

# Notes on the *Muhabbetname* of Xorezmi\*

Uli Schamiloglu

*While a doctoral student at Columbia University I had the privilege of spending the fall semester of 1982 as a visitor in the Department of Altaistics at Szeged University. It has been my privilege to know Éva Kincses-Nagy since those memorable days. I dedicate this article to Éva and her loves...*

## 0. Introduction

The *Muhabbetname* of Xorezmi is one of a small number of Islamic Turkic literary works which we can associate with the Golden Horde. As is well known, what we call today the ‘Golden Horde’ was the western-most state of the Mongol World Empire granted by Chinggis Khan (d. 1227) to his oldest son Jöchi. When Jöchi preceded his father in death, the *ulus* or ‘patrimony’ of Jöchi, which extended westward without limit from the pass at Lake Zaysan (present-day eastern Kazakhstan), was inherited by his sons Orda and Batu. Following the initial campaigns in these western territories in 1221–1223, Batu began the occupation and establishment of a state infrastructure in his patrimony in the mid-1230s. The state he established came to be known internally as the *Aq orda* ‘White Horde’, but today we refer to the *ulus* of Jöchi (or sometimes just the western half ruled by Batu and his successors) by the name ‘Golden Horde’, a problematic name which was used for the first time in a Russian source from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the features of the history of the Golden Horde is the rise of urban centers (Schamiloglu 2018b). Saray Batu and later Saray Berke served as capital, but the exact location of these two urban centers is still a subject of scholarly debate (Zilivinskaya – Vasil’ev 2016, 261–651; 2017, 637–649). What is far less controversial is that by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century the capital of the western White Horde became the center for a new Islamic Turkic cultural synthesis sponsored by the ruling élite at the court of the Golden Horde khan (Schamiloglu 2008). While apparently not written at the court of the Golden Horde ruler, the *Muhabbetname* of Xorezmi is an important example of

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this new Islamic Turkic civilization. As such, it is worthy of close attention both by Turkologists as well as by historians of the Golden Horde. I will take this opportunity to review the literature on this important work and offer a translation of relevant brief sections of this work. I will also comment on how one may understand several nuances hidden in couplets in this work from the perspective of the history of the Golden Horde.

## 1. The Literature of the Golden Horde

The number of literary works we can include under the rubric of the ‘literature of the Golden Horde’ is limited. An excellent survey is to be found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta* (Eckmann 1964). Generally, we may include in this list a small number of works written in Xorezm (which was an integral part of the territories of the Golden Horde until the late 14<sup>th</sup> century) and in Saray. The creation of the world and the stories of the prophets from Adam down to the Prophet Muhammad are the subject of Rabguzi’s *Qisas ül-enbiya*’ (1311) composed in Ribat-i Oğuz, perhaps along the Syr Darya. İslâm’s *Mu‘in ül-murid* (1313–1314), a handbook for Sufi aspirants, was also written in Xorezm. Qutb’s *Xusrev ü Shirin*, an adaptation of Nizami’s work in Persian by the same name, was composed at the court of Timbuk Khan (r. 1341–1342). The *Nehj ül-feradis: Ushtmaxlarnıň achuq yoli* by Mahmud b. ‘Ali Kerderi (1358/1360) is a handbook of Islam which may have been written either in Xorezm, where Kerder is located, or more likely in Saray, where the author apparently died on 22 March 1360. To the list of works we may also add Seyf-i Sarayı’s *Gülistan bi-t-türki* (1 September 1391) as an example of a work by somebody from Saray continuing the literary tradition of the court of the Golden Horde, but in Egypt. (Since the Golden Horde falls into anarchy following the death of Berdibek Khan in 1359, for me this is an outlier as a post-Golden Horde work.) To this list of four (or five) works representing the Islamic Turkic literature of the Golden Horde we must add the *Muhabbetname* or ‘Book of Love’ (AH 754/1353–1354 CE) by Xorezmi. For additional references for the literature of the Golden Horde see Schamiloglu (2008).

In addition to these Islamic Turkic works, there are of course works in other languages such as the *Codex Cumanicus*, a multi-lingual work on the language of the Christian Cumans put together by German and Italian missionaries (Ligeti 1981), the recently-published Persian-language theological work entitled the *Kalendarname* written during the reigns of Özbek Khan and Canibek Khan (Abū Bakr Kalandar Rūmī/Gibadullin – Shamsimuxametova), as well as scientific works in Arabic (İzgi 1996; Fazlıoğlu 2104).

## 2. The manuscripts of the *Muhabbetname*

The *Muhabbetname* of Xorezmi is known from a small number of manuscripts in Uyghur and Arabic scripts; I will return below to the question of whether the original work was most likely to have been written in Arabic or Uyghur script. The Arabic-script manuscript housed at the British Museum (Add. 7914) was first described by Rieu, who called the work on folia 290v–313v “(a)n erotic poem in Mesnevi verse, including eleven love-letters, by Khwārezmi” (Rieu 1888, 290). (Rieu described most love poems as ‘erotic poems’ in his *Catalogue*.) Gandjeï refers to this as manuscript **A** (Gandjeï 1954–56, 131), as does Nadjip (1961, 27n.). The text of this manuscript has been published in an edition by Nadjip (1961). The manuscript bears AH 914/1508–9 CE as the date when and Herat as the place where the *majmu'a* was compiled (Rieu 1888, 284). The manuscript may now be viewed on the website of the British Museum (<http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts>), with the text of the *Muhabbetname* beginning on folio 290v available at the following URL:

[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add\\_ms\\_7914\\_f290v](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_7914_f290v)  
(accessed: 8 March 2021).

The Uyghur-script manuscript, also housed at the British Museum (Or. 8193), was first identified by V.V. Bartol'd (1924, 1973) and later described in exquisite detail by Clauson (1928). The *Muhabbetname* is to be found on folia 159v, 160 (after which two folia containing approximately 36 couplets are missing), 161–169, 181, 171, and 178r (Clauson 1928, 114). The manuscript in which this version of the *Muhabbetname* is found includes three colophons for various works in this manuscript stating that they were completed in Yazd in the Year of the Mouse on AH 29 Rajab 835/29 November 1431; in the Year of the Mouse on AH 4 Sha'bān 835/4 December 1431; and in Yazd in the Year of the Mouse on 6 Rajab 835/6 November 1431. Fortunately for our purposes here the third colophon on folio 178r is from the manuscript of the *Muhabbetname*, so we can confirm that this work was copied in 1431 by Mansur Baxshı upon the order of Mir Jelal Din (Clauson 1928, 112–113). Gandjeï refers to this as manuscript **U** (Gandjeï 1954–56, 131), as does Nadjip (1961, 27n.). The text of this manuscript has been published in critical editions by Gandjeï (1954–56, 1957, 1959) and Shcherbak (1959). Unfortunately, I did not have access to Shcherbak (1959) for the purposes of this essay. This manuscript may also be viewed now on the website of the British Museum with the text of the *Muhabbetname* beginning on folio 59v available at the following URL:

[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or\\_8193\\_f159v](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_8193_f159v) (accessed: 9 March 2021).

Sertkaya has identified and published two additional partial manuscripts of the *Muhabbetname* (1972). In his study Sertkaya refers to the Arabic-script manuscript housed at the British Museum (Add. 7914) as **B** and the Uyghur-script manuscript

housed at the British Museum (Or. 8193) as **A** (1972, 185). The first of the new additional manuscripts, which was also cited by Eckmann (1964, 287), is found in the Millet Yazma Eseri Kütüphanesi (formerly the İstanbul Millet Kütüphanesi) in İstanbul (Arabî no. 86). It is in the form of Persian- and Turkic-language marginal notes to an Arabic-language *tafsîr*. The marginal notes include Hocendi's *Letafetname* on folia 91–98v. Folio 98v (also marked as page 194) is the same folio on which Xorezmi's *Muhabbetname-i türki* begins, continuing in the margins on folia 54r–57v (pages 105–112). Sertkaya identifies this manuscript as **C** (Sertkaya 1972, 186). The second is also found in the Millet Yazma Eseri Kütüphanesi in İstanbul (Ali Emîri, Manzum, no. 949). Sertkaya identifies this manuscript as **D**. Sertkaya offers a very thorough review of additional Turkish and foreign authors who have cited or included excerpts of this work in chrestomathies (including Kilisli Rifat, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, and other more recent authors). Except for the fact that in his view the copyist of **D** did not understand the text at times, Sertkaya considers that there are no major differences between **C** and **D** (Sertkaya 1972, 187).

The Millet Yazma Eseri Kütüphanesi is in the process of digitizing its collection, but these two manuscripts in the Ali Emiri collection are not yet digitized. The record for manuscript **C** is as below:

Archive number: 34 Ae Arabi 86/2  
 Title: Hâsiyetü Hidâye  
 Author Name: Cürcânî, Seyyid Şerif Ali b. Muhammed 740-816 H.  
 [şrh]  
 URL: <http://yazmalar.gov.tr/eser/hasiyetu-hidaye/184357> (accessed: 10 March 2021).

The record for manuscript **D** is:

Archive No: 34 Ae Manzum 949  
 Title: Muhabbetnâme  
 Author Name: Harizmî Haydar  
<http://yazmalar.gov.tr/eser/muhabbetname/190961> (accessed: 10 March 2021).

The manuscript labeled **C** by Sertkaya was also known to János Eckmann, as noted above. Eckmann died in 1971 (before the publication of Sertkaya's article) and his article on this manuscript was published posthumously (Eckmann 1987). In it he offers a study, edition, and translation into English of this fragment of the *Muhabbetname*.

### 3. Chronology, script & language of the *Muhabbetname*

The *Muhabbetname* has come down to us in parallel manuscripts in Arabic and Uyghur scripts. Gandjeï and Nadjip believe that the longer Arabic-script version is older (Gandjeï 1954–56, 132–133; Nadjip 1961, 16). Clauson (1962) takes a different approach, revealing how complicated the textual history of the *Muhabbetname* actually is in his view. He offers many reasons which I will not review here for believing that the book originally consisted of 10 *names* or ‘chapters’ (as stated explicitly in the work itself) of which 2 were subsequently lost and then later replaced by 3 *names* in Persian (one extra for good measure). He also proposes a revised numbering of the couplets. Clauson reconstructs the stemma of the manuscripts of the *Muhabbetname* as follows:

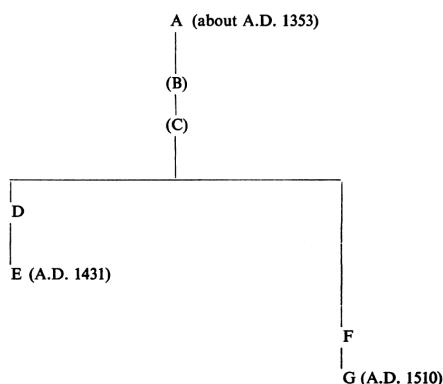


Figure source: Clauson (1962), 254–255.

- A. the author’s autograph ms.
- B. the ms. from which the 9th and 10th *names* were lost
- C. possibly the ms. to which a new conclusion was added
- D. the hypothetical damaged ms.
- E. Or. 8193
- F. the ms. which was altered and changed by the reviser
- G. Add. 7914

Clauson’s reconstruction, which is based on the approach of classicists (and familiar to scholars of medieval Russian literature as well), is not common in Turkology. For a discussion of constructing stemma for works in Ottoman Turkish, see for example Donuk (2018), Peaci (2019). I will follow below the reconstructed numbering of Clauson, who studied the *Muhabbetname* for almost half a century and whose astute observations and keen insights are well known to Turkologists. His suggestions in the case of the reconstruction of the text of the *Muhabbetname* are very

sensible and afford a much-improved reading and analysis of the various texts, especially in the translation of the ‘Introduction’ (Clauson 1962, 247–249) as well as in the ‘Dedication to Muhammed Xoja Bek’. Eckmann concludes that the fragments of the *Muhabbetname* contained in the manuscript which he studied (which is also one of the manuscripts studied by Sertkaya) are based on Clauson’s revised text F (Eckmann 1987, 102).

Following Clauson, then, let us examine briefly the case for considering the Uyghur-script manuscript in the British Museum (Or. 8193) as closer to the original. One reason is that it is closer to the original composition of the autograph, despite damage to it. A second reason is that it is also closer in time to the autograph. As Clauson considers the Persian *names* to be later additions, this itself is a basis for not considering the Uyghur-script manuscript to be defective solely for being shorter. Of course, Clauson (and therefore those who agree with him) may one day be proven wrong through the discovery of additional manuscripts revealing a different textual history.

This leads to several additional issues, the first of which is the script in which the autograph was written. As a Turkologist and student of the history of the Golden Horde, I have no doubt that the *Muhabbetname* (1353–4) was originally written in the Arabic script. This would be the same as the *Qisas ül-enbiya*’ (1311), the *Mu‘in ül-murid* (1313–1314), Qutb’s *Xusrev ü Shirin* (1341–1342), and the *Nehj ül-feradis: Ushtmaxlarnıj achuq yoli* (1358/1360), as well as the outlier *Gülistan bi-t-türki* (1391). There is absolutely no basis in my view for suggesting that this work might have been written in the Uyghur script in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, since we hardly have any Mongolian-script texts from the western territories of the Golden Horde (i.e., the *Aq orda* or ‘White Horde’) in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Poppe 1941).

The second issue is the disruption in the production of literary works. I believe that with the sudden disappearance of acquired literary traditions in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century – including Nestorian Turkic in Syriac script, Volga Bulgharian, the language of the Golden Horde (also known by Turkologists as Khwarezmian Turkic), and Old Anatolian Turkish – we can observe their replacement by new vernacular-based languages (Schamiloglu 1991, 2004, 2008, 2012). As I have argued elsewhere, I believe that this disruption is a direct result of the Black Death of the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century (Schamiloglu 1993, 2017). After the death of the author of the *Nehj ül-feradis: Ushtmaxlarnıj achuq yoli*, there are no new works written in these languages until the beginning of the revival of the Islamic Turkic literary language in Central Asia in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, culminating eventually in ‘Ali Shir Navai’s elevation of this language.

This also explains some of the differences in language between the Arabic-script and Uyghur-script versions. On the use of the Uyghur alphabet in this manuscript see Clauson (1928, 110–112). The linguistic features of the various manuscripts of the work have already been the focus of much attention (Eckmann 1987, 102–103). In some cases, the Uyghur-script version seems to be closer to the pronunciation of the time, with the first word in the title of the poem written as though the form were

[*muhabbät~ muxabbät*] with the first vowel rounded instead of an unrounded vowel closer to the etymologically correct Arabic *mahabbat*. The Uyghur-script version also has Chaghataisms (or Uyghurisms?), which is to be expected in a later text (Clauson 1962, 245–246).

A final issue is why we see a revival in the use of the Uyghur alphabet, as evidenced for example by the *yarlıq* of Toqtamish Khan (late 14<sup>th</sup> century), one manuscript of the *Qutadǵu bilig*, the *Mi<sup>c</sup>rajname*, other works, and yes, the *Muhabbetname* itself. There has been some discussion regarding the ‘renaissance’ of the Uyghur script beginning in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century (Clauson 1962, 243; Peacock 2018). I offer a different explanation: because of the far greater impact of the Black Death and recurring waves of plague on the territories of the ‘White Horde’ versus the eastern territories (*Kök orda* or ‘Blue Horde’) of the Golden Horde, we see the migration of populations from the eastern territories under Toqtamish Khan to the western territories which were no doubt severely depopulated (Schamiloglu 2018a).

In a similar vein, I see the revival of the Uyghur script as a result of the in-migration of scribes trained in writing in the Uyghur script (and/or reading out loud texts written in that script?) from eastern territories, perhaps even from as far away as Eastern Turkistan where the Uyghur script was commonly used for civil documents. That would be proxy evidence for arguing that the further east you go, the less the class of educated people who could serve as scribes was affected, but of course they were literate in Uyghur script rather than in the Arabic script. No doubt they were either attracted by opportunities in the west or pressed into service to fill the void presented by the collapse of the class of educated people who could serve as scribes (and/or reciters?) for Arabic-script texts. As the population in the more westerly territories began to rebound (beginning in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century?), eventually the number of individuals trained in writing and/or reciting texts in Arabic script would become sufficient for the Uyghur script to fall once again into disuse in Central Asia and points further west, including the territories of the successor states to the Golden Horde.

Given all these considerations, British Museum Add. 7914 in Arabic script should be excluded from consideration as the source for British Museum Or. 8193 based upon content and length, including the addition of three Persian-language *names*. The Uyghur-script text, parallel to the case with the *Qutadǵu bilig*, is most likely a later copy based upon an earlier Arabic-script text which also reflects the loss of two original *names* and other damage and subsequent revisions as suggested by Clauson. The circumstances surrounding this also fit neatly within the framework for the understanding of the rise of vernacular languages and the parallel ‘renaissance’ in the use of the Uyghur script in Central Asia in the century following the Black Death of the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century and later.

#### 4. The *Muhabbetname* and the Golden Horde

According to couplet 437 Xorezmi composed this work on the banks of the Sir, but Clauson does not believe that this couplet was included in the autograph (Clauson 1962, 252). Xorezmi did so at the request of his patron, who wished to have Xorezmi's sweet verses available in his own language: *tilär män kim bizig til birlä päyda, kitabi äyläsäj bu qish qatimda* (couplet 36 in the editions by Gandjeï and Nadjip; couplet [C35] in Clauson's revised numbering), see Clauson's translation (below). It was created in the Islamic Turkic literary language of the Golden Horde approximately a dozen years after the creation of Qutb's *Xusrev ü Shirin*.

Xorezmi, the author of the *Muhabbetname*, has already been discussed by the scholars whom I have cited and need not be reviewed here (Gandjeï 1957, 135–139; Sertkaya 1972, 188–189). As noted by earlier scholars, Xorezmi's patron is Muhammed Xoja (Bek), who is mentioned in the work itself in couplets 64, 90, 102, 166, 172, 430(U)/428(A); in Clauson's revised numbering couplets 51, 77, [added later], 151, 162, 293; see also couplet 131 (Sertkaya 1972) and couplet 66 (Eckmann 1987). Xorezmi stated explicitly that he expected to be rewarded with a gift, see my translation of [C68] (81).

Two sections in the beginning of the *Muhabbetname* are of special interest with respect to the history of the Golden Horde. The first section is the 'Introduction'. I can do no better than reproduce Clauson's translation of the revised numeration of the 'Introduction', except that I use his revised numbering in [brackets] (his article uses the enumeration found in manuscripts A and U). I have also lightly edited the punctuation and the transcription (Clauson 1962, 249):

##### 'Introduction'

[C19] (20) Yesterday evening when the moon of Bayram appeared,  
Muhammad Xoja Bek, the phoenix of might,

[C20] (21) issued his orders; the royal pavilion and tent were erected, wine  
cups were brought, and the guests were seated.

[C21] (22) A singer, tuning his lute to the *Husaynī* mode, sang the following  
*gazal*.

[C22-31] (23-32) [Persian *gazal* (not translated)]

[C32] (33) He [*i.e.*, Muhammad Xoja Bek] smiled and said, "You, whoever  
you are (*ay fulānī*), bring us a suitable gift.

[C33] (34) There are many of your jewels in the sea of the heart, and your  
Persian books are all over the world.

[C34] (35) You have beaten everyone at the game of love and captivated the  
world with your sugared tongue.

[C35] (36) I wish you to compose a book in our language this winter by my  
side,

[C36] (37) for the fleeting days pass like the wind, and I should like a gift from us to remain in the world."

[C37] (38) I agreed, kissed the ground and said, "Your Majesty, the earth of your threshold is a lordly court.

[C38] (39) I will do you all the service that is in my power and spread your fame throughout the world."

[C39-47] (51-59) [Turkish *gazal* (not translated)]

[C48] (60) I have begun my book, may it reach its end, and may the *Muhabbatname* reach Egypt and Syria.

[C49] (61) I have issued a general invitation to my entertainment and composed the *Muhabbatname* in ten *names*.

[C50] (63) But first of all I speak praises of the Bek and begin my words with them."

Clauson believes that couplet 62 was added only much later to account for the new *names* in Persian, for which reason he did not include it in his translation. It may be translated: 'I will add two chapters in Persian, since he who knows a lot will get a robe of *atlas* cloth.'

The 'Description' (*sifät*) (U) or 'Praise' (*mädh*) (A) of Muhammed Xoja Bek is offered in couplets 64–102 (Gandjeï and Nadjip's enumeration). According to Clauson we should read these in the order 64–66, 68, 67, 69–83 (couplets 51–70 in Clauson's revised numbering), then 84–101 (71–88 in Clauson's revised numbering). I offer a modest English translation of this section (following Clauson's revised numbering) on the basis of the Uyghur-script text (U) for the benefit of historians of the Golden Horde:

'In Praise of Muhammed Xoja Bek'

[C51] (64) Oh lion-hearted one, relative of the khan (*xan uruğı*), you have been greatest of the great since a young age!

[C52] (65) Muhammed Xoja Bek, the pride of the world, the source of happiness and the treasure of fortune.

[C53] (66) At first the realm was lifeless without you, you are the son of a female relative of emperor Janı Khan (\**Janibek xanǵa\** *yegän siz*).<sup>1</sup>

[C54] (68) You are a Solomon-like padishah, you have the breath of Jesus and the face of Joseph.

[C55] (67) Your troops strengthen the religion, you give the treasury of Feridun to the poor.

[C56] (69) Your horse surpasses the dawn wind when it runs, your name conquers the world like the sun.

<sup>1</sup> My translation is based upon an emended reading of the second line in the original text. See the discussion of this problematic couplet below.

[C57] (70) If it takes Hātim-i ṭay a thousand years to revive, he would (leap up and) kiss the earth just upon hearing your name.

[C58] (71) You are a good omen for the state, Jupiter is a slave to your figure.

[C59] (72) You administered (*tuttuy*) an entire patrimony (*ulus*) by the strength of your reason, in battle blood drips from the tip of your horsewhip.

[C60] (73) Munificence and generosity are always your habit, bravery is always your way.

[C61] (74) Sometimes Hātim would be ashamed at feast, sometimes Rustem would get tired in battle.

[C62] (75) When two rows face off in battle, know that your troops' arrows roar like the thunder.

[C63] (76) They enter battle like entering a wedding feast, but they attack like a hungry wolf attacking a sheep.

[C64] (77) If were I to call you the Hidden Imam (*māhdi*), you are worthy of it, you mow down the ranks with your sword.

[C65] (78) If a scribe in Heaven were to write your praise, even one-thousandth of it could not be written in one hundred years.

[C66] (79) Eternally over the sky like Mercury in writing and Venus in singing,

[C67] (80) May your power shine like the sun, may the seven climes be your slave.

[C68] (81) Always be generous with your gifts, so that your servant Xorezmi sings your praise.

[C69] (82) Let me weave a special kind of *atlas* cloth so that I may recite spring-like verses in the middle of winter,

[C70] (83) So that the building for your feast is heaven, and the air of your heaven's garden is always spring.  
(*gazal*)

[C71] (84) The cup was passed in this very garden, drink the pleasant wine amidst the fragrance.

[C72] (85) The caretaker of the grass, the dawn breeze, spread the scent of roses in the garden.

[C73] (86) Spring has sprung, and (the time when) the Josephs in the grass [*i.e.*, flowers] were in prison has passed.

[C74] (87) The petals of the flowers have fallen to the ground, like cornelians in a mine.

[C75] (88) Oh flower of heaven, come out in the grass, do not remain inside the palace!

[C76] (89) Hear the words of your servant, oh Bek, even though we are not worthy.

[C77] (90) Muhammed Xoja Bek, who like 'Alī makes great twists and turns in battle.

[C78] (91) When his arrow strikes an anvil, the tip will become even sharper in the anvil.

[C79] (92) Oh Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction, whose enemies swim in blood from your sword!

[C80] (93) May the Creator grant you, my Bek, many years of life to come!

[C81] (94) There is no one else like you, in Iraq, Rum, or Canaan.

[C82] (95) Xorezmi's mind has left his body, all that remains is the image with no life inside.

(*presentation of the poet*)

[C83] (96) Oh youth, drink wine and eat sweetmeats, from this day forward live another one hundred fifty years!

[C84] (97) Live in good cheer, happiness, and revelry, cloud your reason with wine!

[C85] (98) These times are very uncertain, the world is not eternal for anyone.

[C86] (99) Show compassion and concern for your patrimony (*ulus*), always be happy and prosperous!

[C87] (100) Your good name has absolutely conquered the world, may God protect you from the evil eye!

[C88] (101) Your wretched servant has made prayers for your soul with love (*muhabbät*), may (God) grant them! Amen.

Clauson does not believe the final couplet (102) to have been a part of the original autograph of the work, it may be translated: 'I have finished the praise of Muhammed Xoja Bek, I have composed the *Muhabbetname*.'

While there are numerous minor differences between the two manuscripts **U** and **A**, I will only treat some of them, including variant readings which have significance from the perspective of the history of the Golden Horde. In comparing my translations with those of earlier scholars, it will become clear in some cases the earlier translations and commentaries of 'In Praise of Muhammed Xoja Bek' would not enable a historian of the Golden Horde to glean much information of significance.

In couplet [C51] (64) in **U** Muhammed Xoja Bek is simply referred to as being a 'relative of the khan' (*xan uruğı*). This can be translated several different ways, as of the 'seed of the khan' or 'descended from the khan'. The term *uruğ* originally meant 'seed' but also came to be used in medieval sources for 'relative, etc.' (Clauson 1972, 214–215). In modern Kazakh, one speaks of the tribal system of the Kazakhs using the compound *ruw-taypa* (< Arabic *tā'ifa*). It would be a mistake, however, to speak of him as belonging to the 'tribe of the khans' based on the term *xan uruğı*.

In contrast, Muhammed Xoja Bek is called the leader of the Qongrat tribe in the alternate version in **A**: 'Oh lion-hearted, of the Qongrat tribe (*Qoygrat uruğı*), you have been greatest of the great since a young age' (Nadjip 1961, 32). I would very much like for this to be the authentic text in the autograph, but we cannot be sure. Clauson considers that *arslan yüräklik xan uruğı* in **U** is "hardly grammatical" and that it was changed later in **A** to *arslan yüräk Qongrat uruğı*, perhaps because the

memory of his having been a member of the Qongrat tribe was beginning to be forgotten (Clauson, 1928, 115; Clauson 1962, 250).

As I have noted many times, I believe that the Qongrats were one of the four ‘ruling tribes’ in the Golden Horde, each one of which was led by an *ulus bek* (Schamiloglu 2020, 298). In this case Muhammed Xoja Bek, whom Ibn Battūta identifies in the 1330s as the governor of Azaq (Ibn Battūta/Gibb: 476, 479), is likely to have been leader of the Qongrat ‘ruling tribe’ in this period. As such he would have no doubt been married to a female relative of the khan, and probably also been descended himself from the female relative of an earlier khan (Schamiloglu 2020, 301–303). He would not have been the son of a khan, though (cf. Ramzī and Köprülü below). If he were the leader of the four *ulus beks*, then he would have been the *bekleri bek*, perhaps even from a tender age. That would also explain the second line in couplet [C51] (64): ‘you have been greatest of the great since a young age!’.

In couplet [C53] (66) the second line reads *shahanshah Jani xan mülkin yegän siz*. Gandjeï translates this as “siete voi che assestate il regno di Ğanī Han imperatore” [in English: ‘it is you who administered (*yegän*) the reign of emperor Jani khan’]. Gandjeï translates *ye-* as ‘assestare’ [in English: ‘to administer, organize, etc.’] (1959, 102), but there does not appear to be any lexical basis for this definition. This definition would, however, be accurate if Muhammed Xoja Bek was indeed the chief of the four *ulus beks*, the *beklileri bek*. In this case he may have been responsible for the installation of Janibek Khan as khan (one possible nuance) and for governing his realm (another possible nuance). In couplet [C53] (66) in A, the variant of the second line reads: *shahanshah Janibek xanga yetän siz* ‘you have reached (*yetän*) Emperor Jani Khan’ (Nadjip 1961, 32), which Nadjip translates as “O ti, naxodyashchiysya v rodstve s shaxinshaxom Djaniibekom” [in English: ‘Oh you who are related to shahanshah Janibek’], meaning that he is ‘related’ (*yetän*) to the khan (Nadjip 1961, 74). (Is *yetän* here an Oghuzism?) I have already noted above that Muhammed Xoja Bek’s mother was likely to have been the relative of a Chinggisid, but he would not have been the direct descendant of a male Chinggisid through the father’s line (Schamiloglu 2020). In this case U would be correct contextually if we were to translate *yegän* as ‘administered’, but there is no basis for such a meaning. The line in A is not necessarily incorrect, but it seems to be an awkward reiteration of the earlier ‘relative of khans’ (*xan urugı*) in couplet [C51] (64).

I would like to propose an alternative solution to reading these two variants of the second line of couplet [C53] (66):

(U) *shahanshah Jani xan mülkin yegän siz.*  
 (A) *shahanshah Janibek xanga yetän siz.*

Rather than reading *ye-* as a hapax legomenon, which is apparently what Gandjeï is doing, what if the word in the autograph is actually *yegän* ‘the son of a younger sister or daughter’ (Clauson 1972, 912–913)? If the rest of the second line in A is correct, this would fit within the system of relations between the khan and the tribal

leaders. In that case Muhammed Xoja Bek is the son of a female relative of the khan married to his father, who was probably tribal leader before him. In that case the emended text would read *\*shahanshah Janibek xanǵa yegän siz*. (I cannot offer any other sound philological justification for this emendation, however.) My translation reflects this emended reading, but the resulting translation is more or less the same as Nadjip's translation of this second line of the couplet in A. My translation simply goes beyond Nadjip to specify that Muhammed Xoja Bek is related as *yegän* 'the son of a female relative'.

In couplet [C59] (72) the term *ulus* 'patrimony' has been rendered as 'people' in some translations, but since Muhammed Xoja Bek really was one of the four main tribal leaders – even the chief of the four since a young age as stated explicitly in couplet [C51] (64) – it makes sense to translate *ulus* not as 'people', but as 'patrimony', perhaps even the *ulus* of Jöchi (or just the *Aq orda* 'White Horde' of Janibek Khan?) which he 'held' (*tuttup*), see Clauson (1972, 451). I understand the verb *tut-* as meaning that he 'held (power)', 'administered', or 'governed' as *bekleri bek*, or leader of the *ulus beks*. The term *ulus* occurs again later in couplet [C86] (99) when Muhammed Xoja Bek is asked to show compassion and concern for his 'patrimony' (*ulus*).

In couplet [C64] (77) in U Muhammed Xoja Bek is called the 'Hidden Imam' (*mähdi*), whereas in A he is likened instead to 'Rustem'. There is no way to know which might have been used in the autograph. In couplet [C77] (90) there is a mention of 'Alī, so mention of the *Mahdī* also known for his famous sword *Dū l-faqar* (*Zülfikar*) is not out of place in this couplet. Even so, references to characters from the *Shāhnāme* are for more frequent throughout the poem, for which reason 'Rustem' in A can also have been the original form.

In couplet [C68] (81) in U Xorezmi states: 'Always be generous with your gifts, so that your servant Xorezmi sings your praise (*sena*).'<sup>1</sup> In A it is so that Xorezmi reads 'prayers' (*du'a*), with the order of the lines reversed as well. There is also quite a divergence in the text couplet [C76] (89) between U and A. 'Hear the words of your servant, oh Bek, even though we are not worthy' in U is replaced by 'Let us drink to the health of our Bek, even though we are not worthy' in A. It seems that U preserves a better sense of the power differential between the chief of the tribal leaders and a humble yet distinguished poet.

Finally, I believe that the reference in couplet [C85] (98) to the uncertainty of the 'times' (*zamana*, which may also be rendered as 'period, era') can be understood as an oblique reference to the threat posed by disease in this period for Azaq specifically, for it is in spring 1346 that the plague spread from Tana (Azaq) to Kaffa and then on to Constantinople, the Middle East, and Europe (Schamiloglu 2004; Grinsberg 2018; Barker 2021). As noted earlier, Azaq was the territory governed by Muhammed Xoja Bek.

Details surrounding Muhammed Xoja Bek's identity and historical role have been the subject of serious misinterpretations in earlier scholarship, beginning with Rieu's wildly speculative misidentification of him (1884, 290). Köprülü refers to Muhammed

Xoja Bek (basing himself upon Ramzī) as *hanzade* or ‘prince’ as though he were the son of the khan. Ramzī does indeed refer to him as *ahad min abnā’ al-xawānīn* ‘one from among the sons of the khans’, but he also refers to him as *al-amīr Muhammād xwāja* ‘the emir Muhammed Xoja’ (Ramzī 1908, i, 555–556; Köprülü 1976, 175n). Gandjeï writes, following Köprülü, that Muhammed Xoja Bek was to be identified with the Xan-zade Muhammed Xoja Bek who was sent by Berdibek Khan (1357–1359), son of Janbek Khan, to Prince Ivan (1353–1359) in Moscow (Köprülü 1976, 175n; Gandjeï 1957, 137). (This would be Grand Duke Ivan II ‘the Fair’.) Even Clauson, misquoting Gandjeï, describes him as the ambassador of Timbek Khan (r. 1341–1342) (*sic*) at the court of Ivan the Terrible (*sic*) in Moscow in 1353–1359 (Clauson 1962, 249).

A more accurate account would be that in 1358 ‘an ambassador from the Horde, the son of the khan of the Horde’, Muhammed Xoja (Маматъ Хожа~Мамотъ Хожа~Мамат-Хожи), arrived in Ryazan’ to discuss the partition of territories, with Gorskiy supporting the view that Muhammed Xoja arrived in Ryazan’ without the knowledge of the khan (Gorskiy 2016, 74). It would have been consistent with the role of someone in the role of leader of the *ulus beks*, the *bekleri bek*, to have external relations. As such he would have been a tribal leader rather than the son of the khan, which reflects a misunderstanding of his position by the Russian chronicler. Ramzī adds that after this episode Muhammed Xoja was killed upon his return to the Horde (Ramzī 1908, i, 556).

The final issue I would like to raise is why the creation of this work was requested by Muhammed Xoja Bek. While I have already noted that this work was composed during a time of pandemic, I would hesitate to argue that the *Muhabbetname* was a pious work reflecting increased religiosity in response to the pandemic. That explanation makes sense as the motivation behind the Persian-language *Kalendarname* or the *Nehj ül-feradis: Ushtmaxlarniy achuq yoli*. This motivation also makes sense for works composed elsewhere in the Islamic Turkic world in this period such as the *Vesilet ün-nejat* by Süleyman Chelebi (ca. 1411). The *Muhabbetname* really does seem to be about romantic love, wine, and the beauty of the Beloved, rather than about religious piety or morbidity. It is only through the esoteric approach of Islamic mysticism that one might endeavor to explain the figurative imagery in this work in religious terms.

In conclusion, the *Muhabbetname* reveals intricacies of meaning like pearls of wisdom to the Turkologist when viewed simultaneously through the lens of the history of the Golden Horde.

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