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The Term *Turkī Khālīš* in Mamluk Sources

INTRODUCTION

We have all enjoyed and benefited from Reuven Amitai's extensive studies exploring the relationship between the Mamluks and their Mongol neighbors.¹ In several of his studies, Amitai also discussed the phenomenon of mamluks of Mongol origin. In his article "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role in Early Mamluk Political Life,"² he discussed in detail the lives of several Mongol mamluks during the early Mamluk period, expanding on David Ayalon's preliminary and cursory observations on this phenomenon.³ It is, therefore, appropriate that we further discuss the mamluks of Mongol origin in the Mamluk Sultanate in a volume compiled to honor Amitai's scholarship and achievements.

While several scholars have touched on or discussed in detail the phenomenon of mamluks of Mongol origin during the early Mamluk period (roughly 648–741/1250–1341),⁴ mamluks of Mongol origin during later periods have hard-

¹See, for example, Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995); idem, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turnhout, 2013); Reuven Amitai, *The Mongols in the Islamic Lands: Studies in the History of the Ilkhanate* (Aldershot, 2007).

²Reuven Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role in Early Mamluk Political Life," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2008): 119–37. For other studies by Amitai touching on Mongol mamluks, see, for example, idem, "The Mongol Occupation of Damascus in 1300: A Study of Mamluk Loyalties," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Amalia Levanoni and Michael Winter (Leiden, 2004), 21–41; idem, "A Mongol Governor of al-Karak in Jordan? A Re-examination of an Old Document in Mongolian Arabic," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 36 (2007): 263–75; Amitai-Preiss, "Northern Syria between the Mongols and Mamluks: Political Boundary, Military Frontier, and Ethnic Affinities," in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700–1700*, ed. Naomi Standen and Daniel Power (New York, 1999), 128–52; idem, "Echoes of the Eurasian Steppe in the Daily Culture of Mamluk Military Society," *Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society* 26, nos. 1–2 (2016): 262, 269.

³See, most conspicuously, David Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Re-examination (Part C1)," *Studia Islamica* 36 (1972): 124–26; idem, "Mamlūk: Military Slavery in Egypt and Syria," in *Islam and the Abode of War* (Aldershot, 1994), 2:7–9.

⁴See, for example, Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 126–28; idem, "Notes on Aitamiš, a Mongol Mamlūk," in *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann (Beirut, 1979), 387–401; idem, "Circassians," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*,



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ly received scholarly attention.⁵ This must be mostly due to the decline in the number of Mongol mamluks after the early period,⁶ but it is also due to terminological difficulties. The two main labels in Mamluk sources that were, in all likelihood, used in the early period to refer exclusively or largely to mamluks of Mongol origin (or mamluks who arrived from Mongol Central Asia or were

ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York, 1983), 399; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (London, 1986), 91–92; Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Ashqar, *Salār, al-Amīr al-Tatarī al-Muslim nā’ib al-salṭanah al-Mamlūkīyah fī Miṣr (660–710 H/1260–1310 M)* (Cairo, 2000); Koby Yosef, “Ethnic Groups, Social Relationships and Dynasty in the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517)” (Ph.D. diss., University of Tel-Aviv, 2011) [in Hebrew]; idem, “Cross-Boundary Hatred: (Changing) Attitudes towards Mongol and ‘Christian’ Mamlūks in the Mamluk Sultanate,” in *The Mamluk Sultanate from the Perspective of Regional and World History: Economic, Social, and Cultural Development in an Era of Increasing International Interaction and Competition*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Stephan Conermann (Göttingen, 2019), 149–72; idem, “The Names of the Mamlūks: Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Solidarity in the Mamluk Sultanate (648–922/1250–1517),” in *Egypt and Syria under Mamluk Rule: Political, Social and Cultural Aspects*, ed. Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2022), 59–94; Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks (XIIIe–XVIIe siècle): Une expérience du pouvoir dans l’islam medieval* (Seuil, 2014), 32–41, 160–73; Amir Mazor, *The Rise and Fall of the Muslim Regiment: The Maṣṣūriyah in the First Mamluk Sultanate, 678/1279–741/1341* (Bonn, 2015), 33–40; idem, “*Sayf al-Dīn Qipchaq al-Maṣṣūrī: Defection and Ethnicity between Mongols and Mamluks*,” in *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants and Intellectuals*, ed. Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, and Francesca Fiaschetti (Oakland, 2020), 102–19; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Careers in Diplomacy among Mamluks and Mongols, 658–741/1260–1341,” in *Mamluk Cairo, a Crossroads for Embassies: Studies on Diplomacy and Diplomatics*, ed. Frédéric Bauden and Malika Dekkiche (Leiden, 2019), 265, 278; Josephine van den Bent, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes: Representing Ethnic Others in the Medieval Middle East” (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 2020), 207–60; idem, “Mongols in the Mamluk Sultanate,” in *The Mongol World*, ed. Timothy May and Michael Hope (London, 2022), 855–64; and see also Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995), 132, 289; idem, “The Changing Concept of Mamlūk in the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria,” in *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, ed. Toru Miura and John Edward Philips (London, 2000), 95–96; Nobutaka Nakamachi, “The Rank and Status of Military Refugees in the Mamluk Army: A Reconsideration of the *Wāfidiyah*,” *MSR* 10, no. 1 (2006); Jo Van Steenbergen, “Caught between Heredity and Merit: The Amir Qūṣūn and the Legacy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (d. 1341),” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 78, no. 3 (2015): 6; Ishayahu Landa, “Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the Thirteenth to the Early Fifteenth Centuries: Two Cases of Assimilation into the Muslim Environment,” *MSR* 19 (2016); Hannah Barker, *That Most Precious Merchandise: The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves, 1260–1500* (Philadelphia, 2019), 50.

⁵For a discussion of Mongol (or Central Asian) mamluks during the later period, see Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 173–80. On mamluks from Central Asia in the later period, see Michal Biran, “The Mamluks and Mongol Central Asia,” in *The Mamluk Sultanate from the Perspective of Regional and World History: Economic, Social, and Cultural Development in an Era of Increasing International Interaction and Competition*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Stephan Conermann (Göttingen, 2019), 375.

⁶See Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 171–72; idem, “The Names of the Mamlūks,” 92.



annexed to the Mongol Khanates of the East)—namely *Mughul* (sing. *Mughulī*) or *Tatar* (sing. *Tatarī*)—would later fall out of use in this context (in the case of *Mughul*) or gradually shift semantically (as happened with *Tatar*).⁷ This article makes a modest contribution to the discussion of mamluks of Mongol origin (or mamluks from [Timurid] Central Asia) during the later period of the Mamluk Sultanate by examining the term *Turkī khālīṣ* (“a pure Turk”) in Mamluk sources.

Half a century ago, Ayalon noted that whereas al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) and other Mamluk historians mention that Aytamush al-Muḥammadī (d. 736/1336), a Mamluk amir of Mongol origin, was knowledgeable in the Mongols’ language (*kāna yaʿrifu bi-al-Mughulī lisānan wa-kitābatan/yaʿrifu bi-lisān al-Mughul*),⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470), who paraphrased (and distorted) al-Ṣafadī’s text, says that Aytamush was proficient in Mongolian and adds that “the Mongol language is the pure Turkish” (*kāna yaʿrifu bi-al-Mughulī wa-huwa al-Turkī al-khālīṣ*).⁹ Ayalon stated that Ibn Taghrībirdī had attempted to show off his knowledge but “his assertion about the Mongol language is without foundation.”¹⁰ Somewhat later, Donald Little noted that when Ibn Taghrībirdī wrote that “the Mongol language is pure Turkish,” he “was speaking out of ignorance.”¹¹ Even if Ibn Taghrībirdī’s comment is linguistically unfounded, however, we should not ignore the possibility that some Mamluk authors used the expression “pure Turk/pure Turkish” (*Turkī khālīṣ*) as equivalent to “Mongol.” In fact, Joo-Yup Lee recently noted that following the usages of pre-Modern Muslim writers in whose writings “*Turk* was often used as a generic term meaning all Inner Asian nomads” including also the

⁷For some preliminary notes on the relevant terminology, see Ayalon, “Mamlūk: Military Slavery,” 8–9; for a detailed discussion, see Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 156–60, 173–87; and see also the section “*Turkī Khālīṣ* as ‘Mongol’: Context and Explanation” below. On the terms *Mughul* and *Tatar*, see also Marie Favereau, *La Horde d’Or et le sultanat mamelouk: naissance d’un alliance* (Cairo, 2018), 78–99; van den Bent, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes,” 33–38.

⁸See David Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Re-examination (Part C2),” *Studia Islamica* 38 (1973): 138, n. 3; see also Little, “Notes on Aitamiš,” 394–95; and see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān al-naṣr*, ed. ʿAlī Abū Zayd et al. (Beirut, 1998), 1:634, 2:636; idem, *Al-Wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, ed. Josef van Ess (Wiesbaden, 1991), 9:440; Mūsā ibn Muḥammad ibn Yahyá al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-nāẓir fi sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ (Beirut, 1986), 329–30; Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Yaʿlāwī (Beirut, 1987–91), 2:342; Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-kāminah fi aʿyān al-miʿah al-thāminah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wārith Muḥammad ʿAlī (Beirut, 1997), 1:248.

⁹Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa (Part C2),” 136, n. 1; and see Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfā baʿda al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1984–2006), 2:291.

¹⁰Ayalon, “The Great Yāsa (Part C2),” 136, n. 1.

¹¹Little, “Notes on Aitamiš,” 395.



Mongols,¹² “Mamluk historians also used the term *Turk* in a broad sense that included non-Turkic groups” including Mongols,¹³ so “it is no wonder why a Mamluk historian [i.e., Ibn Taghrībirdī] even described the Mongol language as being ‘pure Turkish.’”¹⁴ Moreover, it is well known that the Mongols were perceived as (ethnically) related to the Turks,¹⁵ “if not a subgroup of the latter,”¹⁶ and as Josephine van den Bent has recently demonstrated, ethnographic descriptions of the Mongols by Muslim writers starting from the seventh/thirteenth century relied on earlier Islamic descriptions of the Turks.¹⁷ More specifically, Mongol mamluks are sometimes referred to in Mamluk sources as “Turks,”¹⁸ and the Mongol language may be even referred to in Mamluk sources on some occasions as “the Turkish Mongol language” (*al-Turkīyah al-Mughulīyah*).¹⁹ Still, this alone is insufficient to prove that Mamluk authors used the expression *Turkī khāliş* as an equivalent for “Mongol,” and if it was indeed used in such a manner, this does not clarify when and why.

¹²Joo-Yup Lee, “The Historical Meaning of the Term *Turk* and the Nature of Turkic Identity of the Chinggisid and the Timurid Elites in Post-Mongol Central Asia,” *Central Asiatic Journal* (2016): 101–2; and see also *ibid.*, 108–10, 113; *idem*, “Some Remarks on the Turkicisation of the Mongols in Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* 71, no. 2 (2018): 123, n. 10; *idem*, “The Timurid View of the Mongols: An Examination of the Mongol Identity of the Timurids,” *Iran Namag* 6, nos. 3–4 (2021): 209, 215; *idem*, *The Turkic Peoples in World History: A Concise History* (New York, 2024), 10, n. 6, 24. For a discussion of the term *Turk* in the Islamic world, and specifically on its application to Mongols, and for references to previous relevant studies, see *idem*, “Turkic Identity in Mongol and Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe,” in *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, ed. David Ludden (New York, 2019): 3–9, 14–16. On the term *Turk* in European and Mamluk sources, see also Hannah Barker, “What Caused the 14th Century Tatar-Circassian Shift?” in *Slavery in the Black Sea Region, c. 900–1900: Forms of Unfreedom at the Intersection between Christianity and Islam*, ed. Felicia Roşu (Leiden, 2022), 341, 343; *idem*, *That Most Precious Merchandise*, 49.

¹³Lee, “The Historical Meaning,” 110–11.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁵See, for example, Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, 28–29; Little, “Notes on Aitamiş,” 394, n. 49; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (New Haven, 2017), 68–69; Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 5; Van den Bent, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes,” 12, 18; Favereau, *La Horde d’Or*, 89. For more references, see Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 150, n. 5.

¹⁶Van den Bent, “Mongols in the Mamluk Sultanate,” 856, n. 9; *idem*, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes,” 76; Lee, *The Turkic Peoples*, 10, n. 2.

¹⁷Van den Bent, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes,” 63–80.

¹⁸See Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 151, n. 7.

¹⁹Al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) mentions that if a letter arriving in the sultanate is written in the “Turkish Mongol language...such as the letters arriving from some of the khans of the kings of the East (*bi-al-Turkīyah al-Mughulīyah...ka-al-kutub al-wāridah ‘an ba’d al-qānāt min mulūk al-Sharq*)” it should be translated by someone knowledgeable of this language. See Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā‘at al-inshā’* (Beirut, 1987), 6:207.



In what follows, I survey the few usages of the expression *Turkī khālīṣ* that are relevant for the Mamluk period and show that *Turkī khālīṣ* indeed denoted “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia,” starting at some point during the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century (following section). Next, in the section following that I offer context and an explanation for the usage of the term in accordance with this meaning.

TURKĪ KHĀLĪṢ IN MAMLUK SOURCES

Prior to the Mamluk Sultanate, there are only rare references of a linguistic nature to “a pure Turkish” language spoken by some of the Turkish people. The Qarakhanid scholar Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, who, around 464/1072 in Baghdad compiled *Dīwān lughāt al-Turk* (“Compendium of the languages of the Turks”), the first comprehensive dictionary of Turkish languages,²⁰ extolled the people who spoke only “pure Turkish” as opposed to those whose speech was corrupted by contact with speakers of other languages in the cities.²¹ He noted that some people, including the Qipchaqs, “speak pure Turkish”²² as their only language (*la-hum Turkīyah maḥḍah lughah wāḥidah*),²³ that others, such as the Uyghurs, “have a pure Turkish language and also another language which they speak among themselves”²⁴ (*wa-li-Uyghur lisān Turkīyah maḥḍah wa-lughah ukhrā mim mā yatakallamūna bi-hā fīmā baynahum*),²⁵ that the language of other people, such as the Bashkirs, is “approaching the pure Turkish”²⁶ (*yaqrubu lisān...Bashghirt*

²⁰G. Hazay, “al-Kāshgharī,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:699–700; J. Eckmann, “Qāmūs: iii. Turkish Lexicography,” *EI2*, 4:527.

²¹Peter B. Golden, “The Turkic Peoples: A Historical Sketch,” in *The Turkic Languages*, ed. Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató (London, 2022), 19; and see Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk)*, ed. and trans. Robert Dankoff in collaboration with Kames Kelly (Harvard, 1982), 1:83 (“The most elegant of the dialects belongs to those who know only one language, who do not mix with Persians, and who do not customarily settle in other lands”); and see idem, *Kitāb dīwān lughāt al-Turk* (Istanbul, 1915–17), 1:29.

²²Peter B. Golden, “The Turkic World in Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī,” in *Complexity of Interaction along the Eurasian Steppe Zone in the First Millennium CE*, ed. Jan Bemmann and Michael Schmauder (Bonn, 2015), 522, 535; al-Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:83.

²³Al-Kāshgharī, *Dīwān*, 1:30.

²⁴Peter B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 157; idem, “To-ghuzghuz,” *EI2*, 10:557; idem, “The Turkic World,” 526; al-Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:83.

²⁵Al-Kāshgharī, *Dīwān*, 1:30.

²⁶Golden, *An Introduction*, 263; idem, “The Turkic World,” 535; István Zimonyi, “Why Were the Hungarians Referred to as Turks in the Early Muslim Sources?” in *Neptörténet-Nyelvtörténet: A 70 éves Róna-Tas András Köszöntése*, ed. László Károly and Éva Nagy Kincses (Szeged, 2001), 207; al-Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:83.



min lughat hāʾulāʾi),²⁷ and that the language of others, such as the Volga Bulgars, while being Turkish, had been altered by foreign influences.²⁸ However, I have not come across a reference in chronicles or biographical dictionaries written before the Mamluk period describing a specific person or the language of a specific people as *Turkī khāliṣ*.

Al-Kāshgharī's work served as a model for the Qipchaq Turkish dictionaries produced in Egypt and Syria in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries.²⁹ In fact, in the introduction to *Kitāb majmūʿ tarjumān Turkī wa-ʿAjāmī wa-Mughulī wa-Fārisī*—one of the first Arabic-Qipchaq dictionaries of the Mamluk period, completed in 743/1343³⁰—the author mentions that “the pure Turkish Qipchaq language (*al-lisān al-Turkī al-Qifjāqī al-khāliṣ*) is devoid of eight letters... therefore, if one hears a word containing one of these letters he should know that the word is not of the pure Turkish language (*laysat min al-lughah al-Turkiyah al-khāliṣah*) but rather borrowed from another language.” Then the author mentions that he will discuss the differences between “the pure Turkish language (*al-lughah al-Turkiyah al-khāliṣah*) and the language of the Turkmens [i.e., Oghuz] (*al-lughah al-Turkmāniyah*) and what is borrowed by the people in our days from the Persian language and other languages.”³¹ However, the author does not say, as some scholars have mentioned, that the Turkish Qipchaq language is *the* pure Turkish language,³² and, although the Qipchaq language in Mamluk times may have been considered closer to the “pure Turkish,”³³ we cannot infer from his

²⁷ Al-Kāshgharī, *Dīwān*, 1:30.

²⁸ Victor Spinei, *The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads North of the Danube Delta from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 2009), 181; Golden, “The Turkic World,” 534–35; al-Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:84.

²⁹ Eckmann, “Qāmūs: iii. Turkish Lexicography,” 4:527.

³⁰ Ibid.; K. K. Aubakirova, A. A. Mustafayeva, and G. A. Kamisheva, “Comparative Study of the Manuscript ‘Tarjuman’ with Dictionaries in the Mamluk-Kipchak Language,” *Bulletin of Torai-gyrov University* 2 (2022): 21.

³¹ Martijn Theodoor Houtsma, *Ein türkisch-arabisches Glossar* (Leiden, 1894), 2–3 (Arabic text); and see also Samīr Maḥmūd al-Durūbī, “Ḥarakat al-tarjamah wa-al-taʿrīb fī dīwān al-inshāʾ al-mamlūkī (al-bawāʾith wa-al-lughāt wa-al-mutarjamāt),” *Majallat Majmaʿ al-Lughah al-ʿArabīyah al-Urdunī* 26, no. 62 (2002): 46.

³² Kunduzay Aubakirova et al., “Written Manuscripts in Ancient Kipchak Language of 13–15th Centuries and Their Research Problems in Kazakhstan,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 5 (2015): 578 (“The author tells that he knows several Turkic languages, including pure Turkish language or the Turkic-Kipchak language”).

³³ See, for example, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-faridah fī tarājim al-aʿyān al-mufidah*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut, 2002), 1:433 (“their [i.e., the inhabitants of the Qipchaq Steppe] language is the most eloquent among the languages of the Turks” [*lughatuhum aṣṣaḥ lughāt al-Turkī*]); and see perhaps also al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi*, 15:341 (al-Ṣafadī mentions that a



words, as has been suggested, “that Kipchak was considered as *the* ‘pure Turkic’... by the Mamluk scholars during the earlier period of the kingdom.”³⁴ He seems to claim only that there was some layer of the Qipchaq language that could be deemed “a pure Turkish” language.³⁵ In any case, during the early Mamluk period, as in previous periods, references to a “pure Turkish” are very rare and apparently limited to linguistic treatises. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, extant chronicles and biographical dictionaries written during the Turkish period of the Mamluk Sultanate (648–784/1250–1382) do not employ the expression *Turkī khālīṣ*,³⁶ and neither any specific person from the Mamluk period nor any language of a specific people is described as *Turkī khālīṣ* in them.³⁷ It is evident therefore that during this time period, *Turkī khālīṣ* was not used as a specific technical term by Mamluk historians.

member of the civilian elite “was speaking eloquent Turkish, the Qipchaq language” [*ḥadīthuhu bi-al-Turkī faṣīḥ Qibjāqī*]).

³⁴Fikret Turan, “*The Mamluks and Their Acceptance of Oghuz Turkic as a Literary Language: Political Maneuver or Cultural Aspiration?*” in *Einheit und Vielfalt in der türkischen Welt: Materialien der 5. Deutschen Turkologenkongferenz, Universität Mainz*, ed. Hendrik Boeschoten and Heidi Stein (Wiesbaden, 2007), 39.

³⁵Also note that the anonymous author of *Al-Qawānīn al-kullīyah li-ḍabṭ al-lughah al-Turkiyah*, who flourished in the ninth/fifteenth century, mentions in the introduction that he will survey some rules of the Turkish language (*al-lughah al-Turkiyah*), and then mentions that “this language” is devoid of several letters, so “if you hear someone using one of these letters you should know that he is not eloquent or not one of the pure Turks (*laysa min al-Turk al-khullas*).” See anonymous, *Al-Qawānīn al-kullīyah li-ḍabṭ al-lughah al-Turkiyah*, ed. Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (Istanbul, 1928), 3–4. Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh al-Turkī, who flourished in the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century or the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century, simply mentions in his *Bulghat al-mushtāq* that the Arabic language has a few letters that do not exist in the Turkish language (*al-lisān al-Turkī nāqīṣ ‘an al-‘Arabī*). See Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, *Manuel arabe de la langue des Turcs et des Kiptchaks (époque de l’état mamelouk)* (Warsaw, 1938), 1 (Arabic text).

³⁶Although, as will be discussed below, one Circassian-period author uses the expression when (allegedly?) quoting a Turkish-period author.

³⁷However, Mamluk chronicles or biographical dictionaries from the Turkish period employ twice the expression *min khālīṣ al-Turk*, but in reference to periods preceding the Mamluk period. Al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326) mentions in the obituary of the Ayyubid amir Ḥusām al-Dīn Abū ‘Alī al-Hadhabānī (d. 658/1260) several poems he had composed including the line “I love an elegant young gazelle who is of pure Turkish origin” (*ahwā rasha’ min khālīṣ al-Turk rashīq*). See Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir’āt al-zamān* (Hyderabad, 1954–61), 1:384; and see also *ibid.*, 2:84; and see Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Ibn Duqmāq, *Nuzhat al-anām fī tārikh al-Islām (628 H/1230 M–659 H/1261 M)*, ed. Samīr Ṭabbārah (Beirut, 1999), 272. Al-Ṣafadī mentions in the biographical entry of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Ḥamzah ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 419/1028–29) that “a Turk of pure Turkish origin” (*Turkī min khālīṣ al-Turk*) was serving the Buyid ruler. See al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi*, 13:178. In both cases, the exact origin of the persons mentioned as being “of pure Turkish origin” cannot be determined.



During the Circassian period (784–923/1382–1517), on the other hand, Mamluk historians employed the expression *Turkī khālīṣ* on several occasions, though in one of these uses the expression is (allegedly?) taken from a text written by a Turkish-period author (this case will be discussed last). At about the same time as Ibn Taghrībirdī's assertion that “the Mongol language is the pure Turkish” (*al-Mughulī wa-huwa al-Turkī al-khālīṣ*),³⁸ al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451) mentions in the obituary of the amir Manklībughā al-Ṣalāḥī al-Zāhirī (d. 836/1432)—a mamluk of al-Zāhir Barqūq (r. 784–91/1382–89 and 792–801/1390–99)—that he spoke Persian (*kāna yatakallamu bi-al-ʿAjamiyah*) and “pure Turkish” (*wa-al-Turkiyah al-khālīṣah*).³⁹ Fortunately, earlier than this, Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405) mentions that in 799/1396 a letter arrived in Cairo from Tīmūr Lank (d. 807/1405) demanding the release of one of his relatives and one of his companions that were imprisoned in Cairo. Al-Zāhir Barqūq ordered the two to write a reply, which they did in the Mongol language (*kitāb bi-al-Mughulī*). Since none of al-Zāhir Barqūq's companions could read the letter, he summoned Manklībughā, “as he knew how to read some Mongolian” (*wa-huwa yuḥsinu yaqraʿu baʿd shayʿ bi-al-Mughulī*). Manklībughā met with the two and instructed them to write in the Mongol language what al-Zāhir Barqūq had wanted (*wa-katabā la-hu mā aḥabba bi-al-Mughulī*).⁴⁰

This anecdote suggests that al-ʿAynī was referring to the Mongol language as “pure Turkish,” which implies that Ibn Taghrībirdī's usage of the term was not unique. Other contemporary historians used the expression “pure Turkish” as a term denoting “Mongol.” It is likely that “pure Turkish” came into use as a reference to “Mongol” at some point during the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century, between the times of Ibn al-Furāt and al-ʿAynī. As Manklībughā knew the Mongol language, he was very likely a Mongol mamluk. This is also suggested by the fact that some Mamluk sources described him negatively (*lam yakun mashkūr al-sīrah*),⁴¹ which is typical for Mongol mamluks of the early period and apparently also for the later periods.⁴² In any case, as he knew the Persian lan-

³⁸ See at n. 9 above.

³⁹ Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān fī tārikh ahl al-zamān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṭanṭāwī al-Qarmūṭ (Cairo, 1989), 438; and see also Samīr Maḥmūd al-Durūbī, “Aṣnāf al-tarājimāh fī dīwān al-inshāʿ al-mamlūkī,” *Majallat Majmaʿ al-Lughah al-ʿArabīyah al-Urdunī* 65, no. 1 (2003): 22–23. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, Manklībughā memorized poems in the three languages: Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (*al-ʿArabīyah wa-al-ʿAjamiyah wa-al-Turkiyah*). See Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963–72), 15:179.

⁴⁰ Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārikh al-duwal wa-al-mulūk*, ed. Quṣṭanṭīn Zurayq and Najlā ʿIzz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1936–42), 9:453.

⁴¹ Al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān*, 438; and see also Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (Beirut, 1966), 10:173; and see Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 179.

⁴² Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 161–71, 173–80.



guage and was even known as “the Persian” (*al-‘Ajamī*), and since he was sent in 805/1402–3 as an envoy to Tīmūr,⁴³ he was likely related to the Timurid territories of Central Asia.⁴⁴

Al-‘Aynī also mentions in the obituary of the amir Baybughā al-Muzaffarī al-Zāhirī (d. 833/1430), another mamluk of al-Zāhir Barqūq, that he was “a pure Turkish man” (*kāna rajul Turkī khālīs*).⁴⁵ There are several indications that Baybughā was Mongol: in addition to his negative depiction in several Mamluk accounts (*sayyi’ al-khuluq*)⁴⁶ and his characterization as naive (*salāmat bāṭin*),⁴⁷ both of which are typical of the depictions of the Mongol mamluks in Mamluk sources (at least in the early period),⁴⁸ he is also referred to by Ibn Taghrībirdī as “Tatar.” This appears in the description of the events of the year 817/1414, when Baybughā was arrested alongside two other amirs of “Tatar stock” (*wa-al-thalāthah jinsuhum Tatar*).⁴⁹ The label *Tatar* was undergoing a semantic shift in the Mamluk sources of the ninth/fifteenth century (see below). However, in his description of the events of the early ninth/fifteenth century, Ibn Taghrībirdī appears to have still used the label to refer to Mongols.⁵⁰ Moreover, Baybughā is described as holding the Mongol Empire’s founder, Chinggis Khan, in high regard and to have even considered him the Prophet Khidr’s equal (*wa-‘indahū Jinkiz Khān al-Mughulī bi-manzilāt al-Khidr ‘alayhi al-salām*).⁵¹ He excessively praised Chinggis Khan (*akhadha Baybughā fī ta‘zīm malik al-Tatār Jinkiz Khān wa-zāda wa-am‘ana*). When a Circassian amir disrespected Chinggis Khan in front of him, Baybughā wished to kill him, and accused him of blasphemy (*qāla lahu kafarta*).⁵²

⁴³ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, 10:173; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 11:286; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 15:178; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 2002), 4:321; Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah and Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Ashūr (Cairo, 1934–73), 4:900; anonymous, *Ḥawliyyāt Dimashqīyah 834–839 H li-mu‘arrikh Shāmī majhūl*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1968), 49; and see also Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 179.

⁴⁴ And see Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 178–80.

⁴⁵ Al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-jumān*, 391.

⁴⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 3:492; and see Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 174, 176.

⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 3:492; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:320.

⁴⁸ Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 167; and see at n. 58 below a reference to “Tatars” as especially naïve persons in the description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century.

⁴⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:23; and see also Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 175.

⁵⁰ Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 173–74, 178, 184; and see below.

⁵¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 3:492.

⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:320. In this anecdote that appears in the description of events of the year 831/1428, it is also reported that when Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy wanted to mess with Baybughā’s head he used to send to him a Circassian that would disrespect the “Tatars” and praise the Circassians, and Baybughā would start cursing him and counting the merits of the



Baybughā must have been Mongol, so we have here a case of a Mongol mamluk being referred to as “pure Turk” (*Turkī khāliṣ*) by al-ʿAynī.

Timrāz al-Nāṣirī al-Zāhirī (d. 814/1412), another mamluk of al-Zāhir Barqūq, is also said to have been “a pure Turk” (*Turkī khāliṣ*) in his obituaries in Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī’s (d. 852/1449) *Inbāʾ al-ghumr* and consequently in al-Sakhāwī’s (d. 902/1497) *Al-Dhayl al-tāmm*.⁵³ Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 900/1495) apparently refers to him as “one of the naïve Turks” (*min al-Atrāk al-sādhajīn*).⁵⁴ As far as I know, the only other Mamluk amir mentioned as a *Turkī sādḥaj* (“a naïve Turk”) is Burulghay Amīr Silāḥ,⁵⁵ who was a Mongol and a maternal relative of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (d. 741/1341). As noted above, naivety (*salāmat bāṭin*) was considered a typical characteristic of Mongols in the early period of the Mamluk Sultanate.⁵⁶ Even as late as the description of events of the year 824/1421, Ibn Taghrībirdī mentioned a group of “Tatar” mamluks (*min jins al-Tatar*), i.e., Mongols,⁵⁷ led by the amir Qujqār al-Qardumī (d. 824/1421). Al-Qardumī was characterized by “naivety, as Tatar people usually are” (*salāmat al-bāṭin ka-mā hiya ʿādat jins al-Tatar*).⁵⁸ Timrāz al-Nāṣirī al-Zāhirī appears to have been therefore another Mongol mamluk of al-Zāhir Barqūq referred to as “a pure Turk” (*Turkī khāliṣ*) by a Mamluk historian who flourished during the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī).

Another example is provided by the historian ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī al-Malaṭī (d. 920/1514). He mentions that in 844/1440 the envoy of the Timurid ruler Shāh Rukh (d. 850/1447) arrived in Cairo with presents

“Turks” over the Circassians. One gets the impression that by “Tatars” the Mongols are meant, although it is not exactly clear what is meant by “Turks.” And see the note on Ibn Taghrībirdī’s usage of the term “Tatar” in the description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century at n. 50 above.

⁵³ Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr bi-anbāʾ al-ʿumr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969–72), 2:490; Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Dhayl al-tāmm ʿalā duwal al-Islām lil-Dhahabī*, ed. Ḥasan Ismāʿīl Marwah (Beirut, 1992), 1:475. In *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, al-Sakhāwī writes that he was “of pure Turkish origin” (*min khāliṣ al-Turk*). See idem, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, 3:38 (*min khāṣ [ʿ] al-Turk*).

⁵⁴ Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970–94), 2:297.

⁵⁵ Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādihi*, ed. Barbara Schäfer (Wiesbaden, 1978), 221.

⁵⁶ See at n. 48 above.

⁵⁷ See above at n. 50 the note on the label “Tatar” as referring to “Mongols” in the description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century by Ibn Taghrībirdī.

⁵⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 14:108; and see also Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 174–75.



including many boxes of “pure Turkish musk” (*al-misk al-Turkī al-khālīš*). In this case, the term “pure Turkish” likely related to Timurid Central Asia.⁵⁹

Finally, in the biographical entry of Aqbirdī al-Tamāsīhī al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq (d. 900/1495), a mamluk of al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (r. 842–57/1438–53), al-Sakhāwī mentions that he was “a pure Turk” (*Turkī khālīš*).⁶⁰ Unfortunately, his specific ethnic or geographic origin cannot be determined.

We may have concluded at this point that the expression *Turkī khālīš* started to be used by Mamluk historians as a term denoting “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia” during the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century (the earliest historians employing the term for this meaning are al-‘Aynī and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, and both died around the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century), but another author that was active at about the same time used the expression *Turkī khālīš* when quoting an early Turkish-period author and in reference to an early Turkish-period Mamluk amir. In the biographical entry of the amir Bāshqurd al-Nāširī (d. 702/1302), originally a mamluk of the Ayyubids, Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāširīyah (d. 843/1440) quotes al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339) from his largely lost *Mu‘jam al-shuyūkh (dhakarahu...al-Birzālī fī mu‘jamihi fa-qāla)*. The latter had quoted Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamalkānī (d. 727/1327) (*qāla* (i.e., al-Birzālī) *wa-qāla al-Shaykh al-Imām Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamalkānī*) writing that Bāshqurd “composed poetry...and he did it naturally without mastering its principles as he was a pure Turk” (*kāna yanẓimu al-shi‘r...wa-kāna dhālīka minhu bi-al-ṭab‘ lā yata‘āṭā asbābahu fa-innahu kāna Turkī khālīš*).⁶¹ Unfortunately, not only do the meager extant parts of al-Birzālī’s *Mu‘jam al-shuyūkh* not include a biographical entry for Bāshqurd,⁶² but Ibn al-Zamalkānī’s work, from which al-Birzālī apparently quoted, is not extant. Therefore, Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāširīyah’s words cannot be examined against the original source. Moreover,

⁵⁹‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Malaṭī, *Al-Rawḍ al-bāsim fī ḥawādith al-‘umūr wa-al-tarājim*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 2014), 1:176. In the third/ninth century, Ibn Khurdādhbah notes in his survey of the lands of the Turks that the musk is found in the land of the Central Asian Kyrgyz people. This statement was repeated by later authors. See Zimonyi, “Why Were the Hungarians,” 205; and see, for example, Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. Yūsuf al-Hādī (Beirut, 1996), 634.

⁶⁰Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘*, 2:315.

⁶¹‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāširīyah, *Al-Durr al-muntakhab fī takmilat tārīkh Ḥalab*, ed. Aḥmad Fawzī al-Hayb (Kuwait, 2018), 2:659.

⁶²I thank Tarek Sabraa for going through the extant folios of the manuscript of al-Birzālī’s *Mu‘jam al-shuyūkh*. Al-Birzālī does not quote Ibn al-Zamalkānī in the obituary of Bāshqurd in his history book. See ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Birzālī, *Al-Muqtafi ‘alā kitāb al-rawḍatayn al-ma‘rūf bi-tārīkh al-Birzālī*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 2006), 3:200. In the extant parts of al-Birzālī’s *Wafayāt* there is no entry for Bāshqurd. See idem, *Al-Wafayāt lil-Birzālī*, ed. Abū Yahyá ‘Abd Allāh al-Kundarī (Kuwait, 2005), 10.



to the best of my knowledge, the only historian except Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah that quotes Ibn al-Zamalkānī in the biographical entry for Bāshqurd is Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī,⁶³ who, like Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, apparently also quoted Ibn al-Zamalkānī through al-Birzālī’s *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*. Ibn Ḥajar in fact mentioned in Bāshqurd’s biographical entry in *Al-Durar al-kāminah* that both al-Birzālī and al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) had noted Bāshqurd in their *Muʿjams*, and then immediately reported that “Ibn al-Zamalkānī said: he composed poetry naturally without mastering the principles of poetry” (*wa-qāla Ibn al-Zamalkānī kāna yanẓimu bi-al-ṭabʿ lā yataʿāṭā qawāʿid al-shuʿarāʾ*).⁶⁴ This does not, however, appear in Bāshqurd’s short biographical entry in al-Dhahabī’s *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, so the source must have been al-Birzālī’s *Muʿjam*. As can be seen, after mentioning what Ibn al-Zamalkānī had to say about Bāshqurd’s poetry, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī did not add that this was because he was “a pure Turk.”

There are two possible options in this regard. The first is that Ibn al-Zamalkānī did not refer to Bāshqurd as “a pure Turk” and Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, using the terminology of his time, i.e., the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century, added information that he had learned from some other, earlier source, which had pointed to Bāshqurd being Mongol (or of Mongol Central Asia), or, more likely, because he simply assumed so.⁶⁵ The second and more likely option is that Ibn al-Zamalkānī indeed used the expression “a pure Turk” but only in a literal meaning referring to Bāshqurd’s cultural orientation and not as a specific term referring to his ethnic or geographical origin. Bāshqurd is reported to have said of himself that “I spent 20 years not speaking the Turkish language because I was eager to master the Arabic language” (*baqītu ʿishrīn sanah lā atalaffazu bi-al-lughah al-Turkīyah ḥirṣan minnī ʿalā itqān al-ʿArabīyah*).⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is said that when composing poetry (in Arabic) he did not master the principles of poetry that are related naturally to the rules of the Arabic language. It seems that Ibn al-Zamalkānī simply meant to describe Bāshqurd’s strong inclination to the

⁶³I thank again Tarek Sabraa for directing me to some potentially relevant manuscripts of historical works by Syrian authors that are known to have quoted Ibn al-Zamalkānī and for providing me with the relevant folios.

⁶⁴Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-kāminah*, 1:277.

⁶⁵As far as I know, al-Dhahabī is the only historian, except perhaps for Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, that refers to the origin of Bāshqurd; he simply labels Bāshqurd “al-Turkī” in the title of his entry in his *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*. See Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, “Muʿjam shuyūkh al-Dhahabī,” Topkapı MS Ahmet III A462, fols. 45v–46r. I again thank Tarek Sabraa for directing me to this manuscript and providing me with the relevant folios. See also Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, *Al-Durr al-muntakhab*, 2:659.

⁶⁶Al-Şafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr*, 1:676; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-kāminah*, 1:277.



“Turkish” culture which could be overcome only after 20 years and with great effort, and, even then, only with limited success.⁶⁷

Yet, cultural orientation and origin are not unrelated. As I demonstrate elsewhere, in contrast to the Qipchaqs, the Mongol mamluks (as well as Central Asian mamluks that were not Western Qipchaqs) were less inclined to learn the Arabic language, and thus to acculturate. A probable explanation is that the Mongols had to learn the Qipchaq *lingua franca* before studying Arabic.⁶⁸ We can conclude therefore that individuals described as “pure Turks” because they were apparently less acculturated and more inclined to stick to the “Turkish” culture are more likely to have been Mongols or Central Asians and not Western Qipchaqs. Of course, the literal meaning of the expression “pure Turk” may well have not been totally unrelated to the specific meaning that it acquired during the ninth/fifteenth century. This leads us to discuss the context for the appearance of the term “pure Turk” in the meaning of “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia” and explain why the term was chosen to denote this meaning.

TURKĪ KHĀLIṢ AS “MONGOL”: CONTEXT AND EXPLANATION⁶⁹

During the early Mamluk period, until the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709–41/1310–41), quite a few Mongol mamluks arrived in the Mamluk Sultanate, mainly from the Ilkhanid lands in the east, often as war captives, but occasionally also from the northern Golden Horde. During this period, a Mongol mamluk would be labeled in Mamluk sources as a “Mongol” (*Mughulī*) or “Tatar”

⁶⁷That some mamluks are described as “Turks” followed by mention of their incompetence in the Arabic language seems to suggest that the “Turk” description is meant to refer to their strong orientation towards the “Turkish” culture. Ulmās al-Nāṣirī (d. 733/1333), who is described in the sources as a typical Mongol, is said to have been an “an inarticulate Turk who did not understand Arabic” (*kāna Turkī ghutmī lā yaʿrifu bi-al-lisān al-ʿArabi*), and some add that he did not use Arabic out of respect (apparently for the Mongol Yāsa). So, his description as “Turk” is rather clearly referring to his cultural orientation. See Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 168; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:176. For another example involving a mamluk, see Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār, *Kitāb al-tuḥfah al-mulūkīyah fī al-dawlah al-Turkiyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo, 1987), 103 (“illiterate Turk” [*ummī Turkī*]). In addition, al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) has the Khwārazmian king say of himself that he is “a Turkish man that does not understand much Arabic” (*rajul Turkī qalīl al-maʿrifah bi-al-lughah al-ʿArabiyyah*). See Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn et al. (Beirut, 2004), 27:161. [This note referenced in next note]

⁶⁸Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 168–71; and see n. 67 above.

⁶⁹I have discussed elsewhere the semantic shift of the term “Tatar” in Mamluk sources during the ninth/fifteenth century. See *ibid.*, 173–87. While examining the term *Turkī khālīṣ*, I had the chance to look again at the data on the term “Tatar,” and my findings on the term *Turkī khālīṣ* allowed me to reassess and refine the chronology of the semantic shift of the term “Tatar.”



(*Tatari*), labels that were used exclusively or mainly to refer to mamluks of Mongol origin, but sometimes also as a “Turk,” a vaguer and broader label.⁷⁰ However, the resolution of the conflict with the Mongol Ilkhans in 723/1323 ended the influx of Mongol war captives from the Ilkhanate to the Mamluk Sultanate. Therefore, during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the dominance of mamluks originating from the Golden Horde in the Mamluk Sultanate grew. At that time, the Mongols already intermingled with the Qipchaqs in the Golden Horde and the population of that area became a mixture of Qipchaqs and Mongols (Turco-Mongols) that Mamluk authors perceived as “one people” (*jins wāḥid*). From that point onward, mamluks arriving from the Golden Horde were largely called “Turks” in Mamluk sources. Due to these changes, from the 1320s (and until the late Turkish period), mamluks who arrived in the Mamluk sultanate were no longer referred to as “Mongol” or “Tatar.”⁷¹

Some mamluks who arrived in the Mamluk Sultanate starting in the late Turkish period were once again referred to as “Tatar” (*Tatari/Tatar*), but the label “Mongol” (*Mughuli/Mughul*) was no longer used by Mamluk historians to refer to mamluks arriving in the sultanate.⁷² Mamluks who arrived in the sultanate starting from the late Turkish period that are labeled “Tatar” surface mostly in the writings of two historians, Ibn Taghrībirdī and al-Malaṭī. Except for one, all mamluks labeled “Tatar” by Ibn Taghrībirdī arrived in the sultanate in the late eighth/fourteenth century, mostly during the reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq. Importantly, all mamluks labeled “Tatar” who have biographical entries or obituaries in the *Nujūm* or the *Manhal* and arrived in the late eighth/fourteenth century are labeled so by Ibn Taghrībirdī in the *Nujūm*, in the description of events that took place in 817/1414 and 824/1421, or in their own description of past events (in 803/1400) in the *Manhal*, but they are not labeled so by Ibn Taghrībirdī himself in their biographical entries in the *Manhal* or their obituaries in the *Nujūm*, where they are labeled as “Turks.”

This suggests that we are dealing with two layers of reference, one (“Tatars”) reflecting the time of the events, and the other (“Turks”) reflecting a later period,⁷³ but no later than the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century, since the

⁷⁰Ibid., 151, 153, 156–60.

⁷¹Ibid., 171–72.

⁷²Ibid., 172, n. 154, 173. One does find, however, references to “Mongol” (*Mughul/Mughuli*) mamluks in models of a sales contract in *shurūt* manuals of the ninth/fifteenth century. See Van den Bent, “Mongols in the Mamluk Sultanate,” 857; idem, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes,” 209; and Muḥammad ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-‘uqūd wa-mu‘īn al-quḍāh wa-al-muwaqqi‘īn wa-al-shuhūd*, ed. Mus‘ad ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad al-Sa‘danī (Beirut, 1996), 1:79–80, 119.

⁷³Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 173–77. We may add that Baybughā al-Muẓaffarī al-Zāhirī, who was in all likelihood a Mongol, is referred to as a “Tatar” by Ibn Taghrībirdī explicitly in



Manhal was composed around that time.⁷⁴ Since many of these mamluks that are called “Tatar” and had arrived during the late eighth/fourteenth century are portrayed negatively and/or characterized in the same fashion as were the Mongols during the earlier period, we may assume that these mamluks were Mongols or from Timurid Central Asia. Their arrival in the sultanate was likely related to the Timurid westward military expansion (roughly 1370–1402), which would have resulted in an influx of Mongol and Central Asian slaves in the slave markets, from where they would have arrived at the sultanate.⁷⁵ However, the arrival of Mongol mamluks or mamluks of Timurid Central Asia was limited to the late eighth/fourteenth century and the Timurid westward expansion. After the turn of the century, it seems that mamluks of this origin seldom made it to the sultanate.⁷⁶

the events of 817/1414 and implicitly in the events of 831/1428. See at n. 49 and n. 52 above.

⁷⁴The bulk of the entries in the *Manhal* are until 855/1451, and an autograph is dated to 855/1451. It may be added that at first, the *Nujūm* went only until 857/1453. See William Popper, “Abū al-Maḥāsīn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī,” *EI2*, 1:138; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 1:12.

⁷⁵Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 173, 178–80, 187.

⁷⁶Ibn Taghrībirdī never labels mamluks who arrived after the days of al-Zāhir Barqūq (d. 801/1399) as “Tatars” in his description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century. Also note that three of the four mamluks who arrived starting from the late eighth/fourteenth century and are mentioned as “pure Turks” or as speaking “pure Turkish” were al-Zāhir Barqūq’s mamluks, and only one arrived later. See at nn. 39–60 above. It may be added that Ibn Taghrībirdī mentions that “the soldiers of our time do not know the Mongol language and do not speak it” (*lisān al-Mughul al-ān lā yaʿrifuhu jund zamāninā hādhā wa-lā yataḥaddathūna bi-hi*). See Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 1:61. In the description of events of the year 836/1433 in the *Nujūm*, Ibn Taghrībirdī mentions a dialogue between a Turkmen amir and a Mamluk judge, in which the Turkmen amir points at a “Tatar” mamluk (*kāna al-mamlūk...Tatarī*) and says that Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy does not have in his court amirs of this origin (*min jins hādhā*). The judge replies that there are a few (*jamāʿah*), but the Turkmen amir says that this is not true as al-Ashraf Barsbāy had only one such amir and he was expelled to Jerusalem, referring to the amir Qarā Murād Khujā al-Shaʿbānī al-Zāhirī Barqūq. See *ibid.*, 15:27–28. As in the description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century, the label “Tatar” seems to refer mainly to Mongol mamluks or mamluks of the Timurid realm (see above), and as there were still quite a few Turco-Mongol amirs of the Golden Horde in al-Ashraf Barsbāy’s days (though by then they were also in serious decline—see, for now, Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 189, n. 259), we may assume that the label “Tatar” here refers to Mongols, which suggests that by this time there were only a few Mongol amirs in the sultanate, and they were mostly remnants from the days of al-Zāhir Barqūq (Qarā Murād, who has no biographical entry, may be added to this short list). Van den Bent suggested that as al-Asyūṭī (d. 880/1476) mentions “Mongol” mamluks in models of a sales contract, “apparently a Mongol mamluk was a sight common enough for al-Asyūṭī to make an example out of it.” See Van den Bent, “Mongols in Mamluk Eyes,” 209; and see also *idem*, “Mongols in the Mamluk Sultanate,” 857 (“The prevalence of Mongol mamluks in the sultanate is underlined in a model of a sales contract given by Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Asyuti”). However, the evidence from biographical dictionaries and chronicles strongly sug-



Ibn Taghrībirdī continued to refer to mamluks who arrived in the late eighth/fourteenth century and were apparently Mongols or of Timurid Central Asia as “Tatars” in the description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century until about the thirties of that century.⁷⁷ In their biographical entries or obituaries, however, the same mamluks are labeled as “Turks.” Therefore, it seems that during the thirties or forties of the ninth/fifteenth century,⁷⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī (and probably other historians as well) found the label “Tatar” for Mongol mamluks or mamluks of Timurid Central Asia who arrived in the late eighth/fourteenth century awkward or unfitting.⁷⁹ This must have been because “Tatar” in reference to mamluks acquired a new meaning during the ninth/fifteenth century: it came to be understood as referring to the Turco-Mongol mamluks of the Golden Horde.

While the inhabitants of the Golden Horde did not identify themselves as “Turks” and the inhabitants of the western Golden Horde eventually adopted “Tatar” as a self-designation,⁸⁰ and while slaves from the Golden Horde were labeled mainly as “Tatars” by Europeans at least from the middle of

gests that by the days of al-Asyūṭī, not only Mongol mamluks but also Turco-Mongol mamluks of the Golden Horde were hardly sold in the sultanate.

⁷⁷Elsewhere (Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 178, 184) I suggested that the label “Tatar” stopped referring to mamluks of (Timurid) Central Asia around 1420, but now I see that the *Nujūm* apparently contains such references in the description of events of the years 831/1428 and 836/1433. See n. 73 and n. 76 above.

⁷⁸See at n. 74 above.

⁷⁹One case is apparently somewhat exceptional. In *Ḥawādith al-duhūr*, in the obituary of Yalkhujā Min Māmash al-Nāṣirī (d. 850/1446), originally a mamluk of al-Zāhir Barqūq, Ibn Taghrībirdī indirectly refers to Yalkhujā as a “Tatar” when he mentions that he was characterized by “naivety, as his people, the Tatars, usually are” (*salāmat bāṭin ‘alā qā‘idat abnā’ jinsihi al-Tatār*). See Abū al-Mahāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1990), 1:147. Unfortunately, Ibn Taghrībirdī does not refer to him as “Tatar” in the description of events of the early ninth/fifteenth century, but as naivety was traditionally associated with the Mongols (see nn. 56–58 above), we may assume that Yalkhujā was a Mongol or of Timurid Central Asia. (We may add that he is also described very negatively in the sources: see Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Tatimmat kitāb nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān [tatimmat ḥawādith wa-tarājim sanatay 849–850 H]*, ed. Muḥammad Jamāl al-Shūrbajī [Damascus, 2021], 166; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-jumān*, 661.) In fact, we may assume that Ibn Taghrībirdī was using the label “Tatar” here in reference to Mongols who arrived in the late eighth/fourteenth century, although he would normally refrain from doing so in their obituaries, only because he did it when mentioning general stereotypical attributes that were traditionally related to the “Tatars” and not the “Turks.”

⁸⁰Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 11–13.



the eighth/fourteenth century,⁸¹ Turco-Mongol slaves from the Golden Horde were generally labeled “Turks” in Mamluk sources throughout the eighth/fourteenth century. This was likely due to the negative connotations the term “Tatar” had in the Mamluk Sultanate because of the animosity between the “Tatar” Ilkhans and the Mamluks during the early period of the sultanate and later in the late eighth/fourteenth century between the “Tatar” Timurids and the Mamluks.

The Mamluk Sultanate was deemed a “Turkish state” (*dawlat al-Atrāk*) and its “Turkishness” was an important component of its identity. While some late eighth/fourteenth century Mamluk authors acknowledge that the Golden Horde was the “Land of the Tatars,” once a slave arrived from there to the sultanate he was labeled a “Turk.”⁸² While there are perhaps some rare indications that around the turn of the eighth/fourteenth century the label “Tatar” could be used in Mamluk sources in reference to the Turco-Mongol mamluks from the Golden Horde,⁸³ we find the label in common use for this meaning only in the writing of al-Malaṭī in the late ninth/fifteenth century, mostly when he refers to mamluks who arrived after the turn of the eighth/fourteenth century.⁸⁴ Al-Malaṭī himself (like other historians) continued to commonly refer to the Turco-Mongol mamluks from the Golden Horde who arrived in the ninth/

⁸¹ See discussion and references in Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 184–86. On the label “Tatar” in reference to slaves from the Golden Horde in European sources, see Barker, “What Caused,” 341, 347; and see also Jong Kuk Nam, “Tatar Slaves in Late Fourteenth Century Florence,” *Mediterranean Review* 15, no. 1 (2022): 1–24. I thank Hannah Barker for referring me to this article. See also Lorenzo Pubblici, “Some Remarks on the Slave Trade in the Heart of the Golden Horde (14th Century) in the Wake of C. Verlinden’s Research,” *Golden Horde Review* 5, no. 3 (2017): 569; Michel Balard, “Slavery in the Latin Mediterranean (Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries): The Case of Genoa,” in *Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean (C. 1000–1500)*, ed. Christoph Cluse and Reuven Amitai (Turnhout, 2017), 239–40; Danuta Quirini-Popławska, “The Venetian Involvement in the Black Sea Slave Trade (Fourteenth to Fifteenth Centuries),” in *Slavery and the Slave Trade*, ed. Cluse and Amitai, 256, n. 4, 267; Roman Hautala, “The Jochid Ulus,” in *The Mongol World*, ed. Timothy May and Michael Hope (London, 2022), 247; Favereau, *La Horde d’Or*, 96–98; idem, *The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World* (Cambridge, 2021), 166.

⁸² Yosef, “Cross-Boundary Hatred,” 186–87.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 180–83. Elsewhere, I suggested that circa 1400, it became common in Mamluk sources to label Turco-Mongol slaves from the Golden Horde as “Tatars,” and at that time it became uncommon to label slaves of Timurid Central Asia as “Tatars” (*ibid.*, 184). However, references to slaves of Timurid Central Asia as “Tatars” linger until about the thirties of the ninth/fifteenth century, and references to Turco-Mongol slaves from the Golden Horde as “Tatars” are common only in the writings of al-Malaṭī.



fifteenth century as “Turks” as well.⁸⁵ While the label “Tatar” in reference to Turco-Mongol mamluks from the Golden Horde is common only in al-Malaṭī’s writings, as the label “Tatar” in reference to Mongol mamluks or mamluks of Timurid Central Asia apparently generally fell out of use in the thirties or forties of the ninth/fifteenth century, we may assume that about this time it became commonly understood by the readership of the Mamluk historians as referring to Turco-Mongol mamluks from the Golden Horde. Mamluk historians would, therefore, have found it awkward to use it to refer to Mongol mamluks or mamluks of Timurid Central Asia who arrived in the sultanate starting from the late eighth/fourteenth century.⁸⁶

It is in this context that we should understand the appearance of the term “pure Turk/Turkish” (*Turkī khāliṣ*) with the meaning of “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia.” As the term “Tatar” could no longer be used in that meaning without causing confusion, and as the term “Turk” was unspecific, another term had to be devised to refer specifically to Mongol mamluks or mamluks of (Timurid) Central Asia. That the earliest historians using the term “pure Turk” in this meaning died around the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century supports the argument that it was only around this time period (i.e., in the thirties or forties of the ninth/fifteenth century) that the semantic shift in the label “Tatar” reached its zenith (we may imagine, however, a gradual process of a shift in the meaning of the term during the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century).

Why then was the term “pure Turk” chosen to denote “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia”? The territory “of what has been known for the past 800 years as *Mongolia*, was actually in the 6th–9th centuries *Turcia*, i.e., the core territory of the formation of the strongest early Turkic states in history.”⁸⁷ Lee has recently discussed the history of Turkish identity in detail. Turkish identity first emerged as the self-identity of the *Kök Türk* of the Mongolian steppe, who founded the *Türk* Kaghānate (551–745 CE), the first Turkish nomadic empire. *Türk* then had a narrow meaning encompassing only the nucleus of the empire, and the “*Türks* reserved the name *Türk* for themselves and did not employ it for other Turkic-speaking groups that they subdued.” After the collapse of the *Türks*, while some of their direct descendants may have preserved *Türk* identity, in general “the

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 180–82. On the “Turkishness” of the Golden Horde, see, for example, Favereau, *La Horde d’Or*, 136.

⁸⁶ Mamluk historians of the ninth/fifteenth century could still use the label “Tatar” when referring to Mongol mamluks from the early period of the sultanate, as it must have been clear to their audience that this was its meaning in the context of the early Mamluk period.

⁸⁷ István Vásáry, “The Role and Function of Mongolian and Turkic in Ilkhanid Iran,” in *Turks and Iranians: Interactions in Language and History*, ed. Éva Á. Csató et al. (Wiesbaden, 2016), 146.



name *Türk* was not adopted as a self-appellation by the Turkic-speaking peoples who succeeded them,” and the various Turkish-speaking groups in pre-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq steppe did not share a *Türk* identity. Accordingly, “medieval Chinese historians also reserved the name *Türk*... for the Türks.”⁸⁸

While some Muslim writers used the term *Turk* in its narrow meaning, in general it was used with a broader meaning in the Islamic world.⁸⁹ As the Muslims met—in the second/eighth century—the remnants of the *Türk* empire in battles in Transoxiana, the term *Turk* was used by Muslims to refer to all the people of the *Türk* empire at that time, and, in the third/ninth century, the terms *Bilād al-Atrāk* or *Turkistān* (“the Land of the Turks”) came to denote the steppe of Inner Asia, i.e., the steppe belt east of the Volga river, or northeast of the Syr Darya or Amu Darya rivers. Strictly speaking, the steppe region of Eastern Europe, i.e., west of the Volga, was not then considered part of the Turkish world.⁹⁰ In the fifth/eleventh century, the Western Qipchaqs living on the western fringes of the Turkish world settled in the steppe between the lower Danube and the lower Volga, and according to Muslim concepts East Europe came under the power of the Turks.⁹¹ While in Mamluk sources, the Qipchaqs are considered “Turks,” and while the term “the Land of the Turks” may occasionally have been employed by Mamluk authors in a loose meaning also encompassing the “Land of the Qipchaqs,”⁹² one observes also a general distinction between the Land of the Qipchaqs and that of the Turks, and sometimes also a differentiation between Qipchaqs and “Turks.” For example, when Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349) enumerates the “kingdoms of Islam” (*mamālik al-Islām*), the kingdoms of the Chingissids (*mamālik Bayt Jinkīz Khān*), or the kings of the “Turkish world” (*Tūrān*),⁹³ he differentiates between *Turkistān*, that spreads from the east of the Amu Darya river to China, and “the Land of the Qipchaqs” (*Bilād al-Qibjāq/Bilād al-Khifjāj*). He refers to Turkistan as the historical kingdom of the Turks (*Mamlakat al-Khāqāniyah/Mamlakat al-Turk*

⁸⁸Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 2; idem, “The Historical Meaning,” 103–8; idem, “Some Remarks,” 128–31, 139; idem, *The Turkic Peoples*, 3, 24–25, 35. On the ethnonym *Türk*, see Peter B. Golden, “Reflections on the Ethnonym *Türk*,” in *From the Khan’s Oven: Studies on the History of Central Asian Religions in Honor of Devin DeWeese*, ed. Eren Tasar, Allen J. Frank, and Jeff Eden (Leiden, 2022), 1–50.

⁸⁹Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 3–4; idem, “The Historical Meaning,” 108–9; idem, *The Turkic Peoples*, 24.

⁹⁰Zimonyi, “Why Were the Hungarians,” 204–6; and see Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 3; idem, “The Historical Meaning,” 109; idem, *The Turkic Peoples*, 7.

⁹¹Zimonyi, “Why Were the Hungarians,” 208.

⁹²The Qipchaq sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (d. 689/1290) is said to have been brought from “the Land of the Turks” (*Bilād al-Turk*). See Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 7:325.

⁹³Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yaḥyá al-Sariḥī et al. (Abu Dhabi, 2001–4), 3:26, 93; idem, *Al-Taʿrīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1988), 65.



al-qadimah) that was once in the hand of “the king of the Turks” (*malik al-Turk*) and adds that “strictly speaking, this [i.e., Turkistan] is the Land of the Turks” (*ammā Turkistan...Bilād al-Turk ḥaḥiqatan*), and “this is what is meant by the term the Land of the Turks” (*wa-hiya al-murādah bi-qawlihim Bilād al-Atrāk*). The Chaghadaids ruling Turkistan are referred to as “the kings of the Turks” (*mulūk al-Turk*) and the ruler of the Golden Horde as “the ruler of the Qipchaqs” (*ṣāhib al-Qibjāq*).⁹⁴ Al-ʿUmarī sometimes even differentiates between “Turkish” and “Qipchaq” slaves.⁹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) writes that Chaghadaī (d. 639/1242), the son of Chinggis Khān, was made a ruler in “the heart of the Land of the Turks (*kursī al-Turk*) beyond the Amu Darya river (*mā warāʾ al-nahr*), that is, in Kāshghar and Turkistan,” and that Jochi (d. 624/1227), the son of Chinggis Khān, was made a ruler in Sarai and “the Land of the Turks” (*Bilād al-Turk*), then writes that Jochi was the ruler “of the Land of the Qipchaqs, among it Sarai, and the Land of the Turks until Khwarazm” (*Bilād Qibjaq wa-minhā Sarāy wa-Bilād al-Turk ilā Khawārizm*),⁹⁶ which means that Ibn Khaldūn differentiated between the Land of the Western Qipchaqs under the control of the ruler of the Golden Horde and lands under his control east of the Volga which were part of the “Land of the Turks.” Finally, administrative manuals mention that in letters sent to the ruler of the Golden Horde Uzbek (d. 742/1341) he was addressed as “the sultan of the Mongols, the Qipchaqs, and the Turks” (*sulṭān al-Mughul wa-al-Qibjāq wa-al-Turk*).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, 3:26–27, 92–93, 97–98, 121, 141, 170; idem, *Al-Taʿrīf*, 65; and see also al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 4:428, 438, 449. For further examples of al-ʿUmarī’s differentiation between “the Land of the Turks” (*Bilād al-Atrāk*) and the “Qipchaq Steppe” (*Barr al-Qibjāq*), see his *Masālik al-abṣār*, 3:351. For earlier differentiations, see, for example, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt al-zamān fī tawārīkh al-aʿyān*, ed. Muḥammad Barakāt et al. (Beirut, 2013), 1:52.

⁹⁵ Al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, 3:75. Al-Nuwayrī writes that the armies of Chinggis Khān attacked the northern lands and sold as slaves the children of the “Turks” and “Qipchaqs” (*dharārī al-Turk wa-al-Qifjāq*), and he also mentions that Jochi (d. 624/1227), the son of Chinggis Khān and ruler of the Golden Horde, annihilated the tribes of the “Turks” and “Qipchaqs” (*ṭawāʾif al-Atrāk wa-qabāʾil al-Qifjāq*). See al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 29:268; 27:229. Ibn al-Dawādārī (d. after 736/1335), quoting Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), mentions that one of the Ayyubid rulers received “Turkish” and “Qipchaq” slave girls (*waṣīfah Turk wa-Qifjāq*). See Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar* (Cairo, 1960–92), 7:178.

⁹⁶ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn al-musammā kitāb al-ʿibar wa-dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-al-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿArab wa-al-ʿAjam wa-al-Barbar wa-man ʿāṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Khalīl Shaḥādah (Beirut, 2000–1), 7:725, 740; idem, *Riḥlat Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (Beirut, 2004), 283, 298.

⁹⁷ Taqī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Kitāb Tathqīf al-Taʿrīf bi-al-muṣṭalah al-sharīf par Taqī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥibb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Taymī al-Ḥalabī appellé Ibn Nāẓir al-Ġayṣ*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Cairo, 1987), 12; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 7:317; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Saḥmāwī, *Al-Thaḡhr al-bāsim fī ṣināʿat al-kātib wa-al-kātim*, ed. Ashraf Muḥammad Anas (Cairo,



That the terms “the Land of the Turks,” and sometimes even *Turk*, were used by Muslim and, more specifically, Mamluk authors as referring more or less to the lands of the Central Asian steppe and its inhabitants (including the lands ruled and inhabited by the Mongols) but excluding the Western Qipchaqs inhabiting the steppe region of Eastern Europe, is very likely to have been the main factor behind the adoption of the term “pure Turk” (*Turkī khālīs*) to mean “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia,” but two other factors may have also played a role. First, as noted by Lee, “[t]he Muslim view of the Turks as Inner Asian nomads was adopted by the Mongols of the Ilkhanate and the Mongol successors in Central Asia,” among them the Timurids who also identified themselves as Turks. In that context, *Turk* was a term relational to *Tajik*, a name denoting “the Iranian-speaking sedentary population,” so the Turkish identity of the Mongols of the Ilkhanate and Central Asia “was a non-Tajik, Inner Asian nomadic identity, not a non-Mongol, Türk-related identity.”⁹⁸ On the other hand, in the Qipchaq steppe, where the Iranian population was absent, “a Central Asian type of Turkic identity was non-existent...during the Mongol and post-Mongol period. Apparently, the term *Turk* had not been used as a self-appellation among...non-Türk groups of the Qipchaq Steppe as the Qipchaqs,” and the inhabitants of the western Golden Horde eventually adopted “Tatar” as a self-designation.⁹⁹ Thus, the fact that the term *Turk* was used as a self-appellation in Timurid Central Asia but not in the Qipchaq steppe may have also contributed to the adoption of the term “pure Turk” meaning “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia.” Second, as mentioned, there is evidence that Mongol or Central Asian mamluks were less inclined than Western Qipchaqs to learn the Arabic language, and thus acculturate, and were, therefore, more inclined to stick to the “Turkish” culture,¹⁰⁰ which may also have contributed to the adoption of the term “pure Turk” in the meaning of “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia.”

To conclude, one or a combination of these factors very likely contributed to the adoption of the term “pure Turk” (*Turkī khālīs*) in the meaning of “Mongol” or “of (Timurid) Central Asia” around the thirties or forties of the ninth/fif-

2009), 2:771. Also note that al-Nuwayrī writes that the ruler in Sarai controlled the “lands of the Turks and Qipchaqs” (*nawāḥī al-Turk wa-al-Qifjāq*) and when Möngke Temür (d. 681/1282) sat on the throne in Sarai, “he became the ruler of the land of...the Turks and Qipchaqs” (*ṣāra ilayhi mulk Bilād...al-Turk wa-al-Qifjāq*). See al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 27:243, 246.

⁹⁸Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 1, 6–8; and see also idem, “*The Timurid View*,” 209, 215; idem, “The Historical Meaning,” 103, 121.

⁹⁹Lee, “Turkic Identity,” 1, 11–13; and see also idem, “The Historical Meaning,” 121–22; idem, *The Turkic Peoples*, 24; and see at n. 80 above.

¹⁰⁰See at n. 68 above.



teenth century, as around that time the term “Tatar” was understood (or could be understood) by the audience of the Mamluk historians as referring to the Turco-Mongols of the Golden Horde. The investigation of the terms “pure Turk” and “Tatar” also allows us to identify some Mongol mamluks or mamluks of Timurid Central Asia in the later period of the Mamluk Sultanate, a group that had, until now, received only scant attention from modern scholars.

