

The Sogdian Descendants in Mongol and post-Mongol Central Asia: The Tajiks and Sarts

JOO-YUP LEE

This paper is devoted to the examination of the identity of the Sogdian descendants and their historical role in the second millennium CE. More specifically, it discusses the Sogdian connection to the later Iranic-speaking peoples of Central Asia, namely, the Sarts and the Tajiks. It then discusses the symbiotic relationship between the Sogdian descendants and the Mongols and the Mongol descendants (Chaghatays and Uzbeks) in Central Asia. In sum, this paper argues that the Sogdians did not perish after the Arab conquest of Central Asia in the eighth century CE. They survived under new exonyms Sart and Tajik. Like the Sogdians in pre-Islamic Central Asia, the Tajiks or Sarts played important historical roles in the Mongol and post-Mongol states of Central Asia, maintaining a symbiotic relationship with the nomad elites.

Keywords: Sogdian, Tajik, Sart, Turk, Mongol, Silk Road

“Just as there is no cap without a head, there is no Turk without a Tat (*tatsız türk bolmas bashsız bürk bolmas*).”¹ This Old Turkic proverb, which was current in Qarakhanid Kashgaria, epitomizes the symbiotic relationship between nomad and sedentary in medieval Central Asia. The name *Tat* first appears in the Orkhon inscriptions of the eighth-century CE and refers to the Western Türks’ non-Turkic subjects, who were chiefly “Sogdians.”²

The Sogdians were an Iranic-speaking people who inhabited Sogdia, which roughly corresponds to modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Sogdia consisted of oasis towns and agricultural lands between the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya rivers. As international traders, the Sogdians rose to prominence and enjoyed their wealth during the fourth into the eighth centuries CE.³ However, after the Arab conquest of Sogdia in the eighth century and especially during the Samanid period, the Sogdian language virtually fell out of use. A question arises here: What happened to the Sogdians? Were they replaced by incoming Arabs and Persians from the Middle East and later by Turks from the Inner Asian steppes? Or did they just adopt new languages and became Persian and Turkic speakers? If the latter, what role did they play in the history of Central Asia in the second millennium?

This paper is devoted to a discussion of the Sogdian origin of the later Iranic-speaking peoples of Central Asia, namely, the Sarts and the Tajiks, and the latter’s historical role in the second millennium CE. I will first demonstrate that the Sogdians did not disappear but evolved into the Sarts and the Tajiks, drawing on the findings of DNA studies.⁴ I will then discuss the symbiotic relationship between the Sogdian descendants and the Mongols and the Mongol descendants (Chaghatays and Uzbeks)

¹ Maḥmūd al-Kāshgārī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīvān Luġāt at-Turk)*, ed. and trans. Robert Dankoff, in collaboration with James Kelly, 3 pts. ([Cambridge, MA: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University], 1982–1985), 2:103.

² Hans Heinrich Schaeder, “Türkische Namen der Iranier,” in *Welt des Islams*, ed. Gotthard Jäschke, special issue, Festschrift Friedrich Giese (Berlin and Leipzig: 1941), p. 5.

³ For a detailed study of the Sogdian traders active from the first century BC to the tenth century, see Étienne De la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders. A History*, trans. James Ward (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁴ This paper is concerned with studies of Y-chromosome DNA, i.e., paternal ancestry. Y-DNA studies can provide answers to many questions that historical texts alone cannot clearly answer. For instance, they can tell us whether modern-day Turks are mostly descended from Central Asian Turks or from Turkicized indigenous Anatolians, whether modern-day English people are genetically closer to pre-Roman Celts or to Germanic Anglo-Saxons, and whether Ashkenazi Jews are mostly descended from ancient Middle Eastern Jews or from Eastern Europeans. One should also note that genetic studies cannot readily be used to make racist or nationalist claims since they show that all humans share a common origin in Africa and that many neighboring peoples (for instance, Arabs and Jews) who are not politically close are joined by blood. The present author, by no means, argues that DNA defines identity. This paper is not concerned with theories of ethnicity. It only approaches the identity of historical peoples from the perspective of their contemporaries.

in Central Asia providing literary references from historical texts. The conclusions of this article are as follows: The Sogdians did not perish following the Arab conquest of Central Asia in the eighth century CE but survived under new exonyms *Sart* and *Tajik*. Like the Sogdians in pre-Islamic Central Asia, the Sarts or Tajiks played important historical roles in the Mongol and post-Mongol states of Central Asia, maintaining a symbiotic relationship with the nomad elite.

Tajiks and Sarts

The Sogdians were called *Hu* (胡), meaning barbarian, in medieval China. For instance, the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 [Old book of the Tang Dynasty] relates that an Ashina⁵ Türk commander named Ashina Simo (阿史那思摩) was not given a high military post by the Ashina Türk rulers because of his Sogdian (*buren* 胡人) physiognomy:

Simo was a relative of Xieli. Because his face was like that of the “barbarian (*buren* 胡人)” and not like that of the Tujue (Türks), Shibi [Khagan] and Chuluo [Khagan] were doubtful of his being one of the Ashina. Thus although he always held the title of Jiabi telei (夾畢特勒) during Chuluo and Xieli’s time, he could not become a shad (*she* 設) in command of the army till the end ...⁶

From this account, one may learn that the Sogdians were in close contact with the Türks and that the two groups possibly intermarried with each other. The Türks themselves used the names *Tat* or *Soydaq* to denote the Sogdians. *Tat* is used to refer to the Sogdian subjects⁷ of the Ten Arrows (On Oq), the tribal union of the Western Türks, in the Kül Tegin inscription, and the Bilgä Kagan inscription.⁸ The Tonyukuk inscription employs *Soydaq*.⁹

The Sogdians were conquered by the Arabs in the mid-eighth century CE. during the reign of the Samanids (819–999 CE), a Persian dynasty centered in modern-day

⁵ The Ashina were the royal clan of the Old Turks also known as the Kök Türks.

⁶ “思摩者，頡利族人。始畢、處羅以其貌似胡人，不類突厥，疑非阿史那族類，故歷處羅，頡利世，常為夾畢特勒，終不得典兵為設。” Liu Xu 劉煦, *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 [Old book of the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 194a.5163.

⁷ C.E. Bosworth and Éva Jeremiás, “Tat,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

⁸ See the line 12 (south side) of the Kül Tegin inscription and the line 15 (north side) of the Bilgä Kagan inscription in Talât Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkish* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 232, 246 (text), pp. 263, 281 (tr.).

⁹ See the line 46 of the Tonyukuk inscription at <https://bitig.kz/?lang=e&mod=1&tid=1&oid=17&m=1>

Uzbekistan and eastern Iran. The Sogdian language, which was an Eastern Iranic language, was gradually replaced by Persian, a Western Iranic language, written in the Arabic script. After the rise of the Qarakhanids (ca. 950–1213 CE), the first Muslim Turkic dynasty, which ruled in Central Asia including Transoxiana, Turkic, the language of the political elite from the steppes, also assimilated the Sogdian language.¹⁰ The religions of the Sogdians such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Manichaeism were also replaced by Islam. However, although the Sogdian identity eventually became extinct, according to the Qarakhanid lexicographer Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, Sogdian was still spoken in the eleventh century in such Central Asian cities as Balasagun and Taraz.¹¹

As a matter of fact, modern DNA studies reveal that, in all likelihood, the Eastern Iranic-speaking Sogdians did not perish but evolved into the later Western Iranic/Persian-speakers (and also Turkic-speakers) of Central Asia. Y-Chromosome DNA haplogroup R1a1, more specifically, its subclade R1a1a1b2 (defined by mutation z93),¹² is the genetic marker of the Indo-European pastoralists, who migrated from modern-day Ukraine to modern-day Iran, India, the Kazakh steppes, the Tarim Basin, the Altai Mountains region, the Yenisei River region, and western Mongolia during the Bronze Age.¹³ R1a1 (R1a-Z93) is found at a high level among the modern Iranic-speaking

¹⁰ Peter B. Golden, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 62.

¹¹ Kāshgharī, *Divān Luġāt al-Turk*, 1:84. On the long resistance of the Sogdian language, see Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, p. 330.

¹² A Y-DNA haplogroup is defined by the presence of one or more Y-DNA mutations called Single Nucleotide Polymorphism or SNP for short. For instance, haplogroup C is defined by a mutation named M216. The Y Chromosome Consortium (YCC), a scholarship group formed to standardize haplogroup nomenclature, named Y-DNA haplogroups using the capital letters A through T and their subclades using numbers and lower case letters. When a new SNP is discovered and tested, a new haplogroup subclade is determined. For the most up-to-date version of the Y-DNA haplogroup nomenclature and Y-SNP tree, see <http://www.isogg.org/tree>. For introductory studies of the Y-chromosome DNA haplogroups, see Y Chromosome Consortium, “A Nomenclature System for the Tree of Human Y-Chromosomal Binary Haplogroups,” *Genome Research* 12, no. 2 (2002): 339–48; Michael F. Hammer and Stephen L. Zegura, “The Human Y Chromosome Haplogroup Tree: Nomenclature and Phylogeography of Its Major Divisions,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31, no. 1 (2002): 303–21; Tatiana M. Karafet et al., “New Binary Polymorphisms Reshape and Increase Resolution of the Human Y Chromosomal Haplogroup Tree,” *Genome Research* (2008); Jacques Chaharouni, Peter A. Underhill, and Luca L. Cavalli-Sforza, “Y Chromosome Diversity, Human Expansion, Drift, and Cultural Evolution,” *PNAS* 106, no. 48 (2009): 20174–20179.

¹³ On this point, see Ornella Semino et al., “The Genetic Legacy of Paleolithic *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* in Extant Europeans: A Y Chromosome Perspective,” *Science* 290 (2000): 1156. M17 or Eu19 in this article corresponds to R1a1; Tatiana Zerjal et al., “A Genetic Landscape Reshaped by Recent Events: Y-Chromosomal Insights into Central Asia,” *The American Journal of Human Genetics* 71 (2002): 477–78. Haplogroups 3 in Table 3 corresponds to haplogroups R1a1; Christine Keyser et al., “Ancient DNA Provides New Insights into the History of South Siberian Kurgan People,” *Human Genetics* 126, no. 3 (2009): 406–9; Chunxiang Li et al., “Evidence That a West-East Admixed Population Lived in the Tarim Basin as Early as the Early Bronze Age,” *BMC Biology* 8, no. 15 (2010): 9–10, accessed August 5, 2016,

peoples of Central Asia such as the Eastern Iranic-speaking Pashtuns (51.2~56.3%) and the Western Iranic-speaking Tajiks of Tajikistan (45~68%).¹⁴ The modern-day Turkic-speaking Uzbeks, who are descended from the ancient Indo-European (Iranic) populations of Central Asia as well as from the various Inner Asian nomadic peoples,¹⁵ including the Shibanid Uzbeks,¹⁶ also carry Y-DNA haplogroup R1a1 (17.6~32%).¹⁷ Importantly, among the modern-day Iranians (Persians), R1a1 is found at a considerably lower frequency when compared to the Central Asian groups. It ranges from 4.5% to 20.3%.¹⁸ Furthermore, Y-Chromosome DNA haplogroup R1a1 is rare among the Arabic-speaking peoples of the Middle East. These facts indicate that the most likely source of R1a1 and other R1 subclades among modern-day Iranic-speaking peoples and the Uzbeks of Central Asia is the ancient Indo-Europeans of the region, i.e., the Sogdians, not the Western Iranic-speaking Persians or the Arabs.

One may thus argue that the Sogdians did not become extinct after all although their original Sogdian language was eventually lost. They simply acquired new ethnonyms. Like *Tat* during the Old Turkic period, two exonyms, namely, *Tajik* and *Sart*, became attached to the Sogdian descendants in Mongol and Mongol Central Asia. First, the Sogdian descendants became known as *Tazik/Tajik*, a name that had originally been applied to the Arab Muslims by Iranic-speaking subjects.¹⁹

In addition, when the Mongols conquered Central Asia in the first half of the 13th century CE, they referred to the Tajiks, i.e., the Sogdian descendants, as *Sarta'ul*. For instance, the *Secret History of the Mongols*, a 13th-century Mongol history of Chinggis Khan and his ancestors, refers to the Iranic-speaking, settled population of Central Asia as *Sarta'ul*.²⁰ The 17th-century Mongolian chronicle *Erdeni-yin Tobči* by Saghang Sechen

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¹⁴ Figure S7 in Julie Di Cristofaro et al., "Afghan Hindu Kush: Where Eurasian Sub-Continent Gene Flows Converge," *PLoS One* 8, no. 10 (2013): 1–12, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0076748>; Table S4 in Marc Haber et al., "Afghanistan's Ethnic Groups Share a Y-Chromosomal Heritage Structured by Historical Events," *PLoS One* 7, no. 3 (2012).

¹⁵ Peter 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: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 407.

¹⁶ The Shibanid Uzbeks were the Turkic-speaking nomadic people who conquered Transoxiana (formerly Sogdiana) at the turn of the sixteenth century.

¹⁷ See Table 1 in R. Spencer Wells et al., "The Eurasian Heartland: A Continental Perspective on Y-Chromosome Diversity," *PNAS* 98, no. 18 (2001): 10245. M17 in Table 1 corresponds to haplogroup R1a1; Table 3 in Zerjal et al., "A Genetic Landscape Reshaped by Recent Events," 474. Haplogroups 3 in Table 3 corresponds to haplogroups R1a1.

¹⁸ See Table 1 in Viola Grugni et al., "Ancient Migratory Events in the Middle East: New Clues from the Y-Chromosome Variation of Modern Iranians," *PLoS One* 7, no. 7 (2012): 7.

¹⁹ Subtelny, "The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik," p. 48.

²⁰ Igor de Rachewiltz, trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols., Brill's Inner Asian Library 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), sections 257 and 263.

also refers to the Iranic-speaking, settled population of the Chaghatayid khanate as *Sartayul*.²¹ *Sarta'ul/ Sartayul*, or *Sart*, was a term of ultimately Sanskrit origin, meaning “caravan leader” (*sārthavāha*), which entered Uighur via Sogdian.²²

The Symbiotic Relationship between the Tajiks/Sarts and the Mongols and the Mongol Successors

During the Mongol and post-Mongol period, the Sogdian descendants (Tajiks or Sarts) formed one of the two major groups in Central Asia along with the Mongols and their descendants, the Timurids, known as Chaghatays, and the Uzbeks.²³ This is best exemplified by the fact that the Mongols and their successors in Central Asia referred to the population of their states as “Turks and Tajiks/Sarts” or “Uzbeks and Tajiks/Sarts” in their entirety.

The Mongols in Iran and Central Asia referred to the population of their realm as “Turk and Tajik (*Turk u Tāẓīk/Tājik*).” Importantly, in this phrase, *Turk* primarily denoted the Mongols, while *Tajik* chiefly denoted the Iranic-speaking sedentary population. For instance, Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318), the author of the *Jāmi' al-tavārikh*, the celebrated universal history dedicated to the Mongol Ilkhans, relates that, prior to embarking on a military campaign against the Khwārazm Shāh Empire in retaliation for the murder of his envoys, Chinggis Khan (d. 1227) went to a hill and prayed for help from God, whom he addressed as “the Creator of Tajik and Turk (*āfarīnanda-i Tāẓīk u Turk*).”²⁴ In fact, it was in the Mongol Ilkhanid histories and documents that the phrase “Turk and Tajik (*Turk u Tāẓīk/Tājik*),” denoting both the sedentary and nomadic population, began to be widely used.²⁵

²¹ Saghang Sechen, *Erdeni-yin Tobci* (*Precious Summary*): *A Mongolian Chronicle of 1662*, ed. M. Gö, I. de Rachewiltz, J. R. Krueger, and B. Ulaan, vol. 1, *The Urga Text* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1990), p. 83.

²² G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 846.

²³ On the Mongol identity of the Timurids/Chaghatays and the Uzbeks, see Joo-Yup Lee, “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: Oxford University Press, 2019). Doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.443

²⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-tavārikh*, vol. 1, p. 344; Thackston, *Jami'u'l-tavarikh* 1, p. 235.

²⁵ Schaefer, “Türkische Namen der Iranier,” p. 25; Subtelny, “The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik,” pp. 48–49; John R. Perry, “Ethno-Linguistic Markers of the Turco-Mongol Military and Persian Bureaucratic Castes in Pre-Modern Iran and India,” in *Militär und Staatlichkeit*, ed. Irene Schneider, *Orientwissenschaftliche Hefte* 12. 2003, *Mitteilungen des SFB “Differenz und Integration”* 5 (Halle, Germany: Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, 2003), p. 117.

The Timurids also employed the phrase “Turk and Tajik (*Türk u Tāzīk/Tājīk*)” to denote their population. They also used the name *Sart* for the Iranic-speaking sedentary population, while applying the name *Türk* to the Mongols and their descendants. The words of ‘Alīshīr Navā’ī (d. 1501), a poet and scholar in the Timurid court in Harāt, who identified himself as *Türk*, exemplifies this phenomenon. Arguing that the Turkic language was a proper literary language superior to Persian in his *Mubākamat al-lughatain*, Navā’ī adds:

The fortune (*rūzgār*) was transferred from the Arab kings (*malik-i ‘Arab*) and the Iranian rulers (*Sart šalāṭīnī*) to Turkic khans (*Türk kbānlar*). From the time of Hülegü Khan and from the time of Temür (*sulṭān-i šāhibqirān Temür kūrāgān*) to the end of the reign of his son and successor, Shāhrukh, verses in Turkic were composed ...”²⁶

In this passage, one should note that *Türk* is juxtaposed with *Sart* and encompasses the Mongol ruler Hülegü (r. 1259–1265), the founder of the Ilkhanate.

The fact that the name *Türk* encompassed *Mongol* and was relational to the name *Tajik* (and/or *Sart*) in post-Mongol Central Asia is also reflected in the following depiction of the Moghul ruler Yūnus Khan (d. 1487) in the *Tārikh-i Rashidī*, a 16th-century history of the Moghul khanate:

We kept hearing [the name] Yūnus Khān the Moghul and kept thinking that he was a Moghul (Mongol): ‘beardless (*keṣa*),’ ‘his ways and manners like other Turks of the desert (*vaṣṣ‘ u aṭwār-i ū mesl-i sāyir-i Atrāk-i šahrāy*).’ But when we saw the Khan, ‘[he was] a man of good conversation, full-beard, Tajik-faced, and extremely modest in speech and conversation (*mard-i kbush-muḥāvira, hama-rish, Tājīk-chibra, dar ghāyat-i tavāṣu‘ takallum va muḥāvira-t-i ū*)’ in a way that even among the Tajiks such kind of a person is rare.²⁷

In this passage, one may note that *Türk*, a term denoting an Inner Asian nomad, encompasses *Mongol* and is juxtaposed with *Tajik*.

The Uzbeks who conquered Central Asia in the early 16th century also referred to the Iranic-speaking sedentary population of Central Asia as *Sarts*. For instance, the Khivan Uzbek ruler Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādur Khan (r. 1644–63) uses the phrase “Uzbeks

²⁶ *Chrestomathie en Turk Oriental contenant plusieurs ouvrages: De L’emir Ali-Schir*, École royale et spéciale des langues orientales vivantes (France), compiler, publisher (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1841), p. 33.

²⁷ Muḥammad Ḥaidar Dughlāt Mirzā, *Tārikh-i Rashidī*, ed. ‘Abbāsquṭī Ghaffārī Fard (Tehran: Mirās-i Maktūb, 2004), p. 126.

and Sarts” to denote the population of the Khivan khanate in his *Şejere-i Türk*.²⁸

Such juxtaposition of the Sogdian descendants and the Mongols and their successors reflects their symbiotic relationship. In the Mongol states and their successor states in Central Asia, the military was exclusively Turk, while the Tajiks/Sarts, as Persian-speaking inhabitants of the towns and cultivated lands, served as bureaucrats, merchants, and artisans.²⁹ The role of the latter in administration, commerce, and cultural life was indispensable.

The Tajiks/Sarts also played other important roles in post-Mongol Central Asian history. For instance, it was the Tajiks who Islamized the Mongol descendants in Central Asia. Tughlugh-Temür Khan (r. 1351–63), the founder of the Moghul Khanate, the eastern branch of the Chghatayid khanate, converted his people to Islam after having a conversation with a Tajik named Shaikh Jamāl al-Dīn. According to Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādur Khan as well as Muḥammad Ḥaidar, the author of the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, Tughlugh-Temür Khan asked the following question to the latter: “Are you better than this dog, or is the dog better than you.” The shaikh replied: “If I have faith I am better than this dog; but if I have no faith, this dog is better than I am.”³⁰

In the Uzbek khanates of Central Asia, the Sarts or Tajiks played another role as members of new infantry troops armed with firearms, in contrast to the Turks/Uzbeks, who remained mounted archers. For instance, the ruler of the Uzbek Ming dynasty, or the Khoqand khanate, ‘Abd al-Rahīm (r. 1722–34) created an army of Sarts recruited from the settled farmers.³¹ Another Khoqand ruler ‘Alim Khan (r. 1799–1811) also created a standing army of musketeers called the Gala Bahadur made up of Tajiks from the Pamir-Alay.³² Khuydar Khan (r. 1844–1858) also defeated the Qipchaqs, a nomadic tribe of Qazaq origin, in the Khoqand khanate in 1852 relying on the Sarts.³³ The Manghit Uzbek ruler Naṣrallāh (r. 1827–1860) also created a standing army armed with firearms, by recruiting the settled farmers, among others. Naṣrallāh was able to break the power of Uzbek tribes using his new army.

²⁸ Aboul-Ghāzī Béhâdour Khân, *Histoire des Mongols et des Tatares*, trans. Petr I. Desmaisons (St. Petersburg: 1871–1874; repr., Amsterdam: Philo, 1970), pp. 231, 256 (text), pp. 248, 273 (trans.).

²⁹ Wheeler M. Thackston, “The Genghisid and Timurid Background of Iran and Central Asia,” in *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Modern Library, 2002), pp. 20–31.

³⁰ Aboul-Ghāzī, *Histoire des Mongols et des Tatares*, p. 158 (text), p. 167 (trans.).

³¹ Scott C. Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709–1876* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), pp. 30–31.

³² Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand*, p. 82.

³³ Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand*, pp. 166–68.

Concluding Remarks

This paper discussed the Sogdian origin of the later Iranic-speaking peoples of Central Asia, namely, the Sarts and the Tajiks drawing on genetic evidence, and the latter's symbiotic relationship with the Mongols and the Mongol descendants (Chaghatays and Uzbeks) in Central Asia utilizing historical texts.

In sum, this paper suggests that the Sogdians did not disappear after the Sogdian identity eventually became extinct following the Arab conquest of Central Asia in the eighth century CE and the subsequent Samanid and Qarakhanid rule. Instead, they morphed into peoples with different names, including *Tajik* and *Sart*.³⁴ Like their ancestors, the Sogdians of pre-Islamic Central Asia, the Tajiks or Sarts played important historical roles in the Mongol and post-Mongol states of Central Asia as international merchants, religious leaders/missionaries, and infantry soldiers, among others. The juxtaposition of "Turks" and "Tajiks/Sarts" when referring to the population of these states in their entirety reflected the symbiotic relationship between the Sogdian descendants and the nomad elites. Therefore, one may also epitomize the relationship between the Tajiks/Sarts and the Mongols and their successors by rephrasing the Old Turkic proverb as follows: "Just as there is no cap without a head, there is no Mongol/Chaghatay/Uzbek without a Tajik/Sart."-

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³⁴ The fact, as indicated in this paper, that both Turkic-speaking Uzbeks and Persian-speaking Tajiks share their formative years, i.e., Sogdian Y-DNAs may not be well taken in Uzbekistan because the Uzbeks claim descent from "Turks" not Sogdians. However, rediscovering the ancient bonds between the two groups may lead to their more amicable relations in the future.

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