

## TESTIMONY OF GYLYCH THE SUONA TRUMPETER (EXPANDED)

I was born in 1186 on the edge of the Kara Kum desert in a city called Merv. Merv at this time was one of the administrative, economic and cultural centers of Central Asia. Among the population of over 700, 000 were many scholars who had come to the city to take advantage of the extensive libraries there.

I am of the Turkmen race descended from those who intermingled with the occupying soldiers of Alexander the Great's army 1500 hundred years earlier. Merv had withstood and persevered through many empire shifts and at the time of my birth was part of a soon-to-be-forgotten empire called: Khwarazm.

Taking after my father, I became a trader on the Silk Road. The caravans I was part of traveled east toward China journeying at times as far as Hami. It was there that I acquired my suona horn from a Chinese trader.

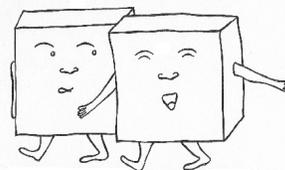
In the year 1218, I was staying in a caravanserai outside of Kashgar. I and some of my cohorts were creating quite a musical revelry as we often did in the evenings. The other guests, most of whom were traders of a variety of different races, sang and danced late into the evening with us. It turned out that one of these, a Mongol trader, was a spy of Genghis Khan's. This man heard me playing my horn and got it in his head that I could be used to help the Mongol army. He reported his idea to one of Genghis Khan's generals who immediately had me captured. I was put before this general and made to play my horn. I was frightened for my life and played as fervently as I could. The general agreed that perhaps I could be used in the Mongol army.

I soon learned that the Mongols were marching toward my homeland; I did not wish to help them. When I heard I was to play in front of Genghis Khan I devised a plan to play the saddest, most unwarlike song I could.

There I stood before the mighty Khan himself in his great, round yurt. His

eyes were incomprehensible as they gazed upon me. He never spoke a word, but his general told me to play. I started into my sad melody and the general bellowed at me to play something more lively. I played all the sadder and then noticed Genghis was crying. I had done it! I had shaken the mighty Khan.

He grinned through his tears after I was done playing and told the general it was true – that my horn was powerful. If it could move him to tears, it could surely give strength to his army. Genghis knew I would not want to help lead his army against my own people so he made a promise to me – if I played for his army he would spare my home city of Merv. I soon found myself among the Mongol troops, playing my horn and guiding them into battles. We captured Samarkand, Bukhara, and Balkh. Unfortunately, outside of Balkh Genghis's grandson was killed in battle. Genghis had every citizen of Balkh killed, but he was not satisfied with this massacre. He wanted more of the Khwarazm Empire to pay for the life of his grandson. He commanded his son Tului to lead an army to Merv. I was sent with him. Tului knew of Genghis's promise to me not to attack Merv. Tului told me if I could play in a way to get the citizens of Merv to surrender peacefully, he would spare them. I knew he was lying to me so I lied to him and told him I would try. As we approached the defenders of Merv, I played my horn as loudly and menacingly as I could trying to scare and push them away – trying to warn them to flee for their lives. I tried to warn them...I tried...



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