

Persian kings. In the thirteenth century they made a stout resistance to the Mongol conquerors, and though driven into the mountains they long continued their forays on the tracts subjected to the Tartar dynasty that settled on the Wolga, so that the Mongols had to maintain posts with strong garrisons to keep them in check. They were long redoubtable both as warriors and as armourers, but by the end of the fourteenth century they seem to have come thoroughly under the Tartar rule; for they fought on the side of Toctamish Khan of Sarai against the great Timur.

The Chinese historians of the Mongol dynasty now call this people *Asu*, and by that name (*Aas* and the like) they were also known to Ibn Batuta and to the Frank travellers, Carpini, Rubruquis, and Josafat Barbaro. This and other reasons led Klaproth to identify them with the *Ossethi*, still existing in Caucasus. Vivien St. Martin however has urged strong reasons against this identification, though he considers both tribes to have been originally members of one great stock of *Asi*, who by routes and at times widely separated, severally found their way from Central Asia to the region of Caucasus. According to the same authority the Georgians, who always distinguished between the *Alanethi* and *Ossethi*, still recognize a people of the former branch in the interior of the Abaz country where no traveller has penetrated.

We now come to the difficulty of accounting for the appearance of numerous Alans in the armies and administration of the Yuen dynasty, a difficulty which perhaps led Klaproth to suggest that those were really of a Mongol tribe bearing that name, and had nothing in common with the Caucasian people of whom we have been speaking.¹

This suggestion has not met with acceptance. And there are notices to be found which account to some extent for the position ascribed to the Alans in China, though the records on the subject seem to be imperfect. Chinghiz Khan, in the course of his western conquests, is recorded to have forced many of the inhabitants of the countries which he overran to take service in his armies. The historian Rashiduddin, in speaking of the Christianity of the Keraites, and especially of the mother and the

¹ Klaproth, *Magazin Asiatique*, i, p. 199.