revelation (Ar. *waḥy*) given only to prophets, Kazaks believe there is a kind of common revelation, called *ayan* (Ar. *āyan*) that the average person may experience now and then. It is very common for Kazaks to identify the images and voices in their dreams as *ayan* from the ancestor-spirits. Reinforced by modern psychology, dreams are believed to be a divine gift *(qasiyet)*. Islam has always allowed wide rein to the personal experience of illumination, and the Kazaks, who

---

1. The Arabic word *rūḥ* (spirit) is seldom used in Kazak except in theological conversation, but the plural *arwāḥ* is perhaps the most common term in the Kazak religious vocabulary. The Arabic plural is used as a singular, hence Kazak *arūaq*, then repluralized in Turkic fashion as *arūaqtar*. Kazak softens vowels in foreign words, so the front vowel *ä* replaces *a* in pronunciation, but not always in writing.

received Islam by way of Sufi culture, have absorbed and stereotyped it into an accessible and culturally comprehensible "*ayan* complex." We have noted in Chapter 3 that Sufism's "*tariqa* complex" has been lost and the "*wali* complex" survives only marginally, but the "*ayan* complex" persists strongly in Kazak religion as a popularization of the the illuminationist tradition of the Sufis.

Kazaks frequently speak of their dreams, which may include visions of their deceased parents, relatives, ancestors, and holy figures. Sızdıqova saw the Prophet Muhammad in a childhood dream (cf. Fisher 1979:220), which persuaded her that her Soviet school teachers were wrong when they said there is no God. In a dream Dastanov (1993:88) saw Ahmet Yasawi take his hand, look at him with "sharp eye," and complain that people had forgotten him. When we asked Uljalğas, a Kazak healer, about the recital of the Quran, her instinctive response was that Kazaks recite the Quran when they have a dream. Zulfiya and Botajan practice Muslim healing arts because the ancestor-spirits come to them in their dreams every Thursday and "press" them to do so *(qısadı)*, as we shall explore in Chapter 6. Nurali Qoja's father appeared to him in an early-morning dream when he was 40 years old and warned him to give up Russian ways and take up the pure way of Islam. Our neighbor, Gulmira, sends sacred bread *(qudayı nan)* around to her neighbors when she sees her late mother in a dream, a basic customary practice of Muslim life in Central Asia which will be explored in detail in this chapter.

For Alim Qoja the existence of the ancestor-spirits is confirmed by the experience of soul-wandering in our dreams:

A: Ăruaqtar jür ġoy kăzir, ăzir de keledi üyimizge. . . . Tüsing qanday, tüsing? Mına denengmen tösekte jatırsın, özing sen Türkistanġa da barasıng, Shımkentke qıdırasıng tüsingde. Qutti so sıyaqtı jüresing.

A: The ancestor spirits are all about us; even now they come to our house. Think about how it is when you dream. In your body you lie in bed, but you go off to Turkistan in your dream, or you make a visit to Shymkent. You wander around happily like that.

Alim Qoja knew the *ḥadith* that when Muhammad was asked by his wife, Aisha, about the other world, he said we will appear to one another there as in a dream. As Westermarck observed also among the Berbers (1926: I,46) dream experiences confirm that the ancestors are living beings like us, that we are capable of sharing their disembodied nature, and that our lives are closely connected not only with theirs, but with God and the heavenly realm.

In the Semitic religions the scriptural tradition legitimates dreams as vehicles of revelation and guidance, e.g. Joseph's dream that he should not divorce Mary (Matthew 1; cf. Kelsey 1968). The phenomenon is known all across the Muslim world (J.Smith 1980:224) and from the earliest period (Lecerf 1966; cf. Musk 1989:236 on the *ḥadith* of Al-Bukhari; Smith 1980:227 on Al Suyūtī). Abdalghanī an-Nābulusī, an Egyptian who wrote a classical Islamic treatise on oneriology, said the dead speak the truth in dreams because they are "in the abode of truth" (von Grünebaum 1966:10). In the matter of dreaming, the "normative Islam" of the *ḥadith* literature and the Quran itself (39:42; 6:60) serves as a source book for heterodox belief and practice (Musk 1989:235ff.).

Baqıtbergen is a matter-of-fact and practical man, a Muslim trader; so at first he felt obliged to express doubt about visible appearances of the *arũaq*. On further questioning, however, he said that his father appears in

his dreams *(äkem tüsime kirip turadı)*. Dreams seemed more credible to him than waking visions. He had recently seen in a dream his father's brother's late wife, recently deceased, dressed in pure white, and encouraging him to strengthen his family ties. Nesibeli, his wife, offered a psychological explanation of his dream, saying that it was due to his poor health at the time, but this did not mean to her that the ancestor-spirits are any less real. In his dream Baqıtbergen had failed to take the hand of his aunt when she extended it to him; Nesibeli was relieved he had not, because if you shake hands in your dream with "those people," you will get sick and die soon, following them to the other world *(tüsine kirip, sol kisilermen amandasıp jürse, jaqında ketedi . . . ne aũrũ sızdaydı, ne körinip erip ketũi mümkin)*. In her understanding, these are not phantoms but real people *(kisiler)*, our ancestors. Though there was a physical cause of her husband's dangerous dream, the ancestor-spirits are so real to Nesibeli that they shake hands with the dreamer.

Some Kazaks argue that the *arũaq* are invisible except in dreams, though Jolbarıs Qoja claims to have seen them dressed in white standing by the door of his house, and both Qalambay and Jolbarıs warned us that the ancestor-spirits could be standing at the door watching the ethnographic interview. The Kazak conception of the spirit-world, summarized by Zulfiya, is that God is invisible and only the ancestor-spirits can be seen *(Quday közge körinbeydi; sol arũaqtar ġana körinedi ġoy)*. This is reinforced by the widespread belief across the Muslim world, especially in areas influenced by Sufism, in the immortal prophet or angel of good fortune, Al-Khiḍr (Kz.

Qıdır),[1] who appeared to Moses in the Quran and whom Kazaks may also testify they have seen. Jamal, an elderly Kazak woman, told me *Qıdır* helped her cross the railroad tracks when she was a child; her father explained the meaning of the vision to her.

If the God of Islam sends ministering spirits like Qıdır and Muhammad himself, then for the Kazaks there is a place also for appearances of the ancestor-spirits. The usual view is that they are visible in dreams *(tüsinde)*, not, like *Qıdır*, in the waking state *(önginde)*. When this is conceded, the relationship between the dream-state and the conscious state must nevertheless be maintained; so Jolbarıs Qoja told us that every good thing people see in their dreams *(tüsinde)* will come true in real life *(önginde)*.

Divinatory folk-wisdom surround the dream experience. When the ancestor-spirits speak in a dream or look ill or emaciated, it is a sign of impending evil; it is better when they appear in full health and are silent. Revealing your dream to someone else can be dangerous, and dreams experienced shortly before waking should be revealed to no one. Aybibi, a very old woman, at first denied that the ancestor-spirits appear to her, then admitted it, but denied that it means anything. Bad dreams do not determine the future, however, because their influence can be "cut off" *(aldın alũ)* with a Quran recital and the giving of the seven sacred breads to

---

1. *Al-Khiḍr*, lit. "the green one," is a mythical figure of the Hadith and Sufi literature (*PDI*:142f.), commonly identified with the "servant of God" who tests Moses in the Quran (18:60-82). In Sufi circles he is an agent of initiation into divine knowledge (Schimmel 1975:105), or popularly a spirit who brings good luck to those who catch a glimpse of him and make a wish *(tilek)*. He is therefore invoked in blessings (*QTTS* 6:542; see the blessing cited below). In southern Kazakstan *Qıdır Ata* is believed to be buried at Sayram; in Middle Eastern legend he dwells at ponds and clumps of trees and appears suddenly to protect or bring blessing (Denny 1985:391).

one's neighbors (see below), or with a visit to the Yasawi Shrine and a gift of seven tenge to the saint (see Chapter 5), or, in minor cases, by a simple blessing. When a child has a bad dream, it is called "fox dung" *(tülkining boġı)*, and parents must say a blessing invoking the name of God in support of good fortune. The fox is an animal in the Inner Asian repertoire of sacred animals, but here the use of an Islamic blessing to counteract its influence again suggests the triumph of a visibly "Islamic synthesis" (Karamustafa 1994).

The ancestor-spirits appear in dreams at their own initiative *(özderi keledi)*, but, perhaps because danger is always inherent in them, Kazaks do not, as Egyptian Muslims do, "make special prayers and supplications *(a'mâl)* by which they may see deceased loved ones in dreams" (Musk 1989:136). The exception is that dream-visions may be sought or "incubated" (Fisher 1979:227) during visits to special visits to special shrines (see Chapter 5). In ordinary time and space, however, the spirits initiate the dream-appearance. Kazak religion is an understated submission to spiritual powers, seldom an aggressive spirituality.

Thursday dreams. The ancestor-spirits appear in dreams especially on Thursday and Friday, because it is on these days that the spirits are unbound from their graves and go looking for their old houses and relatives. Although we may see them in our dreams, Alim Qoja said it is their seeing us, not our seeing them, that is important. In our dreams they are visiting us, their living relatives, just as they do during the Thursday evening meal:

> *A: Ärüaq tüsinde körinedi. Mäselen sen uyıqtap jatqanda sheshengdi köresing be, äkengdi körsesing be? Bizding kitapta aytadi —*

peyshenbi, juma demalıs bizde, shariyatta . . . Peyshenbi, juma küni qorımda jatqan barlıq ölikke Alla Taġaladan ruqsat, ol qıdıradı, sonda ol üyge keledi . . . Biz körmeymiz, olar bizdi köredi.

IK: Sonda älgi sizder baũırsaq pisirip otırasızdar.

A: Biz iyis shıġarũımız kerek, so kisilerge quran oqũımız kerek, soni ġana paydalanadı olar.

A: The ancestor-spirits are seen in dreams. Let's say you see your mother or your father when you're asleep. In our Book it says that on Thursdays and Fridays — you know that Thursdays and Fridays are days of rest in the Shariah — by God's permission all the corpses lying in the grave wander about and come back to their house. We don't see them, but they see us.

IK: And it's for this reason that you cook the pastry?

A: We have to "emit the fragrance" and recite the Quran for them; they have nothing else to "use" [eat].

Alim Qoja's use of the Quran relates the Kazak ancestor cult to "normative Islam." He believes that the Thursday rite is based on statements in the Quran about God "bringing forth the living from the dead" (Quran 7:58; 30:20; cf. 9:84), interpreting these verses to mean that God gives permission for the ancestor-spirits to roam about on Thursdays and Fridays. It is on these days that they must be fed with a special pastry and a Quran recital in the home. Westermarck (1926: II, 536) cited date from Palestine that Thursday is a propitious day to visit the cemetery, because the spirits of the dead are present then, and Musk (1989:136) has heard similar testimony in Egypt.

When Oshanov, always the good communist, equivocated about the Thursday tradition, saying that some people do it and some people don't, his wife interrupted, saying she bakes the sacred bread for the ancestor-spirits every Thursday whether she sees them in a dream or not *(tüs körsem de körmesem de berem).* Such consistent faithfulness to religious

custom is not easy for everyone; so in many Kazak homes a dream jogs someone's memory to get cooking. Often a woman, as the cook, is also the dreamer. Both scripturalist and culinary customs of Kazak religion, further explored below, are reinforced psychologically in dreaming.

Comparative perspectives. Half of all Egyptians say they have visited in dreams by dead relatives, and Egypt hosts a scholarly tradition that explains this Muslim spiritualism in light of theosophical and scientific writings from the West (Smith 1980:232). Ewing (1990) has shown how Sufi behavior in Pakistan is impacted by the dream experience, and Fisher (1979) has explored the role of the dream in conversion to Islam in Black Africa. Crapanzano's study of a Moroccan Sufi brotherhood included the problem of dream psychology (1973). Describing the Javanese *slametan* meal, Geertz noted that "any time one happens to dream of [one's parents], this means they are hungry and wish to be fed" (1960:72), a statement he could have made as well about the Kazaks. Given the wide diffusion of the experience in the Muslim world, any attempt to explain this aspect of the Kazak ancestor cult as a survival of Inner Asian shamanism is belabored.

Hallowell noted that the experiential unification of the "world of the self" is a contribution that culture makes to human mental health when social interaction ratifies personal dreams (1955:181; cf. von Grünebaum and Caillois 1966). Among the Kazaks the memory of the ancestors is experienced both psychologically, when they see the *arũaq* in their dreams, and socially, in the family's experience of preparing food for them. For this reason Kazak religion, in spite of its ritual minimalism and understated affectivity, cannot be classified as a religion that does not value "inner states" (G.Harris 1983). Collective memory theory posits, however, that the

inner states — memories, dreams, even faith — which people experience as individuals are preserved only to the extent that they are affirmed by others. It is to the social context of the ancestor cult that we now turn.

THE QURAN RECITAL AND BLESSING

The Quran is not only a book but an oral event. By tradition Muhammad was illiterate and received the Quran auditorially. It should not be surprising, then, that the "book-value" of the Quran may actually be felt as a threat by some Muslims, as Lambek discovered in the Comorro Islands (1990). Kazaks know that the Quran is a book, as evidenced by common references to "our religion, our prophet, our book" *(dinimiz ıslam, payġambarımız Muhammad, kitabımız quran),* but few claim to have actually read it — even when they can recite it.

Woodward defines Quranic recitation as "reproducing the speech of God" and notes that it may be performed at "funerals, marriages, and other rites of passage, to cure the sick, to exorcise demons, and for numerous other purposes" (*OEMIW* 3:338). Widely diffused Islamic funerary customs are linked as a spiritual complex with the practice of Quranic recitation "devoted" (Kz. *bağıshtaū*) to the spirits of the dead. Reciting the Quran for the dead is a practice "recommended" (Ar. *mandub*), i.e. not required but not condemned or merely allowed, by all four of the legal schools of Islam on the example of the Prophet (Reeves 1990:97). Nelson, in a study of Quranic recitation, has noted its role in honoring the dead in Egypt and elsewhere (1985; also in Bowen and Early 1993:216). The national mosque in Almaty advertise that the imam may be hired to recite the Quran and dedi-

cate the recital to a person's ancestors (*IA*, January 1996, p. 34; *Iman*, August 5, 1994). The imam of the main mosque in Turkistan does the same (*TT*, August 15, 1997, p. 8). The Quran is seldom recited merely as a spiritual exercise for the edification of the soul, or even as an act of divine worship; it is "dedicated" or "devoted" to the ancestor-spirits, because Islam is the religion of the ancestors.

In the Islamic tradition the Quran recital is a quiet but emotionally powerful performance of Arabic passages beautifully enunciated. Among the Uzbeks and other Turko-Persian peoples, the hot summer "month" of 40 days called *chilla* (Kz. *shilde*, traditionally June 25 to August 5) is the occasion for nightly Quran recitals in the homes of the pious (*UED*, p. 177). Ramazan, the month of fasting, is also a propitious time for these. In Kazakstan it is only in the homes of Qojas and other Kazak elders (mullahs) who have learned the Quran, or when they are invited to recite in another home, or in the mosque, that fluent recitations are heard.

When a mullah is not present it may be only a brief verse or two that is recited in Kazak homes, sometimes only mumbled under the breath or haltingly spoken with eyes lowered in embarassment. The reciter has learned only a verse or two from his father or tried to learn from one of the popular booklets which give key verses of the Quran in Cyrillic script.[1] In the household rite to be examined in the following section, the recital is

---

1. Lamashäripov (1991) has published a 60-page collection of Arabic verses from the Quran in Kazak-Cyrillic script; the verses are short and designed to be memorizable by those who do not read Arabic. Öseruli (1995a) has produced a similar collection of 46 pages; it includes some standard poetic blessings *(bata)* in Kazak, because a blessing is always pronounced after the Quran has been recited. In Turkistan Shalapov (1995a,c; 1997b) has produced a series of short recitation booklets.

done by the most senior male (rarely female) member of the family who has learned the essentials of Arabic diction. It may consist of the recital of the Fatiha (the first chapter of the Quran) or the first few lines of it. The Shahada ("I believe that there is no God but God and Muhammad is his prophet") or the Bismillah ("In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful") is interspersed freely to fill out the recital, especially if the reciter knows only a few other verses to recite.

Older persons may recite the Quran confidently, if not always at length, and in Kazakstan they are honored with the title mullah, master (Kz. *molda*, from Pers. *mulla*, Ar. *mawla*), or, more properly, *käri*, reader (Ar. *qa ¯ri'*), for their accomplishments. Now a young *imam* may be trained abroad, or at the Islamic Institute in Almaty, or in the Department of Religious Studies at Yasawi University in Turkistan, who are professional reciters.

The blessing. A blessing *(bata)* pronounced in Kazak always follows the Quran recital in Arabic (Kenjeahmetuli 1994:12–13). The blessing invokes God and the prophets and saints, such as Qoja Ahmet Yasawi and Arstan Bab, as agents of blessing on the family. When food has been served, it also dedicates the meal to the family's Muslim ancestors. The Kazak word *bata* comes from the Arabic *fātiḥa*, the title of the first *sura* of the Quran (*QTTS* 2:145; *QTAPS*, p. 42), but a Kazak blessing is an expression of best wishes, not a Quran recital. Still, the etymological connection of blessing with Quran is important. After the Quran is recited, it is the *bata* that "dedicates" the Quran recital to the ancestor-spirits and/or to a specific purpose.

Kazak blessings are invocations against bad luck and calamity and in favor of a secure future filled with happiness and good things. The short-

est of all blessings, *"Aq jol!"* (White road!), is said when someone is setting out on a trip; it conveys the essence of the *bata* concept, which is the hope that nothing dark will happen and that it can be prevented by the invocation of properly focused words. The third person imperative form of the same blessing, *"Joldarıng aq bolsın"* (May your roads be white), is characteristic of the way Kazak blessings are customarily enunciated in oblique form; often the obliqueness is total, so that it remains vague whether blessing is being asked from God and/or another supernatural force, or whether it is simply a pedestrian suggestion of best wishes. *Aq* (white, pure) is the adjective which most commonly defines the intention *(niyet)* of the supplicant; hence: *aq niyet* (pure intention) and *aq bata* (pure blessing). Kazak religion seeks after purity in the sense of good fortune that rubs off on anyone who is living in the proper cultural relationship with purity, beginning with God, the prophets, saints, and ancestors, but also including old men and women of honorable age who are endued with spiritual power by virtue of their knowledge of a few verses of the Quran, or simply because they are closer to the ancestors. The "pure intention" of anyone who thus walks in the pure way of Islam is transferable to those who receive their blessing.

Reference to the ancestor-spirits in blessings are carefully worded, as in the expression, "May the 'fragrance' of our cooking and the Quran we have read be acceptable to the ancestors" *(Shıġarġan iyis, oqıġan quranımız arũaqqa qabıl bolsın).* In this example the term *qabıl bolsın* (may it be acceptable) is an Islamic concept that often gives way to a special Kazak turn of phrase, *tiye bersin* (may it "touch," i.e. accrue to the benefit of, the ancestor-spirits). Other blessings and good wishes, stated uniformly in

the third person hortatory, may be multiplied and even crowd out the Quran. One often feels that the elder is doing little more than wishing everyone well; clearly the theologically inocuous form was convenient during the Soviet period.

The following stylized blessing includes general well-wishing, invocation of God and other beings of the Islamic spirit-world, and, most characteristically, a prayer that the merit of the occasion may "touch" the ancestor-spirits (Öserulı 1995:43, my translation):

E, qudayım ongdasın,
Mıng saũlıġıng qozdasın!
Segiz tüyeng botalap,
Segiz kelin qomdasın!
Qazanda pissin künde asıng,
Wayım-qayġıng bolmasın,
Qıdır bolsın joldasıng!
Jortqanda jolıng bolıp,
Gayıp eren qırıq shilten
Äũliyeler qoldasın!
Alla berekesin bersin!
Ötken arũaqtardıng bärine tiye bersin,
Allahũ äkbar!

May my God be your strength.
May your thousand ewes have lambs this year,
Your eight camels have baby camels,
And your eight daughters-in-law be with child!
May your cooking pot be full each day,
Worry and grief be far away,
And Al-Khiḍr be at your side.
May the miracle-working Forty Spirits[1]

---

1. The tradition of the *Qırıq Shilten* (Kz. *qırıq*; Pers. *chiltan*, both meaning forty, cf. Basilov 1984c) was known to only a few of our informants, and the meaning is not immediately evident in Kazak. They are 40 saints or spirits invested with special powers to protect the favored. Uljalġas proposed that the *Qırıq Shilten* minister to women in childbirth and watch over corpses, protecting them from evil spirits. When one of the 40 dies, Amal Qoja told us, another is chosen to take a place at the end of the line of 20 men that extends outward invisibly from either side of the person whom they protect. The phrase *ġayıp eren qırıq shilten* (*ġayıp*, otherworldly, spiritual; *eren*, Sufi saint or dervish, from Turkic *er*, man; these two words probably translate the Ar.

And all the saints protect you
When you're on the road.
May God give you his holy power
And may it touch all the ancestors who have gone before.
God is most great!

In Quran and blessing the Arab and Inner Asian traditions meet. The oratorial experience in Kazak culture is divided between Arabic- and Kazak-language recitals, and the Turkic tradition is thus Islamicized. Except for the death-bed blessing *(ösiyet)*, Kazak culture has no form of blessing — indeed, no other word for it — except the *bata* that claims its inspiration from the Fatiha, the first words of God, in the Quran. Such "auditory structures" and "sequenced patterns of sound" are the "ways in which culture represents language to itself" (Fentress and Wickham (1992:42,45). The Quran recital and the Kazak blessing are two related repositories of cultural aspiration preserved in the collective memory.

During the Soviet period Quranic memory verses were preserved on scraps of paper or handwritten in notebooks, as they had always been. Occasionally a Qoja family managed to preserve an old copy of the Quran, but few Kazak homes ever had the actual book, a certainly not a translation, until *glasnost*, when the Quran was printed in Russian translation before it came out in Kazak. Several Kazak versions with Arabic verso pages have now appeared all at once (1990–94 [trans. Öserulı and Istaev]; 1991a [Nısanbayulı and Qıdırḫanulı]; 1991b [Altay]), but Kazaks still think of the Quran primarily as an audible word, not a book to be studied, at least

---

rijal al-ghayb, men of the unseen world) is recited in blessings as an invocation of protector-spirits (*QTTS* 3:7). To identify the *Qırıq Shilten* with *Qıdır Ata* (cf. *QTTS* 7:15) is to confuse their different places in Muslim tradition, but it is true that in Kazak the two are often invoked together, as in the blessing cited.

not in the home. When the Kazaks say that "we read the Quran *(quran oqıymız)*", they mean "read" in the Arabic sense as "recite," and recital, of course, is the meaning the word Quran in the first place. In Kazak the verb "to read" *(oqũ)* in its causative form *(oqıtũ)* is used with the meaning "to recite," because the Quran is "caused to be read" in the hearing of those who cannot read it for themselves.

Reprise: Recital and dedication. Understanding Kazak religion requires an acquaintance with the way Quranic recitation is "dedicated" to a specific purpose or "intention" *(niyet)* in the heart of reciter or the one who is paying for the recital. When we asked Amal Qoja whether Kazaks recite the Quran *only* for the ancestor-spirits or on other occasions as well, he responded defensively that it is read also for the prophets, including Moses and Jesus. Jolbarıs Qoja agreed. Trying not not to appear to be provincial in front of two university teachers, the two Qojas broadened the reference from the ancestors to other spiritual beings, the prophets, including the prophets honored by Jews and Christians, but it did not occur to them to suggest another *kind* of "reading," e.g. learning the Quran for its theological, moral, or literary value. The Quran without the dedicatory context is not an experience they identify with. When Kazaks learn the Quran, they do so in order to have verses at their command on memorial occasions. The purpose of reciting the Quran is always to honor the ancestors.

There is a connection between the Quran and the ancestors in the believer's experience of the Five Pillars of Islam also. Amal Qoja associated the fast *(oraza)* and the daily prayers *(namaz)* with reverence for his ancestors. Because there is much Quran reading during the month of fast-

ing, and because the *namaz* itself consists of verses recited from the Quran, obedience to the pure way of Islam tends to be focused not only on the soul or religious experience of the believer, but on the ancestor-spirits with whom the Quran is associated in the collective memory. Because the *namaz*, to be valid, must begin with a pure "intention" *(niyet)* in the heart of the believer, even this fundamental worship experience of Islam may be dedicated to the ancestors. As a Kazak grows older and anticipates joining the ancestors in death, there is growing sociopsychological pressure to bring one's devotion to them together with a deeper devotion to Islam. The recital of the Quran, in other words, is a link between the pure way of Islam and the Kazak ancestor cult.

THE THURSDAY RITUAL OF QURAN AND OIL

Baqıtbergen remembers his ancestors, he says, first, by eating food specially prepared in their memory, then reciting the Quran to dedicate it to them. He and his family are not especially devout, but they quintessentially represent Kazak religious life in the way they spend their Thursday evenings:

IK: Äkeleringizdi qalay eske tüsirip otırasızdar mısalı?

B: Äkemizdi — ay sayın dep aytpay-aq qoyayın, tamaq ishilgen sayın lajı bolsa — bilgen quranımızdı oqıp turamız. . . . Bizde är beysenbi küni, juma künderi quran oqıp turamız. Endi ärkim ärtürli, shamasının kelgenine, qabiletining jetkenine istep turadı ġoy. Keybireũleri ayına eki-üsh ret isteydi, keybireũler bir ret . . . mal soyıp, qurbandıq shalıp turadı . . . Din jolın jaqsı biletin molda ili qoja, sonday kisilerdi shaqırıp, üyine tamaq berip, as berip, quran oqıtamız.

IK: Qurandı kim oqıydı sonda?

B: *Qurandı endi är keshke . . . tamaqtan keyin, qanday waqıtta bolmasın özimiz oqıy beremiz.*

IK: *Özingiz quran oqıy alasız ba?*

B: *Özimiz jaylap endi jaqsı bilmesem de bilgenimdi oqıymın.*

IK: Could you give us an example of how you remember your fathers?

B: We read the Quran to our fathers as best we can, sometimes once a month, or every time we eat if possible. We recite the Quran on Thursdays and Fridays. Everyone is different, so everyone has to do it as their means and ability allow. Some do it two or three times a month, some only once as the case may be, slaughtering an animal, making a sacrifice, inviting a molda or Qoja or somebody like that who knows the way of religion well, laying out a meal in the house, putting on a memorial feast, we have the Quran recited.

IK: Who recites the Quran?

B: The Quran - well, every evening after dinner, or at any time really, I recite it myself.

IK: Do you know how to recite the Quran?

B: I don't know it well, but I recite what I know as best I can.

This complex of domestic rites involving food and the Quran are acts of remembering for the Kazaks. Larger ceremonial events involving neighborhood and community are occasional expressions of the more regular domestic rite. Whether large or small, these meals make Islam accessible to common consumption. No perfection is required. Within the limits of one's knowledge and financial means, one does the best one can, and it is enough.

Kazaks believe that the ancestor-spirits visit the homes of their descendents and feed, first, on the words of the Quran that are recited for them at the end of the meal *(quran dämetũ)*, and, secondly, on the fragrance of cooking fat or oil *(iyis dämetũ)*. It is the fat of a slaughtered

animal on elaborate ceremonial occasions, otherwise of the pastry oil[1] that may be substituted for it on lesser occasions. The smell of meat roasting or pastry frying in hot oil is so characteristic of Kazak religion that the term *iyis shıġarũ* (emitting the fragrance) is the first expression Kazaks use when asked how they honor their ancestors. "This is our Muslimness" *(musılmangershiligimiz sonday ġoy)*, as Zulfiya put it.

The fundamental place of oil and the smell of smoke in the *iyis shıġaru* rite is surely related to the ancient Inner Asian hearth tradition where the fire is sacred, though connections that are often drawn between Kazak tradition and the fire cult of the Zoroastrians, beginning with Valikhanov (1985 [1862-64]:177f.) are speculative.[2] There are, however, specific residual indications of a fire cult in Kazak custom today, such as a taboo against stepping on ashes *(külge baspaũ)*, and a traditional requirement that the bride greet the ancestors of her new family by pouring oil on the fire *(may tütetũ)*. The latter is found also among the Mongols; Heissig says it goes back to Turkic traditions of the 6th and 7th centuries (1980:69f., 75). Uljalġas told us that the fragrant smoke of the oil goes up to the

---

1. There is a thriving business in bulk oil sales in every Central Asian bazaar. In Turkistan the bazaar authorities had to move the oil sellers away from the main street to a more secluded spot, because they were making a mess. The everyday cooking oil during the Soviet period was dark and foul-smelling cottonseed oil, generically termed *piste may* (sunflower oil). The quality of cooking oil available in the bazaar is a frequent subject of women's conversation. Imported vegetable oils in plastic bottles appeared in the bazaar in the mid-'90s and became quickly popular.

2. Kazaks never had fire-temples or fire-priests, as the Zoroastrians and Parsis do. Since Valikhanov the tradition of the bride's oil poured on "mother fire" *(ot ana)* has been cited as evidence of fire worship in Kazak culture. (Valikhanov and Banzarov thought the Zoroastrians had influenced Turko-Mongol shamanism also [1985:173].) The most that can be reliably said is that the sacrality of the fire was part of the domestic cult of Inner Asia and that it had ritual expressions involving the women of the household.

ancestors with the hope that good fortune *(qut)* and honor *(nesibe)* come to the household and that it may be "fat" *(maylı bolsın dep)*, i.e. that its livestock may grow fat and increase in numbers. In the Turko-Mongol culinary tradition, the fat is the choicest portion of the meat; fermented sheep's tail fat and sausage of horsemeat fat *(qazı)* are Kazak delicacies.

On Thursdays and Fridays the ancestor-spirits come and stand at the door of Kazak homes *(esikting/bosağanıng aldına kelip turadı)*, waiting for the smoke of cooking oil and the sound of the recited Quran. One Qoja said that this properly happens only on Thursdays, Friday being the day reserved for mosque worship; but because few Kazaks attend the mosque, Thursdays and Fridays run together *(beysenbiden jumağa qarağan künderi)* as the Kazak holy days celebrated at home. The western weekend, Saturday and especially Sunday, became the days of rest under Russian influence, but Thursday and Friday are religiously significant days for the Kazaks and, indeed, Muslims everywhere.

The special relationship between Thursdays and the visit of the *arũaq* is indicated by the word *peyshenbilik*, which in Kazak and Uzbek means "Thursdayness." Much like the English expression, "Sunday obligation," this term is used to describe the *iyis shığarũ* rite when it is celebrated consistently *every* Thursday — a level of faithfulness which, however, is not observed in most Kazak homes except on Thursdays between the death of a family members and the fortieth day after the death. As a regular feature of Kazak life the *iyis shığarũ* will be observed on Thursday once a month or, if the rite has been neglected, after a family member sees one of the ancestors in a dream. Botajan told us that on the previous Thursday morning the *arũaq* gave her a revelation *(ayan)* at 3 a.m., saying,

"Get up, cook the fragrance!" *(Tur, iyis shiġar!)*. She fries her pastry on both Thursdays and Fridays in such cases. Whether someone in the family knows how to recite the Quran or not, the ceremonial bread will be cooked after the noon hour on Thursday and served for dinner; failing this one must at least throw some oil on the fire, so the ancestor-spirits will smell the burning oil. But no matter what the frequency or the fare, Thursday, or Thursday and Friday together, are the propitious days, because on these days the ancestor-spirits are present in the home.

Crosscultural patterns of Muslim piety suggest that the source of "Thursdayness" is the tradition that Thursday is a propitious day for visits to the shrines of saints (*OEMIW* 4:376 [Sachedina]) and the family cemetery (Musk 1989:136). In Muslim societies Friday begins on Thursday evening, as in the Jewish Sabbath tradition. In Saudi Arabia the Wahhabis established Thursday and Friday as the weekend (*CEI*, p. 134), though this is a late development in opposition to the Western tradition. So the Kazak domestic cult is linked, first, to the funerary tradition of Muslim pilgrimage and the cult of the spirits associated with it, and is consistent, secondly, with a more generalized Islamic concept of the days of the week. In any case there is no question but that the Thursday rite is felt by the Kazaks as a marker of their Muslim identity, and that they hold this view in common with the Uzbeks. Indeed, Kazak pronunciation of the word Thursday as *peyshenbi* is an Uzbek pronunciation (in Kazak it is *beysenbi*). This aspect of the Kazak ancestor cult has its roots in the wider Islamic tradition of Central Asia.

That the ancestors are alive is a fundamental tenet of Kazak belief. Even cosmopolitan Kazaks invoke it with respect, influenced by parapsy-

chological ideas that were sanctioned by Soviet science. A century ago the doctrine was justified philosophically by Abay Qunanbaev in the poem cited at the head of this chapter, where he applies the Sufi concept of *ma'rifa* (gnosis), according to which the soul's desire (the "I") is to attain a selfless state free of the possessive "mine" (Mırzahmetov 1996:11; cf. Schimmel 1975:99). This, Abai says, defines life after death and therefore the way of the ancestor-spirits. Far from lapsing into esoteric Sufism, however, Abay carefully preserves the domestic spirituality of the Kazaks by setting his justification in terms of the simple belief that the ancestors are not dead, that they come back to the home, and their coming is serious business, no joking or laughter *(oynap-külmes)* the second time around. In this world we are foolish creatures, captive to self-interest and the frivolity of youth, but when we are aware of the presence of the ancestors on Thursdays, we must put off our petty selves and listen honorably — if only for a moment at the end of the meal — to the elders of the family reciting a verse or two from the Quran and dedicating the food to their forebears. Because of their age the elders of the household are closer to the ancestors; the spirits of the ancestors, being Muslims, are themselves closer to the saints who brought Islam to us; and the saints *(aũliye)* are the representatives *(wali)* of God. As Humphrey notes in Mongolia, the elders have "entered a liminal status" between daily life and the ancestors (1996:29).

A Thursday meal in a Kazak home. At the typical Kazak meal in "profane time," the family eats factory-made square loaves *(bulka nan)*, or flat bread *(tandır nan)* like the Middle Eastern *pita* (Tk. *pide*; Rs. *lepëshka*). On Thursdays the table is set as usual, but the bread is different. *Shelpek* or *baũırsaq,* two shapes of the same pastry, must be on the table along

with the common loaves. The pastry is deep fried in cooking oil (traditionally animal fat or butter); *baũırsaq*, the round form, tastes like an American doughnut, and *shelpek*, the flat form, can be described in Kazak as a round pancake *(dönggelek juqa)* or a "little ash bread" *(külshe)*. When this special pastry is on the table, the ancestor tradition is felt in the home.

The family sits either at a kitchen table Russian style, or around a tablecloth on the floor, or most commonly at a low "tea table" *(shay stol)* in the Central Asian style. The meal begins without ceremony when the hostess invites everyone to eat and the eldest person present does so. The special pastries are consumed with the rest of the meal, which may consist, for the poor, of little more than tea with bread, or, in the case of a prosperous Kazak home, of rolled dumplings *(qamır; beshbarmaq)*, boiled lamb, beef, or horsemeat *(et)*, with cream *(qaymaq)* or yoghurt *(ayran)* to drink. Significantly, however, it is considered better form to serve Uzbek pilaf *(palaũ)* instead of Kazak *qamır* on religious occasions — another indication that the ceremonies of the Kazak ancestor-cult are identified with the sedentary Muslim tradition of Transoxiana and the Uzbeks.

When the meal is over someone who knows a few verses of the Quran recites them, in Arabic, as the others sit absolutely still, a characteristic feature of Muslim piety. Then the father of the family or the oldest person, sometimes the grandmother (if the grandfather is dead), says a blessing *(bata)* in Kazak, as the others sit with their hands opened upwards in front of their chest; when the blessing is finished, all say amen *(äũmin)* and "wipe their faces" again. The brushing of the face with both hands (Kz. *bet sıypaũ*; Ar. *tabarruk*) is a ritual sign, signifying the receiving of *baraka*, the divine blessing, often in very physical ways, as when a pilgrim

passes her hands over the walls of a tomb and then across her face. A *hadith* of Abu Juhaifa reports that believers would shake the hand of Muhammad and then pass them across their faces (Parshall 1994:41) — a variation of which is observable today also among Christians in Indonesia, when they shake the hand of a minister. In Kazak, however, the Muslim *bet sıypaũ* is the opposite of the Christian act of crossing oneself with fingers held together, pejoratively called *shoqınũ* (to peck at oneself like a bird; *QTTS* 10:245). At the end of every meal Kazaks are reminded by the physical act of receiving a blessing that they are Muslims, not Russian "peckers." This closing rite of Quran reading and blessing normally take less than a minute or two. It is the most regular event in Kazak religious life.

Sometimes the father of the home is visibly relieved to have got through the Quran recital in stumbling Arabic and obviously feels more at home with the blessing, because it is pronounced in Kazak. This is especially evident in young and middle-aged men raised in the Soviet era. Mira's husband, who knows only a few verses of the Quran because he was raised in a communist family, sometimes recites the Quran for the Thursday meal but admits that he often lets Mira's mother do the honors. Having grown up early in the Soviet era, she learned the Quran better than he.

On Thursday evenings the family's special bread may also be distributed to neighbors, in which case it is called the "seven pastries" *(jeti shelpek)* or "sacrificial bread" *(qudayı nan)* or variants of these expressions (e.g. *jeti nan qudayı*). The pastries are sent around the neighborhood, delivered happily by the children, who are thus trained in the meaning of the tradition. The seven breads are never given to one neighbor alone but

put on separate plates of two or more pastries and distributed to several families. The commemoration of the family's ancestors thus becomes a community event, even when they do not invite anyone into the home to share the meal with them. Distributing the *jeti shelpek* is explained by Kazaks as a quick and economical substitute for the sacrifice of an animal and the associated rite of hospitality called the *qatım quran* which will be examined below.

Intentions of the Thursday rite. Except when a recently deceased family member is remembered every Thursday until the fortieth day after death, the *iyis shıġarũ* rite is, in practice, celebrated intermittently in most Kazak homes. Amal Qoja confessed that in his house it is done only occasionally, not every Thursday. Baqıtbergen exaggerated the ideal when he said a Kazak family should do the *iyis shıġarũ* every day, retreating to the practical conclusion that if once a week isn't possible, then once a month is a worthy goal, and if even this goal is missed, an unfortunate event or a dream will prompt the memory. A happy event in the family, such as a profit in trade or the return of a family member from school, can also prompt the *iyis shıġarũ* and the distribution of the *jeti shelpek* to neighbors; it becomes a thank-offering in this case. Sometimes the child who brings the bread to the neighbor's door will announce the reason, and a child's simple language tends to reduce the explanation to precise essentials, such as, "My mother had a dream," or "My brother came home from the army," or "Someone died."

The purpose may also be magical. It is common belief that feared outcomes may be controlled or "cut off" *(aldın alũ)* by dedicating a meal or simply the oil of the frying pastry to the memory of the ancestor-spirits.

A Kazak family who had lost the key to their apartment spent weeks crawling in through the window; when they finally had enough money to have a new lock installed, they sent around the seven breads to their friends in thanks for the new lock and in the hope that no one would lose the key again.

Kazak hospitality and the ancestor-spirits. Omar Qoja summarized Kazak belief when he told us that the *arũaq* come out of their graves on Thursday and visit homes of their descendents, asking that the Quran be read *(kelip quran tilep).* According to a well-known proverb, the *arũaq* feast on the Quran in the same way that we feed on the meat set before us: *Ölining aũqatı - quran; tirining aũqatı - ölik* (The dead feed on the Quran, the living on a carcass [of meat]); so to eat your fill but neglect to recite a few verses of the Quran is the same as eating in the presence of your guests but refusing to feed them. It is inhospitable, and Kazaks profess to value hospitality above wealth or station. In Turkistan one variant prescribes that, if the *arũaq* do not hear the Quran being read and smell the oil of the fire, they depart and hover in a crowd over the shrine of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi; they seek hospitality from the Muslim saint, because Friday is the day when Sufi masters feed seekers who come to the shrine (see Chapter 5).

The ancestor-spirits must be made to feel satisifed *(ırza, razı)* or you will have "no road" *(jolıng bolmaydı).* A proverb warns: *Arũaq ırza bolmay, tiri bayımaydı* (If the ancestors aren't satisfied, the living will not get rich). In nomadic times fat smoking on the fire meant that the herd had produced enough of a surplus that one animal could be sacrificed, and the oil of the butter meant the flock was producing milk. Oil and smoke are

symbols of prosperity. Still today the pastries are fried in deep fat in such a way as to yield as much smoke as possible. When cooked in the traditional outdoor kitchen, it can be smelled by neighbors and passersby; when in the close quarters of a Soviet apartment building, the smoke and smell fill the stairwell. The oil and the Quran persuade the ancestors that all is well, and they are honored by the prosperity of their descendents.

The problem of whether the oil and the Quran also "serve the welfare of the deceased" has been noted by Irons (1975:118). Valikhanov said the Kazak phrase, *"Arũaqqa tiye bersin"* (may it "touch" the spirits) in the dedication of the meal shows that the ancestor-spirits are believed to eat it (1985 [1862-64]:188). The two proverbs cited above also imply that the ancestor-spirits are being fed. The extent to which Kazaks think of the ancestors as eating the food is less certain from our data. It is the dedication of the meal to the memory of the ancestors, not so much their "feeding," which is the predominant element in the *iyis shıġarũ* rite. *"Arũaqqa tiye bersin"* means in practice that the family is trying to strengthen a relational bond with the ancestors, who are ritually passive.

However, the salience of the culture of hospitality in relation to the ancestor-spirits means that they may not be given a stingy fare. A family is unable to perform the rite if it has no cooking oil:

> *A: Kädimgi aũqat, sıbaġa salıp, sosın iyis shıġarıp, quran oqısa, soning bäri toyıp, aũqat jegen bolıp, süytip qaytadı aũlına. Sol üshin iyis shıġaradı.*
>
> A: We lay out our usual meal and choice portions on the table, "emit the fragrance," and recite the Quran; they all have their fill, and when they've finished they return to their village *(aul)*. That's the purpose of "emitting the fragrance."

The usual meal of tea, jam, and store-bought bread that forms the daily

fare of many families must be supplemented on Thursdays with "choice portions" *(sıbaġa)*, meaning meat, or at least with cooking oil suggesting animal fat. Giving a colleague a ride home one Thursday afternoon, I was asked to stop at the bazaar so she could buy a jar of cooking oil. When I protested I was in hurry, she insisted, saying, "It's Thursday! I can't serve dinner without oil."

Sacrifice and the ancestor cult. The hearth ritual of oil and sacred fire is an evocation of the Islamic tradition of sacrifice, although it is never called *qurban*, the Semitic and Quranic word for sacrifice. Semantically the relationship is evident, however, from the use of the nominalized adjective *qudayı* (Pers., a holy thing) both for a sacrificial animal (Kenjeahmetulı 1994:30) and for Thursday's sacred bread *(qudayı nan)*; so in Kazak *qudayı* means food associated with Islam and distributed to others in acts of hospitality. Jolbarıs Qoja distinguished the two by saying that animal sacrifice *(qurbandıq)* is offered to God, and *qudayı* is offered to the ancestor-spirits. The meaning of Thursday rite of the sacred bread is intensified by its association with the Abrahamic sacrificial tradition. The oil in which the sacred bread is fried recalls the fat of the sacrificial lamb.

Amal Qoja connects the Thursday rite with the tradition of animal sacrifice that Inner Asian religion shared with the Semitic religions:

> *A: Soġan mal soymasa da, kishkene jeti shelpek deydi, baũırsaq neġıp jiberedi dönggelek juqa ġıp, sonı mayġa pisirip özi shartı . . . Sonı shıġarsın boldı. Sosın bilgeni, qulhu allanı oqısın, alhämdu lillanı oqısın, jüdä dım bilmese osı, sonı jeysiz ġoy. Osı jegen aũqatımnıng sawabın äke-sheshemning rũḥlarına baġıshladım, allahu akbar desengiz boldı.*
>
> A: If [the family] can't slaughter an animal, the requirement is that they cook in oil the seven *shelpek*, as it is called, making little round pancakes or *baũırsaq* and quickly [cooking] them. If they do that

> much, it's enough. Then, even if they know nothing at all, they should recite [Sura 112 that begins] "Say, God is One," and [Sura 1 that begins] "Praise be to God," or whatever they know, and then eat it. If you just say, "I devote this meal and its merit to the spirits of my father and mother, God is most great!" it is enough.

Whereas the elaborate public ceremonies (see the section on *Qatım Quran* below) require the slaughter of an animal, usually a sheep, the simpler Thursday rite of flour and oil has come to serve as a synecdoche of the sacrificial system. Westermarck noted that the Berbers give alms when a departed family member is seen in a dream (1926: I, 46ff.). Our neighbor, Gulmira, says that when she sees her mother in a dream but does not have the money to buy a sheep and put on a big meal for the mullah and all the neighbors, she simply fries the *jeti shelpek* and sends it around to the neighbors. The rite is an inexpensive form of sacrifice and an acceptable substitute for the ideal of Kazak hospitality. Kazaks offer a generous meal to guests, and in the pastoral-nomadic heritage fresh meat is always the best dinner one can offer. Pastoralism makes meat the staple but requires long summers of abstention from meat for the sake of the increase of the herd, so that even the proud nomads resorted to bread and milk products and went without meat for long periods. This dietary minimum is reflected in the ritual requirements of the Thursday rite. The family is honoring the visit of the ancestor-spirits, their regular, if unseen, guests, with their regular fare.

Valikhanov argued (1985:177f.) that for the Kazaks the oil and its fragrance are a sacrifice to the fire, as it is for the Mongols, or, in Kazak terms, to the holy power *(kiye)* of the fire-mother *(ot ana)*. The problem with viewing the *iyis shıġarũ* today as fire-sacrifice is that Kazak has no word for sacrifice except the Arabic and Persian terms, *qurbandıq, tasattıq,*

and *qudayı*. All three words place the Kazak rite within the semantic domain of Islamic sacrifice. Kazak retains no semantic device that would relate the hearth ritual with Mongolian or Zoroastrian fire cult. The term "fire mother" is used only in a bridal ritual that occurs only once in the history of a household, not in relation to the regular *iyis shıġarũ* rite. Islamic sacrifice is suggested by the *iyis shıġarũ* in social terms, but only in the sense that distributing sacred bread to one's neighbors brings to mind the act of inviting them to a large household ceremony where an animal is sacrificed in Islamic fashion. In Islam sacrifice *per se* is restricted to the slaughter of an animal on the Feast of the Sacrifice, Id al-Adha; Kazaks observe this limitation and do not call their hearth ritual a sacrifice. The two concepts are thus tangent with one another, mutually evoked in the collective memory, but they do not intersect cognitively or ritually. When Kazaks "emit the fragrance," they do not think of themselves as sacrificing but as devoting themselves to the memory of the ancestors.

Islamic theology posits that Islam is a simple religion, made uncomplicated and inexpensive for the sake of human frailty. The Kazak domestic rites express this Islamic pattern of ritual simplification. From Amal Qoja we note the concession that the family does not need to know the Quran at all, or not more than a phrase or two. Islam among the Kazaks is not a religion that requires the believer to become an Arab in culture or learning. Erudition is lauded, and those who learn to read and recite the Quran are highly respected even in their youth, but Kazaks know how to practice Muslim devotion without it. The merit *(sawap)* of the seven pastries and a few words from the Quran, even a simple *Bismillah*, is enough.

Spiritual sanctions. Kazaks may fear that failure to perform the weekly domestic rite of their religion will result in misfortune, but spiritual sanctions are weak, and the *arũaq* are basically passive. The consequences of ritual neglect are expressed primarily in terms of honor and shame. When we experimented in the interviews with a suggestion that the *arũaq* are malevolent, and that misfortune will come on a family that does not honor its ancestors, several informants resisted and refused to confirm our statement. Alim Qoja put it this way:

> *A: Íyis shıġarmaġanda esh närse bolmaydı, biraq . . . barġan jerinde ol da uyaladı ġoy. Mäselen sen üyge kelding, saġan men bir närse bersem özing qũanıp barasıng, bir närse bermesem, uyalıp barasıng ġoy. Ol da sonday arũaqta.*
>
> A: If we don't "emit the fragance," nothing happens, but [the spirit] is shamed when it returns to its place. For example, you have come to my house, and if I give you something to eat, you will be pleased, but if I don't serve you anything, you will be shamed. It's the same way with the ancestor-spirits.

Similarly, when we asked Amal Qoja what happens if the Thursday rite is not observed, he replied: "The spirits come and then they leave. They leave offended" *([Arũaq] keled te, qaytıp keted te, renjip ketedi ġoy).* When we pressed and asked what the offended spirits do, he replied, "What are they supposed to do when the get offended? They don't do anything *(Renjip ketkende ne isteũshi edi, ol birdenge qılmaydı ġoy).* They will go hungry if they are not fed on the words of the Quran, and they may appear in one's dream looking pale, emaciated and not quite themselves, as a reminder that you have been negligent. As Westermarck (1926: II,546) noted:

> The dead . . . come not as enemies but as friends. . . . Very frequently

> the soul of the deceased visits one of his old friends, but he does so not for any malevolent purpose [but] because he is unhappy and in need of help, or as a foreshadowing of some future event, good or evil.

Still, there is a sense of caution about the ancestor-spirits in Kazak culture. In the 1950s the mosque in Qush-Ata lay in ruins during the childhood of my neighbor, Kengesbek, and his parents warned him to stay away from it because of the *arũaq* who inhabited it.

In the 1860s Valikhanov wrote that the Kazaks are afraid of the wrath of their ancestors, and he cited the terms *kesir* and *kesapat* (harm, evil) as the feared consequence of failure to honor the ancestors (1985:187f.). However, the ancestor-spirits themselves do not intervene malevolently against their descendents. The most that can be said is that failure to walk in the pure way of Islam according to the "Muslimness" of one's ancestors leaves one fair prey to evil spirits *(jin-shaytan)*. Fear of death in childbirth is felt by women who are not able to hold an expensive Quran recital during their pregnancy. Like the Kazak elders who refuse to sanction an improper marriage, the ancestor-spirits may turn their backs instead of giving their blessing. The sorry economic state of the new nation today is sometimes attributed to this spiritual cause; so it is not surprising that President Nursultan Nazarbaev has countered such criticism by reminding the country that Kazakstan achieved independence because of the support of the ancestor-spirits. A letter printed in the official journal of the Kazak Mufti's office in Almaty reprimands a Kazak woman distraught by the Christian marriages of her two daughters to Russians, reminding her that their fate would have been less calamitous if she had taught them to "emit the fragrance" *(osı shangıraqta musılmanshılıqtıng bir iyis shıqpaġan)*. In the end it is not the ancestor-spirits who are vindictive, causing misfor-

tune. The Kazaks have Islamized their concept of the spirit-world: the *jinns* are evil, and the *arũaq* cannot be, because they are Muslim.

Unusual individuals may suffer from what Botajan called the "sickness of the ancestor-spirits" *(arũaq aũrũı)*. The *arũaq* "press" *(qısadı)* the person to change their ways. When chest pain or kidney problems are interpreted as signs of this kind of "pressure," it is a case less of punishment than of special calling in which the spirits are presenting difficulties *(mayıp etũ)* until the person accept a new vocation as a healer in the ancestral way (see discussion of the "shaman's sickness" in Chapter 6). For the Kazaks in general, the primary sanction against neglect of ancestor cult is shame *(uyat)* and a general fear of misfortune when anyone — living or dead — is shamed. The ancestors thus participate in the Kazak culture of honor and shame, which are the foundations of social morality.

Comparative perspectives. Whatever Inner Asian hearth ritual and ancestor cult may be said to have existed before the coming of Islam, it has undergone substantial Islamization in the case of the Kazaks. Archaic traditions can be only minimally documented. One 13th-century testimony tells us that the medieval Qipchaqs put out food for the dead at cemeteries (Golden 1996a:11f.). The Mongols poured libations of milk to household spirits (Heissig 1980:7). The Kazaks do not have either of these practices today; as far as we know, they never did.

The Kazak custom of "dedicating" funerary meals to the dead is paralleled more obviously in Muslim practices elsewhere. "Ritual meals and the distribution of blessed food are especially common in the popular Islams of South and Southeast Asia" (*OEMIW* 3:338 [Woodward]), where small, flat pancakes called *apam* in the Malay languages are associated with funerary

rites (*OEMIW* 3:351 [Bowen]; Geertz 1960:71,127), and "baking special pastry as a sacrifice for the dead" is a feature of Muslim life in Lebanon also (*OEMIW* 2:36 [Denny]). Westermarck reported that in Morocco, "The dead are said to visit their former homes on Thursdays; . . . their families should therefore have good food for supper every Thursday" (1926, II:534), including thin bread called *rġaif* (p. 483). Similar practices occur in India, Afghanistan, and Palestine (p. 534ff.).

Such wide diffusion of similar ancestor practices is strong evidence that the Kazak practice is grounded proximately in the Muslim funerary tradition. Religious concepts and customs with thin roots in the deep recesses of regional or local cultures often turn out to be widely dispersed across the Muslim world.

Goldziher's classic article on the veneration of the dead in Islam demonstrates that sacrifice at graves was widely practiced a century ago (1966 [1888]). If these practices also happen to have been present in Inner Asian religion before Islam, the assimilation of the Islamic funerary cult was surely easier. In time the local ancestor cult became so thoroughly colored by Muslim lifeways that the local form was surmerged beneath it and, indeed, forgotten.

Muḥammadrayim, a barber of Turkistan and a Qoja who identifies with the Uzbeks, is contemptous of Kazaks for their lack of discipline in remembering their ancestors: "In my house I recited the Quran this [Thursday] morning for my *ata-babalar*, and my wife is preparing the bread right now, but these Kazaks — aah!" he said dismissively with a wave of the razor as I sat in his barber chair. The fact that the ancestor practices of the Kazaks are observed also by their Uzbek neighbors, whom Kazaks admire

for their religiosity, makes the Thursday rite a sign for them of their Muslim identity. The Qojas, the guarantors of the way of Islam among the Kazaks, observe it also. It is notable that Uzbek food is served at Kazak memorial meals also. A comparative study of Uzbek ancestor practices from southern Kazakstan to northern Afghanistan would be a valuable contribution to the understanding of domestic religion in Inner Asia.

Kazak ancestor veneration? In the Thursday evening blessing *(bata)* there is no recital of the names of individual ancestors and no mention of the seven ancestors *(jeti ata)* or one's horde or clan as a special class of ancestor-spirits. Instead the spirits are invoked collectively as "the spirits of our forefathers" *(ata-babalarımızdıng arũaġı)*, and sometimes foremothers are mentioned as well *(ata-analarımızdıng arũaġı)*. This is not ancestor veneration or ancestor worship in any familiar sense. It is better described as a spiritual kinship rite, a weekly enactment of the communion of the Kazak family across the generations. This kinship rite is defined in the collective memory in such a way that the dead are experienced -- or simply thought of -- as meeting with the living over the Thursday evening meal. No conscious experience of their presence is prescribed, and there is no divination or summoning of the spirits in the rite. The resonance of the Quran and the fragrance of the oil speak for themselves.

The "communion of the saints" in the Catholic tradition (cf. Hebrews 12:1), with its credal and liturgical invocations in verbal form, is closer to the Kazak experience of the memory of the ancestors than is "ancestor veneration" in "animistic" contexts. In their Thursday rite the Kazaks do not put food out at tombs as the medieval Qipchaqs, their forebears, did (Golden 1996a:12), nor do they expect the spirits to eat the funerary meal,

as the Karo Bataks in Sumatra do when they leave plates of food in the rafters of the house or at the cemetery. Nor do the Kazaks have clan temples, as among the Chinese; they do not have wall hangings representing the ancestors, nor gold plates of ancestral names, nor candles burning before them, nor the custom of prostration before images of the ancestors (Yang 1945:93; cf. *ADLR*, pp. 30–33 [Odell and Schwartzbaum]; pp. 164–168 [Overmyer]). Though all Asian ancestor practices may well come from the same pre-historic roots, Kazak religion cannot properly be lumped with the others as ancestor veneration, since it lacks the above mentioned features.

One modern development is that Kazak households display photo portraits of the husband's deceased father and mother at the top of the family's best carpet, which is hung on a wall in the largest room of the house.[1] With this exception, usually blamed on Russian influence, Kazaks do not have household shrines and do not venerate ancestors personalistically. The Thursday rite is practiced faithfully by the Qojas and Uzbeks also, thus invalidating simplistic interpretations which would make good Muslims of the Qojas and Uzbeks but animistic ancestor-worshippers of the Kazaks. It is not ancestor veneration but the collective memory of the Muslimness of

---

1. We visited one Qoja home where, in accordance with Islamic prohibitions against images, photos of the deceased father and mother were not displayed, but such scruples are rare. Islamic iconoclasm is more clearly evident when Kazaks disparage Russian cemeteries because of the photo portraits embedded in Russian tombstones, though they have assimilated the practice also. Kazak attitudes are inconsistent and, in general, ignore the prohibition. Alim Qoja first refused to have me take his picture but later relented when Sızdızova asked him if he had had his picture taken for his passport, which all citizens must do. He laughed, conceded the case, agreed I should bring my camera, and was waiting for me the next evening, carefully dressed in Muslim fashion, obviously eager to be photographed (see illustrations before page 1). However, a painting of a likeness of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi displayed in the Yasawi University administration building was criticized during a political campaign and was later removed in favor of a painting of the Yasawi Shrine.

the ancestors that defines Kazak religion.

Reprise: A Muslim ancestor cult. For the Kazaks the Thursday domestic rite and other culinary practices of the Muslim tradition are definitive markers of their *musılmanshılıq*, the Muslim life. Even in urban, russified households where observance may be more lax than in Turkistan, the sacred meals are acknowledged as ideals of Kazak culture. To fail to attend the mosque may be felt as a deficiency and technically a sin *(künä)*, but to fail to "emit the fragrance" is shameful *(uyat)* and blameworthy *(obal)*. Shame more strongly than sin, community sanctions more than the Shariah, motivate Kazak religious life. That the Kazaks remember their ancestors not only with a meal but with the recital of the Quran (*quranmen eske alũ*, lit. to remember with the Quran) makes the ancestor cult a sign to them of their Muslim identity. As one remembers one's ancestors and feeds them on the words of the Islamic holy book and the fragrance of the oil, one also remembers that they were Muslims and that this is a Muslim family. The relationship of these practices or lack thereof to Islamic orthopraxy is an issue that matters to visiting Muslim scholars and Orientalists but is seldom at issue in Kazak homes.

It is axiomatic that culture is shared; so it is what one's neighbors, relatives, and mentors do that matters in Turkistan. Neither the Shariah on the one hand, nor personal or political perspectives of belief or unbelief on the other, affect the extent or cultural salience of the ancestor cult. Neglect of the ancestors and, by extension, of one's living mother, father, and grandparents, is inconceivable even to the best Marxist-Leninist. And for spiritually sensitive persons, awareness of one's own mortality is a sanction against neglect of the ancestors; as Uljalġas put it, "I do it because I will

become an *arũaq*, too" *(Men de osınday arũaq bop ketem ġoy dep)*. So whether or not personal belief had been attenuated by scepticism or the "scientific atheism" of the Soviet period, our informants were never contemptuous of "emitting the fragrance." Even those tending toward Western or Russian lifeways practice the *iyis shıġarũ* at least to the extent of serving the *baũırsaq* pastry as occasional fare at the table, and to bake it they must "emit the fragrance." Kazak religion can be as simple as baking your daily bread.

OCCASIONAL CEREMONIAL MEALS

In any neighborhood in Turkistan it happens every other week or so throughout the summer, sometimes several days running. A family sends a boy or young man around the neighborhood to invite everyone to a *qatım quran* in the evening. Invitations must be honored except in the case of sickness or when the invited party himself has guests in his home, but attendance is never viewed as an onerous duty. The occasion is a convivial social event and a free meal with roast lamb and pilaf. In contrast to the Thursday rite, when bread is distributed to the neighbors so as not to have to invite them in, the *qatım quran* is an expansive and expensive occasion of hospitality, a second category of memorial ritual. One or more mullahs are invited to be present to recite the Quran in style.

Qatım quran (Uz. *qatim*) comes from the Arabic *khatmat al-Qur'ān* (colloq. *khatam quran*), a complete recitation of the Quran from beginning to end, a meritorious act traditionally accomplished in eight nights (Denny 1985:399; *EINE* 4:1112f.) or during the 30 nights of Ramazan (*OEMIW* 3:397

[Denny]). The requirement of a complete recitation is acknowledged in formal Kazak definitions (*QTTS* 6:153), but in practice it is a much less rigorous ceremony. Even in Egypt, the heartland of stylized Quranic recitation (*EI* 4:1112f.), the ideal is compromised, and among Kazaks and Uzbeks in Turkistan the evening recitation lasts a half hour or less.

Because the Central Asian *qatım quran* is a public event, it was suppressed during the Soviet period, and the private family rite on Thursday served in its place. Now, however, families try to save enough money to put on a big spread for a *qatım quran*. Early on in our stay a boy came to our house and told us to come to their *qatın* [sic] *quran*, mispronouncing the Arabic term and thereby mistakenly suggesting that the event was only for women *(qatın)*. Through the revival of public recitals children are again learning Islam in their own homes.[1]

In our neighborhood the *qatım quran* was mostly an Uzbek practice, though Kazak neighbors attended; social class is more likely to restrict invitations than ethnicity. The *tasattıq* (Ar. *tasadduq*) is a variation on the *qatım quran* and is common in Kazak villages, organized by the village elders, not by a family (*QTAPS*, p. 169), and featuring an extended Quran recital by all the mullahs of the community. Its purpose is to deal with public emergencies and ward off evil (Kenjeahmetulı 1994:46). The term *tasattıq* refers to the sacrificial animal, which is paid for by a collection in the community; or the sacrifice may also be called *qudayı*, the Turko-Per-

---

1. In traditional Islam children learned Quranic recitation at an early age. In this case the *khatam* may also be a celebratory event for parents to show them off (*OEMIW* 3:351 [Bowen]). I have not observed Kazak children reciting the Quran. This form of religious enculturation fell out of practice during the Soviet period.

sian term. The village of Qush Ata held such a ceremony in 1996 to ward off the feared effects of the Hyakutake comet. Rainmaking is another common purpose of this ceremony.

The *qatım quran* and *tasattıq* are occasional rites because they are held only with a specific "intention" *(niyet)* in mind. As a neighbor explained, "The basis of the *qatım quran* is that it is dedicated to something" *(Qatım quran degende birnärsege bağıshtap beredi ġoy negizi).* At the *qatım quran* the intention may not be mentioned at the ceremony, though the invited guests know what it is. Uzbek neighbors of ours sent their son around to invite the neighborhood to a *qatım quran* one summer evening. The hosts did not announce the purpose, and it was never mentioned by the elders who recited the Quran and said blessings after the dinner, but our daughters knew from the neighborhood gossip that the family hoped to sell their house and that God would bless them with a buyer.

Comparison with the family rite on Thursdays suggests that the latter is an attempt to reproduce on a smaller scale the spiritual ambience of the *qatım quran.* Instead of a professional mullah, a family member recites the Quran haltingly, and bread is sent around to the neighbors instead of inviting them in for meat. The Quran and the fat of the land are dedicated to the ancestors in both cases, and the food always includes *baũırsaq,* the fried pastry. Both the *qatım quran* and the *iyis shıġarũ* conclude with a blessing in Kazak. However brief the Quran retical and blessing may be at the Thursday household rite, the family reproduces the *qatım quran* pattern for itself without benefit of neighbors and mullahs. In both cases the Quran recital binds the family to Islam and to the memory of the ancestor-spirits.

The Central Asian *iyis shığarũ* and *qatım quran* bear comparison with the Javanese *slametan* rite classically described by Geertz (1960:11-15). In Java the "aroma of the food at the *slametan*" is offered to "pacify [the spirits] so they will not disturb the living" (p. 14). The Kazak ancestor-spirits are not considered dangerous, nefarious influence being feared from the "jinn-satans" rather than the ancestor-spirits, but the spirits must be "satisfied" (Kz. *ırza*). In both Indonesia and Central Asia the "aroma of the food" is affectively important. In both places formal speech includes both Arabic and vernacular cadences, the postures of recital and blessing are similar, and an "intention" *(niyet)* of the host family is expressed or implicitly understood. The *qatım quran* is a more talkative social occasion than the Javanese *slametan*, but in both cultures it is neighbors who are invited, and attendance is obligatory on short notice. Such substantial similarity in widely disparate societies is best accounted for in terms of the diffusion of an Islamic cultural pattern, and the minor variations in terms of local influences.

THE FUNERAL CYCLE AND MEMORIAL FEAST

The household and neighborhood memorial meals discussed above derive their inspiration from the Muslim cycle of funerary meals. In Chapter 3 the Muslim funeral *(janaza)* was identified as an important marker of Muslim lifeways among the Kazaks. After the funeral itself, the cycle of memorial feasts (Turkic *as*, food) is a series of prescribed ritual meals in remembrance of the dead (Kenjeahmetulı 1994:4-5). Although the Shariah specifies that mourning be limited to three days, or four months and ten days for a

widow, the practice of extended memorial feasts for the dead is known across the Muslim world (*OEMIW* 2:36 [Denny]) and is a universal marker of Muslim identity in Central Asia. The Turkmen tradition of "keeping the death days" is indistinguishable from the Kazak (Irons 1975:118). The Karakalpak *as*, also essentially identical to the Kazak form, was well described in a propagandistic though descriptively accurate Soviet-era article (Esbergenov 1964). We know that the Kazaks celebrated Islamic funerary banquets at least from the early 19th century (Lévchine 1832).

Kazaks "give" the memorial feast (*as berũ*, to give food) with the definite implication of an indirect object, for the *as* is given or dedicated to the spirit of the deceased *(ölgen arũaġına berũ/baġıshtaũ).* As in most Muslim societies, the Kazaks do this on the seventh, fortieth and sometimes the hundredth day after the death of a family member, on each Thursday between the seventh and fortieth days, and again on the anniversary of death for as many years as the memory of the ancestor endures and the family can afford it. Usually the word *as* is reserved for the feast on the anniversary of death or many years later and is the most elaborate feast of all. The intervening feasts are called by their numerical names: to "give the seventh/fortieth/hundredth" *(jetisin/qırqın/jüzin berũ).* The Thursday meals between the seventh and fortieth days are called *peyshenbilik* ("Thursdayness").

Professor Qasımjanov of the Kazak National University in Almaty told me in 1995 how his family, thoroughly urbanized and schooled in communism, had recently "given the seventh and fortieth" after his mother-in-law's death. They were pleased that they had found a good Kazak mullah who had patiently taught the family to recite the proper Quranic verses.

Bayan, the professor's wife, had learned how to prepare a corpse for burial in the Muslim way from a booklet sold in kiosks on the street (Öseruli 1992), and Qasımjanov himself described it as a renewal of the family's Kazak heritage. Even in Almaty the Kazak cycle of funerary meals was not lost to the collective memory.

Alim Qoja, by contrast, is a village Kazak and retired collective farm worker from Chapaev near Turkistan. He says he holds memorial feasts two or three times a year for his father, though he has never been to his distant grave site near Lake Balkash. Alim Qoja described three essential activities of the *as*: slaughtering one of his animals *(bir malımdı soyıp)*, dedicating the meal to his father *(äkeme bağıshtap)*, and reciting the Quran *(quran oqıtam)*. A fourth requirement, of course, is the inviting of guests. Such events may be advertized in the newspapers, and the Shymkent TV station carries invitations to *as* ceremonies paid for by the family and featuring a photo and eulogy of the deceased, always including the obligatory phrasing that the *as* will be "dedicated to his/her spirit" *(arũağına bağıshtaymız)*. An *as* ceremony may be held also in memory of saints, especially now that their shrines are being rebuilt, e.g. the shrine of *Qarabũra Aũliye* in Sozaq (*TT* September 10, 1997), or of important figures in national or local history.

The funerary meal. I have been invited to attend a number of funerary *(as)* feasts in the neighborhood where I live. They are usually held at 1 p.m. for the convenience of guests who attend during their lunch break. As guests arrive, both gates of the house stand open — a large metal gate for vehicles and a smaller gate for people are usually the only openings in the high mud-brick wall around the family compound — signal-

ing that guests may enter without knocking. It is customary to find a neighbor with whom one may arrive in force: men with men, women with women. Upon entering the yard one is greeted by a young man or a small boy or two with a metal pitcher of water in hand. A basin lies on the ground with a few green leaves in it, and the boy pours water three times into the basin over the hands of each guest. Guests remove their shoes if they are invited to enter the house, though many sit outside at tables (boards on saw-horses) provided for the overflow crowd.[1] The largest room (Rs. *zal*, from French, *salle;* traditionally this would have been the largest yurt) is spread with floor-cushions *(körpeshe)* around the walls, and on the floor there is a table cloth entirely covered with salads, fruit, nuts, flat bread, and the obligatory *baũırsaq* that has been fried according to the *iyis shıġarũ* tradition. The bread and other dishes must be served in groups of three, five or seven, not two, four or six; odd numbers signify mourning, whereas even numbers are for happier occasions. A second room is set up similarly for the overflow crowd or the women, who, however, attend in smaller numbers (often only the close female relatives) when a male ancestor is being memorialized.

Small talk and introductions occur, and the most prominent guests are introduced. Those who are sitting near one another chat in small groups, or a dominant personality among the older men or women may command the attention of the whole group with stories, political grousing, or

---

1. Ro'i says that the secularization of Islam was resisted in Central Asia by small groups of believers meeting in "open places, rather than in any fixed building" (1995:15), and Olcott says that "informal Islam" persisted in "small, illicit worship and assembly houses" (1995:31f.). In Turkistan these "open places" and "assembly houses" were simply the homes and walled gardens of Muslim families.

neighborhood history and gossip. Tea is served, and loaves of flat bread are broken and nibbled at, along with walnuts and fruit (usually apples and apricots, the fruits that will grow in paradise, according to tradition); it is polite to break walnuts or slice apples and give pieces to the guests near you. Butter on the table is a sign of prosperity, the fat of the herd. The mullahs and older relatives sit in the honored places opposite the door; educated younger men who arrive first may be asked to sit next to the mullahs at first, but will yield their positions by scooting along the floor-cushions when an older man arrives. As the guests gather, dishes are continuously added to the fare by the daughters, sons, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased, who are the servers at any Kazak meal involving guests. This is Kazak etiquette that would occur at any special meal, whether celebrative, as at marriages and birthdays, or religious, in the case of the *as* or *qatım quran*.

The main dish almost always consists of Uzbek rice pilaf (Kz. *palaũ*; Uz. *osh*) cooked in oil, onions, and carrots, with boiled fresh lamb *(et)*. Rarely Kazak dumplings *(qamır)* — often called *beshparmaq* (lit. five fingers), a mildly pejorative word used to describe it for foreigners for whom eating slippery dumplings and boiled meat with the fingers is difficult — may be served, but pilaf is considered more appropriate and easier to prepare for large groups.[1] The food is brought in on large platters to the men's tables by young male relatives of the family, and the sheep's head

---

1. A diffusion of the Central Asian pattern for the memorial meals is suggested by the universality of pilaf as the main dish. A relationship with Southeast Asian custom, where rice is also considered the food of the dead (Geertz 1960:72), is also possible.

is placed in front of the most senior guest. The *as* begins with his recital of the *Bismillah* (In the name of God) and the *Al hamdu lillah* (Praise be to God), followed by any short verse from the Quran he may know, and finally the *Allahu akbar* (Praise be to God), to which all add their amen *(aũmin)* and brush their faces with their hands *(bet sıypaũ)* (cf. Geertz 1960:13). The women listen from the adjoining room and join in the *bet sıypaũ* and *aũmin*. The senior guest, usually a relative, then carves small pieces of charred and boiled skin off the sheep's head, gives them to guests near him in the places of honor. If he is eloquent he will recite a Kazak proverb with each piece and then pass the platter on. Small groups form around each platter, which requires some shifting of position on the cushions, and one person in each group takes the knife and cuts up the meat on the platter. Then everyone eats from their common platter with the right hand. Conversation continues, and tea is refilled continuously. Nuts, fruit, and candy are nibbled for desert, and tea is served again. In contrast to wedding and circumcision parties discussed in Chapter 3, no alcohol is served at the *as*, or at least no vodka or European liquor; *qımız* (kumiss, mildly alcoholic mare's milk) or *shubat* (camel's milk, also called *qımran*) may be served, but both are expensive and were seldom served at the memorials I attended in the early 1990s. At the end of the meal the broth in which the sheep and dumplings were boiled may be served; it is drunk from small handleless cups (*piala*; Pers. *piyale*; cf. English *vial*) with interjections of pleasure, belches, and compliments for the food and the host.

When everyone has eaten, the Quran is recited by one or more of the mullahs. Women cover their heads with a scarf, and men wear a *taqiya* (round Kazak or square Uzbek skull cap) or *qalpaq* (Kazak shepherd's felt

hat); or a Russian hat will do, such as a fur hat in winter, but somehow the head must be covered, as at all Muslim holy times and places. Those who forget their head covering are embarassed, because Russians take their hats *off* before entering sacred space. The Quran recital normally takes only 10 or 15 minutes and is followed by a benediction *(bata),* invoking the spirits of the ancestors and praying that they will be content *(ırza),* that the meal and the Quran will "touch" them *(tiye bersin),* and the family will be blessed because of the merit (*sawap*; Ar. *sāvab*) of the meal they have provided. In Turkistan the blessing (Kz. *bereke,* Ar. *baraka*) of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi and all the saints is usually invoked, followed by the prophets; occasionally I have felt that "Muhammad, the last of the prophets," was being specified for my benefit, and sometimes Moses, David, and Jesus have also been mentioned, perhaps also because I was present.

At Kazak funerary meals the mullah may be an Uzbek or a Qoja, if there is no Kazak mullah in the network of relatives or family acquaintances who knows the Quran. A young Uzbek mullah who presided at an *as* I attended became the talk of the neighborhood, because he recites the Quran confidently, at length, and in full voice, not mumbling it like unlettered Kazak men. The shame *(uyat)* of the illiteracy of the Kazak mullahs and of having to resort to Uzbeks for proficient Quran recitation is a frequent subject of discussion on such occasions, and even of letters to the editor (*Jibek Joli* [Shymkent], April-May 1991, p. 48).

On one occasion I was invited to a memorial-feast for a neighbor's father whom the family had not honored with an *as* since his death 15 years ago. Now many postponed *as* events are being held (*"Kesh berilgen as,"* in *QA*, January 6, 1995, p. 6). The difficulty of doing so during Soviet times

was cited as a reason, and the financial burden of providing a meal for a large number of people is usually also an issue in such cases, resulting in delay. In Soviet propaganda the *as* feasts were railed against as a waste of money (Esebergenov 1964; Abramzon 1962). Nevertheless, it appears not to be a new custom for the work associates of the head of household to attend during their lunch hour *en masse,* even from government offices. Invitations are later reciprocated, and attending these domestic funerary meals is a basic form of social intercourse in Turkistan.

Recently it has become common again for the Kazak clans *(rū)* to celebrate large *as* memorial feasts for the clan ancestors. Since these are associated not with families but with lineages, they are acts of reverence for distant progenitors who may no longer be remembered specifically in the Thursday family rites or memorial feasts of individual households. One *as* of this kind was held in Almaty and other cities on May 31, 1992 in memory of three million Kazaks who died in Stalin's famine, purges, and war. Another was held by the Sunaq clan at Sunaq Ata near Qızıl Orda in 1994. In 1993 an international *qurıltay* (gathering of the clans) of the Kazak, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek nations was organized as an *as* feast by President Nazarbaev at Ordabası near Shymkent in memory of the 270th anniversary of the meeting of three Kazak "judges" *(biy)* who organized the resistance to the Jungars in 1726 (Joldasov 1996; Olcott 1994:17ff.); an obelisk was erected there in 1997 as a permament memorial.

Thus, four kinds of sacred meals related acts of Muslim devotion for the Kazaks: (1) the cycle of funerary meals, (2) the large *as* feast, (3) the neighborhood *qatım quran* or *tasattıq*, and (4) the family's Thursday evening *iyis shıġarū.* They are all celebrated by other Muslim peoples also.

The recital of the Quran is the central religious act of all the meals. The feasts are related in form and content to a complex of Kazak religious belief and behavior that includes Muslim healing practices (see Chapter 6), pilgrimages to Muslim shrines (Chapter 5), and the Islamic rites of passage I have already discussed (Chapter 3).

THE KAZAK ANCESTOR CULT AND THE PERSISTENCE OF RELIGION

The sacred meal is widely adapted to variable objects of devotion. Evans-Pritchard (1965:94) summarizes the theory of religious banquets of the Italian social theorist, Vilfredo Pareto, as follows:

> Banquets in honour of the dead become banquets in honour of the gods, and then again banquets in honour of the saints; and then finally they go back and become merely commemorative banquets again. Forms can be changed, but it is much more difficult to suppress the banquets.

Pareto argued that there are "residues" (basic domains) of culture, such as eating together for spiritual purposes, which persist no matter what the nature of accumulated or derived forms and meanings. These "residues" are combined in ways that seem inconsistent or irrational to the outsider. For the Kazaks a meal eaten by one's relatives and neighbors and dedicated not only to God and the prophets but to the spirits of the Muslim ancestors and saints suggests the honor in which the family wishes its lineage to be held in the Muslim community. Moreover, the meal eaten together and concluded with Quranic recitation and a blessing of dedication is a reminder for the Kazaks of their Muslim identity. While communal meals are universal and we know of pre-Islamic forms of feasting in Turkic-Mongolian culture,

we cannot expect primal elements, often weakly attested in any case, to explain the derived forms.

Remembering the ancestors as a Muslim people made Kazak religion resistant to deculturation even in the severe test case of the Soviet experience. *Qızıl belsendiler* (Red activisits) did manage to curtail public *as* ceremonies and funerals, but Muslims simply retreated to the home and practiced the *iyis shıġarũ* on Thursdays in private or distributed the holy bread to a select group of trusted neighbors. In families where the words of the Quran fell into disuse, the collective memory was sustained by the simple act of eating *baũırsaq* and saying a *bata* once a week. The place of the Quran as oral event and offering in the family was never forgotten so long as the pastry and act of blessing were maintained. Anti-religious propaganda could attack religious books as fables, but it could hardly attack food and the family. The unavailability of religious books did not affect the religion of memorized texts which had always been transmitted primarily in oral form.

In the USSR religious sensibility was eroded in its institutional and intellectual forms, such as churches and mosques, seminaries and *madrasas*, priests and *imams,* but the communist Titanic could do little more than dodge the iceberg at the surface. Religion could not be destroyed among a people for whom it is deeply rooted in kinship and social ties associated with daily bread and the remembrance of mothers and fathers (Altınsarīn 1884). Its significance was missed by Miropiev, Divaev, Castagné, and all the non-Kazak ethnographers of Kazak religion at the turn of the 20th century; they were preoccupied with collecting shamanic texts and observing the culture of the Muslim shrines, but none of them left us a descrip-

tion of a Kazak meal dedicated to the ancestors. Perhaps they missed it for good reason: even today the *iyis shıġarũ* can be celebrated so subtly in the home that the unassuming visitor hardly notices it. It is part of a pattern of religious understatement among the Kazaks. It is this understated linkage of the meal and the Quran as offerings to the Muslim ancestors that enabled Islam to persist among the Kazaks through the Soviet period.

Kazak and Mongolian ancestor-spirits. Since Shoqan Valikhanov wrote his seminal articles on Kazak religion in the early 1860s, the standard view of Kazak religion has been that it has persisted by means of shamanistic and animistic survivals overlaid with a "veneer" of Islam (see Chapter 1). A crucial argument for Shoqan was that Mongolian religion was the source of the concept of ancestor-spirits among the Kazaks, who had simply substituted the Arabic *arũaq* for the Mongolian word, *ongon* (1985:170f.). Although he never cited actual evidence for the substitution, Kazak scholars insist on the Mongolian connection on the authority of Shoqan and his lexical argument. The circumstantial case that the Kazak khans were Chinggisids, descendents of Genghiz (Chinggis) Khan, and therefore Mongols, and therefore must have contributed something Mongolian to Kazak religion, is also frequently mentioned. This argument is rendered untenable by the lapse of five centuries between the Islamization of the Chinggisid rulers of the Golden Horde and the time of Valikhanov.

Shoqan's lexical analysis also is unsustainable. Kazaks who have not read him are entirely unfamiliar with the word *ongon*, and Kazak has no word for ancestor-spirits except the Semitic *arũaq*. Shoqan's argument therefore depends on the premise that the Mongolian term *ongon* has simply vanished from the Kazak vocabulary since the 1860s. A better explanation

is that *ongon* was unknown in Kazak even in Shoqan's time. He cites no examples of its use. The unabridged ten-volume Kazak dictionary *(QTTS)* contains the complete vocabulary of the works of Abay Qunanbaev (1845-1904) in the generation after Shoqan (1835?-1865), but no trace of *ongon*. Abay was prolific (he is called the Shakespeare of the Steppe), and would surely have used the word if it was in use. DeWeese has found no trace of *ongon* in Turkic- or Persian-language hagiographies of Inner Asia, which suggests that it was never part of the vocabulary of the Turkic peoples of Mawarannahr or the Golden Horde. While negative evidence cannot be decisive, it is supported by the fact that the Arabic words *ruḥ* and *arwāḥ* have been in circulation in Inner Asia for centuries. They complement Turkic terms like *ata-babalar* and *ata-analar* (our fathers and mothers) and have surely done so since the earliest encounters of the Turkic peoples with Islam.

Thus, *contra* Shoqan, the Kazaks have never had *ongon*, but they have always had *arũaq*. The Kazak ancestor-spirits are semantically Muslim, not Mongolian. The Kazak understanding of the ancestor-spirits was and is more thoroughly Islamized than Shoqan recognized. While his ethnographic *ouvre* is immensely important for our understanding of the Kazaks, it does not provide the best explanation of their spirit world. A common sociopsychological origin for ancestor cults may be likely, but in the Kazak case it cannot be demonstrated on lexical grounds.

Reprise: Syncretism and anti-syncretism in ancestor cults. Woodward summarizes the recent consensus that ancestor practices are best accounted for as "the result of a convergence around quasi-universal ideas of death as transition, and not the simple result of the survival of pre-Islamic prac-

tices into the Islamic present" (*OEMIW* 3:352). If Islam itself contains such "quasi-universal ideas," then "pre-Islamic survivals" lose their explanatory power. Because Kazak ancestor practices are comparable with funerary rites among Muslims in such geographically distinct Muslim societies as Lebanon and Malaysia (*OEMIW* 2:36 [Denny]), Java (*OEMIW* 3:351 [Bowen]), Egypt (Nelson in Bowen and Early 1993:216) and sub-Saharan Africa (*OEMIW* 3:345 [Stewart]), their crosscultural comparability is most parsimoniously accounted for by the one processual element they have in common, *viz.*, Islamization. Of course there were indigenous Inner Asian conceptions of the spirit-world (however difficult to document) that were assimilated by Islam. In the collective memory, however, it is not these archaic traditions but "our Muslimness" *(musılmanshılığımız)*, and the Muslimness of our ancestors, that requires us to remember them with the Quran and a sacred meal. Inner Asian religious values have been conceptually and affectively accommodated to Islam.

The acculturation of the Kazaks or any people under the influence of the invasive world religions is reflected in its mirror image, the contextualization of the world religions in local forms. As a general framework, the symbolic interaction of contextualization and acculturation is unavoidable in understanding the how a religion like Islam overcomes and absorbs a local religious system. Where syncretism occurs, anti-syncretism is also operative, as we noted in Chapter 3; in the Kazak ancestor cult the anti-syncretic or universal religious identity is a control on the local syncretic impulse. Religion acquires its integral character when such controls are semantically and affectively strong.

CONCLUSION

"Religious memory lives and functions within the entire group of believers" (Halbwachs 1992:98). Religion as memory is never an experience of the individual alone, because memory rises to the surface when it is affirmed by others in a social context. Like all religion, Kazak religion is a collective memory in at least two ways. First, it actively remembers the Kazak ancestors in a Muslim way and as a Muslim people. Secondly, it depends on the active memory of family and friendship networks eating together. For Halbwachs, religious memory "is conflated in the law with the collective memory of the entire society" *(ibid.)*; indeed, Kazak religion has been "conflated" to the essentials of eating and blessing that are prescribed in the Kazak household and reinforced by the honor shown to elders who embody the Muslim way of the ancestors.

Kazaks have ways of talking about their ancestors in genealogical terms, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. But when the ancestor-spirits are "touched" with the blessing of shared food and holy words around the family table, Kazaks do not use the Turkic terminology for the progenitors of the horde *(jüz)* and clean *(rũ)*, nor the more recent lineage of the "seven grandfathers" *(jeti ata)*. Instead it is the *arũaq*, the ancestor-spirits, characterized with an Arabic collective noun, who are united conceptually with the spirits of saints *(aũliyening arũaġı)* and prophets *(payġambardıng arũaġı)*. The ceremonial context of the *iyis shıġarũ, quran oqıtũ, as berũ*, etc., relies exclusively on the Semitic and Quranic concept of spirit, and the social interactions of the *jüz-rũ* and *jeti ata* traditions are sacralized by means of an Islamic conception of the spirit-world.

In the Kazak language the Islamic term *arũaq* makes the ancestors into Muslims whether they like it or not. When I have reminded Kazak colleagues that Christian influence was strong in the Nayman and Kerey clans before the Mongol period, they have responded with emotions ranging from grudging acknowledgement to a fervent wish that this shameful history might be forgotten. When the ancestors are called *arũaq*, they are conceived as living spirits with an Islamically mediated power *(bereke*, Ar. *baraka)* that parallels the same power resident in Muslim saints and their shrines. The Qoja ancestors are called *aũliye* (saint), because they have the pedigree of the family of the prophet, but the Kazak ancestor-spirits or *arũaq* were also Muslims, and the two are conceived as a unit. The expression *aũliyelerding arũaġı* (the *arũaq* [spirits] of the saints) is as common an expression in Kazak as *ata-babalardıng arũaġı* (the spirits of the [Kazak] forefathers).

Maintaining the honor of the Kazak ancestors by way of an Islamic spirituality is one of the cultural mechanisms in the maintenance of Kazak ethnic identity. The *jüz-rũ* and *jeti ata* concepts served primarily to validate the nomadic social structures of patriarchy and clan exogamy which have undergone acculturative pressures of their own in the 20th century; so they are less meaningful today than they once were. The household rites of Kazak religion, however, are being strengthened now in the post-soviet period by renewed awareness of their association with the Islamic heritage of Semitic prophets and Sufi saints of the Turko-Persian tradition. Kazak religion consists in calendrical and occasional meals dedicated to spiritual beings. These meals are characteristic, in one form or another, of Muslim households in many cultures. Comparative studies of the Muslim

home, especially the household traditions of Central Asian peoples such as the Uzbeks and Tajiks, would further validate this conclusion.

The honor of the ancestors, rather than fear of them, is the fundamental motivation in Kazak religion. As one Kazak woman said, "We must defend the honor of the ancestor-spirits by 'emitting the fragrance' to them and distributing the 'seven breads'" *(Jeti nandı arũaqtarġa iyis shıġarıp, oldardı jebep-jebep jürũ kerek).* Kazak religion is an act of "sponsorship" or cultural "defense" (*jebeũ*, to support, defend, sponsor [*QTTSK*, I:225).

The Kazak ancestor cult commemorates the ancestor-spirits at specified times and places. In the nomadic and then the Soviet contexts where Kazak religion was forged, the concept of *arũaq* allowed for the adaptive sacralization of time and space. Under persecution it provided family and community with semantic and ritual access to the collective memory of the people's engagement with their spiritual realities, especially the ancestors and *their* Muslim identity. For the Kazaks the ancestors are not merely genealogical forebears. Mothers and fathers link each new generation not only with the family tree but with special men and women of the past and the places that hallow their memory. The graves where a Kazak's own parents are buried are part of the same experiential matrix as the shrines of the Muslim saints nearby. In this way the household cult flows naturally into pilgrimages to the regional shrines of the Yasawi Sufi tradition. Along with the Turkic ancestors of the Kazaks, the Arab ancestors of the Qojas are a great cloud of witnesses to the Muslim culture of the Kazak steppe, and it is to the latter we must now turn.

Bireũ oqıp qarı boladı, oqıp molda boladı; bireũlerge oqımay, birtindep darıydı.
—Amal Qoja, 1995

By studying one may become a reciter or a mullah; others receive it as a gift all at once, without studying.

CHAPTER FIVE

AULIYE: REMEMBERING THE SAINTS

In Kazak the word *ziyarat* (Ar. *ziyāra*, pl. *ziyārāt*) means a visit for the purpose of giving greetings, and, as Oshanov put it, giving greetings is a duty of all Muslims *(ziyarat etũdi barıp sälem berũ — o musılmannıng mindeti deymiz). Ziyarat* is especially associated with the Muslim saints *(aũliye)* and the "besainted" places *(aũliyeli jer)* where they are buried. Visits to these shrines and to the family graves at the local Muslim cemetery are the primary venues of *ziyarat*. When people who have moved away return to visit their parents and kin, it may also be called *ziyarat* (cf. N.Tapper 1990:236). A Kazak friend once brushed off my concern that the phone lines would be busy over the holidays: "For us a phone call is not enough; we must go visit every one." When Kazaks visit the domed monument that enshrines the tomb of Ahmet Yasawi, their *ziyarat* is in the same affective domain as their holiday visits to family and friends.

The cycle of family visits during Id al-Fitr (Kz. *Ramazan Ayt*), the three-day holiday at the end of the month of fasting includes visits to the

graves of deceased family members and the shrine of the local saint. If one's ancestors are buried in a distant place, *ziyarat* can be a major undertaking, or, for local people, simply a holiday outing. On other occasions a tour of a shrine, or a circuit of shrines, may be organized by kinship networks or other social groups, such as the clients of a healer. In the case of the Qojas, *ziyarat* takes on special meaning, because they claim descent from the saints; so the shrines are, in a sense, their family tombs.

Ziyarat has its historical sources in the devotion of disciples or "adepts" *(murid)* in the circle of a Sufi master *(shaykh; pir).* In India a visit to one's *pir*, who keeps an "office" near the shrine, can be the primary objective of pilgrimage (Troll 1989). As understood today by Kazak pilgrims, however, *ziyarat* has largely severed itself from the concept of "Sufism." The Qojas, who claim descent from the Sufi masters, still occasionally exert control over peripheral shrines as caretakers (*shıraqshı*, lit. lamp lighters), but in Turkistan their role is limited. The Yasawi Shrine is a museum run by the government,[1] and in any case the Qojas' own memory of Sufi spirituality is distended, as we have seen (Chapter 3). Amal Qoja spoke at length about his *ziyarat* to the shrine of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi without mentioning the Sufi heritage; instead he defined pilgrimage in relation to the customary holiday visit to the mosque and the family graves:

A: Erteng ayt namazı boladı, ayt namazı bolġannan keyin . . . [meshit-

---

1. *Äzirət Sultan Memlekettik Tarïhï-Mädenï Qorıq-Muzeyi* [The Eminent Sultan State Historical-Cultural Museum and Historical Preserve] of the Kazakstan Ministry of Culture.

ten] shıqqannan keyin, kelip ziyanat [sic][1] *qılamız, Quran oqıymız. . . . Niyetpen baramız barġanda, sosın basım bäleden sadaqa beremiz sol kisining [äũliyening] atına, Quday üshin dep beremiz oni, Quran oqıġandarġa beremiz, sosın özimiz Quran oqıymız . . . Sosın äkemiz, sheshemiz, aġalarımızdıng basına barıp, qabir mazarattarı dey me, soġan barıp, Quran oqıp qaytamız.*

A: Tomorrow is the Id Festival, so when we leave [the mosque] after the morning *namaz*, we will make a pilgrimage and recite the Quran there [at the shrine]. When we go, we will carry our "intention" with us and give alms in the name of the saint that he will [protect us] from misfortune, giving it for God's sake to those who recite the Quran for us, and then I will recite the Quran myself. Then I'll go visit my father and mother and my brothers — you know, their graves at the cemetery — and after reciting the Quran there we will come home.

Ziyarat is here defined in terms both of the pure way of Islam and of the cult of the ancestors *(arũaq)*, or as three movements: first to the mosque, second to the shrine, and third to the family graves. Amal also described his recent *ziyarat* to the distant shrine of his Qoja ancestor, Qılıshtı Ata, on the occasion of a large memorial-feast there. He witnessed Quran recitals and gifts of embroidered Kazak robes to the leading mullahs of the lineage. Elaborate *ziyarat* events organized by descent groups have proliferated during the 1990s and are organized as *as* feasts (see Chapter 4).

On visits to shrines the Quran is recited, food may be dedicated to the memory of ancestors, saints, and prophets, or money is given to the caretakers *(shıraqshı)* or the shrine-mullahs *(molda)* in place of the food. Because *ziyarat* is part of a larger complex of Kazak ancestral obligation, the saints and shrines are inseparable from the ancestor cult. Visits to the saints who sacralize the Muslim identity of family and people are part of the

---

1. *Ziyanat* is a local mispronunciation of *ziyarat* which occurs because of aural confusion with the word *ziyan* (injury, damage, loss). Homophonic words of foreign origin are often confused or mispronounced in Kazak. When Amal Qoja uses *ziyanat* here, he shows that the Qojas are rather Kazak in their grasp of Arabic.

experience of Kazak kinship and its heritage. Whether they be the "spirits of our forefathers" *(ata-babalardıng arũaġı)* or the "spirits of the saints" *(aũliyening arũaġı)*, the Muslim dead are living beings; or, for the post-soviet secular-minded, they are at least living memories worthy of commemoration because they accrue to the honor of the Kazak nation.

The Kazak version of the cult of the saints *(aũliye)* is a devolved or attenuated version of the "*wali* complex" which is still found elsewhere in the Muslim world. Egyptian (Reeves 1990:1), Indian (Troll 1989), and Moroccan (Eickelman 1976:169) devotion to the living descendents of the saint is defined by clientelistic structures and patterns of exchange between adepts *(murid)* and Sufi masters *(wali, shaykh, pir)*. While this "*wali* complex" is known to the Kazaks, it no longer dominates Kazak religion or the pilgrimage experience. The attenuation is probably to be accounted for because the tribal context is no longer crucial to Kazak religion, and because a living *wali* (Qoja, in the Kazak case) no longer controls the most important shrines. Now that the social connections between tribes and saintly lineages have been severed, the more subtle architectural evocations of religious values in the collective memory, not active patron-client obligations, define Kazak religion. The spiritually textured landscape dominates the entire religious horizon.

Kazak devotion to saints *(aũliye)* is inseparable from devotion to the Kazak ancestors *(ata-babalar)*. Both the *aũliye* and the *ata-babalar* are called *arũaq* (spirits) in Kazak; and in this way the collective memory of the Muslim saints sacralizes the memory of the Kazak ancestors in one semantic field. The pilgrimage visit is made to the graves of both Muslim saints and Kazak ancestors, and the association between the two provides an essential

basis, both conceptual and affective, for Kazak religion. The "*wali* (saint) complex" has virtually merged with the ancestor cult.

To unfold this tradition I will examine three initial questions by listening to local voices. First, what is a saint for the Kazaks? Secondly, what is a shrine? Thirdly, what is pilgrimage? Then, in addition, the new phenomenon of living, self-proclaimed, urban Kazak saints must be examined; and, finally, the defining role of personal revelation in Kazak religion, which I have already labelled the "*ayan* complex" (Chapter 4) will be further explored in a closing historical essay.

THE SAINTS

The *walī*, God's representative in the Arabic meaning, is an *aũliye* among the Kazaks. This is technically an error of grammar, because the Kazak singular, *aũliye*, is a Kazak version of the Arabic plural form of *walī*. Such niceties mean little; for the Kazaks, an *aũliye* (sic) is a singular character indeed, an irreducible link to the sacred past. The link is preserved in three ways: (a) formally, in Qoja lineages, because the Qojas are, by tradition, the descendents of the saints *(aũliyening urpaġı)*; (b) devotionally, in the architecture of the saint's tomb; and (c) hagiographically, as Qoja families transmit legends of the acts of their saintly forebears. The hagiographical dimension of the collective memory of Yasawian sainthood is being explored by DeWeese (1990; 1998); here only the formal and devotional dimensions will be explored.

Formal division of the *aũliye* into two groups is possible in Kazak. First, the Qojas claim the Arabic title *sayyid* (Kz. *seyit*, liege lord) or

members of the Prophet's family; they are therefore Arabs 'Alids, putative descendents of Caliph Ali. Ahmet Yasawi himself is called Qoja. A second group are the *saḥaba*, the 33,000 companions of the Prophet, who gathered around Muhammad from every tribe, tongue and nation and took the mission of Islam to the peoples of the world.[1] Yasawi's teacher, Arstan Bab, is called one of the *saḥaba*. These two groups are a local simplification of the Islamic tradition of saintly descent; indeed, the definition of the Qojas as *sayyid* does not correspond with usage in earlier times, when the Qojas, as descendents of the first three caliphs, were distinguished from the *sayyids*, the descendents of Ali, the fourth caliph. In the Kazak taxonomy of *aũliye*, however, there are only Qojas and companions, and even this distinction may be ignored. *Aũliye* is the affectively important category.

In many places in the Muslim world the *wali/aũliye* is still a living person, the heir of a Sufi master in a spiritual chain of transmission *(silsila)* and therefore, more generally, the divine friend. By virtue of a holy life or at least a sacred heritage, the *wali* has special "merit" (Kz. *sawap*; Ar. *sāvab*) and becomes an agent of blessing, the local mediator of the power of God (Kz. *bereke*, Ar. *baraka*). When, however, the *silsila* chain becomes hereditary and evolves into a "religious honor group" or clan identity, as it has among the Qojas, the descent group as a whole may lay claim to the *wali*'s status, which is then socially diffused into a quasi-ethnic identity. In Kazakstan this transformation preceded the eclipse of

---

1. Apostolic preaching in Islam is justified on the basis of a verse in the Quran: "For every people there is a messenger" (10:48), which is taken to mean that there was a non-Arab *saḥaba* in Muhammad's circle whom he sent out to each of the peoples of the earth.

Sufi spirituality and helped the Kazaks absorb the loss.

For *wali* and *aũliye* the English translation, saint, is unavoidable, but local definitions of Muslim sainthood — the association of the saint with sacred space — must always be kept in mind. Muslims have no central authority for the canonization of saints; so a saint in one place may be unknown elsewhere. The Catholic saint is comparable with the Muslim *wali* only when the former is associated with local centers of the Catholic healing cult, such as the shrine of Josaeiro in Brazil (della Cava 1970). In Europe the medieval church had "a greater tolerance for popular tradition than it has today, when it is seeking to modernize its image and thinking," and there were 74 well-attended pilgrimage sites in England and 32 in Scotland before the Reformation (V.Turner 1974:188). In Spain, Compostela is a survival of a once extensive Christian pilgrimage tradition in Europe (Christian 1972). The English culture of pilgrimage was celebrated by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*.

It is widely believed among the Kazaks that the saints came from Arabia to the Turkic peoples to "open religion" *(din ashũġa keldi)*. The *aũliye* are apostolic personages, sent out with a sacred trust *(amanat)* from the Prophet himself. Qoja Ahmet Yasawi is invariably characterized as the *aũliye* who brought Islam to Turkistan; he was a *waġızdaũshı* (preacher), one who "spread religion" *(dindi taratqan)*. Such characterizations are not always historically supportable, but this hardly matters for the Kazaks. As the saint *(aũliye)* of Turkistan, Ahmet Yasawi is for them the emissary of Islam to their Kazak forefathers*(ata-babalar)*. His shrine provides a commemorative link between Kazaks today and the sources of Islamic faith, tradition, and moral values. In the collective memory the uncertainties of

history are made certain.

The saint's gift. The Muslim saint has something special or extra *(artıqsha, artıqshılıq)*, a spiritual "gift" *(darın)*. As Amal Qoja put it, the *äũliye* have gifts that only God could have given *(Alla Taġala özi darın berdi)*, consisting in purity of life and a special power in the blessings they pronounce, or that now are said in their name. The verbs *darũ* and *darıtũ* translate in English as "to be endued," and "to endue with power" — the same semantic field as the Greek concept of *charisma* in the New Testament (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12, etc.). The *aũliye* acquired their knowledge of spiritual things by special illumination, a Sufi theme articulated in Kazak terms by Amal Qoja in the header at the beginning of this chapter. His distinction between the miraculous gift of knowledge and the acquired knowledge of study is found in the earliest Arabian tradition of Islam. Because Muhammad was illiterate, his wisdom was self-evidently spiritual. The miraculous nature of the saint's knowledge was ignored, of course, in Soviet appropriations of Ahmet Yasawi as a great philosopher.

The saint's *darın* is remote, and to aspire to know it as his adepts once did is unusual among the Kazaks today. It is not, however, so remote as to be irretrievable, because the gift is spatialized in the shrine. It has also been historicized; the *darın* of the saints is believed to have been powerfully evident among their Qoja descendents in recent times. Nurali Qoja believes that from the time of the Prophet down to his father's generation there were always special people who possesed *darın*. Cures performed by men like Nurali, and the acclaim of a Kazak clientele who believe in the power of their blessings, make *darın* a living experience. Wherever the requisite knowledge of the Quran and miraculous powers surface in

unusual persons (often Qojas, but not always), the power of the saints is thought to be at least provisionally present.

Because he had *darın*, Amal Qoja's father bore the title *Īshan*. With an elaboration by Jolbarıs Qoja, Amal explained:

A: Ishan degen, ol kisi darın boladı, oqımay toqıġan boladı. Ol kisi taqwa boladı, qısı jazı oraza boladı, bireūding üyinen aūqat ishpeydi, jaman söz söylemeydi, nuqıl azannan keshke sheyin namazın oqıp, quranın oqıp tömen qarap otıradı, elge shıqpaydı, el aralap . . . Ol düniya jıynamaydı.

J: Ishan dep, bir jerde otıratın adamdı aytadı.

A: An ishan is a gifted person *(darın)* who is filled with understanding without having studied. He is a holy pauper, keeping the fast summer and winter, never taking meals from another person's house, never saying a bad word, reciting the *namaz* from the early morning call to prayer until evening, reciting the Quran and always keeping his eyes lowered, never going out among the people. He accumulates no possessions.

J: An ishan is a person who sits in one place.

The ishan's spontaneous knowledge of spiritual things is confirmed by his domestic asceticism, because purity requires detachment from worldly interests. Traditionally used for the leader of a circle of Sufi disciples, the term ishan is no longer applied to holy men among the Kazaks, probably because the ishans were the favorite whipping boys of "scientific atheism."[1] So, like *aūliye*, it has been reduced to a historical category: an *ishan* is, in Kazak, someone who inherited the *darın* of the *aūliye* before the modern era. We met only one or two Kazaks who claimed an illuminationist knowledge of

---

1. *Ishan* was the preferred term in Soviet antireligious propaganda for a deceiver of the people — Sufi masters who were said to maintain underground cells of adepts and trained them in Islam and anti-communism. In retrospect underground Sufism seems to have been a figment of the Soviet imagination, except in the Caucasus.

the Quran, and even they, rather modestly, would say only that they found it surprisingly easy to memorize the Fatiha, the Yasin Sura, etc. But Nuraii Qoja lamented that he has had to study hard in his old age to learn what he knows.

Dreams and illumination. The saint's gift is experienced among Kazaks today not as Sufi illumination *(darın)* but as simple personal revelation *(ayan)* in dreams, as I have noted in Chapter 4. Spiritual guidance and divinatory knowledge, not beatific vision (Ar. *ihlam*), are the focus and content of *ayan*. Dream-visions are coveted in the pilgrimage experience. Sleeping overnight at the saint's shrine is an attempt to induce dream-visions because of the power of sacred space -- a practice associated also with *ziyarat* elsewhere in the Muslim world; it is a central feature, for instance, of the plot in a short story by Tayeb Salih about a saint's shrine in a Sudanese village (Musk 1995:184). As distinct from dreams at home, dreams at the shrine are endued with special authority because they occur in sacred space. Divination -- either confirmation of a direction already chosen, or an attempt to reverse a dangerous future already sensed or prophesied -- is usually the avowed purpose of dreams induced at the shrine. Among the Kazaks a woman desiring to conceive a child will drink from the well and sleep overnight at the shrine of Arstan Bab, hoping for a dream that will ratify her "intention" *(niyet)*. A dream may also bear a call to a new vocation, a conversion to the life of a healer who, in the tradition of the *aũliye*, heals the sick by breathing on the patient after reciting verses from the Quran (see Chapter 6). In this special case a helping spirit is sought in the dream, making it similar to the Native American hunter's vision quest. "Indians 'believe' when they see of feel the super-

natural being" (Hultkrantz 1987:30); so do the Kazaks, and for specialists it is essential.

In a dream the believer may be directed to build a shrine, endow it, or embellish it. Tamerlane is believed to have received revelation *(ayan)* in a dream to build a new shrine for Ahmet Yasawi (Qurbanqojaev in Mırzaḥmetov 1996:139f.). The pious man of Turkistan who recently (re)built the Gaũhar Ana Shrine was directed to do so in a dream. Reeves reports the restoration of a shrine in Tanta by an Egyptian bureaucrat whose troubling dreams stopped only when he obeyed a command to raise money to endow a decrepit shrine (1990:84ff.). The magnificent shrine of Ali at Mazar-i Sharif in Afghanistan was built there in the 12th century because the location of his grave was revealed in a dream (McChesney 1991:27).

The dreams of the ordinary believer are minor versions of the saint's special charism of knowledge by visionary illumination *(darın)*. In the form of dream most widely testified to by Kazaks, the ancestor-spirits remind their descendents in the early waking hours to remember them with the rite of "emitting the fragrance" *(iyis shıġarũ)*, as we saw in Chapter 4. "Dream-compulsion" (Reeves 1990:106) is the primary pneumatological impulse both in Kazak domestic spirituality and in the saint cult. Stripped of the ascetic demands associated with Sufi aspiration, an Islamic concept of charisma has become an accessible religious experience in popular spirituality. No longer an esoteric Sufi experience, personal revelation has been democratized in everyday dreams (cf. Hultkranz 1987:52).

Mediation and association. Amal and Jolbarıs Qoja justified Muslim devotion to the saints in terms of the spiritual necessity of mediation. The *aũliye* is a "bridge" *(köpir)* to God, they said. Just as people fear that any

direct appeal to higher authority — such as the Supreme Soviet — will be refused unless supported by someone well placed to help, so also a saint will ask of Allah on behalf of the pilgrim, and Allah will bless the pilgrim so as not to make a liar of his friend. Amal Qoja's analogy essentially reproduces the same illustration used by Eickelman's Moroccan barber (1976:161f.). The concept that the saint is a mediator with God is the basis of the concept of *wali/aũliye* itself.

Apologizing, Amal acknowledged that, when Muslims "worship" the saints *(musılmaniyada äũliyege barıp tabınadı)*, they are violating the Islamic doctrine of the unity of God *(tawhīd)*. If Islamic doctrine is interpreted rigidly, *ziyarat* is "saint worship" and therefore *shirk*, the sin of "associating" the human with the divine. Like the Protestant Reformers, the learned men of the *ulama* at various times and places (Goldziher 1890a, 1911) have opposed the unseemly veneration of saints and pilgrimage to shrines, insisting that the mosque is the only proper place for public worship. The Kazaks also are now finding to their surprise that the sacred places with which they have associated the meaning of Muslim life are subject to such criticism. To think that the *ziyarat* to Turkistan might not, after all, be good Islam, is unsettling.

But widespread belief in the wholesome influence of the spirits of the besainted dead has produced various forms of artifice in Islamic doctrine, and Muslims are seldom uncompromising in their opposition to *ziyarat*. Almost everywhere, popular piety long ago won the day against scholastic monotheism. In Saudi Arabia all shrines outside Mecca and Medina were pulled down by the Wahhabis and their clients, the Saud family, but elsewhere the *ulama* have been unsuccessful and often half-hearted iconoclasts.

In Central Asia even the official guardians of the "puritan" or "scripturalist" tradition have tended to support the veneration of saints, and the new Kazak *ulama* is unlikely to break new ground on this issue.

Veneration and worship present special semantic difficulties, however, in the Kazak language, where several verbs, especially *tabınũ* and *sıyınũ*, are used in undifferentiated fashion to describe devotion to God, saints, and ancestor-spirits. When translated carelessly into other languages, such words can prompt the accusation that Kazaks are "worshipping" saints and ancestors instead of God, though Kazaks always deny this. Interestingly, however, they seldom meet the charge of plural worship with the semantic distinction that is available to them. In Kazak *qulshılıq* (servanthood, submission) translates the Arabic *'ibāda* (Kz. *ġībadat*), which means true Islamic worship, specifically the *namaz* prayers, that can be offered to God alone; so no Kazak says he offers *qulshılıq* to the saints or ancestors. In Kazak discourse the lesser devotion of "dedication" *(baġıshtaũ)*, when the Quran and the meal are dedicated to the ancestors and saints, is thus clearly distinguished from worship of God. But the ambiguous verbs, *tabınũ* and *sıyınũ*, are applicable to both divine worship and the veneration of saints and ancestors, and Kazaks freely indulge the ambiguity.

Even Turkistan's Qojas seldom feel bound by rigidly monotheistic interpretations of *tawhīd*. Amal Qoja dutifully acknowledged theological objections to the mediation of saints, but his heart was in the local argument for mediational necessity. The Qojas, after all, are descended from, and therefore devoted to, the very saints whom Islam says may not be worshipped. The social status of the Qojas depends on the special sanctity of the *aũliye* and the devotion of the Kazaks to their shrines.

Reprise: Bridging the gaps. The "*wali* complex" — social relations of deference and spiritual dependence engendered by the religious authority of the living descendents of a Muslim saint — is defended by the Qojas but is less aggressively conceived by the Kazaks in general. When Kazaks say *aũliye*, they mean something more — and less — than Egyptian and Moroccan Muslims mean when they say *wali*. For the Kazaks the *aũliye*, such as Ahmet Yasawi, is indeed a mediator because he is a friend of God; more especially, however, he was the friend of the Kazak ancestors. Kazak pilgrims who come to visit the saints are associating the spiritual beings who dwell there as much with their own Muslim ancestors as they are with God. At the shrine they think of themselves as appropriating the same kind of spiritual power that is present in the invocation of the collective memory of the ancestor-spirits at home. The *aũliye* are mediators not only of God's blessing but of the Kazak ethnic heritage.

The Islamic critique of pilgrimage cults poses, therefore, a double problem for Kazaks, because it threatens not only their "mediationist" understanding of Islam but their "associationist" memory of Kazak ancestors sanctified by a client status in relation to the saintly patrons of old. It is this association of two groups of ancestors that is the key to understanding Kazak religion. Its decisive concepts are neither the formal doctrine of *tawhīd* nor the theological problems of the Kazak vocabulary of worship, but rather the problems of a spirituality of divine mediation *cum* commemorative association. The saints bridge two gaps: first, between the Kazaks and the powers of the spiritual world, and, secondly, between today's Muslim identities and the Muslim identities of the past. The *aũliye* both mediates between Kazaks and God, and also associates them with the Islamic heritage of

their Muslim ancestors. It is because our ancestors were devoted to these Muslim saints that we too are Muslims.

This Kazak understanding has historical merit. However the theological objections may be posed, it is historically accurate to say that the phenomenon of Sufism and the pilgrimage practices it engendered have in many places been "the main institutional mechanism for the mediation of Islam" (Geertz 1968a:51). In Turkic Islam, moreover, mosque-centeredness is a late-coming alternative to shrine-centeredness.

THE SHRINE CENTER AND ITS PERIPHERY

From the time of the Kazak khanate the Kazaks have revered Turkistan as holy ground *(kiyeli jer)*, and Lévchine (1832:56) tells us that the Kazaks made pilgrimages to worship there. Muslim shrines are verbally represented in a varied Kazak vocabulary consisting, within the single exception of the word *kiyeli* above, of loan words from Persian and Arabic. The tomb of Ahmet Yasawi makes Turkistan a "place with saints" *(aũliyeli jer)*, and the monument itself is called variously a *mazar* or *mazarat* (cemetery), a *beyit, qabir* or *qabirstan* (grave), and, less commonly, a *saġana* or *kesene* (tomb, shrine). Though it is no longer used for the Friday prayers, the local people call the Yasawi Shrine the *meshit* (mosque);[1] they distinguish it from

---

1. In English the term "mosque-shrine" is occasionally used to describe the association of the two to describe Islamic mausolea when they are connected to mosques (Reeves 1990:6; Gordlevskii 1962:368). There is a mosque-room inside the Yasawi Shrine where the *namaz* can be performed (southwest corner, facing Mecca), but none of the pilgrims we interviewed said they had come to the shrine for this purpose. Scholastic tradition forbade saying the *namaz* at graves, "a danger which was enhanced by the erection of mausolea resembling mosques" (Goldziher 1966 [1888]:233). Nevertheless, the

an actual mosque by terming the latter the *juma meshiti* (Friday mosque) or *jamaġat meshiti* (congregational mosque). In Soviet parlance the Yasawi Shrine was officially called a *mavzolei*, like Lenin's Mausoleum in Red Square, but the people seldom used this foreign word, though it can be expressed in literary Kazak with a term from Arabic, *ġīmarat*, a grand architectural structure. Such unregularized vocabulary reflects the anomalous status of sacred space in regularized, secular life.

The most economical way to refer to the shrine is to use the name of the saint as a name for the building. "Going to visit Ahmet Yasawi" *(Aḥmet Yasawīge barū)*, "while driving past Haziret Sultan" *(Äziret Sultannan ötip bara jatqanda)*, and "the repair of Yasawi" *(Yasawīding remontı)* are typical expressions in Turkistan. Such personifications of sacred space are widely known, as in the case of the famous shrine of Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi in Egypt (Reeves 1990:78). Nurali Qoja was familiar with the doctrine of Sufi hagiology that the saints do not rot in their graves but are enveloped in a blessed light, rest in comfort in the ground, and are possessed of a vision of heaven awaiting the last judgment, where they will not have to endure the test of the fires of hell. The personalism of the Kazak pilgrimage cult is not intense, however; the mutual relationship of love between pilgrim and saint, as noted by Pinto at the Nizamuddin Shrine in Delhi (Troll 1989:118–122), does not usually surface among the Kazaks, but many do indeed visit the shrine to encounter the power of blessing *(baraka)* that emanates from

---

Yasawi Shrine used to be used for the *namaz*. Bekchurin (1866; *AT*, September 11, 1997, p. 2) witnessed the Friday *namaz* at the Yasawi Shrine, and Amal Qoja remembers going there with his father in the 1920s to say the *namaz*.

a living presence.

The shrines of Turkistan. Besides the shrine of Ahmet Yasawi, there are other shrines and therefore other saints in and around Turkistan, some of which were discussed in Chapter 2 (see Figure 1). They belong to three groups: first the shrines of the Qojas, secondly, of the *saḥaba* (companions), both of which I have mentioned above; and thirdly, of recent holy men who are being anointed posthumously as *aũliye*. The Yasawi Shrine typifies the shrines of the Qoja tradition. Arstan Bab,[1] whose shrine is near ancient Otrar about 70 km. south of Turkistan, is traditionally identified with Salman-i Fars, a Persian, and so is one of the companions, a saint who is not an Arab and therefore not a Qoja. The shrine of Ukasha Ata, another companion, is a simple well near Atabay (Karnak), about 30 km. north of Turkistan. Both are important stops on the pilgrimage periphery. Qojas will often mention the shrines of their *aũliye* forebears in distant places. The shrine of Khorasan Ata (Abd Jalīl Bab) in the desert across the Syr Darya, for instance, is important to the Khorasan Qojas (Jandarbekov 1994:5), but among the local Kazaks the three most frequently mentioned

1. The title *Bab* is sometimes said to derive from the Persian for "gate," so that one who is called *bab* is a gate to truth and heaven. This etymology is an article of faith for the Bahai — their John the Baptist, Mirza Ali Muhammad of Shiraz (1819-1850) is "The Bab." The same etymology is used by Muslims of Turkistan, though Kazaks usually identify *bab* with *baba* (father, grandfather), as in the expression *Arıstan babamız* [Arstan, our grandfather]. Like *Bab, baba* is Persian (cf. *papa* in Indo-European languages) but came very early into Turkic languages. In Kazak kinship terminology *baba* is the patrilineal great-grandfather and in Turkish is the common word for father. Its use in religious discourse as a title for a holy man, especially a famous Sufi, is known also in Anatolia (Yuvalı 1993:415-419). *Bab* is therefore a Perso-Turkic version of the Islamic concept of saint; so Arstan Bab is the "lion saint." When *baba* is coupled with the parallel Turkic term, *ata,* it means forefathers *(ata-baba)* and is frequently intoned in a genitive relationship with *arūaq* (Ar. *ruḥ,* spirit); hence *ata-babalardıng arūaġı,* the spirits of the ancestors.

shrines are those of Yasawi, Arstan Bab, and Ukasha Ata.

A catalog of the Central Asian pilgrimage centers was done by Castagné (1911; 1951), a valuable baseline for the pre-soviet period. A study of the Syr Darya cities by Dobrosmyslov (1912) is also an important source. Figure 3 on the next page is a list of well-known shrines that are still standing or marked off in communities within a radius of about 100 km. from Turkistan.

At Taraz (Dzhambul; Aũliye Ata), at Sayram (ancient Isfijab) near Shymkent, and in the Qazıġurt area between Shymkent and Tashkent, there are additional groups of historic shrines; and the west-northwest group in the table is really a separate group also, but its adherents are well represented among the Qojas of Turkistan. None of these catchment areas has a center as dominant as the Yasawi Shrine in Turkistan. Sayram, however, has *more* shrines than Turkistan, reflecting its important place in the early Islamization of Central Asia (DeWeese 1997a:8). As the traditional birthplace of Ahmet Yasawi and the burial place of his parents, Sayram is related to Turkistan. Unlike Turkistan, it features shrines and/or local legends of prophetic figures, including Idris, Qızır *(Khiẓr)*, Japheth, son of Noah, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Sayram today is an Uzbek enclave in Kazakstan. It was never implicated as intimately as Turkistan in the history of the Kazak khanate; this, along with the smaller size of its shrines, makes it a lesser pilgrimage venue, and less attractive as an Islamic focus for the nation-building program of the government than the Yasawi Shrine in Turkistan. However, the absence of tombs of prophets in Turkistan shows not only that Sayram is older, but that the sacred origins of Turkistan derive entirely from the Yasawi Sufi tradition around the time of the Mongol

SHRINES... IN TURKISTAN:
Ahmet Yasawi (Äziret Sultan)
Bab Arab
Qumshıq Ata
Al-Qoja Ata
Gaũhar Ana (on the road to Otrar)

TO THE NORTH AT ATABAY (KARNAK) AND BEYOND:
Imam Baḥīl or Qoylaqa Ata (in Atabay)
Aũliye Mālik Ata
Erqoyan Ata (beyond Atabay)
Ukasha Ata
Qurıshqan Ata (in Abay village)
Jılaġan Ata (in the mountains beyond)
Balıqshı Ata

TO THE NORTHEAST TOWARD KENTAU:
Kök Tondı Ata (at Shobanaq)
Qusshı Ata (at Qushata)

TO THE NORTH ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS:
Baba Ata / Isqaq Bab (across the mountains from Shayan)
Baba Tükti Shashtı Azīz (at Qumkent)
Qara Bura Aũliye (near Sozaq)

TO THE SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST:
Abdi Malik Aũliye (at Chapaev)
Saḥan Ata
Arstan Bab (at Otrar), with peripheral tombs
Domalaq Ana (at Qaynar Bulaq, near Shymkent)

TO THE WEST AND NORTHWEST:
Qorasan Ata or Abdi Jalīl Bab (near Özgent across the Syr Darya)
Qılıshtı Ata
Asan Qayġı (Asan Qoja) and Oqshı Ata (at Shiyeli)
Sunaq Ata (near Shiyeli)
Aũ-Qoja Ishan (at Aq Meshit/Qızıl Orda)

FIGURE 3: THE SHRINES OF TURKISTAN

(See Maps, Figures 1-2, pp. 6-7)

invasion and after.

The paucity and poor condition of peripheral shrines in Turkistan reflects neglect or actual destruction during the Soviet period. Located about 1 km. from the Yasawi Shrine, the underground shrine of Qumshıq Ata has been excavated and partially restored (Tuyaqbaev 1991),[1] but the historic tombs of Al-Qoja Ata ('Ali Khoja), the husband of Gaũhar Ana, is in ruins, having been bulldozed by the communists. The shrine of Bab Arab, a disciple of Ahmet Yasawi, is unattended (see Figure 2). None of these attracts a pilgrimage clientele. Other structures immediately adjacent to the Yasawi Shrine have been carefully restored, however. On a hill about 100 meters south of the Yasawi Shrine, there is a 19th-century mosque, now a museum, and next to it an excavation of a 16th-century underground structure associated with Yasawian ascetic life called the Qılũet Mosque (Ar. *khalvat*, seclusional retirement [*CEI*, p. 221; DeWeese 1997a:198]).

Some of the peripheral shrines are now being rebuilt or restored. Chief among these are the shrines of famous personages of Kazak and Central Asian history on the grounds of the Yasawi Shrine itself, including Esim Khan, who made Turkistan his capital at the end of the 16th century. Funds come from private individuals, as in the case of the shrine of Gaũhar Ana, the daughter of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi, or contributions may be solicited from the public, even on TV, as in the case of the attractively modern new shrine of Qara Bura Aũliye in Sozaq and Sunaq Ata near Qızıl Orda. The Yasawi Museum in Turkistan uses funds from pilgrims' gifts to restore

---

1. *Qumshıq* is probably a deformation of *khum-i 'ishq* (vat of mystical ardor), reflecting its Sufi origins (DeWeese, personal correspondence).

other shrines and is officially responsible for 30 shrines in the Turkistan region (*TT*, October 31, 1997, p. 4). Memories of these shrines are primarily associated with the Yasawi Sufi tradition, such as Qara Bura Aũliye, who by local tradition was the disciple of Ahmet Yasawi who buried him, and Aũliye Mälik Ata, another disciple.

Paired shrines of male and female saints are fairly common in Central Asia, such as Zangi Ata and Anbar Ana in Tashkent, and Ibrahim Ata and Qarashash Ana, the parents of Ahmet Yasawi, in Sayram. The shrine of Domalaq Ana at Qaynar Bulaq is a famous shrine of a Kazak female saint of the 15th century (Düysenbaev 1991).[1] While patrilineal descent patterns in Central Asia tend to favor the preservation of the shrines of male ancestors, poetic tropes about mothers are prominent in Kazak popular culture. This pattern is reinforced when genealogies are negotiated for saints or heroes who had no male offspring. But there is no special female devotion to shrines of female ancestors; when praying for the conception of a child, women visit shrines with their husbands, and they are as likely to visit the shrines of male saints, such as Arstan Bab and Yasawi, as of female saints, such as Domalaq Ana or Gaũhar Ana.

The Kazak steppe is sparsely populated, which helps explain how a small city like Turkistan with only one major shrine can be a center of pilgrimage. In teeming Egypt and India, shrine centers are more complex. Desai lists 13 major *dargahs* (shrines) in the North Indian city of Ahmeda-

---

1. Domalaq Ana, also called Nurila Ana (1378-1456?) was the daughter of Maqtım Ağzam, a Qoja of Turkistan, and the wife of Bäydibek (1356-1419?), an officer in Tamerlane's army for whom a *raion* near Shymkent is now named. Nurila's father was told in a dream that his daughter was an *äUlïe äyel* (saint-woman) (Düysenbaev 1991:21).

bad itself, not to mention its periphery (Troll 1989:78f.). Reeves lists 36 shrines in Tanta (1990:78). Turkistan does not compete with these numerically, but its cultural power as a center of Kazak identity is, if anything, increased by the lesser number of competing shrines.

Pilgrimage circuits. A "sacralizing vision" (DeWeese 1997:38) makes Sayram, Arstan Bab and Turkistan the grand pilgrimage circuit of southern Kazakstan. In interviews we conducted with pilgrims at the Yasawi Shrine, one in four said they were on a tour of shrines. Several had already been both to Sayram and Arstan Bab, more had been only to Arstan Bab. Two women said they had just been to Gaũhar Ana. Turkistan is often the final (or only) destination, though pilgrims from the south who go on to the well of Uqasha Ata to the north are compelled by geography to make Yasawi the penultimate stop on their tour. It is customary to overnight at Arstan Bab, drink the *zam-zam* water from its well,[1] and sacrifice an animal there. Adding Sayram on the front, as several had done, makes a two- or three-day pilgrimage with at least one overnight. *Ziyarat* may thus become a camping vacation for today's post-nomadic Kazak pilgrims, like the Feast of Tabernacles in ancient Israel. In the summer of 1997 a group of 40 Kazak students walked from Sayram to Arstan Bab to Turkistan, a pilgrimage of 245 km. over 10 days, and for this earned a feature story on the front page of the local newspaper (*TT*, September 19, 1997, p. 1).

According to one local legend, Yasawi once sat down with his teacher

---

1. The wells at Muslim shrines in Central Asia are held in popular belief to be connected with the well in Mecca from which miraculous *zam-zam* water is drawn by pilgrims. There is a well inside the Yasawi Shrine, and outside the Arstan Bab and Gaũhar Ana Shrines.

and agreed in advance that pilgrims should ask from Arstan Bab and expect the answer from Yasawi himself. A pilgrim put it this way:

> *P: Arıstanbabtan sura deydi, Türkistannan tile deydi. Türkistannan alũ üshin batanı, birinshi Arıstanbapqa barıp sıyınadı, so jerde tüneysiz, tilegingizdi tileysiz, keregingizdi suraysız, sol batangızdı osı beredi.*
>
> P: Ask of Arstan Bab, request of Turkistan, it is said. In order to receive your blessing from Turkistan, you must first go to Arstan Bab and worship, spend the night there, make your request, ask for what you need, and then this one will give you a blessing.

In the redundant couplets of the proverb, the verb *tileũ* (request) implies the phrase *bata tileũ* (to ask for a blessing). One asks by imploring *(suraũ)* and making a sacrifice at Arstan Bab and then requesting *(tileũ)* a blessing from one of the shrine-mullahs in Turkistan.

The Kazak pilgrimage cycle is thus a spatially elaborated experience of the rite of blessing of the domestic cult that has been discussed already in Chapters 3 and 4. The pilgrim asks for the blessing of the elders at home before setting out to visit the homes of the saints and receive their blessing; so saintly blessing at the shrine completes the ethnic experience of blessing in the Kazak ancestral context. The shrines of the Muslim *aũliye* are no longer Sufi centers nor merely sovietized museums, but memorials that ratify the Kazak ancestor cult. The Kazak religious experience, largely confined to the home for 70 years, is finding again in the shrines a public confirmation of its domestic religious values.

PILGRIMAGE AT THE YASAWI SHRINE

During a half-hour period during the late morning on a Friday in June 1995 I counted 46 persons, excluding restoration workers and museum staff, exit from the the main portal of the Yasawi Shrine. Museum staff said that Sunday is the day of heaviest attendance,[1] and that Thursdays and Fridays are moderately popular. Putting numerical values on these and other seasonal assumptions, I calculated that about a quarter million people would visit the shrine during the year. Later a rising businessman planning to cash in on tourists estimated that a minimum of 200,000 people visit the Yasawi Shrine annually. The numbers — 500-700 people a day — are not overwhelming, since many are local pilgrims whose visit may last only a few minutes. The intense, sometimes frenetic, activity at shrines in other Muslim countries, as described by Troll et al. in India (1989), Canfield in Afghanistan (1993), Fernea in Iraq (1965), Gilsenan (1973) and Reeves (1990) in Egypt, and Mernissi (1977) in Morocco, is not evident in Turkistan. Unlike Sufi saints elsewhere, Ahmet Yasawi is not honored with a birthday festival *(mawsim; 'urs)* festival when pilgrimage runs at a high pitch at other shrines in the Muslim world.

I sat on a bench in the shade of the main portal of the shrine, where human voices are muted under the towering structure. Birds making nests in niches in the brick walls make more noise than the pilgrims. They perch

---

1. The Russians made Sunday the day of rest in Central Asia. In the Kazak language Sunday is commonly called *demalıs* ([day of] rest) rather than *jeksenbi*, the formal term from the Persian calender. Proposals that Friday be made the sabbath in Kazakstan are unrealistic and will never be adopted, because the government would not choose to offend its Russian citizens over so quixotic an issue.

on scaffold timbers, left over from an earlier restoration project at the end of the sixteenth century, that still protrude high up under the frontal arch. One feels "scaled" by the size of the monument.[1] It is a quiet place, a tidy religious park in the middle of a busy oasis town. The main traffic artery that passes next to it scarcely disturbs the peace.

I contented myself with the mechanical duties of counting pilgrims, observing clothing and devotional behaviors, watching mullahs, restoration workers and museum officials, etc. Sızdıqova, dressed as a modern, professional Kazak woman, approached pilgrims and managed to record statements from 24 of them in 20 interviews, each yielding between three and 13 pages of handwritten Kazak-language transcription. Of the 24 persons, 21 were Kazak and three Uzbek, one-third male and two-thirds female, half under age 40 and half over. Only a few pilgrims seemed to avoid Sızdıqova deliberately; our strategy of keeping me out of the way produced willing responses.

Turkistan and nearby villages, plus 11 other cities, were identified by the pilgrims as their places of residence. Except for one person from Almaty and one from Uzbekistan, all were from South Kazakstan (Shymkent) or Qızıl Orda Oblasts, within about 300 km. of the shrine. The shrine also hosts visitors from more distant places — today most notably from Turkey — and pilgrimage tour buses arrive on weekends from locales in Central Asia. When Subtelny visited the Yasawi Shrine, she witnessed a group of Kurds who had driven all the way from Azerbaijan (1989:599). Tajiks are

---

1. Ron Angert of Riner, Virginia, made this affective assessment during his visit to Turkistan in May 1996.

frequent pilgrims in Turkistan, annoying the local people with their tradition of begging alms up and down the streets of the holy city. The strong participation of pilgrims from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is contemporary evidence of the historical importance of the Yasawi Sufi tradition in both Turkic- and Persian-speaking communities of Central Asia (DeWeese 1998). Still, a local Kazak and Uzbek clientele accounts for the majority of pilgrims.

The semantic field of pilgrimage. The very first person who spoke to Sızdıqova, a 45-year-old man from Qızıl Orda, said he had come to have the Quran recited in the name of Yasawi and his ancestors *(äūliyening, ata-babalardıng atına quran oqıtū).* When asked why, he responded immediately, "Because this is the Muslim way" *(Bul musılmanshılıq qoy).* For Kazaks the most Islamic of all buildings is the Yasawi Shrine, the most Muslim of all religious figures is the saint buried there, and the most meaningful of all ritual movements is the recital of the Quran on the occasion of pilgrimage.

One woman said she had come on pilgrimage to "worship" the saints *(äūliyege tabınū)* in the hope that the merit of their faith would accrue to her *(äūliyelerding īmandarı sawat* [=sawap] *bolsın).* Others said they had come to "worship" *(täū etūge),* to "worship" the spirits of the ancestors *(ärūaqqa sıyınū),* and to "worship" in the old way *(eskishe sıyınū),* to bow before God *(Qudayġa bağınamız).* Ürmet Täwip, an impressive figure who identified himself as a well-known healer from Shymkent, was leading a delegation of his patients to Turkistan because this is the way of the ancestor-spirits *(ärūaq joli).* Several pilgrims said they had come to ask for help *(järdem, kömek suraū)* from the saints and ancestors. A young woman told a complex story of trouble in her marriage, how her husband's

ancestor-spirits had directed her to come live in Turkistan to make things better; she had received some of her husband's inheritance *(enshi)*, so she had come to show reverence for his ancestors, make them happy with her, and lend her support to the saint *(ärüaqtardı sıylap, bärin ırza qıp, äüliyege arqa süyep kep otırmız)*.

As already noted, the several different verbs for devotion and worship in these statements cannot be accurately nuanced in English translation. *Tabınü, baġınü, sıyınü,* and *täü/täübe etü* are all words that Kazaks use more or less interchangeably to describe their acts of devotion; *sıylaü* (to respect) can be used for both living elders or dead saints. The domestic rites as well as pilgrimage can be characterized with any of these words, because all include a remembrance of the way of the ancestors and saints, along with devotion to God. Similarly, the Kazak nouns for God, saint, ancestor, and ancestor-spirit fall within a single semantic field as objects of the pilgrimage act.

The ritual movements of pilgrimage. Sızdıqova asked pilgrims to describe specific acts they perform at the shrine, and I watched what they actually did. A Yasawi University student from Janga Qorġan gave the most concise statement, saying one comes, says a prayer, and leaves *(kelip bir duġanı oqıp qaytadı)*. When fleshed out, these three acts are the ritual movements of *ziyarat*. On that day most of the pilgrims approached the shrine from the parking lot on Tamerlane Street *(Ämir Temir Köshesi)*, entered the shrine through the carved wooden doors under the front portal, came out a few minutes later, looked around for a mullah, had him recite the Quran and say a blessing on their behalf, and walked away. From the pilgrims' statements, further ritual acts involved in these three

general movements can be described, as follows:

(1) At home, before leaving for the shrine, the pilgrim washes *(däret alũ)* and puts on clean clothes. It is this spiritual purity that distinguishes the pilgrim from the tourist. The impure *(däretsiz)* condition in which some pilgrims arrive at the shrine has prompted a recent appeal for running water for ritual washings to be provided at the Yasawi Shrine (*TT*, November 21, 1997, p.8 [D.Aḥmet]). Secondly, while still at home, the pilgrim expresses a pure or "white" intention *(aq niyet)*, what Catholics would call an intercession, and evangelical Christians a prayer request. It may be secret, or it may be shared with family members, and the elders of the family may be asked to give their blessing for the pilgrimage. Thirdly, an amount of money must be pledged to the saint at the shrine, commonly seven tenge or a multiple of seven. This money, sometimes called *sadaqa* (alms, such as one gives to a beggar), is also called the *ataġan,* lit., "the mentioned (amount)." One pilgrim said he had decided on an amount to give as his *ataġan* as he was driving toward Turkistan; his pilgrimage was serendipitous, unplanned. As their *ataġan* a group of pilgrims may bring a sacrificial animal, usually a ram.

(2) Arriving at the shrine the pilgrim "recites a prayer" *(bir duġanı oqũ)*, which is conceived not as a verbal statement by the pilgrim but as a series of ritual behaviors. The basic act is to put the money one has pledged into the large bronze caudron *(tayqazan)* in the main hall of the shrine. Upon entering the pilgrim first pronounces the *Bismillah* (In the name of God) to express a pure heart. One young pilgrim said his spiritual teacher *(ustaz)* had taught him also to greet the spirit of the saint with the *Assalam aleikum* (Peace be upon you) and to enter the shrine with the right

foot first, a custom from the mosque tradition. Such acts are traditional at shrines and cemeteries across the Muslim world.

Pilgrims climb the wooden steps in front of the bronze cauldron, ascend, and drop their seven tenge over the top (it is tall enough that most people cannot see inside); often they pause before doing so, expressing their *niyet* silently to the saint. Visitors usually tarry for some minutes inside the Qazan Room, staring up at the dome, which inspires marvel and comment. Gordlevskii called the main domed chamber of the Yasawi Shrine the *zikr-chana* (1932:63), but because the Sufi *zikir* is no longer recited there, it has recently come to be called the *qazanḫana* after Tamerlane's cauldron. In 1934 Soviet authorities had carried off the sacred vat, a ritual object associated at Sufi shrines with mystical discipline or "ardor" *('ishq)*, to the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, from where it was returned a half century later in 1989. It has now become the primary object of devotion for pilgrims, who deposit their votive offerings in it as they pause to mention silent "intentions" *(niyet)* to the saint. The focus of reverence has shifted from Sufi ceremonies to the bronze cauldron itself.

The custom of putting votive offerings in the cauldron began only with its return from Leningrad. Previously the offerings of pilgrims were received in a special box (Ar. *sanduk al-ṇazur*) which is traditional at Muslim shrines, and the museum authorities plan to return to this custom soon in order to protect the *tayqazan* from constant handling by visitors. Traditionally it is said to have been filled with *zam-zam* water from the well in the northeast chamber of the shrine and given to pilgrims to drink. In India, the *deg* (cauldron) of Emperor Akbar at the Chishti Shrine in Ajmer was used, according to Hussain Moini, to serve food to Sufi adepts and

pilgrims (Troll et al. 1989:62), but in Turkistan such meals, called *halīm*, seem to have been served in other pots when this rite was still observed on Fridays (Lykoshin 1916:219ff.). Today, in any case, it is the cauldron's sacred water that is remembered.

During the time of our fieldwork, Muzaffar Shalapov, a local Qoja, was employed to recite the Quran for pilgrims inside the Yasawi Shrine. He seated himself on a rug next to the *tayqazan*, and pilgrims would gather around him and ask questions about Islam after he had recited the Quran for them. After the restorations, when the door to the chamber housing Yasawi's sarcophagus was opened, groups would squat or sit on the floor in the Qazan Room facing the tomb to hear the Quran recited and receive a blessing. As in household Quran recitals, the pilgrim sits silent and motionless while Quranic verses are recited in Arabic, then opens his or her hands toward heaven while the *bata* is pronounced in Kazak. The change of languages signals the time to open one's hands.

After putting their money in the *tayqazan*, pilgrims return outdoors and, if the Quran has not been recited inside, find a mullah who will recite the Quran and say a blessing over them. Many Kazaks are unable to recite the Quran at all, except for the *Bismillah*, so the shrine mullahs fill this void. When a pilgrim's "intention" *(niyet)* involves a need for healing, the mullah's diagnosis and directives may be solicited, sometimes involving a lengthy consultation before the Quran reading. Good manners require that one squat or kneel before the mullah, who is usually seated on the ground. A small monetary gift is given to him. Though the shrine mullahs are often criticized for their illiteracy and mendicancy, several pilgrims said they come to Turkistan for the special power of a *bata* pronounced by the mul-

lahs there.

Circumambulation of Muslim shrines is traditional, mimicking pilgrims at the *Ka'ba* in Mecca.[1] In Turkistan some pilgrims kneel at the gate under the rear dome of the shrine where the jasper sarcophagus of Ahmet Yasawi is visible, expressing their *niyet* directly to him. Others touch the walls and brush their faces *(bet sıypaũ)* to receive the blessing of the saint, and teach their children to do so. Omar Qoja described the movements of pilgrimage emphasizing circumambulation: "I begin by having the Quran recited to my forefathers, then I go inside, then worship outside by walking around, touching [the walls] with my hands and then my face and making my request" *(Barıp, babama quran oqıtũdan bastaym, ishine kirip, sırtınan täube etip, aynalıp ötip . . . sıypap qolımmen, sosın betti sıypap degendey, tilek tilep . . .).* Schoolchildren visit the shrine on holidays and write their names on the foundation stones with limestone rocks, which they carry away as talismans. Seven times around is the standard circumambulation in Mecca, but three times appears to be the maximum in Turkistan, and many walk around only once or not at all. Because of restoration work in progress at the time or our fieldwork, the chamber at the back of the shrine housing the sarcophagus of the saint was closed, but less than half of the 46 people I observed leaving the main domed chamber at the front walked around to view the tomb through the back portal.

(3) Pilgrims then leave the shrine and go on their way. Our young

---

1. Syncretic processes in Islam were set in motion by Muhammad himself, who venerated the Ka'ba, a shrine of Meccan goddesses, and by the first caliphs, who allowed veneration of the tomb of Muhammad. As already noted in Chapter 3, the anti-syncretic puritanism in "normative Islam" plays willing host in many ways to syncretistic "popular Islams" across the Muslim world (Musk 19898:224, 238).

pilgrim had learned from his teacher that one should leave the Qazan Room left foot first, never turning one's back on the tomb of the saint. The pilgrim leaves with a feeling of relief *(jengil)* and hopefulness (see the discussion of the emotions of pilgrimage below).

Except in cases where sacrifice is performed, a visit to a single shrine can be accomplished in half an hour for local residents. I once dropped off my Uzbek neighbor, Akim, a welder, at the Yasawi Shrine so he could drop his seven tenge in the cauldron in hope of making a good wage that day. It does not take more than a few minutes to approach the shrine with an intention in one's heart, enter the Qazan Room and deposit the seven tenge, find a mullah to recite a few verses from the Quran, and go on one's way.

For Kazaks who have been to shrines as children in the company of their parents, pilgrimage is as familiar as frying the seven sacred breads or reciting a blessing over dinner at home. Both in the home and at the shrine, Kazak religion is subdued and sublimated in the familiar forms of family life. *Ziyarat* requires no expertise — even less, in fact, than the domestic rites, because a mullah is always at hand at the shrine to perform the Quran recital competently. Even the ritual niceties of pilgrimage — head covered, right foot first, greet the saint, etc. — can usually be ignored without sanctions. One comes, says a prayer, and leaves. This is the unadorned simplicity of *ziyarat*, the most public ritual of Kazak religion.

The motivations of pilgrimage. The uncomplicated pilgrimage of the Kazaks corresponds to an inner state having to do with the Islamic concept of spiritual "intention" (Kz. *niyet*; Ar. *niyya*). The prior expression of a *niyet* is characteristic of Islamic ritual acts (Robson 1934:40). The word is

widely used in secular conversation as well as religious. Parents have high hopes *(niyet)* for a child's future. Prosaic plans, however, are not *niyet* but *maqsat* or *jospar*, plans of action of which one is in charge; *niyet* is always a hope which is beyond one's capacity to fulfill, requiring another agency. Because of a *niyet* the believer may set aside money, buy special clothing, or fatten a sacrificial ram to make a pilgrimage to a holy place. Precisely because it is unattainable on one's own initiative, *niyet* is a powerful motivator of social action.

A *niyet* is always described as "pure" or "white" *(taza/aq niyet)*, never as anything less. But it is pure not because it is selfless — indeed, *niyet* is usually self-absorbed or focused on the needs of one's loved ones — because it seeks a beneficent outcome, not a curse on anyone, and because it is grounded in devotion to God and the pure memory of the saint at the shrine.

Typical "intentions" are prayers for the conception of children or their nurture, or for healing of disease, or for a successful outcome of a business trip, a student examination, even a political campaign. A 36-year-old Kazak woman from Jetisay had returned with her small children to Turkistan, her home town, with a *niyet* that her prayer for their growth, prosperity, and health find acceptance *(öskenine, öngenine, janga denining saũ bolġanına niyet qılıp, tilegimiz qabıl bolsın dep, osılardı a[lı]p kelgenimiz)*. An 87-year-old Kazak woman from Shymkent expressed the formulaic *niyet* that her family would grow up, prosper, and be secure *(öseyik, öneyik, bala-shaġa aman bolsın dep tilek tilep [j]atırmın)*. Ürmet Täwip's *niyet* was for the health of his entourage of patients; he trusted they would show improvement when he treats them again after their tour of the

shrines. A 62-year-old Uzbek woman of Sayram was making a *ziyarat* to Turkistan so that her "Muslimness" would not "deteriorate" and in the hope that the saints would help her train her family in the Muslim way *(xuda yolinda keldim ziyarat qılıp, äũeli musılmanshılıġım qalmasın, azizder qoldasın, qos-qosıp tarbiya qılsın dep* [mixed Kazak and Uzbek]). There was a childless young couple at her side.

A Kazak woman from Qazıġurt, age 39, had accepted the calling to be her brother's successor as a healer and so had come on pilgrimage in the hope that she might receive a spiritual gift to do the work of a healer *(aġamnıng jolına tüsip niyet qıp jürmiz, qolımızdan kelse, Alla buyırsa, ärũaq qoldasa, emshilik qasiyet qona ma degen ümittemiz).* She wanted Yasawi to cause the spirits of her forefathers to "open the way" for her and bring good fortune to her new enterprise *(jolımdı ashtırıp, baq tileũ).*

Perhaps the most striking *niyet* we heard was that of a 56-year-old Kazak woman from Almaty making her third pilgrimage to Turkistan. She had just come from the shrine of Gaũhar Ana, where she had interceded for all Kazak girls that they would live by the Muslim rule of faith and polite modesty *(bükil qazaq qızdarına Īmandılıq, Īnabattılıq tiledim).* She saw her pilgrimage as a vicarious exercise on behalf of other women. The honor of Kazak womanhood (cf. Bazarbaev et al. 1995) is a reality so profound for her that she believes there is a "model" of it *(tübi)* in heaven. She pronounced an effusive blessing *(bata)* that the grace of God and the saints would give health and favor to all the pilgrims that day, including the ethnographers. Although the average Kazak pilgrim may perform the ritual of pilgrimage with less fervor and fewer words, the intense *niyet* of this woman is an indication that deep conviction is far from absent among

Kazaks today, even the Kazaks of Almaty who are often considered so russified as to be incapable of Muslim piety.

The emotions of pilgrimage. Pilgrims at the Yasawi Shrine display both intense emotion and its utter absence, or at least emotion that is utterly subdued. Quran recitals and blessings are pronounced in hushed tones. The quietness is striking. Absence of visible emotion is the norm, but our interviews with pilgrims revealed, in several cases, strong feelings. This contrast between the observed and the revealed suggests that Kazaks may be inclined to hide religious emotion. Their wariness probably has multiple sources, including fear of a *faux-pas* on holy ground, the critical attitudes of townsmen toward the religious ineptitude of nomads, and of Soviet ideologues toward religion in general.

What makes depth of feeling burst from otherwise expressionless faces? Pilgrims said they come away from the shrine with a sense of "floating" or a feeling of relief, of walking more lightly *(jengil)* than before. Residents of the city should visit the shrine every Thursday or Friday, one pilgrim said, and then bake the seven sacred breads at home, and the two together will help them "feel lighter" *(jengildenũ).* The woman from Almaty said she felt her heart had been set free *(köngilim bosap jür).* Ürmet Täwip said the pilgrimage transforms one's inner state *(köngilingdi aũdaradı).*

This sense of relief after performing a ritual act is related to the Kazak concepts of defilement *(künä)* and shame *(uyat),* on the one hand, and purity *(tazalıq),* on the other. In Turkistan life can feel heavy, influenced by the common difficulties *(qıyınshılıq)* and burdens of life *(aũır jaġday)* in a desert town. Shame *(uyat)* is produced either by personal failure or

simply by circumstances which make difficult the behaviors and performances which are required by cultural standards. This heaviness may or may not be related to moral or religious shortcomings, but it can be produced by various compromises with Russian ways, which tend to exacerbate the Kazak feeling of religious incompetence. An antidote for "heaviness" is a pilgrimage to the Yasawi Shrine. Victor Turner notes that pilgrimage is an experience "antistructure" that frees the individual from his or her captivity in institutionalized social forms and the patrimonial social order (1974:175). A trip to a shrine in the company of family and friends will typically include "solemnity, festivity, and trade, all three representing different types of liminal disengagement from day-to-day participation in structural role playing and status incumbency" (p. 221). It also disengages you from the feeling of having "gone over to the Russians." *Ziyarat* cleans you up and lightens your load.

Mernissi's work in Morocco (1977, 1987) has shown that shrines are the only public places where Muslim women express depth of emotion together. In Muslim societies where the seclusion of women is *not* observed and women have no space of their own, the role of shrines as a refuge may be particularly vital. The Shi'a tradition provides another important example of collective emotion during pilgrimage and domestic religion alike (Schubel 1993; E.Fernea 1965). Against this dimension of Muslim life, secularism and religious orthodoxy often join forces to suppress or ridicule emotion in "folk" religion. Mernissi's Marxist criticism of the female culture of Muslim shrines, when she calls it an opiate and a co-optation of women's anger that could be better channelled into political action, forgets that religious affectivity may give more meaning to marginalized lives and make

more sense of oppression than revolution does. Kazak women are religiously sustained by the subtle emotion of "the great unburdening" *(ülken bir jengildik)* that occurs in sacred space. Kazak men may use the same language and are not contemptous of this experience, as Muslim men are known to be elsewhere (Mernissi 1977; N.Tapper 1990).

Tolmacheva (1993) notes that Soviet ethnographies of Muslim life took neither the gender nor the faith of the researchers into account as a methodological problem. (The native language and ethnic identity of the interviewer also tended to be ignored.) The fact that Sızdıqova is a Kazak-speaking Muslim woman and a believer, and so was always affirming in her questions and incidental comments, helped pilgrims express their feelings and reveal themselves to her.

The purity complex and pilgrimage. A local Kazak-speaking Uzbek woman described the preparations for her visit to the shrine that day in terms of Islamic purity: "Before we left the house we washed in the appropriate way, performed the ceremonial ablutions, and came here with our 'intention'" *(Üyden shıqqannan jangaġıday jũınıp-shayınıp ta[ha]rat ap keldik qoy, niyetimizben birge).* Her pilgrimage thus included the ritual preparations which Muslims everywhere make before going to the mosque or any sacred place. This purity complex includes (a) clean clothes, which may be elaborately designed for the occasion of a pilgrimage; (b) bodily cleanliness according to ritual ablutions; and (c) a "pure intention" or noble purpose.

Although visitors at the Yasawi Shrine include foreign tourists who may be ignorant of, and local teenagers who ignore, the rules of Muslim decorum, the two signs of special piety, hushed voices and headcoverings,

that are evident at mosques are seen also in the behavior of pilgrims at shrines. A young woman in jeans with short hair uncovered by a scarf *(oramal)*, or a man without a *taqiya* (skullcap), may be assumed to be less than devout or unfamiliar with the tradition of *ziyarat*; whereas a pilgrim wearing white robes has chosen an optimal devotion for the occasion.

Ürmet Täwip, the healer, was dressed in white robes and white turban — not the usual wardrobe for a Kazak man. A 39-year-old Kazak woman from Qazığurt wore a white head covering and unusually delicate robes consisting of large swaths of gold-braided white cloth. This dress, she said, is a "model" *(ülgi)* of her reverence for the spirits of the ancestors, the way of God, and the Quran *(ata-baba ärũaqtarımızdı, allanıng jolın, qasiyetti qurandı sıylaũdıng ülgisi)*. The word *ülgi*, model or representation, suggests the significance of religious behavior in its relationship with inward states of belief and commitment. This Kazak woman, however, not only displayed a consistent Islamic vocabulary, but in her clothing carefully modeled the "intention" *(niyet)* of her pilgrimage. However minimalist the religion of the Kazaks may be in other respects, they cannot be said to lack inward states commensurate with their religious behavior in the pilgrimage event.

Though the Kazaks, like all Muslims, think of the daily prayers *(namaz)* as the quintessence of purity, only two of 24 pilgrims answered yes when asked if they say the *namaz*. About half, however, wore white: white robes were unusual, but white scarves and skullcaps were common. One Kazak woman from Tülkibas confessed that she does not know how to say the *namaz*, but she came on her pilgrimage dressed in white and explained why:

P: *Osı taza kelgim kelũ dä, aq niyetpen shıqqannan keyin taza kiyinip, äytpese molda emespin, qoja emespin, äsheyin tazalıqqa kiyip keldim.*

P: I wanted to come here clean, so I expressed a pure intention before I left home and came dressed in the clean clothes of common purity, but I am not a mullah, I am not a Qoja.

White clothes are associated in the Kazak mind with Arab cultures; so the Qojas, as "Arabs," wear white on religious occasions, and their wives wear white head scarves that stand out from the bright colors and patterns preferred by Kazak and Uzbek women. With her "common purity" *(äsheyin tazalıq)* this Kazak woman was emulating the purity of the Qojas, as suggested by her need to deny that she is one. The term "common purity" was obviously one she had learned from or discussed with others who had experienced the same religious dynamic. The idea that she, a Kazak of the "black bone," could lay claim to the purity of the saints had impelled her to buy or make expensive white clothing that represented her inner state. The *namaz* may be difficult for the Kazaks, but they have found alternative ways to appropriate the pure way of Islam. In Africa Stewart notes that Muslim dress makes the convert a Muslim even when his or her orthopraxy is still weak (*OEMIW* 3:343); similarly, the Kazaks have emerged from the Soviet period, in a sense, as converts seeking purity.

Sacrifice and pilgrimage. When pilgrims travel in families or groups, they may sacrifice an animal on the grounds of the shrine and distribute the meat to the mullahs and other pilgrims. When money dropped in the bronze cauldron is felt to be insufficient, the Islamic concept of sacrifice is invoked as a higher expression of the "pure intention" of pilgrimage. One of our interviews came to an end when a companion of the pilgrim ap-

proached to say the animal was ready. Alternatively, sacrifice may be performed at the Arstan Bab Shrine before coming to Turkistan. Ürmet Täwip said he always sacrifices an animal at the shrine for the health of his patients and followers. In April 1995 when President Nazarbaev made a pilgrimage to Turkistan before the referendum on extending his presidential term, a sheep was slaughtered by a group of local mullahs in front of the gathered crowd.

At the Arstan Bab Shrine a special house has been set aside where pilgrims may bring food and offer it to guests. The pilgrim's hospitality may be offered in the open air also. The sacrificial meat *(qudayı)* and other food, always including the sacred bread *(qudayı nan)*, are distributed to the mullahs at the shrine and other pilgrims who happen to be there at the time. Animal sacrifice and the meal that accompanies it is especially efficacious when it is offered at the shrine, because the saint's blessing *(baraka)* is disseminated in the sacrificial gift. The domestic rite offered to the family's ancestor-spirits is intensified in sacred space.

Ziyarat among Muslims of Central Asia thus differs from saint veneration in Egypt, where Reeves says sacrifice is not done at the Badawi Shrine (1990:107). But even in Turkistan no one says that Ahmet Yasawi is being fed; so the meaning of sacrifice at the shrine must be carefully evaluated. The problem of sacrificial exchange was articulated classically by Hubert and Mauss (1981 [1898]:100), who posited the theory that a share of the profane is given to the sacred *so that the sacred may subsist* and be induced to share its power with the profane. In Turkistan today, however, nourishing the saint does not seem to be at issue. No one says that Ahmet Yasawi wants or needs the sacrifice. Kazak sacrifice is not articulated as a

negotiation in which blessing is given *in return for* a compensating gift. And animals are no longer sacrificed to free their spirits to accompany the dead, as in pre-Islamic Inner Asian religion (Golden 1996a; Roux 1984a). Rather, slaughtering a sheep and feeding the mullahs and other pilgrims, like feeding relatives and friends at home, serves to express lavish generosity in demonstration of serious spiritual intent. Religiously charged social obligation and enhancement of prestige, but not sacrificial exchange, are the purpose of sacrifice during pilgrimage.

Surely sacrificial exchange used to be more evident in clientelistic relationships between Kazaks (or Sufi adepts) and their Qoja patrons. Today, however, the operative principle seems to be rather that the shrine, as a sacred space, sanctifies the animal, rather than the other way around. Kazak sacrifice is *sacri-fice* in the literal sense of the Latin term, a "making holy" of the gift because of the place where, and the purpose for which, its blood is shed.

Among the Kazaks as in all Muslim societies, the *Bismillah* (in the name of God) is recited by the man (always a man) who wields the knife of sacrifice, and the animal is slit at the throat and cleaned according to Muslim custom.

The hajj *and* ziyarat*: Mecca and Turkistan.* A woman leading the group from the town of Tülkibas near Shymkent said she and her friends were making their second visit to Turkistan. Repeat visits are a clue to the role Turkistan plays as an alternative *hajj*. Turkistan for the Kazaks is the "second Mecca" *(ekinshi Mekke)*. *Ziyarat* is conceived as "pauper's hajj" in Egypt and other Muslim cultures (*OEMIW* 4:120 [Ohtsuka]). Kazaks and other Muslims who do not have the strength to go to Mecca, one pilgrim

told us, have been given "full permission" to make a pilgrimage to Turkistan instead *(qazaq balası, musılman balası öz küshi kelmegen, Mäkätullaġa barmaġan, osı jerge kelip ziyanat qılũġa tolıq rũqsat berilgen).* The devout woman from Almaty already mentioned said she had come for the third time, completing the "little hajj" (*kishi qajılıq*; cf. *SK*, December 2, 1994 [Oljabaev]); she is now hoping to make the pilgrimage to Mecca but first must "pass before these people" *(aldımen osı kisilerding aldınan ötip [j]atırmın)*, i.e. the saints of the shrines of Turkistan. Comparison's abound. According to A.R. Saiyed, seven pilgrimages to the shrines of Ajmer in North India are considered equal to the hajj (Troll 1989:241). But a recent proposal in the Turkistan press that anyone above age 63 (the Prophet's age when he died) who makes the *ziyarat* to Turkistan on foot be given the title *Hajji* (*TT*, October 3, 1997, p. 5) produced a scathing rejoinder in which the authors point out that Islam allows no such liberties with the hajj and that these days old men do not arrive in Turkistan on foot (*TT*, November 7, 1997, p. 4).

One factor that favors local *ziyarat* over the Meccan pilgrimage is the Kazak culture of shame in the face of Quranic illiteracy. As one Kazak pilgrim told us, you may come to Turkistan "with stuttering lips" *(aptaũızben kelũ)* and say a simple *Bismillah* upon entering the shrine; you then pay a mullah to recite the Quran and affirm the recital with a one-word *aũmīn* (amen). Because there is no verbal statement that absolutely must be uttered by the pilgrim, *ziyarat* may be performed as a silent ritual act, which suits the Kazak culture of religious understatement. By contrast, going on the *hajj* without knowing how to recite the Shahada and say the *namaz* in Arabic is inconceivable. As my neighbor Baqıtbergen said, "I'd

have to keep the [rules of the] Muslim religion before I could think about becoming a hajji *(eng aldımen musılman dinin ustaymın, özim qajı bolam dep).* Clearly *ziyarat* is less expensive and ritually stressful than the *hajj.* It is, in fact, a pleasant relief from the hard life. Riding in a bus from one's town or village, in the company of family or friends, or led by a local healer such as Ümbet Täwip, the Kazak pilgrim experiences the spiritual energy of the local holy places as assurance and reassurance, without shame. Best of all, *ziyarat* is a spatial liminalization of the familiar household tradition of Kazak ancestor veneration.

A local conception of the authority of religious writing is revealed in the comment of the pilgrim above who told us that the status of Turkistan as the second Mecca is "written" *(jazılġan)* and that permission had been "fully given" *(tolıq ruḫsat berilgen)* for Kazaks to make a *ziyarat* as a substitute for the hajj. Here is a concept of "writtenness" as Kilani has noted also at the El Kasr Shrine in Tunisia (1992; cf. Larson 1993:546), that defies any attempt to determine where or by whom it is written. *Ziyarat,* the pilgrim feels, is so right for me that it must be written somewhere! The Quran and Hadith and, ultimately, the heavenly books, are the repository of "writtenness" for Muslims, which, however, may mean little more in practice than that *someone told me* it is written and therefore allowed. For illiterates the collective memory of a documentary tradition is more important than knowledge of the documents. The aura of written orders of uncertain origin was exacerbated for Kazaks by the Soviet bureaucratic doctrine that no public act is valid or real until an official order has been signed and sealed. People want to be reassured that, somewhere, "it is written."

Ziyarat as an alternative to the *hajj* is thus a "democratic" version of

pilgrimage, a kind of religious "socialism" that makes the spiritual commodities of Islam available to the poor. For a time the Soviets stopped the Meccan *hajj* dead in its tracks, but they could do little about *ziyarat*, because it was conceived by Soviet Muslims as essentially complimentary with socialist ideology. As the Communist Party took care of the poor workers' material needs, Ahmet Yasawi took care of their spiritual needs. Believers could rationalize the communist attack on religion as a reasonable criticism of illiterate mullahs, etc., thinking the "humanitarian values" *(adamgershilik)* of the Communist Party to be consistent with the spiritual egalitarianism of Islam and the shrine. But whereas the Soviet system, for all its professed beneficence, made people feel powerless, the shrines of the saints put them in the presence of accessible power.

Reprise: Convergence and divergence. Kazak pilgrimage today is essentially continuous with *ziyarat* in Indonesia (Geertz 1960, 1968a), Morocco (Geertz 1968a; Eickelman 1976); Egypt (Gilsenan 1973; Reeves 1990), Pakistan (Geijbels 1978; Pastner 1978; Schubel 1993), India (Troll et al. 1989), etc., and with *ziyarat* in the medieval period (C.Taylor 1990; McChesney 1991). It is a venture into "liminal" space at the edges of daily life where the divine meets the human. Pilgrimage centers are often peropheral: even Mecca, the center of the world, is in a desert. Pilgrimage means travel and movement from a familiar place to a far place and back again. In this sense every *ziyarat* is a Gennepian *rite de passage* involving separation, liminal experience, and reaggregation. It is "spatial separation from the familiar" that "distinguishes shrines from centers of ecclesiastical structure," such as mosques (Turner 1974:196f.). For Muslims who live in desert niches and at the boundaries of Islamic civilization, the way of the "Muslim traveler"

(Eickelman and Piscatori 1990) has always been a walk in the spirit.

Kazak pilgrimage has been detached from the "*wali* complex" of sacred personages (to the extent that government, instead of the Qojas, now controls the Yasawi Shrine), and although there is no longer a "*tariqa* complex" in Kazak religion to link *ziyarat* to a contemporary Sufi experience, pilgrimage remains. In the Kazak case, *ziyarat* is a more basic domain of analysis than Sufi *walis* or *tariqas*.

Divergences from the practice of shrine devotion in other Muslim contexts do not substantially alter the comparability of the Kazak experience. In Turkistan there is less of the feminine ambience that has been noted at particular Muslim shrines in Turkey (N.Tapper 1990) and Morocco (Mernissi 1977), though women were indeed the majority of visitors to the shrine of Ahmet Yasawi on the day we did our interviews. Turkistan is the center of a regional circuit of shrines, but the economic foundations of the phenomenon of center and periphery are less certain in Turkistan than they were in the contexts represented in Werbner's collection of "regional pilgrimage" studies in Africa (1977). Though Turkistan is a symbol of the Kazak nation, the "hidden government" of a Sufi clientele that wields or aspires to political power, as at the Badawi Shrine in Egypt (Reeves 1990), is not an issue in Turkistan. Nor does the intense devotion of love for the saint as a living mediator, which is evident, for example, at Muslim shrines in India, occur in Turkistan, where both the nomadic heritage of the Kazaks and the Soviet criticism of religion seem to be the sources of a ritual attitude of quiet reverence that avoids crude forms. With these qualifications, we have confirmed in Turkistan the same general complex of religious behavior on holy ground, complemented by verbal expressions of Muslim

experience and symbolic interpretations of spiritual power, as one would see and hear at virtually any shrine of any saint in the Muslim world.

The distinctive context of Kazak pilgrimage is its symbiotic relationship with the domestic ancestor cult. The saint *(aũliye)* of the shrine is conceptualized within the same semantic field as the ancestor-spirits *(arũaq)* of the home. The collective memory of the Muslim saints sacralizes the memory of the Kazak ancestors, and Ahmet Yasawi is revered as the apostle of Islam to the Qipchaq hordes who were the ancestors of the Kazaks.

LIVING SAINTS: KAZAK TRADITION AND NEW AGE RELIGION

When, occasionally, the Qojas say, "We are *aũliye*," they are not laying claim to personal sanctity; they mean only that they are the rightful descendents of the saints *(aũliyening urpaġı)*. Eickelman noted that it is more and more difficult for contemporary *walis* to maintain a moral claim to sanctity (1976:161). In Turkistan the saintliness of the saints is confined to the time of sacred origins *in illo tempore*, or to the pre-modern and pre-soviet period, or at most to the previous generation of Qojas. Saintly qualities were, in other words, the prerogative of the ancestors. But the hunger for a revival of the saints is evident. Every year new road signs appear indicating the locations of the small shrines of various *auliye*, because holy men recently deceased or newly remembered are being honored as *aũliye*. One mullah of Turkistan told us that next door to his house there had lived, until recently, a "very powerful saint" *(öte küshti aũliye)* who had performed great miracles. Both Nurali and Alim Qoja recall rain-making and other saintly miracles performed by their own fathers, and Kazaks who make

no pretense to personal sanctity will intone the solemn memory that their grandfather was a "great mullah" *(ülkö-ön molda)* or that their grandmother was "an enspirited woman" *(arũaqtı kisi)*. The aura of sainthood remains a desirable commodity.

For the Qojas it is preferable, of course, that there be no *aũliye* left today except themselves, who are the generations of the saints. But they are no longer masters of the religious dynamics of Kazakstan. In part because of the reduced influence of the Qojas, there have arisen in the 1990s new claimants to the status of saint, whom I will call the living *aũliyes* or new saints. Unlike the Qojas, whose stronghold is in Turkistan and the southern towns along the Syr Darya, the new *aũliyes* are urban practitioners of the saintly gifts in Almaty, claiming healing powers remembered from the tradition of the *aũliye* and confirmed now by Soviet extrasensory parasychology.

Two new saints. Two men in particular, calling themselves *Sarı Aũliye* (Yellow Saint) and *Aq Aũliye* (White Saint) have dominated the scene. They dress in robes and head gear to match their appelations and wear rosaries *(täspih)* and other amulets *(boytumar)* around their necks, thus drawing attention to their claim to be preachers and healers in the tradition of the *aũliye*. Aq Aũliye, whose given name is Serik Jumaḫmetov, carries a staff capped with a crescent moon, a symbol of Islam. Both men advertise in the newspapers and hold séances (Rs., Kz. *seans*) in stadiums and large halls. Sarı Aũliye, a.k.a. Marat Esenbaev, advertises that women should cover their heads and the sick should make a *niyet* and perform the Muslim rite of major purification (Kz. *ġusıl*; Ar. *ghusl*) before coming to his séance. This emulates the purity of pilgrims when they visit the shrines and

worshippers when they attend the mosque. Although most of our Qoja informants view them as charlatans, Sarı and Aq Aũliye are held in esteem by many young Kazaks not only for their healing powers but for their propagation of the way of Islam.

Sarı Aũliye held a séance in the Turkistan stadium in 1993 and another in a theater in 1997. In 1994 Aq Aũliye drew 15,000 people by the end of a week of stadium séances in Qazalı (Kazalinsk) (*JA*, December 17, 1994) and held another in Arıs in April 1998, advertising it in the Shymkent newspapers (*SK*, April 24, 1998, p. 10). He also trains disciples to work the small towns. A young woman living in the tenement section of Turkistan claims to be one of three of Aq Aũliye's approved lieutenants; in 1994 she invited her neighbors to a meal to celebrate her graduation from his training program. The strategy of the new saints has been to contextualize the healing tradition of the *aũliye* for the cities, spread their reputations from there, and make forays into small towns. Sarı Aũliye has a healing center in Almaty at 40 Lenin Avenue, a main boulevard in the downtown area; on a billboard outside he calls himself *Qazaq ḫalqınıng süyikti qasiyetti Qul Sarı Aũliye Qajı* (The Kazak People's Beloved and Reverend Hajji Yellow Saint, Servant [of God]). The use of the term *qasiyetti* (holy) as a self-designation means that Sarı Aũliye believes he has inherited the spiritual powers *(qasiyet)* of the saints; the title *qul* (servant) evokes the memory of Qul Qoja Ahmet Yasawi and of all the Muslim prophets.

Notably, however, these "living saints" are not Qojas. Aq Aũliye adverises himself as "sent by the spirit of Aqtan Hero-Saint" *(Aqtan batır-aũliye arũaġı jibergen)*, where the use of the term *batır* (hero) redefines *aũliye* (saint) in non-Qoja terms. The Qoja tradition is unimportant in

Almaty, where New Age theologies and Soviet parapsychology are more fashionable.[1]

The new saints have moved the healing ministry away from medieval oasis towns and traditional Muslim shrines and into metropolitan clinics. They have been freed to do so by the attenuation of the link between the Qojas and the custodianship of the shrines that has weakened the symbiosis of sacred space and sacred personality. Sainthood beyond the shrine and apart from sacred lineages is a new experience in Kazak religion; so the claim of the new saints to the title *aũliye* is disputed.

The influence of Russian parapsychology. Russian healers called *ekstrasens* ("extrasensories") are well known in Kazakstan and provide modern inspiration for the new Kazak saints. Their connection with theosophy and Western ideas of extrasensory perception from the New Age Movement is clearly suggested by the foreign vocabulary that has found its way into the Russian and Kazak spiritual lexicon. Young Kazaks may be more familiar with terms like *ekstrasens* and *biotok* (bioenergy) than they are with native categories such as *aũliye* and *täwip* (Muslim healer; see Chapter 6). TV personalities such as the Russian healer, Kashpirovski, have a wide following all across the former Soviet Union, and *ekstrasens* has become an alternate term for magic in Russian and Kazak vocabulary — a new magic with scientific credentials.

"Scientific atheism" made a considerable concession to non-empirical worldviews by defining bioenergy and other extrasensory phenomena as

---

1. At a 1997 French conference on shamanism Anne-Marie Vuillemenot reported on a séance near Almaty by another medical practitioner of this modern type, characterizing him rather too eagerly as a Sufi and a shaman (see Chapter 6).

legitimate domains of medical research. Parapsychology research institutes were officially sanctioned. Treatment centers proliferated, Sarı Aũliye's being an example. By using *ekstrasens* techniques the new saints lay claim to the prestige of modern methods; they also open themselves to those who would challenge their Muslim credentials. Botajan, a Kazak *täwip* of Turkistan, insisted that the *ekstrasens* healers are not like Muslim *täwips*, because they heal with bioenergy without ever touching you, i.e. without taking the pulse as a method of diagnosis like the Kazak healers do. However, even those who dispute the authority of the new saints tend to concede much ground to parapsychology. Qalambay, a devout Muslim, told us that he has no need to go to an *ekstrasens* because, he said, "The truth is that I have extrasensory power in my own body" *(Sözding shını esktrasens özim de, özimning boyımda tur)*. For Qalambay his own Muslim healing gifts are in the same semantic domain as the New Age powers of Sarı Aũliye. Even in Qoja prayer booklets, the concept of bioenergy may be invoked as proof of the validity of Muslim healing practices, and Öserulı's booklet of Quran verses intended for memorization, healing, and other prayer applications features a cover photo of cupped hands emitting light as from a crystal (1997b).

Kazaks educated in the Soviet tradition may prefer Russian *ekstrasens* healers to traditional Qojas, mullahs, and *täwips*. Those who like a combination of both attend the rallies of Sarı Aũliye. A Russian *ekstrasens* woman in Kentau, 30 kilometers from Turkistan, is popular with Kazak university teachers, one of whom believes this woman acquires bioenergy by making pilgrimage to the Church of St. Nicholai in Almaty. In July 1997 a healer from Uzbekistan, Nasiba, held a séance at a theater in Shymkent and

was lauded afterwards on national television as a healer with "strong spirits" *(küshti ärũaġı bar)*. Patients become familiar with *ekstrasens* methods from local experience and so are attracted also to the national ministries of the new saints.

Kazak evaluations of the new saints. Impure motives and financial irregularities are commonly suspected of Kazak healers in general (Chapter 6), and the new *aũliye*, as big-money practitioners, are doubly suspect. Only a few of our informants had attended Sarı Aũliye's 1993 stadium séance in Turkistan. Oshanov, who had, believes Sarı Aũliye to be a crass hypnotist. Amal Qoja showered polite criticism with the proverb that a saint must neither look at a girl nor steal her donkey *(qızdı nazar qılmay, eshegin de aldırmaydı)*. Jolbarıs Qoja contemptuously called them *balger* (diviners) who make a living by deception and spiritual arrogance *(astamshılıq)*. When asked if he ever resorts to them for healing, Jolbarıs cursed the thought: "May the sun not rise on me if I do!" *(Olarġa barıp mening künimdi salmasın!)*.

But Omar, a Qoja of the next generation, in his 40s, was less dismissive than the old men:

> *O: Olardı men senũime boladı eger de olar jın-perini baylap almay, özinshe äũliyelikpen istese. Kim biledi. . . . Eger jındı baylap almay, taza arũaq bolsa, onda oġan senũge boladı.*
>
> O: If I thought they had their own special saintliness and weren't trafficking in *jinns* and *peri*-spirits, I might believe in them. Who knows? If they are calling on a pure *arũaq* and aren't summoning *jinns*, then it is o.k. to believe in them.

Jinn are the evil spirits of Islamic demonology, and *peri* are spirits of the shamans. Omar wants to know whether the new saints have a spirit *(arũaq)*

that is as pure as the Muslim spirits of the saints, or whether they traffic in *jinn* and *peri*. He does not rule out the possibility that they have good spirits, but his openness is more characteristic of the young than the old.

Sufi Timur, one of the Kazak (non-Qoja) shrine-mullahs, thinks highly of Sarı Aũliye, calling him *mıqtı* (strong), saying he speaks the truth and that he is a better man than most of the mullahs of Turkistan, 80% of whom are *buzıq* (corrupt). Similarly, Zulfiya, a Kazak healer, told us that she likes the new style of *Sarı Aũliye*, because he encourages the people to accept religion (*din*, i.e. Islam).

Reprise: Commercializing sainthood. Breaking out of the traditional boundaries of the Qoja and shrine tradition, the new *aũliyes* broach new religious concepts for the Kazaks. Theirs is an Islamicized New Age spiritualism that contextualizes the saintly heritage in contemporary form. As Kazaks, not Qojas, they also link the experience of common people with the saintly tradition. In them the ontological status of sainthood is made scientifically plausible and publicly evoked in the "hot media" of modern performance (stadiums) and modern communications (TV). The new saints have commercialized the Muslim healing tradition on a national scale. They represent a postmodern urban "*wali* complex," filling a void left by the weakening of the Qoja claim to be legitimate landlords of the shrines.

No one calls the new saints shamans *(baqsı)*, even informants who claimed knowledge of shamanism. They themselves only claim the title *aũliye*, because it is the Muslim tradition that is religiously honorable in Kazakstan. These living *aũliye* are conceived, and conceive of themselves, in Muslim terms, and appeal to the Muslim sensibilities of the Kazaks with the help of New Age concepts and strategies.

THE *AYAN* COMPLEX: THE SYMBIOSIS OF ANCESTORS AND SAINTS

New saints notwithstanding, the relationship between the ancestor cult and the Sufi tradition of the shrines is the cultural dynamic that accounts for the persistence of Kazak religion. The *ziyarat* cult was sustained in the past by its association with the Sufi legacy and its Qoja heirs, who were caretakers of the shrines and specialists at its ritual events, such as the *zikir* at the Yasawi Shrine that Amal and Alim Qoja remember from their youth. Since the demise of these public events, the Kazak ancestor cult has absorbed their function as the impulse of pilgrimage and Kazak religion in general. Because the ancestor cult is not new, but because it was more resilient than Sufism, it took on new duties, as it were, when Sufism was eclipsed. The association of the ancestor cult with the cult of saints and sacred space is energized, moreover, by an experiential element they share in common, *viz.* the spirituality of dreams and dream-visions *(ayan).* It is this "*ayan* complex" that must now be defined.

Sufism is at best a vague memory for the Kazaks. They relate to Qojas not as Sufis but simply as representatives of saintly ("Arab") lineages. Neither the "*tariqa* complex" of Sufi organization nor the "*wali* complex" of patron-client relationships, both of which are known (often together) in pilgrimage centers in other parts of the Muslim world, provides an adequate theoretical foundation for the understanding of the Kazak shrine culture. At most there is an emerging "neo-clientelism" between a Qoja elder and a young man here and there who desires to learn the way of Islam. I have noted Baqitbergen's family and their devotion to "our Qoja." Most families, however, invite any Quran reader who is available when they host a memo-

rial feast; so a clientelistic obligation is not preserved in all Kazak families by any means. Nor is the status of the Qojas any longer a firm basis for social relationships of religious superiority and inferiority — the essence of clientelism.[1]

Dreams, however, are understood among the Kazaks as they were understood by the Sufis. As we have seen in Chapter 4, dreams function strongly in the domestic ritual tradition, and we have noted in this chapter that they are felt to be especially powerful when experienced at the shrine. At the shrine it is the saint who reveals him/herself in a dream, or who is somehow responsible for the appearance of the dreamer's own ancestor-spirits. For example, Mereshova gives a poetic account (*TT*, October 10, 1997) of the life of Ahmet Ishan, the last caretaker *(shıraqshı)* of the shrine of Qara Bura Aũliye at Sozaq across the mountains from Turkistan. After Ahmet Ishan's arrest in 1938 he continued to pray the *namaz* in prison in defiance of the rules, saying "What is there to be afraid of? The saint himself has given me revelation" *(Nesine qorqam . . . Aũliyening özi maġan ayan bergen). Ayan* was the inspiration for a risky political statement against the Soviet policy on religion.

Sufi disciples of the saints and devotées their shrines believed that the saint would produce within them the virtues of the Muslim life, includ-

---

1. Eickelman (1976:160-169) describes the relationship in Morocco between Berber "client tribesmen" and Sherqawa "marabouts" (descendents of the Sufi saint, Sidi Mḥammed Sherqi). The Sherqawa command less and less honor today, because the dead saint's reputation for moral purity and miraculous powers is more easily maintained than their own. In the place of these lineal heirs of the saint there have emerged a class of "*nonmaraboutic* Sherqawa," who provide religious services on the occasion of special meals for a fee. In Turkistan the Sherqawa are paralleled by the Qojas, and the "non-maraboutic Sherqawa" are paralleled by the young mullahs who have learned the Quran proficiently and are often preferred by the people.

ing the charisms of Quranic (Kz. *darın*) and divinatory (Kz. *pal*) knowledge. As Amal Qoja says, "Some become reciters or mullahs by studying; others receive it as a gift all at once, without studying." This is the personal illumination of *ayan*. Today the illuminationist experience may still be sought in order to receive or confirm charisms, such as a healing gift (see Chapter 6), but it also has a broader meaning. There is no need to be a Sufi to benefit from it. Dreams serve as compulsions to perform household rites and even to go on an elaborate pilgrimage visit to a circuit of shrines.

The surest confirmation of any dream-experience at home is to spend the night at the Arstan Bab Shrine. It is a very liminal exercise, because a night at Arstan Bab on the remote desert-steppe makes one feel very far indeed from civilization. This overnight pilgrimage always includes the expectation that visionary revelation from the ancestors will occur there to confirm the "intention" *(niyet)* of the pilgrim — conception of a child, undertaking a new vocation, etc. Afterwards the miraculous benefit *(bereke)* of the illumination is sealed by a trip to Turkistan where blessing *(bata)* of a mullah at the Yasawi Shrine is sought. Such *ayan* experiences are coveted, because *ayan* from an ancestor at home that is confirmed by *ayan* in the shadow of the saint's tomb is self-evidently a blessing of God.

A reasonable conjecture is that successive generations of Qojas received their *darın* by means of *ayan* from their Sufi ancestors and then taught the experience to the Kazaks as the pure way of Islam. One source of the Kazak *ayan* complex is therefore Sufi spirituality with its hunger for

illumination.[1] This can be experienced only as grace already known to, and therefore best communicated from, someone with a link to the time of sacred origins *in illo tempore*. In the case of the Qojas, the saintly founder of the local Sufi tradition is their ancestor; so the Kazaks came easily to understand that revelation received from ancestors is good Muslim spirituality. The spiritual disciplines and institutional expressions of Sufi spirituality have been lost, but their experiential basis in the "*ayan* complex" remains strong in Kazak religion.

Crucially, *ayan* is an experiential link for the Kazaks between their saints and their own ancestor-spirits. As the Qojas called upon their Sufi ancestors, the *aũliye* at the shrines, so also Kazaks believe that their ancestors, the *arũaq* of the household, visit them in their homes. And just as the Qojas could expect their ancestors to come to their assistance with miraculous knowledge, so the Kazaks expect to see their ancestors in dreams. Kazak spirituality thus reflects the historic spirituality of Qojas, Sufis, and saints. *The domestic cult of the Kazak ancestors is a reflection of the Muslim cult of the saints and vice versa, and the two traditions of ancestor and saint are sustained by the "*ayan *complex."* By means of

---

1. Masami (1978) has documented the religious experience of the Qojas of Kashgar, Kucha, and Turfan in eastern Turkistan (western China) in the 19th century. In a hagiographic work he has studied called the *Taẓkirat al-Najāt*, a Qoja named Rāsh al-Din is described as the guardian of the shrine of his ancestor, Arshad al-Din, in Kucha. Whenever he encountered a verse of the Quran he did not understand, he would ask for inspiration from the saint. He also justified political action this way, accepting the nomination of the people to serve them as khan, on the basis of "spiritual intercourse with his ancestor entombed in the mazār." Notably, this Qoja also received pilgrims from "Western Turkestan," i.e. Central Asia (1978:93f.). The inspiration or communion with the saint claimed by Rāsh al-Din of Kucha parallels the *darın* which Amal Qoja in Turkistan still today identifies as the mark of the saint, and also personal illumination of *ayan*.

common access to dream-visions of the ancestral spirits, Qojas and Kazaks have transmuted their clientelistic relationship into a domestic spirituality with direct access to the ancestors and a public outlet in the spirituality of the shrine.

Because of the "*ayan* complex" in Kazak religion, the shrine retains its evocative power even though Qojas no longer serve it as living representatives of the saint. In post-soviet space and time, the caretakers *(shıraqshı)* of the shrines are variable; government museum officials or a pious local family are as likely to serve in this role as are the Qojas. With the Qojas marginalized, the collective memory of Ahmet Yasawi himself assumes an even stronger force as an endorsement of the Muslimness of the Kazak ancestors. The eclipse of Kazak tribal nomadism occurred simultaneously with the collapse of the foundations of Qoja authority. What remains is the evocative power of the shrine itself to "incubate" illumination.

Thus, neither the domestic cult of the ancestors nor the pilgrimage cult of the saints depends on the Qojas any more. As architectural evidence of the divine presence in the world, the Yasawi Shrine has proven stronger than Qoja clientelism. Sacred space outshines the sacred lineage, and the pilgrim's link to it no longer requires the Qojas to ratify it. The mediational arrangements of the past are no more, but personal spirituality, exemplified in the *ayan* experience, sets the Kazak believer in an immediate relationship with the saint and his memory. *Ayan* has been democratized.

CONCLUSION

Three elements of the Islamic spirituality of *ziyarat* in Kazak religion have been explored in this chapter.

First, the saint who once mediated the way of Islam and the blessing of God to the people has become "architecturalized" over time. This historical process has been even more pronounced in Soviet Central Asia than elsewhere, because the institutional authority of the Sufi lineages has been eroded or entirely lost. In Turkistan the "*wali* complex" is no more.

Secondly, I examined in detail how the circuit of shrines centered on Turkistan is sustained by a "sacralizing vision." The experience of blessing in the domestic rites of Kazak religion examined in Chapter 4 was originally defined by the public blessings that were sought at the Sufi shrine complex. Communal meals at home and pilgrimages to the shrines, along with the sacrificial meat and bread consumed in either place, have become detached from their historical source in the "*wali* complex." The sacrifices were deprived of their source but preserved in the domestic cult, often with fried bread in place of meat, and have been easily reintegrated now into the public cult of pilgrimage.

Thirdly, the affectivities, motivations, and ideology of the purity of Islam that were explored in Chapter 3 are found here to sustain the pilgrimage experience also. Not sacrificial exchange, but the spiritual force of the shrine to sanctify the sacrificial animal (or simply the seven tenge) that a pilgrim brings, was found to be the essence of the pilgrimage offering.

Besides these three elements of the traditional *ziyarat* experience, evidence of its modernization and urbanization -- the "new saints" -- con-

firmed the salience of the historical cult of the saints in defining Kazak religion.

Finally, the "*ayan* complex" of dreams and dream-visions was found to provide a kind of psychological glue that holds the domestic and pilgrimage cults together. When the ancestors apppear in Kazak dreams today, it is understood as a spiritual encounter of the Muslim kind. Despite the eclipse of Sufism, subliminal awareness of the origins of the "*ayan* complex" is expressed still today when Kazaks visit a shrine to "incubate" a dream.

Like the domestic cult, the pilgrimage cult of Kazak religion persists largely without religious specialists. The only indispensible religious personality in Turkistan today is Qoja Ahmet Yasawi, who died eight centuries ago. The pilgrim who comes to visit his shrine comes to visit the image of saint-*cum*-sacred space, the "architecturized" saint.

In Kazakstan a shrine is sacred space not only because of the saint buried there, but also because the saint legitimates the ancestor cult. This has been the cultural framework that relates Chapter 4 on the *arũaq* to this chapter on the *aũliye* — the irreducible conceptual framework of Kazak religion. Kazaks remember that their nomadic forebears visited these same places with the same kinds of "intentions." It explains spiritually why the Kazak ancestors are conceived as Muslims. The saint's spirit is in the same ontological category as the spirits of the one's own ancestors and therefore of one's own soul. There is a mythological relationship as well. On Thursdays and Fridays the *arũaq*, who come out of their graves and visit their homes expecting to hear the Quran and smell the fragrance of the cooking oil, also gather around the shrine of Ahmed Yasawi, circling overhead like the angels over the *Ka'ba* in Mecca. Pilgrims know that Thursday and

Friday are "the days of the gathering of the ancestor-spirits" *(ärũaqtıng jıyılatın küni)*; so these days are the best days both to "emit the fragance" and to visit the shrine. The archaic *ot ana* (fire mother) of Inner Asian household religion has been subsumed into the realm of the *aũliye ata* (saint father) at the Muslim shrine. Sacred time and space provide a continuous context for sacred purposes.

For Islam's modernist reformers, "Sufism became a scapegoat through which the 'backwardness' of Islam could be explained (*OEMIW* 4:107 [Chittick]). Chicago's Fazlur Rahman saw in *ziyarat* a deficient residue of Sufi mysticism that corrupted the purity of Islam (1979:150–166). Today Muslim preachers from abroad are inclined to use the Kazaks as a case in point. One of my Turkish colleagues, Dr. Muhammad Kileci, preached in Turkistan that Kazaks are "sinful Muslims" *(künäli musılman)* because of their failure to observe the Shariah. Geertz noted that the scripturalist tradition of the mosque and *madrasa* is sceptical about the faith of the people and thus deprives them of the assurance that *ziyarat* offers (1968a:60). Nevertheless, the Kazak *ziyarat* experience invokes the same aspirations to purity, intercession, and blessing that are found in "normative" Islam," even some of its ritual enactments, such as sacrifice,

Classically, Turkish scholars and their Western sympathizers have lauded the Yasawi Sufi tradition as a distinctive Turkic spirituality, even applauding a historical relationship they see between it and shamanism (Köprülü 1918; Mélikoff 1987). Whatever its ideological or political motives, the "turkicizing" analysis is closer to the mark than the qualms of reformist orthodoxy. Turner has said that "the pilgrim's sense of the sacred . . . gives him powerful motives for credence, [and] the pilgrim's journey

becomes a paradigm for other kinds of behavior—ethical, political, and other" (Turner 1974:198).

For a Kazak woman of Turkistan the same *ziyarat* characterized as credulous and superstitious animism by Muslim reformers, or as a synthesis of Turkic shamanism and Yasawian Sufism by Pan-Turkist revivalists, is simply the pure religion of her Kazak ancestors and the Arab ancestors of her Qoja neighbors. She knows nothing of Sufism, nor of shamanism. Having made her sacrifice at Arstan Bab, standing now in the quiet shade of Yasawi, she looks around for a mullah to say a blessing for her. She feels lighter, forgiven, and nearer to God because of the legacy of Qul Qoja Aḥmet Yasawi, servant of God, the *aũliye* of Turkistan. She thinks of him as second only to Muhammad, or of Muhammad as an extension of him. For eight centuries her forefathers and mothers, including even Tamerlane, the world conqueror, have called on God on this hard desert soil. God has preserved their Muslim heritage in spite of Lenin and Stalin. Not the defunct *isms* of Sufism or shamanism, but the spirituality of household and shrine account for the persistence of Kazak religion.

Aũrũdıng egesi bar ġoy, arũaqtar kelip onımen soġısadı; bul zattar - arũaqtıng qılıshı, belgisi.
—Abdisalih Qoja (1995)

The ancestor-spirits come and fight the master of the illness. These things [a knife and whip] are the sword and sign of the ancestor-spirits.

CHAPTER SIX

EMSHI: THE KAZAK HEALER

Kazaks describe their healers with a varied vocabulary that reveals the diffuse character of the Muslim healer's art in Central Asia. Virtually the entire semantic field is common to all the Muslim peoples of Central Asia, with variations only of spelling and pronunciation, seldom of concept or practice. Kazaks consult Tajik diviners who sit in the bazaar; they frequent Uzbek healers as well as their own, and Russian healers also may be held in high esteem. The Qojas, with their claim to Arab descent from the Prophet, are believed to have pure healing powers in the pure way of Islam; so other healers emulate this sacred tradition. Qoja or not, any Kazak may become a healer, and all Kazak healers believe they have received their power from the ancestor-spirits.

The Kazak folk-healer is a *emshi*,[1] from the word meaning cure *(em)*; so the title of a recent book on herbal remedies (Qurayısh 1994) is simply,

---

1. The Kazak *e* is pronounced with a slight glide, so the reader will want to say "a *yemshi*" when the word is graced with the English indefinite article.

Men - emshimin (I am a healer). To become a healer is to "fall into the way of a healer" *(emshi jolına tüsũ)*, which parallels an expression, "to fall into the way of religion" *(din jolına tüsũ)*, i.e., to get serious about the pure way *(taza jol)* of Islam, which we have already encountered in Chapter 3. The methods and treatments in the Kazak *emshi's* repertoire are called "Muslim cures" *(musılmansha em)*, because they are a gift of God.

The *emshi's* reputation is established by his or her command of cultural patterns of diagnosis as well as by efficacy of treatment. Spiritual power is proven by evidence which is negotiated interpersonally between healer, patient, and community. Out of this process come patterns of medical resort, which usually include the government medical system in addition to traditional healers. Indeed, first resort is usually not to the traditional *emshi* but to the doctor at the government hospital.

While modern medicine *per se* is outside the purview of our discussion of Kazak religion, Kazak healers may compare themselves with doctors and justify their treatments in modern medical terms. The two worlds are related but also clearly distinguished. A doctor is called *däriger* in Kazak or *vrach* in Russian, and these are seldom used for traditional healers. The Soviet Union made large strides in making modern medicine available on the Kazak steppe where medical care had been ignored under the Russian colonial system; Valikhanov, for instance, was alarmed by infant mortality and made an urgent appeal to the Tsar for a smallpox vaccination program in the 1860s (1985:202).

Soviet medical care improved life expectancy and the standard of living of Central Asia without, however, diminishing traditional healing practices. The Yasawi University Medical College in Turkistan includes

programs not only in nursing and midwifery, but also in Oriental medicine. Kazak medical doctors are generally supportive of homeopathy and parapsychology and take pride in the Kazak and Muslim healing traditions. Not only traditional *emshis* but Kazak doctors trained in Soviet medical science have recommended I drink the Kazak delicacy, fermented mare's milk (kumiss; Kz. *qımız*), for my asthma. All this they view as the medical wisdom of the East that goes back to Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who is lionized as a native of Central Asia (Bekmuratov 1992). In this age of holism and respect in the West for all things eastern, it is not surprising that Oriental medicine is devoutly defended also in the East.

When we interviewed Alim Qoja he had just been to the doctor and was unhappy about it. Significantly, he did not grumble about the inadequate facilities of the local hospital, nor about shortages of medicine, but about excessive specializiation. Why is it, he mused, that a doctor knows only one part of your body and has to call in another for anything else that's wrong with you? If you go to a *emshi*, she can diagnose everything just by taking your pulse! Couldn't the Soviet Union produce a doctor who knows the whole body? The only complete doctor, he said, is one who can treat diseases caused by sorcery. With its religious and holistic perspective, traditional medicine reassures the patient; anyone who is sick naturally wants to know that the healer sees the whole picture as culturally conceived.

The Kazak *emshi* tradition may be divided into four semantic categories. A healer may be called (1) a *molda* (master, i.e. Quran reader; Ar. *mawlā*); (2) a *täwip* (doctor, healer; Ar. *tabib*); (3) a *palshı* or *balger* (for-

tune-teller, from Pers. *fal*, divination); or (4) a *baqsı* or *shaman*.[1] The first group consists of healers, including but not limited to Qojas, who lay specific claim to the Muslim therapeutic tradition. The second group is the broad, middle range of Central Asian spiritual practitioners, who are often women. The third, divination, is similarly a female preserve and more closely concerned with healing in emic terms than the outside observer first suspects. The fourth is the the Turko-Mongolian shaman, of whom few, if any, remain among the Kazaks. The general term, *emshi*, may be used as a self-ascription by healers who for one reason or another disdain lesser designations; a Qoja, for example, may want to be called a *emshi* rather than a *täwip*. This variability will now be illustrated by way of a series of portraits of Kazak healers according to the four categories above.

QOJA AND MULLAH: THE MUSLIM WAY OF HEALING

In the back room of the house I sat on a quilted floor mat spread over felts. I was facing Abdisalih Qoja, the healer. My friend Sharipbek, the patient, sat with his back to me, also facing Abdisalih.

Sharipbek had asked me that afternoon if I would like to join him for one of his daily treatments (he used the Russian word *meditatsiya*, meditation) for headaches and "pressure" on his heart *(jüregim qısadı)*. He had experienced relief after a week of treatments by Abdisalih. A Qoja in the lineage of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi, the saint of Turkistan, Abdisalih told us that

---

1. Kazaks know the word *shaman* only from Russian which got it from Tungus. The Kazak word *baqsı* and its cognates in other Turkic and Mongolian languages comes from Sanskrit by way of early Buddhist missions in Inner Asia (Humphrey 1996:70, n. 55).

he received his healing powers *(qasiyet)* a few years ago from the spirit *(arũaq)* of his grandfather.

Sharipbek's wife and son drank tea with Abdisalih's mother, served by Abdisalih's wife, while the three of us were in the inner room. It was the only occasion on which I was privileged to observe the Muslim healing rite called *dem salũ* (Kz., "putting" the breath). Unlike other Kazak healers, Abdisalih uses no herbal remedies, saying that he treats only psychological ailments that cannot be healed by other methods. Though herbal remedies are valued among the Kazaks, some healers consider their methods more Muslim when they rely on spontaneous revelation *(ayan)* and the spiritual power of the ancestors that is present in their whip and knife and in the breath they breathe after reciting the Quran. Abdisalih exemplifies this tradition of Central Asian mullah-healers who rely exclusively on the power of the recited Quran and of their ancestor-spirits.

Abdisalih is about 30. He was dressed like any Kazak man his age in a sweater, plain slacks, and a black skull cap *(taqiya)*. He kneeled facing his patient. On the wall behind him hung an expensive carpet, a rifle, a plaque of Quranic verses, and a black-and-gold wall-hanging of the *Ka'ba*, the central Meccan shrine. Once or twice during the rite he glanced at me but otherwise was intensely occupied with his patient and his own breathing and bodily movements. After a brief Quran recital and prayer, the "meditation" consisted entirely of Abdisalih's motions with a knife and braided-leather horse whip, followed by very forceful blowing of his breath directed from close range at Sharipbek's head. I took notes during the 15-minute "meditation" and estimate that each of the following actions lasted 30 seconds or so:

- Abdisalih began by holding the knife over Sharipbek as if to cut his head across the top from back to front, then waved it back and forth over the top of his head, finally drawing it forward.

- He recited a brief Arabic verse from the Quran and then a prayer in Kazak asking his *arũaq* for help, and both men swept their hands across their faces *(bet sıypaũ)* in Muslim fashion.

- He waved the knife in front of Sharipbek's face, over his head and next to his head, then hit him softly on the back and the back of his head with the knife edge. Sharipbek was wearing a suit jacket, so this body contact with the knife did not hurt him.

- Abdisalih breathed hard in the patient's face, expelling air forcefully through pursed lips until he ran out of air.

- He waved the knife under the patient's arms and then blew hard in his face again.

- He put the knife down and picked up his whip, folded with the crop against the handle so it looked like an inflexible stick. With the folded whip he then struck at Sharipbek lightly all around his body with the same motions he had used with the knife.

- He breathed softly in his face.

- He opened the whip and hit the patient gently on back of one shoulder and then the other, repeatedly.

- He then folded up the whip again, leaned over the patient's back and beat his back gently with it.

- He put the whip down, picked up the knife, and did the same motions he had done before with it, whispering lightly.

It was now about seven minutes into the ceremony and Abdisalih was laboring. I felt I was watching an athlete. After accepting the opening prayer with a sweep of his hands, Sharipbek had remained motionless — the patient, an older man, completely submissive to the younger healer.

- Abdisalih pointed the knife at the patient's shoulder blades from behind, then raised it and pointed it downward toward the top of his head, as if to stab him. He put his left hand on Sharipbek's head with the knife in his right, affecting stabbing motions downward.

- He pointed the knife at each of Sharipbek's eyes, made a small circular motion with the knife in front of each eye, and blew hard into the right eye three times.
- He put down the knife, folded the whip again, breathed across the top of Sharipbek's head, moved the whip in circles in front of Sharipbek's face, and pointed it at his right eye.
- He again blew hard, this time into both eyes, three times.

There were voices of children playing in the next room, and women talking. I remembered I was in someone's home, where Kazak religion is centered. This was not a doctor's office, nor a mosque, nor even a shrine or a holy burial ground. These men, healer and patient, were at home with their families.

- Abdisalih massaged the very short greying hair on Sharipbek's head, put his open hands on the sides of Sharipbek's head, then one on the top of his head with the other on the right side of his head.
- Holding his left hand in front of Sharipbek's head, Abdisalih moved his right hand continuously around Sharipbek's head: first on top of his head, then one side, then the other (always the right hand), then palm-down above the head, then in front of the patient's face.
- He picked up the whip and did more whip motions, as before.
- Healer and patient both opened their hands to heaven in the manner of Muslims receiving a blessing. Abdisalih said a prayer *(duġa)* in Kazak, praying for Sharipbek's heart. He addressed Allah in Kazak and said, "Give help, give aid" *(Kömek ber, järdem ber).*

The "meditation" was over. Abdisalih invited me to drink a cup of water he had placed in front of me to collect the power of the spirits. His whip and knife, his hands and especially his breath, were the only instruments of the healing ceremony. He spoke few words, only once and very briefly in Arabic (perhaps also when he whispered in the middle of the ceremony), otherwise in Kazak only.

When I asked Abdisalih about the knife and whip, he replied, "The

ancestor-spirits *(arũaqtar)* come and fight the master of the illness *(aũrũdıng egesi)*; these things are the sword and sign of the spirits." I pressed him, saying, "But you prayed to Allah!" To which he replied, "Yes, but it is the *arũaq* I see. They come to me in dream-visions *(ayan)*. My ancestors *(ata-babalar)* told me that if I would use the whip and knife, they would come and help me."

Abdisalih is a Muslim healer. *Dem salũ*, breathing on the patient after the recital of verses from the Quran, is said to have been practiced by Muhammed himself, according to a *hadith* of al-Bukhari that relies on the testimony of his wife, Aisha (Parshall 1994:210). Other Kazak mullahs *(molda)* who are not Qojas may also emulate this method. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, the Kazak healer's reputation is acquired because of the efficacy of the Quranic verses he recites for various ailments. Abdisalih's kinsman, Muzaffar Shalapov is a well-known mullah of Turkistan and has been publishing a series of small booklets since 1995 on the healing properties of specific Quranic verses; one is a tract on the Yasin Sura (1997), which is everywhere the Muslim healer's favorite chapter, "the heart of the Koran" (Donaldson 1937:258). Muzaffar presents Arabic texts in Kazak orthography so that the common *täwip*, illiterate in Arabic, can memorize them (cf. Öserulı 1995). In addition Qojas may or may not use herbal remedies and homeopathic techniques; these are discussed in a number of new self-help books by Kazak authors (Ädetov 1995; Íslämjanulı 1995; Qurayısh 1994; Osmanova and Luqpanov 1992) and Russians as well (Safina and Petrov 1992), and one native ethnographic treatment (Aldashev and Älimḫanov 1992).

Healing perspectives of the Qoja elders. Because the Qoja healers may also be called *molda*, but other Kazak *moldas* will never be called Qoja, it is economical to refer to the whole group as "mullah healers," remembering that the Qojas are quintessentially representative of this tradition. They are called mullah (master) when they are proficient in reciting the Quran, and any mullah who is proficient with the proper verses may also have healing power. Among the Kazaks, mullahs are invariably men; only rarely is a woman called a *molda*, and Kazaks tend to be surprised when the term *äyel-molda* (woman mullah) is used. The mullah healers are often elderly, and though young Qojas like Abdisalih may find a market for their healing gifts, we encountered mostly old men. Our four Qoja informants, Nurali, Alim, Jolbarıs, and Amal, talked about healing as follows.

Nurali Qoja is a healer himself and attributed his powers to the blessing of his uncle which he sought in response to a dream-vision *(ayan)* from his dead father. He told us that a mullah may not heal by *dem salũ* until he knows how to recite the Yasin Sura from the Quran — it has been known to raise the dead, he says — and has received the blessing *(bata)* of his father or other ancestor. Otherwise the healer's breath will be unable to chase away the *jın-shaytan*, *jın-peri*, and *albastı*, three classes of demons from the Arabian and Persian traditions. Possession by a female water-spirit called *sũ-peri* is especially dangerous, and Nurali said he was currently treating a woman possessed by one. The Arabic Shahada (confession of faith) alone is powerful enough to drive away the demons who are hanging around listening to us at this very moment, he said; nevertheless power lies not in the Word alone but in the Word conveyed via the Prophet's lineage. Nurali believes that the Quran made sickness the Prophet's business, and

the Qojas are the generations of the Prophet.

Alim Qoja also prefers the power of the Quranic word to all other remedies. He places little confidence in ordinary Kazak healers *(täwip)*, and definitely rejects the fortune-tellers *(palshı)*, the new saints *(aũliye)*, and the old art of the shaman *(baqsı)*, accusing them of "playing with jinns" *(jın-oynaq)*. He modestly denies that he is a "curer" *(emshi)* but believes in the power of his own breath blown in the face of the patient *(dem salũ)* is a sacred trust from his Duwana Qoja forefathers. He treats only family and friends with minor problems and refers to it colloquially as "saying poof" *(kuf dep otırũ)*. Children must be old enough to recite the Shahada before he will treat them. They usually get better, he says, but if they don't, or whenever there is fever, he sends them to the doctor for an injection.

When a child in his family gets sick, Jolbarıs Qoja calls the doctor, or he himself will treat the child by *dem salũ* or its variant, *tüshkirũ* (spitting, also intoned as *üshkirũ, tükirũ*), in which the blowing of *dem salũ* is stepped up a degree into actual expectorating on the patient (Muqanov 1974:21). He uses the phrases *dem salũ* (put the breath) and *Quran oqıtũ* (recite the Quran) as a pair that define the Muslim concept *em* (healing). In the case of psychological ailments, which he attributes to demonic power, he calls an experienced mullah. He denies that he is a mullah or a *emshi* but nevertheless ministers to his family as he knows how. He also advocates Islamic preventative medicine. A Muslim who wishes to live 100 years must exercise once a day; go to the public bath *(monsha)* once a week (on Friday); drink a purgative *(sana, slabitel'nii ishũ)* once a month; and have blood drawn *(qan aldırũ)* once a year. This is the medieval medical tradi-

tion of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) mentioned above, which Jolbarıs exalts by calling it a *hadith* of the Prophet.

Amal Qoja was eager to tell us that the ritual patterns of the Muslim life have been shown scientifically to be good for bodily health:

> A: *Burın oraza tutũ sävsem zıyan dep aytqan, asqazanıng buzıladı deydi; namaz oqũ degen, bes waqıtılı, bu da zıyan dep tapqan, endi käzir qaytadan bunı polezniy dep taũıp jatır. Bir ay ishide azanda bir iship, keshke bir-aq ishesing, asqazan tazalanıp, burıngı qalġan aũqattar tazalanadı, densaũlıqqa payda dep taũıp jatır, meditsina jaġınan. Namaz oqũ kak fizkultura, ishken aũqattı singiredi, taqım jazıladı, engkeyesing, turasıng. Qaytadan namaz oqıydı da keyingi kezderde. Oraza tutqan da paydalı.*
>
> A: They used to say fasting was very harmful and would upset your digestion, and praying the five daily prayers was also considered harmful, but now they're finding again that these are good for your health. For one month you eat once in the morning and again in the evening, and your digestive tract — the food left in it — is cleaned out; modern medicine says it is beneficial to bodily health. Saying the *namaz* is like physical exercise, because it squeezes the food you've eaten; you flex your knees, you bend over, you straighten up. People are saying the *namaz* again now. Keeping the fast is also beneficial.

Religion, once condemned on materialist grounds, is embraced by turning materialist reasoning on its head.

Hanging amulets and sacred plants. Mullahs become famous for their amulets (Kz. *tumar*; Ar. *ḥijab*). These are necklaces or pendants that contain verses of the Quran written out by hand and sewed into a triangular pouch; a string or chain is added so the pouch can be hung around the neck, on the wall of a room in the house, or from the rear-view mirror of a car. Sold to patients by the mullah, they are a form of healing and protection against sickness, accidents, and especially sorcery, and they also emit positive energy, so that success in business and love may be expected from them. Amulets are a nearly universal artifact of magical cultures, including

Christianity (good luck crosses, religious jewelry) and New Age religion (crystals, piercings, etc.). In Muslim cultures they transfer to the believer the spiritual power represented by the mullah or healer. In Gambia, Sanneh's informant Hassan argued that they are signs of God's care: "Amulets merely trim and reinforce the roof which God had already elevated and set above man for his protection" (1974:525); by rejecting "any doctrine of man's self-sufficiency," amulets strengthen faith in God (p. 527).

To "hang" an amulet *(tumar taġũ)* is to protect a house from fire and theft, a child from getting lost, and, especially, the body from disease. Amulets are also used to *treat* disease and to protect a patient recovering from illness. If the diagnosis is that the patient is being afflicted by spirits or has been touched by the evil eye, a Kazak healer may give a *boytumar* (body-amulet in the form of a necklace) as the primary treatment. Or a healer may say that a *boytumar* being worn by a patient lacks sufficient power, or is doing harm, and insist that it be thrown away or replaced. Kazak popular manuals are now appearing with instructions for writing amulets (Shalapov 1995b, 1996, 1997), which help any mullah make amulets who knows how to write Arabic. A *tumar* written by a Qoja is especially valued because of his lineage.

In Omar Qoja's words, *tumars* are used to protect from "danger" *(bäle-jäle)* and "misfortune" *(baqıtsızdıq)*, "so that the roads ahead may be opened" *(aldındağı joldar ashılıp bolũ üshin)*. In the case of sickness, they are held to be especially effective as a cure for cases caused by spirits, often now — under Russian influence — called diseases of the nervous system; more traditionally, however, such illnesses are understood to be effects of the evil eye *(köz)*, sharp tongue *(til)*, or pointed finger *(suq)*. A

related use of amulets is to protect children against spirits that frighten at night *(shoshıġar)*. Amal Qoja believes they are especially effective to calm hyperactive children.

Like all Kazak drivers, my neighbor, Baqıtbergen, has a *mashina tumar* (car amulet) hanging from his rear view mirror. Often car amulets are ornate, but Baqıtbergen's is plain and smaller than usual: two triangles of white cloth, about 3 inches long and 2 inches high, sewn together and bulging slightly from the paper inside. He told me that "our Qoja" recited the Quran in the car and hung the amulet in its place in a little ceremony, and that this is what all drivers do: "They go to a mullah and have an amulet made, and he hangs it in the car and recites (the Quran) for the driver" *(Moldalarġa barıp jazdıradı, mashinaġa boytumar taġıp oqıp beredi)*. A Kazak man trying to sell me a car said he would throw in two new tires but would have to remove the three amulets hanging from the mirror: "We are Muslims, you know. These were written especially for me and I must keep them my whole life."

Sacred flora and fauna of the steppe tradition have medicinal uses, but they may also be used like amulets (Sızdıqova 1998:70–82). A fox skin hung in the house is a powerful amulet. More commonly, wild rue (*adıraspan*, steppe sage) is hung in the house and owl feathers *(üki)* on the cradle of a child. Omar Qoja recited a formula of greeting recited in rhyme when the wild rue is picked that invokes the early Muslim caliphs :

As-salaum aleikum, adıraspan,
Meni saġan jiberdi Omar, Ospan.

Peace be unto you, o wild rue!
Umar and Uthman have sent me to you!

Thus has the steppe tradition been Islamized. Not only does the memory of the caliphs legitimate the use of the wild rue, but it is said to be appropriate for Muslims because it expresses a good "intention" *(niyet)*, like saying the *namaz* or going on *ziyarat*.

To the car amulet written by "our Qoja," Baqıtbergen has added a falcon's claw *(bürkit)*, one of the sacred animals of the steppe, trained for hunting. The sacral character of special plants and animals is a fundamental conception of the steppe tradition that persists in the framework of Islamic amulets. Their connection with the land elevates their force in the collective memory.[1]

The *täspih* or Muslim rosary, a string of 99 beads used to recite the names of God, may also be used as a *tumar*, hung on the wall or around the neck. Like his car amulet, Baqıtbergen's *täspih* was also prepared by "his" Qoja; it hangs on the wall of the family living room as an *üy tumar* (house amulet). Although Baqıtbergen and his wife, Nesibeli, freely confess that they are lax in the disciplines of the pure way of Islam, they feel connected to it vicariously because they received these amulets "from the hand of a man who is walking in the way of religion" *(din jolımen jürgen adamnıng qolınan shıqqan täspih)*.

Reprise: Lineage and method. A Qoja like Abdisalih is viewed among the Kazaks as the best of all possible healers, because the Qoja blood-line is sacred and powerful, going back to Ali and therefore to the Prophet. It is a near ancestor, however, such as Abdisalih's grandfather, who passes

---

1. In his stories Chingiz Aitmatov, the Kirgiz novelist, highlights the sacrality of animals in the steppe tradition by giving them consciousness and personality, notably a wolf, a camel, and a horse (1969, 1983; cf. Jeziorska 1991).

on the "pure blessing" *(aq bata)*, sometimes posthumously by means of a dream-vision *(ayan)*. If treatment by reciting verses produces cures, the healer will be honored as a "big mullah" *(ülken molda)*. If a mullah is not a Qoja, his claims may be held suspect because he is "black" (*qara*, i.e. *qara süyek*, black bone), not white or pure (*aq, aqsüyek,* white bone or nobility), like the Qojas. Nevertheless, efficacious prescription of the sacred flora and fauna of the steppe can make any Kazak a fine reputation as a healer. Method and lineage share ground as sources of Muslim authority for Kazak healers.

THREE *TAWIPS:* BOTAJAN, THE ASPIRING SHAMAN

Among the Kazak *emshi*, the *täwips* are the most diverse. They share some features with the Qojas and mullahs, notably a Muslim self-concept, the calling of the *arũaq*, and various methods that will be explored below; in these ways the *täwips* represent the mullah's healing model ramifying into Kazak culture more broadly. They may also differ from the mullahs, displaying a lack of confidence in their right to use identifiably Islamic elements. Unlike the mullahs, many *täwips* are women. *Täwips* differ from one another in their methods and perspectives on healing. For this reason *täwip* is only the most general term for this group of healers; other labels, describing specific aspects of the healer's art, e.g. *tamırshı* (pulse-taker; lit., "veiner") and *tüshkirũshı* (spitter), are sub-sets of *täwip*. *Täwips* are in high demand but may also be derided as charlatans; if they are sensitive to the ridicule they may adopt one of the alternate terms, or the most general term of all, *emshi*.

To cover this variability, three separate portraits of *täwip* women will be offered below. The first of these, Botajan, provides an outline of the *täwip's* art. Botajan is a young Kazak *täwip*, 34 years old. She dresses neatly and covers her head with a multi-colored scarf *(oramal)*, indicating that she is a Muslim and a married woman. She was born in Turkistan but grew up in the borderlands between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with her Kazak parents, moving back to Turkistan only in 1989, when she was 29. She considers herself a traditional Muslim and says that her parents, because they lived among Uzbeks, preserved the "old ways" fervently *(eskilikti qatal ustaġanbız)*. This is a typical Kazak expression of confidence in Uzbek religiosity and resistance to Russian cultural influences.

When she was 13 Botajan's ancestor-spirits came to her *(arũaq qonġan)*, but only in the last two years has she taken up her vocation as a *täwip*. This is the result of dream-visions *(ayan)* and weekly visits to a well-known healer, Zamanbek Besbayev of Shymkent, who cured her of an illness and from whom she received a blessing *(bata)* authorizing her to heal others. She calls Besbayev her "father-shaman" *(baqsı atam)* and hopes to become a *baqsı* herself, but considers this a very high calling and is content to be a simple *täwip* for now. In this one matter of her aspiration to consciously wed her Muslim therapies with those of the Kazak *baqsı*, Botajan is different from most *täwips*, as we shall see.

Like the mullahs Botajan receives patients in her home, a small apartment. She and her husband are childless. Both lost their jobs in a conflict with the director of the factory where they worked. The dream that sealed her calling occurred about the time they lost their jobs. She had received the "minor blessing" *(kishi bata)* from her relatives, who

confirmed that the spiritual legacy of the family had fallen on her, but then a woman at work became jealous, cast a spell *(ırım, dũa)*, which she believes is why she lost her job. She found relief from the spell at Besbayev's hands and received the major or "pure blessing" *(aq bata)* from him.

The Täwip's *Spiritual "Pressure"*. Botajan used to visit *täwips* as a patient, and *ekstrasens* healers as well (see "The Living Saints" in Chapter 5). Now she treats herself when she becomes sick, and the spirits show her what to do:

> *B: Men emge jügingen waqtımda babalarımnıng özi körsetedi. Sosın sıgılam, sıgılġan waqtımda ata-babalarımnıng ärũağı kep maġan ayan beredi özi. Ayan bergenning arqasında men isteymin. . . . Jüregimdi dükildetip urıp, kädimgi mazasızdanıp [otıramın].*
>
> B: When I need a cure, my fathers show me what to do. I feel "pressure", and when this pressure happens, the spirits of my ancestors come and give me revelation. Because of this revelation I am able to do it. They [make] my heart race and beat hard, so that I feel rather uncomfortable.

Whenever she feels this discomfort, she bakes the sacred bread *(iyis shıġarũ)* for the ancestors to relieve the pressure on her heart. Botajan refused a request by my associate, Sızdıqova, that she treat her for a headache, because it was Thursday, and her *arũaq* "press" her on Thursdays, their reminder to her that she must stay on the healer's path. They help her heal on other days, but she cannot "hold shop" *(düken ustaũ)* or examine anyone *(tekserũ)* on Thursday when she herself is suffering.

Having healed herself, Botajan then feels able to practice the full range of the Kazak healer's art:

> *B: Aũrũlar kelgen kezde . . . tamır ustaymın. Tamır ustaġan waqtımda ob'yazatel'no aũırġan jerin maġan ärũaqtarım otırıp aytadı, mınanıng mına jeri aũıradı, ananıng ana jeri aũıradı. Soni jaz, soni üyt, soni*

sen jaza alasıng dese, jaza alam, jaza almaysıng dese, aytam: jaza almaymın seni, basqa jaqqa bar dep silteym. Özime ayan beredi. . . . Alastaymın, pal ashamın, sosın emdegende dem salam, sosın massazh jasaym, sosın tilimdi salam.

B: When patients come I take their pulse. When I take their pulse, my ancestor-spirits come without fail and tell me where the sickness is: for one person it hurts in this part of the body, for another in another part. If my spirits tell me to do such-and-such and that I am able to cure it, I do so, but if they tell me I can't cure it, I say, "I can't cure you, so go to someone else." They give me revelation. I exorcise, I do divination, and when I heal I breathe on the patient, and then I massage and I remove [foreign objects from the eye] with my tongue.

Botajan diagnoses by pulse-taking *(tamır ustaymın)*, exorcizes spirits *(alastaymın)* by spitting or blowing in the Muslim fashion *(dem salam)*, casts fortunes *(pal ashamın)*, and gives massages *(massazh jasaym)*. Direction about whether she is qualified to treat a particular case is given by her ancestor-spirits *(ärũaqtarım aytadı, ayan beredi)*.

Diagnosis by pulse-taking. The blood vessels and pulse *(tamır)* are the "barometer" of the body (Qurayısh 1994:25). Botajan told us that the purpose of taking the patient's pulse is to discern the hotness or coldness of various body organs. This is the humoral theory of internal medicine which originated in the medical tradition of ancient Greece, was formalized in Islamic medicine by Ibn Sina and others, and is widespread in the Muslim world (Laderman 1995:22-39) and across Inner Asia (Shalinsky 1980b; Penkala 1980; cf. Humphrey 1996:58). If Kazaks are having health problems, they will often echo the view of the *tawips*, saying, for instance, that their kidneys, liver, thigh muscles, etc., have become "chilled" *(büyrek sũıqtaġan)*. Foods are either hot or cold and are eaten as antidotes for the hotness or coldness of the organs of the body. In the Turko-Mongolian pastoral taxonomy, beef is "cold" and so eaten in summer, whereas horse-

meat is "hot" and eaten in winter.

So *täwips* are also dieticians, prescibing foods to eat or avoid. In the same vein they listen to the pulse to sense heat or cold. (They never count pulses against their watch as modern medical practitioners do.) Diagnosis based on the patient's pulse is an art supplemented by intuition; therefore the revelation *(ayan)* of the healer's ancestor-spirits, another expression of the "*ayan* complex" already discussed, is an irreducible part of the Kazak healer's art.

Treatment by exorcism. A Kazak who is not faithful in honoring his or her own ancestor-spirits *(arũaq)* may be subject to attack by evil spirits *(jın-shaytan)*. Botajan does exorcism *(alastaũ)* in the case of diseases that involve "bondage" *(baylanũ*, lit. being tied up), which is thought to occur because spiritual "objects" (*kirne,* "inserts"; *shanshũ,* "piercings") have been malevolently transferred into the body. The mechanism of sorcery may be the evil eye *(köz)*, or the bitter tongue *(til)*, or the pointed finger *(suq)*, all of which are usually the fruit of jealousy or anger in any enemy. "Inserts" may be cast by the jealous person or by a sorcerer hired for the purpose or, just as commonly, by accidental contact with bewitched objects, such as a coin found on the ground (so Kazaks may avoid picking up lucky pennies).

Some *täwips* are themselves sorcerers.[1] All those we interviewed

---

1. Sorcery is largely left out of account in this study because we failed to produce reliable data. Kazaks fear the *baylaūshı* (lit., "one who ties") or *dūalaūshı* ("curser") as a purveyor of dangerous spiritual power. Sorcerers cast *dūa* ("prayer") or *ırım* (curse) on the enemies of their clients. From TV programs Kazaks are usually familiar with the magical practices of other societies; so they use the terms *qara magiya* (black magic) or *sıyqırshılıq* (magical arts) for comparable practices in their own society. Sorcerers generally practice in secret and also may insist on being called

denied that they were, but several suggested or implied that their rivals might be. Botajan was contemptuous of *täwips* who help women magically seduce married men into adultery. A neighbor of hers had got her husband this way. The technique involves enchanting an object such as a strand of hair or a thread and attaching the magical object surreptitiously to the clothing of the person who is to be enticed away from their spouse. Or an unfaithful spouse may be targeted with a *kirne* to cause disease or death.[1]

Disease is believed to have spiritual sources when scientific explanation fails. The sick person cannot expect to have an "open road" *(aq jol)* ahead of them when the way is blocked or "tied up" (*baylaġan*, tied up) by spirits. The verb "bound" is commonly used with the noun "road", and often also in connection with "foreign objects;" so Botajan says, "If you have a 'foreign object' or you are 'tied up,' if your 'road' is tied up, I cure you with my knife" *(Pıshaqpen endi shanshũıng bolsa, baylanıp qalsa, joląng baylanıp qalsa, solardı emdep otıram)*. Besides the "cutting" of the spirit's power with the shaman's knife, methods of exorcism include "putting the breath" *(dem salũ)* in the Muslim fashion, as demonstrated by Abdisalih Qoja, and/or spitting *(tüshkirũ)*, and/or writing amulets *(tumar*

---

by the more honorable term, *täwip*, to disguise their activities.

The corruption of the Arabic word *du'ā* in Kazak is reflected in the way two meanings are assigned to different spellings. *Dũa* means curse, and *duġa* means intercessory prayer, though Kazaks themselves may confuse the two. Bowen notes that the word is associated with both spells and prayers in Southeast Asia also (*OEMIW* 3:351).

1. Qojas also have power to curse. Their special authority *(qasiyət)* is not only beneficial but dangerous; so a Kazak does not cross a Qoja. Kengesbek told us the apocryphal story of the neighbor of a Qoja whose dog the neighbor had shot in a fit of anger, and who then paid for it when the Qoja breathed on him and said, "I just shot you." The breath *(dem)* of the Qojas figures here as the destructive counterpart of the curative breath of *dem salũ*.

jazıp berũ) for ongoing protection.

If a patient cannot come for treatment in person, Botajan asks that a picture be brought and she will breathe on it *(sũretke dem salamın).* If a woman comes with her husband's picture when he is seeing another woman, Botajan recites the Fatiha from the Quran and breathes across the picture, and the husband will come back.

Therapeutic paraphernalia. Mullahs and *täwips* share a common set of therapeutic paraphernalia. Both Abdisalih Qoja and Botajan display the shaman's knife and whip as emblems of their authority over the spirits. Botajan showed us the five kinds of objects she uses in healing and listed them in a fluent litany: "I have a Quran, a whip, a knife, two rosaries, and pellets [about a dozen dried beans] for divination" *(Quran kitabım bar, qamshım bar, pıshaġım bar, eki täspim bar, pal ashatın qumalaġım bar).* They were all wrapped in a white cloth, sitting in the highest place in the room atop a stack of quilted floor mats on a trunk. As she took the package down and turned to us, she touched it to her forehead and kissed it in Muslim fashion. She then talked about each object of her healer's paraphernalia.

The whip was a common leather riding crop. She says she does not hit anything with it but lightly waves it ritually *(ırım isteymin)* to drive out "Satan, the deceiver of humanity" *(adamdı azġırũshı shaytan).* She believes it dissolves the thing that hurts *(aũırtpalıġın sheshedi).* At the end of the whip are owl feathers which are holy *(kiyeli)* and protect her; the disease stays with the featers, she said, so that the patient's disease doesn't transfer to her.

Botajan attributed a miraculous origin to her knife, which was

sheathed and had an unusually fancy handle. She had a dream that a knife would be given to her by a mullah, so she went to the Yasawi Shrine on pilgrimage and lo, a woman she had never seen before came up and gave her one. For this reason she believes that she received her *tawip's* knife from Ahmet Yasawi himself.

Whip, knife, and owl's feather's are shamanic paraphernalia, but compared with the material culture of Buryat (Mongol) shamanship, they are rather minor objects (see the illustrations in Basilov and Zhukovskaya 1989). They are interpreted by Botajan in Islamic terms, and she uses them together with a rosary. Of her rosaries *(täspih)* she said, "This one I use for "putting the breath" *(dem salam)*, and this one for divination *(pal asham)*." If she holds the yellow *täspih* in her hand during *pal ashũ*, the *arũaq* speak to her *(ärũaqtarım söyleydi)*. She turns the tassel of the *täspih* and says the Shahada, because the tassel was put there by her *arũaq*. She also showed us a necklace *(közmonshaq)* of cloves *(qalampır)*, which keeps the disease away from her, like the owl's feathers on her whip; like her knife, it was given to her miraculously at the Yasawi Shrine.

In a dream Botajan was told to memorize Quranic verses, but she said nothing about the Kazak text and did not seem to be familiar with it, though she possesses one of the volumes of the handlettered, newsprint edition of the four-volume Kazak translation and transliteration of the Arabic text (1990-94). During *dem salu* she uses the Fatiha, which appears to be all she knows of the Quran. She knows verses only orally but cannot transcribe the Arabic text; so she cannot help her patients by writing amulets. She says her *arũaq* have not given her permission to do this. Although she is not a Qoja, Botajan believes her ancestor-spirits to be

"pure spirits" *(taza arũaq)*, both because they are hers and because they are Muslim; so they have power to drive away oppressive spirits that cause sickness and immorality. Reciting the Quran is a holy ministry to counteract sorcery, she believes. Most importantly, the power of Quranic recital is ratified by the ancestor-spirits.

THREE *TAWIPS*: ULJGALGAS, THE MUSLIM ECLECTIC

Uljalġas[1] is a *täwip* like Botajan, with whom she shares both a theory of healing and a therapeutic method. At 53 she is a generation older, confident in her bearing, a respected servant of the community who has treated many people in Turkistan over the years. She lives in a private mud-brick home, not in the ramshackle Soviet tenement apartments where Botajan lives.

Uljalġas takes her healing art from three sources: modern medicine, Muslim folk traditions, and Russian Christian healing traditions. Her Christian sources are modulated, however, by Muslim ones; in one breath she lays claim to the Gospel *(men injildi ustap otırmın)*, and in the next confesses, "Praise God, I am a Muslim" *(Alhamdu lillah musılmanmın)*. Baba Anya,[2] an old Russian woman from whom she learned herbal remedies, she calls her *pir*, a Muslim and Sufi term meaning spiritual master. Because she

---

1. *Uljalġas* means May A Son Be Added. It is one of several names given to Kazak girls in the hope that a boy will be born next. Others examples are *Ulbosın*, May There Be A Son, and *Ultuar*, A Son Will Be Born. One Kazak woman named Ulbosın told me she likes her name, because her younger brother was indeed born next after her, and it is a sign of divine favor that her name was efficacious in this way.

2. Coincidentally, in Russian *baba* means old woman but in Turkic languages means grandfather or old man, or even saint, as in Arslan Bab (Baba).

sometimes refers patients to the medical clinic and treats the doctors themselves when they come to her sick, Uljalġas also calls herself a *doktor-täwip*, combining the modern with the traditional Muslim term for healer. She is a forcefully deliberate syncretist, impervious to criticism, with seniority and confidence in her right to be eclectic.

Belief in the healing power of Christians is widespread in the Muslim world. Village mullahs in Tajikistan pray for healing in the name of the Prophet Isa (Jesus); in Jordan and Egypt, where Muslims have always lived alongside a substantial Christian minority, Muslim peasant families have been known to have their children baptized in the hope that it will be therapeutic. But Sızdıqova was surprised when she heard rumors of a Kazak *täwip* of Turkistan who healed in the name of Jesus. She thought that interviewing Uljalġas would be an interesting application of our interreligious research collaboration. In the outcome, however, serious theological controversy was missing, because Uljalġas is a Muslim *täwip* who embraces not Russian theology but only Russian methods and, with them, the right to invoke the name of Jesus, "the prophet of the Russians" *(orıstıng payġambarı)*.

When Uljalġas' *arũaq* were "pressing" her to accept her healing powers, Baba Anya interpreted her dream. Uljalġas had been urged by her Muslim relatives to accept the *täwip's* calling so that her ancestor-spirits would help her conceive a child, and when she found herself able to memorize everything Baba Anya told her, she embraced both her Muslim *arũaq* and her Christian *pir* as sources of inspiration — and bore six children. But despite her professed allegiance to the *Injil* (evangel, gospel), which she justified because the Book of Jesus is one of the four books which

Muslims receive, Uljalġas showed little familiarity with the Gospel. Baba Anya never gave her a Bible, so she had received not the Book itself but the spirit of the Book, and of course the remedies: "She taught me how to 'bind' each disease from the Gospel" *(Ol ärbir aũrũdıng injilden baylaũın berdi).*

It was Baba Anya who taught Uljalġas to think of Christian and Islamic faith as a unitary whole. Muslim women have Fatima *(Bībī Batıma)*, and Russians have the Mother of God *(Bozh'ya Mat')*; and since it is God who allowed the division between Muslims and Christians, we are one people under the divine sovereignty. Our God and our Prophets [*sic*] are One; so Islam is the religion of us all. Sızdıqova argued with Uljalġas about this, insisting that circumcision makes Muslims different from Christians, but Uljalġas brushed this aside with a homophonic play on the words for circumcision and baptism: Muslims "cut" (Kz. *kestiredi*) and Christians "christen" (Rs./Kz.: *krestit' etedi*). For Baba Anya and her Kazak disciple, our differences are a matter of mere pronunciation.

Learning healing by stages. Uljalġas believes herself special because her sources of authority include not only the healing secrets she learned from Baba Anya, but also her Qoja ancestry. Qojas are more inclined toward religion *(dinge beyimdeũ)*, she said, than common Kazaks, who believe they will go to heaven if they simply sit down at a meal with a Qoja. Uljalġas' mother was a shaman *(baqsı)*, and both parents were Qojas, but parents both died when she was a child, and she was raised an orphan in the boarding department of a school in Shymkent. Because she was an orphan she was allowed to marry a Kazak of the black bone, violating the Qoja rule of female endogamy. In 1972, when she was 29, she came to live

in Turkistan and began to receive her healing powers at about the same time. Until a few years ago she worked in the city bakery. Her husband was an engineer and a member of the Communist Party who did not believe in her healing powers, but she was protected because of his public position.

She was young and uncertain, and her calling came in stages. When she would say the Bismillah and spit on sick dogs, they would recover from mange and distemper. Then she received a revelation *(ayan)* from her ancestor-spirits and a blessing *(bata)* that confirmed it, along with a rosary *(täspih)* as an emblem of the confirmation, from one of her Qoja relatives. She believes that this blessing has protected her from curses and contagious disease. First she began to treat eye diseases, then learned to set bones, and then to "take pulses" and heal fertility problems. Confident that the Prophet's blood is in her veins, she is utterly uninhibited and feels at liberty to take her inspiration from Russian herbalism and Soviet medical science.

Diagnosis and treatment. Like Botajan, Uljalġas is a "pulse-taker" who relies on revelation from her ancestor-spirits to make a diagnosis and prescribe a treatment. Very much a Muslim healer, she wears a *täspih* around her neck and "turns" it after every *namaz*.

When Sızdıqova asked for a diagnosis of her own ailments, Uljalġas took her pulse and said it didn't "speak" clearly *(tamırıng jaqsı söylemeydi)*; nevertheless, she diagnosed "low blood" (anemia), "cold kidneys" *(büyreging sũıqtaġan)* and stomach problems — common illnesses in the repertoire of Kazak *täwips*. She prescribed a homemade honey drink. Like any Muslim healer, Uljalgas says that each ailment has its own "recital" *(oqũ)*, and although she substitutes the name of Jesus for Quranic verses,

she combines this with "putting the breath" *(dem salũ)* in the healing tradition of the Qojas and the Prophet Muhammad.

She also has "recipes" *(retsept)* she learned from Baba Anya, or she refers people directly to Baba Anya for herbal teas *(travnik)*. But she uses Kazak treatments, too, prescribing steppe sage *(adıraspan*, wild rue) for tuberculosis, because censing the house and breathing the fumes of a holy plant is good for lung diseases. Listing her specialties, she said she treats "wounds of seven 'fathers' [kinds]" *(jaranıng jeti atasın)*, six kinds of shingles *(temiretki)*, infertility in women *(tũmaġan äyelder)*, whooping cough *(kökjetel)*, bunions *(kübirtke)*, eczema *(egzema)*, croup *(kruk*), ear infections *(krasnoe ukho)*, rashes *(böritpe)*, and mange *(qotır, chesotka)*. To label diseases she uses Kazak or Russian terms as needed.

Uljalġas is a specialist in treating infertility. Running against the local prejudice, however, she knows that the cause of childlessness is not necessarily in the woman; so she insists on seeing the couple and looks for prostate problems and venereal disease in the husband; in the woman she looks for fallopian tubes that have become "cold" according to humoral theory. The treatment, however, is always the same: a three-day treatment with hummingbird nests *(qurqıltay uyası)*. Shepherds in the mountains bring her the rare nests, which she fills with horse fat *(jılqınıng mayı)* to treat the genitals. For each nest she charges a hefty 500 tenge ($10 in 1995, a week's wage).

Uljalġas knows there are different kinds of "healing gifts" *(emdik qasiyetter)* and "varieties of healing" *(emshilikting emshiligi boladı)* for which people shop around. She refers surgical and other problems to medical doctors, including diseases caused by ecological damage. She be-

lieves her whip and knife are spiritual weapons adequate to turn back serious devils *(jın-shaytan)*, "little demons" *(bäleket)*, and "white satans" *(aq saytan)*, but darker problems caused by curses *(dũa)*, the evil eye (Rs. *chyornaya porcha*), or black magic *(chyornaya magiya)* she refers to the mullahs, like a specialist who knows her limits. Her proud syncretism has made her humble.

THREE *TAWIPS*: ZULFIYA, THE SPITTER

Zulfiya is a "spitter" *(tüshkirũshi)*. All Kazak *täwips* expectorate on their patients, and any Kazak woman who desires to impart a blessing to a child may spit in the child's face. Though appalling to outsiders, spitting is a regular occurrence whenever a Kazak mother takes a new baby out in public and shows the child to visitors. She wouldn't think of objecting, because spitting is a sign of "pure intention" *(aq niyet)*, a Muslim volition that is the opposite of the evil eye. The custom of spitting or just feigning the spitting act as protection against compliments or prophesies of good things to come — like knocking on wood — is widely dispersed across Eurasia.

A *tüshkirũshi* may not be a full-fledged *täwip*. Zulfiya takes pulses to diagnose sick children and then spits on them, her basic and only treatment. If she refuses to take a sick child's pulse, she feels "pressed" by her ancestor-spirits *([tamır] ustamasam qısadı)*, but if she treats them, she feels "a little relief" *(sonı tükirip tursang, üsting jengil bop, kishkentay jengildenip...)*.

Zulfiya is a Sunaq (see Chapter 2). Her great-grandfather, Nurbay,

was from a *baqsı* from a village near Turkistan who brandished a whip in his treatments, she remembers. She was born in Shiyeli (Chilik) near Qızıl Orda in 1945, raised in Kentau, and moved to Turkistan when she was married in 1969. When two of her children, then her mother and brother, died several years ago, she knew she must begin healing or she herself might suffer their fate. Claiming no special signs of her calling — no whip or knife and no special blessing from her relatives — Zulfiya does what she sees other women doing. She has submitted, after bitter experience, to her duty to do what one must do to relieve the "pressure" of the *arũaq*. She took up the healing art to save herself.

Zulfiya says she worships *(sıyınũ)* God first, then Ahmet Yasawi, and finally her ancestor, Sunaq Ata: "If I speak the name of Sunaq Ata, my road opens up" *(Sunaq-Atanı aytsam, jolım boladı)*. She no longer believes in doctors, nor in other *täwips*, whom she despises for their pecuniary motives; she herself never takes more than a few tenge for her services. In the old days there were healers who were truly "given over" to God *(shın berilip täwipshildik istegender)*, but today there are many false ones whom she expects to be condemned at the Last Judgment *(ötirik täwipshildik istegender bäri joyılıp ketedi)*.

Spitting is first in the hierarchy of resort for common childhood ailments. Spitting is more like a mother's prayer or a neighbor's act of well-wishing than a full-blown healing art. Families prevail upon the old woman *(kempir)* or old man *(shal)* next door to bless sick children in this way, because it is a convenient alternative to seeking out (and paying for) the skills of a specially gifted healing practitioner. Qalambay, who puts off charges that he is a shaman by claiming to be only a spitter (see below),

says it is a lesser gift than that of the mullahs but a valuable one: "Everyone has their own share [of the gift]" *(Ärkimning ärtürli nesibi bar).*

The Kazak spitter is associated with the Islamic tradition as surely as the other healers, because expectorating is an extension of breath, and when the healer's breath is blasted in the face of the sick person, spittle, of course, is not far behind. Breath and spittle are associated not only with the Kazak or Qoja ancestor-spirits but with the prophets as well: Jesus spat to make a plaster of mud which he swabbed on the eyes of the blind man (Mark 8:23). Basilov errs in associating spitting with the shaman alone and obfuscates his case when he writes ambiguously that "a shaman *or other kind of healer* recites prayers and spits on the sick" (1995:7). Among Siberian shamans the master spits in the mouth of the adept to pass on the power of the helping spirits (Eliade 1964:114; DeWeese 1997c:7), but again there is a more direct parallel in the practice of Muslim healers who breath forcefully on the sick. During the Islamization process the shamanic pattern appears to have ramified from the master-disciple relationship to the healer-patient relationship. For the Kazak *täwip*, spitting is an Islamic therapy associated with *dem salū*. It is also a way for female healers to participate in the Islamic aura of the mullahs.

Reprise: Three Täwips. The *täwip's* art is practical religion, an application of Kazak belief in the ancestor-spirits, the Muslim saints, and the pure way of Islam. It depends experientially on the "*ayan* complex." Botajan, Uljalġas, and Zulfiya all believe that their healing powers reflect the power of these forces in their lives. Idiosyncratic experience, such as Uljalġas' apprenticeship to Baba Anya or Botajan's training with Zamanbek Besbayev, does not detract from these basic foundations. All three *täwips*

felt "pressed" by the ancestor-spirits to adopt the life of a healer, and all three then visited the Muslim shrines to validate their calling. Even their therapeutic spittle is an expression of "pure intention" *(aq niyet)*, which makes it a Muslim spirituality in the Kazak understanding. Healing is a variant calling to the Muslim life.

All three *täwips* are self-reliant women. The title may also be used by men, such as Ümbet Täwip mentioned in Chapter 5, but the Qoja and mullah healers may reject it as a title for themselves, in part because it so often means a woman. It is said that 10% of all the women living in Turkistan's government housing block — the poorest section of town — are *täwips*. The *täwip's* skills give her an identity distinct from her husband's and make her a small income at home. She acquires a reputation and social confidence from providing a service to the community. For a woman with religious nerve, therefore, the calling of the healer may be attractive in spite of the "shaman's sickness" and other attendant hardships. Its validation of a woman's (even a young woman's) authority and status probably explains the multiplication of Kazak *täwips* during the hard times of the 1990s. It is also important for the female *täwip* that her work keeps her affectively connected with the memory of her own lineage, as distinct from her husband's. Her spiritual world may include spirits on her mother's as well as her father's side. A childless woman like Botajan who has failed to produce children in her husband's patriline may find maintaining a connection with her own ancestor-spirits especially reassuring. This matrilineal theme cannot be construed as un-Islamic, because even the Qojas may trace their lineage through women, as in the case of Fatima and Gaũhar Ana, when their fathers had no male issue.

Visiting a *täwip* is usually a second resort after a medical doctor. Certain diseases, however, are thought to be better treated by *täwips* or mullahs than at the hospital, especially if the evil eye or other magical cause is suspected, or if a certain *täwip* is known for her skill with a particular ailment, such as infertility. The failure of a *täwip* may then produce a search for a more proficient "big mullah" *(ülken molda).*

Criticism of *täwips* is common. Modernist Kazak sensibilities find the healing cult superstitious, of course, but the traditional objections are more interesting. Nurali Qoja cannot believe in Kazak *täwips*, because for him healing power lies only in the line of the Prophet. This means, however, that he, as a Qoja, shares with *täwips* a high confidence in his own healing art as compared with that of others. He trusts in the power of the Quranic verses he recites, the *bata* he received from his father, and *ayan* he experiences from his ancestors. A Kazak must only be "enspirited" *(arũaqtı adam)* to be a *täwip*, but the mullah, in addition, must have at least a minimal command of the traditional therapeutic verses of the Quran to claim the favor of his ancestors. Omar Qoja, Nurali's nephew, acknowledges that *täwips* perform an admirable service, but the Quran and breath of a big mullah like his Uncle Nurali treat spiritual causes more effectively. These Qojas think of the Kazak *täwip*, with whom they share much ground, as superficial because they are of inferior lineage and gender. Uljalġas, however, is a Qoja woman and exploits it. Early in her ministry, she says, even older *täwips* would defer to her, saying, "You are the seed of the Prophet" *(payġambar tuqımı ekensing dep)*; so, she says, "I felt I was somewhat higher than them" *(özimdi olardan artıqtaũmın ġoy dep sezinetinmin).* One wonders what sparks would fly between her and Nurali Qoja.

PALSHI: THE FORTUNE-TELLERS

The Kazak *palshı* or *balger* (diviner, fortune-teller) is usually a woman. She is on display more publicly than the mullahs and *täwips*. In Turkistan one may find the *palshı* sitting on the ground at the bazaar playing tarot cards for passers-by, reading palms, casting the "forty-one sheep's pellets" *(qırıq bir qumalaq ashũ)*, or examining cracks in a sheep's shoulder blade *(jaũırın)* heated over a fire (scapulimancy). Because the *palshı's* art is to "see" things, she may also be called a *köripkel* (seer; Kz. *körũ*, to see), or sometimes *sıyqır* (magician, sorcerer; Ar. *siḥr*), less commonly a *säwegey* (sorcerer; Pers., *sanagoi*), though she does not cast spells but only "opens" the future *(pal ashũ)*. The Kazak vocabulary of divination is largely borrowed from Persian sources.[1] Thus, two traditions are being conflated. When *balger* is coupled with *baqsı*, the Kazak word for shaman, as in a new Kazak reader on shamanism entitled *Qazaq baqsı-balgerleri* [The Kazak shaman-diviner] (Däũrenbekov and Tursınov 1993). The Kazak *balger/palshı* today is not a shaman but a fortune-teller narrowly defined.

The *palshı* displays her implements in front of her on a cloth. Most commonly these are the traditional 41 small pellets of sheep dung, dried and

---

1. I have not found a Kazak who knows the word *elti*, which Valikhanov reported as a Kazak synonym of *balger* or female shaman *(baqsı)* (1989 [1864?]:158ff.; cf. Castagné 1930:123f., who spells it *iltu*). When confronted with Valikhanov's identification and the suggestion of an association with shamanism, Kazaks will sometimes propose that *elti* is derived from the Kazak/Turkic word, *elitũ*, to hallucinate, but the etymology is unlikely. *Elti* in Turkmen is a kinship term for a second wife or brother's wife (Irons 1975:103), and in Turkish for the wives of brothers (*TED*, p. 118), who in Kazak call each other *abısın*. Women thus related have a joking relationship in Turkic cultures, sexual inuendo being allowed in conversation between them and their men. Probably Valikhanov and Castagné were hearing a derisive application of this word against fortune-teller women.

lacquered, now usually brown beans or plastic beads (all of these are called *qumalaq*, the Kazak word for sheep dung). Judging by the objects displayed by *palshıs* in the Turkistan bazaar, skill in scapulimancy is less common than casting pellets or reading tarot cards. Supplicants squat in front of the *palshı*, explain the problem they face, watch the casting of the pellets, listen to the forecast, and receive the blessing of the *palshı*. It takes a minute or two. A very small amount of money changes hands. The police and bazaar authorities often run the *palshıs* off as a public nuisance or because they have not paid their fee for taking up commercial space in the bazaar. The law of supply and demand brings them back when the policeman turns his back — or needs his own fortune cast!

Some of the bazaar *palshıs* are Tajik women. When divination is thought of pejoratively, Kazaks may dismiss it as a specialty of the Tajiks, but this is facile. Kazaks eagerly embrace the prognostic arts of "pulse-taking" *(tamır ustaũ)* and "opening the future" by divination *(pal ashũ)* as part of the Oriental "world-knowledge" *(düniyetanım)* of the East (Aqpanbek 1993; Ömirzaqov 1996). In the face of scientific russification, Oriental sciences assume the function of ethnic markers. Though they may intone disillusionment with the results, they seldom express reservations on Islamic grounds. The image of the *palshı* has even been celebrated in nation-building exercises; in a 1997 television documentary about Kazak life, a *palshı* sitting in front of a beautiful fountain in Almaty was paired in successive frames with a mullah saying a blessing in front of the Yasawi Shrine in Turkistan.

Illness and other foci of divination. The *palshı* is not a healer *per se* and so cannot strictly be called a *emshi*, but her prophesies often have

to do with health and sickness, among other things. A common hierarchy of resort when a Kazak is sick is to visit the doctor at the government hospital, take one's medicine, and then visit a *palshı* to determine whether the treatment is going to work. Roles overlap again when *täwips* and mullahs not only heal and give blessings but cast fortunes. A *täwip* must discern the illness and the treatment, just as the *palshı* discerns unknown outcomes and coming events. I mentioned above that Botajan practices *pal ashũ* in her home as part of her *täwip's* art. She took her divining pellets *(qumalaq)* to her mentor, Zamanbek Besbayev, and had him bless them by "putting the breath" *(dem salũ)*. Gülsim, a *täwip* interviewed by Ardaq Jeksenbaeva, one of our students, is a *palshı* also.

Turkistan's fortune-tellers solve a variety of problems that may or may not be related to sickness. They decide where a lost animal or child has gone, or which young man a young woman should go with. They do a booming business with student couples wanting to know whether their parents will approve of their relationship. In the case of sickness it is a cause that is sought, and the answer is usually that the sick person has a been "touched" by the evil eye *(köz tiygen)* or has been pierced by a spiritual object in the body *(kirne)* planted there by sorcery. Belief in the evil eye is so widely diffused that Seligman proposed a hundred years ago that a universal socio-psychological function might be found to explain it. The most prominent of these theories has been the envy-syndrome documented by Foster in Mexico, though Maloney (1976:ix), summarizing the data and theories, argues that no single explanation is persuasive.

Divination and Islam. Islam is tolerant of divination, one of the "accepted forms of Koranic magic" (Donaldson 1937:254). The universality of

divination in Muslim cultures defies attempts to trace its historical source, though its Persian vocabulary may be a significant clue in the case of the Kazaks. Among the Kazaks it is usually conceived as an Islamic art. Omar Qoja pays homage to the local fortune-tellers, because God, through their ancestor-spirits *(arũaq)*, gives revelation *(ayan)* to them. Jolbarıs Qoja said the *palshıs* are like the saints *(aũliye)*, because both need prophetic gifts from God. The traditional association of divination with Muslim piety is obvious in the Kazak proverb, "God knows the number of the pellets" *(Qumalaqtıng esebin quday biledi)* (*AT*, June 1, 1995).

Kazaks who know the name of no prophet other than Muhammad often know that Daniel *(Daniyar Payġambar)* is the patron saint of Muslim diviners (cf. Valikhanov 1985:159). Fortune-tellers have the same "quality" *(qasiyet)*, and thus participate in the same spiritual domain, as mullahs and *täwips*, even the *aũliye* of old:

> *O: Palshılardıng qumalaq ashatındarı, jaũırın ashatındarı boladı, tolıq tabadı . . . Qudaydıng qudiretimen ärũaqtar ayan beredi . . . Qumalaq ashqanda Quday özi tüsirer soġan ädeyi.*
>
> O: When the diviners use pellets or shoulder blades to reveal things, they can lay bare the whole truth. The ancestor-spirits give them revelation by the power of God. God sends it down to them directly when they cast the pellets.

When the *palshı* examines the sheep's pellets or shoulder bone, God and the ancestor-spirits give an interpretation which Omar believes would be invisible to himself as an ordinary person. As in the case of the pulse-taking of the *täwips*, prognostic method must be supplemented by special revelation.

Some of the Qojas are more scrupulous about divination. As Nurali

says, "People like us who have [Islamic] knowledge don't believe in fortune-tellers" *(Biz ilimi bar adam palshıġa senbeydi eken)*. The healer Arḥat Anūr in Shymkent calls himself a Sufi and advertises (*AS*, September 5, 1997) that, although he can foresee events *(rūḥanī joldı köremin)*, he does not tell fortunes *(bal ashpaymın)*, "because it is best not to force one's way into the future" *(bolashaqqa bas suġa berū jön emes)*. Uljalġas argues the same case demonologically, saying that, of the different kinds of healing gifts *(emdik qasiyetter)*, the ones used by the *palshı* women are inspired by the "white satans" *(aq saytan)*, which, while useful for inspired divination (hence "white"), have no power for higher and holy ministries like healing. Qalambay believes in the good or evil he foresees in his dreams, but not in the prophesies of the *palshı* women.

The *palshı*'s ambiguous religious status is defined by Kazaks with a proverb: "Don't mess with divination, but don't try to avoid it" *(Balmen de bolma, balsız da bolma)*. Omar's mother, Fatima, interpreted this equivocation with an obfuscated Kazak colloquism: "You can have divination but you can't *not* have it" *(Onıng da bolatını bar, bolmaytını joq)*. The fortune-teller is neither honored nor feared, only used. She answers questions and gives reassurance, but she also is a magnet for the social criticism of credulity and theological criticism of obscurantism.

Women and divination. Like pilgrimage to Muslim shrines, a visit to a diviner is an outlet for the daily concerns and faith of women especially. Zulfiya, a "spitter," is sceptical about the *palshıs* and says their prophecies are gibberish, but she admits she used to go to them when one of her children would get lost or come home late from school. Women whose college-age sons and daughters are studying in Almaty or Istanbul will go to a

palshı to find out their child is doing. When Baqıtbergen is gone on a business trip, Nesibeli worries about his health and wonders when and whether he'll bring back a profit this time. So she goes to her favorite *palshı* with an "intention" *(niyet)* in her heart. The *niyet*, her act of faith, indicates that she thinks of divination in a Muslim way, not unlike a pilgrimage to the Yasawi Shrine or domestic reverence for the ancestor-spirits.

Divination, like pilgrimage and the domestic rites, allows a woman to express her spiritual aspiration. Household, shrine, and bazaar, not mosque, are the environments of female spirituality in Kazakstan.

Fortunes without malice. Kazak proverbial wisdom requires that the *palshı* may not prophesy misfortune or a bad future *(jamanġa jorqıtũġa bolmaydı)*. Similarly, when a blessing *(bata)* is sought from the shrine mullahs or any Muslim elder, only good wishes may be intoned. And in the case of bad dreams, the seven sacred breads are to be fried and distributed *(iyis shıġarũ)*, but the dream is not to be mentioned. So the *palshı* will deny misfortune she foresees rather than utter it.

The reality of the future is believed to lie in prophetic experience — blessing, dream, and divination — so verbalizing an anticipated misfortune would cause it to come to pass. For the *palshı* to do so would make her a possible object of sorcery *(dũa)* by the client whose bad future she had betrayed. Gülsim, a village *täwip-palshı*, told Jeksenbaeva that she never prophesies someone's death, because the person or their family would come after her. She justifies lying with the argument that the days are evil and no one has a "pure intention" *(taza niyet)* any more.

No *palshı* has ever reported a bad outcome to Nesibeli, but if anyone, *palshı* or otherwise, even hints that something bad might happen to her or

her family, she springs into action. She prepares the seven sacred breads for the ancestor-spirits and gives them to her neighbors, then goes immediately to the Yasawi Shrine and puts the seven tenge bills in Tamerlane's bronze cauldron. By appealing to both the *arũaq* and the *aũliye* — the domestic and shrine traditions of Kazak religion — she hopes to prevent the misfortune before it happens, or "knock down its approach" *(aldın alıp jatadı)*. If it is her children who have been threatened, she takes them with her to the shrine and has them put the seven tenge into the cauldron. A misspoken word is a serious matter and demands serious remedies.

Reprise: Uncertain outcomes. The *palshı* fulfills a sociopsychological need for assurance about uncertain outcomes and the individual's access to the spiritual world. Kazaks themselves articulate this functionalist interpretation. For Qalambay, the *palshı* is someone you go to to learn about your future when your own dream-visions *(ayan)* are inadequately prophetic. For people who don't have dreams, or haven't had the kind they want, divination provides an alternate route into the mysteries of the ancestor-spirits. When your *arũaq* are silent, you go to a *palshı*. When your home has become spiritually lonely, and the shrine seems too holy, there is one last alternative: go to the bazaar and spend five minutes with a *palshı*. Divination among the Kazaks is a supplementary venue for the devotion of home and shrine, just as the latter are alternatives to the mosque. For some, divination is contemptible or low on the hierarchy of spiritual resort, but it is excluded entirely by few.

Divination allows personal involvement in the flow of events in one's life. For the marginalized it is a way of laying claim to their own history and destiny. It is energized by the cultural perspective that personal fate

(*taġdır)* is never so determined in advance that remedial measures cannot be attempted. A happy future prophesied is a reassurance, and even a foreboding of misfortune is better than not knowing at all. A Kazak then knows to "emit the fragrance" on Thursdays, or visit a shrine, or go to a *täwip* for healing, or even begin to keep the fast and learn to say the *namaz.* Whether revealed in an elder's blessing *(bata),* a dream-vision *(ayan),* or a *palshı's* prophesy, awareness of the future makes possible personal control of fate and circumstance.

BAQSI: REMEMBRANCES OF THE KAZAK SHAMAN

Sharipbek's wife's grandfather was a shaman *(baqsı).* The old man would never publicly say so, because the Soviets would take the shamans away and shoot them, she said; so she was strictly taught as a child to conceal the fact that her grandfather was a *baqsı* — so much so that it is hard for her to talk about it to this day. The *baqsıs* were an easy target of the Soviet anti-religious campaigners, because they healed not in the quiet way of the mullahs and *täwips* with their pulse-taking *(tamır ustaũ),* "putting the breath" *(dem salũ)* and herbal remedies, but with ecstatic trances that could be ridiculed as so much "shouting and noise" *(ayqay-shũ),* as Jolbarıs Qoja put it. Muslims and communists agreed that the way of the shaman was obsolete; so the Kazak *baqsı* was doomed.

Most Kazaks say they have never seen or heard of a *baqsı.* Someone may occasionally say that there is a *Baqsı* So-and-So in such-and-such a village, but even then they usually qualify with the observation that there are no true *baqsıs* any more. A few current indications of shamanic identi-

ties and practice will be explored below, but, in general, one cannot escape Jolbarıs Qoja's conclusion that "their seed dried up" *(tuqımı qurıp ketti)*. In the 1990s there has been a literary revival surrounding the figure of *Qorqıt Ata* (Tk. *Dede Korkut*), the legendary father of all Central Asian shamans (Därbisalīn 1993; B. Isqaqov 1994), whose shrine on the banks of the Syr Darya near Qızıl Orda has been washed away. But the literary revival confirms the shaman's antiquarian image in Kazak culture today.

Shamanism is not a religion *per se*; so it is a misuse of terms to say that the pre-Islamic religion of the Kazaks was shamanism (Muqanov 1974:182), even though they did indeed have shamans. Lévi-Strauss rightly understood the shaman a vicar of souls rather than a leader of a religion (1963:199):

> Actually the shamanistic cure seems to be the exact counterpart to the psychoanalytic cure, but with an inversion . . . [I]n one case, the patient constructs an individual myth with elements drawn from his past; in the other case the patient receives from the outside a social myth which does not correspond to a former personal state.

The shaman improvises methods in a do-it-yourself style but is not the leader of a unified system of belief. For this reason Humphrey, in her study of the Daur Mongols, rejects the term shaman*ism*, substituting shaman*ship*, which focuses on the methods and personhood of the shaman. "Shamanship commonly, perhaps always, coexists with other religious practices" (1996:360) and so is a kind of "dispersed religion" (p. 364); so I will join Humphrey in speaking of shamans and shamanship, since there is not, and never was, such a thing as Kazak shaman*ism*. The ethnographic record shows that the Kazak *baqsıs* had all absorbed Islamic therapeutic and thought-patterns. They did so because their curing methods depended on

the "social myth" or ideology, and Islam was the ideology of the Kazaks.

For the Kazaks this device in English does not solve the problem, unfortunately, because both shamanism and shamanship would be translated *baqsılıq*. It is revealing, however, that Kazaks will speak of *baqsılıq* (Kz.) or *shamanizm* (Rs.), but then confess they have never seen a *baqsı* or *shaman*. They have no shamans but claim to have shamanism! Still under the spell of Marxist theory that assigned shamanism a fixed position in the evolution of religion, Kazaks tend to think of "Kazak shamanism" as a kind of organized religion that preceded Islam. The supplemental theory of the "survival" of archaic forms --- Engels learned it from Tylor and Morgan and stamped with the Marxist imprimatur -- then leads Kazaks to conclude, even in the absence of evidence in their own personal experience, that their moribund shamanism somehow survives in their culture today. The case cannot be sustained, no matter how thoroughly three or four generations of Kazak students have imbibed it in philosophy class. The faint traces of the early synthesis of shamanic and Islamic healing practices, which will be identified below, fall well short of being a living shamanism.

What we do have are remembrances by elderly informants of Kazak *baqsıs* early in the Soviet period. Baqıtbergen remembers that a *baqsı* stayed in their home in a village near Turkistan when he was a small boy in the 1950's, but it is with older memories, from a generation earlier, that we must begin. The shamanic texts left to us by Divaev (1899) and Castagné (1923, 1925, 1930) find their historical continuity in reports we heard from three women, Fatima, Aybibi, and Uljalġas.

Fatima and the Baqsı *of Qazalı*. Fatima, at age 80 (born ca. 1915), was born and raised in a yurt --- a nomad by birth. Her father was a Qoja

and educated Muslim *(älim kisi)*, she said, and a well-to-do livestock herder at Kök Töbe near Balta Köl across the Syr Darya from Turkistan. His tent was called a *jüz bas* (hundred head) because it would hold 100 people, and Fatima remembers that her father's wives lived in their own yurts spaced five meters away from his. Her father died when she was 11 or 12 years old (1926/27?), and before she was 16 (1930/31?) she was married to a Qoja from Turkistan. Her husband worked as an agricultural laborer on one of the early Soviet farms, and it was there she had a life-changing encounter with a Kazak shaman.

Fatima is not a credulous person; she talks effusively with a happy lilt and makes occasional impious comments. She confessed that she scoffed at the *arũaq* for most of her life until a recent illness when she was healed by a *täwip* summoned by her son. And she loves the memory of a *baqsı* from Qazalı (Kazalinsk), tolerating no criticism of him.

Her baby was six months old, and she was 19 years old, so it was 1934. While her husband was away from home with a harvest crew, her baby became malnourished and dehydrated, would no longer nurse, and she thought he had died; so she went looking for a shovel and an old woman who would help her bury the child. I was in a daze, she said, but my baby was a Qoja, a descendent of the Prophet, who deserved a Muslim burial *(janaza)*.

She was directed to a house where the women of the village had gathered that day. Outside the spectators warned Fatima that inside a man was "sticking a knife into himself" *(ishine pıshaq tığıp [j]atır)*. She looked in the window and saw a grey snake and a man with a knife wearing a skull cap *(taqiya)* and an open shirt *(jeyde)*, sweating profusely, waving a

knife and shouting "Leave! Git!" *(Qayt ta qayt!).* She saw him stick the dagger *(qanjar)* into his belly. She couldn't get anyone to call one of the old women out of the house for her, and meanwhile the baby lay in her arms lifeless *(basılıp qaldı)*. Suddenly the *baqsı* stopped, said he was finished, and someone prevailed on him to receive Fatima. She believes that the person who got her in to see the *baqsı* was "pressed" to do so by the ancestor-spirits *(ata-babanıng ärũaġı basıp turġan)*, and that her child was saved providentially because the *baqsı* had not left for Qazalı on the train that day as he had planned.

The *baqsı*'s medical procedure and treatment of Fatima's child were unremarkable for someone who had just been sticking himself with a dagger and handling a snake. He examined the child, manipulated the spine to revive him, and promised to visit her the next day after his morning *namaz*, which he did. He taught the young mother to make a medicine called *kömesh* from butter and other ingredients and to spoon feed boiled water — apparently a rehydration therapy. (Probably Fatima herself was malnourished, and breast feeding had become useless.) The *baqsı* told her that God had sent him to save the child and prophesied that he would live till his 25th *müshel* (a key birthday in the 12-year Kazak zodiac cycle). The child did survive and, as predicted, died in his late twenties.

The *baqsı* from Qazalı also had Fatima sew a Khoqand coin[1] on the baby's skull cap as an amulet *(tumar)* and told her Allah would now protect him and give good fortune. Fatima brought us the coin, which, though

---

1. During the period 1819-1864 the khan of Khoqand ruled the towns of the middle Syr Darya basin (see Chapter 2) where these events took place. So this was an old coin, at least 70 years old at the time and at least 140 years old today.

rubbed smooth, still showed an Arabic imprint and a small hole for the string that had tied it to the baby's skull cap. She insisted the *baqsı* had performed no shamanic rite *(oynamadı)*; in fact, he had said the *namaz* that morning like a good Muslim. Fatima had no money to pay him, so he received nothing. She laments that the days of such selfless service are over.

Fatima believes that a healer must be "enspirited" *(arũaqtı)*, and that the spirits "burn" in any good healer *(arũaq jaġıp jüredi)*. This much is acknowledged by most any Kazak. But when she said that the old Kazak *baqsıs* were "pure healers" *(taza emshi)*, Omar Qoja, her son, objected respectfully, saying, "Pure, but they have jinn" *(Taza, biraq jını bar)*. This statement is a happy contradiction made necessary by Omar's duty both to uphold the way of Islam, which opposed shamanic excesses, and to honor his mother. Jinn or no jinn, however, Fatima remembers only the power of the spirits who inspired the selfless service of the *baqsı* of Qazalı; so she ignored her son's theological critique. Beneficial spirits are, by definition, pure *(taza)* spirits as far as she is concerned, and therefore blessings of God and the Muslim way of life.

***Aybibi and the Flying* Baqsıs.** Two informants told us that their mothers had been shamans. Aybibi was born in 1916 at Babay Qorġan near the Karatau Mountains and then worked 28 years in the cotton fields at Shäũildir. She comes from a line of *baqsıs* on her mother's side, including also her maternal grandfather. (We note that among the Kazaks the art could be passed from father to daughter [cf. Svanberg 1989:152].) Although Aybibi herself was required by her husband's family to learn the *namaz* and cut her ties to the shamanic tradition, her mother practiced the sha-

man's art until she died in 1963. Aybibi does not think there are any *baqsıs* left these days, but she told a fantastic story about her mother's and maternal grandfather's generation, which Sızdıqova (IK) discussed with her:

A: *Olar bir-bir qobızdı arqalay tuġın. Aũrũ adam bosa, aldına alıp otırıp, oynay tuġın. O-oy tam basına shıġıp kete tuġın, qara üyding shangıraġına shıġıp kete tuġın. Ḥaldarı ot bop janıp jarıq sala tuġın. Qanday baqsı - solar sonday.*

IK: *Aspanda ushadı deydi. Aspanġa ne küsh köteredi eken olardı sonda?*

A: *Ärũaq köterip ketedi. Mening . . . sheshemning äkesi jeti jastarında ustaġan eken.*

IK: *Sheshengizding äkesi. Äyel baqsı boladı ma?*

A: *Äyel baqsı boladı. Jan qıyılıs äũpirim baqsı ġoy sheshemiz.*

A: They would carry a *qobız* around on their back. They would sit in front of the sick person and play. They would go way up to the top of the house, to the smoke hole *(shangıraq)* of the yurt. Their countenance would light up like fire. If you ask about the *baqsı*, that's what they were like.

IK: People say that they flew up to the sky. What kind of power lifted them to heaven?

A: The ancestor-spirits lifted them. When he was seven years old my mother's father became a *baqsı*.

IK: Your mother's father. Can a woman be a *baqsı* also?

A: There were women *baqsıs*. My mother was a *baqsı* with her helping spirit *(pir)* joined to her soul.

Transformed physiognomy and miraculous flight or levitation (climbing?) up to the smoke hole of the yurt, where the *baqsı* summoned and met his or her helping spirits, was characteristic of Inner Asian shamanic séances. In Yasawian legends also the gift of flying is claimed by Ahmet Yasawi and his disciples (as it was in other Sufi traditions [Goldziher 1971a:269), but it is

also devalued in other stories in which Mecca itself flies *to* Yasawi: Sufi quietism triumphs over ecstatic gifts (DeWeese 1997c:4,7). Also characteristic was Aybibi's use of the Turko-Persian term, *pir*, taken over by the shamans from Sufism, where it meant a spiritual master *(walī; shaykh)*, to describe the shaman's *arũaq*. Her mother was "a shaman with her helping-spirit joined to her soul" *(jan qıyılıs äũpirim baqsı)*.

Playing the *qobız*, a stringed instrument specifically associated in Kazak culture with the *baqsı's* art (Janäbilov 1994; Sarıbaev 1981),[1] as Aybibi's story illustrates, induced trance in the performance of the Kazak shaman, and the absence of the *qobız* and ecstatic trance is one element that distinguishes the Kazak *täwip* from the musical *baqsıs*. After Aybibi's mother's death, her *qobız* sat in the house and played itself on Thursdays and Fridays, until one day it disappeared; the family believes that the ancestor-spirits stole it. Sharipbek told me about another *qobız* of a deceased shaman that he and others passed around from house to house trying to get rid of it, blaming various ailments and misfortunes on its presence. Asem Muhammedjanova, a musician trained at the Almaty Conservatory and skilled on the *qobız*, apologized that she could not teach me the *qobız*, because it is too deep and spiritual, a gift of her ancestor-spirits. Miracles associated with the shaman's *qobız* were recorded in 19th-century ethnographic transcriptions, and Muzaffar Shalapov repeated one of them to me. In response to some impudent young men who had been ridiculing him, Qoylıbay Baqsı hung his magical *qobız* in a tree and challenged the smart

---

1. Svanberg says a Kazak *baqsı* woman in Turkey played the *dombra* (1989:152), which is never associated with shamanic performance in Kazakstan, as far as I know.

young riders to beat his *qobız* in a horse race. The tree, empowered by the *qobız*, was lifted from its roots by a whirlwind and won the race, leaving the horses in a cloud of dust (cf. Valikhanov 1985 [1862–64]:159ff.; Castagné 1930:64f.).

Qoja and **baqsı.** Uljalġas, ever the good Muslim, says the spirits of the *baqsıs* are jinns, so as a Muslim *täwip* she lays no claim to the shamanic heritage. But her mother was a *baqsı* — and a Qoja as well. The Qoja men we interviewed tend to be contemptuous of the *baqsı*, who was "a healer from among the people" *(ḥalıqtıng arasınan shıqqan emshi)*, as Jolbarıs Qoja put it, lacking an Arab and prophetic pedigree. Qoja women, however, appear to have played a part in the *baqsı* tradition. Uljalġas recited two shamanic texts from memory, which suggests a closer personal attraction than she admits to:

> *U: Baqsı kempir otqa ketpendi salıp, qızdırıp, waj-waj jalaydı eken, sonda mına jerining [?] bäri keŭip ketedi eken, sonda baqsı oynaydı, aŭırġan adamdardı ortaġa tastaydı, baqsı oynaydı eken sekirip, sonday olardıng arŭaqtarı boladı, shaqıradı sonı:*
>
> *Kere qulaq, ker jılan*
> *Bosaġa boylı bop jılan*
> *Ayday aldı ay jılan*
> *Mening qara däŭlerim*
> *Mening qara pirlerim*
> *Mening qara narlarım,*
>
> dep shaqıradı. Keybireŭding jını jılan boladı, keybireŭding jını adam boladı, keybireŭding jını tüye boladı . . . Meni anam bosanayın dep kelgende, eki jılan keregede büytip tur eken deydi ġoy . . . sonda meni tŭıp qoyıp, so baqsı mening kindigimdi kesip alġan. Eki közi birdey qıp-qızıl bolġan eken . . . Olar köretin, olardiki jındı arŭaq . . . Eng arŭaqtıng ishindegi shadır arŭaq – baqsınıng arŭağı. . . . Arŭaq degen öli arŭaq, momın arŭaq, mısalı meniki momın arŭaq . . . Shadır arŭaq degen baqsıniki, olar – jın. Olar qobız tartadı, qobızbenen ıngıldap otırıp, sodan jındarı kelip, seketep, bir orında turmaydı, ushıp ketedi, qanday aŭır denemenen . . . Aspanġa ushıp ketedi büytip, sekektep, ayağına tiymeydi. Ana saytandarmenen,

Sarı qız-ay, sarı qız
Däringiz-ay, däringiz,

dep jürgen baqsılar. . . . Munıng bärin birdey arũaq eken deũge bolmaydı. Är qaysınıki är türli bulardıki.

U: The *baqsı* woman puts the coal shovel in the fire, heats it up, licks at it, then her whole face dries up, and then she performs. She puts the sick people in the middle and performs around them, leaping into the air. And of course she has ancestor-spirits and summons them like this:

O snake as tall as the door frame
With the floppy ears, you swaggering snake!
O snake with a face like the moon!
My black giants,
My black masters,
My black stud-camels.

For some of the *baqsıs*, their jinn is a snake, for others it is a man, for some it is a camel. When my mother was about to give birth, they say two snakes came and stood next to the lattice wall [of the yurt], and when she had given birth to me, the *baqsı* cut my umbilical. They say that her two eyes were beet red. [The *baqsıs]* can divine the future, and their spirits are jinns. Among all the ancestor-spirits, the most fearsome are the spirits of the *baqsı*. There are also the spirits of the dead and the gentle spirits; mine, for instance, are gentle spirits. The fearsome spirits are jinn, the ones the *baqsıs* have. They sit there moaning with their *qobız*, and because of this their spirits come. They romp, they don't stay in one place, they fly off, no matter how heavy their body. They fly off to heaven like this, skipping, their feet don't touch the ground. The *baqsıs* would speak to the satanic spirits, saying:

O my yellow girl, yellow girl,[1]
O your medicine, your medicine.

One shouldn't say that all these spirits were alike. Every one of

---

1. Basilov equates the "yellow girls" *(sarı qız)* of the Uzbek shamans with the *albastı* spirits (1995:6) and then suggests they both go back to "the Aryan epoch" (p. 12); whereas Kazak scholars equate the *albastı* with the *martũ* and attribute one to the Iranian and the other to an Arabic source (*QDMES*, p. 342, 358; *QTAPS*, p. 24,114). Imprecision in the classification of the Inner Asian spirit world is normal; Valikhanov produced a list of spirit names, but did not classify them (1985 [1864?]:156ff.). The Kazak shaman distinguished his or her own helping spirits from those that were not under control. An Indo-Iranian etymology is evident in the case of the most characteristic of the Central Asian shaman's helping spirits, called *dãũ* or *deũ*, lit. giant, which comes from the root *dev* in Sanskrit, whence Latin *deus*, god. (See discussion below on *peri*.)

them had a different kind of spirit.

Several characteristics of the shamanic trance not mentioned by Aybibi are in evidence here, notably the ordeal of fire. Kazaks who can describe the *baqsı* often mention the licking of red hot objects, usually a small fireplace shovel *(ketpen; qalaq)* or a knife *(pıshaq)* (cf. Crapanzano 1972:328). Like Fatima's *baqsı* of Qazalı, the *baqsı* women of Uljalġas' village featured a snake in their repertoire.

Uljalġas' mother's called her spirits "my black giants *(däü)*, my black 'Sufi masters' *(pir)*, my black stud-camels *(nar)*," but Uljalġas herself calls them "crazy spirits" (*jındı arŭaq*, lit. ancestor-spirits possessed by jinn). For Uljalġas their demonic behavior makes them incompatible with the "gentle spirits" *(momın arŭaq)* by which the Muslim *emshi* heals today. In the devolved semantics of Kazak religion, the healer's spirits are simply ancestor-spirits *(arŭaq)*, and the shaman's pantheon of spirits has been lost.

Shamans of Turkistan? We encountered only a few references to living Kazak shamans, as follows: (1) two descriptions of our informant, Qalambay, as a *baqsı*, which, however, he himself denied; (2) a reference by one of our students to a young *baqsı* in her village in the Alġabas (now Bäydibek) *raion* between Turkistan and Shymkent, and Botajan's description of her *täwip's* training, both of them being disciples of *Baqsı* Zamanbek Besbayev of Shymkent; (3) three eyewitness accounts of a pilgrimage of so-called *baqsıs* in the spring of 1994 to the Arstan Bab Shrine. Although this evidence suggests that a few shamans survive in the area around Turkistan, I have yet to observe or even talk with any healer who calls him/herself one. Besbayev died before we could interview him, and in any

case his shamanship was modulated; a newspaper article about him (*SK*, September 2, 1994) suggests that he used the *qobız* to create a musical mood among the participants at his séances, not to induce ecstasy in himself for the purpose of shamanic visions or spiritual voyages. We have no Kazak data to compare with the Uzbek shamans described by Centlivres and Slobin (1971) and Basilov (1989; 1995). At a conference in Paris in 1997 Vuillemenot reported a New Age healer in Almaty whom she calls a *baqsı*, but she cited no evidence that he or others call him by this title.

Qalambay, the dissembler. Our reluctant informant, Qalambay, has a very long goatee beard with whiskers 10 inches long, as though to prove why the Kazak elders are called *aqsaqal* (lit. "white beard"). Thus determined to look like a Muslim elder, he even sports a well-worn green lapel pin with Arabic characters in white: the flag of Saudi Arabia. He was born in Turkistan in 1925, finished fourth grade during the tumultuous '30s, then went to work in the Kentau lead mines during World War II. Retired for medical reasons which he said had to do with his "nervous system," he lives now in retirement in the same neighborhood with several of his children and their families.

One son told us that his father is a *baqsı*, plays the *qobız*, heals with a whip and knife, and burned many of his books for fear of the police during Brezhnev's time. But Qalambay himself dissembled during our interview, presenting himself as an unlettered but convinced Muslim whose only healing activity is to serve his neighborhood as an inocuous *tüshkirūshi* ("spitter"), healing children's coughs. "If a dog bites you and you ask me to spit, I will do it for you, and when I go pfut, the swelling goes down" *(Íyt tiyse, tükir deseng, saġan da tükirem, tfay dep jibersem,*

barıp bılsh ete qaladı). But he admitted there are still *baqsıs* in Turkistan, and let slip the assessment that the *baqsı* is gifted by God; almost certainly he was including himself.

Botajan, the aspiring shaman. Unlike Qalambay who hides his shamanic art, Botajan aspires to move up from *täwip* to *baqsı.* She believes that the blessing *(bata)* of Baqsı Zamanbek Besbayev of Shymkent has made her a disciple of his healing art. She described his method as a scheduled weekly *zikir* involving *qobız* music combined with "putting the breath" *dem salũ* (like any Muslim healer), by which the "blocked ways" *(jolın baylaũ)* and "curses" *(ırım)* of patients in attendance are "released" *(sheshiledi).* Botajan does not play the *qobız*, apparently the only shamanic behavior exhibited by Besbayev; so it is not a shamanic repertoire to which she aspires, but the style of public performance he modelled for her.

Botajan described Besbayev as having the powers of a seer *(köripkeldigi bar)* and a *täwip (täwipshiligi bar).* When he treated her for demonic dream experiences — a black-bearded man had been "suffocating" her *(bũındıratın)* — the six-month treatment consisted of a "recital" *(oqũ).* Healing came when she accepted his advice that the "pressure" she felt in her heart *(jüregim qısılıp qalatın)* was the calling of her ancestor-spirits to accept the healer's vocation in the "way of the spirits" *(arũaqtıq jol).* This is related to the "shaman's sickness." The future healer comes to believe, usually by way of an experience of illness and a feeling "pressure" on the heart that his or her ancestor-spirits are demanding something of him, and the cultural consensus is that serving the people in a healing ministry is a good way to recover and maintain one's own health.

Everywhere we looked for shamanism we kept coming up with

something less. We knew that the Kazak *baqsı* knew nothing of the Siberian shaman's "psychopomp" experience of traveling to other worlds to retrieve souls separated from their bodies (Eliade 1964:215ff.); their emphasis, as among the Tungus, is on "mastering spirits *in this world*" (Lewis 1986:86; cf. Shirokogoroff 1935). So when we asked Botajan about heavenly travels, we were momentarily surprised when she replied, "I am a person who has been to the other world and back *(Men o düniyege barıp kelgen adammın)*. What she meant by this, however, was not shamanic psychopompism, but an out-of-body, life-after-life experience. She died in a dream, saw herself being prepared for burial in the Muslim fashion by four women, went to heaven looking for her younger brother, and returned to earth to find him at home. That she was looking for someone in the other world hints at shamanic travel, except that she did not think of herself as performing a service in doing so, as the shamans did. For Botajan her heavenly encounter was more in the nature of an experience of "blessed assurance." She now believes that when she dies, the four women in her dream, including her father's sister, will wash her body, and that the heavenly beings dressed in white will be her eternal companions. Here shamanic travel has dissipated into an Islamized dream-vision *(ayan)*.

The gathering of "shamans" at Arstan Bab. Uljalġas was present — coincidentally, she says — at a gathering of shamans at the Arstan Bab Shrine in 1994. Abdisalih Qoja also confessed reluctantly that he was an eyewitness. Their presence at the event suggests that a wide variety of *emshi* had been invited to be there, not *baqsıs* only. Both Uljalġas and Abdisalih are Qojas, and they both made a point both of reporting the event salaciously, distancing themselves from it. Independent confirmation was

provided by Muhtar Qojaev, Director of the Otrar Museum at Shäüildir, who said that the event had ended in the expulsion of the *baqsıs* from the grounds of the shrine.

Uljalġas described the shamanic *zikir* for us in light of what she witnessed at Arstan Bab:

> U: *Baqsılardıng oynaytın oyının zikir deydi. Baqsılar birin-biri jıynaydı, janga qırıq shaqtı baqsı bolıp, olar qamshını qolına ustap alıp, birin-biri sabap - qurısın! Bir rete Arıstanbabqa barġanda, so baqsılardıng ortasına tüsip qalıp . . . Aldıngġı jılı köktemde bardım ba, bir avtobus kelipti . . . Jambıldan, osı jerden jıynaladı eken ġoy baqsılar, äüliyening ishinde zikir salıp, birin-biri sabap . . . erkegi de, äyeli de bir tamġa kirip, zikirlerin salıp, qoldarında qamshıları, pıshaqtarı bar, qobızdarı, shilmändarı, soni keyin quman sıyaqtı närseleri bar, söytip sondaymenen barıp zikirdi salıp . . . Azanda qarasang türa bir avtomatpen atıp tastaġan ġoy, sonday bop jatır ġoy.*
>
> U: *Zikir* is what they call the performance of the *baqsıs*. The *baqsıs* gather together and when there are about 40 of them, they take a whip and beat each other - the cursed lot! One time when I went to Arstan Bab I landed in the middle of a group of *baqsıs*. It was a year ago last spring, I think. A bus showed up. The *baqsıs* had gathered from Djambul and places around here, and they did their *zikir* and beat each other inside the grounds of the shrine. The men and women went into the same house and did their *zikir* with whips and knives in their hands, and their *qobızes* and tambourines, and they also had something like water jugs; they did their *zikir* with these things. When you looked around the next morning they were lying around looking like they'd all been shot with a machine gun.

When we asked Uljalġas if she took part, she retorted: "You think I have a jinn like them to take part in such a thing?" None of them, according to Uljalġas, was a "true shaman" *(shın baqsı)*. She called them "corrupted shamans" *(shala jansar baqsı)* who are in it for the money.

The event implies, of course, that there are 40 shamans in southern Kazakstan. If, however, the attendance of people like Uljalġas and Abdisalih was not entirely coincidental (despite their disavowals), the conclusion that

must be drawn is that mullahs and *täwips* received invitations to a gathering advertised as a recovery of traditions. Why was it held at Arstan Bab in the middle of the desert? To encourage the association of the healing tradition with Islamic sources? The "revival" that actually occurred appears to have been, in effect, an abrupt dislocation of the *emshi* tradition from its sedate symbolic context as felt by contemporary *emshis*. This scenario would explain why Uljalġas and Abdisalih felt alienated by the experience. Apparently the leadership (if there was any) lost control of the meeting, and the real *emshis* left in disgust. It was an abortive revitalization event (Wallace 1956; Kehoe 1989).

Reprise: Evidence of shamanship. This data from Turkistan and the surrounding area contains memories of the Kazak *baqsı* but very little evidence of current processes. It is not a living tradition that our investigations turned up, but faint images of archaic practice vaguely understood by the people. Elements of the Inner Asian healing tradition that survive are expressed in Islamic vocabulary by self-consciously Muslim practitioners who use therapies that are common also in other Muslim societies. Nevertheless, the Kazak *emshi* today retains a few links with the *baqsı*, especially conceptually; so we turn now to an examination of this distended relationship.

SEMANTIC PROBLEMS IN THE HEALING TRADITION

Three terms, *zikir*, *kiye*, and the Kazak healer's experience of being "pressed" *(qısılũ)* by the spirits, have surfaced in our discussions at several points. These concepts are associated with both the Muslim and the

shamanic contexts and so are used in synthetic and often confused ways by Kazaks. When the historical contexts and current meanings of these three words are clarified, the parameters of the Kazak *emshi* tradition emerge in a more even light.

Zikir (Dhikr) In Kazak the shamanic performance is designated with the term *zikir* (remembrance, Ar. *dhikr*) from the Sufi tradition; the Kazak lexicon has no other term for the shaman's séance except "play" *(oyın)*. Kazaks are familiar with the shaman's *zikir* from propagandistic parodies on Soviet television. The Sufi *zikir*, however, featured recitation of the name of God (*Allah hoo*, etc.; see Chapter 3) and therefore was excluded from public view during the Soviet period; so Kazaks are less familiar with it. For example, Sufi Timur told us that a *zikir* is the *oyın* performed by a *baqsı* and did not associate it at all with the Sufi tradition to which he lays claim.

The transference of the Sufi term *zikir salũ* (sing the *dhikr*) to the shaman's trance was obviously suggested because both featured ecstatic behavior. The Yasawian Sufis chanted their *zikir*, whereas Kazak shamans sang musically with the *qobız*, but surely the parallel was affectively obvious to them and their audiences. There is another connection that directly pertains to curing in the two traditions. The Yasawian *dhikr-i jahr* (loud or audible *dhikr*, as opposed to the silent *dhikr* of other Sufi traditions) apparently had a therapeutic conterpart in a "healing *jahr*." In one of the hagiographical documents examined by DeWeese, Ahmet Yasawi himself is said to have told a disciple to hit a sick person on the back to cure him, and the Yasawian "healing *jahr*" is still known among the Turkmen (DeWeese 1998, forthcoming). I have noted that Abdisalih Qoja ritually struck Sharip-

bek on the back with his whip; so the same practice is confirmed now among the Kazaks.

It is a reasonable conclusion that the Kazak shaman's healing performance was renamed with the Islamic term *dhikr* because some of the shaman's ceremonial and curing techniques were felt to be justified by Sufi practices. Differences remained, of course. Most importantly, shamanic ceremonies are not recitals of remembrance of God, which is the root meaning the word *dhikr* in Arabic. It was the vocabulary and a formal element or two of the Sufi *dhikr*, not its heart and soul, that was appropriated by the shamans.

Assimilation by the local religion of terminology and formal patterns from the invading "world" religion is a basic form of culture change (Spicer 1962, 1971). The reverse influence does not seem to have happened in Turkistan, where the local Sufis and Qojas do not seem to have accepted any particular shamanic practices. The last Sufi *zikirs* at the Yasawi Shrine and in homes in Turkistan (see Chapter 3) were attempts to express the classical Sufi remembrance ceremony. They do not appear to have owed anything to "shamanism," unless the loud *zikir* of the Yasawiyya is itself attributed to the shaman's singing, but there is no real evidence for this influence (*contra* Köprülü 1918; Trimingham 1971).

For the Kazak *baqsı*, the ecstatic trance was the essence of *zikir*. Because today's Kazak *emshis* do not exhibit ecstatic behavior, they do not conform well to the widely accepted definition of shamanism as "a cult whose central idea is the belief in the ability of some individuals chosen by some spirits to communicate with them *while in a state of ecstasy*" (Lewis 1986:92, citing Basilov). The Kazak healers we observed and talked to did

not evidence ecstatic behavior or approve of it. Abdisälih and Uljalğas rejected the strange and chaotic event at Arstan Bab, and Botajan admired Baqsı Zamanbek for his sedate composure, not for ecstatic therapies. The *täwip's* ancestor-spirits give her *ayan* (revelation), but they do not put her into a trance. The helping spirits Uljalğas called "black giants" and "yellow girls" *(qara däüler, sarı qızdar)* were the ecstasy-inducing spirits of her mother and forebears, not her own.

In its relationship with the *emshi* tradition, therefore, *zikir* refers to an archaic practice in Kazak usage. This is lexical evidence of a transition to a new and more sedate therapeutic practice which, as we have noted, is identified by its practitioners and patients with Muslim cures *(musılmansha em).*

Kiye. The usual way to say that a Kazak healer has spiritual power is to say that he or she "has ancestor-spirits" *(arüağı bar)* or is "an enspirited person" *(arüaqtı kisi).* Applying the Quranic term, *arüaq*, to a healer's helping spirits certifies them as Muslim spirits. There is, however, a Kazak noun, *kiye*, that is the sacred essence or *animus* in special people, animals, objects and places (Valikhanov 1985:188), like the Polynesian *mana.* A classical proverb of the Kazak healing tradition features a play on words: *Aürüdıng iyesine adamnıng kiyesi qarsı qoyıladı* (the *kiye* of the healer is pitted against the "master" [*iye*] of the disease) (A. Qongıratbaev 1991:56). Most *emshis* we interviewed did not understand this saying until we explained it to them from the ethnographic record, although Uljalğas affirmed it vigorously when we did. More typically, Abdisälih spontaneously substituted *arüaq* for *kiye* in the dichotomy between *kiye* and *iye* (see the quotation at the head of this chapter).

Kiye is a Turkic and Kazak word, but it is seldom used in in the noun form today. When we asked our informants for a definition of *kiye*, a quizzical look appeared on their faces almost every time. When we then followed up with *kiyeli*, the adjectival form, it produced recognition, because the adjective has retained its meaning specifically in relation to sacred space; so the title of Chapter 2 is *"Kiyeli Jer,"* holy ground, a place of power. *Kiye* in the noun form survives in common usage in rare expressions, e.g. *kiye qashadı* (his soul will flee), which once referred to soul-flight but now means only that misfortune will result from an evil act or a violation of tradition.

Botajan commented, in a way that further illustrates the matter, that her cures are *kiyeli*:

IA: *Qazaq baqsılarında bir söz bolġan: Aũrũdıng iyesine adamnıng kiyesin salũ kerek degen uġım . . . bar ma sizderde?*

B: *Bar, bar, oġan tolıq senem. Aũrũdıng iyesi boladı. . . . [Bireũding] bası aũradı. Köbinese tamır ustaġan waqtımda körinedi, bası aũratın bolsa, eki büyregi sıġılatın bolsa . . . Kiyelilik - özimning emimdi, küsh-qayratımdı salıp, sonı men kiyeli deymin.*

IA: The Kazak shamans had a saying that you have to set the person's *kiye* against the *iye* of the disease. Do you have this expression?

B: Yes, yes, I believe it completely. There is a master *(iye)* of the disease. Someone has a headache. When I take their pulse, I'll see it usually, [knowing] whether it's a headache or pressure on their kidneys. You ask about who has "the condition of having sacred power *(kiyelilik)*"? When I apply my power and energy to a cure, I say it is "empowered" *(kiyeli)*.

Botajan affirmed the existence of the "master" *(iye)* of the disease but then agglutinated a new derivative noun, *kiyelilik*, from the adjective, *kiyeli*, instead of using the noun, *kiye*, because it is the adjective that is comfort-

able in Kazak usage today. Her elaboration of the root word indicates that this *kiyelilik* is a quality which her Muslim *arũaq* bring into her life and ministry. *Kiye* itself is obsolete.

Kiye is a spiritual force, but it is not a being or entity. Thus, in Kazak one may say "the *arũaq* of the ancestors" *(ata-babalardıng arũaġı)*, as we have seen in Chapter 5, but I have never heard "the *kiye* of the ancestors." The ancestor-spirits are persons; so they are *arũaq*, not *kiye*. When *arũaq* came into usage into Old Turkic from the Quranic lexicon, a personal dimension was added to the meaning of spirit in indigenous Turkic religion.

Like Botajan, Uljalġas believes the sacred power *(kiye)* of the ancestor-spirits is upon her *(öz basımda kiye bar)*, and, unlike Botajan, she used the root noun (probably at our suggestion). Every Muslim has ancestor-spirits *(arũaq)*, she said, but holy people *(kiyeli adam)* have more spirits than others. Kazaks commonly say that the healer must have at least five *arũaq*, because the average person has four. (Belief that the healer has more spirits than the common person occurs also among the Plains Indians [Hultkrantz 1987:31].) Everyone has *arũaq*, but whether they have *kiye* or not depends, according to Uljalġas, on whether their *arũaq* remain with them or come and go *(qonatını boladı, qonbaytını boladı)*. In this way she gives *kiye* an Islamic meaning, interpreting it in reference to *arũaq*.

Uljalġas also thinks that *kiye* must have a physical sign, such as the birthmark of the Prophet (Muhammad had a large birthmark on his back). In her own case the sign — she announced it with an unabashed fervor that set us on our heels — is that she has four nipples and all four give milk! In Turkistan, where Tamerlane's ceremonial cauldron at the Yasawi

Shrine once suckled pilgrims from its bronze "nipples," idiosyncratic lactation is a special sign of *kiye* or multiple *arũaq*. Whatever its sign, it is this power that the healer must possess as a personal endowment.

While it has not disappeared, the impersonal sacred power of the Inner Asian spirit-world has yielded ground to personal spirits conceptualized as Muslim *arũaq*.

Qısılũ: The shaman's sickness All three of our female *täwips*, Botajan, Uljalġas, and Zulfiya, said they experienced the "pressure" of their spirits, usually as a physical symptom in the heart *(jüregim qısılıp qaladı)*. The ancestor-spirits are the agents of this pressing *(arũaq qısadı)*. It is experienced by the healer as a reminder or impetus to do something during the therapeutic process, as in the case of Fatima's *baqsı* whom she believed was "pressed" by his *arũaq* to delay his departure *(arũaġı basıp turġan)* so he could save the life of her baby. The pressure is also felt before the person becomes a healer as a demand to take up the new vocation. Serious illness in a Kazak home tends to raise the question whether the person is being called to be a *täwip*; so the sick person may be advised to start healing others to see if this will provide a self-cure also.

This conceptual framework clearly suggests the "shaman's sickness" that occurs in many shamanic cultures also (Eliade 1964 [1951]: 33ff.), including distant Muslim cultures (Crapanzano 1972:347f.), and nearby among the Uzbeks (Basilov 1995). DeWeese has suggested that the shamanic element may not be as strong as it appears, because new vocations, even religious conversion itself, necessarily involve "a universal pattern of crisis, resolution, and transformation" (1997c; personal correspondence). Sickness can be the occasion of spiritual renewal for anyone, anywhere. So a

prudent hypothesis for crosscultural investigation would be that, because of universal pattern is endemic to Islam also, the framework of the shaman's sickness was easily absorbed by Islam from the Inner Asian and other local contexts.

The same conclusion applies in the case of the *kiye* concept, which was absorbed and transformed. The shaman's appropriation of the Sufi *dhikr* ran in the opposite direction, the Arabic term being applied retroactively to the indigenous form, so that the *baqsı* could claim the authority of a Muslim healer. The contextualization of Islam in indigenous forms was thus a bi-directional process of considerable social force. In Kazak folk medicine Islam won the day and can hardly be said to be a mere "veneer" over a predominant and enduring "shamanism." Whatever synthetic elements of Inner Asian shamanship may still be visible among, or at least heard in the vocabulary of the Kazak *emshis*, they always understand themselves, and should be understood, as Muslim healers.

The demise of Kazak shamanism has been mentioned throughout the study; so a concluding synopsis of the problem is now in order.

TODAY'S *EMSHI* AND YESTERDAY'S SHAMAN

Although Uljalġas' has family roots in the shamanic tradition, she has come to identify with Muslim healing practices and holds the *baqsı* in contempt. The *emshis* of Turkistan do not call themselves shamans, as we have noted. All this being said, however, shamanic elements are still evident. We have noted, first, that the *emshi's* experience of "pressure" on the heart at the hands of the *arũaq* is the shaman's sickness. Secondly, the shaman's

knife and whip are vocational emblems for Qojas, mullahs, and *täwips* alike. Although these are viewed as the "sword and sign" of the Muslim ancestor-spirits, not as survivals of shamanism, they are material artifacts shared by today's *emshi* with the old shamans. Thirdly, the gathering of *baqsıs* at the Arstan Bab Shrine suggests that at least some healers in the Kazak *emshi* tradition may still aspire to a shamanic ideal. Botajan hopes to graduate from *täwip* up to *baqsı*.

Is this then a revival of Kazak shamanship? A recent volume by Yakut scholars (Gogolev 1992; cf. Khazanov 1996) argues that the pre-Christian religion of the Yakuts was shamanism (because the Yakuts had a shamanist cosmology and priesthood, the "white shamans") and endorses the post-soviet Yakut religious revival and reaction against Russian Orthodoxy. The case of the Kazak *emshi*, however, cannot support such a "neo-shamanist" interpretation. The proliferation of *täwips* in Turkistan is a kind of "second conversion" to Islam for them, an aspect of re-Islamization after the Soviet interlude. To become a mullah or *täwip* is one way for a Kazak to imbibe the values of Muslim devotion more deeply. Kazak healing practices represent what I.M. Lewis has called the "therapeutic route to Islam." "The appeal of Muslim therapeutic techniques, and indeed of Islam itself, as a mystical defense system has, I think, been underestimated in analyzing the expansion of Islam" (Lewis 1986:98). As Bolatbek Kümisbekulı has said recently, a true Muslim will not be content with purity and worship but seeks to master all the traditional sciences, including medicine (*QA*, September 9, 1997, p. 5). Healing ministries are one of the faces of Islam.

Clearly the Kazak *emshi* complex emerged over time as a synthetic expression of indigenous elements and the Islamic therapeutic tradition, and

there can be no either/or dichotomy in a careful interpretation. But the diffusion of the cultural features of Islam "as a whole" should never be discounted, as Gellner has argued (1980:80f.). Anthropology tends to be rather too fascinated with the indigeous and the local. The many parallels between Kazak healing practices and those found in other Muslim societies should warn us against the defunct ethnological theory of "survivals." Lewis (1986:96) states the matter succinctly:

> [P]henomena characterized as "fringe" or "marginal" Islam are, on closer inspection, sometimes so intimately connected with "core" Islam that they seem part of a single complex. Moreover, what in a particular cultural context is regularly categorized as "pre-Islamic survival" is in many cases nothing of the sort.

For instance, Crapanzano describes Hamadsha disciples in Morocco undergoing the ordeal of licking red hot iron blades (1972:328); so the same ordeal attributed by Kazaks to their own *baqsıs* could as well have its source in diffused practices of the Muslim therapeutic tradition as in the indigenous shamanship of Inner Asia. Laderman proposes Islamic sources also for the shaman's sickness in Malaysia (1991); so we cannot be certain that the Kazak healers get sick because the Siberian shaman also did. Never in any of the descriptions of Kazak shamanism by Valikhanov, later Miropiev (1888), Divaev (1899), or Castagné (1930), did the *baqsı* evidence the "psychopompic" behavior of the Siberian shaman, who is believed to travel to the other world to retrieve or accompany the souls of the sick or dead. Universal elements of the Islamization process need further research and crosscultural comparison in relation to indigenous elements.

Historiographical and comparative evaluations In the mid-19th century Shoqan Valikhanov argued that his Kazaks had more in common with

Mongolian shamanists than with the Muslims of Central Asia. As already discussed in Chapter 1, Shoqan believed that Banzarov's theory of Buryat shamanism as a nature religion (1846) was confirmed among the Kazaks, among whom Islam, he said, was little better than a "disease." From the virility of his opposition it is clear, however, that Islam among the Kazaks was stronger than Valikhanov admitted. When he recommended, for instance, that only Kazaks, and if necessary Qojas (i.e. not Tatars or Sarts [Uzbeks]), be certified by the Russian authorities as mullahs, he reveals that Muslim influence was pervasive enough that there were significant numbers of Kazak and Qoja mullahs who could be given official recognition (Valikhanov 1985:201). I have already shown in Chapter 1 that the parallels he saw between Kazak healing practices and Mongolian shamanship, and between the Mongolian *ongon* and the Kazak *arũaq*, were an overly enthusiastic response to his reading of Banzarov. In newer studies of Mongolian domestic religion, Tibetan Buddhist elements are shown to be predominant and "shamanism" marginal (Atwood 1996).

A judicious modification of Shoqan's view of Kazak shamanism was offered by Muḫtar Awezov (Mukhtar Auezov), the author of the modern epic of Kazak life, *Abay Jolı* (1953 [1942]). He believed that the Kazak shamans made a "covenant" with Islam from a position of weakness (Däũrenbekov and Tursınov 1993:98f.). The shaman was shackled by the superior power of the Muslim healing tradition. Awezov quotes several shamanic songs *(sarın)*, recorded before 1900 by Divaev, where the *baqsı* addresses his helping spirits helplessly, lumping them as *jın* and *peri*, and complaining that nobody calls them by their true names any more. Similarly the Mongolian shamans failed, in the face of rapid culture change in the 20th century, to

learn quickly enough and so atrophied rapidly, despite their history of syncretic adaptation (Humphrey 1996:320). In Kazakstan also it was an already incapacitated shamanism that collapsed under Soviet pressure. The Kazak *baqsı* let himself be interpreted through Islamic lenses and so lost his independent identity. Successfully controlling the interpretive categories, Islam passed on to the Kazak *emshi* the healing tradition of Muhammad and Ibn Sina.

Our data from remembrances of the early Soviet period also confirm that the Kazak *baqsı* made large concessions to Islamic thought-patterns and behavior, as in Fatima's *baqsı* of Kazalinsk who said the *namaz*. Today, the *emshi's* cures, when effective, are assumed to partake of the blessings of the pure way of Islam; only when they fail are they blamed, in quasi-shamanic terms, on "demonic commotion" *(jın-oynaq)*. Nor can it be argued that the Kazak *täwip* or *palshı* is somehow more of a shaman than the Qojas or mullahs. The *täwip's* lexicon and her diagnostic methods and treatments essentially mimic those of the Qojas and mullahs. "Spitting" *(tükirũ)*, we have noted, is a variation of "putting the breath" *(dem salũ)*, a method associated with Muhammad himself. Even if spitting may be found also in the Siberian shaman's ceremony of passing authority from master to apprentice, it is the Muhammadan source that matters to a spitter like Zulfiya, who wraps herself in the aura of Islam.

The study of spiritual healing and healers among Muslim peoples requires a hermeneutic without evolutionary preconceptions. When "survivals" are reified by the anthropologist as though they provide the key to current cultural patterns, the collective memory process is distorted. Collective memory then becomes nothing more than a residuary of things past,

when in fact, as we have seen, it is a creative process by which people build a future for themselves. Kazak healers are now eagerly using newly available manuals of the Islamic therapeutic tradition; so clearly their future is not in the revivial of an obsolescent "shamanism."

CONCLUSION

Qalambay defines the Kazak *emshi* succinctly as someone who can diagnose your medical condition by taking your pulse. Both the patient and the healer must have the honest or "straight intent" *(tüzũ niyet)* of a Muslim, and an appeal must be made to God. These conditions having been met, the healer will experience a dreaming *(tüs)* or conscious *(öng)* revelation *(ayan)* or prognosis *(tuspal)* that the patient will be healed by a certain treatment. Qalambay is prepared to believe in any Kazak healer whose methods are consistent with these Muslim values *(musılmanshılıqtan shıqpay bärine senem)*.

Healers in each of the three main categories I have examined in this chapter — the mullahs, *täwips*, and *palshıs* — are distinguished by social status and minor variations in technique, but they claim access to the same world of spiritual power. The Qojas and mullahs are the purest strand in the healing tradition, for they heal as Muhammad did, as Muslims always have, as all Kazak healers aspire to. Because they must be able to recite the Quran and write amulets from it, the mullah healers are men, the Book being the province of men. Botajan feels that ideally a *täwip* also should know Arabic, because then she can recite the Quran and write amulets for her patients like the mullahs do. She apprenticed herself to a shaman (if

Besbayev really was one), but she aspires also to the virtues of a mullah. Like all the *emshi*, however, the mullahs diagnose by pulse-taking and revelation from the ancestor-spirits.

The sacred power of the tradition of the ancestors settles on one person rather than another by the choice of his or her father during his lifetime, or by the ancestor-spirits themselves if the healer of the previous generation is deceased. A healing ministry is not possible without the blessing of the ancestors. In the case of the Qojas, this confers the healing gift *(darın)* that inheres in the blood-line of the Muslim saints. The blessing is usually conveyed in a dream-vision and is then confirmed by a formulaic blessing recited by an elder who bears the healing "quality" *(qasiyet)* in the family. Often the blessing is accompanied additionally by a course of instruction in healing techniques, but the *emshi* may discover his or her own methods and specializations. Sometimes the blessing may come in two stages, one at the time of the healer's calling, and another at the end of a course of study, in which case the former is called the "little blessing" *(kishi bata)*, and the latter the "pure blessing" *(aq bata)*. From his or her teacher *(ustaz, pir)*, the new *emshi* accepts an amulet *(tumar)*, which may include a knife, whip, and/or *täspih*, the Muslim's rosary of 99 beads. According to Botajan, you must be careful whom you accept a *tumar* from, and she is careful in her curing sessions to use only the amulet given to her by her teacher.

The *emshi* serves his or her patients with cures and proactive defenses against recurrence or other misfortune. But the obstacles of life are conceived in Kazak in quite general terms: "closed roads" *(jabılġan jol)*]; danger *(bäle-jäle)*; harm *(obal, kesir)*; unhappiness *(baqıtsızdıq)*; so Kazak

demonology is uncomplicated. It is enough to know that the world is more or less dangerous and filled with "jinn-satans" *(jın-shaytan)*, the kazakified Quranic term for negative aspect of the spirit-world. Other hostile spirits, such as the *peri*, *albastı*, and *martũ* from the Turko-Persian tradition, are obsolete, mentioned only by older people who believe they have once encountered these spirits. Divaev (1899) and Miropiev (1888) discussed a wider range of malevolent spirits among the Kazaks than are evident now a century later. The *Ismi A'zam*, a traditional Muslim healing manual, says the *peri* cause sickness and attack on Wednesdays (Shalapov 1996 [1903]:13), the day before the healer's Thursday *arũaq* come to the rescue, but today the *peri* are usually equated with the Quranic *jinn*. Most Kazaks know that the *sũ-peri* (water spirit) is a female spirit that tempts men, and swimming in the Syr Darya is said to be risky for this reason. Solomon (Süleymen) is believed to be the "master" of the spirit of the water *(sũ iyesi)* with which taboos are associated, e.g. a prohibition against drawing well water after dark or staring down a well (Sızdıqova 1998:73). Water spirits are considered especially intractable, and the *arũaq* of a Qoja is needed to exorcise them.

Some of the *emshis* prescribe herbal medicines, believing them to be therapeutic gifts of the Muslim landscape of the Kazak steppe; so even plants and animals have been Islamized in the Kazak collective memory. Omar Qoja believes that *adıraspan*, wild rue, was specially favored for exorcism and healing by the earliest caliphs, and Baqıtbergen attaches the falcon's claw to his *täspih*, "because we are Muslims, you know."

This, in summary, is the world of the Kazak *emshi* in Turkistan today.

A Kazak professor visiting in Oklahoma was explaining who the Kazaks

are to a Native American professor, who listened intently and finally asked, "So may we call you Russian Indians?" The feeling is mutual. Kazaks are fascinated by the Indians of North America, with whom they share facial features — and a healing tradition with prehistoric origins. The parallel we noted between the Kazak and Shoshone ideas that the healer has more spirits than the ordinary person is one of many indications that religious ideas diffused from North Asia into Native American religion (on Cheyenne and Siberian shamanism, cf. Schlesier 1987).

On both continents, of course, the traditional healer has suffered a similar fate and is more and more marginal in modern society. What Hultkrantz says of Shoshone healers in Wyoming must be said also of the Kazaks: "Today, practically all the old-style medicine men and women are gone, and those who now claim to be a medicine man or woman operate without the benefit of the complete traditional setting" (1987:41). A Kazak *täwip* like Botajan who says she wants to recover the way of the *baqsı* cannot reproduce the context of archaic shamanship. Her context is the sacred ground of Muslim Turkistan. Like the *baqsıs* of old, she concedes much in her covenant with Islam. She brandishes the *baqsı's* whip and knife but also keeps a Quran on a high shelf and memorizes Arabic verses from Muzaffar Shalapov's booklets. The material culture of the steppe shamans has survived along with one or two concepts, but for the most part its ideology and practice are Muslim. Most of the Kazak *emshis* reject any connection with shamanship, but they make their choice gently (Kz. *momın*), softening the hard edges of acculturational dichotomies. For Muslims it is this gentle spirit of cultural negotiation that is the ideal way of the believer (Ar. *mu'min*), no longer the fantastic spirit of ecstasy.

> While the Ash'arites asserted that one cannot be a real Muslim unless one understands the basis of Islam, the Māturidis in Central Asia were saying that the actual Islam of the common Turks was good Islam whether the Turks had any rational knowledge of their religion or not.
> —Fazlur Rahman (1985:197)

CHAPTER SEVEN

KAZAK RELIGION AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The descriptive purpose of this ethnography has been down-to-earth, a traditional empirical effort to specify cultural content. In a departure from Valikhanov and his descendents, I have characterized Muslim lifeways among the Kazaks as an integral experience of the Muslim life. Like other "world religions," Islam is strengthened, not weakened, when it is contextualized in local forms and thought-processes. Without this departure from positivistic understandings of Islam, Islam in Kazakstan cannot be understood or even properly identified.

For a theoretical focus I have adopted an emergent framework in anthropology and one that is emically familiar to my Kazak colleagues. With me they have no trouble acknowledging the explanatory power of collective memory *(ḫalıqtıq [kollektivtik] jad)* as a processing mechanism for culture change and persistent cultural systems. Collective memory is also a theory that engages religious belief and behavior in such a way as to avoid dismissing the religious explanation of religion. Although this is not a theological study, theological interpretations of Kazak religion will find it usable.

It is fashionable now in the interpretive sciences to reject "general cultural models" as an "unsatisfactory idiom" and to insist that culture must be engaged in a way that highlights "history, singular views, contexts, and disagreements" (Humphrey 1996:1). To highlight diversity I have let the Kazaks of Turkistan speak in their own voices, even in their own language. I agree that disparate voices make a culture pluralistic and disputable, but they do not necessarily make it an unintelligible "collage" or "bricolage." The plea that no pattern should be sought because the "essentializing formulations" of culture are complex, mythic and therefore "pernicious" (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:163) is, I believe, an evasion. The contingency of particular cultures and sub-cultures does not exonerate the anthropologist from looking for patterns and models of culture; so in this ethnography I have used collective memory theory, not to dismiss Kazak religion as mythic or fictional or merely constructed, but to suggest an explanation of Kazak religion.

A summary of findings about Kazak religion will be presented below. These are followed by a discussion of collective memory as the social force that has allowed Kazak religion to persist into the 21st century. I conclude with reflections on my personal experience among the Kazaks — the meaning of ethnography as a spiritual enterprise.

THE KAZAKS AND THEIR RELIGION

Kazak religion is a local or "popular" contextualization of Islam. It is Muslim life affectively experienced in the collective memory as five elements:

- Ethnicity ("blood") conceived as a Muslim identity, because the land

has been sacralized by "Muslim landscapes," the shrines of Sufi saints and the cemeteries of Muslim ancestors;

♦ Remembrance of Kazak ancestors who, as clients of Qoja (Sufi) patrons, are idealized together as having faithfully assimilated the pure way of Islam — an idealization which now expects the Qojas and Kazak elders, as surrogates for the community, to model the Five Pillars of Islam and other rules of the Shariah;

♦ An ancestor cult with domestic and neighborhood rites understood in Islamic terms, especially as the Islamic cycle of funerary meals ramifies to include occasional Quran recitals in the home, frequent Thursday memorial rites and the distribution of sacred bread;

♦ Pilgrimage by individuals and groups to the Yasawi Shrine and other peripheral shrines, the local and regional memorials of the Sufi tradition;

♦ Diagnosis and treatment of illness by methods associated with traditional Islamic medicine and the blessing of the healer's ancestor-spirits, usually including the spirits of the saints;

Pattern requires process; so these five elements of Kazak religion are expressed in three cultural movements:

♦ The first is an illuminationist outlook on the spirit-world associated with dreaming and dream-visions, which I have called the "*ayan* complex." It energizes the domestic cult, is sought at the shrines of the saints, and informs the twin prognostic arts of healing and divination.

♦ Secondly, Kazak religion depends on the *association* in the collective memory of the Kazak ancestors with the Sufi saints. Although historical data is limited on religious life during the period of the Kazak khanate, DeWeese's studies of the Golden Horde (1994) and the Yasawi Sufi tradition

(1998) give us reason to posit the early Islamization of the Kazak nomads by way of clientelistic processes within the Sufi tradition. Semantic evidence, especially the relationship between the Kazak ancestors and the spirits of the Muslim saints, both of whom are called *arũaq* in Kazak, supports an "associationist" basis for Islamization in the Kazak collective memory.

♦ Thirdly, the religious system has depended for its persistence through the agonies of the 20th century on continuities between the nomadic and socialist contexts. This requires a summation of historical issues that have been highlighted throughout the study.

The persistence of Kazak religion. Traditional Islam, we have noted, was seldom mosque-centered anywhere in the Muslim world before the reform movements of the colonial period. According to Gilsenan's historical sketch of Egyptian Islam (1973:189), Sufi brotherhoods *(tariqat)* and clientelistic relationships, not mosques and mosque-schools *(madrasa)*, have provided, until recently, the primary system of religious enculturation in Islam — a pattern that is confirmed in the Kazak case. The revolutionary tumult of the early 20th century locked the Kazaks into this pre-modern form of Muslim experience. They were prematurely cut off from the religious reformation espoused by "enlighteners" like Abay Qunanbaev and the Jadidists. During the Soviet period several of the public forms that Islam had assumed among the Kazaks were lost: Sufi brotherhoods were suppressed and patron-client relationships became difficult to maintain. Now that the *tariqats* are gone, it is domestic rites and pilgrimage events that are the surviving contexts for Muslim spirituality among the Kazaks, and clientelism is taking new forms that are no longer Sufic in character. Islam among the Kazaks had always been articulated without active reference to the Book and the

Mosque. Often viewed as a sign of religious weakness in Kazak culture, this proved to be a strength: Kazak culture was impervious in essentials to the Soviet assault on religion, which misdirected its attack at the theology and institutions of urban Islam.

Kazak religion was sufficiently energetic that it was able to accept the loss of key forms and yet sustain itself with domestic, funerary, pilgrimage, and healing experiences. Its spiritual foundations were unaffected. Kazak religion proved to be stronger than other parts of the cultural system, e.g. its economic basis and residential pattern, which did not survive the Soviet experiment.

Muslim life among the Kazaks is not, as is sometimes implied, a mere "identity" without devotional behavior. It is an affective experience sustained by the feeling which the Kazaks call *jengildik* — "lightness" or relief, the "great unburdening." Although Kazaks can be vocal and gregarious, verbal expression and visible emotion in their religious behavior tend to be understated. Nomads feared the scorn of cultured and sedate urban believers, and the Communist Party insured that Kazaks would become even more cautious about their religion than they already were.

Kazak religion is specifically Kazak, not because it is "shamanistic" or "Sufic," but, first, because it configures its Muslim saints in relation to its own ancestor cult, and, secondly, because it is experienced as an ethnic marker over against the Russians. Ethnic identity uses religion to sustain itself. Virtually all Kazaks think of themselves as Muslims by birth, and "Muslimness" *(musılmanshılıq)* is believed to be one of the things that makes a Kazak a Kazak. It is important to the understanding of *religion as Kazak* that Muslim values are believed to be innate: "Muslimness," via ancestors

and saints, has "seeped into the blood" of the *ethnos*. This identity is, of course, differentially appropriated by Kazaks according to individual styles and strategies (Royce 1982); these are based, however, not only on self-maximizing economic calculations (Barth 1969), but also on ideational and affective commitments to land and family, to social equilibrium and honor (Barth 1983; Royce 1982; Larcom 1980).

Islam is experienced by the Kazaks as a reflection of their ethnic heritage, remembered as tightly knit with the history of the Islamization of Inner Asia at the hands of Sufi saints and their Qoja heirs. In this sense Kazak religion is an "historical religion" (Eliade 1960), not a shamanic "nature religion" as argued by Valikhanov and others. Not the *natural* but the *textured* features of the steppe define Kazak religion today, not its sacred flora and fauna but its Muslim cemeteries and monuments.

Regional, generational, and gender variabilities. Turkistan is an important symbol to Kazaks, but many, of course, have never seen it, since it lies at the southern edge of the Kazak Steppe. It is accessible by road and rail to Kazak pilgrims, but it is far from any major urban center. While separate studies of Muslim life in northern Kazakstan and the urban cultures of Almaty and Karaganda would provide different data, we have noted that Kazaks everywhere have shrines and cemeteries that make the pilgrimage environment of Turkistan essentially comparable with Kazak religion elsewhere. An additional study of the emergence during the Soviet period of the Yasawi Shrine as a national symbol for the Kazaks would provide historical substance to the ethnographic data presented here. Soviet-era urban "pilgrims" visited their "museums" at Arstan Bab and Yasawi in tourist buses and thus flirted with the *ziyarat* experience. When

glasnost and then independence came, the religious meanings of Islamic architecture could then be reasserted.

Any one of the elements and processes of Kazak religion may provide the individual with access to sacred history. We noted the case of a cosmopolitan Kazak woman in Almaty who learned to prepare her mother's corpse for burial from a booklet on the Islamic *janaza* rite. Her young grandson then came asking for circumcision, and her husband planned a *ziyarat* to Turkistan with the boy. Because she remembers that her mother would have done it this way; because the boy saw that his friends in kindergarten had all been circumcised; and because her husband felt that the boy's religious inclinations would be appropriately formed by a pilgrimage to the holy city of the Kazak ancestors — because of all these dynamics, religion was recoverable by a formerly communist family far from the Mecca of Kazak religion.

Generational issues also need further study. Werner has noted that the obligations of ritual exchange, e.g. attending circumcision parties, fall heavily on Kazaks of middle age (1997, 1998). Old age, we have noted, is the time when a Kazak man or woman is expected to take up the practice of the Five Pillars of Islam. Youth are thus included in religious life vicariously, not excluded from it. While Kazak youth appear to be more frivolous and less "religious" on the surface, a revival of interest in religion among Muslim youth in the Soviet Union was noted during the *glasnost* period, and it continues today. We interviewed a local youth who was making a pilgrimage to Yasawi as instructed by his *ustaz*, his elderly role model and teacher. Conversion to other religions occurs primarily among the young. An ethnographic study of the religious life of Kazak youth,

with urban and rural control groups, would be a valuable contribution to the study of Kazak religion.

Women have figured prominently in the study, especially as pilgrims and healers. Female mullahs are rare among the Kazaks, but many *täwips* are women, as were the three featured in Chapter 6. By becoming a healer a woman can make a living and achieve a kind of professional status. She appeals to her own ancestors, instead of her husband's, as her helping spirits, thus sustaining the memory of the matriline. A childless woman may find a spiritual and social identity as a healer. Visits to fortune-tellers, we noted, are one of the forms of female spirituality. The shrines are frequented heavily, though not exclusively, by women. Turkistan features a new shrine of a woman, Gaũhar Ana, through whom the local Qojas trace their descent from Ahmet Yasawi. Most importantly, the woman is the key to the practice of the domestic cult of the ancestors; it is she who "emits the fragrance" of the cooking oil, she who has her children distribute the seven sacred loaves to the neighbors, and often she who has the dream that impels her to do so. Kazaks like to talk about their mothers as faithful Muslims who said the *namaz* and kept the fast in old age.

This, in summary, is the culture of Kazak religion and its ramifications in the sub-cultures of Kazakstan. The meaning of Kazak religious life is also elucidated by its relationship with Islam in the theological sense; so a brief concluding statement must be attempted concerning this perennial problem.

Kazak "popular" religion and "normative Islam." Islamization in Inner Asia is an important issue both because of the academic ways it has been denied, and because of the ways the denials have been imbibed by the

Kazaks. A tendency to "deny the depth of Islamization" (Gellner 1981:157) is not the pre-occupation of scholars only. Reformist Muslims are offended by nomadic religion, which strikes them as uncultured and unscriptural. Reformers insist that minimalists are sinful in the hope of changing them, and minimalists concede the case rather than do battle against superior power. This much is still true today, and the Kazaks remain, in this sense, nomads wandering in dry places on the northern frontier of the Muslim world.

To the extent that Kazaks are unfamiliar with the theology and ortho-prax institutions of Islam, they may be uncomfortable when they speak of it. Their historical experience as nomads and communists has made "normative Islam" feel too abstract and esoterically literate, too legalistic and embarassing to the uninformed. However, when our informants could not list the Five Pillars of Islam, they still spoke comfortably and consistently of their "Muslimness," the Muslim way. This is the Islam that feels like it has always been with them on the Kazak steppe. I thank Kazaks for the subtle distinction between Islam and "Muslimness," which, of course, is already evident in Arabic but more striking in Kazak usage. I soon realized that I wanted to do a study of "Muslimness" rather than of Islam *per se*.

Kazaks frequently exonerate their religious lapses by pointing to historical circumstances which circumscribed the process of Islamization on the northern steppe. Foreign observers affirm the local perspective, perhaps too eagerly, because finding Muslims who are not "practicing Muslims" is somehow a relief (see Gellner's discussion of French colonial studies of Morocco [1981:156ff.]). What matters, however, is that local contextualizations of Islam provided the Kazaks and other peoples like them

with adequate means of living the Muslim life where its theological and legal tradition was weakly understood, inconvenient, or perceived as foreign. "Islam for the common people," one Kazak journalist has said, "occurs not only as a faith but as a system that clarifies the meaning of the people's way of life *(ömir saltın)*" (*HK*, July 23, 1994 [J.Bekbolatov]).

Most important of all, the "popular religion" of the Kazaks lay reasonable claim to the "orthodox" tradition itself. The syncretic appropriation of local values which contextualization requires need not contaminate or bring serious insult upon the integrity of a "high religion" like Islam. It is, of course, indisputable that syncretism occurs during the Islamization process, but the salience of this construct as an explanation for contemporary processes is very questionable, as I have shown in each descriptive chapter:

♦ The shamanic elements in traditional Kazak medical therapies do not detract from the "Muslimness" of the healing experience (Chapter 6). Material artifacts of the Inner Asian tradition survive in the knife and whip of the Kazak *emshi*, but the technique of healing by reciting the Quran and breathing on the patient are standard practice among Muslim folk healers everywhere, as is the humoral theory of diet and disease. Some aspects of Kazak healing usually attributed to "shamanism" probably have roots in the Yasawi Sufi tradition instead, such as the striking of the patient on the back.

♦ Pilgrimage to tombs and Sufi centers such as the Yasawi Shrine (Chapter 5) harks back to the medieval tradition of Muslim travels *(rihla)* in search of wisdom -- an important process in the emergence of Islamic civilization (Werbner 1977; Eickelman and Piscatori 1990). Pilgrimage centers like

Turkistan are not mere rustic peripheries but are found in the historic centers of Islamic civilization (Troll 1989; Reeves 1990). Calling a pilgrimage site a "Second Mecca" is more an identification of the place with the Meccan *hajj* than a competing claim.

♦ The Kazak ancestor cult (Chapter 4) is an Inner Asian contextualization of the Islamic funerary pattern. The Kazak ancestor cult is more authoritative with Islam than without it. Unlike their Qipchaq forebears who offered food to the dead at cemeteries, and unlike the Mongols who gave libations of milk to the ancestors, the Kazaks today simply "dedicate" it to them. This is represents a substantial Islamizing of the Turko-Mongol pattern. Kazak conceptions of the spirit-world, of how to honor ancestors and saints with Quran and food, are known across the Muslim world from Java to Lebanon to Algeria and Morocco. Kazaks in Turkistan conceive and practice these things like the Qojas and Uzbeks do, differing little from the other Muslim peoples of Central Asia in this respect.

♦ Kazak observance of the Five Pillars of Islam is inconsistent in general and neglectful in many individual cases, but it is not absent altogether, as is often implied. Our evidence (Chapter 3) refutes the judgment that the Kazaks have no traditional Muslim practices except circumcision (Svanberg 1990:205). Such dismissals must be variously amended, e.g. with Mırzaḥmetov's statement to me that the only element of the Shariah preserved among the Kazaks is the funerary cycle. The accumulation of such amendments in this study produces a substantial configuration of Muslim lifeways among the Kazaks.

♦ Rigidities of religious observance are modulated among the Kazaks by being conceived anamnetically: they are "thrown back" upon the memory of

the ancestors and elders. Many of the Islamic ritual obligations are expected to be performed vicariously by the Kazak elders and Qojas as surrogates for the community. Even if, due to ignorance or the frailties of age and poor health, the elders do not always fulfill their duties as prescribed, they are still honored as guardians of the "pure way" for being closer to the ancestors who did. In this way the entire community is subsumed within the collective memory of the "pure way" of the Kazak ancestors. "Orthodoxy" is thus joined to "popular Islam."

♦ Re-Islamization ("second conversion") processes that have begun in the 1990s belie prophesies of the withering away of Kazak Islam. The assimilations and syncretistic processes of remote periods in the past are historically interesting, but this does not necessarily make them salient in the present. Conversion to Islam is a new experience for every individual in every new generation, but when it happens as part of the enculturation of the person, it is generally also true that an Islamic cultural synthesis has been previously achieved: Islam has already made a substantial impact on Kazak culture, and it is within the context of this this "first conversion" of the *ethnos* that the individual makes his or her "second conversion." Especially when the individual conversion to Islamic spirituality or ritual performance is entered into as a way of confirming personal ethnic identity, it is the earlier conversion of the culture that provides the religious context.

The Kazak understanding of the "pure way of Islam" can help us reformulate the rigid distinction between "normative" and "popular" Islam. For the Kazaks the "pure way" *(taza jol)* is not to be identified, pure and simple, with "normative Islam" in the sense of Shariah and its observance.

The "pure way" is an idealization of Islam as the best "humanitarian" way of life *(adamgershilik).* To be human is to worship God by honoring your father and mother and their fathers and mothers, to visit them in the places God has blessed, to seek their counsel and encouragement when you are in trouble, to remember them at meal times. In this way God is remembered. The pure way of Islam is not external to the people as a higher law or theology, but is achieved from within the spiritual life of family and community.

Since Valikhanov, the ethnographer's penchant for taking apart identities has prejudiced the case against an integral conception of Kazak religion. Religion cannot be understood apart from its ideals expressed in local realities, where the ideal and the real define each other. Kazak religion is "integral religion" in this reciprocal sense. Kazaks are not unaware of the higher ideal of theological Islam, but this is conceived as embracing their knowledge of themselves, not as inimical to it. Kazak religion is a syncretic faith sustaining itself on anti-syncretic ideals.

So Kazaks believe in their religion of sacred hearth and saintly ancestors as their version of the Islamic norm. These local contexts are the practical norm for them, because it is these cultural rules they understand and know how to act upon. Local distinctives are *normative in context* (Lewis 1986), just as the classical theologies are normative in theirs. It is "popular" Islam that is normative in the empirically accessible world. "Orthodox" and "scripturalist" Islam is the province of mosques and classrooms, the way of theological specialists and their clientele. It can be spiritually meaningful and politically dynamic, as Islamic revolutions and uprisings from Algeria to Iran to Pakistan demonstrate, but it is hardly the

predominant expression of Muslim life and never has been.

Soviet propaganda made the Kazaks wary of "fanatical" religion; so many Kazaks believe the Islam of other Muslim societies to be somehow fanatical. Sovietized, and now westernizing, secularists feel this way implicitly, and the Kazaks of Turkistan also tend to feel that any Islamic society except the one they know is too "fanatical." The re-Islamization processes of the '90s have tended to be clumsy and insensitive at times; so they may well reinforce this fear, inoculating Kazak culture against the Islam of universal law. Sharipbek, a devout Kazak Muslim and benefactor of a new mosque in his neighborhood, is indignant about how Kazaks are looked down on by Turks, saying he has no intention of giving up his Kazak identity in order to embrace a Turkish version of Islam. Jumabay Istaev, dean of Oriental Studies at Yasawi University, argues that, so long as Kazaks affirm the unity of God *(tawhid)*, their religious practice is "another matter" of lesser importance. Clearly the Kazaks of Turkistan want to be good Muslims but of a different kind.

I confess I enjoy helping the Kazaks indulge the difference they crave; so I have not escaped the Western preference for heterodoxy. Since anthropology specializes in variation, I have taught it in my classes. My Kazak students are always fascinated by Geertz's broad distinction between the "scripturalist" and "illuminationist/*maraboutist*" ways (1968a:65) and enjoy debating whether they are illuminationists or *maraboutists* on the heterodox end of Geertz' scale. While they also affirm the "scripturalist" way, it is something they, as Kazak young people, wish somebody else would learn for them, preferably the elders and Qojas, so that they will not be separated from it entirely.

Reprise: In pursuit of Kazak religion. Western anthropology and religious studies had long ago found creative paradigms to study religion elsewhere, but they had tended to rely, in the case of the Central Asian peoples, on worn-out evolutionary perspectives. The Soviet theory of religion was itself a survival of 19th-century social theory, and Kazak religion in particular had been obscured by a unilinear evolutionary framework that assumed the present must be a waning version of the past. Soviet studies of religion viewed religious experience among the Kazaks as a set of cultural "relics" (Rs. *relikty*; Kz. *qaldıqtar*), and Islam itself as a mere "shadow of the Middle Ages" (Petrash 1981).

From the more progressive vantage of Southeast Asian studies, Bowen (*OEMIW* 3:354) summarized the new direction I knew I must choose:

> The central research activity has in effect shifted from distinguishing between Islam and non-Islam in popular religion to analyzing the debates within each society about the religious character of specific ideas and practices.

Early on I saw that, among the Kazaks, one of these debates has to do with their perceptions of the religious character of their culture in general. "We have no religion!" *(Bizde din joq qoy!)*, they say, or "We don't observe religion very well" *(Dindi ustaġanımız nashar)*. Kazak has no word for religion except *din*, and this means Islam; so, because Kazaks consider themselves inadequate practitioners of the Shariah, they also exaggerate the degree of their religionlessness. Ethnographers and others have tended to believe these self-deprecations instead of probing what Kazaks actually do and how they reflect on it. Elsewhere I have provided a rough trait list of a wide variety of religious elements in Kazak culture (Privratsky 1997), and

I trust that, on the basis of the expanded description and analysis in this study, we will begin to hear less of the refrain that, "These people aren't very religious."

But is "Kazak religion" a defensible category at all? In traditional Durkheimian terms it can be nothing but a representation of cultural processes in Kazak society, and in postmodern terms it is a reified construct of the practitioner and observer alike. Indeed, early on in my research I soon learned to stop telling Kazak colleagues that I had come to study "Kazak religion" *("qazaq dini")*, because this was an unknown concept. Even a modified phrasing, "religion among the Kazaks" *(qazaqtardağı din)*, while conceptually acceptable to them, suggested that I wanted to research the narrow problem of Islamic ritual observance, and some were afraid I would find little to study in Kazakstan. I finally learned to say I had come to study how religious attitudes and practices are preserved in the collective memory of the people *(qazaq halıqtıq jadındağı dinī salt-sananıng saqtalūı)*. Collective memory theory made my project acceptable: I was there not to dissect the Islamic synthesis of Kazak culture, but to discover the cultural dynamics of its "Muslimness." Kazak colleagues were reassured when they perceived that I was committed to answering previous studies which had argued that Kazak religion had never amounted to much anyway and had deservedly withered away.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND RELIGION

In Kazak religion the spiritual world *is* real because it *was* real. When a culture receives the past, along with its spirits, as a plausible explanation

for the present, the collective memory has become its means of access to the spiritual world. What is remembered becomes present by faith: it is "realized," as the believer sees it, or "reified," from the sceptic's perspective. The practical cogency of collective memory theory is that, on these terms, it makes possible a dialogue between science and religion about the sources of belief. Spiritual power — expressed among Muslims as *baraka*, or in Kazak more commonly as "special qualities" *(qasiyet)* of the spirits of the ancestors/saints — is capable of both scientific and theological analysis by way of the sociopsychological paradigm of collective memory and the paired theological concept of *anamnesis*.

Collective memory and the persistence of religion. Collective memory is most salient in anthropological theory for the study of peoples who are living under political oppression or actively recovering an identity in response to deculturative forces. When people reach into their past, they do so in order to articulate a future for themselves (Fentress and Wickham 1992:25); so collective memory is not mere recall or recollection, a one-way access to history; it is a sociopsychological mechanism for cultural persistence.

The Kazak case is an example of how religion is sustained by negotiating the relationship between past and future in the present. So long as Turkistan's glorious future was conceived as a product of the program of the Communist Party, the Kazaks lionized *Lenin Babamız* (Our Father Lenin), and Yasawi, the local saint, was relegated to the remote status of a medieval poet and philosopher and thus preserved in the collective memory. But when a new future for Turkistan began to be conceived in terms of building relationships with the Turkic world and the Muslim ambience of the

past, the place of Yasawi and the Kazak khans buried next to him assumed center stage. Like a cameraman, the memorial process shifted its focus to a different image of the past in response to a new vision of the future.

By means of the collective memory, culture is constituted as shared symbols and meanings, and then reconstituted synthetically for new generations. By means of their collective memory, cultures process their identity symbols diachronically. In Islamic societies, popular devotion seeks "direct access to the sacred past [in order to] engage the holy in immediate time and space" (C.Taylor 1990:80); so a Muslim people is religious to the extent that they use their collective memory for the purpose of achieving such access. Even at the secular edges of Kazak culture, where religion was rejected during Soviet times, the "engagement of the holy" (Taylor) has proven to be recoverable because of memorial processes.

Whether the sacred past is openly acknowledged to be mythical, as in Hinduism, or conceived as historical, as in the Semitic religions, or dismissed as "mythistorical," as in secularist and postmodernist thinking, the process is consistent. The collective memory is a processing mechanism by which the elements of religious culture persist. Conversely, as the collective memory ceases to claim the past as an avenue to the sacred, culture begins to lose its religious dimension. However, the case of the Kazaks shows that the process is reversible. A people may suppress its memories for tactical reasons and then bring them forth again when its collective amnesia is no longer viable. Kazak communists were determined to forget Islam, but now many of the same people are retrieving it in various ways. And even when new religious ideas emerge, they are never created out of nothing, as I have shown in the case of the "new saints."

Collective memory and geographic symbols. In most persistent cultural systems the land is sacralized as an affective symbol of historical identity (Spicer 1971:397). The Yasawi Sufis were active on the Kazak Steppe even before the place was called the Kazak Steppe. In the 16th century Qasim and Esim Khan chose Yasi/Turkistan for their headquarters precisely because of the memorial power of the Islamic architecture of the town. In the 18th century it was to Turkistan that Ablay Khan came in his determination to unite the Kazak hordes again for one last stand against Russian and Chinese encroachment on the Kazak Steppe. Because the Kazaks have always known Islam through the prism of Turkistan, it has become one of the measures of their culture, however variably conceived as a cultural complex at different points in history, or by individuals negotiating their ethnic identities.

Geography is a very solid fact to which the collective memory can appeal. Religious architecture impresses new values on the natural landscape; so I have identified "textured landscape" as the primary collective memory mechanism for the Kazaks. Restoration projects and the rebuilding of demolished shrines have a literally constructive power of their own. A shrine maintains its claim on the land even when it has to be rebuilt from the ground up. As DeWeese said in his 1995 lecture in Turkistan, the foremost evidence we have of the Yasawi Sufi tradition is the Yasawi Shrine itself.

Collective memory and the religious affections. Collective memory depends on affective processes to give force to historical intellection. The social force of language, rhetoric, and poetry, which store collective memories, is primarily affective, often only "touching base" with its rational or

referential sources, and never, in the Kazak case, entirely depending on them. Speech moves people "in some mysterious (and dangerous) non-cognitive way" (Shotter 1990:124). Kazak elders are honored on ceremonial occasions with formal and flowery affection and linked semantically with the ancestors and their spirits; in this way the elders' religious surrogacy role is grounded in the sacred past, the time when Sufi saints and Kazak heroes were mutually engaged in the negotiation of communal and clientelistic identities. It is the feeling that life had to have been this way, not its historicity in particular cases, that makes Kazak religion what it is.

When Botajan saw four female relatives in a dream, she drew the eschatological conclusion that these four women will wash her corpse when she dies. The dream built an affective bridge between the other world and her mundane sense of the funerary laws of Islam. Similarly, the Muslim curing art has an irresistible affective appeal for many Kazaks, even if they choose scientific medicine for its technological superiority in the first resort. And now that the Kazaks are no longer "Russian Indians," they feel a nationalist emotion that identifies the ancestors with Islam and proves to them that Islam was superior to Russian Christianity after all.

Affective mechanisms of culture feed also on "bodily processes." The body knows by heart what the mind cannot conceive and speech cannot articulate. When the collective memory of Kazak religion is evoked by the sacred landscape, culturally prescribed physical responses are summoned to sustain it. The habits and postures of pilgrimage, for instance, include squatting before a mullah outside the shrine while he recites the Quran, "brushing" the face to receive his blessing, circumambulating the shrine, and the "new custom" of dropping votive offerings in the bronze cauldron.

Wearing an amulet against disease or misfortune is "bodily religion." When asked why they do these things, Kazaks typically respond, "Because it is our Muslimness" — an affective justification of a bodily act. Such collective memories can be stored in very minimal ritual expressions. In deculturative contexts the best ritual system for the preservation of religious affectivities is a simple and domestic one.

Collective memory and language. Discourse may be secondary to affectivity, but affectivity is regularly expressed in language. As a matter of method, the ethnographer's best avenues of access to the Kazak world are the words Kazaks they use to characterize religious feeling. Observation of ritual forms will yield poor results for our understanding of Kazak religion unless the concepts of *arũaq* and *aũliye* are semantically engaged; until now, to cite another example, there has never been a study of what Kazaks mean when they use the word *sopı* (Sufi).

Evaluation of semantic fields is essential in the anthropology of religion; indeed, it has been the lack of such studies that has perpetuated superficiality in the Western understanding of the Kazaks. Sociological surveys of religious practice or journalistic evaluations of front-page issues will tend to miss the force of religion as a collective memory system, because they sidestep the deep structures of language.

Language is a repository of the collective memory. Kazak religious experience is enshrined not only in the Islamic architecture of Turkistan, but in the Islamic rhetoric of Kazak discourse.

Collective memory and historical criticism. Against postmodernism, the Kazak case suggests that neither religion nor culture in general is adequately understood as a "social fiction" or "construction of reality." A

balanced epistemology takes account not only of the constructive power of memory, but of a people's capacity to perceive things and nuance them in social interaction. Cultural affectivities have reshaped the historical evidence of Kazak religion but have neither expunged nor simply created the evidence.

For example, the local historian, Zikirya Jandarbekov, places great affective importance on the large number of mosques in Turkistan before the Soviet period, but he has no evidence that these mosques, whatever their number, were frequented by Kazaks in particular. However the Kazak ancestors may be idealized as better Muslims than their descendents are today, the former were probably no more acquainted with the mosque than the latter. Nevertheless, the historian cannot simply dismiss the collective memory's affective urgencies. The premise that the Kazak ancestors were Muslim is usually defended not by counting mosques, but on the more impressionistic feeling that they were Muslim because of their association with the shrine tradition. This impression is essentially accurate. Historical memories are not necessarily invalidated for being also nuanced reconstructions of the collective memory.

Montogomery Watt concluded his biography of Muhammad with the observation that the "creative imagination" overreaches itself when it overrules the facts of history, and he accuses Islam of doing so in its denial of the crucifixion of Jesus as a historical event (1961:240). Such extreme instances notwithstanding, our evidence from the Kazak religion suggests that the "creative imagination" of the collective memory does not usually distort pristine "facts" beyond recognition. There may be internal cultural pressures to build an honorable identity from historical sources,

but modern societies also give ground to critical perspectives and exhibit learning processes that enforce honesty. The creativity of the collective memory contributes to the persistence of religion, but dishonest constructions endanger the society. An historical religion sets in motion a popular engagement with historical analysis -- an enduring contribution of the Jadidist reformers to Muslim life in the former Russian colonies (Lazzerini 1992:161). Jandarbekov, for example, is preparing a defence of the historicity of local Qoja genealogies (1998; cf. Muminov and Jandarbekov 1992; Eraslan 1996). As a good Muslim he hopes they are from the 13th century, but he also jousts delicately with evidence that they are 19th-century constructions of lineages of Qojas seeking political advantage. Ethnocentric opinions do not always benefit from ethnohistorical constructions, because historical criticism is never entirely absent from the constructive process.

A religious culture will freely decontextualize and recontextualize its knowledge of itself. Without this freedom, religion cannot cope with culture contact, deculturative pressures, or scepticism. No doubt, collective memories thus build ideal conceptions of culture, but two factors, one epistemological, the other moral, should caution the interpreter from reducing them to either fictions or single explanations. Epistemologically, collective memories are limited by real historical contexts and, despite their creativity, are seldom absolutely inventive, as we have noted. Whether Ahmet Yasawi actually received a 500-year-old date pit and arrived in town on a miraculous white camel or not, we know that he lived and died in Yasi, was buried there, had real disciples who remembered him, and who left identifiable impressions on Central Asian culture. I have confirmed Schwartz' rebuttal of Halbwachs that cultural realities are seldom, if ever, constructed on a

blank page. Epistemologically, it is the very constructedness of knowledge that makes it our point of entry into the human mind. If culture consisted of pure knowledge of uncontingent fact, it could not be interpreted without destroying it. This is epistemology's Heisenberg principle (cf. J. Harris 1992).

Morally, cultures are demeaned, and scientifically they are neglected, when the constructedness of their history and collective memory are conceived as mere "texts" or "social fictions." Of course cultures are "contested, temporal, and emergent" (Clifford and Marcus 1986:18), but they also beg to be compared and structured ethnologically according to both their universalities and variabilities. If science refuses to do so, it refuses to do what humans habitually do anyway. Postmodernism has something to say to ideologically rigid societies, including the Kazaks (Privratsky 1994), and the principle of cultural critique is ignored to the peril of any people, but in the end postmodernism is itself a "hegemonic" exercise; it is a new version of Western "intellectual imperialism," deconstructing other societies and their "texts" at will (Stewart and Shaw 1994:23). Human dignity demands the tolerance and appreciation of the anthropologist for cultural constructions of history without which there would be no history or culture in the first place. Science, morever, benefits from "reifications," i.e. from models and hypotheses, which provide focus for the pursuit of truth. In the present study an ethnographic "reification" of Kazak religion has been offerred unapologetically, because without one there can be no progress in the study of the Kazaks, or of the meaning of religion.

Kazak religion suggests possible approaches for a new discussion of the origins of religion by way of collective memory theory. This is the "ultimate explanation," of course, the one that science fears as much as believers do. Although collective memory theory has served this study as a framework for the understanding of a people recovering its religious identity, our conclusions also suggest a direction anthropology might take in the search for a better understanding of the origins of religion than it has thus far achieved.

Half a century ago Hallowell asked whether the symbolic principle in the human psychobiological structure may perhaps be a mechanism for the "evolution of the mind," with which he believed the origins of religion were closely related (1955:5). Symbolization involves not only rational processes, he said, but "psychic functions" such as "attention, perception, memory, dreams, imagination, etc." By way of these processes cultures and individuals are able "to deal with . . . the possible or conceivable, the ideal as well as the actual, the intangible along with the tangible, the absent as well as the present object or event, with fantasy and with reality" (p. 7) a universal human capacity. Like the Ojibwa Indians studied by Hallowell, the Kazaks perceive images in their dreams that reinforce collective memories that in turn impel religious behavior. Spiritual matters are also ritually expressed in household blessings and pilgrimages.

To configure the problem of collective memory for the further study of the sources of religious belief and behavior, the light shed on Kazak religion by two long-standing theoretical perspectives will be considered

below. One is from anthropology in the West, the other from social psychology in the Soviet Union.

Religion as anti-structure. Victor Turner discussed pilgrimage as an example of the cultural processes he labelled "liminality" (following van Gennep [1909]) and "communitas" (Horton's "communal strivings," see Chapter 1). In the Kazak case also, the domestic cult of the *arũaq* and the pilgrimage cult of the *aũliye* give the Kazak Muslim "an interval between two distinct periods of intensive involvement in structured social existence" (1974:175); and that such liminal intervals produce a "rearranging of thought patterns" (p. 168). Religion is not religion without this rearrangement, and to this extent it is like other liminal processes, such as revolution and entertainment. Turner's *communitas* consists in "social relatedness" as opposed to social structure; so he calls the former "anti-structure" (p. 201). The subjection of the nomadic Kazaks to totalitarian state control was an invitation for them to cultivate compensatory anti-structures and liminalities. Alcoholism was one, but Kazak *communitas* in the Soviet period harked back to religious anti-structures also. The Kazak case shows that cultures under pressure will access the anti-structures that are available to them in their collective memory.

Communitas comes in three types, Turner teaches: (1) the existential or spontaneous type, or "the absolute communitas of unchanneled anarchy;" (2) the normative type, which organizes the spontaneous so it will last, using mechanisms of social control; and (3) the ideological or utopian type of social blueprints (1974:169ff.; cf. 1969:131ff.). In Kazak religion, I have shown, the collective memory rises from the spontaneous experience of dreaming (Turner's first type) and is then organized symbolically in house-

hold, pilgrimage, and healing rites, whose norms enabled Kazak religion to survive the Soviet experiment (the second type). Turner's third form of *communitas*, the utopian, was represented by the Soviet experiment and now by the pressure to produce a Kazak national ideology.

Kazak society still bears the marks of totalitarian control; so in religion the Kazaks seek anti-structural experience. In its nomadic and collectivized forms Kazak culture sought "existential" or "spontaneous" encounters with the spirit world, e.g. in the dreams of the "*ayan* complex," and in the religious energy exerted in pilgrimages. It is also defined them by way of "normative mechanisms," e.g. the Muslim funerary cycle, or the social honor accorded to the Qojas. Religion's anti-structures ran in tension with the Communist Party's project to create a New Soviet Man (Rywkin 1987). Within families the Kazaks engaged the tension by simultaneously participating in the new socialist structures and also resisting them by means of religious anti-structures preserved in the collective memory. Utopian ideology may try to control narrative and monumental traditions of religion, reinterpreting them in materialist terms, or razing and expunging them, but it cannot destroy anti-structure, which is rooted in spontaneous (e.g. religious) experience.

Without calling it collective memory in so many words, Turner was conceptualizing religion as an anamnetic experience. His model points to the foundational processes of religion itself. Cultures resist acculturative predicaments by reaching back, and by doing so they engage the spirit-worlds of their forebears.

Mediated memory and narrative. L.S. Vygotsky, a seminal figure in Soviet social psychology who was purged by Stalin in 1934, studied the

restructuring of "natural (instinctive) memory" by the "mediational means" of semiotic culture in the "logical (voluntary) memory" (Bakhurst 1990:209f.). Social groups cannot create this voluntary memory out of nothing, Vygotsky said, but they can restructure the spontaneous individual memory by means of two devices: *signs* (e.g. the Yasawi Shrine, or the healer's whip and knife), and *narrative* (e.g. Alim Qoja's memory of his uncles going to the weekly Sufi ceremony). According to Vygotsky, these semiotic and narrative devices give substance to personal memory that otherwise would remain unfixed at best, or be forgotten. At about the same time Halbwachs in France (1925) and Bartlett in England (1932) argued essentially the same theory of memory (see Chapter 1).

Vygotsky's theory turned on an experiment in which children were asked to choose pictures as memory aids. They made unexpected choices, e.g. a camel reminded one child of death (because its rider was dying of thirst in the desert), and a crab reminded another of the theater (because the crab sits motionless and watches the same rock all day). Vygotksy concluded that "the child used the picture to construct a story which led to the required word as a punchline," and argued on this basis that "the structure of mediated memory must be seen as *narrative*" (Bakhurst 1990:211). The children, in other words, chose the signs in the hope of being asked to explain why.

Mediating signs that permit the construction of meaningful narrative are the basis of personal stability and social coherence, or what anthropologists call the persistence of culture. In the face of severe deculturative pressure, Kazak culture persisted in essentials because Kazaks had access in the collective memory to both semiotic and narrative anti-structures, and

chief among them were religious ones.

Though not for lack of trying, the Stalinist regime failed to destroy the memory of religion among the Kazaks, because it could not possibly destroy all the symbolic and narrative pegs on which religious memory is hung. Most particularly, it could not purge the "*ayan* complex," the individual experience of dreams and dream-visions, where the *arũaq*, the proximate superhuman beings in the religious experience of the Kazaks, confirm the reality of God for them. It destroyed most mosques and some shrines but could not bring itself to destroy the most historic ones — the ones that mediate the strongest narrative lines. Religious narrative need not be known in detail, and was not, in the case of the tradition about Ahmet Yasawi, as we have seen; so long as its mediating sign survived, the narrative could be reconstructed later.

Vygotsky believed he was working on a general theory of the mind. Hallowell also believed that one of the "grand-theory" goals of anthropology was to explain the evolution of the mind. Bergson argued that the non-rational was an evolutionary adaptation that balanced natural reason and technological creativity in *homo sapiens*. Turner's was a profound reading of how non-rational experience serves this balance of social forces. Despite anthropology's neglect of grand theory since the demise of unilinear evolutionism, the origins of religion are probably to be found in the development of these articulations of collective memory theory.

If, *per* Vygotsky, it is "mediating signs" that allow the construction of meaningful narratives that are demanded by the need for personal stability and social coherence, then the origins of religion in terms of collective memory theory would appear not to be beyond the reach of scientific expla-

nation. *Anamnesis* is a proximate cultural processing mechanism for liminal experience. It does so by means of mediating signs that allow humans to retain and recall, among other things, conceptions and stories of the spiritual world. In religion we retain a memory of things as they were, because this memory helps us survive in the world that is.

Reprise: The metaphysical challenge to empiricism. In pursuing a new theory of religion, anthropology must confront its traditional prejudice against the spiritual substance suggested by its own researches. The problem for anthropology is still that a "mediating sign" mediates something, which may not be a referent that is empirically verifiable. For all its efforts to avoid it, anthropology thus touches upon a metaphysical problem. Empirical science cannot avoid brushing up against the spiritual elements in religion; I have brushed up against the ontological status of the *arũaq*, who can be very real to Kazaks.

Science is most dialogical, and therefore most social, when it is open to spiritual possibility at the margins of empirical analysis. This, for the sceptical scientist in the religious world, as much as for the Christian in the Muslim world, requires the "suspension of disbelief" of which Geertz once said anthropology is incapable (1968b:403). This depends, of course, on who the anthropologist is. I agree with Geertz to the extent that the spiritual openness I advocate need not be accompanied in every study by theological evaluation. I have avoided theological and confessional evaluations of the Kazaks here. But the source of anthropological thinking is in theology (Pannenberg 1985; Moltmann 1971; Davies 1988; Abdul Hamid el-Zein 1977), and theology retains its claim to the anthropology of religion, exercising it precisely at the point where science has trouble accepting the trans-

empirical phenomena it describes but then turns away from. Is the anthropology of religion a discipline that in the end will better suit those who think of religion as something more than a human construction? "The study of religion can only be meaningful if it is itself of religious significance" (Seyyed Hossein Nasr 1993:64).

KAZAK RELIGION AND THE ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE

For me Kazak religious life was not a mere hodge-podge of synthesized elements from the past, but a genuine faith, at least some of whose assumptions I share. Studying it was a pilgrimage, a visit to honored friends. The *ziyarat* experience is a spiritual journey, Turner says, in search of "a forgiveness of sins, where differences are accepted or tolerated rather than aggravated into grounds of aggressive opposition" (1974:208). Since I believe that forgiveness of sins is ultimately worth having and that it cannot be reduced to mere social or psychological processes, I identified with the motivations of Kazak religion. When Sızdıqova told me she experiences "a great unburdening" when she stands on Yasawi's sacred ground, I believed her and understood why.

In the end I cannot, of course, say that I know Kazak religion as Kazaks know it, nor do I believe it as they do. In my life in Turkistan I often felt barriers that were both confessional and scientific. My Kazak friends know that I sometimes felt exasperated by them, as I am sure they did by me also, but it was never such a radical distance that our otherness became absolute (cf. Rabinow 1977:161). To my own satisfaction I disconfirmed the postmodernist premise that the other culture is too thoroughly

other to be morally understood.

In the wake of his masterful ethnography of Dinka religion, Godfrey Lienhardt came to feel that anthropology's "mode of thought" is one of translation. When we "mediate between their habits of thought, which we have acquired with them, and those of our own society, . . . it is not finally some mysterious 'primitive philosophy' that we are exploring, but the farther potentialities of our own thought and language" (1961:96ff.). Despite our native Islamophobia, perhaps we are learning in English to speak more comfortably and cogently about Islam as it is actually lived — about *musılmanshılıq*, as the Kazaks agglutinate it. But I know that this study is also a study of me and my translation of their agglutinations. For all my concessions to affectivity, I have analyzed the Kazaks primarily in light of semantic and conceptual frameworks. Language is the dominant mode in which I experience religion; so it is inevitable that, to some extent, I have distorted the Kazaks in my own image. They, and other ethnographers who follow, must judge how much.

Despite the many Kazak-language texts included here, and despite my efforts to make my etic analysis as emic as possible, it is, of course, only an English version of Kazak religion that I have been able to produce. This may disappoint Kazak colleagues who had hoped, after all this time, that I might have something more to say to them. I trust they will be reassured that I have tried to enrich the English-speaking world's understanding of Kazak religion. Given the difficulties the Kazaks are having in rediscovering the potentialities of their own language, they will perhaps understand why I have had to struggle so hard to understand them also in mine. I have not been able to describe Alim Qoja and Zulfiya as they would

describe themselves, nor as Sızdıqova would describe them. That I have lived for a while as a pilgrim on the Kazak steppe gives, I hope, a realistic credibility to their story as I have told it.

REFERENCES CITED

ABBREVIATIONS OF REFERENCE WORKS

ADLR: *Abingdon dictionary of living religions.* Edited by Keith Crim. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1981.

CEI: *The concise encyclopaedia of Islam.* By Cyril Glassé. Second edition. London: Stacy International, 1991 [1989].

CED: *A concise etymolotical dictionary of the English language.* By Walter W. Skeat. New York: Capricorn, 1963 [1882].

EI: *The encyclopedia of Islam: A dictionary of the geography, ethnography and biography of the Muhammadan peoples.* Edited by M.Th. Houtsma, A.J. Wensinck, et al. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1913–36.

EINE: *The encyclopaedia of Islam: New edition.* Edited by E. van Donzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978.

ER: *The encyclopedia of religion.* Edited by Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

IA: *İslâm ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam]. Istanbul: Millî Egitim Basımevi, 1993.

IESS: *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.* New York: Macmillan, 1968.

KED: *Kazakh (Qazaq)-English dictionary.* By Karl A. Krippes. Kensington, Md.: Dunwoody Press, 1994.

KEDS: *Kazakh-English dictionary.* By Boris M. Shnitnikov. Ural and Altaic Series, Vol. 28. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966.

KTLS: *Karşılaştırmalı Türk lehçeleri sözlügü* [Dictionary of comparative Turkish dialects]. By Ahmed B. Ercilasun et al. Ankara: Kültür Baskanlıgı, 1991.

NSAK: *Narody srednei Azii i Kazakhstana* [Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakstan]. Moscow, 1962–63.

OEMIW: *Oxford encyclopedia of the modern Islamic world.* Edited by John L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

ORED: *Oxford Russian-English/English-Russian dictionary.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, 1984.

PDI: *A popular dictionary of Islam.* By Ian Richard Netton. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1992.

QDMES: *Qazaq dästürli mädeniyetining entsiklopediyalıq sözdigi* [Encyclopedic dictionary of Kazak traditional culture]. Edited by Ayubay Quralulı. Almaty: Sözdik-Slovar', 1997.

QTAPS: *Qazaq tilindegi arab-parsı sözderi: Tüsindirme sözdik* [Arabic and Persian words in the Kazak language: Explanatory dictionary]. By E.B. Bekmuḫametov. Almaty: Qazaqstan Baspası, 1977.

QTTS: *Qazaq tilining tüsindirme sözdigi* [Explanatory dictionary of the Kazak language]. 10 volumes. Edited by A.I. Isqaqov. Almaty: Qazaq SSR Ğılım Baspası, 1974-86.

QTTSK: *Qazaq tilining tüsindirme sözdigi* [Explanatory dictionary of the Kazak language]. 2 volumes. Edited by Í.K. Kengesbaev et al. Almaty: Qazaq SSR Ğılım Akademiyasının Baspası, 1959-61.

SPIKK: *Svod pamyatnikov istorii i kul'tury Kazakhstana: Yuzhno-Kazakhstanskaya Oblast'* [Commemorative collection of the history and culture of Kazakstan: South Kazakstan Oblast]. Almaty: Glavnaya Redaktsiya Qazaq Entsiklopediyası, 1994.

TED: *A Turkish-English dictionary.* By H.C. Hony and Fahir Íz. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

UED: *Uzbek-English dictionary.* By Karl A. Krippes. Preliminary edition. Kensington, Md.: Dunwood Press, 1993.

ABBREVIATIONS OF FOREIGN-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS[1]

AS: *Ayġaq* [Shout]. Shymkent. 1996- .

AT: *Ana Tili* [Mother Tongue]. Almaty, 1990- .

ÄT: *Äzireti Türkistan* [Eminent Turkistan]. Turkistan. 1997- .

Bilig. Ankara, Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitütü. 1996- .

Bitig: Türk Dünyası Dergisi [Journal of the Turkish World]. Haarlem. 1991-96.

---

1. Newspaper articles are not cited individually in the main section of references below; instead, names of authors of newspaper articles are inserted in the text in brackets after the reference.

EQ: *Egemen[di] Qazaqstan* [Autonomous Kazakstan]. Almaty, 1919– .

HK: *Ḥalıq Kengesi* [People's Council]. Almaty, 1990– .

IA: *Islam Älemi: Dinī–Mädenī Köpshilik Jurnal* [The World of Islam: Popular Journal of Religion and Culture]. Almaty, 1996– .

Iman [Faith]. Almaty, 1992– .

JA: *Jas Alash* [The Young Alash Horde]. Almaty, 1921– .

JQ: *Jas Qazaq* [Young Kazak]. Almaty, 1995– .

KE: *Kazakhstan* (English-language newspaper). Almaty, 1992– .

KP: *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*. Almaty, 1920–.

OQ: *Ongtüstik Qazaqstan* [Southern Kazakstan]. Shymkent, 1924– .

QA: *Qazaq Ädebiyeti* [Kazak Literature]. Almaty, 1934– .

Qazaq. Orenburg, 1913–1918.

QE: *Qazaq Eli* [The Kazak Nation]. Almaty, 1995– .

QÜ: *Qazaq Üni* [Kazak Voice]. Almaty, 1915– .

SK: *Shımkent Kelbeti* [The Face of Shymkent]. Shymkent, 1990– .

SQ: *Sotzialistik Qazaqstan* [Socialist Kazakstan]. Almaty. 1919– .

TA: *Türkistan*. Almaty, 1994– .

TT: *Türkistan* (formerly: *Qızıl Türkistan* [Red Turkistan]). Turkistan, 1930– .

Türk Yurdu [The Turkish Horde]. Ankara: Türk Ocagı Merkez Heyeti.

YU: *Yasawi Universiteti* [Yasawi University]. Turkistan, 1994– .

Yesevî. Istanbul, 1994– .

ZG: *Zang Gazeti* [Law Gazette]. Almaty, 1994– .

ZK: *Zaman Kazakistan* [Times of Kazakstan]. In Turkish and Kazak. Almaty, 1992– .

ARTICLES, COLLECTIONS, AND MONOGRAPHS[1]

Abdirashev, Jarasqan (ed.). 1992 [?]. *Qoja Aḥmet Yassawī: Danalıq kitabı* [The book of wisdom (Diwan-i Hikmet) of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi]. Shymkent.

Abdirayımov, S., I.N. Bukhonova, et al. (eds.). 1991. *Qazaq qalay ashtıqqa ushıradı: Qasiretti jıldar ḥattarı* [How the Kazaks faced famine: Letters from the years of suffering]. In Kazak and Russian. Almaty: Qazaq Universiteti.

Abdishükirov, Rasmuhammed (ed.). 1992. *Devoni Hikmat.* Tashkent: Nashriyot-Matbaa Birlashmasi.

——— 1993. *Qoja Ahmed Yasawī: Diwanī Hikmet* [The Diwan-i Hikmet of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi]. Turkistan: Mura.

Abdul Rauf, Muhammad. 1985. Outsider's interpretations of Islam: A Muslim's point of view. In *Approaches to Islam in religious studies,* ed. Richard C. Martin. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Abduvakhitov, Abdujabar. 1993. Islamic revivalism in Uzbekistan. In *Russia's Muslim frontiers: New directions in cross-cultural analysis,* ed. Dale F. Eickelman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Abramzon, S.M. 1962. Reflections of the process of the coming together of nations in the family life and daily habits of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. *Soviet Sociology* 1:41-52.

Äbũshärip, Sayran. 1996. *Etnos jäne onıng özindik sanası* [Ethnos and personal consciousness]. Almaty: Ğılım.

Abuov, Aidar Parkulovich. 1997. *Mirovozzrenie Khodzha Akhmeta Yasavi.* Almaty: Kazak National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy.

Adamov, Tölegen. 1993. *Naũrız bata-tilekteri* [Blessings for the Navruz festival]. Shymkent: Jibek Joli Baspa Firması.

Adams, William Y. 1990. Preface. In *The hidden government: Ritual, clientelism, and legitimation in Northern Egypt,* by Edward B. Reeves. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Ädetov, B. (ed.). 1995. *Qazaq emshiligi* [Kazak healing]. Almaty:

---

1. English alphabetical order is used, ignoring diacriticals. English translations of titles of Asian-language works are given in brackets. Spelling of names and geographical terms may vary from the transliteration table, where newer usage, e.g. Almaty, Kazak, etc., differs from traditional spellings.

Qaynar, 1995. (Originally published in Xinjiang: Shunggu Gılım Jalpılastırũ Baspası, Shinjiang Uyghur, Qazaq Bölimshesi, 1988.)

Ahmed, Akbar S. 1992. *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and promise.* New York: Routledge.

——— and David M. Hart (eds.). 1984. *Islam in tribal societies from the Atlas to the Indus.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Aitmatov, Chingiz. 1969. *Tales of the mountains and steppes.* Moscow: Progress Publishers.

——— 1983. *The day lasts more than a hundred years.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Akiner, Shirin. 1983. *Islamic peoples of the Soviet Union.* Boston: Kegan Paul.

——— 1990. Uzbeks. In *The nationalities question in the Soviet Union,* ed. Graham Smith. New York: Longman.

——— (ed.). 1991. *Cultural change and continuity in Central Asia.* New York: Kegan Paul.

Aldashev, A., and J. Älimḫanov. 1992. *Qazaqtıng ḫalıq meditsinasınıng qupıyası* [The secret of Kazak folk medicine]. Almaty: Qazaqstan.

Algar, Hamid. 1992. Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev: The last great Naqshbandi shaykh of the Volga-Urals region. In *Muslims in Central Asia,* ed. Jo-Ann Gross. Durham: Duke University Press.

Allworth, Edward 1989. *Central Asia: 120 years of Russian rule.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

——— 1990. *The modern Uzbeks.* Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

Altınsarīn, Ibıray. 1991 [1884]. *Musılmanshılıqtıng tutqası: Shariyat-ul-Islam* [Handbook of the Muslim life: Islamic Shariah]. Almaty: Qazakstan-Qalamger. (Originally published in Kazan, Tatarstan.)

Altoma, Reef. 1994. The influence of Islam in post-soviet Kazakhstan. In *Central Asia in historical perspective,* ed. Beatrice F. Manz. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Amandıqov, Ḫamze. 1990. Qıylı-qıylı zaman bolġan, nemese demografiya derekteri ne deydi [It was a different time, or what demographic facts tell us]. *Jibek Jolı* (Shymkent), December 1990, pp. 12-15.

Amanturlin, Sh.B. 1977. *Perezhitki animizma, shamanstva, islama i ateisticheskaya rabota.* Almaty.

——— 1985. *Predrassudki i sueveriya ikh preodorennya.* Almaty.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism.* New York: Verso.

Aqpanbek, Guzıḫan. 1993. *Qazaqtardıng düniye tanımı* [The Kazaks' understanding of the natural world]. Almaty: Qazaq Universiteti.

Arġınbaev, Ḫalel. 1974. *Qazaq ḫalqındağı sem'ya men neke* [Family and marriage among the Kazak people]. Almaty: Ġılım.

——— (Khalel Argynbaev) 1980. *Ahmed Yasawi architectural complex.* In Kazak, Russian, and English. Almaty: Öner.

——— 1996. *Qazaq otbası* [The Kazak household]. Almaty: Qaynar.

Arınov, Toqtar (ed.). 1990. *Bozaġım: Qazaqtıng joqtaũ jırları* [My lament: Kazak songs of mourning]. Almaty: Jazũşı.

Atımtay, Jomart (ed.). 1996. *Allanıng 99 atı* [The 99 names of God]. Shymkent: Sheker.

Atkin, Muriel. 1989. The survival of Islam in Soviet Tajikstan. *Middle East Journal* 43:605–618.

——— 1992. Religious, national, and other identities in Central Asia. In *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of identity and change*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Atkinson, Jane Monnig. 1992. Shamanisms today. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21:307–330.

Atwood, Christopher P. 1996. Buddhism and popular ritual in Mongolian religion: A reexamination of the fire cult. *History of Religions* 36:112–139.

Awezov, Muḫtar (Mukhtar Omarkhanovich Auezov). 1975. *Abai: A novel.* 2 vols. New York: Progress Publishers. (Also an abridged version in one volume, same year).

——— 1990 [1953, 1942]. *Abay jolı* [The way of Abay]. Almaty: Jazũshı, 1990. Previous editions: *Abay: Tarīḫī roman* [Abay: An historical novel]. 2 volumes. Almaty: Qazaqtıng Memlekettik Körkem Ädebiyet Baspası, 1953, 1948–49 (including a Russian version), 1942.

——— 1995 [1967]. *Abay Qunanbaev.* Almaty: Sanat.

Bacon, Elizabeth E. 1966. *Central Asians under Russian rule: A study in culture change.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Bainbridge, Margaret (ed.). 1993. *The Turkic peoples of the world.* London: Kegan Paul.

Bakhurst, David. 1990. Social memory in Soviet thought. In *Collec-*

tive remembering, ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

Baldick, Julian. 1993. *Imaginary Muslims: The Uwaysi Sufis in Central Asia.* New York: I.B. Tauris.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam (ed.). 1990. *Shamanism: Soviet studies of traditional religion in Siberia and Central Asia.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Banzarov, Dorzhi. 1981–82 [1846]. The black faith or shamanism among the Mongols. *Mongolian Studies* 7:53–91. Translated by Jan Nattier and John P. Kruger from *Dorzhi Banzarov: Sobraniye sochinenii,* ed. G.D. Sanzheyev (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955).

Baqbergenov, S. 1993. Türkistan [Kazak text]. In *Türkistan,* ed. R. Nasırova. Almaty: Öner.

Barbour, Ian G. 1974. *Myths, models, and paradigms: A comparative study in science and religion.* San Francisco: Harper.

Barth, Fredrik. 1961. *Nomads of south Persia.* New York: Humanities Press.

———— 1967. On the study of social change. *American Anthropologist* 69:661–669.

———— (ed.). 1969. *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of cultural difference.* Boston: Little, Brown.

———— 1983. *Sohar: Culture and society in an Omani town.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Barthold, Wilhelm (V.V. Bartol'd). 1927. Ḳazaḳ. *EI* 2:836. New version: W. Barthold and G. Hazai. Kazak. *EINE* (1978) 4:848–849.

———— 1956. *Four studies on the history of Central Asia.* 3 volumes. Trans. from the Russian (see *Sochineniia*). Leiden: E.J. Brill.

———— 1965. K istoria orosheniya Turkestana. In *Sochineniia,* Vol. 10. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.

———— 1968. Dvednadtsat' lektsii po istorii turetskikh narodov Srednei Azii. In *Sochineniia,* Vol. 5. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.

Bartlett, F.C. 1932. *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Basilov, Vladimir N. 1980. The study of religions in Soviet ethnography. In *Soviet and western anthropology,* ed. Ernest Gellner. New York: Columbia University Press.

——— 1984a. The study of shamanism in Soviet ethnography. In *Shamanism in Eurasia,* ed. Mihály Hoppal. Göttingen: Herodot.

——— 1984b. Honour groups in traditional Turkmenian society. In *Islam in tribal societies*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and David M. Hart. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

——— 1984c. The *chiltan* spirits. In *Shamanism in Eurasia,* Part 2, ed. Mihály Hoppál. Göttingen: Edition Herodot.

——— 1989. Chosen by the spirits. *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology* 28:9–55. (Also in Balzer 1990.)

——— 1992. *Shamanstvo u narodov Srednei Asii i Kazakhstana.* Moscow: Nauka.

——— 1995. The "shamanic disease" in Uzbek folk beliefs. *Shaman* (Hungary) 3(1):3–13

——— and Natalia Zhukovskaya. 1989. Religious beliefs. In *Nomads in Eurasia*, ed. V.N. Basilov, pp. 161–181. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Batunsky, Mark. 1994. Russian clerical Islamic studies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. *Central Asian Survey* 13(2):213–235.

Baypaqov, K.M. 1994. *Ejelgi Qazaqstan tarīḫī: Ejelgi zamannan b[izding] e[ramızdıng] V ġasırına deyin* [History of ancient Kazakstan: From ancient times to the fifth century C.E.]. Almaty: Rawan.

Baytasov, Törekeldi. 1995. *Tüs jorũ türleri* [Varieties of dream interpretation]. Shymkent: Jibek Jolı.

Bazarbaev, J., et al. 1995. *Inabat: Ädeptanũ oqũ quralı* [Modesty: A reader on etiquette]. Almaty: Rawan.

Bekchurin, Mir Salih. 1866. Opisanie mecheti azreta: Nakhodnyashcheisya v gorod Turkestan. *Voennii Sbornik* 50:209–219 (St. Petersburg). (Excerpted in Kazak translation in *ÄT*, September 12, 1997, p. 2.)

Bekmuratov, Ermek (ed.). 1992. Däriger Äbu Älī ībnsīoniki: Aytjan Damılanıng nemeresi, Äbubäkir qarınıng balası Nomannıng qolındağı qoljazbadan [(The wisdom of) Doctor Abu Ali Ibn Sina: From a manuscript in the possession of Noman, son Abu Bakr Qarı and Aytjan Damla]. Kentau: Yasawi University Faculty of Medicine. Unpublished manuscript.

Bellah, Robert N. 1968. The sociology of religion. *IEES* 13:406–414.

Bennigsen, Alexandre. 1984. Panturkism and panislamism in history and today. *Central Asian Survey* 3:39–49.

——— 1985. *Mystics and commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. 1967. *Islam in the Soviet Union.* New York: Praeger.

——— and S. Enders Wimbush. 1985. *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A guide.* London: C. Hurst.

Benson, Linda. 1990. *The Ili rebellion: The Moslem challenge to Chinese authority in Xinjiang 1944-1949.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

——— and Ingvar Svanberg (eds.). 1988. *The Kazaks of China: Essays on an ethnic minority.* Studia Multiethnica Upsaliensia. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis).

Bergson, Henry. 1956 [1932]. *The two sources of morality and religion.* Translated from the French by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton. New York: H. Holt & Co.

Bernard, H. Russell. 1988. *Research methods in cultural anthropology.* Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage.

Berger, Peter. 1970. *A rumor of angels: Modern society and the rediscovery of the supernatural.* Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday.

Bevans, Stephen B. 1992. *Models of contextual theology.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

Bice, Hayati (ed.). 1993. *Divan-ı Hikmet: Hoca Ahmed Yesevi.* Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, No. 119.

Binat, Tarık. 1995. Yesevî hazretleri (Şeyh Ahmed Yesevî) [The disciples of Shaykh Ahmet Yasawi]. *Yesevî* 2(16):30 (April 1995).

Borasulı, Mīras. 1992. Janga shangıraqtıng jumısı qanday? [What's happening under the new roof?]. *Jibek Jolı* (Shymkent) 1/2:8-9.

Bowen, Donna Lee and Evelyn A. Early (eds.). 1993. *Everyday life in the Muslim Middle East.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bowen, John. 1987. Islamic transformations: From Sufi doctrine to ritual practice in Gayo culture. In *Indonesian religions in transition*, ed. Rita Smith Kipp and Susan Rodgers. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

——— 1992. On scriptural essentialism and ritual variation: Muslim sacrfice in Sumatra and Morocco. *American Ethnologist* 19:656-671.

Boyd, Robert, and Peter J. Richerson. 1984. Natural selection and culture. *Bioscience* 34(7): 430-434.

——— 1989. The evolution of ethnic markers. *Ideas in Anthropology 1989*, pp. 27–39. Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research. (Also in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 21 [1987].)

Bregel, Yuri. 1982. Tribal tradition and dynastic history: The early rulers of the Qongrats according to Munis. *Asian and African Studies (Journal of the Israel Oriental Society)* 16:357–398.

Brenner, Louis (ed.). 1993. *Muslim identity and social change in sub-Saharan Africa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bromley, Yuri (ed.). 1974. *Soviet ethnology and anthropology today.* The Hague: Mouton.

——— 1983. Ethnic processes. *Soviet Ethnographic Studies* (Moscow), No. 3.

Burridge, K.O.L. 1975. Other peoples' religions are absurd. In *Explorations in the anthropology of religion*, ed. W.E.A. van Beek and J.H. Scherer. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Canfield, Robert L. (ed.). 1991. *Turko-Persia in historical perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1993. New Year's Day at Ali's shrine. In *Everyday life in the Muslim Middle East*, ed. Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Carrère d'Encausse, Hélène. 1979. *Decline of an empire: The Soviet socialist republics in revolt.* New York: Newsweek Books.

——— 1988. *Islam and the Russian empire: Reform and revolution in Central Asia.* London: I.B. Tauris.

——— 1993 [1990]. *The end of the Soviet empire.* Translated from the French edition. New York: Harper Collins.

Castagné, Joseph A. 1911. *Nadgrobnyya sooruzheniya kirghizskikh' stepei / Les monuments funéraires de la steppe des Kirghizes.* Orenburg: Tipografia Turgaiskago Obl. Pravzenil.

——— 1923. Survivances des anciens cultes et rites en Asia centrale. *Revue d'Étnographie et des Traditions Populaires* 4:245–255.

——— 1925. Le traitement des maladies par des procédés magiques chez les Kirghiz-Kasaks. *Revue d'Étnographie et des Traditions Populaires* 6:309–319.

——— 1930. Magie et exorcisme chez les Kazak-Kirghizes et autres peuples turks orientaux. *Revue des Études Islamiques* 4:53–151.

——— 1932. Essai de demonologie Kazak-Kirghize: La personification

des elements chez les Kazak-Kirghizes. *L'Éthnographie* 26:51–60.

——— 1951. Le culte de lieux saints de l'Islam au Turkestan. *L'Ét-nographie* 46:46–124.

Castile, G.P. and G. Kushner (eds.). 1981. *Persistent peoples: Cultur-al enclaves in perspective.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Censuses. 1926–1994. *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1926 goda Kazakhskaya SSR* (Moskow, 1928); *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1939 goda. Osnovnye itogi* (Moscow, 1992); *Naselenie Kazakhskoi SSR: Itogi vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya na 15 yanvara 1959 goda* (Alma-Ata, 1960); *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1959 goda Kazakhskaya SSR* (Moscow, 1962); *Itogi vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1970 goda: Chislennost' naseleniya SSSR*, Tom I (Moscow, 1972); *Itogi vsesoyuz-noi perepis' naseleniya po Kazakhskoi SSR, 1979 god*; *Chislennost' naseleniya Resp. Kazakhstan na 1 yanv. 1994 g.* (Almaty, 1994).

Centlivres, Micheline and Pierre, and Mark Slobin. 1971. Muslim sha-mans of Afghan Turkestan. *Ethnology* 10:160–173.

Christian, William A., Jr. 1972. *Person and God in a Spanish valley.* New York: Seminar Press.

Chylinski, Ewa A. 1991. Ritualism of family life in Soviet Central Asia: The *sunnat* (circumcision). In *Cultural change and continuity in Central Asia*, ed. Shirin Akiner. New York: Kegan Paul.

Çınar, Ali Abbas. 1996. Orta Asya Türk kültüründe işanlık gelenegi [The tradition of the *ishans* in the Turkish culture of Central Asia]. *Bilig* 1996, No. 1, pp. 55–59.

Clifford, James. 1982. *Person and myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian world.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— and George E. Marcus (eds.). 1986. *Writing culture: The poet-ics and politics of ethnography.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cohen, Ronald. 1978. Ethnicity: Problem and focus in anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7:379–403.

Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How societies remember.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Corbin, Henry. 1966. The visionary dream in Islamic spirituality. In *The dream and human societies*, ed. G.E. von Grünebaum and Roger Caillois, pp. 380–408. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Coser, Lewis. 1992. Introduction. In *On collective memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Crapanzano, Vincent. 1972. The Hamadsha. In *Scholars, saints, and Sufis: Muslim religious institutions in the Middle East since 1500,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— 1973. *The Hamadsha: A study on Moroccan ethnopsychiatry.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— 1979. Preface. In *Do Kamo: Person and myth in the Melanesian world,* by Maurice Leenhardt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Därbisälīn, Änwar (ed. and trans.). 1993. *Qorqıt Ata: Oğızdardıng batırlıq eposı* [Dede Korkut: The heroic epic of the Oghuz Turks]. Kazak translation from a 1962 Azerbaijani and 1962 Russian edition. Almaty: Qazaqstan.

Dastanov, Ornınbay. 1967. *Aũliyeli jerler tũralı shındıq.* Almaty: Qazaqstan..

——— 1991. Türkistanğa jerlengen qazaq ḫandarınıng mungı [The sorrow of the Kazak khans buried in Turkistan]. *Jibek Jolı* 3/4:6–9.

——— 1993. *Aziret Sultan: Qoja Aḫmet Yasawī jayında poemalar men öleng, balladalar* [Honorable Sultan: Poems, songs and ballads about Qoja Ahmet Yasawi.] Almaty: Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakstan.

Däurenbekov, Jaqaũ. 1993. *Aytıngız quttı bolsın* [Congratulations on your Id ul-Fitr]. Almaty: Öner.

——— and E. Tursınov (eds.). 1993. *Qazaq baqsı-balgerleri* [Kazak shaman-diviners]. Almaty: Ana Tili.

Davies, Merryl Wyn. 1988. *Knowing one another: Shaping an Islamic anthropology.* New York: Mansell.

della Cava, Ralph. 1970. *Miracle at Joaseiro.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Demko, George J. 1969. *The Russian colonization of Kazakhstan, 1896–1916.* Bloomington: Indiana University Research Center for the Language Sciences.

Denny, Frederick M. 1994. *An introduction to Islam.* Second edition. New York: Macmillan.

Deny, Jean, Kaare Grønbeck, Helmuth Scheel and Zeki V. Togan (eds.). 1959. *Philologiae turcicae fundamenta.* Vol. I. Wiesbaden: Steiner.

Derbisälīev, Äbsattar (ed.). 1995. *Qoja Aḫmet Yassawī – ḫīqmetteri* [Qoja Ahmet Yasawi – his words of wisdom]. Translated by Äbirash Jämishulı. Almaty: Öner.

DeWeese, Devin. 1990. Yasavian legends in the Islamization of Turkistan. In *Aspects of Altaic Civilization III: Proceedings of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, June 19–25, 1987,* ed. Denis Sinor. Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies.

——— 1994. *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and conversion to Islam in historical and epic tradition.* University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

——— 1995a. The descendents of Sayyid Ata and the rank of *naqīb* in Central Asia. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115:612–634.

——— 1995b. Khoja Ahmed Yasavī: Sources and chronology. A lecture at Yasawi University, ed. Bruce Privratsky. Manuscript.

——— 1996a. The *mashā'ikh–i turk* and the *khojagān*: Rethinking the links between the Yasavī and the Naqshbandī Sufi traditions. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 7:180–207.

——— 1996b. The *Tadhkira–i Bughrā* and the "Uvaysī Sufis of Central Asia: Notes in review of *Imaginary Muslims* [by Julian Baldick]. *Central Asiatic Journal* 40:87–127.

——— 1997a. Sacred history for a Central Asian town: Saints, shrines, and legends of origin in histories of Sayrām, 18th–19th centuries. Manuscript.

——— 1997b. Shrine, *waqf*, and holy families: Descent groups linked to Khoja Aḥmad Yasavī in the 19th century. Manuscript/Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association.

——— 1997c. The Yasavī Sufi tradition and the problem of shamanic "survivals." Manuscript/Paper delivered at the 4th ISSR Conference on Shamanism, Chantilly, 1–5 September 1997.

——— 1998 (forthcoming). *The Yasavī Sufi tradition.* Draft manuscript.

Divaev, Abubakr A. 1909 [1898]. Primety kirgizov vo vremya puteshestviya. In *Svornik b chest' semidesyatiltiya Grigoriya Nikolaevicha Potanina.* Zapiski Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva po otdelnenii Etnografii, T. XXXIV.

——— 1899. *Iz oblasti kirgizskikh veroavanii: baksy, kak lekar' i koldun (etnograficheskii ocherk).* Kazan: Tipografia Imperatorskago Universiteta.

——— 1992. *Tartū.* [Gift]. Selections in Kazak translation from Divaev's writings. Almaty: Ana Tili Ḫalıq Qazınası.

Dobrosmyslov, A.N. 1912. *Gorodo Syr'–Dar'inskoi Oblasti: Kazalinsk,*

Perovsk, Turkestan, Aulie-ata i Chimkent'. Tashkent: Tipo-Lit. O.A. Portseva. Reprinted in *Turkestan: Metodicheskie razrabotki.* Shymkent: Oblastnaya Universal'naya Nauchnaya Biblioteka im. A.S. Pushkina, Seria "Chimkentskii uezd na stranitsakh dorevolyutsionnikh izdanii," 1995, pp. 9-52.

Donaldson, Bess Allen. 1937. The Koran as magic. *The Moslem World* 27:254-266.

Donovan, Vincent J. 1982. *Christianity rediscovered.* Second edition. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

Dosjan[ov], Dükenbay. 1991. Sıġanaq jäne Sunaqtar [Sıghanaq City and the Sunaqs]. *Jibek Joli* (Shymkent) 4-5:22-24.

———— 1996. *Qoja Aḥmet Yassawī ġīmaratı* [The Qoja Ahmet Yasawi building]. Almaty: Öner.

Douglas, Mary. 1951. Introduction. In *The collective memory,* by Maurice Halbwachs. New York: Harper.

Dughlát, Muhammad Haidar. 1898 [ca. 1550]. *A history of the Moghuls of Central Asia, being the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlát,* ed. N. Elias,. tr. E. Dennison Ross. 2nd edition. London. (Reprint: New York: Praeger/Barnes and Noble, 1972.)

Dulatov [Dulatulı], Mirjaqıp. 1992 [1913]. Ḥaziret Sultan [Eminent Sultan (Ahmet Yasawi)]. *Jibek Joli* (Shymkent) 1/2:14-15. (Originally published in *Qazaq*, No. 16/17.)

Dunn, Stephen P. and Ethel. 1967. Soviet regime and native culture in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. *Current Anthropology* 8:147-208.

———— (eds.). 1974. *Introduction to Soviet ethnography.* 2 volumes. Berkeley, Cal.: Highgate Road Social Science Research Station.

Durkheim, Emile. 1965 [1915]. *The elementary forms of the religious life.* Translated from the French by Joseph Ward Swain. New York: Macmillan, Free Press.

Düysenbaev, Danıyarbek. 1991. *Domalaq Ana.* Almaty: Murattas.

Düysenbay, Esenbay (ed.). 1993. *Ḥan Kene: Tarīḫı tolġamdar men piesa, dastandar* [Kene Sarı Khan: Historical considerations, with poems and epics]. Almaty: Jalın.

Dwyer, Kevin. 1982. *Moroccan dialogues: Anthropology in question.* Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press.

Eickelman, Dale F. 1976. *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and society in a pilgrimage center.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

——— 1977. Ideological change and regional cults: Maraboutism and ties of "closeness" in western Morocco. In *Regional cults,* ed. R.P. Werbner. New York: Academic Press.

——— 1978. The art of memory: Islamic education and its social reproduction. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20:485–516.

——— 1983. The study of Islam in local contexts. *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17:1–16.

——— 1992. Mass higher education and the religious imagination in contemporary Arab socieites. *American Ethnologist* 19:643–655.

——— and James Piscatori (eds.). 1990. *Muslim travellers: Pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination.* London: Routledge.

el-Zein, Abdul Hamid. 1977. Beyond ideology and theology: The search for the anthropology of Islam. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6:227–254.

Elgin, Yuri Andreevich. 1992. Kesenening köne sũreti [An old picture of the (Yasawi) shrine]. *Jibek Jolı* (Shymkent) 3/4:8–9.

Eliade, Mircea. 1960 [1954]. *Cosmos and history: The myth of the eternal return.* New York: Harper & Row.

——— 1961 [1957]. *The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion.* New York: Harper & Row.

——— 1964 [1951]. *Shamanism: Archaic techniques of ecstasy.* Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Elikbaev, Näbi. 1992. *Ulttıq psikhologiya* [Ethnic psychology]. Almaty: Qazaq Universiteti.

Eraslan, Kemal (ed.). 1991 [1983]. *Dîvân-ı hikmet-ten seçmeler* [Selections from the Diwan-i Hikmet]. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları.

——— (ed.). 1996. *Mevlânâ Safiyyü'd-dîn neseb-nâme tercümesi* [A Turkish translation of Muminov and Jandarbekov 1992, q.v.]. Yesevî Yayıncılık Nu: 4. Istanbul: n.p.

Ernst. Carl W. 1992. *Eternal garden: Mysticism, history, and politics at a South Asian Sufi center.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Erimbetov, Mıltıqbay Mamıtulı. 1993. *Qongırat shejiresi jäne oġan qatıstı änggimeler* [Genealogy of the Qongrat clan and related stories]. Almaty: Jalın.

Erjanov, J.E. 1996. *Sũnaqtar jäne Sũnaq qalası* [The Sunaqs and the city of Sunaq (Sıghanaq)]. Almaty: Ǵılım.

Esbergenov, Kh. 1964. On the struggle against survivals of obsolete customs and rites (The Karakalpak "As" memorial feast). *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology* 3:9–20.

Escobar, Arturo. 1993. The limits of reflexivity: Politics in anthropology's post-*Writing Culture* era. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 49:377–391.

Estenov, A. 1993. *Naũrız toyı* [The Navruz festival]. Almaty: Jazũshı.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1949. *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica.* Oxford: Clarendon.

———— 1956. *Nuer religion.* New York: Oxford University Press.

———— 1985 [1965]. *Theories of primitive religion.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Ewing, Katherine P. 1990. The dream of spiritual initiation and the organization of self representations among Pakistani Sufis. *American Ethnologist* 17:56–74.

Fathi, Habiba. 1997. *Otines:* The unknown women clerics of Central Asian Islam. *Central Asian Survey* 16(1):27–43.

Fentress, James, and Chris Wickham. 1992. *Social memory.* Cambridge: Mass.: Blackwell.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. 1965. *Guests of the sheik: An ethnography of an Iraqi village.* New York: Doubleday.

Fierman, William (ed.). 1991. *Soviet Central Asia: The failed transformation.* Boulder: Westview.

Firth, Raymond. 1973. *Symbols, public and private.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Fischer, Michael M.J. and Mehdi Abedi. 1990. *Debating Muslims: Cultural dialogues in postmodernity and tradition.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Fisher, Humphrey J. 1979. Dreams and conversion in black Africa. In *Conversion to Islam,* ed. Nehemia Levtzion, pp. 217–235. New York: Holmes and Meier.

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. 1994. *Islamic society in practice.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Futrell, Michael. 1979. Dostoevsky and Islam (and Chokan Valikhanov).

Slavonic and East European Review 57:16–31.

Geertz, Clifford. 1960. *The religion of Java.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——— 1966. Religion as a cultural system. In *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion,* ed. M. Banton. London: Tavistock Publications.

——— 1968a. *Islam observed: Religious development in Morocco and Indonesia.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

——— 1968b. Religion: Anthropological study. *IEES* 13:398–406.

——— 1973. *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Harper-Collins.

Geijbels, M. 1978. Aspects of the veneration of saints in Islam, with special reference to Pakistan. *Muslim World* 68–69:176–186.

Gellner, Ernest. 1969. *Saints of the Atlas.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——— 1975. The Soviet and the savage. *Current Anthropology* 16:595–617.

——— 1980. *Soviet and western anthropology.* New York: Columbia University Press.

——— 1981. *Muslim society.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

——— 1984a. Doctor and saint. In *Islam in tribal societies,* ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and David M. Hart. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

——— 1984b. Foreword. In *Nomads and the outside world,* by Anatoly N. Khazanov. New York: Cambridge University Press.

——— 1992. *Postmodernism, reason and religion.* New York: Routledge.

Gibb, H.A.R. 1990 [1928]. *The Arab conquests of Central Asia.* New York: AMS Press.

Gilliland, Dean S. 1991. First conversion and second conversion. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 26:237–252.

Gilsenan, Michael. 1973. *Saint and Sufi in modern Egypt.* Oxford: Clarendon.

——— 1982. *Recognizing Islam: An anthropologist's introduction.* New York: Pantheon.

Gladney, Dru C. 1987. Muslim tombs and ethnic folklore: Charters for

Hui identity. *Journal of Asian Studies* 46:495–532.

Gogolev, A.I. (ed.). 1992. *Shamanizm kak religiya, Genezis, Rekonstrukstiya, Traditsiya: Tezisy.* Yakutsk: Izdatel'stvo YaGU.

Golden, Peter B. 1992b. *An introduction to the history of the Turkic peoples: Ethnogenesis and state-formation in medieval and early modern Eurasia and the Middle East.* Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

——— 1996a. Religion among the medieval Qipchaqs. Manuscript.

——— 1996b. Wolves, dogs, and Qipchaq religion. Manuscript.

Goldziher, Ignaz. 1966 [1888]. On the veneration of the dead in paganism and Islam. *Muslim Studies*, ed. S.M. Stern. Translated from the German by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern. Vol. I, pp. 209–238. Chicago: Aldine Atherton.

——— 1971a [1890a]. Veneration of saints in Islam. *Muslim Studies*, ed. S.M. Stern. Translated from the German by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern. Vol. II. pp. 277–341. Chicago: Aldine Atherton.

——— 1971b [1890b]. Ordeals in sacred places. *Muslim Studies*, ed. S.M. Stern. Translated from the German by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern. Vol. II. pp. 368–369. Chicago: Aldine Atherton.

——— 1911. The cult of the saints in Islam. *The Moslem World* 1:302–312, 2:106.

Goody, Jack. 1975. Religion, social change, and the sociology of conversion. In *Changing social structure in Ghana,* ed. J. Goody. London: International African Institute.

Gordlevskii, W. 1962 [1929]. Khodja Akhmet Yasevi. *Izbrannye sochineniya* 3:363ff. Moscow.

——— (Gordlevsky) 1932. Choga Ahmed Jasevi [German]. In *Festscrift Georg Jacob,* ed. Theodor Menzel, pp. 57–67. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz.

Gross, Jo-Ann (ed.). 1992. *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of identity and change.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Hadley, Alice O. 1993. *Teaching language in context* (Appendix A: ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1951. *The collective memory.* With an introduction by Mary Douglas. New York: Harper.

——— 1992 [1925]. *On collective memory,* ed. and trans. from the French with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hallowell, Alfred I. 1967 [1955]. *Culture and experience.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania/Schocken Press.

——— 1992. *The Ojibwa of Berens River, Manitoba: Ethnography into history.* Posthumous, from the author's draft, edited by Jennifer S.H. Brown. Forth Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Harris, Grace G. 1983. Review [of *Religious organization and religious experience*, ed. J. Davis (ASA Monograph No. 21)]. *Man* 18:416–417.

Harris, James F. 1992. *Against relativism: A philosophical defense of method.* LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court.

Heissig, Walther. 1980 [1970]. *The religions of Mongolia.* Trans. from the German by Geoffrey Samuel. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hiebert, Paul G. 1983. *Cultural anthropology.* 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House.

——— 1994. *Anthropological reflections on missiological issues.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House.

Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger (eds.). 1983. *The invention of tradition.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hodgson, Marshall G.S. 1974. *The venture of Islam: Conscience and history in a world civilization.* 3 volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hoppál, Mihály (ed.). 1984. *Shamanism in Eurasia.* 2 vols. Göttingen: Herodot.

Hoppe, Thomas. 1988. Kazak pastoralism in the Bogda range. In *The Kazaks of China: Essays on an ethnic minority,* ed. Linda Benson and Ingvar Svanberg. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

Horton, Robin. 1960. A definition of religion, and its uses. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 90:201–226.

Hubert, Henri, and Marcel Mauss. 1981 [1898]. *Sacrifice: Its nature and function.* Translated by W.D. Halls from *L'Année Sociologique.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hudson, Alfred E. 1964 [1938]. *Kazak social structure.* Yale University Publications in Anthropology No. 20. New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files Press.

Hultkrantz, Åke. 1987. *Native religions of North America.* San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Humphrey, Caroline, with Urgune Onon. 1996. *Shamans and elders: Experience, knowledge, and power among the Daur Mongols.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Imajanov, Ḥamid Zeynolulı. 1991. *Qoja Ahmet Yasawī: Qırıq ḥīkmet* [Hoja Ahmet Yasawi: Forty words of wisdom]. N.P.: Qızılqum Aũdandıq Baspaḥana.

Irons, William. 1975. *The Yomut Turkmen: A study of social organization among a Central Asian Turkic-speaking population.* Anthropology Papers No. 58. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.

Isabay, Qalmuqan, and Sapar Bayjan-Ata. 1996. *Qajıġa barġan qazaqtar* [Kazaks who have made the pilgrimage *(hajj)*]. Almaty: Ana Tili.

[Isabekov, Ziyadin (ed.).] 1998. *Türkistan: Keshe, Bügin, Erteng* [Turkistan: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow]. Proceedings of an international conference held at Yasawi University, October 1-2, 1997. In *AYUH* January-February 1998 (*Qosımsha* [supplemental number]).

Isajiw, Wsevolod W. 1974. Definitions of ethnicity. *Ethnicity* 1:111-124.

Íslämjanulı, K., ed. 1995. *Tal besikten jer besikke deyin: Qazaqtıng otbasılıq ġurıp jırları* [From the wooden cradle to the cradle of earth: Songs of the Kazak family life]. Almaty: Ana Tili.

Ismaġulov, Orazaq, Ziyadin Isabekov, and Muḥatar Qojaev. 1998 (forthcoming). *Abılay Ḥan: Tarīḥı, antropologiyalıq zertteũler* [Historical and physical anthropology on Ablay Khan].

Isqaqov, Baltabek (ed., tr.). 1994. *Qorqıt ata kitabı* [The book of Korkut Ata]. Translated from the Turkish edition published in Istanbul, 1969. Almaty: Jasũshı

Íz, Fazlur. 1960. Aḥmad Yasawī. *EI* 1:298-299.

Jackson, Michael. 1989. *Paths toward a clearing: Radical empiricism and ethnographic inquiry.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Jämishulı, Ä. (ed., trans.). 1992. *Muḥtasar: Musılman mektepterine arnalġan oqũlıq jäne jalpı jämaġatqa qajetti qaġīdalar* [Reader for Muslim schools and rules for the congregation]. Tr. from the Turkish [ultimately from the Arabic *Al-Mukhtaṣar* of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qudurī (d. 1036)]. Almaty: Jazũshı.

Janäbilov, Serik. 1994. *Molıqbay: Qobızshı* [Molıqbay the kobyz player]. Almaty: Jalın.

Jandarbekov, Zikirya. 1991a. *Qoja Aḥmet Yasawī: Ömiri jäne shıġarmalġı* [Qoja Ahmed Yasawi: his life and work]. Turkistan: n.p.

——— 1991b. *Qoja Aḫmet Yasawī: Qırıq ḥīkmet* [Qoja Ahmed Yasawi: forty sayings (from the Diwan-i Hikmet)]. Translated by Ḥamid Íman-janov. Turkistan: Qızılqum Raion Press.

——— (ed.) 1994. *Ḥorasan qojalar shejiresi* [Genealogy of the Khorasan Qojas]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— (forthcoming). *Nasabnama nusqalarının tarīḫīlığı.* Almaty: Kazak State National University *kandidat nauk* thesis.

Jarmuḫammeulı, M., C. Däwitulı, M. Şarīfī (eds.). 1993. *Qoja Ahmet Yasawī: Dīwanī ḥıkmet (Aqıl kitabı)* [The Diwan-i Hikmet of Qoja Ahmet Yasawi: Book of wisdom]. Almaty: Murattas.

Jeziorska, Irena. 1991. Religious themes in the novels of Chingiz Aitmatov. In *Cultural change and continuity in Central Asia*, ed. Shirin Akiner. New York: Kegan Paul.

Joldasov, Säbīt. 1996. *Birlikting bası bolġan - Ordabası* [Ordabası - Once the center of our unity]. Shymkent: Jibek Jolı Baspası.

Jurınov, Murat (ed.). 1993. *Jarġı/Ustav: Q.A. Yassawī atındağı ḫalıqaralıq qazaq-türik universiteti* [By-Laws of the Hoja Ahmet Yasawi Kazak-Turkish University]. Turkistan: Yasawi University.

[For Kasymzhanov, Kunanbaev, etc., see Qasımjanov, Qunanbaev, etc.]

Karamustafa, Ahmet T. 1993. Early Sufism in eastern Anatolia. In *Classical Persian Sufism: From its origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn, pp. 175-198. New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications.

——— 1994. *God's unruly friends: Dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period 1200-1550.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Kaydarov, Ebduali. 1997. Kazakistan'da latin alfabesi meselesi [The problem of a Latin alphabet in Kazakstan]. *Bilig* 1997(5):191-193.

Kehoe, Alice Beck. 1989. *The ghost dance: Ethnohistory and revitalization.* Fort Worth, Tex.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Kelsey, Morton T. 1974 [1968]. *God, dreams, and revelation: A Christian interpretation of dreams.* Minneapolis: Augsburg.

Kenjeaḫmetulı, Sewit. 1994. *Qazaqtıng salt-dästürleri men ädet-ġurıptarı* [Traditions and customs of the Kazaks]. Almaty: Ana Tili.

[Khayyam, Omar. See Köpeyulı.]

Khazanov, Anatoly M. 1984. *Nomads and the outside world.* Trans. Julia Crookenden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— 1992. World religions in the Eurasian steppes: Some regularities of dissemination. In *Altaic religious beliefs and practices*, ed. Géza Bethlenfalvy et al. Budapest: Research Group for Altaic Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

——— 1994. The spread of world religions in medieval nomadic societies in the Eurasian steppes. In *Nomadic diplomacy, destruction and religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic*, ed. Michael Gervers and Wayne Schleppe. Toronto: Joint Center for Asia Pacific Studies.

——— 1995. The ethnic problems of contemporary Kazakhstan. *Central Asian Survey* 14:243–264.

——— 1996. Nationalism and neo-shamanism in Yakutia. In *Post-Soviet Eurasia*, ed. Kathryn Lyon. Ann Arbor: Michigan Discussions in Anthropology Series.

Kilani, Mondher. 1992. *La construction de la mémoire: le lignage dans l'oasis d'El Ksar.* Geneva: Éditions Labor et Fides.

Kirk, Jerome and Marc L. Miller. 1986. *Reliability and validity in qualitative research.* Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage.

Kluckhohn, Clyde. 1962. *Culture and behavior.* New York: Free Press.

[Koran. See Quran.]

Köpeyulı, Mäshhür Jüsip. 1993. *Qazaq shejiresi* [Kazak genealogy.] Almaty: Jalın.

——— and Omar Khayyam. 1993. *Naũrıznama* [Celebrating the Navruz festival]. Almaty: Jalın.

Köprülü, Fuad. 1991 [1918]. *Türk edebiyatında ilk mutasavvıflar* [The first Sufis in Turkish literature]. Seventh edition, with corrections and notes by Orhan F. Köprülü. Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlıgı.

——— 1993. Ahmed Yesevî. *IA* 1:210–215.

Krader, Lawrence. 1963. *Social organization of the Mongol-Turkic pastoral nomads.* The Hague: Mouton.

——— and Ivor Wayne. 1955. *The Kazakhs: A background study for psychological warfare.* Report commissioned by the U.S. Department of the Army. Washington: George Washington University Human Resources Research Office.

Kreindler, Isabelle Teitz. 1969. *Educational policies toward the eastern nationalities in Tsarist Russia: A study of Il'minskii's system.* Columbia University: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation.

——— 1991. Forging a Soviet people: Ethnolinguistics in Central Asia. In *Soviet Central Asia: The failed transformation*, ed. William Fierman. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Kroeber, A.L. 1963 [1923]. *Anthropology: Culture patterns and processes*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

——— 1952. *The nature of culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuzio, Taras. 1988. Nationalist riots in Kazakhstan. *Central Asian Survey* 7:79–100.

Laderman, Carol. 1991. *Taming the wind of desire: Psychology, medicine, and aesthetics in Malay shamanistic performance*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lamashäripov, Qayrat. 1990. *Namaz tağılımı* [Rules of the *namaz* (five daily prayers)]. Almaty: Qalamger.

——— 1991. *Duğa* [Prayer]. Almaty: Qazaqstan/Qalamger.

——— 1993. *Qajılıq* [The hajj pilgrimage]. Almaty: Dayar.

Lambek, Michael. 1990. Certain knowledge, contestable authority: power and practice on the Islamic periphery. *American Ethnologist* 17:23–40.

Landau, Jacob M. 1988. The fortunes and misfortunes of Pan-Turkism. *Central Asian Survey* 7:1–5.

——— 1995. *Pan-Turkism: From irridentism to cooperation*. Second edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Lapidus, Ira. 1988. *A history of Islamic societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Larcom, Joan. 1980. *Place and the politics of marriage: The Mewun of Malekula*. Stanford University: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation.

——— 1983. Following Deacon: The problem of ethnographic reanalysis, 1926–1981. In *Observers observed*, ed. George W. Stocking. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Larson, Barbara K., 1993. Review [of *La construction de la mémoire* by Mondher Kilani]. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25:544–546.

Lazzerini, Edward J. 1992. Beyond renewal: The Jadīd response to pressure for change in the modern age. In *Muslims in Central Asia*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross. Durham: Duke University Press.

——— 1994. Volga Tatars in Central Asia, 18th–20th centures: From diaspora to hegemony. In *Central Asia in historical perspective*, ed. Beatrice Forbes Manz. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Leach, Edward. 1968. *Dialectic in practical religion.* Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology No. 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LeCerf, Jean. 1966. The dream in popular culture: Arabic and Islamic. In *The dream and human societies*, ed. G.E. von Grünebaum and Roger Caillois, pp. 365–379. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Leenhardt, Maurice. 1979 [1947]. *Do kamo: Person and myth in the Melanesian world.* Translated from the French by Basia Miller Gulati. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LeMercier-Quelquejay, Chantal. 1984. From tribe to *umma. Central Asian Survey* 3:15–26.

Lévchine, Alexandre de (Alexei Iraklievich Levshin). 1832. *Description des hordes et des steppes des Kirghiz-Kazaks.* Paris.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963 [1958]. *Structural anthropology.* Translated by C. Jacobsen and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books.

Lewis, I.M. 1983. The past and the present in Islam: The case of African "survivals." *Temenos* 19:55–67.

——— 1986. *Religion in context: Cults and charisma.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lienhardt, Godfrey. 1961. *The institutions of primitive society.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Linton, Ralph. 1936. *The study of man: An introduction.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Lubin, Nancy. 1981. Women in Soviet Central Asia. *Soviet Studies* 33:182–203.

——— 1995. Islam and ethnic identity in Central Asia: A view from below. In *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i. London: Frank Cass.

Lykoshin, N.C. 1916. *Pol zhizni v Turkestan.* St. Petersburg: Tipografiya V.A. Berezkovskii.

Magnarella, Paul. 1984. Kazakhs. In *Muslims peoples,* ed. Richard V. Weekes. Second edition. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1954 [1916, 1925, 1926]. *Magic, science and*

religion and other essays. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Maloney, Clarence (ed.). 1976. *The evil eye.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Mandelbaum, Michael (ed.). 1994. *Central Asia and the world.* New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.

Manz, Beatrice Forbes. 1989. *The rise and rule of Tamerlane.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

——— (ed.). 1994. *Central Asia in historical perspective.* Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Marcus, George E., and Michael M.J. Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marġulan, Älkey. 1985. *Ejelgi jır-angızdar* [Ancient songs and legends]. Alma-Ata: Jazũshı.

Martin, Richard C. (ed.). 1985. *Approaches to Islam in religious studies.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Masami, Hamada. 1978. Islamic saints and their mausoleums. *Acta Asiatica: Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture* (Tokyo: The Tōhō Gakkai) 34:79–98.

Masson, Mikhail Yevgen'evich. 1930. *Mavzolei Khodzha Akhmeda Yasevi.* Tashkent: Tipo-Lit. No. 2 Uzpoligraftresta.

[Mauss, Marcel. See Hubert, Henri.]

McChesney, R.D. 1991. *Waqf in Central Asia: Four hundred years in the history of a Muslim shrine, 1480–1889.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

McKenzie, Kermit E. 1989. Chokan Valikhanov: Kazakh princeling and scholar. *Central Asian Survey* 8:1–30.

Medeũbekulı, Saġatbek. 1992. *Sündet toyı* [Circumcision feast]. Almaty: Öner.

Mélikoff, Irene. 1987. Ahmed Yesevi and Turkic popular Islam. In *Utrecht papers on Central Asia: Proceedings of the first European seminar on Central Asian studies, 16–18 December 1985*, ed. Mark van Damme and Hendrik Boeschoten. Utrecht: Utrecht Turkological Series No. 2., pp. 83–94.

Mernissi, Fatima. 1977. Women, saints, and sanctuaries. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 3:101–112.

——— 1987 [1975]. *Beyond the veil: Male-female dynamics in modern Muslim society.* Revised edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Meyirmanov, Zeken. 1991. *Muḥammed paygambardıng ömiri men tangdamalı ḥadīsteri* [Life of the Prophet Muhammad and selected hadith]. Almaty: Jazũşı.

——— N.D. *Iman shart* [Rule of faith] N.P.

Mıngjan, Nıgmet. 1993 [1987]. *Qazaqtıng köne tarīḥı* [Ancient history of the Kazaks]. Ed. and translit. into Kazak-Cyrillic from the Kazak-Arabic text by Murathan Qanī. Almaty: Jalın Baspası. (Originally published in Urumchi: Shinjiang People's Press, 1987.)

——— 1994 [1987]. *Qazaqtıng qısqasha tarīḥı* [Short history of the Kazaks]. Second edition of *Qazaqtıng köne tarīḥı.* Almaty: Jalın.

Mırzaḥmet[ov], Mekemtas. 1993. *Qazaq qalay orıstandırıldı* [How the Kazaks were russified]. Almaty: Atamura-Kazakstan.

———. 1994. *Abay jäne shığıs* [Abay (Qunanbaev) and the East]. Almaty: Kazakstan.

——— (ed.). 1996. *Yasawī taġılımı* [Studies on the Yasawi tradition]. Turkistan: Mura.

Middleton, David, and Derek Edwards (eds.). 1990. *Collective remembering.* Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage.

Miropiev, M. 1888. *Demonologicheskie razskazy kirgizov: Sobrannie i perevedepnie.* St. Petersburg: Tipografiya V.O. Kirshbauma.

Mitchell, Richard G., Jr. 1993. *Secrecy and fieldwork.* Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

Moltmann, Jürgen. 1971. *Mensch: Christliche Anthropologie in den Konflikten der Gegenwart.* Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag.

Moone, Janet R. 1981. Persistence with change. In *Persistent peoples,* ed. G.P. Castile and G. Kushner. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Morgan, David. 1986. *The Mongols.* Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.

Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. 1993. *Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in international politics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Muminov, Ashirbek K. 1996. Veneration of holy sites of the mid-Sïrdar'ya valley: Continuity and transformation. In *Muslim culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the early 19th centuries,* ed. Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelen, Dmitriy Yermakov.

Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

——— and Zikirya Jandarbekov. 1992. *Safī ad-Din Orın Qoylaqı: Nasab-Nama* [Genealogy of Safi ad-Din Orın Qoylaqi]. Turkistan: Mura.

Munson, Henry, Jr. 1984. *The house of Si Abd Allah: The oral history of a Moroccan family*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

Muqanov, Säbīt. 1995a [1974]. *Qazaq qawımı: Tarīḫtıq jäne etnografiyalıq sholū* [The Kazak people: Historical and ethnographic survey]. Reprint of *Ḫalıq murası* [The people's heritage]. Almaty: Qazaqstan.

Murdock, George P. 1934. The Kazaks of Central Asia. In *Our primitive contemporaries,* ed. G.P. Murdock. New York: Macmillan.

Murtaza, Sherjan, Ayan Nısanalı, et al. (eds.). 1992. *Üsh paygambar: Töle Bī, Qaz Dawıstı Qazıbek, Äyteke Bī* [Three prophets...] Almaty: Däwir Publishing House.

Musk, Bill. 1989. *The unseen face of Islam.* Eastbourne, U.K.: MARC.

——— 1995. *Touching the soul of Islam.* Crowborough, East Sussex: MARC.

Mustafina, Raushan N. 1992. *Predstavleniya kul'ty, obryady u kazakhov: V kontekste bytovogo islama v yuzhnom kazakhstane v kontse XIX-XX vv.* Almaty: Qazaq Universiteti.

——— 1994. Role of Islam in Kazakhstan. *Kazakhstan* (Almaty), March 16, p. 8; March 23, p. 8; March 30, p. 8.

Nash, Manning. 1989. *The cauldron of ethnicity in the modern world.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nasırova, P. (ed.). 1993. *Turkestan* [A photo album in Kazak, Russian, and English]. Almaty: Öner.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 1993. *The need for a sacred science.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Neill, Stephen. 1964. *A history of Christian mission.* New York: Viking Penguin.

Nelson, Kristina. 1985. *The art of reciting the Qur'an.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Nısanbayulı, Ratbek Qajı [Hajji]. 1995. *Gībadattıng ulısı - namaz* [The best act of worship is the *namaz*]. Almaty: n.p.

Nurmuḫammedov, Nagim-Bek (ed.). 1988. *Aḫmed Yasawī säūlet gīmaratı: Al'bom* [The Ahmed Yasawi architectural complex: An album (with

English, Russian, and Kazak text)]. Almaty: Öner.

——— 1991. *The mausoleum of Hodja Ahmed Yasevi.* Ed. Hayati Bice [with English, Russian, Kazak, and Turkish text]. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları.

Nusqabayulı, Jarılqasın, and Özbekäli Jänibek. 1997. *Ejelgi Otrar / Dverniy Otrar / Ancient Otrar.* English translation by N. Golikov. Almaty: Rawan.

Olcott, Martha Brill. 1981. The collectivization drive in Kazakhstan. *The Russian Review* 40(2):122–142.

——— 1987 [1995]. *The Kazakhs.* Stanford, Cal.: Hoover Institution Press. (Second edition 1995.)

——— 1991. Women and society in Central Asia. In *Soviet Central Asia: The failed transformation*, ed. William Fierman. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

——— 1992. Introduction. *Everyday Islam*, by Sergei P. Poliakov. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

——— 1993. Kazakhstan: A republic of minorities. In *Nations and politics in the Soviet successor states*, ed. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, pp. 322–326. New York: Cambridge University Press.

——— 1994. Ceremony and substance: The illusion of unity in Central Asia. In *Central Asia and the world,* ed. Michael Mandelbaum, ed. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.

——— 1995. Islam and fundamentalism in independent Central Asia. In *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i. London: Frank Cass.

Ömirzaqov, Toqtasın. 1996 [?]. *Qırıq bir qumalaq* [Forty-one sheep pellets (Fortune-telling)]. Almaty: Qazaqstan Naurız Qorı.

Öserulı, Nuralı. 1992. *Ölim-jitim qağīda-erejeleri* [Rules and regulations for handling a corpse]. N.P.: Nujum.

——— 1994. *Musılman qağīdaları* [Rules of the Muslim life]. Almaty: Öner.

——— 1995 [1997]. *Duġalar* [Prayers]. Almaty: Öner. Second edition by Islam Alemi [The Mufti's Office].

——— 1996. *Sharīat* [Islamic law]. Almaty: Qaynar.

——— 1997a. *Aq bata* [Pure blessing]. Almaty: Islam Alemi.

——— 1997b. *Duġalar* [Prayers]. Almaty: Islam Alemi.

Osmanova, M., and J. Luqpanov. 1992. *Ösimdik - janġa shīpa, dertke dawa* [Plants - cures for the soul, medicine for the body]. Almaty: Qaynar.

Ötegenov, Talġat, and Toyboldı Zeynäbilov (eds.). 1991-92. *Almatı 1986 Jeltoqsan* [The December 1986 events in Almaty]. 2 volumes. Almaty: Altın Orda.

Padden, Carol A. 1990. Folk explanation in language survival. In *Collective remembering,* ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

Paksoy, H.B. (ed.). 1994. *Central Asia reader: The rediscovery of history.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. 1985 [1968]. *Anthropology in theological perspective.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Parshall, Phil. 1994. *Inside the community: Understanding Muslims through their traditions.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker.

Pashino, Petr Ivanovich. 1868. Turkestanski krai v. 1866 godu. In *Petuvye zametki P.I. Pashino,* pages 63-73. St. Petersburg.

Pastner, Stephen L. 1978. Power and pirs among the Pakistan Baluch. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 13:231-243.

Pelto, Pertti J. and Gretel H. 1978. *Anthropological research: The structure of inquiry.* Second edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Peneff, J. 1985. Fieldwork in Algeria. *Qualitative Sociology* 8:67-78.

Penkala, Danuta. 1980. "Hot" and "cold" in the traditional medicine of Afghanistan. *Ethnomedizin* 6:201-228.

Penrose, G.L. 1978. Kazak. In *Muslim peoples,* ed. Richard V. Weekes. First edition. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Peters, Emrys. 1984. The paucity of ritual among Middle Eastern pastoralists. In *Islam in tribal societies from the Atlas to the Indus,* ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and David M. Hart. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Petrash, Yurii Grigor'evich. 1981. *Ten' srednevekov'ya.* Almaty: Izdatel'stvo Kazakhstan.

Pierce, Joe E. 1964. *Life in a Turkish village.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Poliakov, Sergei P. 1980. *Istoricheskaya etnografiya Srednei azii i kazakhstana.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta.

——— 1992. *Everyday Islam: Religion and tradition in rural Central Asia.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Privratsky, Bruce. 1994. Mädenītanū ġılımındaġı post-modernizm teoriyasının orını [The place of post-modernist theory in cultural anthropology]. *Proceedings of the Second Academic Conference of Yasawi University on the Occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Birth of Abay Qunanbaev.* Turkistan: Yasawi University.

——— 1996 [1992]. *Barefoot situations for learning Kazak.* Manuscript in circulation.

——— 1997. "These people aren't very religious": A new look at Kazak religion. *Ahmet Yasawi University Herald* (Turkistan) 1997, No. 1 (Jan.–Feb.): 28–33.

Qalīev, S., M. Orazaev, and M. Smayılova. 1994. *Qazaq ḥalqının salt-dästürleri* [Traditions of the Kazak people]. Almaty: Rawan.

Qasımbaev, Januzaq. 1993. *Kenesarı Ḥan* [Khan Kene Sary]. Almaty: Kazakstan.

——— et al. 1993. *Ḥan Kene.* Almaty: Jalın.

Qasımjanov, Aġın et al. 1994. *Qazaq* [Kazak]. Almaty: Bilim.

Qazbekov, M. (ed.). 1991. *Naūrız 1926–1988: Janġġırġan salt-dästürler* [Nawruz (Persian New Year) 1926–1988: Traditions renewed]. Almaty: Qazaqstan.

Qıraūbaeva, A., ed. 1991. *Ejelgi däwir ädebiyeti* [(Kazak) Literature of the early period]. Almaty: Ana Tili.

Qıstaūbaev, Zaḥardīn, and Baljan Ḥabdīna (eds.). 1993. *Qızıldar qırġını* [The Red holocaust.] Almaty: Öner.

Qojabekova, Botaköz (ed. and trans.). 1994. *Qazaqı neke: Salt-dästür jönindegi jazbalar* [Kazak marriage: Documents of the tradition]. Almaty: Jalın.

Qojaev, Muḥtar. 1992. *Arıstanbab.* Almaty: Demeū.

——— 1996. *Arıstanbab jäne onıng kesenesi* [Arstan Bab and his shrine]. Shymkent: Jibek Jolı.

Qongıratbaev, Äūelbek. 1987. *Qazaq eposı jäne türkologiya* [The Kazak epic and Turkic studies]. Almaty: Ġılım.

——— 1991. *Qazaq fol'klorınıng, tarīḥı* [History of Kazak folklore]. Almaty: Ana-Tili.

Qongıratbaev, Tınısbek. 1996. *Ertedegi eskertkishter: Sır boyının*

ejelgi tarīḫı men mädeniyeti [Memorials of former days: The ancient history and culture of the Syr Darya valley]. Almaty: Öner.

Qudayberdiulı, Shäkärim. 1988a. *Jolsız jaza: Ölengder men poemalar* [Punishment with no way out: Songs and poems], ed. M. Maġaũin. Almaty: Jalın.

——— 1988b. *Shäkärim Qudayberdiyev shıġarmaları: Ölengder, dastandar, qara sözder* [Works of Shäkärim Qudayberdiev: Songs, verses, and sayings], ed. M. Jarmuḫammedov and S. Däũitov. Almaty: Jazũshı.

Qulımbetov, Eleũsiz. 1992. Tũġan uldan ne payda? [What good is a son?] *Jibek Jolı* (Shymkent) 1992, No. 3–4, pp. 18–20.

Qunanbaev, Abay (Abai Kunanbaev). 1977. *Abay (Ibrahīm) Qunanbaev: Shıġarmalarının eki tomdıq tolıq jıynaġı* [Abay Ibrahim Qunanbaev: The complete works in two volumes]. Alma-Ata: Ġılım.

——— 1993 [1890s]. *Abay: Qara söz. Poemalar* [Abay: Sayings and Poems]. In Kazak and Russian. Almaty: El.

——— 1994. *Abay: Shıġarmalar* [Works of Abay]. Almaty: Mör.

Quran. 1990 [1410 A.H.]. *The Holy Qur-ān: [Arabic with] English translation of the meanings, and commentary.* Medina: King Fahd Holy Quran Printing Complex.

——— 1990–94. *Quran jäne onıng qazaqsha maġınası* [The Quran and its Kazak meaning]. 4 volumes. Arabic, with Kazak transliteration and translation by Nuralı Öserulı and Jumabay Istaev. Moscow (Vol. I) and Almaty (Vols. II–IV).

——— 1991a. *Quran kärim* [The Glorious Quran]. Arabic, with Kazak translation by Ratbek Hajji Nısanbayulı and Wahap Qıdırḫanulı. Almaty: Jazũshı.

——— 1991b. *Quran kärim: Qazaqsha maġına jäne tüsinigi* [The Glorious Quran: Its Kazak meaning and interpretation]. Arabic, with Kazak translation by Ḫalīfa Altay. Medina: King Fahd Holy Quran Printing Complex.

Qurayısh Qajı, Sayīd Yoldash Äli, with Kengesḫan Zäkenov. 1994. *Men – emshimin* [I am a healer]. Almaty: Rawan.

Rabinow, Paul. 1977. *Reflections on fieldwork in Morocco.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— 1983. Facts are a word of God: An essay review [of *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*, by James Clifford]. In *Observers observed*, ed. George W. Stocking. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Radloff, Wilhelm. 1893 [1870]. *Aus Sibirien: Löse Blätter aus meinem Tagebuche.* 2 vols. Second edition. Leipzig.

Rahman, Fazlur. 1979. *Islam.* Second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——— 1985. Approaches to Islam in religious studies. In *Approaches to Islam in religious studies,* ed. Richard C. Martin. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Rakowska-Harmstone, Teresa. 1983. Islam and nationalism: Central Asia and Kazakhstan under Soviet rule. *Central Asian Survey* 2:7-87.

Raũshanov, Esenġalī (ed.). 1991. *Ḥadīster* [Hadith sayings]. Almaty: Murattas.

Redfield, Robert. 1960 [1956]. *Peasant society and culture.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Reeves, Edward B. 1990. *The hidden government: Ritual, clientelism, and legitimation in Northern Egypt.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Reynolds, Vernon, and R.E.S. Tanner. 1983. *The biology of religion.* New York: Longman.

Robson, James. 1934. Magic cures in popular Islam. *The Moslem World* 24:33-43.

Ro'i, Yaacov. 1991. Central Asian riots and disturbances 1989-1990: Causes and context. *Central Asian Survey* 10(3):21-54.

——— (ed.). 1995. *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting legacies.* London: Frank Cass.

Romanucci-Ross, Lola, and George DeVos (eds.). 1995. *Ethnic identity: Creation, conflict, and accomodation.* Third edition. Walnut Creek, Cal.: Sage-Altamira.

Roosens, Eugeen E. 1989. *Creating ethnicity: The process of ethnogenesis.* Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage.

Rorlich, Azade Ayse. 1986. *The Volga Tatars.* Standford: Hoover Institution Press.

Roux, Jean-Paul. 1984a. Les religions dans les sociétés Turko-Mongoles. *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 201:393-420.

——— 1984b. *La religion des Turcs et des Mongols.* Paris: Payot.

——— 1987. Tengri. Turkic religions. *ER* 14:401-403; 15:87-94.

——— 1993. Historical introduction. In *The Turkic peoples of the world,* ed. Margaret Bainbridge. New York: Kegan Paul.

Royce, Anya Peterson. 1982. *Ethnic identity: Strategies of diversity.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Rywkin, Michael. 1987. Islam and the new Soviet man: 70 years of evolution. *Central Asian Survey* 6:23–32.

——— 1994. *Moscow's lost empire.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Safina, L.K., and E.P. Petrov. 1992. *Jasıl apteka* [Green pharmacy]. Almaty: Qaynar.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage Books.

Saidbaev, Talib Sarymsakovich. 1978. *Islam i obshchestvo* [Islam and society]. Moscow: Glavnaia redktsiia vostochnoi literatury, Izd. Nauka.

[Samizdat.] 1987. The events in Kazakhstan—an eyewitness report, from the Arkiv Samizdata, 10 April 1987. *Central Asian Survey* 6:73–75. (Reprinted in H.B. Paksoy, *Central Asia reader: The rediscovery of history,* pp. 160–164 [Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe].)

Sangren, P. Steven. 1988. Rhetoric and the authority of ethnography: "Postmodernism" and the social reproduction of texts. *Current Anthropology* 29:405–435.

Sanneh, Lamin. 1974. Amulets and Muslim orthodoxy. *International Review of Mission* 63:515–529.

——— 1989. *Translating the message: The missionary impact on culture.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

——— 1993. *Encountering the West: Christianity and the global cultural process. The African dimension.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

Saparalı, B., and J. Däũrenbekov (eds.). 1993. *Toy* [Festival]. Almaty: Öner.

Sarıbaev, Bolat. 1981. *Qazaqtıng musikalıq aspaptarı* [Musical instruments of the Kazaks]. Almaty: Öner.

Sarkizyanz, Manuel. 1972. Russian conquest in Central Asia: Transformation and acculturation. In *Russia in Asia,* ed. Wayne S. Vucinich. Stanford, Cal.: Hoover Institution Press.

Särsenbaev, Orazbek, and Ăliya Seksenbaeva (eds.). 1994. *Muḥammed payġambarımızdıng ḥadīsteri* [The hadith (sayings) of our prophet, Muhammed]. Translated by Nurqasım Qazıbekov. Almaty: Jazũshı.

Schama, Simon. 1995. *Landscape and memory.* New York: Knopf.

Schimmel, Annemarie. 1975. *Mystical dimensions of Islam.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

——— 1981. The Sufis and the *Shahada.* In *Islam's understanding of itself,* ed. Richard G. Hovannisian and Speros Vyronis, Jr. Los Angeles: University of California, Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies.

——— 1992. *Islam: An introduction.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Schlesier, Karl H. 1987. *The wolves of heaven: Cheyenne shamanism, ceremonies, and prehistoric origins.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Schneider, David M. 1968. *American kinship: A cultural account.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schoeberlein-Engel, John. 1996. The prospects of Uzbek national identity. *Central Asia Monitor* 1996(2):12-20.

Schubel, Vernon James. 1993. *Religious performance in contemporary Islam: Shi'i devotional rituals in South Asia.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Schuon, Frithjof. 1975. *The trascendent unity of religions.* Translated from the French by P. Townsend. New York: Harper and Row.

Schuyler, Eugene. 1877. *Turkistan: Notes of a journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja.* New York: Armstrong & Co. (Abridged version, ed. Geoffrey Wheeler, New York: F.A. Praeger, 1966.)

Schwartz, Barry. 1982. The social context of commemoration: A study in collective memory. *Social Forces* 61:374-97.

——— 1990. The reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln. In *Collective remembering,* ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards. Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage.

Şeker, Mehmed, and Necdet Yılmaz (eds.). 1996. *Ahmed-i Yesevî: Hayatı, eserleri, fikirleri, tesirleri.* Istanbul: Baskı Umut Matbaası.

Semenov, A. 1926. Mechet Khodji Akhmeda Yeseviiskogo v g. Turkestane: Resul'taty osmotra v noyabre 1922 g. In *Ivestiya Sredazkomstarisa* 1:121-130. Tashkent.

Serikbayulı, Törekeldi. 1990. Mazarattardı mazalamayıq [Let's not neglect the cemeteries]. *Jibek Jolı* (Shymkent), December 1990, pp. 16-17,46.

Shah, Idris. 1969. *The way of the Sufi.* New York: E.P. Dutton.

Shahrani, M. Nazif (Mohib). 1979. *The Kirghiz and Wakhi of Afghanistan: Adaptation to closer frontiers.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

——— 1984. "From tribe to *umma*": Comments on the dynamics of identity in Muslim Soviet Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey* 3:27–38.

——— 1991. Local knowledge of Islam and social discourse in Afghanistan and Turkistan in the modern period. In *Turko-Persia in historical perspective,* ed. Robert L. Canfield. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Shalapov, Muzaffar Quttıqojauli (Qarashayıq), (ed.). 1995a. *Nurnama* [Book of light]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— 1995b. *Dertke dawa dūġalar* [Healing prayers against sickness]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— 1995c. *Islam, īman jäne namaz* [Islam, faith and the (five daily) prayers]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— 1995d. *Türik emi* [Turkic healing practices]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— 1995e. *Duġalar qasiyeti* [The sacred quality of prayer]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— 1996. *Ísmī A'zam: Toqsan türli aūrūġa emdik duġalar* [The great name: Healing prayers for 90 diseases]. Türkistan: Mura. (Original by Shamsuddin bin Husain, Kazan University, 1903.)

——— 1997a. *Ísmī aġzam jäne basqa da qasiyetti duġalar, nemese Shıġıstıng ġajayıp qupiya ġılımı* [The great name and other sacred prayers, or the wonder-working and secret knowledge of the East]. Türkistan: Mura.

——— 1997b. *Payġambarlar duġası jäne 'Yasin' süresining qasīetteri* [The prayers of the prophets and the power of the Yasin Sura]. Türkistan: Mura.

Shalinsky, Audrey C. 1980a. Group prestige in Northern Afghanistan: The case of an interethnic wedding. *Ethnic Groups* 2:269–282.

——— 1980b. Curing strategies in a Central Asian population in Afghanistan. *Ethnomedizin* 6:183–200.

——— 1986. Reason, desire, and sexuality: The meaning of gender in Northern Afghanistan. *Ethos* 14:323–343.

——— 1990. The significance of Islam in pre-1978 northern Afghanistan: An urban Uzbek example. *Central Asian Survey* 9:99–108.

Shamshatov, N.Sh. (Aq-Beket). 1992. *Allanıng düniyege janga sälemi - Novoe poslanie Allakha miru* [God's new message to the world]. Almaty: Qaynar Ekspresspechat'.

Shınggıs Qajı [Hajji Genghiz]. 1996. *Alla aldındağı aq neke* [Pure marriage before God.] Almaty: Nur.

Shirokogoroff, S.M. 1935. *The psychomental complex of the Tungus.* London: Kegan Paul.

Shoolbraid, G.M.H. 1975. *The oral epic of Siberia and Central Asia.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Shotter, John. 1990. The social construction of remembering and forgetting. In *Collective remembering,* ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards. Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage.

Shülembaev, Q.Sh. 1972. *Qazirgi waqıttağı Īslam dini jaylı* [Concerning present-day Islam]. Alma-Ata.

——— 1975. *Magi, bogi i deistvitel'nost'.* Alma-Ata.

——— 1978. *Täwipshildik degen ne?* [What is folk healing?]. Alma-Ata.

——— 1983. *Obraz zhizni, religiya, ateizm.* Alma-Ata.

——— (ed.). 1987. *Sovettik shığıs respublikalarındağı Islam* [Islam in the eastern Soviet republics]. Almaty: Qazaqstan.

Shushud, Hasan Lutfi. 1983. *Masters of wisdom of central Asia.* Translated from the Turkish by Muhtar Holland. Moorcote, Ripon, U.K.: Coombe Springs Press.

Simmons, William S. 1979. Islamic conversion of social change in a Senegalese village. *Ethnology* 18:303-323.

Sinor, Denis (ed.). 1990. *Essays in comparative Altaic linguistics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies.

Sızdıqova, Gaũhar M. 1997. Ongtüstik qazaqtarı arasındağı Īslamğa deyingi dinī nanım-senimder tũralı [On pre-Islamic religious beliefs among the southern Kazaks]. *Ahmet Yasawi University Herald* (Turkistan) 1997, No. 5, pp. 22-24.

——— 1998 (forthcoming). *Qazaqtardıng dinī sanasınıng erekshelig: Ongtüstik Qazaqstan materialdar boyınsha* [Defining features of the religious mind of the Kazaks: Based on materials from southern Kazakstan]. Draft manuscript for *kandidat nauk* thesis, Kazak State National University, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Almaty.

Smaġulov, E. 1991. Yası, nemese Türkistan qalası [Yasi, or Turkistan city]. *Jibek Joli* (Shymkent) 4/5:11.

———, and M. Tuyaqbaev. 1998. *Türkistannıng ortaġasırlıq tarīḫī* [Medieval history of Turkistan]. Türkistan: Mura.

Smith, Graham (ed.). 1990. *The nationalities question in the Soviet Union.* New York: Longman.

Smith, Jane I. 1980. Concourse between the living and the dead in Islamic eschatological literature. *History of Religions* 19:224–236.

Snesarev, G.P. 1958. The survival of religious and social customs in Uzbekistan. *Central Asian Review* 6:5–15.

——— 1970–72. Remnants of pre-islamic beliefs and rituals among the Khorezm Uzbeks. *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology* 4:329–353 (1970–71); 1:2–37 (1971–72).

——— 1974. On some causes of the persistence of religio-customary survivals among the Khorezm Uzbeks: Based on 1954–56 field materials of the Uzbek detachment of the Khorezm Archeological and Ethnographic Expedition. In *Introduction to Soviet ethnography,* ed. Stephen P. and Ethel Dunn. Berkeley, Calif.: Highgate Road Social Science Research Station.

Snouck-Hurgronye, C. 1906. *The Achehnese.* 2 vols. Leiden: E.J.Brill.

Soymen, Mehmet. 1991. *Ġılımḫal* [Manual of knowledge]. Translated from Turkish into Kazak by Ḫalīfa Altay. Istanbul: Ajar Baspa Qurılısı.

Spicer, Edward H. 1962. *Cycles of conquest: The impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest 1533–1960.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

——— 1971. Persistent cultural systems. *Science* 174:795–800.

Spiro, Melford E. 1966. Religion: Problems of definition and explanation. In *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion,* ed. Michael Banton. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

Spradley, James P. 1980a. *Participant observation.* Fort Worth, Texas: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

——— 1980b. *The ethnographic interview.* Fort Worth, Texas: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stewart, Charles C. 1985. Popular Islam in twentieth-century Africa. *Africa* 55:363–368.

——— and Rosalind Shaw. 1994. *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The politics of religious synthesis.* New York: Routledge.

Stocking, George W. (ed.). 1983. *Observers observed: Essays on ethnographic fieldwork.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

——— (ed.) 1991. Colonial situations: Essays on the contextualization of ethnographic knowledge. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Subtelny, Maria Eva. 1989. The cult of the holy places: Religious practices among Soviet Muslims. *Middle East Journal* 43:593–604.

Sukhareva, O.A. 1960. *Islam v Uzbekistane.* Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR.

Süleymenov, Oljas. 1992. *AZ i Ya: Ízgi niyetti oqırman kitabı* [Asia: A book for the pure in heart]. Translated from Russian by S. Aqataev. Almaty: Jazũshı.

Svanberg, Ingvar. 1989. *Kazak refugees in Turkey: A study of cultural persistence and social change.* Studia Multiethnica Upsaliensa. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.

——— 1990. Kazakhs. In *The nationalities question in the Soviet Union,* ed. Graham Smith. New York: Longman.

Tapper, Nancy. 1990. Ziyaret: Gender, movement, and exchange in a Turkish community. In *Muslim travellers,* ed. D.F. Eickelmann and James Piscatori. London: Routledge.

Tapper, Richard. 1984. Holier than thou: Islam in three tribal societies. In *Islam in tribal societies from the Atlas to the Indus,* ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and David M. Hart. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Tapper, Richard and Nancy. 1987. 'Thank God we're secular!' Aspects of fundamentalism in a Turkish town. In *Studies in religious fundamentalism,* ed. Lionel Caplan. London: Macmillan.

Taylor, Christopher S. 1990. Sacred history and the cult of Muslim saints in late medieval Egypt. *Muslim World* 53:72–80.

Tätimov, Maqash. 1996. Qazaqtıng altın ġasırı qaytalana ma? [Can the golden century of the Kazaks be repeated?]. *Islam Alemi* 1/96:12–15.

Thomas, Bruce. 1994. The gospel for shame cultures. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly,* July 1994, pp. 284–290.

Togan, Isenbike. 1992. Islam in a changing society: The Khojas of eastern Turkistan. In *Muslims in Central Asia,* ed. Jo-Ann Gross. Durham: Duke University Press.

Togan, Zeki Velidi. 1994 [1947]. The origins of the Kazaks and the Özbeks. In *Central Asia reader: The rediscovery of history,* ed. H.B. Paksoy. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Töleũbaev, A.T. 1991. *Relikty doislamskikh verovanii v semeinykh obryadakh kazakhov.* Almaty.

Tolmacheva, M.A. 1993. The Muslim woman in Soviet Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey* 12(4):531–548.

Trimingham, J. Spencer. 1952. *Islam in Ethiopia.* London.

——— 1971. *The Sufi orders in Islam.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Troll, Christian W. (ed.). 1989. *Muslim shrines in India: Their character, history and significance.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Turantegi, Dũlat, and Jarılqasın Borbanbay. 1996. *Baba Tükti Shashtı Azīz: Tanımdıq zertteũ* [Introductory researches on Baba Tükti Shashtı Aziz]. Shymkent: Jibek Jolı.

Turmanjanov, Ötebay (ed.). 1993. *Qazaq maqal-mätelderi* [Kazak proverbs and proverbial sayings]. Almaty: Ana Tili.

Turner, Victor. 1969. *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornel University Press.

——— 1974. *Dreams, fields, and metaphors.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Tuyakbaeva, Bayan T. 1989. *Epigraficheskii dekor arkhitekturnogo kompleksa Akhmeda Yasavi.* Alma-Ata: Öner.

Tuyaqbaev, Marat. 1991. Türkistandaġı jer astı meshiti [An underground mosque in Turkistan]. *Jibek Jolı* (Shymkent) 4/5:24–25.

Tyson, David. 1997. Shrine pilgrimage in Turkmenistan as a means to understand Islam among the Turkmen. *Central Asia Monitor* 1997, No. 1, pp. 15–32.

Valikhanov, Chokan. 1984–85 [1904, 1961–68]. *Sobranie sochinenii.* Almaty: QSSR Ġılım Akademiyası.

——— (Shoqan Wälīḫanov) 1985. *Tangdamalı* [Selected works of Chokan Valikhanov]. Edited and translated into Kazak from the Russian by E. Jarmuḫanbetov et al. Alma-Ata: Jazũshı.

——— 1993 [ca. 1864]. Qazaqtardaġı shamandıqtıng qaldığı [The survival of shamanism among the Kazaks]. In *Qazaq baqsı-balgerleri,* ed. J. Daũrenbekov and E. Tursınov. Almaty: Ana Tili.

van Gennep, Arnold. 1960 [1909]. *The rites of passage.* Translated from the French by Monica B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

von Grünebaum, G.E., and Roger Caillois (eds.). 1966. *The dream and*

human societies. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vreeland, H.H. 1954. *Mongol community and kinship structure.* New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files.

Vrijhof, P.H., and Jacques Waardenburg (eds.). 1977. *Official and popular religion: Analysis of a theme for religious studies.* The Hague: Mouton.

Vucinich, Wayne S. 1972. The structure of Soviet orientology: Fifty years of change and accomplishment. In *Russia in Asia: Essays on the influence of Russia on the Asian peoples,* ed. Wayne S. Vucinich. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press.

Wallace, Anthony. 1956. Revitalization movements. *American Anthropologist* 58:260–282.

Wardhaugh, Ronald. 1992. *An introduction to sociolinguistics.* Second edition. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.

Watt, W. Montgomery. 1961. *Muḥammad: Prophet and statesman.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Weekes, Richard (ed.). 1984 [1978]. *Muslim peoples: A world ethnographic survey.* Volume 1. Second edition. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Werbner, R.P. (ed.). 1977. *Regional cults.* New York: Academic Press.

Werner, Cynthia Ann. 1994. A preliminary assessment of attitudes toward the privatization of agriculture in contemporary Kazakhstan. *Central Asian Survey* 13:295–303.

——— 1997. Marketing gifts: Economic change in a Kazak village. *Central Asia Monitor*, 1997, No. 6, pp. 1–7.

——— 1998. Gift exchange and the transition to a market economy in a Kazak village. *Ahmet Yasawi University Herald* (Turkistan) 1998, No. 1, pp. 12–23.

Westermarck, Edward. 1926. *Ritual and belief in Morocco.* 2 volumes. London: Macmillan.

Wheeler, Geoffrey. 1962. *Racial problems in Soviet Muslim Asia.* Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

——— 1964. *The modern history of Soviet Central Asia.* New York: Praeger.

Wimbush, S. Enders. 1985. The politics of identity change in Soviet Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey* 3(3):69–78.

——— 1987. The Alma Ata riots. *Encounter* 69:62–68 (June).

Wixman, Ronald. 1984. *Peoples of the USSR: An ethnographic handbook.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Wolin, Sheldon S. 1981. Max Weber: Legitimation, method, and the politics of theory. *Political Theory* 9:401–424.

Yang, Martin C. 1945. *A Chinese village: Taitou, Shantung province.* New York: Columbia University Press.

[Yasawī, Aḥmet. For versions of the *Diwan-ī Hikmet*, see Abdirashev, Abdishükirov, Bice, Imajanov, Jandarbekov, Jarmuhamedulı, Qıraũbaeva.]

Yuvalı, Abdülkadir, Mustafa Argunşah, and Ali Aktan (eds.). 1993. *Milletlerarası Hoca Ahmet Yesevî Sempozyumu Bildirileri (26–29 Mayıs 1993)* [Proceedings of the international conference on Hoja Ahmet Yesevi (May 26–29, 1993)]. Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Basımevi.

Zaleskii, Bronislav. 1991 [1865]. *Qazaq saḥarasında sayaḥat / Zhizn' kazakhskikh stepei.* Translated from the French into Kazak and Russian by K. Segizbaev. Almaty: Öner. (Original: *La vie des steppes kirghizes*, Paris.)

Zarcone, Thierry. 1995. Le culte des saints musulman en Turquie et en Asie centrale. In *Le culte des saints dans l'Islam,* ed. H. Chambert-Loir and C. Guillot, pp. 267–333. Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient.

Zenkovsky, Serge A. 1960. *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Zerubavel, Yael. 1995. *Recovered roots: Collective memory and the making of Israeli national tradition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zeybek, Namık Kemal. 1994. [Introduction.] *Ahmet Yesevî Üniversitesi.* Türkistan and Ankara. Reprinted as "Ahmet Yesevi," in *Türkiye Türkçesi* [Turkey's Turkish], by Cemal Şafak, Günhan Kayhan, Lâtif Batı, and Nejdet Albay. Ankara: Ahmet Yesevi Vakfi Yayınları, No. 2, pp. 4–5.

[For Zhandarbekov, Zhurinov, etc., see Jandarbekov, Jurınov, etc.]

APPENDIX

PRINCIPAL INFORMANTS

"ABDISALIH QOJA" - Age about 30, born in Turkistan, a Qoja healer in the lineage of the Aqqorġan Qojas, claiming descent from Qoja Ahmet Yasawi. His mother also gave us a brief interview about him.

ABLAS ABULQAYIR-ULI - Born 1904 in Janga Qorġan, fled to Tashkent in 1931, returned to Turkistan in 1971, appointed *imam* of the main mosque in 1983. A "Qoja-Sunaq" by self-ascription.

ALIM QOJA SAPAROV - Born 1924 of the Duwana Qojas at Lake Balkash, moved to Chapaev 10 km. from Turkistan as a small child, now a retired member of a large cooperative farm, veteran of the Red Army.

AMAL QOJA IBADULLA-ULI - Born ca. 1919 in Turkistan, a retired teacher at the school for railroad children. Amal's memory was deep: his paternal grandfather died in Turkistan at age 87 in 1930, and his father died at age 63 in 1940.

"AYBIBI" - Born ca. 1916 in Abay village near Babay Qorġan, married and worked 28 years in the cotton fields Shäũildir. Her grandmother was a shaman.

BAQITBERGEN OMAROV - Age 41, my neighbor, born in Otrabad village, came to Turkistan for school and stayed when his father, born in 1904, also moved to town in 1980.

BEYMUHAMMEDOV (BAQITJAN) - Age 39, director of a fledgling Arabic Institute which closed shortly after we interviewed him. His wife is a folk-healer in whose powers he fervently believes.

"BOTAJAN" - Born ca. 1961 in Turkistan, lived in Uzbekistan till 1989 when she married and moved back. Her husband is a welder, and she is a healer.

FATIMA - Born 1915 of the Qorasan Qojas at Köktöbe across the Syr Darya from Turkistan, married around 1930, came to Turkistan in 1957 after living in villages near Qızıl Orda and Taraz, now a widow, the mother of "Omar Qoja" (q.v.). Her father, a nomadic herdsman, died at age 53 when she was about 11 years old.

GULMIRA ABDURAHMANOVA - Born at Tülkibas, about 35 years old, Kazak wife of a Sunaq (Uzbek) trader.

"JAMAL" - Born 1927 near Janga Qorġan, widowed by a prominent member of the local Communist Party shortly before my arrival in Turkistan in 1991. Mother of "Mira" (q.v.).

JOLBARIS QOJA NURMUḤAMMEDOV - Born 1923 at Ortaq village between

Turkistan and the train station (Ortaq is now inside the city), a retired bookkeeper and veteran of the Red Army. His father was Qaljan Qoja, "a rich man with much livestock."

"KENGESBEK" - Born 1943 at Qush-Ata 20 km. from Turkistan, a teacher and school administrator. He was a quiet but respected member of the Communist Party, is now a thoughtful Muslim.

"MIRA" - Born 1956 in northern Kazakstan, came to Turkistan as a small child, now a teacher, married to a Qoja businessman and local government official. Daughter of "Jamal" (q.v.).

MUHAMMADRAYIM QOJA - About 60 years old, born and raised in Turkistan of the *Shaykh ul-Islam* Qojas, a barber and one of the town's two traditional circumcisers.

NESIBELI - Age around 35, native of Turkistan, wife of Baqıtbergen Omarov (q.v.).

"NURALI QOJA" - Born 1928 of the Qorasan Qojas at Janga Qorġan, moved to Turkistan in 1958; a retired bookkeeper now serving his neighborhood as *imam-molda*. His father (1887-1955) was imprisoned during the Stalinist repression, "because he knew Arabic and the Quran." "Nurali" is "Omar Qoja's" uncle (q.v.).

"OMAR QOJA" - Born 1948 of the Qorasan Qojas in Turkistan, finished a professional institute, now a white-collar worker. Fatima is his mother, "Nurali Qoja" his uncle (q.v.).

"OSHANOV" - Born 1925 at Sozaq across the mountains from Turkistan, a veteran and retired local government official, proud of his 25-year membership in the Communist Party. His mother lived to age 83 and died in 1964. "Oshanov's" wife also participated in the interview.

"QALAMBAY" - Born 1925 in Turkistan, worked as a miner in Kentau and was disabled. His son, neighbors, and a patient identified him as a *baqsı* (shaman), but he denied it.

"SHARIPBEK" - Born 1952 in Turkistan, a local businessman and a devoted and knowledgeable Muslim.

"SUFI TIMUR" - Born ca. 1927 in Turkistan, an unofficial mullah at the Yasawi Shrine. One of the museum directors considered him disreputable and had run him off.

ULJALGAS - Born ca. 1942 of Qoja parents, orphaned, grew up in an orphanage in Shymkent, married and moved to Turkistan in 1972 where she worked in the city bakery, and as a healer in her home.

ÜMBET TÄWIP - A healer from Shymkent about 45 years old, who was leading a group of pilgrims at the Yasawi Shrine in June 1995.

"ZULFIYA" - Born 1945 near Shiyeli and Sunaq Ata, herself a Sunaq healer, raised in Kentau, moved to Turkistan when she married in 1969.

Notes on Informants

Informants whose voices are heard frequently in the study are named above. Qojas and Sunaqs are identified; otherwise all are Kazaks. Names in quotation marks are pseudonyms for persons who asked for anonymity. Age is at the time of the principal interview.

These principal informants include 10 Qojas and 2 Sunaqs (all officially Kazak); old women, Aybibi, Fatima, and Jamal; young women, Gülmira, Mira and Nesibeli; young men, Sharipbek, Baqıtbergen, and Beymuhammedov; and the Qojas: Abdisalih, Abu Farabi, Alim, Amal, Jolbarıs, Nurali, Omar, and, among the women, Fatima and Uljalġas; an imam, Ablas Abulqayıruli; a neighborhood imam-mullah, Nurali; a shrine-mullah, Sufi Timur; pilgrims like Ümbet Täwip; traditional healers, Abdisalih, Botajan, Qalambay, Uljalġas, and Zulfiya; and former Communists, including Kengesbek and Oshanov.

Other Kazak and Uzbek friends and neighbors provided information and essential insights in hundreds of encounters. University colleagues too numerous to mention suggested helpful information and frameworks of analysis.

VITA

Bruce George Privratsky is a third-generation American, born in Dickinson, North Dakota, on June 26, 1948. During his youth he lived in Turkey, then entered Deerfield Academy (Deerfield, Massachusetts). In 1969 he earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in religious studies *magna cum laude* from Oberlin College (Oberlin, Ohio). He studied history and theology at University of Tübingen (Germany) on a Fulbright Scholarship, and at Harvard Divinity School (Cambridge, Massachusetts), then earned the Master of Divinity degree at Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Kentucky) in 1980.

He is a member of the Holston Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and has been supported by churches in Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama during the period of his work in Indonesia and Kazakstan. From 1986 to 1990 he taught at the Methodist Biblical Institute at Bandar Baru, North Sumatra, Indonesia. In the summer of 1991 he studied Kazak language and did preliminary field research on Kazak religion in Almaty, Shymkent, and Turkistan. Between April 1992 and May 1998 he worked in Turkistan in southern Kazakstan, doing ethnographic research, and teaching religious studies and ethnology at the Hoja Ahmet Yasawi Kazak-Turkish International University.