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State Formation in Central and West Asia During the 10th-13th Centuries

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1. Introduction

Following the Abbasid revolution in 750, conversion to Islam among the nomadic Turks who inhabited steppe areas, as well as cities, began to accelerate. The same was valid also for Sogdians, Persians and other Iranian peoples who mainly inhabited the cities of Central Asia.¹ The Abbasid revolt against the Umayyad Dynasty was successful thanks to the help from the non-Arabs within the Caliphate who were called *Mawali* by the Umayyad and were hindered from entering or rising in state service. The Abbasids, on the other hand, delegated more power to the non-Arab elements especially in Iran and Central Asia where the Abbasid revolt began in 747 by Abu Muslim. As a result, the Iranian and Turkic elements began to assume control both in the Abbasid capital and in the provinces. The Persians quickly filled the ranks of the bureaucracy, and the Turks began to dominate the military.²

In less than a century the Abbasids lost control of most of its territories in North Africa, Iran, Central Asia, and eventually their actual rule was limited to Baghdad and parts of Iraq. In the provinces, new “autonomous” provincial governor states emerged beginning with the Toluids in Egypt. These were mostly set up by Iranian and Turkic generals or governors in Central Asia, whereas in North Africa, the Berbers were setting up their own autonomous states. The Samanids, who were preceded by the Saffarids were an

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¹ Branko Soucek and Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 57.

² Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 47.

Iranian dynasty with claims of reviving the pre-Islamic Sassanid Empire.³ Both were established in Khorasan and competed for domination over Transoxiana and other parts of Central Asia with their Turkic tribes.

However, by the 10th century, these states began to wane in power and be replaced by states such as the Ghaznavids, Qarakhanids, and Seljuks. From this time onward, a series of phenomena began to take place in most of the Central and West Asia giving birth to new states, mostly called “conquest dynasties.” These entities displayed distinctive state formation characteristics and differed from the previous nomadic steppe empires and the sedentary “civilized” empires of the region. This paper aims to address the questions related to the reasons and the development of these new state formations and explores their distinctive characteristics. The following section introduces these states and explicates the distinctions in terms of sources of legitimacy, state structure, and the effect of migrations and resulting amalgamation of cultures. The concluding section highlights these distinctions and the duality which became the norm for state formations in the whole region.

2. Dualities in State Formation in Central Asia, Iran and Anatolia

From the beginning of the 10th century, nomadic Turkic and Iranian tribes had converted to Islam in large numbers and Islam became a source of legitimacy for any ruler in the region. For example, the Ghaznavids derived their legitimacy from being a governor under Samanid rule and being sanctioned by the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. However, the Qarakhanids, who were originally non-Muslim until Satuk Bughra Khan, were independent from the Caliphate. Accordingly, they represented the beginning of a new state formation and a new form of legitimacy. The Qarakhanid rulers claimed descent from Afrasiab (Turkic Alp Ær Tunga), a legendary hero from the Pre-Islamic Iranian legend which tells the story of struggles between the Iranians and Turanids.⁴ In the same way, the three brothers who established the Seljuk State came from the Khazar Empire, which collapsed after the wars with Kievan

³ Iraj Bashiri, *The Samanids and the Revival of the Civilization of Iranian Peoples* (Tehran: Irfon, 1998), 14.

⁴ Dmitri I. Tikhonov, *Хозяйство и общественный строй Уйгурского государства: X-XIV вв* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 98.

Rus' and Norman incursions.⁵ While for Khazar Qaghans who descended from the western branch of the Kōk Türk Qaghanate, the sources of legitimacy were *qut* and their descent from the Ashina tribe, the Seljuks who ruled over the Oghuz tribes derived their legitimacy from another pre-Islamic legendary character, Oghuz Qaghan. In fact, Sultan Sanjar of the Seljuk Empire claimed descent from Alexander the Great.⁶ These examples demonstrate a shift in the sources of legitimacy for sovereignty and forming a state.

Another innovation that brought a dramatic change to the political structure was the institution of the sultanate. Ghazali who was one of the most prominent scholars of his time suggested that the secular and religious authorities must be separated and the sultans should be able to rule with temporal authority in their respective areas.⁷ This was used for bringing about an end to at least the nominal temporal rule of the Caliph all over the Islamic lands and confine his authority to the religious area.

The third novelty brought about by this transition was the administrative structure of the areas previously ruled by the Caliphate. The Caliphate from its earliest times onwards pursued a policy of centralized governmental structure like those of the Roman Empire and the Sassanid Empire both of which conquered lands and adopted policies. In fact, the Umayyad dynasty which was centered in Syria, previously one of the most important Roman provinces, was influenced heavily by the Roman practices. Abbasid Caliphate which was established in the Eastern provinces of the previous Sassanid Empire moved to Kufa and later on to Baghdad, which was close to the previous Sassanid capital. Abbasid Caliphate employed mostly Persians and other Iranians as bureaucrats and consequently employed Persian administrative practices which were centralized, quite similar to the Roman practices.⁸

⁵ Andrew C.S. Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: A New Interpretation*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 26.

⁶ G. M. Kurpalidis, *Государство Великих Селджуков Официальные Документы Об Административном Управлении и Социально-Экономических Отношениях* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 32.

⁷ Carla L. Klausner, *The Seljuk Vezirate: A Study of Civil Administration, 1055-1194*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs 22 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 22.

⁸ Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 67.

The Qarakhanid state and Seljuk State, however, began as independent nomadic Turkic states. While the idea of *qut* which is similar to the Chinese idea of mandate of heaven (*tianming*) continued to be valid as a source of legitimacy among these newly converted Muslim rulers, as can be seen in their titles such as “kut almış oğlu” (meaning the son of he who has qut), these new states were different from previous nomadic states of the steppe areas such as the Türk Qaghanate, Turgish Khanate, Oghuz Yabgu State and others preceding them. First of all, while the nomadic steppe confederations or states mainly chose not to settle in sedentary areas and were content with only receiving annual tributes and different forms of taxes from the city-states of Tocharia, Transoxania and other areas in Central Asia, these new states not only settled down on these sedentary areas but also created dual administrative state structures that administered both the nomadic elements and the sedentary elements under their control. In fact, these states’ grip on the sedentary areas were stricter than on their nomadic elements.

Although these changes were not specific to states established by the Turkic peoples, the other states established by dynasties of Iranian origin such as the Saffarids, Samandis, Buyids, and Ghurids mostly followed the examples of the previous Persian and Islamic practices. Neither the Seljuks nor the Ghaznavids were the first states established by Turkic dynasties in areas not inhabited by a Turkic majority. The Toluids in Egypt, Jin, Later Han, and later Tang dynasties of the Five Dynasties era in China were also established by Turkic peoples. But what set the Seljuk, Ghaznavid, Qarakhanid, and later on Khwarazmian states apart from the previous ones was that there were large scale migrations by the Turkic tribes into the areas where these states were established or conquered. As a result, the rulers of these states found themselves obliged to meet the prerequisites of two different cultures for the legitimacy of their rule.

In sedentary cultures with an agricultural economy such as China, Iran, Egypt, or the Roman Empire, the majority of the population was tied to the land and mostly did not have the option to migrate as long as their situation was not too dire. Pastoralists, however, were more mobile and although tribes’ or a smaller groups’ pasture lands were strictly defined, if a group of people within a tribe or a smaller unit decided to leave and join another unit, it was difficult to

prevent them from doing so. As in the case of the Türk Qaghanate, they could even leave for a rival state such as China.⁹

While the imperial ideologies of both the sedentary and nomadic cultures shared similarities, there were certain differences in important details. In China, Iran, and the Roman Empire, dynastic changes were common. The bloodline ruling over the country was not considered to be sacred. Therefore, any person, regardless of their family background, could become an emperor or a ruler if he succeeded in battle, which was a significant sign that he received divine favor. In the nomadic empires, however, bloodlines were deemed as an important condition for the legitimacy of the ruler.¹⁰ The Türk Ashina clan and its branches continued to rule even after the dissolution of the second Türk Qaghanate until the 9th century. Both the Uighur and Khazar Qaghanates claimed to descend from the branches of the Ashina clan. In the same way, even long after they lost their power, the Jिंगgisid lineage continued to be a source of legitimacy as can be seen in the case of Amir Timur who could only adopt the title of Amir and ruled through a puppet Jिंगgisid ruler. In this respect, the Seljuk and Qarakhanid rulers had to demonstrate both divine (in this case Muslim) and a hereditary claim to be able to rule both sedentary and nomadic subjects.

This in a way explains the references to Islamic values and virtues attributed to the rulers and their titles -e.g. "the shadow of God on earth." Though Islamic in name, many titles were still Turkic in nature, e.g. *qut* was given by Tengri to the ruler- as well as their claims of descent from illustrious ancient lineages (Oghuz Qaghan and Afrasiab/Alp Ær Tunga). In the case of the Seljuks, Oghuz Qaghan was posthumously depicted as Muslim convert following the conversion of the Oghuz tribes into Islam as can be seen in the version of *Jami'ut Tavarikh*.¹¹

The same process took place in Anatolia where the settlement of the Turkic tribes, especially the Oghuz were very dense following

⁹ Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, 221 BC to AD 1757* (New York: Wiley, 1992), 59.

¹⁰ Erdoğın Merçil, *Selçuklularıda Hükümdarlık Alametleri (Signs of Rulership in the Seljuks)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2007), 29.

¹¹ Rashiduddin Fazlullah, جامع التواريخ (Tahran: Ktab inc., 2000), 37-49. Rashiduddin Fazlullah, "Jami'u't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles", trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, vol. 3, in *Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World: Persian Histories of the Mongol Dynasties* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2012).

the battle of Manzikert. The titles taken by the Seljuk rulers of Rum were actually of pre-Islamic Iranian origin such as Keyqawus, Keykhosraw, etc. This could be mainly due to the fact that the areas where the Seljuks of Rum ruled over were initially in the areas which had been a borderland area between the Roman and Sassanid Empires. Accordingly, the peoples living in these areas occasionally fell under the rule of one or the other empire. In this regard, the titles along with the claims of lineage seem to be changing during this period.

These states at the same time displayed a dual state structure. While the administration of the sedentary areas was conducted in a similar manner to the Persian examples, the nomads were governed by a different set of rules and institutions. Within the Seljuk Empire and the Seljuks of Rum, there were Divans which dealt with the workings of the central government.¹² Although the institution itself was Islamic in origin, when we have a look at the decrees issued in the Divan-i Kebir of the Seljuk State, we see that there are allusions to both Islamic and Persian symbols, and sometimes the use of these symbolisms, titles, phrases, and terminology reflect references to both but are actually aimed at the Turkic nomadic tribes.¹³ When the decrees concerned the nomadic subjects, the Sultan was referred to as “Shadow of the God on Earth,” whereas he was referred to as “he who holds the highest view” when the decree concerned a city.¹⁴ The Seljuk Sultans most probably did not want to act in the capacity of or replace the Abbasid Caliphs, therefore, the title “Shadow of the God on Earth” was most probably aimed at creating an image of having received *qut*, -the mandate to rule from God- as a continuation of the Turkic tradition. In the case of the Qarakhanids, this was even more stressed.

While these changes were taking place in the northern half of Central Asia and most of Iran and Anatolia, the second type of state formation was also taking place in the south. Beginning with the Ghaznavids, the so-called “*mamluk*” or slave dynasties began to be established by the *Ghulam* (military slaves). Mahmud of Ghazni, who was a former slave and a general in the Samanid army,

¹² Klausner, *The Seljuk Vezirate: A Study of Civil Administration, 1055-1194*, 57.

¹³ Kurpalidis, *Государство Великих Селджуков*, 60.

¹⁴ Songül Mecit, “*The Rum Seljuqs: Evolution of a Dynasty*”, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 86.

established a state in Ghazni, which quickly expanded as south as Lahore ruling over much of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and parts of Iran. A similar structure was also seen in Egypt as well and the later Delhi Sultanate which ended the Ghurid Dynasty was also a *Mamluk* dynasty. In the case of these *mamluk* dynasties, it was mostly the military which had nomadic origins. These people were originally brought in as military slaves into the army of a local dynasty, but they established a new state when the local dynasty weakened.

Members of the several Turkic tribes and other nomadic tribes such as the Alans had been either hired as mercenaries or bought as military slaves from the Black Sea ports in and around Crimea for centuries.¹⁵ But with the dissolution of the Khazar Qaghanate, as a result of the migration and replacement of different tribes, as well as intermittent wars between these tribes such as the Uz, Pecheneg, Qipchak, and others, there was an increase in numbers of war captives and the slave trade began to flourish in the region.¹⁶ The survival of these states depended on the cooperation between the local bureaucracy and the foreign military. Another crucial factor was the constant flow of new military slaves. While the Delhi Sultanate and the Mamluks of Egypt were successful in retaining their states, the Ghaznavids failed. However, this system was not sustainable in the long run. As a result, the hybrid states that emerged in Central Asia became the norm throughout Central, Inner, and West Asia.

In these states, there were two administrative and legal systems that coexisted sometimes within the same physical geography. Common law continued to be applied alongside Sharia and sometimes administrative decisions were also made in accordance with or in view of common law practices that preceded Islam and continued to be practiced among the pastoral nomads.¹⁷ In fact, this practice of dual legal systems continued into the modern times in the Ottoman Empire long after the dissolution of Seljuk and other nomadic dynasties. A similar development also took place in the

¹⁵ Charles J. Halperin, "The Kipchak Connection: The Ilkhans, the Mamluks and Ayn Jalut," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 63, no. 2 (2000): 98.

¹⁶ Bashiri, *The Samanids and the Revival of the Civilization of Iranian Peoples*, 76.

¹⁷ Salim Koca, *Selçuklu Devri Türk Tarihinin Temel Meseleleri (Basic Issues of the Seljuks Era Turkish History)* (Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi, 2011), 259.

Delhi Sultanate and much later the Mughal Empire in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and parts of Iran where peoples with different religious beliefs continued to exist until today.

The main aim of the dual legal and administrative structures was to integrate the nomadic tribes that migrated into agricultural and urban areas from the 10th century onward. Since most of these people were newly converted into Islam or were still in the process of conversion into Islam, a strict application of the Sharia law and central administrative practices as applied by the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties could easily cause resentment and rebellion. In fact, Sultan Sanjar was taken as a hostage by the Oghuz tribes and had to stay under confinement for three years between 1153-1156.¹⁸

These tribes did not only make up a huge bulk of the military, but they also had the capacity to act independently and in most cases, the Seljuk rulers in Central Asia and later on in Iran and Anatolia simply had to recognize their independent actions.¹⁹ For example, especially in Anatolia, whenever a Turkmen Beg conquered a new territory without authorization from the Sultan, his new conquest was often sanctioned as legal under the guise of Jihad.²⁰ Thus, the common law of these newly converted people was often allowed to be practiced in order to make a compromise and keep them under control. This was closely related to Qipchak and Pecheneg migrations and the chaotic situation to the north of the Caspian Sea that pushed some of the Oghuz westward while pushing the majority of the Oghuz tribes southwards into Central Asia.

Oghuz tribes first entered the northern parts of Central Asia and later on into Khorasan following the Seljuk victory in Dandanakan in 1040. In Khorasan, the Seljuk Sultans were not able to fully control these Oghuz tribes and as a result, directed them westwards. These events were in many ways resulting from the establishment of the Seljuk dynasty within the Oghuz Yabgu State during the 10th century and his conversion to Islam. He revolted in Jand but was beaten and had to escape to Khorasan with his followers. Later on, he defeated the last Oghuz Yabgu Ruler Malik Shah who also

¹⁸ Halil İbrahim Gök and Fahrettin Coşguner, *Tarih-i Âl-i Selçuk: Anonim Selçuknâme*, (Ankara: Atıf Yayınları, 2014), 87.

¹⁹ Yusuf Ayönü, *Selçuklular ve Bizans (The Seljuks and Byzantium)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), 49.

²⁰ Ayönü, *Selçuklular ve Bizans (The Seljuks and Byzantium)*, 48.

converted to Islam. The Qipchaq and Qarlug pressure drove the remaining Oghuz tribes westwards and southwards. As a result, the Seljuk state which was still in the process of the establishment had to settle down new waves of migrant Oghuz tribes, some of whom were not Muslim yet and in the process of conversion.

The problems caused by these migrations to the Seljuk Sultans who had to play two roles at the same time can be seen in the chronicles. While the Seljuk Sultans, as a branch of the Oghuz tribes claimed to be a part of and also the head of the Oghuz tribes, they had the role of a Muslim Sultan, as well. In fact, following their victory against the Buyids and their rescue of the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad in 1055 under the command of Tughrul Beg, they began acting as the leaders of the Islamic world. Unlike their predecessors, the Samanid and the Ghaznavids in Iran and Khorasan, the Seljuk were compelled to compromise on the needs of their nomadic subjects. While the Turks in Ghaznavid state were mainly the *Ghulam* who were previous slaves and did not retain a tribal organization or connection like the Mamluks in Egypt, the Turks under the Seljuk rule were bound to the Seljuk Sultan with tribal fealty which could be slippery if the Seljuk Sultan did not comply with their demands in the manner of a nomadic ruler.

These tensions created dual state structures in terms of administration. While these nomadic rulers were at the same time Muslim Sultans of sedentary states, they knew very well that they needed to rule and administer their nomadic subjects who could pose the greatest challenge to their authority with care. While on the outset, the administrative nomenclature was Perso-Arabic and the Seljuk State formation appeared to be an extension of the Abbasid State, the functions of the administrative apparatus were different in many ways.²¹ *Divan-i Kabir* in many ways acted both as the Abbasid and Persian court, but it also dealt with the daily problems of the nomadic tribes in a different way than the sedentary subjects.²² As a result, under *Divan-i Kabir*, there were other Diwans that were in name Perso-Arabic, but in terms of their functions, they had different characteristics.²³ The *Reis* and the *Shahnas* were often responsible

²¹ Kurpalidis, *Государство Великих Селджуков*, 74.

²² Kurpalidis, *Государство Великих Селджуков*, 74.

²³ Kurpalidis, *Государство Великих Селджуков*, 75.

for the administrative duties of the local tribes. While they could also be appointed to the agricultural areas as well, the cities were governed by *walis* (governors), and the provinces were under the jurisdiction of the Viziers.²⁴ The *reis* were chosen from among the prominent families of the localities where they were appointed in cases that the area was an agricultural or a commercial area, and the tribal leaders (*begs*) on the other hand were simply confirmed with a *farman* that designated them as the *reis* of their tribe after they were chosen to or inherited their seat.²⁵ The *Shahnas* were in many ways similar to the *darugachis* of the later Mongol Empire in terms of their functions within the tribes to which they were appointed. While the *reis* were selected from among the tribe (or the settlement if it was a settled area) the *shahnas* were appointed from the center. They were responsible for keeping the peace, supervising the collection of the taxes, writing reports to the court, and making sure that the tribe or the settlement where they were appointed to stayed loyal to the Seljuks. In this regard, they differed from the Abbasid Caliphate where the appointment of such personnel was delegated to the *walis* of the provinces. The other type of governors were the *amids*.²⁶ They were operating mostly in the sedentary areas and were responsible for the administration of urban and agricultural lands. However, this was not always necessarily a strict arrangement. For instance, Melikshah I appointed a *shahna* and an *amid* to Basra at the same time in 1078. The main reason for such appointments was the military operations continuing in this region: while the *shahna* was responsible for the military affairs and the security of the area, the *amid* was responsible for the governance of the important cities in the area.²⁷ This type of structure was maintained by the following Seljuk principalities in Anatolia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.²⁸

The Khwarazmshahs on the other hand was facing a different situation. After the dissolution of the Seljuk Empire following the battle of Qatwan in 1141, there were two major developments in Central Asia, Iran, and Anatolia. One was the ascendancy

²⁴ Klausner, *The Seljuk Vezirate: A Study of Civil Administration, 1055-1194*, 82.

²⁵ Merçil, *Selçuklularda Hükümdarlık Alametleri (Signs of Rulership in the Seljuks)*, 93.

²⁶ Klausner, *The Seljuk Vezirate: A Study of Civil Administration, 1055-1194*, 83.

²⁷ Müneccimbaşı Ahmet Bin Lütfullah, "Camiu'd-Düvel: Selçuklular Tarihi (The History of the Seljuks)", ed. Ali Öngül, vol. 2, *Şark Klasikleri Dizisi 16* (Istanbul: Kabalıcı Yayıncılık, 2017), 132.

²⁸ Refik Turan, ed., *Selçuklu Tarihi El Kitabı (Handbook on the History of the Seljuks)* (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2012), 171.

of the decentralized government in Central Asia due to the Khitan administrative structure. The other was the emergence of independent states in the region modeled after the Seljuk Empire.

A group of Khitans led by Yelü Dashi migrated west into Central Asia and Dzungaria following the overthrow of the Khitan Liao Dynasty in Manchuria, Northeast China, and Mongolia by the Jurchens. They have passed through Uighur and Mongol areas possibly thanks to their previous alliances with these states and groups in the region. In 1141, the Khitans won a victory against the Seljuks and the Khitan rulers were recognized as suzerains by the regional states in Central Asia as Gürkhans. Although Khitans were essentially a nomadic people with linguistic and cultural ties to the Mongols and Turks, they had culturally been significant to a certain extent after they adopted many of the Chinese practices as a result of acquiring thirteen Chinese provinces around modern-day Beijing. This acquisition alongside the previous conquest of the Korean Balhae Kingdom in southern Manchuria resulted in a Chinese cultural influence on the Khitan state structure. The Big Khitan script was modeled after the Chinese script, and many of the Chinese classics were translated into the Khitan language.

The other influential group within the Khitan state were the Uighurs. Nearly all of the Khitan rulers married girls from the Uighur Xiao clan who acted as the consort clan. This pattern was repeated by the Jurchens who married Korean and Balhae aristocrats and the Mongols who married girls from the Önggüd tribe. These marriage alliances had a deeper significance than merely political and military alliances between the tribes or clans. These marriage alliances were arranged between a militarily strong ruling clan or a tribe and a culturally strong elite who helped the military class to administer the country.

Although similar alliances were also seen between the Turks and Sogdians in the Türk Qaghanate, the Uighurs and the other Turkic tribes in the Qarakhanid State, Seljuk ruling class and the Persian aristocracy, these alliances were between the groups and were not formed as formal marriage alliances where all the rulers married from the same clan or tribe. The Ashina Türk tribe beginning from the second Qaghanate onwards formed marriage alliances with the

Ashide clan of the famous statesman Tonyukuk,²⁹ but this alliance was most probably not intended to be a systematic arrangement as in the case of the Khitans. This tradition seems to have influenced the other states after the Khitans since not only the Mongols but their predecessors both in East Asia (Jurchens) and in Central Asia, Iran and Anatolia seem to have continued it. The Seljuks of Rum formed marriage alliances with the Greek aristocracy in Anatolia,³⁰ whereas, in Central Asia, the Khwarazmians and the post-Seljuk states all systematically married with the local elite whose presence in the region not only predated the migrating groups who conquered these regions but also had greater experience in administrative structures of the region. This aspect of the inner politics of the region predating the Mongols has rarely been studied. Although there are books on the marriage policies and patterns of the Mongol Empire, studies on Qarakhanid, Seljukid and other region dynasties' marriage politics is rarely studied despite the similar patterns with East Asia.

These marriages brought various advantages to both parties. One obvious advantage was the military alliance between these families which enabled the ruling family to have a stronger grasp on a local level whereas the families marrying off their daughters to the ruling house gained a political advantage over their rivals within the court. The other, subtler, advantage was the employment of the family members from the consort clan who were well educated and could be trusted more both on a local level and in the court. As a result, these ruling families created state structures that reflected the alliances between the families of nomadic origin and their sedentary subjects. The clan networks of the sedentary families in Iran, Central Asia, and Anatolia made it possible for the new nomadic ruling elite to indirectly exert their power on the local level and these marriages also legitimized the ruling house in the eyes of the mostly Muslim and sedentary subjects who would otherwise condemn these nomadic groups as barbarians.

In this regard, the political marriages gave the nomadic rulers many advantages in both forming their new states in a more flexible

²⁹ Hiroshibushi Suzuki, “突厥トニユクク碑文筋記-斥候か逃亡者か [Tokketsu tonyukuku hibun sakki – Sekkō ka tōbō-sha ka: Türk Tonyukuk Inscription- A Spy or a Fugitive?],” 待兼山論叢 [*Machikaneyama ronsō: Machikaneyama Journal*], no. 42 (2008): 84.

³⁰ Ayönü, *Selçuklular ve Bizans (The Seljuks and Byzantium)*, 95.

way and gaining political popularity among the majority of their subjects without offending their nomadic subjects as in the case of early Seljuk struggles with the Oghuz tribes.

3. Conclusion

In the period beginning from the 10th century following the fall of the Abbasid power in Central Asia, nomadic powers quickly took hold of the region and new Muslim but nomadic dynasties emerged in the region. These new dynasties established states seemingly similar to the Abbasid Caliphate in terms of the nomenclature used for the institutions. However, both the functions and the mentalities of these institutions were fundamentally different from the Abbasid Caliphate. The tools and the roots of legitimacy were also different from the previous Abbasid and Umayyad rulers in the region albeit these states continued to recognize the Abbasid Caliph's authority. However, this recognition was mostly nominal and these new states used the Abbasid Caliph's religious authority to legitimize their temporal authority over their mostly sedentary and Muslim subjects.

The administrative and the legal systems of these states also displayed dual structures in order to cope with the needs of and the conflicts between their sedentary and nomadic subjects. The orfi law was used mostly for the nomadic tribes rather than the sharia law which was applied more commonly to the sedentary urban and agricultural areas. The administration of these states also had double administrative structures one of which was responsible for dealing with the nomads although the nomadic tribes were mostly autonomous in their internal affairs whereas diwan or a court was responsible for the sedentary population. Thus, there could be two sets of administrative and legal structures in one region at the same time, or if either a sedentary or a nomadic group was not existent in large numbers, only one set of administrative and legal structures could be applied in a certain region within these states.

This duality became the norm for the whole region until the early modern times when the gun powder empires emerged and the nomadic military power waned significantly in these regions.

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