

A Preliminary Discussion of Sources in Manchu Relating to Xinjiang (c.1760–1912)¹

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Introduction

The argument for and against the importance of the study of Manchu has surfaced intermittently in sinological circles for well over a century. For historians of China, until the late 20th century, the case against was simple: there was little, if anything, in Manchu sources that was not available in Chinese. Against this, lay the claim that Manchu could assist in the interpretation of texts and indeed that there was a limited number of texts, and notably versions of texts, that existed only in Manchu. And here the stalemate pretty much rested until about 20 years ago when historians such as Beatrice Bartlett and archivists such as Wu Yuanfeng began exploring the extent of Manchu archival holdings in the PRC. Since the mid-80s, monographs by several US scholars, including Bartlett, Evelyn Rawski, Pamela Crossley and Mark Elliott have ensured that few, if any, Qing historians would today take issue with Berthold Laufer's impassioned assertion that "only self-complacent conceit and the arrogance of ignorance may arrive at the dogma that Manchu is a *quantité négligeable*."² Indeed, most would concede that, in certain areas of Qing historical research, Manchu is an essential tool.

However, acknowledging the significance of Manchu language to *some* Qing historical researches is a long way from advocating its study. Despite the best efforts of the aforementioned scholars and the broad ranging bibliographical studies by Giovanni Stary, Taciana Pang, Hartmut Walravens and Matsumura Jun, to mention but a few, the question of what Manchu sources have to offer researchers and whether Manchu should be an integral part of the training of all Qing historians remains debatable. Manchu is not a difficult language but neither, as Erich Hauer pointed out, is it a "tiffin language,"³ and with the demise in language

¹ I am grateful to Prof Martin Gimm, as well as the participants of the "International Workshop on Xinjiang Historical Sources" (Hakone, Dec. 2004), for helpful comments on this paper.

² HAUER, Erich 1930 "Why the Sinologue Should Study Manchu," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 61, p. 157, citing Berthold Laufer.

³ Hauer 1930: 163. Indeed, according to Louis Langlès, "Une personne studieuse peut en cinq ou six années se metre en état de lire avec profit tous les livres écrits ou traduits en mantchou," cited by GIMM, Martin 1997 "Hans Conon von der Gabelentz (1807–1874) und die erste manjurische Grammatik in Deutschland," *Oriens Extremus* 40, p. 228, note 35.

proficiency generally among graduate students, the question of whether the aspiring Qing (particularly late-Qing) historian would be better advised to learn Manchu or, for example, German or even Latin, is by no means cut and dried.⁴ This paper does not aspire to present any instant answers to the general problem, it merely suggests that there is far more that those currently working with Manchu materials in specific fields can and, perhaps, should do in order to assess those sources for the information of other scholars, present and future. So, let us start with Qing dynasty Xinjiang.

The paper is divided into three sections: the first provides a brief survey of some of the printed Manchu sources, *chaoben* (hand-copies) and manuscripts relating to Xinjiang which are held in libraries and other collections; the second looks at Manchu documentary sources on Xinjiang, primarily those held in the First Historical Archives (hereafter FHA) in Beijing; and the third takes a closer look at a small number of documents from the FHA as a means of exploring, more generally, the value of the Manchu archive to the further study of Xinjiang.

1. Non-documentary Sources in Manchu

By far the majority of published works in Manchu relating to Qing Xinjiang are also available in Chinese. In some cases we know that the work was originally written in Chinese and then translated into Manchu, for example the *Qinding Huijiang zeli*. In other cases, however, even though the Chinese version was printed before the Manchu, the former drew heavily on documentary sources in Manchu. As Isenbike Togan has noted in the case of the *Qinding waifan Menggu Huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, although the Manchu and Mongolian versions were not completed until after the Chinese version, its compiler Ji Yunshi (who had an excellent command of Manchu) drew heavily on Manchu sources.⁵ Despite the earlier date of completion of the Chinese version, therefore, it is possible that more of the work was translated into, than from, Chinese.⁶ The same would undoubtedly have been true of works such as *Qinding pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe* for which

⁴ It is worth noting that, notwithstanding a certain degree of interest in the study of Manchu among students of Qing history in the US and the recent revival of Manchu studies in China, Japan is the only country that currently produces a steady stream of young Manchu scholars.

⁵ The former was probably completed in late 1790, the latter (the trilingual version) in 1795. TOGAN, Isenbike 1985 "The Compilation of the Hedkel Šastir," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 9, p. 4.

⁶ The same may well be true of the *Huangchao fanbu yaolüe*, published by Qi Juncao in the 1850s. This drew on a draft (documents and manuscript) that his father had prepared for the *wanggong biao zhuan*, but was published only in Chinese.

many of the original sources were in Manchu and perhaps even for a less well-known work such as *Bi qinxiang gong liezhuan* (1857). In the case of the latter (a work which although not adding a great deal to other accounts of Bichang's service in Altishahr, is nevertheless a useful reference for anyone interested in this outstanding official whose career was intimately bound to Xinjiang), a *Man-Han hebi* wood-block edition held in the Beijing library is, as far as I am aware, the only extant version.

To return for a moment to the *Qinding waifan Menggu Huibu wanggong biao*, it was, of course, on this work that Hening drew for his chapters on Hami and Turfan in the *Huijiang tongzhi*. There are only two known copies of this work in Manchu. One is a monolingual hand-written manuscript (*chaoben*) held in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the other an incomplete *Han-Man hebi* edition which is held in the British Library under the title *Man-Han Huijiang zhuan*. Interestingly, this copy incorporates the emendations (mainly *ling qi*) made to the Paris edition.⁷

Quite clearly then, a number of works which are assumed to have been written in Chinese were drawn from Manchu sources and may even have been originally written in Manchu. The anonymous, untitled work of c.1762/3 recently edited by Ruan Mingdao and published as *Xiyu dili tushuo zhu* is for the most part in Chinese. However, in addition to Manchu words interspersed throughout the text (e.g. place names etc), one section of the original manuscript, concerning peoples living beyond the north-western frontier (*waiyi*), is in Manchu only,⁸ thus suggesting that the author, or one of the authors, may have been Manchu.⁹ The value of this work is that while it may never have achieved wide circulation, the material and data it includes predates the *Xiyu wenjianlu* by almost 15 years.

Most scholars assume that the *Xiyu wenjianlu* was written in Chinese, yet there is good reason to suppose that, as with the *Xiyu dili tushuo zhu*, some sections, if not the entire work, may well have originally been written in Manchu. Möllendorff writing in the late 19th century makes mention of a Manchu copy of Qishiyi's work held in the library of the sinologue and Manchu scholar Hans Conon von der Gabelentz.¹⁰ At the end of World War II the Gabelentz-library in Poschwitz,

⁷ See PUYRAIMOND, Jeanne-Marie 1979 *Catalogue du Fonds Mandchou*, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, p. 169; SIMON, Walter and Howard G. H. NELSON 1977 *Manchu Books in London: A Union Catalogue*, London: British Museum Publications, p. 30.

⁸ This section of the manuscript has been translated in Ruan Mingdao's edited version, *Xiyu dili tushuo zhu*.

⁹ Although not necessarily indicative of joint authorship, the variation in handwriting in the manuscript suggests there may have been more than one copier. RUAN Mingdao 阮明道 ed. 1992 *Xiyu dili tushuo zhu* 『西域地理图说注』, p. 2.

¹⁰ Von MÖLLENDORFF, P. G. 1989-90 "Essay on Manchu Literature," *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (N.S.) 24, p. 31. The title given by Möllendorff is *Wargi jecen-i bade bifi donjihi* [i.e. donjiha] *sabuha bithe*.

comprising some 8,000 books, was confiscated by the Russians and taken to Moscow.¹¹ The majority of these books are now housed in the Lenin Library and among them is a copy of *Xiyu wenjianlu*, the work to which Möllendorff may have been referring.¹² According to Volkova's catalogue of Manchu manuscripts, however, there is a slight variation in the titles and this hand-written copy is in Manchu and Chinese while Möllendorff makes no mention of a Chinese text.¹³ But this is not the end of the road as far as the *Xiyu wenjianlu* is concerned. In the library of the *Minzu yanjiusuo* (CASS) in Beijing, is a *chaoben* catalogued as *Xiyu Huizu fengsuzhi*. The work, which is incomplete, has been rebound, relatively recently, in a paper jacket bearing the Chinese title. It comprises 39ff and is in fragile condition but nevertheless legible. It bears no date and no author and (notwithstanding the Gabelentz-Manchu version of *Xiyu wenjianlu*) appears to be the only extant Manchu version of a section of that work.¹⁴ Its existence, however, together with that of the Gabelentz copy, must at least raise the question of whether the *Xiyu wenjianlu*, or some part of it, might not have been written originally in Manchu.

Given the seminal importance of a work such as the *Xiyu wenjianlu* to past and present-day researches on Xinjiang, there must surely be a strong case here for comparative translation. Indeed, for anyone familiar with the benefits that can be derived from consulting different editions of Chinese texts, it goes without saying that the Manchu editions, even of the most well-known and established texts, should not be dismissed as mere translations of Chinese works.

Finally, one cannot conclude even a brief discussion of non-documentary sources on Xinjiang without mention of the large and rich collection of papers and writings relating to the Sibe and the Ili region which is held in the Institute of Oriental Studies in St Petersburg. Some of these works, which include a history and ethnographical description of Ili (*Ili ba-i baita be ejehe bithe*),¹⁵ descriptions of wedding ceremonies and many songs and tales in Sibe dialect, have already been

¹¹ Gimm 1997: 225, note 24.

¹² The provincial government of Thuringia is currently endeavouring to trace all the rare books and manuscripts from the Gabelentz collection which are held in Russia and have them copied or returned. Martin Gimm, private communication.

¹³ VOLKOVA, M. P. 1965 *Opisanie man'chzhurskikh rukopisei Instituta narodov Azii AN SSR*, Moskva: Nauka, p. 19. The title given by Volkova is *Wargi jecen-i bade donjiha sabuha ejehe bithe*. Martin Gimm believes that Möllendorff and Volkova are probably referring to two different copies. Private communication.

¹⁴ The relevant section of the *Xiyu wenjianlu* appears in the complete Chinese work under the heading "Huijiang fentu ji." The *Minzu yanjiusuo* Manchu copy of this section begins in the middle of the description of the Eid rituals and finishes in the midst of the discussion of the Muslim literature (i.e. one or two pages appear to be missing from both the beginning and end).

¹⁵ See appendix below.

published and translated,¹⁶ but much more clearly waits to be done.

2. Documentary Materials in Manchu

2.1. Xinjiang as a Manchu “Enclave”

The overriding argument for the importance of Manchu to the study of Qing Xinjiang lies, of course, in the documentary sources and the fact that Xinjiang remained a Manchu enclave, thus arguably privileging the Manchu language, until the re-conquest in 1877. What is meant here by a “Manchu enclave” is simply that the Qing exercised control over Xinjiang through a military establishment, the upper echelons of which were staffed, for the most part, by Manchu or Mongol officials until 1864. Not surprisingly, therefore, one might expect to see more correspondence in Manchu between Xinjiang and the court than, for example, that which passed between Guangdong and the court.¹⁷

The precedent for excluding Han Chinese from high office in strategically important frontier regions dated from the Kangxi era when, in an edict of 1688, the emperor instructed that only Manchus were to be appointed to the offices of financial commissioner, judicial commissioner, governor and governor-general in Shanxi, Shaanxi and Gansu.¹⁸ A few years later, in 1712, an edict addressed to the Grand Council, Grand Secretaries and Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Boards confirmed that the emperor considered the Han Chinese ill-equipped for duties in the north and northwestern borderlands, and further suggested that the Han Chinese themselves were reluctant to take up office in these regions: “As for important military work, they [the Han Chinese] have generally demonstrated incompetence...I have repeatedly told them, that since they cannot ride horses or stand hardship, I must appoint banner men to do the work whenever an emergency arises in the border areas...Moreover, Han Chinese often decline to take up an appointment in the northern or western border areas with the excuse that they cannot ride horses and

¹⁶ For details of these manuscripts, most of which date from the late 19th century and were originally in the collections of N. N. Kratkov, V. V. Radlov and F. M. Muromsky, see PANG, Tatjana 2001 *Descriptive Catalogue of Manchu Manuscripts and Blockprints in the St Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Science*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz. In the introduction to the catalogue (pp. xx–xxi, xxiii–xxiv), she provides details of those texts which have been published and translated.

¹⁷ Xinjiang, is not however the only area where officials reported in Manchu well into the 19th century. In Hulunbeier, for example, Manchu was in frequent use the 20th century. See TENG Yonggong 佟永功 2000, “Dui Qingmo zhi Minguo nianjian Hulunbeier difang gongwen zhong shiyong Manwen qingkuang de kaocha” 「对清末至国民间呼伦贝尔地方公文重用满文情况的考察」 *Manyu yanjiu* 2: 20–5.

¹⁸ *Da Qing huidian* (1732) 『大清會典』 (雍正), 8, 2a–b.

that they find it too difficult to move around on foot in large areas where there is little water.”¹⁹ However, while in the final century of Qing rule Han Chinese were appointed to senior posts in Shanxi, Shaanxi and Gansu, this was not the case in Xinjiang until after 1877. Indeed, even in the early 1870s, it was by no means certain that Han Chinese would be allowed to assume high office in the region after the re-conquest. In 1874, after Zuo Zongtang had successfully suppressed the Muslim rising in Gansu and was eager to lead the recovery of Xinjiang, he confided bitterly to a friend that he fully expected that responsibility for the recovery of Xinjiang would be given to a Manchu, thus depriving him of finishing his task and, by implication, reaping his due merit.²⁰ We still have no answer to the question of whether Xinjiang was preserved as a Manchu enclave for a specific reason, or whether it was simply a legacy of the conquest that became an unquestioned principle—it is possible that we never will. However, what is clear is that those appointed to serve as imperial agents and above in Xinjiang could not escape the significance of their Manchu identity and clearly this had implications for the use of Manchu in the region.

The continued reliance on Manchu bannermen to fill the posts of imperial agents, councillors and military governor in Xinjiang and thus the frequent use of Manchu in communications with the court, meant that the need for competent Manchu clerks/translators (*Ma. bithesi*, Ch. *bitieshi*) endured that much longer in Xinjiang than elsewhere. Indeed, given that appointment as a *bithesi* was a common mode of entry into the civil service for bannermen and a short-cut to rapid advancement, not surprisingly, many of those who held high office within the region, such as Shuhede, Songyun, Changlin, Tuojin and Fujun had all begun their careers as *bithesi*, thus ensuring their proficiency in Manchu. The appointment of officials to serve in Xinjiang who were adept in Manchu, and the training of *bithesi* were, therefore, to a certain extent mutually reinforcing.

There is no knowing whether there was any particular onus, subconscious or otherwise, on those serving in Xinjiang to privilege the use of Manchu in writing memorials, but the *relatively* high status of Manchu in Xinjiang is indisputable and is even reflected in the fact that some *hākim* beks made a point of learning Manchu rather than, or as well as, Chinese—and even required their sons to do so with a view to impressing the emperor and so advancing their career.²¹

¹⁹ *Donghualu, Kangxi* 『東華錄』(康熙), 96: 8b–9a, as cited in CHU, Raymond and William SAYWELL 1984 *Career Patterns in the Ch'ing Dynasty*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, p. 46.

²⁰ ZUO Zongtang 左宗棠 1890 *Zuo wenxiang gong quanji, shudu* 『左文襄公全集』(書牘), 13 juan, Taipei: Wenhai, repr. 1964, 43a.

²¹ See MILLWARD, James and Laura NEWBY 2006 “The Qing and Islam on the Western Frontier,” in P. CROSSLEY et al. eds. *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity and Frontier in Early Modern China*. By comparison, as far as I am aware, there are no references to *tusi* (local chiefs) in the southwest of the empire learning Manchu.

2.2. Documents in the First Historical Archives and Elsewhere

According to Wu Yuanfeng, the chief Manchu archivist in the Beijing's First Historical Archives, one third, approximately 64,000, of the total number of the *lufu* documents (copies for file) stored in the monthly Manchu bundles (*yuezhe bao*) are concerned with Xinjiang.²² This gives an average per annum of 696 under Qianlong (1736–96), 390 under Jiaqing (1796–1821), 288 under Daoguang (1821–51), 265 under Xianfeng (1851–62), 37 under Tongzhi (1862–75), 15 under Guangxu (1875–1908) and 10 under Xuantong (1908–11). Viewed in this way, the frequently mentioned dramatic decline in the use of Manchu for official correspondence from the Qianlong to Jiaqing periods (evidenced in the case of Xinjiang by a decline in the total number of documents from 41,798 to 9,377), is far less remarkable.

Nevertheless, the “Xinjiang archive” clearly does reflect a significant reduction in the use of Manchu for official correspondence over the period from the 1760s to 1860s. Scholars have suggested several reasons for this apparent decline in usage. First, during Qianlong's reign, the conquest itself and the establishment of the administration necessitated a formidable amount of correspondence with the court which was accentuated by Qianlong's hands-on style of government—no matter was too small for his attention. Second, after 1794 the memorial system was modified necessitating less paper work. As Bartlett notes in her survey of the record books, the reduction in Manchu materials for the 19th century, especially in the Daoguang and Xianfeng periods, “probably indicates not so much a reduced use of the Manchu language in government work as a re-organization and streamlining of record keeping procedures.”²³ Finally, despite the fact that high-ranking officials in Xinjiang continued to be selected from Manchu and Mongol bannermen, from the Jiaqing period clearly proficiency in Manchu was declining among officials. Thus by the 1840s, the fact that Buyantai, the military governor in Ili, possessed excellent Manchu and was personally responsible for composing the memorials concerning trade with Russia, was worthy of note in his annual appraisal.²⁴ Despite this decline, however, Manchu was being used in correspondence both to and from the court right up to the 1911 revolution and the FHA holds some 500-odd Manchu documents relating to Xinjiang from the Guangxu period.

Despite the undeniably vast holdings of the FHA, one should not forget

²² Wu Yuanfeng 吴元丰 2000 “Junjichu Manwen yuezhebao nei Xinjiang shiliao ji qi yanjiu jiazhi” [“军机处满文月折包内新疆史料及其研究价值”], *Xiyu yanjiu* 1, p. 92. The following figures are all based on Wu's calculations which appear to relate to catalogue entries, rather than actual documents.

²³ BARTLETT, Beatrice 1985 “Books of Revelations: The Importance of the Manchu Language Archival Record for Research on Ch'ing History,” *Late Imperial China* 6, no. 2, p. 32. See also Wu 2000: 93–94.

²⁴ *Zhupi zouzhe* [“硃批奏摺”], *minzulei* 民族類, 64.3 n.d.

that it does not have a monopoly on Manchu documentary sources relating to Xinjiang. Notwithstanding the Xinjiang provincial archive (which is still largely uncatalogued) and possibly other provincial archives, several Manchu documentary sources relating to Xinjiang have found their way into libraries and other public and, no doubt, private collections. For example, one document from the Guangxu era which is not in the FHA and is worthy of further attention is a communication to the Regent at Hami from the Guangxu emperor in 1905. A copy of this appears in an article by Erich Haenisch published in 1951 and the original is now held with the Albert von Le Coq collection in the Ethnological Museum in Berlin-Dahlem.²⁵ The document, which is concerned with the opening and closing of the seals and New Year rituals, is not perhaps of any immediate great interest in terms of content; but the fact that it is in Manchu with a Chaghatai translation makes it, to the best of my knowledge, unique.²⁶ Equally interesting—and indeed puzzling—is what appears to be a collection of useful phrases in spoken Turki and Manchu that Haenisch presents in the latter section of the article and which were apparently gathered from various sources in Beijing.²⁷

Other documents of which I have to date found no copy in the FHA, include the regulations of punishments for stealing cattle in Xinjiang and two volumes of documents under the catalogue heading of *Kara šar i alibure cese* (Ch. *Halasha chengce*). The former, which is held in Institute of Oriental Studies in St Petersburg, is dated 1889; it comprises some 130 pages of what was originally a longer document and was copied by N. N. Krotkov. The latter, held in the Beijing Library, comprises two string bound volumes each containing a collection of memorials running to some 60 *ff*. The documents cover the period from 1820/21 (Jiaqing 25) to 1830/31 (Daoguang 10); all are concerned with beks and local affairs and, with the exception of those included in the final 6 *ff* of the first volume, are in Manchu. These last few documents are transcribed on pages that are cut about 1–2cms smaller than the preceding pages, and may have been appended at a later date. The final page of this volume bears the date 1850 (Daoguang 30.10). The appended Chinese memorials are directly or tangentially concerned with the compilation of the Manchu documents. Thus we learn that they were to be compiled in 5 year runs, and clearly at least six volumes were originally compiled.

It goes without saying that the above mentioned documents are not new discoveries. My objective in drawing attention to them is merely to emphasise the need to gather together the very disparate information that we have on relevant sources, in an easily accessible format.

²⁵ HAENISCH, Erich 1951 “Turko-Manjurica aus Turfan,” *Oriens* 4, pp. 256–64.

²⁶ It may be that similar bilingual documents are to be found in the archives in Xinjiang.

²⁷ Haenisch provides no reference for the former document, but the fragments of the phrase books appear in the old catalogue as IB 4174a.

3. The Value of the Manchu Sources in the First Historical Archives

3.1. Subject Matters

It was early suggested by scholars that in certain broad areas of study e.g. security, Russia, Xinjiang, the FHA Manchu archive would prove particularly rich. However, when after ten years of work the Chinese catalogue of the Manchu *lufu zouzhe* (*yuezhe bao*) relating to the northern frontier was finally published in 1999,²⁸ its length exceeded most expectations. Six of the twelve volumes relate to Xinjiang, covering the period from 1730 to 1911. Wu Yuanfeng, the chief editor, has already gone some way towards setting out the range of subject matters covered in the holdings.²⁹ The scope is no less than that which one might find in the equivalent Chinese documentary sources, covering topics from the appointment of officials to the eradication of a plague of mice and from the surrender of Mongol tribes to the selection of local artisans to be sent to work in Beijing. However, once one moves beyond particular documents at one end of the scale (e.g. rodent extermination) and broad areas of categorization at the other (e.g. Qing administration of the region), it is more difficult to be specific about areas of study in which the Manchu documentary sources are *significant*, or an essential complement to Chinese sources. As far as routine matters (*lixing gongshi*) were concerned, based on a proportionate volume of documents in the Chinese and Manchu archives, I have been unable to detect a preference for either language for any particular subject matter, save in the area of expressing thanks to the emperor (*xie'en zhe*) where the language of choice does appear to favour Manchu. On the other hand, it is relatively easy to identify those areas where Manchu sources are significantly fewer, namely, grain supplies, garrison provisions, the Green Standard troops, and trade. Quite clearly, these were all matters which were routinely reported to the governor-general in ShaanGan—who, unlike the senior officials in Xinjiang, was not necessarily Manchu.

3.2. Uses

The value and significance of an archive, or indeed any collection of primary

²⁸ See bibliography under *Qingdai bianjiang Manwen dang'an* (FIRST HISTORICAL ARCHIVES OF CHINA 中国第一历史档案馆 ed. 1999 *Qingdai bianjiang Manwen dang'an mulu* [清代边疆满文档案目录], compiled by WU Yuanfeng 吴元丰 et al., 12 vols., Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe.). Below all references to archival documents preceded by MWDA (*Manwen dang'an*) may be found in this catalogue and are held in the Manchu archive of the FHA.

²⁹ See Wu's extensive and detailed list of subject matters covered by the archival documents. Wu 2000: 94–97.

sources, however, is not of course necessarily related to its size. As Onuma Takahiro has highlighted in his excellent article based on Manchu archival documents, what we ought to be assessing is not mere quantity and range of subject matter, but the extent to which these sources provide us with information that is not available in Chinese or other sources. Onuma's study of the depositions of Khojis bek and his son, not only sheds new light on the shifts in political power between the Āfāqiyya and Ishāqiyya in the period immediately preceding the Qing conquest, but also presents us with a plethora of new insights and detail, from the use of the term the "four cities" (Tur. *dorben shahr*) and the duties of the various beks to Khojis' "pragmatic" illness at the time of Burhān ad-Dīn's return to Altishahr, accompanied by the imperial guardsman, Torontai, and a Mongol/Muslim force of 1,000 soldiers.³⁰

To continue with this line of reasoning, the final section of the paper is something of a case study based on my own area of interest in the Manchu archive which has focused on documents relating to Qing relations with the Central Asian khanate of Khoqand. As with any topic, the subject is not discrete and the following discussion therefore also considers documents which do not directly relate to Khoqand but have nevertheless fallen within the dragnet of my research. The objective here is not simply to identify where these sources might give new insight into relations between the khanate and the Qing authorities in Altishahr, or indeed any aspect of the society and administration of Altishahr, but rather to enable others to draw from these comments a broader sense of what one might, or might not, realistically hope for from Manchu sources on Xinjiang.

Khoqand's integral involvement with the khoja rebellions in Xinjiang, and the issue of the retention of the region have ensured that Chinese sources in this field were not lacking even before access to the Chinese documents became available in the last decade or so. From the onset, therefore, it must be stressed that the Manchu sources in this area do not tell a new story or indeed dramatically change the story of Khoqand's relations with Qing China and Altishahr in any significant form.

A comparison of the numbers of Chinese and Manchu *lufu* documents on matters relating to Xinjiang's relations with Khoqand reveals that not only is the Manchu archive inferior quantitatively, but despite the sensitive nature of foreign relations and the fact that Manchu is so often referred to as the "security language," after the Qianlong period there was clearly no bias towards the use of Manchu in reporting on external affairs. So what does the Manchu archive have to offer

³⁰ See ONUMA Takahiro 小沼孝博 2002 "Zaikyō Uiguru jin no kyōjutsu kara mita 18 seiki chūyō Kashugaria shakai no seiji teki hendō" 「在京ウイグル人の供述からみた18世紀中葉カシュガリア社会の政治的変動」, *Manzokushi Kenkyū* 1, pp. 46–61. The importance of the Manchu documents in terms of adding detail to other sources and correcting or validating information has, of course, been made by others. See for example, Wu 2000: 99.

researchers in this area?

I have already made mention of Onuma Takahiro's work on the khojas and the way he has used three Manchu documents, all depositions, to focus on developments in Altishahri society during a period for which sources are particularly scarce. A point that may not be obvious from Onuma's work, however, and should perhaps be emphasised, is that depositions in Manchu are very few and far between. Interpreters in Xinjiang worked mainly into Chinese and therefore it was naturally more convenient for the *bithesi* (clerks/translators) to record depositions in Chinese. Given that depositions were "accompanying documents" and were not for the emperor's personal perusal, they would not normally be translated into Manchu unless being cited in a memorial. The fact that the depositions of Khojis Bek and his son were recorded in Manchu may, therefore, be explained by the fact that they were probably recorded in Beijing where a small number of officials were equipped to translate from spoken Turki into Manchu.

To stay with the khojas for a moment, let us look at another document which dates from the early period of the Qing rule in Altishahr, a bilingual document (*Man-Han hebi*). Contrary to general belief there is not a large volume of *Man-Han hebi* documents relating to Xinjiang. The copying of a document in both Manchu and Chinese was for the most part limited to *zhupi* (memorials seen by the emperor) and these were largely separated by FHA archivists in the 1950s. The small number of documents of which the Chinese and Manchu copies are still stored together are thus found primarily among the Chinese and Manchu *lufu* (copies for file, not presented to the emperor) and, once again, they are not restricted to any particular subject matter.³¹ I mention this particular document, however, because it pertains to a crucial event in the history of Altishahr: the deaths of the khoja brothers, Burhān ad-Dīn and Khoja-Jahān, an event which was rapidly surrounded in myth. The document includes lengthy citations from the depositions of witnesses to their murders and is, therefore, the closest record, in every sense, that we have of the events and the way in which they were interpreted in the immediate aftermath. We learn quite clearly from this document (and in much gory detail) that both khojas were summarily murdered and thus that the assertion that Khoja-Jahān died of his wounds is apparently false. The disappearance of Burhān ad-Dīn's body before it could be identified is attested to in several other sources, but significantly, according to those who killed Burhān ad-Dīn, as he faced imminent death he repented for his crime against the emperor and requested that his body be taken to Kashgar for burial, or, if that were not possible, then he wished to be buried somewhere peaceful—most importantly he is said to have insisted that he did not want to be buried with his younger brother who had instigated the rebellion. Given the pivotal

³¹ Interestingly, the MWDA catalogue reveals a small cluster of Manchu/Chinese *hebi lufu* for the Tongzhi period. See *Qingdai bianjiang Manwen dang'an*.

nature of their revolt in shaping the subsequent history of Xinjiang, the suggestion of the schism between the brothers (again only alluded to in other sources), is of great importance. The document also contains the earliest reference to Sulṭān Shāh's anxiety that handing over the Khojas to the Qing would bring retribution (and that handing them over dead would be considered an even worse crime). Whether a portrayal of actual events, an astute political manoeuvre, or merely a paranoid fear, Sulṭān Shāh's assertion that 5,000 Hindustani forces, as well as troops from other neighbouring polities, were amassing against Badakhshan in order to come to the aid of the Khojas, tells us much about the esteem in which the Khojas were held throughout the region. It also offers fertile ground for research both into the making of myths and the regional politics of this period.

As many have pointed out, the richness of the Manchu *yuezhe bao* archive is that it contains not only the *lufu zouzhe*, but the accompanying materials that were not generally reproduced when a *zhupi zouzhe* copy was made.³² As a memorial from Songfu, the councillor at Kashgar in 1816 reveals, officials were under strict orders to dispatch to the court all original copies of letters from rulers and chieftains beyond the *karun* (frontier check-points) together with a "rough" translation.³³ Thus it is among the *lufu zouzhe* that we find the correspondence from polities lying beyond the *karun* and the replies from the Qing frontier officials. It is also the case that by far the majority (although not all) of the correspondence from outside the *karun* was translated from Chaghatai into Manchu rather than Chinese, and is therefore held in the Manchu archive. It is not entirely clear why this should have been the case and I can only hazard a guess that maybe for linguistic reasons (grammatical structure, transliteration etc) the *bithesi* considered it easier to make a translation from Chaghatai into Manchu rather than Chinese. Certainly words were absorbed into Manchu that did not pass into Chinese e.g. *belek* (tribute), but this may be putting the cart before the horse.

The value of these original letters and their Manchu translations goes without saying. Nicola Di Cosmo has pointed to the telling use of the title "bek" in the Manchu translation of a document from the Khoqandi ruler 'Ālim, rather than "khan,"³⁴ however, in fact, in the original Chaghatai documents the Khoqandi rulers did, indeed, use the title khan, not least in their gold embossed seals; moreover, at times their careful use of the required deferential language is known to have

³² Hence one entry in the MWDA catalogue may comprise half a dozen or so items (*jian*).

³³ MWDA 3885-051, Jiaqing 21. As this and other memorials reveal, however, errors were not uncommon and messengers did on several occasions return with the original copy of their letter. See also 3512-020, Qianlong 60.9.3.

³⁴ DI COSMO, Nicola 1997 "A Set of Manchu Documents Concerning a Khoqand Mission to Kashgar (1807)," *Central Asiatic Journal* 41, p. 163.

slipped to unacceptable levels of familiarity.³⁵ Thus, the form of address and very language of the correspondence reveal much about the framework within which bilateral relations were conducted (and changed) over time, as well as how the Qing authorities used adherence to the ritual practices and forms in order to create a space for negotiation on matters of real concern.³⁶ Equally important, however, is the actual content of these letters, of which there are several dozen emanating from Khoqand and the rulers of Qarategin, Shighnan, Bolor etc, as well as a substantial number from the Qazak and Qirghiz chieftains. Not only do the letters provide information about events in the various polities neighbouring Xinjiang, but the rigorous filing system of the Qing bureaucracy allows us to date some of these events relatively precisely, for the first time. Just as importantly, of course, these communications (and the replies they received) allow us to scrutinize the nature and tenor of relations between their senders and the Qing officials in Altishahr, as distinct from relations with the court. Given that any communication intended for the Qing councillor was invariably accompanied by a covering letter to the incumbent *hākim bek* (of Kashgar, or Yarkand) to which the latter would reply, this body of correspondence also offers the possibility of further insight into the role of the *hākim beks* as middlemen, or brokers, between the Central Asian polities and the Qing authorities. Finally, it is to be hoped that, in future, careful comparative translations will be able to reveal different perceptions of these bilateral relations, and in some instances may even serve to shed light on the source of disagreement and misunderstanding.³⁷

I have already alluded to the role of the Manchu documents as a source of Central Asian history generally, but equally they can help us to locate Xinjiang within that broader historical context of Central Asia and, more surprisingly perhaps for official documents, give us unique insights into the local society.³⁸ The richness

³⁵ See for example when ‘Ālim khan addressed the emperor as *dost* (friend). *Na wenyi gong zouyi* 19: 17b. The Manchu translations that Di Cosmo consulted in Saguchi Tōru’s collection can be found in the FHA together with the original of the Chaghatai letter from ‘Ālim. See MWDA 3715-007, Jiaqing 12.2.3.

³⁶ See Hevia, James 1995 *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*, Durham: Duke University Press.

³⁷ For an excellent example of where comparative translation has been instrumental in revealing the source of one such misunderstanding, see PAN Zhiping 潘志平 and JIANG Lili 蒋莉莉 1989 “1832 nian Qing yu Haohan yihe kao” [1832 年清与浩罕异议和考], *Xibei shidi* 1, pp. 99, 100–109.

³⁸ This is, of course, not a unique feature of the Manchu archive and I have written elsewhere about the extent to which the Chinese documentary sources may be used for the same purpose. See NEWBY, L. J. 2004 “Lines of Vision: Qing Representations of the Turkic Muslim Peoples of Xinjiang,” in ESCHMENT, B. and H. HARDER eds. *Looking at the Colonizer: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Bengal, and Related Areas*, Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 339–55.

of the Manchu archive in the early years after the conquest makes it particularly important, not only for research on how and why the Qing adopted certain policies in the region (even if they were not strictly adhered to), but precisely for these types of insights. Let us look at a few examples.

We know from several Chinese sources that under the Qianlong emperor marriage between the Turkic Muslims of Altishahr and those from outside the region was prohibited. However, the correspondence between the Qing authorities in Altishahr and the court tell us much about not only why these marriages were forbidden, but also why they so frequently occurred in the 18th century. According to Yongbao the councillor in Kashgar:

In the past when Andijanians come to this place [Altishahr] to trade for a long time, they all took the daughters of local Muslims as wives and because they could not take the women they had married back to their place they made their homes here. The Andijanians went to and fro trading and when they had children, they took the boys but did not take the girls. After Iskandar arrived [i.e. took up his post as *hākim bek*], he looked into why this principle had originally been established, and discovered that there was nothing to this effect in the scriptures. On each occasion it [the marriage] was established by mutual agreement and there was no official seal. He visited old people to make enquiries and they said: probably in the past the Muslims were very poor; there was no one they could rely on to look after them. After they established contact with the Andijani traders, the ordinary people willingly gave their daughters to them. They praised the Andijani traders for not taking them back with them to their own homes, thus they trusted the Andijanians. In this way the wife was never cut off from her family. If the Andijanians forced the wives to go to another place there would be no one to take care of them.³⁹

Another policy introduced by the Qing which also had the effect of reducing contact between the people of Altishahr and those outside the *karun* was the implementation of a system of passes for those who wished to trade outside the *karun*. Again, although it is well known from the Chinese sources that this was introduced as a response to the escalating number of attacks on traders by Qirghiz, it is only in the Manchu archive that we find an account of the real scale of the problem, and learn that reports of Qirghiz stealing the cattle and belongings of the Muslim traders could not always to be taken at face value:

On one occasion when the Muslim traders were asleep, unbeknown to them, their horses stampeded. The Qirghiz rounded them up and took them away.

³⁹ MWDA 3512-020, Qianlong 60.9.3.

The next day when the Muslims wanted to take them back from the Qirghiz, the Qirghiz said: it is true that we found a herd in our area, but we don't know that they are really your animals. Without authorization how can we give them to you? Return to the city and get authorization and afterwards if they are really yours we'll give them to you...

On another occasion the Muslims traders arrived at the Qirghiz place and camped with Tatibek. Previously Tatibek had stolen the goods of Akhudzai and during the night he sought retribution and robbed Tatibek unaware that amongst what he was stealing were the goods of the Muslims. This was not a case of specifically stealing from the Muslims. When the Muslims returned they concealed the reason [for their loss] and falsely reported that the Qirghiz had attacked them and stolen all their belongings...⁴⁰

Indeed, it was to a large extent the frustration of the Qing authorities at their own inability to adjudicate fairly in these disputes, just as much as the demands for compensation, that seems to have prompted the introduction of restrictions on trade outside the *karun*.

Yet another area in which the Manchu archive provides poignant insight into society in Central Asia is slavery. The purchasing of slaves outside the *karun* for sale in Altishahr was forbidden by the Qianlong emperor but continuation of the practice, which was underpinned by the bek system, is attested to in many documents. One convoluted case involving the ruler of Shighnan reveals the extent to which Qing legislation in this area was undermined, not only by the internal demands of traditional practices (supported by the Qing), but by the reinforcement of the legitimacy of those practices in regions beyond the Qing frontier. When four Kashgari traders went to Shighnan in the early 1790s, they were given 20 Galchas (Mt. Tajiks) by the ruler of Shighnan in exchange for the purchase of ceramics, horses etc. On the return journey to Altishahr in the middle of winter, the traders were killed by four of the slaves and the remainder fled. The emperor noted that only the traders themselves were to blame for their fate, nevertheless, the ruler of Shighnan, Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn, was requested to track down the culprits. Two had already died and, clearly anxious to avoid incurring the displeasure of the Qing authorities, Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn dispatched a further 16 slaves to Kashgar (one of whom died en route) as compensation for those who had fled. The Qing officials in Yarkand were duly horrified by this turn of events, but nevertheless praised the ruler of Shighnan for his good intentions!⁴¹

Although neither the Manchu nor the Chinese archive on Xinjiang is particularly rich in terms of legal cases—primarily because all but the very serious

⁴⁰ MWDA 3483-014, Qianlong 59.10.6.

⁴¹ MWDA 3495-041, 042, Qianlong 60.2.25.

of offences were dealt with by local courts—nonetheless, the attempts by various khans of Khoqand to intervene in disputes between their traders and Altishahris did give rise to a flutter of Manchu documents concerning legal cases. These provide considerable insight into affairs which normally came under the jurisdiction of local officials, *hākim beks*, *mollas* and *aqsaqals* (chief traders). For example, we learn that in the early 19th century not only were many Altishahris heavily in debt to Khoqandi traders, but these loans, which were contracted with formal written agreements, were long-term loans e.g. 18 years, and the obligation for repayment would be passed on through generations and across families.⁴²

Such insights are manifold but, undeniably, taken in isolation they are slight. It is only when married with information from other sources that they serve to enrich the wider picture and may even, on occasions, provide the vital piece of the jigsaw.

Conclusion

Published Documentary Sources

While there are undoubtedly Manchu sources relating to Xinjiang that still await discovery in archives and libraries across the world, access to those already catalogued and recorded by scholars has taken a great leap forward in recent years. The publication of translated and, more importantly, original documents has played a significant role in this process. As a result, not least, of the dramatic increase in the number of scholars being trained in Manchu in the PRC, the last twenty years has seen a significant rise in the amount of translation into Chinese of the Manchu archives relating to Xinjiang. Starting modestly in the late 1980s with articles of translated documents appearing in the FHA's journal *Lishi dang'an* and two volumes of *Sibozu dang'an shiliao*, most recently we have seen the publication of *Qingdai xiqian Xinjiang Chaha'er Menggu Manwen dang'an quanyi* (comprising some 900-odd documents from the FHA, complete with catalogue references for the *yuezhe bao* and *shangyu* archives).⁴³ Even more welcome, perhaps, is the fact that PRC government funding has recently been authorized for the publication of the entire Manchu *lufu* archive on Xinjiang. With anticipated completion in 1–2 years, this will probably appear even before the Chinese translation of the same archive, a project already well under way. And the much hoped for complement to all this

⁴² See for example, MWDA 3635-009, Jiaqing 6.11.12.

⁴³ The latter builds on an earlier publication of a selection of documents from this archive i.e. *Qingdai xiqian Xinjiang Chaha'er Menggu Manwen dang'an yibian* [清代西迁新疆察哈尔蒙古满文档案译编], 1994, Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei zhongxin.

activity is, of course, an on-line catalogue with sophisticated search powers.

In conclusion, I must stress the preliminary nature of this overview and my hope that others will be willing to correct errors and add to what should be regarded as an on-going exercise. Only if we promote knowledge of the sources, and encourage accessibility to them, will future generations of Qing historians of Xinjiang and Central Asia be able to make an informed decision on the value of learning Manchu.

Appendix: List of works and manuscripts in Manchu relating to Xinjiang.

(Where more than two copies exist the location list is not comprehensive. Dates of specific editions have been added only where verified.)

『璧勤襄公列傳』 *Bi qinxiang gong liezhuan / Bi kicebe aisilan gung ni faidangga ulbun. Man-Han* [The chronological biography of Bichang], 2 ce 1857 (Beijing Library).

『哈喇沙呈冊』 *Halasha chengce / Kara šar i alibure cese* [Records from Karashahr] Jiaqing 25 – Daoguang 10, 2 ce, 1850 (Beijing Library).

『回疆通志』 *Huijiang tongzhi / Hoise i jecen i j'i* [Gazetteer of the Muslim region], 1804 (Bibliothèque Nationale; British Library, incomplete and bearing the title *Man-Han Huijiang zhuan* 『滿漢回疆傳』 on the first folio).

Ili ba-i baita be ejehe bithe [A history and ethnographical description of Ili beginning with the Manchu conquest] 52ff, compiled by Bališan, no date (Institute of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg).

『欽定回疆則例』 *Qinding Huijiang zeli / Hesei toktobuha hoise jecen i kooli hacin i bithe* [Imperially authorized regulations and statutes for the Muslim frontier] (Zhongyang minzu xueyuan library, Beijing; Institute of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg; Collège de France, incomplete; Library of Congress).

『欽定平定準噶爾方略』 *Qinding pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe / Jungar i babe necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithe* [Imperially authorized record of the pacification of the Junghars]. 1761–65. (Beijing Library; Nanjing bowuguan, Toyo Bunko; Library of Congress).

『欽定外藩蒙古回部王公表傳』 *Qinding waifan Menggu Huibu wanggong biao zhuan / Hesei toktobuha tulgeri Monggo hoise aiman i wang gung sai iletun ulabun* [Imperially authorized genealogical tables and biographies of the princes and nobles of the Mongols and Muslims]. *Man-Han*, 1795. (Beijing Library; Institute of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg; Collège de France).

『欽定續纂外藩蒙古回部王公表傳』 *Qinding xucuan waifan Menggu Huibu wanggong biao zhuan / Hesei toktobuha sirame acabuha tulgeri Monggo hoise aiman i wang gung sai iletun ulabun* [Imperially authorized sequel of the genealogical tables and biographies of the princes and nobles of the Mongols and Muslims]. (Beijing Library, 1814, 1839; Beijing Palace Museum Library 1849, 1859; Institute of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg; The Toyo Bunko; Library of Congress).

Untitled geography and topography of the Western Regions (partially Manchu), 1762/3 (Sichuan Shifan daxue library).

Untitled regulations of punishments for stealing cattle in Xinjiang. Copied by N.N.Krotkov,

- dated 1889, pp. 53–183 only (Institute of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg).
 『西域回族風俗志』 *Xiyu Huizu fengsuzhi / Wargi bai hoise uksura i an tacin be ejehe bithe*
 [Record of the customs of the Muslims in the Western Regions]. Manchu only, no
 date (Minzu yanjiusuo library, Beijing).
 『西域聞見錄』 *Xiyu wenjianlu / Wargi jecen i bade bifi donjihi sabuha bithe* [Record of
 things seen and heard in the Western Regions]. *Man-Han*. (Lenin Library, Moscow).

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Glossary of Chinese Terms

<i>bitieshi</i>	筆帖式
<i>chaoben</i>	抄本
<i>jian</i>	件
<i>Lishi dang'an</i>	歷史檔案
<i>lixing gongshi</i>	例行公事
<i>lingqi</i>	另起
<i>lufu zouzhe</i>	錄副奏摺
<i>Man-Han hebi</i>	漢滿合璧
<i>shangyu</i>	上諭
<i>tusi</i>	土司
<i>waiyi</i>	外夷
<i>xie'en zhe</i>	謝恩摺
<i>yuezhe bao</i>	月摺包
<i>zhupi zouzhe</i>	朱批奏摺