

whilst my comrade, with some other friars, was carried on further to URGANTH.¹ I was willing enough to go with him, but after taking counsel on the matter, I determined first to learn the language of the country. And by God's help I did learn the Chamanian language, and the Uigurian character;² which language and character are commonly used throughout all those kingdoms or empires of the Tartars, Persians, Chaldæans, Medes, and of Cathay. My comrade turned back from Urganth and went to you again. But I could not bear to return, like a dog to his vomit, and I was desirous to obtain the grace conceded by his holiness the Pope, so I would not turn back. For you must know that all of us friars who come into these parts have the same Caspian. There are modern Russian authorities on the site and ruins of Sarai referred to by Von Hammer and Reinaud, but these are not available to me. The name of the city merely means the *Palace* (Serai, Serail, Seraglio). Ibn Batuta says that starting at early morning to traverse the city he did not reach the opposite side till past noon. Sarai was twice taken by Timur, and was entirely destroyed by him. (*Pallas, Voyages*, Paris An. II, vii, 175, 388; *Hammer-Purgstall, Gesch. der Goldenen Horde*, pp. 9 and 431, etc.; *Reinaud's Abulfeda*, II.)

¹ Urghanj or Jorjaniah, formerly the chief city of Khwarezm, the country now known as Khyva. It stood on both banks of the Oxus, with a bridge connecting them. It was the scene of awful devastation and massacre by the Mongols under Jenghiz in 1221, and a hundred thousand of the only class spared, the artizans, are said to have been transported to Mongolia. It must have recovered to some considerable extent in the next hundred years, from the notices in Pegolotti and Ibn Batuta; but the river deserted it and it fell into entire decay. It is the Urgence of Anthony Jenkinson, who describes it in 1558 as an ill-built mud town in a depressed state. New Urghanj, which is the present commercial capital of Khyva, is some sixty miles east of the site of the old city, near the present channel of the Oxus. The lists of Minorite convents in Kipchak, given by Wadding, contain a name which looks as if meant for Urghanj (*Organae, Orgune*), but it seems unlikely, considering the bigoted Islamism of the people, that this should have been the place.

Col. James Abbott visited the ruins of Urghanj on his journey from Khyva, but mentions nothing of much interest. (*D'Ohsson*, i, 265-270; *Wadding*, under 1400; *Abbott's Journey*, i, 214.)

² The Comanians were Turkish according to Klaproth, and Rubruquis says, "*Apud Iugures est fons et radix idiomatis Turci et Comanici.*" The name is supposed to be connected with the River Kuban. As to the character, see note above, p. 205.