

Yam (Post/Communication) Organization in Mongols

Moğollarda Yam (Posta/Haberleşme) Teşkilatı

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the establishment and functioning of the Yam Organization are discussed. This study also discusses about the effects of the Yam Organization on the development of the Mongolian Empire. Mongols, who united culturally developed Eurasian countries under a single roof and thus extended their dominance, felt the need to pay attention to the postal organization upon the widening of the borders and the extension of the distances between the center and the states. This is mainly due to the fact that any empire, which has achieved to unite a wide geography under a single roof, has to find a systematic organization to address all areas in order to be able to hold this geography permanently under its control. In this research, while the establishment stages of the postal organization were explained, it was revealed in the sources that the Mongol Empire, which left a great mark in world history, got its power.

Keywords: Intelligence Service, Middle Asia, Mongols, Post Organization, Yam Organization

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada Yam Teşkilatı'nın kuruluşu, işleyişi ve bu posta teşkilatının kuruluş nedenleri araştırılmıştır. Temel olarak bahsettiğimiz konuları ele alan bu makale Yam Teşkilatı'nın, Moğol İmparatorluğu'nun gelişimine etkilerini de açıkça ortaya koymuştur. Kültürel açıdan oldukça zengin olan Avrasya ülkelerini tek çatı altında birleştirerek hakimiyetlerini genişleten Moğollar, sınırlarının genişlemesi ve merkez ile eyalet arasındaki mesafelerin uzaması ile posta teşkilatının kurulup geliştirilmesine ihtiyaç duymuşlardır. Bunun başlıca nedeni, geniş bir coğrafyayı tek çatı altında toplamayı başarmış herhangi bir imparatorluğun, bu coğrafyayı kalıcı olarak kontrolün altında tutabilmesi için her alana hitap edecek sistemli bir teşkilat bulması zorunluluğudur. Bu çalışmada posta teşkilatının kuruluş aşamaları anlatılırken, dünya tarihinde büyük bir iz bırakmış Moğol İmparatorluğu'nun gücünü aldığı kaynaklarda ortaya konulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İstihbarat Servisi, Orta Asya, Moğollar, Posta Teşkilatı, Yam Teşkilatı

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Introduction

Genghis Khan and The Mongol Empire

The Mongols were the people of the Mongol Empire who were living in Middle Asia within the region which had boundaries spanning from the mountain chains separating Middle Asia from Siberia in the north, and Tibet, Kura River, Syr Darya River, and the Caspian Sea in the south. Furthermore, the Mongol people had also adopted the coasts of Onon and Kherlen Rivers located in the north of the Gobi desert and the Baikal Lake as their homeland (D'ohsson, 2014: 31; Roux, 2001: 36-37).

The tribes, which include the ancestor clan of Temucin, who was the founder of the Mongol Empire, are currently maintaining a nomadic life in the the northeastern part of the region called Outer Mongolia today, which is located between the Onon and Kherlen Rivers (Abû'l-Farac, 1950: 476; D'ohsson, 2014: 23-24; Gökalp, 1973b: 119; Grousset, 2014: 221; MGT, 2016: 3; Gülensoy, 2007: 257-275). The inscription of *they came by crossing the sea* (The Secret History of the Mongols, 1982: 1; Moğolların Gizli Tarihi, 2016: 3; Togan, 1970: 27) in the anonymous work titled "Hidden History of the Mongols," which is estimated to have been written circa 1240, gives an important clue to the historians that the ancestors of the Mongols settled in these areas by moving from west to the east. Temucin, who would later take the name of Genghis Khan by reorganizing the Mongol tribes from a disorganized state, was the oldest son

of Yesugai Bahadır from Kiyat clan of Bogorcin tribe and of Hoelun from Merkits. Yesugai Bahadır, the father of Temucin, who was born in February of 1155, was killed by being poisoned by Tatars, while Temucin was only 9 years old (Beckwith, 2009: 184; Gökalp, 1973a: 120; Grousset, 2014: 227; Marshall, 1996: 10; Morgan, 1987: 57; Roux, 2001: 71-72; Topçi, 2008: 32; Vernadsky, 2015: 37; Larson, 1932: 50; Pelliot, 1923: 23; Vladimircov, 1950: 16). Temucin lived with his mother Hoelun and his siblings and maintained his life by hunting at the coasts of the Kherlen River after the death of his father. During this time, their clan was kept in captivity by their enemies Tayciuts for a while. Temucin, who wanted to take part in the political field, scrambled against Merkits by receiving the support of Togrul (To'oril) Khan, the chief of Kereyit tribe, and his blood brother Camuka from Cacirat tribe (Grousset, 2014: 229-230; Marshall, 1996: 11; Moğolların Gizli Tarihi (MGT), 2016: 38-51; Morgan, 1987: 58-59; Roux, 2001: 84-92; Temir, 1950: 27-33; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1982: 34-47; Barthold, 2006: 11; Vernadsky, 2015: 38-39; Vladimircov, 1950: 26-28; Kafalı, 1993: 367-369). Thus, he began to spread the seeds of an empire that would rule on the Mongol land for a long time. Temucin was declared as Great Khan at the convention held in 1206 (Allsen, 1994: 331-343; MGT, 2016: 133-134; Topçi, 2008: 39-40; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1982: 141; Yakubovskiy, 1955: 31). Therefore, he united the Mongol tribes, which had been disorganized since the mid-ninth century, under one name. He domineered Kyrgyz, Merkit, Nayman, and Uighurs till 1209 (Özgüdenli, 2005: 225). Following the expeditions of 1209 Tangut, 1211 China, and the conquer of Peking, he established his domination in Middle Asia and created the largest contagious land empire in Asia (Barthold, 2017: 407; Beckwith, 2009: 187; D'ohsson, 2014: 54; Fahreddin, 2003: 23; Grousset, 2014: 259-260; MGT, 2016: 169; Ögel, 2002: 306, 309, 320; Rásonyi, 1993: 178; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1982: 183; Vladimircov, 1950: 71, 75, 78; Ayalon, 1971: 151-180; Morgan, 1986: 163-176). The Mongol army, which launched an expedition after the defeat of the Karahitay Empire, captured Bukhara and Samarkand and then defeated the Khazem Shah Empire (Aknerli Grigor, 1954: 5; Barthold, 2017: 430-437, 446-455; Cüveynî, 2013: 155-176; Cûzcânî, 2016: 116-119; D'ohsson, 2014: 108-135; Ebü'l-Ferec, 2011: 13-15; Grousset, 2014: 272-275; MGT, 2016: 181-186; Nesevî, 1934: 30-35; Roux, 2001: 187-191; Temir, 2002: 259; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1982: 198-204; Vladimircov, 1950: 92-102; Yuvalı, 2017: 67-76). He held a convention with his sons in the veldts of Kulan-basi in the spring of 1223 and divided the lands under his domination among his sons (Ağaldağ, 2002: 274; Barthold, 2017: 462-463; Cüveynî, 2013: 95; D'ohsson, 2014: 169-170; Grousset, 2014: 277, 288-290; Jackson, 1999: 23-28; Marshall, 1996: 39-40; Rásonyi, 1993: 181-182; Roux, 2001: 211, 227; Temir, 2002: 259; Yuvalı, 2017: 85-86). Therefore, a period called the "Four Nations" began when Ogeday, who was selected as successor in the lifetime of his father, (1229-1241) took over the empire after the death of Genghis Khan in 1227. These four nations became khanates after 1260 (Togan, 2002: 245).

Genghis Khan, who in a way created a great forest from a small seedling, eventually left an empire that was spreading from Korea to Near East and Southern Europe and from South Siberia to Indochina to his successors when he died. The conquests that Genghis initiated were continued by those who established dominance afterward him for the purpose of providing the continuity of the empire besides the political and military power. "Yam Organization" was one of the institutions, of which its basis was founded by Genghis Khan and was continued by his successors and which had great importance for the existence of the empire. Yam Organization, which was probably the most important institution of Mongols after their military, became systematic in direct proportion to the expansion of the boundaries of the empire.

Yam (Post/Communication) Organization in Mongols

In almost every period of history, states have needed a fast and a reliable communication network. The desire of being informed about events occurring in the center or states, the need to ensure the safety and peace of the public and the desire to learn the ambitions of political opponents in order to preserve its existence, has increased the importance of communication for any governing body. For this reason, besides being an organization having its origin from old times, the post service has been used by various states by making it fit for their procedures. Although the name of the organization was called by a different name within each border or territorial area, eventually it had great importance for every state. For example, the name of the organization was Berid¹ in Near East Islamic States, Peyk² in Seljuq Empire, and Derbend and Menzil in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, while those who performed this task were called with different names such as ulak, beygir, yam, yamci, menzil beygiri, tatar, kâsid, postaci, sâî, berid, eskinci, munhî, eskudâr, and musri³, the undertaken mission was always the same. Mongols, who united culturally developed Eurasian countries under a single roof and thus extended their dominance, felt the need to pay attention to the postal organization upon the widening of the borders and the extension of the distances between the center and the states. This is mainly due to the fact that any empire, which has achieved to unite a wide geography under a single roof, has to find a systematic organization to address all areas in order to be able to hold this geography permanently under its control.

Yam Organization, which etymologically bears the meanings such as "road, send, street, gate; postal accommodation; guide, observer, tracker," is a courier network where its foundations were set in the period of Genghis Khan, with the aim of providing a fast communication network (D'ohsson, 2014: 160-161; Grousset, 2014: 257; Hartog, 2003: 149; Kafalı, 1976: 187; Lamb, 1956: 162; MGT, 2016: 187; Spuler, 2011: 459; Uzunçarşılı, 2014: 248; Howorth, 1880: 84; Webb, 1967: 117; Kamalov, 2008: 291). Communication in the organization, which is thought to have been being inspired (Atwood, 2004: 258; Morgan, 1987: 107; Vladimirtsov, 1950: 58)³ from the Chinese communication system, was provided through the messengers called "yamci" or "ulakci." Post station, which were established for the resting and satisfying the needs of messengers, were named after "yamhane" were located in daily crossing routes of the empire with 1-day distance intervals (Wilhelm Von Rubruk, 2001: 78; Minovi & Minorsky, 1940: 764-765). There were initially 20 horses and one messenger

1 See for details about "Berid Organization" which literally bears the meanings of "tatar, postman, messenger, and courier" and founded by Persian Judge Darab according to Kazvini (Hamdu'llâh Mustawfî-i Qazvini, 1913: 32; Harekat, 1992: 498-501).

2 See for details about Peyk which bears the meanings of "messenger, postman, courier" (Merçil, 2007: 262-263)

3 At the beginning of the factors that drive researchers to this opinion is the thought that silver tablets, which were captured in China and there were information about the postal organization on them, are the ancestors of payza/tamgas that Mongols were used (Rachewiltz, 1966: 111-112; Morgan, 1987: 107). Examples are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

in these yamhanes, which were under the control of the local administrators (Devlet, 2002: 45; Hartog, 2003: 47; Kemaloğlu, 2016a: 134-135; Kemaloğlu, 2016b: 56; Kotan, 1976: 132-133; Spuler, 2011: 459).

Ogeday Khan, the son of Genghis Khan who succeeded him after his death, structured this organization in the form of a communication network by making it more effective and systematic (Ağaldağ, 2002: 274; Atwood, 2004: 258; Devlet, 2002: 45; D'ohsson, 2014: 184; Grousset, 2014: 257; Kemaloğlu, 2016b: 56; Kamalov, 2008: 292; Marshall, 1996: 45; MGT, 2016: 204; Olbricht, 1954: 40; Spuler, 2011: 459; Yakubovskiy, 1955: 55-56). Ogeday Khan's biggest supporter in this regard was his brother Chagatai Khan. Chagatai Khan, who was the most loyal guard of the laws of Genghis Khan, did not leave his brother alone in the regulation of the postal organization. Therefore, the system, where the foundations were laid during the period of Genghis Khan to provide the communication of Karakum, was actually the center of political and commercial life. Thus, an effort was made to prevent the late arrival of the news to the necessary centers. It was primarily decided to establish yam stations at the points determined in all the major centers of the empire during the convention gathered in the year 1235. Thirty-seven yam stations were built between Karakurum and China at a distance of five leagues (about 30 km). Troops including 1000 soldiers were placed in each station. In addition, a warehouse for supplies, as well as for a sufficient amount of horses, wheel, sheep, and oxen were made available. At the same time, men were charged to ensure the safety of warehouses with weapons and precious goods (Barthold, 2017: 479; Kushenova, 2013: 40). The convention organized in 1240 was a turning point for the postal organization and some new principles were determined regarding the Yam Organization:

1. Messengers would not stop by the cities, villages, and towns on their routes except in extraordinary circumstances. Thus, as an advantage to both sides, the people would be freed from certain obligations and the messengers would arrive in time to the centers they had to reach.
2. Postal stations would be established at various points of the Empire. The nations, in whose region station would be established, would take this responsibility themselves.⁴
3. Twenty messengers (rider) and grooms would be assigned to these stations and they would be selected from the troops of the region where they are stationed.
4. The amount of riding horses required for postal stations, sheep for eating, mares for drinking their milk, wheels, and other munitions would be determined officially (Cüveynî, 2013: 91; Kafalı, 2002: 599; Martin, 1950: 19; MGT, 2016: 203; Olbricht, 1954: 41; The Secret History of the Mongols, 1982: 225; Moğolların Gizli Tarihçesi (Moğolların Kırmızı Kitabı), 2011: 248-250).

After the new regulations, yamhanes began to be inspected annually. In case of being met with an attitude against the rules or in case of detecting deficiency in items that had to be kept in yamhanes during the inspection, the situation was notified immediately to Khan (Chaliand, 2001: 137-138; Cüveynî, 2013: 91; Uzunçarşılı, 2014: 248). Although Barthold reports that half of the offender's property had been confiscated in case of a deficiency in the goods during an inspection (Barthold, 2017: 479; Kushenova, 2013: 40), furthermore it is seen in the Hidden History of the Mongols that penalties were actually more severe.⁵ The messengers had to inform Khan quickly about the unusual situations they faced in addition to troubles. Thus, Khan could easily be informed about what was happening around the country (Hartog, 2003: 47-48). Finally, both the organization became systematic and the burden on the people's shoulder on the transition route was reduced by the founding of a private postal organization with conducted regulations. Special attention was paid to the postal stations located between the cities where Chagatay, Ogeday, and Batu Han were in. Thus, the communication between the central government and the states was quicker as a result.

Despite the innovations brought by Ogeday Khan, some problems and distortions began to appear in the postal organization soon afterward. Especially foreign ambassadors and merchants, who were benefited from this organization in a privileged way, began to abuse the privileges favored to them. The information given by Vladimirtsov in this regard is of great importance; "we can show an example about the strong influence of feudal principles, regarding the private law and public law is mixed in a characteristic manner even in an important area like the postal organization. According to Halha Rule Book, decision was issued that without an exception everybody had to provide horses, wheels and provisions to the ones who came with three important missions. These important three missions were:

1. Giving assault to enemy (dayisun)
2. Getting sick of a significant individual (yeges-un genege),
3. The fight of two noyans (ebderel). Neither the gentlemen, the darhans or Buddha monks were exempt from this obligation." (Vladimirtsov, 1987: 255)

Mengu Han, who was disturbed by the current situation, banned traders from using this system (Spuler, 2011: 460). In addition, it was also forbidden for messengers to bring more than 14 horses to the postal station, to take horses from the local people, to benefit from postal stations for private issues, to detour to villages and cities other than on their routes, as well as to charge more ulufe than the pre-determined amount (Barthold, 2017: 480; Cüveynî, 2013: 490; Devlet, 2002: 45). The system was further developed with the convention held in 1253 and the chief of the post was appointed to ensure the seamless communication of the emperor with the dynastic princes. A special postal station named after "narin/narit/barin yam" was founded between North China and Karakurum to operate only for the special Post work of the emperor (Devlet, 2002: 45; Reşîdüddin Fazlullah, 2013: 15-16; Spuler, 2011: 459-460). His successor Hulagu

4 Founded with distances of 40–50 km. This corresponds to one day (Atwood, 2004: 259; Marshall, 1996: 46). D'ohsson bu mesafeyi 25-30 fersah olarak verir (D'ohsson, 2014: 243).

5 The number of riding horses, sheep to be eaten, mares to be milked, oxen and wheels to be harnessed, which had to be kept in these stations, are to be determined by me. If a person is missing even a rope within these materials, s/he will be punished by cutting his/her lip, if a spoon or radius is missing, s/he will be punished by cutting his/her nose (MGT, 2016: 204; The Secret History of the Mongols, 1982: 226).

Khan carried Mengü Khan's innovations a step further, and he exempted the people from all taxes in regions where postal stations were, with the aim of putting the organization into action. In return for this exemption, the only duty of the local people was to ensure the safety of the stations and to provide a place to stay and food when necessary for the messengers. Grigor from Akner summarizes this situation successfully: "Hulagu began to have ruins built. He appointed three heads of family as yam, where one of them was young and two others were old from the rebuilt village. They were not subject to any taxes other than giving bread and buttermilk to the Mongol travellers" (Aknerli Grigor, 1954: 33; Oktay, 2007: 141). At the same time, since the taxes were insufficient to cover the expenses of the Yam Organization, arrangements were made in the current tax system. Therefore, the necessary amount was collected with the new processes, and the tax inequality between the rich and poor people was removed (Cüveyni, 2013: 430-431). Yam Organization, which became a regularized system with all the innovations that it has brought forward, has been the subject of discussion of significant names such as Plano Carpini (Plano Carpini, 2015: 125, 157), Wilhelm Von Rubruk (Wilhelm Von Rubruk, 2001: 78; Ruysbroeckli William, 2010: 36), Friar Odoric (Odoric, 2001: 143), and Marco Polo (Marco Polo, 2017: 98-100). All these travelers could not help themselves to express their admiration for the system.

The struggle for sovereignty following the death of Mengü Han in 1259 and upon the decision of four nations would continue their existences as four khanates in 1260. Thereafter, Kublai Khan ordered to make the regulations of the postal organization to be replicated in many other areas as well.

Although Chinese bases were taken as an example in the beginning, these bases were then blended with Mongolian traditions. Thirty new postal stations established on the Chinese border in 1281 followed the innovations made in 1270 in line with this purpose (Allsen, 2004: 105). Moreover, it was decided that the smaller disruptions experienced in the organization would be resolved by the officers or by the upper units to which these officials were affiliated. The problem would be resolved with an imperial edict called "sheng-chi," in case of meeting an unusual situation (Olbricht, 1954: 53). Conducted regulations moved the Yam Organization to a more advanced level. The Italian traveler Marco Polo, who had been living in China for a long time, mentioned about the postal organization with great admiration: *There are many roads getting out of Hanbalik and going to the cities in all four sides. There are mansions called as jamb or post office where foreign travellers could be cared on every main roads at twenty-five or thirty-mile intervals. These are nice and broad constructions which were beautifully furnished and walls covered with silk with many rooms and they could meet the needs of important people. Four hundred high quality breed horses are always ready as the messengers and envoys of khanate could change their horses anytime when they come. Great Khan had such mansions and inns built even in mountainous regions, and the places which were out of the main road (not having any village nearby), where the cities were far from each other. Those who run these inns are obliged to perform the duty of working soil and postman. Therefore, messengers and envoys can travel to provinces all over the Khanate with great ease. This makes evident that the Great Khan is bigger and stronger than the other rulers and kings* (Marco Polo, 2017: 98-99).

Although the regulations made by Mengü Khan, Hulagu Khan, and Kublai Khan enabled the organization take a short breath, it was obvious that a more fundamental reform was required. This was because the stations could not even provide a horse for state ambassadors after a short time. The couriers abused the privileges granted to them by taking the way of extorting people. They also did not stop by at the stations on itineraries; instead, they were plundering the places which had prosperity. This situation created a great burden for the public, and in addition, the issue of not utilizing the main roads for travel caused the arrival of news to reach late to the concerned persons. In addition, all princes, generals, and even lower-class state officials began to send postman equivalent to the rights of a monarch postman. Stations were simultaneously filled with 100–200 yams, and people who got the arrival news of messengers were seized with fear due to the plunder that they would create. In short, as a result, the organization was completely strayed away from its main purpose, and it was in a state of disarray (Atwood, 2004: 259; Kotan, 1976: 133; Kushenova, 2013: 40-41; Lane, 2004, 34; Olbricht, 1954: 44-45; Pelliot, 1930: 192-195; Spuler, 2011: 461-462; Uzunçarşılı, 2014: 248-249; Vladimirtsov, 1987: 187).

Ilkhanid emperor Gazan Khan who was known for his reforms was aware that the postal organization, which was about to become gangrenous, would affect other organizations negatively if he did not take the appropriate measures immediately. He began to work by giving the order of renewal of the roads, which were built for postal organization, but essentially transformed into ruins, as they were not used by messengers for a long time. He then took a number of radical decisions on both the route and the couriers:

1. A post station (ribât-yâmhâne) was to be established in every 18–20 km.
2. Horses would be available for use in these stations to be used in case of need (Barthold, 2017: 479; Kushenova, 2013: 40; Uzunçarşılı, 2014: 249).
3. Nobody except the officials with yarlig or gold tamga would benefit from these stations (Cahun, 2013: 309; Marshall, 1996: 46; Plano Carpini, 2015: 157; Vernadsky, 2015: 162).
4. The envoys would be able to meet their sheltering needs free of charge in places called "elci hâne," but would provide their food or horse needs in return for a charge. These envoys would be given maximum four horses, including essential situations.
5. Messengers would cover a distance of 30–40 fersenk (1 Arabian league: 5.76 km, 1 Persian league 6.23 km) in 24 hours.
6. Emergency postal messengers would cover a distance of 60 fersenk (345/373 km) by changing their horses.
7. The princes and state officials would be allowed to benefit from the postal service and their messengers would be equated with the status of the emperor's messenger.
8. The salary of postal officers would be increased.
9. With the aim of following the speed of the messenger and to record whether he was delayed or not, it would be recorded by officials at which day and what time he had set out. Based on this, it would be marked with the sign of "Φ" if a delay had occurred, and if the messenger was on time, then the record was marked with "Θ" sign and with green tamga (Özgüdenli, 2009: 341; Vassâf, 1959: 387; Yuvali, 2000: 103).



Figure 1.
Bronze Payza Sample that Messengers Carried as Identity (Marshall, 1996: 45).

Although the established rules seemed similar to the previous periods, the acts of the provisioning of required space and tools for service, the recording of the arrival and departure hours of the yamci by officials in yamhane, bringing the obligation of sheltering only in yamhane for envoys, meeting their personal needs and the requirements of the horses they used, and holding the governor of each province accountable for possible robbery and damage to ensure the safety of the roads used by messengers enabled the revitalization of system with fresh blood (Yuvalı, 2017: 267). Now Yam Organization had two main functions apart from providing communications:

1. Preventing delays in government affairs.
2. Preventing officials who are traveling with official assignments from applying pressure on the public (Barthold, 2017: 478).

While one of the major princes was assigned to supervise yamhane works, also some of the state revenues were spared for the financial needs of this organization (Lane, 2004: 34-35; Uzunçarşılı, 2014: 249). In addition, a special tax was imposed on the Yam Organization and the messenger (Aksarayı, 2000: 68; Atwood, 2004: 259; Cüveynî, 2013: 91; Kafalı, 1976: 135). The officials, who collected taxes, dealing with civil and military issues and named after "daruga," were responsible for the organization of post work. Darugas were especially collecting taxes used for messengers, traveling state officials, and supplying provisions to their animals (Kemaloğlu, 2016a: 136). The amount and the collection time of these taxes were determined according to the legislation of the noyan and the governors (Meng Ta pei lu ve Hei Ta shi lu: Cengiz İmparatorluğu Hakkında İlk Tarih Kayıtları, 2012: 125). It has been mentioned in various sources that even the news sent from the furthest points of the country were delivered within a week at the latest (Vassâf, 1959: 387). Although it is also claimed that a news sent from Khorasan to Tabriz was delivered in three or four days, Bertold Spuler proves that this is not possible with the examples he has provided (Spuler, 2011: 463). Nevertheless, it is an undeniable fact that the delivery process gained speed as compared to the past.

There was also an effort to gain the postal service its old reputation in Yuan Khanate as in Ilkhanids. Although regulation was made many times after Kublai Khan, complete success could not be achieved. Since both individuals in charge of the postal service were not subject to special training and a regular law for its supervision could not be created, the establishment of a permanent system was prevented. Despite all these, the Yam Organization began to gain its former function in 1320 as a result of these efforts. The organization continued its activities in the direction of the regulations carried out in 1320 until the Empire's decline. Nevertheless, it is evident that the Yam Organization was repeatedly tried to be kept alive with reinforced fresh blood rather than stand by its annihilation.

Postal organization, of which its basis was founded in the period of Genghis Khan, continued its function until the annihilation of the empire by means of conducted reforms in spite of occasional disruptions. Although we do not have sufficient data about Chagatai and Cuci Khanate, the data concerning Ilkhanid and Yuan Khanate show that the descent of Genghis aimed to make the organization regular proportional to the expansion of its borders. The organization set an example for the Ottoman Empire, Sultanate of Delhi, Egyptian Mamelukes, Calayirs, Timurids, Akkoyunlus, Karakoyunlus, Safavids, Crimea-Kazan Khanate, and eventually Russia by going beyond the borders where it had been functional (Alef, 1967: 15; Esterâbâdî, 2014: 429; Herbestein, 1851: 150-152; Köprülü, 1979: 548; Morgan, 1987: 106-107; Uzunçarşılı, 2014: 260). The states were aware that being immediately informed about unusual situations occurring inside and outside the state was a condition to continue its existence and to protect border integrity. Thus, they also used the essence of the Mongol postal organization by blending it with their own method.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

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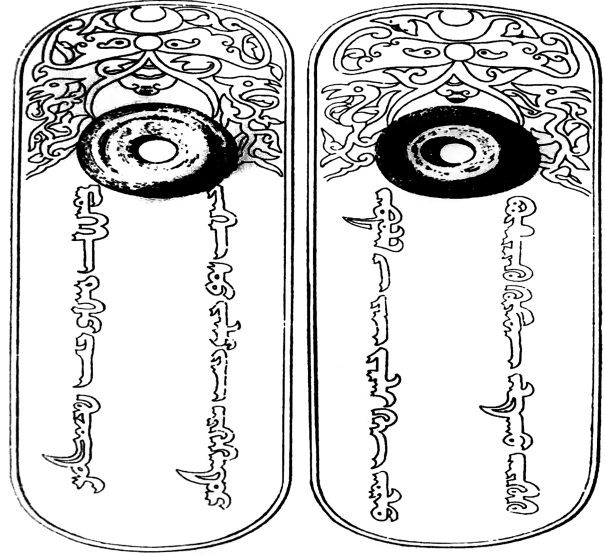


Figure 2.
Payza Sample (Morgan, 1987: 105).

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar çıkar çatışması bildirmemişlerdir.

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Yapılandırılmış Özet

Tarihin hemen her döneminde devletler hızlı ve güvenilir bir iletişim ağına ihtiyaç duymuşlardır. Merkezde veya eyaletlerde meydana gelen olaylardan haberdar olma isteği, halkın güvenlik ve huzurunu temin etme ihtiyacı ve varlığını sürdürebilmek için siyasi muhaliflerin emellerini öğrenme isteği herhangi bir idari birlik için iletişimin önemini artırmıştır. Bu nedenle posta teşkilatı kökeni çok eskiye dayanan bir teşkilat olmakla birlikte, çeşitli devletler tarafından kendi usullerine uygun hale getirilerek kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Teşkilatın adı her sınır yada bölge içerisinde farklı bir adla anılsa da nihayetinde her devlet için büyük bir öneme sahip olmuştur.

Eskiçağ devletlerinden itibaren posta teşkilatlarının varlığına rastlanmaktadır. Her büyük devlet ve imparatorlukta tesis edilmiş olmasından anlaşılacağı üzere posta teşkilatı büyük devlet olmanın unsurlarından biridir. Yollar bir devletin damarlarına, posta teşkilatı ve onun mensubu ulaklar da o damarların içindeki kana benzemektedir. Telefon, e-mail, hatta gazete gibi günümüzün bilgi ve haber edinme kaynaklarından yoksun olduğu bir dönem için posta teşkilatının önemi gerek devlet kurumlarının koordineli çalışmasında gerek ordu teşkilatlanmasında ve gerekse de istihbarat ve nakliye alanlarında en etkin kurum olmasından dolayıdır. Hakanın emirlerinin yayılmasından istihbarat faaliyetlerine kadar geniş bir yelpazede hizmet gören posta teşkilatı pek çok diğer devlet gibi Moğollar'da da önemli olmuştur.

Tabir caizse küçük bir fideden koca bir orman meydana getirmeyi başaran Cengiz Han, öldüğü vakit haleflerine Kore'den Yakındoğu'ya ve Güney Avrupa'ya, Güney Sibirya'dan Çin Hindî'ne kadar uzanan bir devlet bırakmıştı. Cengiz'in başlattığı fütuhatlar, siyasî ve askerî gücün yanında devletin devamlılığını sağlamak gayesiyle kendisinden sonra hâkimiyet kuranlar tarafından geliştirilerek sürdürüldü. Temeli Cengiz tarafından atılıp, halefleri tarafından sağlanan kurumlardan biri de imparatorluğun varlığı için büyük önem taşıyan "yam teşkilatı" idi. Moğolların belki de ordudan sonraki en etkili kurumu olan yam teşkilatı, imparatorluğun sınırlarının genişlemesi ile doğru orantılı olarak sistemli hale dönüşmekteydi.

Etimolojik olarak "yol, yolamak, sokak, geçit; posta konaklama yeri; kılavuz, gözcü, izci" gibi anlamlar taşıyan yam teşkilatı, hızlı bir haberleşme sağlanabilmesi amacı ile temeli, Cengiz Han döneminde atılan bir kurye şebekesidir. Çin haberleşme sisteminden esinlenerek kurulduğu düşünülen teşkilatta haberleşme, "yamçı" veya "ulakçı" adı verilen haberciler aracılığı ile sağlanmaktaydı. Habercilerin dinlenmesi ve ihtiyaçlarını gidermesi için kurulan ve "yamhane" adı verilen posta istasyonları, imparatorluğun günlük geçiş güzergâhlarına birer gün mesafelik aralıklar ile konumlandırılmış vaziyetteydi. Yerel yöneticilerin idaresi altında bulunan bu yamhaneler de başlangıçta 20 at ve bir elçi bulundurulmaktaydı.

Cengiz Han'ın ölümünün ardından yerine geçen oğlu Ögeday Han, babasının çekirdeğini oluşturduğu bu teşkilatı daha etkin ve sistemli bir hale getirerek haberleşme ağı biçiminde yapılandırdı. Ögeday Han'ın bu hususta en büyük destekçisi kardeşi Çağatay Han idi. Cengiz Han'ın yasalarının en sadık muhafızı olan Çağatay Han, posta teşkilatının düzenlenmesinde kardeşini yalnız bırakmadı. Böylece politik ve ticari yaşamın merkezi olan Karakurum'un, tüm uçlarla seri şekilde iletişim kurabilmesini sağlamak ve haberlerin gerekli merkezlere geç ulaşmasının önüne geçmek amacıyla Cengiz Han döneminde ilkel versiyonu kullanılan sistem, geliştirilmeye çalışıldı. Öncelikle 1235 senesinde toplanan Kurultay'da, devletin tüm merkezlerinde belirlenen noktalara yam istasyonları kurulması kararlaştırıldı. Karakurum'un, pek çok ihtiyacını Çin'den temin ediyor olması sebebiyle Karakurum-Çin arasına 5 fersah (yaklaşık 30 km) mesafelik 37 yam istasyonu inşa edildi. Her bir istasyona 1000 kişilik askerî birlik yerleştirildi. Ayrıca erzak için bir depo, kâfi miktarda at, araba, koyun, öküz hazır bulunduruldu. Aynı zamanda içerisinde silah ve kıymetli malların bulunduğu depoların güvenliğini sağlamak için adamlar görevlendirildi. 1240 senesinde düzenlenen kurultay ise posta teşkilatı için bir dönüm noktası teşkil etti ve yam teşkilatına dair birtakım yeni kaideler belirlendi.

Yeni düzenlemenin ardından, yamhaneler senede bir teftiş edilmeye başlandı. Teftiş esnasında kurallara aykırı bir tutum ile karşılaşılması veya yamhanelerde bulundurulması zorunlu olan eşyalarda eksiklik tespit edilmesi halinde, durum derhal hana bildirilirdi. Barthold, teftiş esnasında mallarda bir eksiklik ile karşılaşılması halinde, suçlunun malının yarısının müsadere edildiğini bildirirse de Moğolların Gizli Tarihi'nde cezaların daha ağır olduğu görülmektedir. Haberciler aksaklıkların yanı sıra karşılaştıkları olağan dışı durumları da süratle hana bildirmek zorundaydılar. Böylelikle han, ülkenin dört bir yanında olup bitenlerden kolaylıkla haberdar olabilmekteydi. Nihayetinde yapılan düzenlemeler ile hem teşkilat sistemli hale getirildi hem de hususî posta teşkilatı kurularak, geçiş güzergâhı üzerinde bulunan halkın omuzlarındaki külfet azaltıldı. Çağatay, Ögeday ve Batu Han'ın bulunduğu şehirlerin arasına konumlandırılan posta istasyonlarına özel bir önem verildi. Böylece merkez ve eyaletler arasındaki iletişim daha hızlı sağlanıyordu.

Çalışmamıza konu olan ve temelleri Cengiz Han döneminde atılan posta teşkilatı, zaman zaman kesintiye uğramakla birlikte yapılan reformlar sayesinde imparatorluğun yıkılışına kadar işlevini sürdürmüştür. Çağatay ve Cuci Hanlığı hakkında yeterli veriye sahip olmasak da İlhanlı ve Yuan Hanlığı hakkındaki veriler, Cengiz soyunun teşkilatı, sınırların genişlemesiyle birlikte düzenli hale getirmeye amaçladığını göstermektedir. Teşkilat, faaliyet gösterdiği sınırların ötesine geçerek Osmanlı Devleti, Delhi Sultanlığı, Mısır Memlûkleri, Celâyirli, Timurlular, Akkoyunlular, Karakoyunlular, Safevîler, Kırım-Kazan Hanlığı ve nihayetinde Rusya'ya örnek olmuştur. Devletler, içeride ve dışarıda meydana gelen olağandışı durumlardan derhal haberdar edilmenin, varlığını sürdürebilmek ve sınırlarını koruyabilmek için şart olduğunun farkındaydı. Böylece Moğol posta teşkilatının özünü, kendi yöntemleriyle harmanlayarak kullanmışlardır.